

6 Trends over Management Theory: Decolonization, Sinification, Empowerment/ Precarization, Degendering, Transdisciplinarity, and Environmental/Natural Challenges

Ulaş Başar Gezgin¹

Abstract

What would be the future of management theory? To answer this question, we explain 3 factors behind the heterogeneity of management theory from a sociology of science perspective. Then we present and discuss 6 trends that are expected to be influential over management theory in our future estimation. These are: Decolonization; Sinification; empowerment and precarization; feminization, degendering and egalitarianism; transdisciplinarity; and environmental and natural challenges and issues (including global warming, increasing number of disasters, peak oil, energy crisis, renewable energy, sustainability, green management etc.). We make the distinction between risk-averse mainstream core academia and risk-accepting critical peripheral academia. These 6 trends we claim are already gaining power in the periphery, and it is highly like that they would be parts of the mainstream science in 50-100 years. Firstly, although the old-fashioned colonialism is over, decolonization of management theory is under progress. Secondly, the rise of China and Chinese scholars will bring the wave of Sinification. Thirdly, the industrial relations oscillate between empowerment and precarization. Fourthly, with the rise of gender equality, degendering of management theory will be visible. Fifthly, the sciences including management science will move more and more towards transdisciplinarity. Finally, environmental and natural challenges will be more influential.

1 Ulaş Başar Gezgin, Istanbul Galata University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, ulas.gezgin@galata.edu.tr, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6075-3501

1. Introduction

What would be the future of management theory? Before answering this question, we need to set time limits for a discussion of future. It can range from a few years to a millennium (e.g. Tonn, 2004) and even million years from a cosmological, geological and evolutionary points of view by focusing on inorganic and organic matter. However, in human sciences, the time limit we set fatally determines our discussion: For example, if we would think about language development in a century, we can identify a set of trends, but if the scale is a millennium then we can't even know whether our languages English, Spanish or Russian will survive as they are or evolve into some other languages and thus go extinct (as in the case of how European languages evolved from Latin historically). So it is better to have narrow time limits for precision, but wider enough to predict long-term possibilities. That is why, in this article, we decided to concentrate on 50-100 years ahead.

2.3 Factors behind the heterogeneity of management theory

From a philosophy and sociology of science point of view, we need to keep in mind that management theory is far from a heterogeneous monolith. In fact, it is hard to agree with the singular characterization of the area rather than a plural one. This heterogeneity can be due to 3 factors, when management theory is reconceptualized with an onion model:

2.1. Normal, risk-averse core vs. revolutionary, risk-accepting periphery

Management theory consists of a core and outer layers which can also be called as periphery. The core is always more resistant to change compared to the periphery. Since in our times, the change in everyday reality is the norm, rather than exception; the core had to be more dynamic for higher fidelity. But this is rarely the case. Analogous to the sticky prices and wages of Keynesian economics, the core has its reasons to be more dogmatic and resistant to the dynamic character of everyday reality. The core is in full control of the funds, tenure, other key positions and other sources of prestige and monetary returns. For the core, to think differently may be risky, as it would easily be translated into loss of prestige and monetary returns through getting rejections from the top journals, fund agencies and research institutes of Kuhnian normal science which expect the contributor to be more or less normal and similar to each other, rather than revolutionary and inherently different. This can also mean loss of funds and in some cases even tenure. Let us remember the story of Ignaz Semmelweis (1818-1865) who had reasons to propose a relationship between childbirth deaths and dirty hands

but no sufficient proof to convince his colleagues. He had lost his positions and prestige (Best & Neuhauser, 2004). One can't be in both the normal, risk-averse core of scientific community and the marginalized periphery that is more eager to recognize the facts. Of course we have more remarkable cases of revolutionary science such as Galileo which corroborates our central thesis here.

So when we think about the future of management theory, we need to take note of the fact that there is no single scientific community producing and re-producing management theory, but two: Normal, risk-averse core and revolutionary, risk-seeking (or in better terms, risk-accepting) peripheries. Their future responses to the changes in reality will be different.

2.2. The mainstream core vs. critical periphery: This distinction has implications for critical and self-critical approaches to management theory. The periphery can be more critical and self-critical, criticizing the theory as well as their own role in, for example, social control. Management theory, as critical and self-critical thinkers know very well, is never science alone; it always involves values which open the gates for politics. Again critical and self-critical thinkers are aware of the influences of the world wars in particular and military motivations in general over the origins and history of management theory. The aim of management theory, in that sense, is not only maximizing efficiency and accordingly boosting financial indicators such as profit, revenue, return of investment etc., but also pacifying resistance to authorities, authoritarianisms and norms. Thus, the way the future dynamics will be received and responded to will be different among the mainstream core and the critical periphery.

2.3. The fields, sub-fields and overlaps: Another major source of heterogeneity for management theory is due to the fact that there is no management theory with capital 'M' and 'T' that has the explanatory and predictive powers over all fields and sub-fields of management. A few candidates for such a comprehensive theory making appeared such as systems theory, chaos and complexity models, but so far they are far from full-fledged, thus we don't consider them as MT. Rather than a single theory explaining everything in management, which is the case in, for example, physics, we have tens of theories in management with differing scope, and explanatory and predictive power, and considerable overlaps. So a question concerning the future of management theory is based on the false assumption that there is a single management theory. Contrary to this singular view, if we take it in its plural, then we need to concentrate on each, to come up with satisfactory responses.

A way to stick to a singular management theory would be periodization of the history of management theory on the basis of the most common approach for each period. This typical textbook point of view, seen for instance, in Pearson (2018) brings about 4 major periods of management theory: Classical view which is characterized by “[e]mphasis on purpose, formal structure, hierarchy of management, technical requirements, and common principles of organisation” (p.43), human relations view which can be summarized by “[a]ttention to social factors at work, groups, leadership, the informal organisation, and behaviour of people” (p.43), systems view which relies on “[t]he integration of the classical and human relations approaches, [i]mportance of the socio-technical system, [and] [t]he organisation within its external environment” (p.43), contingency view which proposes that there is “[n]o best design of organisation. Form of structure, management, and ‘success’ of the organisation [are] dependent upon a range of situational variables” (p.43). However, this point of view is not comprehensive enough. Its focus is only about organizational aspects, but management theory covers many areas other than organizations such as supply chain management, operations management, project management etc. Secondly, we should keep in mind that historically speaking, overlaps are likely. Thirdly, these are rather characterizations of the mainstream academic core rather than marginalized peripheries, which lack the description of the mechanisms that lead to transition to another approach, in other words, it does not provide a dynamical account.

Nevertheless, a number of future studies of some of the management theories can be noted in this context. Kessels (2001) states that the time for traditional management theory is over, as we have been moving to knowledge economy. The knowledge work needs to be up to date. That is why to survive in the future, the companies have to be learning organizations. In the same vein, Koski (2001) proposes companies to be intelligent organizations.

While these kinds of studies partially explain how the economy will be transformed, it is not the case for management theory. As explained above, there is no deterministic relation between everyday reality and management theory. Management theory usually falters, and delays are typical of the theory due to the resistance and risk-averseness of the core. At the same time, we need to remind that this article was written in 2001 which means well ahead of theory construction in this area, which makