The price of everything, and the value of nothing? Stories of contribution in entrepreneurship research

Drakopoulou Dodd, S, Jones, P, McElwee, G & Haddoud, M

Author post-print (accepted) deposited by Coventry University’s Repository

Original citation & hyperlink:
https://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-03-2016-0049

DOI 10.1108/JSBED-03-2016-0049
ISSN 1462-6004

Publisher: Emerald

Copyright © and Moral Rights are retained by the author(s) and/ or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This item cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder(s). The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

This document is the author’s post-print version, incorporating any revisions agreed during the peer-review process. Some differences between the published version and this version may remain and you are advised to consult the published version if you wish to cite from it.
The price of everything, and the value of nothing?
Stories of Contribution in Entrepreneurship Research

Introduction

This paper is concerned with academics who ‘do’ entrepreneurship research and not concerned with academic entrepreneurship, in the sense of university spin – outs for example. Landström and Persson (2010) note that the entrepreneurship discipline has developed significantly as a research field over the last three decades. Wiklund et al. (2011) similarly demonstrated that it has grown to rank among the larger groups of the Academy of Management. Audretsch (2012) comments that entrepreneurship research has gained considerable prominence in leading disciplinary and mainstream management journals. The increase in interest in academic entrepreneurship, centres upon the perceived economic benefits attained from the commercialisation of science and technological knowledge (Storey and Tether, 1998) and increased interest by policymakers, business practitioners and universities (McElwee and Atherton, 2005).

The extant literature considers the range and nature of entrepreneurial research outputs (Ireland and Webb, 2007) as opposed to the experience of the entrepreneurship researcher. Nevertheless, studies of entrepreneurship research, from a scholar’s perspective, are emerging. Frank and Landström’s (2015) focus-group study of ‘what makes entrepreneurship research interesting’ highlights the importance of the relevance-rigour debate, and contrasts the emphasis of junior scholars on individual interestingness, with that of senior professors on the interestingness of the field. Both groups agree that interesting entrepreneurship research is novel, relevant, and challenging. Smith et al (2013) draw upon insights from leading entrepreneurship scholars to identify and analyse the antecedents, processes, and consequences of qualitative entrepreneurship authorship. They find that the consequences of research include the generation of fine-grained richness that facilitates the understanding of multi-faceted complexities, that personal
consequences such as intellectual enrichment, fun, confidence and frustration are also important, as well as the groundedness of qualitative work in engagement, relevance and stories of reality. Drakopoulou Dodd et al (2014) deploy the same dataset to examine, through a Bourdieuan lens, the processes, structures, and relationships within qualitative entrepreneurship authorship. They demonstrate that qualitative researchers share an ‘openness with regard to methodology and epistemology, an insistence upon grounded interaction with people and text, an explicit rejection of positivism, and a passion for the philosophy and practice of engagement’ (2014:641). The capitals created through qualitative authorship were identified as a range of personal benefits (such as interacting with new people, motivation, freedom, satisfaction, self-understanding), and benefits to the wider field’s research project, through enhanced, richer understandings (2014:642). All three of these papers draw our attention to the researchers’ perspective as to what contributions - what value, what capitals - entrepreneurship scholarship can achieve, highlighting the importance of grounding in practice (relevance), of personal development and intrinsic satisfaction, and of advancing shared knowledge in our field. The studies suggest that value is created for (and with) multiple stakeholders (oneself, the community, practitioners); that quality of intellectual contribution is assessed through depth, richness and novelty of understanding; and that extended and varied engagement with others is, in itself, both research process and contribution. However, Frank and Landström focus on one particular form of contribution – how interesting research is – and the Drakopoulou Dodd et al (2014) and Smith et al (2013) studies concentrate only on qualitative researchers, and include a wide range of topics beyond research outcomes i.e. process, practice and antecedents. Gurău et al (2012) recognises the needs for research to provide reliable measurements of academic entrepreneurship performance.

The studies provide an interesting foundation for directly considering in detail the research contribution of entrepreneurship scholarship, suggesting novel areas of investigation, whilst highlighting a clear research gap.
This paper extends these recent studies, by exploring, challenging and deepening their initial findings, and by focusing specifically on professors’ perceptions and experiences of the contributions of entrepreneurship research. What value does entrepreneurship research create? What contribution does our scholarship make, who for, and in what ways? How is the value of this contribution recognised, assessed, measured, and rewarded (or not)? Given the effort that our community of practice expends on entrepreneurship research – the passion, commitment, time, and intellectual heavy-lifting – it seems strange that these questions have not been raised more clearly and frequently. This is particularly so in academic contexts increasingly shaped by external and internal research metrics determining the award of tenure, promotion, and funding. Our study aims to develop a grounded understanding of the value created by entrepreneurship research. It does so by analyzing what entrepreneurship professors have told us about their perceptions and experiences of research contribution. The unit of analysis here are full-time tenured Professors holding the title of Professor of Entrepreneurship or variants of (e.g. Small Business Management) working in the Entrepreneurship discipline in terms of their teaching activity, research and external project activity within a European University. Entrepreneurship professors were expected to work specifically within the Entrepreneurship discipline and not in the more generic business/management groupings. In so doing, we place the creators of entrepreneurship research at the centre of this problem, developing a scholar-driven framework of where our research value lies, and the processes by which it is achieved.

Ellson (2009) and Wilkins and Huisman (2015) describe the publication of academic papers in learned journals as the ultimate outcome of scholarship and acclamation of application contribution, knowledge and skill. Nevertheless, Erkut (2002) suggest that whilst some published research produces no measureable impact on its respective discipline, other work has a profound effect. How
might such impact be identified? Ellson (2009) posits that the evaluation of academic research remains debatable, subject to diverse, conflicting and contradictory patronage, and controversial in application. Furthermore, Wilkins and Huisman (2015) argue that institutional managers and governments have become obsessed with research quality even though there is minimal consensus on what constitutes quality research and how it is recognised (Nedeva et al., 2012). For example, Rao et al (2013) suggest that an important measure of research impact is number of citations that a scholarly work achieves from its peers (Ranatunga and Romano, 1997; Leimu and Koricheva, 2005; Coleman et al., 2012), a stance which is far from uncontroversial. Geuens (2011) claims that an objective of many researchers is to achieve citations and increased prestige. Such an objective requires novel, and original research ideas and results. Whilst important to the field and commendable, care should be taken that the results are also meaningful in a real world business context. Ellson (2009) suggests that research should focus on the needs of academic researchers, practitioners and students alike with the aim to provide solutions for contemporary business problems.

Following Drakopoulou Dodd et al (2014)’s analysis of qualitative entrepreneurship authorship, a Bourdieuvian theoretical lens is adopted. We focus on Bourdieu’s Four Forms of Capital namely economic, cultural, social and symbolic to examine the various types of value generated through entrepreneurship research. Bourdieu’s approach is particularly suitable, since his own work included detailed studies of French academia, illustrating that ‘just like any other field, academia is a struggle to establish and maintain the rules for legitimacy, membership, and hierarchy, and to determine the forms of capital which this game will value as its highest stakes’ (Drakopoulou Dodd et al, 2014, 1; Bourdieu, 1988:11). Pret et al (2015) review the deployment of this frame within the entrepreneurship literature, as well as carrying out a detailed analysis of capital creation and

1 For a detailed application of Bourdieu’s wider theory, including forms of capital, to entrepreneurship theory, and within the entrepreneurship literature, please Drakopoulou Dodd et al, 2014.
conversion by a sample of rural craft entrepreneurs. They remind us that economic capital, (which they found not to play a dominant role) includes all financial and tangible assets; that cultural capital incorporates long-lasting dispositions, skills and education, and cultural goods; that symbolic capital is expressed in recognition, awards, status and legitimation; and that social capital is enacted in and through networked relationships with others. The potential relevance of this frame for exploring the contribution of entrepreneurship research is thus considerable, since it permits us to simultaneously consider the intellectual fruits of research (objectified cultural capital), the engaged and interactive nature of research contributions (social capital), the financial rewards of contribution (economic capital), and the recognition which highly valued contributions achieve (symbolic capital).

Setting the Context

Before progressing to explore what entrepreneurship professors believe their research contribution to be, a brief overview of current debates from the wider context is required. Three key areas where discussion has been focused, within academia, but also in the wider public arena, are, the purpose of the university; its relevance for practitioners; and the increase in national measurement frameworks.

The University Role

The first debate relates to achieving the purpose and mission of universities, and the implications of this for academia. The purpose of a university is seen to be the production and dissemination of knowledge, and to achieve this end its employees undertake teaching, research and administration (Harley et al., 2004). Blaxter et al., (1998) note that the archetypal academic role comprises all three activities. However, Austin (2002) suggests the role of the academic is changing with the requirement to teach to specific learning outcomes, possess traditional subject matter expertise, use information technology effectively, and integrate and apply knowledge and solve open-ended problems. Consequently, academic careers are characterised by increased stress, pressure and
uncertainty (Rice et al., 2000). It is suggested that the academic must demonstrate a wider array of talents and higher productivity (Fairweather, 1996; Massy and Wilger, 1995) than their predecessors. Moreover, Weick (1970) notes an academic fulfills multiple roles including teaching, research and university service to the profession resulting in potential overload. Furthermore, Gurău, Dana and Lasch (2012) suggest entrepreneurship academics can undertake three forms of academic entrepreneurship namely founding an entrepreneurial firm, project managing an existing firm acting as a scientific advisor/consultant to the board of directors of one or several firms. The primacy of research is, however, as Browning et al., (2014) suggest problematic; academic staff who do not research are unlikely to develop fully as scholars, teachers and researchers (Orne, 1981; Weaver, 1982).

Forster (2007) concludes that business people perceive that academics are publishing for each other and their research articles are becoming irrelevant to business, industry, and public sector practitioners. Armstrong et al., (2001) suggest that observers have criticized business research for its slow scientific progress, a particular challenge in the evolving business environment. Furthermore, increased student expectations of the relevance of their business education have been identified (Ellson, 2009). Frank and Landström’s (2015) discussion of relevance and rigour, within entrepreneurship and management research arena, is a particularly thorough examination of this topic.

Assessing Research Quality

Furthermore, as Browning et al. (2014) recognise, there has been an increasing focus on the assessment of research and linking government funding allocations to research quality and output, within the environment of tightening financial constraints within higher education globally. This is evidenced by national frameworks designed to assess quality, including “Performance Based Research Fund Quality Evaluation” (New Zealand), “Excellence in Research for Australia”, the “Research Excellence Framework” (UK), “Research Assessment Exercise in Hong Kong”,

6
“Excellenzinitiative” (Germany), “Initiatives d’Excellence” (Idex, France), and “STAR METRICS” (USA). Such frameworks systematically rank journals, scholars, and academic institutions (Adler and Harzing, 2009). This increasing institutional pressure to publish in top ranked journals with high impact metrics, is a concern for all scholars (Ortinau, 2011; Smith et al., 2013). Harley et al (2004) suggests pressure is being put on individual academics to produce more output for funding purposes. This has led to the privileging of research and the drive towards publication in high profile, international journals taking precedence over other aspects of the academic role and the rewarding of high achieving individuals for its accomplishment. It is evident that PhD students and academics will be ‘unable to succeed in their jobs unless they are productive writers’ (Gardiner and Kearns, 2012, p. 237).

Harley et al., (2004) posit that such changes have positive and negative implications for academic careers. For high achievers there is the potential of encouragement, career progression, enhanced mobility and financial reward. From a negative perspective, the measurement of research activity performance gives the employing institution increased control over the academic career and its progression. At its most extreme, such measures have created insecurity of employment, loss of autonomy, career inhibitors, enhanced peer competition and increased the potential of role failure. So, from one perspective it can still be claimed that an academic career provides several unique benefits in terms of freedom and autonomy and an opportunity to contribute to research in an area of personal interest (Bailyn, 2003). Contrastingly, Adler and Harzing (2009) note that scholars who seek the reputational and financial rewards that results from a successful research career face significant pressure to comply with stringent rules.

Given this evolving context, and the dramatic increase in entrepreneurship scholarship, it is especially timely and significant to question “what value does entrepreneurship research create?”
The study explicitly focuses on the experiences and perceptions of senior entrepreneurship researchers, to elicit understanding of research value held by those responsible for its creation. We recognise that the views of other relevant stakeholders, such as policy makers, and practitioners, are also important. However, our aim in this study has been to implement a detailed analysis of the value which entrepreneurship professors believe they, and their community, achieve. To carry out a rounded exploration of this issue, it was necessary to consider also who value is created for, and how it is measured and recognised.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach within which entrepreneurship professors were asked to complete a research instrument to express their opinions on the value of their research and the extent to which their work contributes to knowledge and practice. Specifically, participants were asked to respond to six related questions, which were kept simple, broad and open, to encourage maximum flexibility in responses:

1. What is contribution?
2. Who measures contribution?
3. What measures contribution?
4. Identify personal motivations for undertaking academic research.
5. Does your work make a difference?
6. Do you make a contribution to knowledge? How do you know?

The sample was drawn from tenured entrepreneurship professors from Australia, Europe, New Zealand, the USA and UK. The authors decided to focus this study on established entrepreneurship research professors with an established track record of publication in the discipline as a benchmark.
study of expert respondents. The sample was identified through an internet search of Universities to identify established entrepreneurship professors. Each professor was emailed with a personalised message explaining the purpose of the research and a request to complete the questions enclosed within the communication. In total, 41 academic were contacted and 26 responding giving a response rate of 63%.

The data was analysed using NVivo software and organised by coding examples in which particular aspects of academic behaviour towards research contribution were explored. To analyse the data collected in a logical manner, a coding system was adopted to categorise the collected data (Jones and Jones, 2014). This involved a process of data reduction, display and conclusion drawing and verification based on the protocol proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Within this process, the data was sorted into groups relating to the research themes identified in the literature (Smith, 1991). This axial coding narrative text approach was adopted to enable an accurate description of the data as related to the issue of academic contribution within the entrepreneurship discipline (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This interpretation process involved multiple reviews by the authors to explicate and refine understanding (Baskerville and Pries-Heje, 2001).

Insert Table One here

Following similar critical inspiration experience by other scholars, (including Terjesen and Elam, 2009:1100; Dodd et al 2014) ‘during this process that it became apparent that our data could benefit from application of a conceptual framework’, namely Bourdieu’s theoretical frame (Pret et al, 2015). Our data was therefore re-categorised using this conceptual frame. In particular, Bourdieu’s capital theory provided us with a helpful lens through which to view this dataset, as we hope the subsequent findings illustrate. Preliminary findings from the study were shared with colleagues at a
major international conference, so as to provide reflexivity, by discussing and challenging the findings with a diverse group of entrepreneurship professors. Analysis, findings, and theoretical framing were re-visited and refined following this practitioner interaction, and further discussion amongst the authors.

Findings

Overview

When we applied Bourdieu’s Forms of Capital as an analytic frame, patterns in the nature of entrepreneurship professors’ cultural, social and symbolic capitals emerged. Minimal reference was made to economic capital, indicating that research contributions are not typically valued by measurements of their financial impact, whether upon the individual researcher, or other stakeholders. The processes by which these capitals are created, maintained, extended, combined and converted provide novel insights into how entrepreneurship professors perceive their research and careers. In summary, entrepreneurship professors engage in the creation of knowledge for a variety of personal and community-of-practice reasons (cultural capital), which they share, in several ways, through interactions with four main groups of stakeholders (social capital). Recognition of the value of these interactions, and the cultural capital shared through them, is manifested in several forms by each stakeholder group (symbolic capital). The frame itself makes intuitive sense, and exhibits strong face validity. The benefit of the frame is as an analytic vehicle for exploring and reflecting on the nature of these capital forms, and the processes which link them; their relative significance to entrepreneurship professors; their potential use as contribution measures, and the positive and negative attributions ascribed to them.

At the centre of the frame are personal drivers for creation of cultural capital, the set of knowledge, skills, experiences and dispositions adopted by entrepreneurship professors, and the practices by
which these are developed. Four personal and intrinsic processes motivating respondents to engage in the generation of entrepreneurship cultural capital emerged: intellectual curiosity, inherent enjoyment, a desire to influence thought, and, less positively, professional pressure. However, the majority of responses could be classified as processes which involved the transfer, sharing, evolution, or communication of this cultural capital with others. These others grouped into four clear “sets” of social capital relationships; the wider academic community; students; entrepreneurs/practitioners; and policy makers. In many cases, interactions were direct, and personal, through the enactment of social capital ties from all four sets, in written or verbal conversations. In other cases – most especially in the policy sphere – these were equally likely to be enacted through less direct means, including media coverage and debate. Some of these interactions were enacted with relational ties from all four social capitals sets, such as receiving responses from those who had read specific research outputs, including conversations and debates. In other cases, the process of “making a contribution” was audience-specific. Sharing research through the practice of teaching was an interaction shared with students, specifically, for example. Recognition and legitimation arising from these interactions varied across the four different social capital groups, although for all, the over-arching theme of using cultural capital was key. Below, we present and explore each of these three forms of capital, and their significance in the life of entrepreneurship professors, before drawing conclusions as to what novel cultural capital this research and writing process has developed, what our own contribution with this study might be.

**Personal Drivers of Cultural Capital Creation**

At the heart of the creation of academic cultural capital, and in line with the suggestions from earlier studies, we identified four main clusters of more personal, internal drivers; intellectual curiosity; inherent enjoyment; professional pressures; and the desire to influence thought (see Figure One).
Firstly, participants depicted a cluster of rationales for writing around their inherent “curiosity about things”, their “personal intellectual development” and their desire to “make sense of the world around me”. Here, what is striking is the role that writing plays in working through their own sense-making: “I simply like to sit down and mull about what’s the most intriguing result to put into writing”. The discipline of writing “forces close examination of ideas and attention to logical inconsistencies and textual ambiguities”. As is discussed below, more often this sense-making, curiosity, and intellectual puzzling is experienced as a research community activity, as something engaged in together, as an on-going, evolutionary enactment of co-creation. Yet there is also a personal, private, solitary side to this aspect of writing, as professors write-and-think for themselves, by themselves: “to me writing is an extension of my thinking – if I do not write it down it becomes fleeting and ephemeral” since “until I write things down, I can’t be sure what I think”.

Insert Figure One about here

Secondly, the intrinsic satisfaction of writing emerged as a significant driver of research, with respondents describing the “joy in writing”, the “fun”, the “passion”, to the point that writing can even be experienced as being “like an obsession”. Professors told us that they write because they “want to”, because they “enjoy ideas and … enjoy the process of putting thoughts, research and data together into a story”, and because writing leads to a “great deal of personal and professional satisfaction”. Even within these powerful assertions of fulfilment and pleasure, however, there were indications of the other tensions than can act as barriers to such delights: “the very act of writing is itself therapeutic, but only when time permits and ideas deep back in my mind have opportunity to surface”. This demarcation of joyful, essential writing from other professional obligations was also indicated in relation to engagement with publishing: “I think there is a difference between writing and publishing the writings. For me to write is to exist (as a researcher)”. 

12
The third intrinsic, personal driver to write continues this theme of professional pressures. Evident within the dataset was the pressure to write because “in truth... it is expected of me”, because “it is now a requirement of the job”; a “part of the job... (since) there is an expectation of output which can only be achieved through writing”. Thus, “people are forced to write because of the industry they are in”, and due to their “employment contract”. Several respondents linked enhanced writing expectations to “the reduced status of teaching”. This sense of unwelcome compulsion contrasts with the exuberance of the personal joys associated with writing, with professors noting both drivers as important stimuli for writing. This multi-faceted, ambivalent, paradoxical and conflicted nature of writing, of making a contribution, emerged at a several other points in our analysis, and appears to be one of the hallmarks of the research process.

Linking cultural and social capital emerged as a motivator at the personal level, too, which is unsurprising given its importance in the remainder of our analysis, and, perhaps, the focus of our study. The desire to influence the thinking of others through research was distinct, with writing offering, for example, “just one opportunity or platform on which to promote my ideas/practice in order to gain access to places where I want to exert some form of influence”. Such influence was expressed as a will to “change ways of thinking”, so that “the ultimate motivator is that one’s research influences how others (scholars, educator, practitioners, public policy professionals) think about entrepreneurship”. The fourth personal driver for engaging with the writing process, then, was outward looking, and encompasses the urge to shape others’ thinking and practice. Who these others are, and the nature of writers’ interactions with them, represent the major themes shared with us by the study’s participants.
Beyond these personal drivers for writing, significant weight was placed on the cultural and social capital interface. Furthermore, it is through these interactions of professors and their writing with significant others, that symbolic capital – legitimation and recognition – is achieved. Study participants depicted four main groups of stakeholders in their writing and research work (or, to use Bourdieusian terms, four main social capital sets); entrepreneurs/practitioners; students; policy makers; and other academics. The inherent complexity and diversity of the audience for entrepreneurship research, then, emerges strongly from the dataset. This is so pronounced that it has formed the main theming frame for our analysis of the remainder of these findings, as the subsequent sections illustrate. However, the nature of this audience diversity and complexity is a significant theme in its own right, as an over-arching element in the shaping and evaluation of research contribution. The multiple audiences for our writing are perceived, as we have seen, to include academics, and our leadership, as well as practitioners, policy-makers, and students. Moreover, multiple levels of audiences are identified including, “personal, team, department, faculty, university as well as local, regional, national and international”:

“This to me contribution is a multi-layered activity. It exists at personal, institutional and disciplinary levels. I want my work to make a contribution to topic and subject knowledge. It has to be useful to someone (other academics primarily) but also contribute at a theoretical, methodological, conceptual and/or practical level. Being of use to practitioners is very important to me.”

Building on this audience complexity, many respondents note a multi-faceted imperative placed on entrepreneurship research writing. For many respondents, this demands that all writing make both a theoretical contribution, and impact upon practice in some meaningful way, since whilst “theory may or may not contribute to immediate practical knowledge that supports solving a specific
problem here and now ... it should contribute to a wider understanding of the activities studied and contextual influences impinging upon them”. Whilst commonalities, overlaps and movement between these four sets of social capital groups are evident, there remains adequate differentiation between them to merit separate analysis, as entrepreneurship professors strive to create and share practitioner knowledge, to impact public discourse and debate within the policy sphere, to impact student knowledge through writing and teaching interactions, and to contribute to the academic environment through critical conversations, recognising the controversies around contribution metrics.

Creating and Sharing Practitioner Useful Knowledge

Many of our respondents explicitly stated that they perceive contribution to be, in part, the creation and sharing of useful knowledge with practitioner entrepreneurs. Although this means research findings “are filtered through the prism of their particular agendas”, nonetheless as a community we value the practical relevance of our writing for entrepreneurs. The transmission of this cultural capital to the practice world takes several forms, including roundtables, writing for professional media, training programmes for entrepreneurs, and “contributing to stakeholder debates”. These interactions with entrepreneurs take the vehicle of novel cultural capital – new academic knowledge –, enacting the social capital that connects and bridges the worlds of theory and praxis. The rich social capital inherent in these interactions can be expressed in a series of research interactions, underpinned by trust: “entrepreneurs keep on trusting me by facilitating my gathering of data and by participating in roundtables or conferences that I organize with their collaboration; this trust allows me to think that my works contribute to a useful knowledge (the most important thing for me)”.

15
Although minimal attention was made of Symbolic Capital being developed through such research interactions with practitioners, it was noted for many other diverse social capital sets to be viewed as a legitimate entrepreneurship scholar, research contributions are required. One respondent noted that the micro-business community had also supported their work by recognising it explicitly during consultations with senior policy makers. Thus, in spite of the stated importance of research contributions being useful for entrepreneurs, it appears that few of us have experience of this being translated into formal, measured institutional approval.

Insert Table two here

Insert Table three here

Impacting Students: Writing and Teaching Interactions

Students comprise an important social capital set for whom entrepreneurship professors write, and with whom they interact both to share their writing, and to enhance its contribution. In terms of the content of writing, theory, practical contributions, “case studies (derived from ... academic research”, and entrepreneurship education research offer opportunities for linking writing and teaching. There are a variety of processes through which this takes place, according to our participants. Writing, by maintaining and extending the professor’s own expertise, leads to stronger classroom performance, and to students who appear “to be happy to attend my lectures”: “I also learn when I write in my subject area and this informs my teaching and hopefully inspires my students; at least they tell me they’re inspired!” Equally, fellow academics may take our writing into their classroom: “my best praise comes via emails from readers/followers who express that a particular paper almost spoke to them and that they use it in their teaching”.

16
Conceptual research deepens and extends students’ theoretical analysis of entrepreneurship, this being especially relevant for teaching and training of graduate students. Similarly, research with practical implications informs teaching by enhancing the ways in which students are prepared for entrepreneurship, for example by making them “aware of the challenges they face”. The distinction between these two types of students is relevant, as are the heuristics used for considering the impact of contribution made: “in the long run I know I have contributed to my doctoral students being able to think and my MBAs in starting and sustaining ventures”. Engaging with students through our writing is an important vehicle through which entrepreneurship professors can help develop these relational others, so that they successfully evolve into members of the practitioner social capital set, (by becoming strong entrepreneurs) or the academic stakeholder group. By deploying cultural capital (their writing) within student interactions, Professors facilitate the movement of other “players” around the categories of social capital sets we have identified. Thus, to some degree, entrance to membership of the practitioner/entrepreneur, and the academic, social capital sets is itself shaped by interactions around and through the writing of entrepreneurship professors. Our own cultural capital forms the content of interactions with others, and these social capital inter-relationships enhance outcomes, satisfaction, and impact for all parties to the relationships. This process continues through writing with early career researchers, who can be broadly understood as “students”, again linking writing and teaching: “I also write / co-author to train my younger researchers in writing academically”.

When considering the recognition and legitimation of deploying writing successfully through student interactions, the dataset provided us with stimulating, examples of the generation of symbolic capital. Being invited to share entrepreneurship education expertise with other institutions is identified as a sign of recognised contribution in this area, as is the adoption of course models by other universities. This institutionalisation of one’s writing into the wider field of entrepreneurship education is seen in “the extent to which your work is integrated in some derivative way into leading textbooks or instructional materials that reflect how aspects of entrepreneurship are explained and
taught”. Additionally, symbolic capital and personal satisfaction, are achieved when “a student launches a firm, or sells the firm they started in my classes and made money”.

**The Public and Policy Sphere: Impacting Public Discourse and Debate**

A core theme to emerge from the dataset with relation to the policy and support sectors was the contribution to national discourse, through policy and media debates, and as “the knowledge gained from the writing percolates into society”. This contribution was experienced through media coverage, inclusion in policy reports, as well as via personal feedback, public acknowledgements, and the opportunity to present work to policy makers, since “contribution to knowledge occurs when the peer reviewed article gets picked up the public media and a wider discussion takes place”. Whereas with teaching interactions, direct personal contact with known others was the main medium through which the contribution of writing was enacted, here the emphasis is on more public and indirect modes of communication. Thus, making a difference in the policy sphere may be achieved through research writing which would not be highly valued using more formal academic metrics:

“My piece of work that has made the biggest difference was published as a research note in a domestic journal. It spawned comment, criticism, debate, linkages, had policy impact and made a difference to national debate”.

However, a note of caution was sounded by the scholar who noted that “policy-makers...have their own objectives which means research findings are filtered through the prism of their particular
agendas”. Furthermore, “being asked to contribute to policy making has as much to do with communication skills as academic content”. Such points highlight the significance of on-going interactions with others, as writers’ cultural capital – their new knowledge – is communicated to others, debated, and re-shaped to meet their needs. Cultural capital, in the process of making an impactful contribution, is always being evolved and co-created by other stakeholders within the framework of their social capital set. Warnings were sounded about the dangers of writing too closely to the agenda of powerful stakeholders, where “demonstrating ‘impact’ might involve supporting organisations and practices constitutive of the status quo, rather than being critical of them”. Here, we see that co-creation of knowledge can work reflexively also, with academic writing being shaped by the perceived demands of others, even when “whether such orientations necessarily give rise to the ‘best explanation’ is a moot point”.

An important vehicle for achieving such contributions was seen to be the introduction of novel, poorly understood or under-recognised knowledge to the policy sector achieving impact through “the recognition of a new principle or fact previously not considered or fully understood”. The creation and sharing of novel knowledge is also a major theme when participants consider their impact upon the academic community, as we shall illustrate.

Turning to symbolic capital, the recognition of contribution in the public and policy arenas was associated with the writer, and their writings, being employed to shape policy at the highest levels possible, within government and socio-economic development agencies. Participants variously reported, for example, an “award from business mentors in the House of Lords”; “having the UN’s Chief of Entrepreneurship as a research student”, “being invited to lead new proposals from the OECD”, and having presented their “research to four Prime Ministers in the UK”.
In addition to highlighting potential significance of entrepreneurship writing to the policy and public sphere, these findings raise issues relating to the co-creation of knowledge, and suggest a set of contribution metrics specific to this arena. These are both topics considered in our discussion of the study’s findings.

**Insert Table six here**

**Insert Table seven here**

*Contributing to the Academic Environment: Critical Conversations and Controversial Metrics*

Within the scholarly academic environment, impact and contributions are sought at “various levels: personal, team, department, faculty, university as well as local, regional, national and international”.

Much of this academic social capital set comprises those interested and engaged with the subject of entrepreneurship, where contributions interactions tend towards a variety of conversations. However, other important social capital can be developed, through our research contributions, with those whose interest in the content of entrepreneurship scholarship is of secondary interest to its achieved impact. For example, institutional managers, “read” impact and contribution signals as indicating our standing as individual scholars, as entrepreneurship departments/centres, and as a field of enquiry. Some of the contribution indicators discussed by our respondents – citations and journal rankings, for example – are valued as forms of symbolic capital both within and beyond the actual field of entrepreneurship scholarship. Other forms of cultural and social capital developed within the academic community via entrepreneurship research are inherently content-focused, and hence largely field-specific, such as generating and sharing novel knowledge, or engaging in research debate.
Being noticed, and read, is the first and most basic process of one’s cultural capital becoming the currency of social capital development within academia. Engaging the attention of others is perceived to be a valuable contribution, and this interaction of others with one’s research writing is converted into social capital through conversations where writers are told (via email, at conferences, etc) that their work has been read and valued. However, this is increasingly complicated “as we sink into ever deeper silos and lack the objectivity required by those with broader, perhaps interdisciplinary approaches”, so that “those who think narrow look for detailed analysis, whilst those who think wider look for perceived relevance and connectivity”.

Beyond this simple acknowledgement of readership, many of our respondents’ contribution to knowledge was seen to emerge through debate around their writing, by influencing others, by seeing their work utilised by others, and thus contributing to the “wider research community”. The developmental nature of the shared research conversation was emphasized, so that writing makes a contribution even though – or, indeed, because, it is “not something specifically correct as it were, but more of a prototype that is part way through its evolution that is ‘beta tested’ by peers”. Our ideas and research - our cultural capital – grows further and develops through challenges, conversations, and critique from others. Indeed, it is clear that acceptance of their writing is not per se what our participants seek, but being “able to put up knowledge to be challenged”. Through these processes, it is not only professors cultural capital which builds their social capital relationships, through scholarly interaction, but also the converse: social capital relationships build, develop and co-create professors’ cultural capital too. Indeed, this is highlighted to such a degree that it could be argued that cultural capital, in the process of making a contribution, becomes a co-created and co-owned community resource, through the shared evolution of its use and meaning.
A cognate social-to-cultural capital conversion phenomenon can be observed in the dataset responses, where participants state that their “practice involves creating a) *conceptual frameworks* and/or b) acting as a *meta-data analyst* to support the development of others”, and setting “boundaries for others who want to do research into similar topics”. Related supportive activities include making resources (e.g. time, money and contacts) available to empower writing of colleagues, since “time and space to think is a gift to be able to give someone”, and, similarly, “acting to make a (tacit) contribution to support colleagues in the entrepreneurship research community (e.g. coach or mentor)”. Overall, there is a very sense “we tend to agree that contribution is a ‘team level’ activity”.

*Insert Table nine here*

It was apparent from the dataset that writers, drawing on conceptual understandings of innovation, recognise the substantive value and contribution made by *both* incrementally novel cultural capital, *and* the radically novel. Adding to the entrepreneurship knowledge base, building our shared pool of cultural capital, is valued in its own right; deepening, “refining”, enriching, filling gaps through “incremental” research are perceived to be valuable ways of making a difference. Participants told us that “an intellectual contribution must ... enrich the theoretical knowledge”, and that they write “because of a belief that there are gaps in our understanding that are critical, and that I may be able to make a contribution”.

As with the policy sphere, radical novelty is perceived to be an important form of contribution that our writing can make within the academic community. Novelty is variously understood as the creation of “something which adds a new perspective to old questions, something which suggests new solutions, something which bridges different perspectives”; as “adding something new ... looking at a question in a different way, applying a new theoretical lens to a question, using a
different method or gathering data from a different place”. A special value ascribed to the sharing of cultural capital that challenges the status quo, “which questions what we have taken for granted, which pushes boundaries”. Such a contribution, however, through “ideas that really turn the discussions to new directions”, cannot be seen “when they happen but they need years or even decades to mature”.

Insert Table ten about here

Considering the creation of symbolic capital within the academic community, it is evident that success in scholarly writing is a crucial process to enhance “personal reputation – recognition by others that I am doing interesting, useful or high-quality work”, since “publication in a journal, and its perceived value for the group, is also a measure of value”. There is an element of mutuality, and community, evident in these forms of symbolic capital, which is interlinked with the social capital network of scholars: “amongst a group of UK small business scholars it seems that I am well regarded, in the same way that I hold others in this group in high regard”. It is not de facto necessary to achieve star professor status, based on conventional metrics, to be well regarded within the field. An evocative metaphor compared this more rounded peer approval to “the sort of informal accolade that attaches itself to certain types of sportsmen and women the players’ player, someone that isn’t perhaps a star player, but that is nevertheless highly regarded because of their perceived integrity, way of playing or some other attribute that singles them out”.

Though the legitimation and recognition accruing to scholarly writing is not regarded as the award of individual symbolic capital, but adds to the prestige of writers’ departments, research centres, and universities, as well as to the entrepreneurship field collectively. For example, scholars explained that they “write because I think it helps support the legitimacy of entrepreneurship as a unique discipline deserving of scholarly attention”, and because “it helps build the image and reputation of
the institution with which I am affiliated at the time, and raises the legitimacy of entrepreneurship within that institution”. Once more, we perceive the collective, communitarian nature of much capital (whether cultural, social or symbolic) generated and converted through scholarly writing about entrepreneurship.

A considerable number of our participants debated the role of elite journals, their readers and editors, in the measurement and validation of writing contribution. Here, we see the interweaving of social, symbolic and cultural capital, as research writing (cultural capital) is awarded community status (symbolic capital) through media which “belong” to a specific group of people, the interactions of whom (enactment of social capital) shape the impact of scholarship substantially. The positive aspects of this respected peer-based system were celebrated, and there is clear recognition of the importance of “the quality of the journal in which the contribution is published”.

Nevertheless, a level of ambivalence was evident as to the double-edged swords which all established, institutionalised measures of success, including publishing in elite journals, represent. For example, the correlation between journal standing and article impact is neither automatic nor obvious, since “overall I think the journal rankings correlate with the quality of the articles published, I think it would be misleading to think that the articles in the ‘better’ journals automatically make a more substantial contribution than the articles in the other journals”. Doubts were raised about the effects of concentrating influence in the hands of “those that hold institutional power within groups through journal editorships”. For example, comments were made as to the potential conformity this desire to win recognition from the elite might engender, since “by potency I want my papers to conform to whatever qualitative genre/area I am writing in. I care deeply about how my writing is perceived”. Again, there is a both a positive and negative connotation to this conformity, which is seen here to lead to more potent writing. Other participants expressed concerns as to the downside
of top journal-focused conformity, arguing that “authors may be tempted to follow suit, copying approaches and analyses they perceive to be popular in high-ranked journals in order to get published. ... there is a lot of bandwagon jumping, where authors adopt concepts introduced by others, in order to obtain favourable responses from editors/reviewers”.

Other anxieties included the size of this elite audience of elite journal readers may be a “small constituency” so that “the chance to ‘make a difference’ may be limited”. This potential for limiting impact through a focus on journal impact factor is linked to the fact that “of our 100 plus journals, most have a low impact factor or only impact a small slice of the discipline”. Indeed, one author, whilst acknowledging ranking and rating systems, noted that their most impactful piece of work “was published as a research note in a domestic journal”. Here, again, we see the trade-off between measurement, assessment, and legitimation of differing forms of contribution, and the conversion of cultural capital into diverse, and perhaps mutually exclusive, forms of symbolic capital.

“There is also a risk in letting contribution be defined by a narrow group of editors/reviewers who advise on/accept submissions to elite-ranked journals. This might encourage conservatism in what editors choose to publish and in what authors choose to submit. Journal editors facing commercial as well as intellectual pressures might lean towards accepting papers that perpetuate, rather than challenge, existing lines of thinking, to avoid dropping down the journal hierarchy.”

In line with Bourdieu’s view of the agonic nature of specific fields, and the dominance of elites, contribution was seen to be “knowledge that is regarded by elites of particular groups as rigorous or interesting or novel for some reason... it is a group and these compete against each other for primacy for the rights to represent certain subject or topic domains”. Similarly, “if we are honest, writing/publishing is a kind of competition”. These competitive understandings of the nature of academic writing, and its contribution, whilst a minority theme, are nevertheless an indication of the
complex nature of the phenomenon, which is both competitive and collaborative, individual and communitarian, creative and conformative.

Insert table eleven about here

It is, however, when we consider the related themes of citations, and the UK’s Research Excellence Framework (REF) that the greatest ambivalence is demonstrated as to how our cultural capital is converted into institutionalised symbolic capital. Citation indices, in particular, are highlighted by participants as key measures of recognition and legitimation, yet their perceived shortfalls are lamented, so that “citations are one of the simplest forms of measuring contribution but they can also be misleading”. Participants tell us that they know they make a difference because they have “respectable Citation Indexes, including Google Scholar”, and that their work is “cited significantly by academics, researchers, student, practitioner and policy makers in the UK and abroad”. This support may be due to the perception that while “citation statistics are over-blown, they are a proxy measure for impact over time”, as well as the transparency of this symbolic capital measure.

Scepticism about over-reliance on citation indices is based on several factors, participants noting, inter alia, that such an approach does not allow for the recognition of the applied impact of research, and researchers: “I think the use of citations as a guide is inherently flawed, not least because those who adopt it may well be working in ‘hands on’ situations”. Additionally, the pursuit of citations, and similar formal success, may lead academics “in a resource-constrained, and competitive, funding environment … to devote increasing effort to publicising marginal differences in imperfect indicators rather than taking action to improve the real quality of their research”. Similarly, an anxiety was expressed that “authors often write papers intended to attract citations but which offer limited novel insight”. There was a pronounced anxiety about “gaming” of the system.
which may be facilitated, if not actively encouraged, by an over-reliance on citation indices, and other ranking measures of contribution:

“Obviously, important prior work should be referenced when presenting an argument but authors commonly cite work in order to convince editors/reviewers that their study is of similar quality to works widely regarded as exemplary, even though such work may be tangential to the author’s specific arguments. Editorial ‘advice’ to authors to cite supposedly related work from the same journal – but, more cynically, to increase journal impact factors – also encourages gaming. Authors keen to get published no doubt accept editors’ advice.”

The UK’s REF, which allocates government research funding to universities and departments largely on the basis of perceived publication quality, comes in for related critiques, which argue that “by assessing academic work in a particular way” REF “is arguably having all kinds of unwanted side effects, which may undermine research quality”.

Insert table twelve here

Conclusions

Our analysis illustrates that entrepreneurship scholars identify four personal drivers that stimulate them to write, produce cultural capital. These comprise intellectual curiosity, inherent enjoyment, a desire to influence thought, and, less positively, professional pressure. This study contributes new
understanding towards a limited literature in the entrepreneurship discipline. Looking beyond the individual, to the embeddedness of entrepreneurship writers within a social capital nexus, the data presented evidence of four main groups of stakeholders with whom this cultural capital is shared, and with whom a variety of contributions are sought, measured and recognised: the wider academic community; students; entrepreneurs/practitioners; and policy makers. Research relevance is a much discussed topic, and our study demonstrates that within entrepreneurship these four specific groups are seen to form the social capital nexus wherein such relevance is co-created. The interactive nature of the generation of relevant contributions was highlighted in our findings, such that cultural capital (objectified in research output) appears to be converted into symbolic capital (highly valued contributions) through the processes of social capital interactions. Although we found similarities in some of the processes of cultural capital exchange, co-creation, and evaluation across groups (direct interaction to converse and debate useful knowledge, for example), we identified some group-specific practices, summarised and reflected upon below.

Creating and communicating knowledge which is useful to entrepreneurs, which informs practice, was highlighted as being of crucial importance for our participants. However, there was minimal evidence of such contributions being measured, legitimated and rewarded by the wider stakeholder community, beyond feedback from specific entrepreneurs. We suggest that research policy in this area - within and beyond universities - consider the need for metrics and celebrations of such contributions. An emphasis upon Impact Case Studies within the Research Excellence Framework is an indication of policy movement in this direction within the UK, although this was not remarked upon by participants.

Writing was also perceived to make an impact upon teaching interactions with students, both by shaping and enhancing their entrepreneurial practices, and by providing conceptual developments
to strengthen the understanding of students. Here, the impact of writing could be perceived in the movement of students from this status, to another stakeholder group, as they develop into entrepreneurs, or academics. Helping to move other individuals from one social capital set to another, enhancing these movements, and shaping the field’s membership may thus be an additional valuable contribution made through entrepreneurial research writing. Again, it is through the social capital of on-going relationships with students and graduates that this form of high-value contribution should be experienced.

Within the public and policy sphere, impactful contributions were associated with one’s writing informing public debate, within the media, but also within the workings of government and its support services, through reports, committee work, and advising. Symbolic capital accrued from the level and extensiveness of debate generated, and from the seniority of politicians drawing upon scholarly writing. The dangers of an over-eagerness to please stakeholders within this sphere was regarded as a threat to the quality, innovation and independence of academic writing, however.

Much of our dataset focused upon contributions to the academic environment, a complex and multi-layered social capital nexus, comprising team, department, institution, and our discipline at local, regional, national and global levels. Cultural capital is only converted into social and symbolic capital within this environment if writing is first noticed and read. However, interacting in the critical research conversation, through both novel and more incremental contributions, was especially valued. Citation metrics, journal rankings and governmental research reviews were perceived as double edged swords. It may be the case that, these measures also have the potential to concentrate power in the hands of an elite, perhaps undermining novelty, and of encouraging gaming, so that scholars are motivated to pursue success in the measure, rather than quality in writing.
Our analysis illustrates that much of the motivation, the contribution, and the perception of success which professors ascribe to their writing and publishing is inherently embedded in, and manifested through, interrelations with others. More formally expressed, the evolution and legitimation of cultural capital, as it becomes converted into symbolic capital, is largely interwoven with the development and enactment of social capital.

In terms of limitations the authors recognise that this study represents an initial snapshot of a limited sample of entrepreneurship professors. The generalisability of the results must therefore be treated with caution. We recognise that our sample is UK centric. The authors recognise the need for further research in this area. In the present article we set out what we have learnt from this first stage of our study. This represents the “what”, “with whom”, and “why” of entrepreneurship research contribution. As such, it illustrates a useful, informative and timely picture of our field. The second stage of the study will entail a large-scale, international, quantitative survey to assess patterns of universalizability around the frame presented here, and to identify contextual and personal drivers that shape the patterns found thus far. We anticipate that the study’s second survey phase will add further evidence to our understanding of what contributions matter to different types of entrepreneurship researchers (in terms of age, gender, experience, research experience etc), in diverse contexts. The study has identified a range of informal metrics of entrepreneurship research contribution, and we hope that these will form the basis of further research and debate around institutional research assessment, especially given the reservations expressed by our participants as to the dangers of over-reliance on citations indices and journal rankings.
References


Coleman, J., Boloumie, Y. and Frankel, R. (2012) Benchmarking individual publicat


TABLES AND FIGURES

Table One: Sample Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Total Word Count per Country for all Respondents</th>
<th>Average Word Count per Country by Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10115</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16250</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure One: Personal Drivers of Cultural Capital Creation

Table Two

Creating and Sharing Practitioner Useful Knowledge – Illustrative Data

| I just want to bring some specific ... solutions / recommendations to managers |
| By its impact on the professional environment/business world (for example, the opportunity to present the results of a research during a roundtable with the participation of some entrepreneurs or the opportunity to publish a short article in a professional journal). |
| An intellectual contribution ... and more particularly in the domain of entrepreneurship, has to be directly useful to the entrepreneur/manager in a SME/intrapreneur. |
| Informal feedback from people who actually used the knowledge is far more enriching than other methods of measurements. |
### Table Three

**Creating and Sharing Practitioner Useful Knowledge – in Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Capital in Process</th>
<th>Symbolic Capital “ Measures”</th>
<th>Risks, Dangers &amp; Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roundtables, conferences, and training programmes for entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Contribution is measured and celebrated via feedback from specific entrepreneurs, and their organizations, through personal interaction, emails, and ongoing participation in research studies</td>
<td>There is little evidence of such contributions being otherwise measured, legitimated and rewarded by the wider stakeholder community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing for professional media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to stakeholder debates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table Four

**Writing and Teaching Interactions – Illustrative Data**

“Used much of the outcomes of my research in the content and teaching methods we use”

“I find that the research behind my writing, especially when it is conceptual work, informs my teaching.”

“I try to push at the boundaries of current research and then to present this to for example student cohorts as some new thinking”

“I value guest speaking slots and the like. For example at XXXXX tomorrow I will be proposing new ‘in curriculum’ developments”

### Table Five

**Writing and Teaching Interactions – in Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Capital in Process</th>
<th>Symbolic Capital &quot;Measures&quot;</th>
<th>Risks and Dangers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual research deepens and extends students’ theoretical analysis of entrepreneurship - especially relevant for the teaching and training of graduate students</td>
<td>The successful movement of students to another stakeholder group, as they develop into entrepreneurs, or fellow academics.</td>
<td>None mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing maintains and extends the professors’s own expertise, leading to stronger classroom performance</td>
<td>Satisfied, engaged and motivated students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research with practical implications enhances the ways in which students are prepared for entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Use of research findings by other teachers, and in textbooks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table Six

**Impacting Public Discourse and Debate – Illustrative Data**

“my work makes a difference. It has been used in national debates, ... it has encouraged people to debate.”

“I think that contribution to knowledge occurs when the peer reviewed article gets picked up the public media and a wider discussion takes place.”

“I am aware of my research being sited in reports to US presidents and Australian/New Zealand prime Ministers as well as Scottish First Ministers”

“If impact depends on securing the commitment (or at least tolerance) of powerful social actors & funders to research-generated knowledge, then one might anticipate that academics will act in ways to ensure their findings are acceptable to such actors. ... Speaking truth to power might be inversely proportional to achieving impact.”

Table Seven

**Impacting Public Discourse and Debate – in Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Capital in Process</th>
<th>Symbolic Capital “Measures”</th>
<th>Risks and Dangers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informing public debate, within and through the media</td>
<td>The level and extensiveness of debate generated</td>
<td>The dangers of an over-eagerness to please stakeholders within this sphere was seen as a clear threat to the quality, innovation and independence of academic writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the workings of government and its support services, via reports, committee work, and advising</td>
<td>The seniority of politicians drawing upon scholarly writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Eight

**Being noticed and read – Illustrative Data**

I love it when folks tell me they have read everything I have written

I often get praise from other academics at conferences who say my papers are readable and make a contribution.

I am not sure individuals care that much about contribution to knowledge till the work actually gets looked at by others.

Table Nine

**Interacting in the critical research conversation – Illustrative Data**

the extent to which my published work is incorporated with the work of others and is reproduced to inform critical arguments and insights

For me, a contribution is more a qualitative measure – of being able (or not) to influence or inspire peers and their work.

I appreciate review and informed friendly critique that makes you revisit and rethink
“Conceptual innovation & persuading readers that what I have to say offers new insight into important issues is perhaps the most challenging and satisfying aspect of academic writing for me.”

“To me a contribution is simply adding to existing knowledge base or understanding. Similarly to innovations, there are probably different sub-types of contributions (e.g. radical, incremental contributions), and most of our work deals with incremental contributions. The radical contributions deal with asking totally new questions/probing “adding something new ... looking at a question in a different way, applying a new theoretical lens to a question, using a different method or gathering data from a different place”

Table Eleven
Symbolic Capital, Top Journal Publication, the REF and Citations – Illustrative Data

“Journal publications tell us something about research quality & contribution as editors/reviewers wouldn’t publish (or recommend publication) if they felt submitted papers were not offering something of value to their readerships.”

“While overall I think the journal rankings correlate with the quality of the articles published, I think it would be misleading to think that the articles in the “better” journals automatically make a more substantial contribution than the articles in the other journals.”

“The so-called top four journals, especially in my area are probably read by a relatively few folk”

“The level of real scholarship in the field has been corrupted by the wonderful tool of Google Scholar”

“Contribution is mostly measured in terms of citations and informal feedback and rarely in specific value of the contribution in real life. Informal feedback from people who actually used the knowledge is far more enriching than other methods of measurements.”

“What I realise now (in hindsight) is the recent REF exercise has worked against my practice in terms of knowledge impact.”
The academic “impact” environment is a complex and multi-layered social capital nexus, comprising team, department, institution, and entrepreneurship academia at local, regional, national and global levels.

### Table Twelve

#### Contributing to the Academic Environment – in Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Capital in Process</th>
<th>Symbolic Capital “Measures”</th>
<th>Risks and Dangers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing must first be noticed and read</td>
<td>Citation metrics, journal rankings and governmental research reviews recognise and reward strong research contributions</td>
<td>These measures also have the potential to concentrate power in the hands of an elite, perhaps undermining novelty, and encouraging gaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting in the critical research conversation, and being challenged</td>
<td>Informal reputation amongst peers, and within the field</td>
<td>It can take years for real impact to be achieved and recognised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching and extending the existing knowledge base through incremental novelty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating radical novelty and challenging the status quo</td>
<td>Heightened respect for entrepreneurship scholarship, and departments, within wider academia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>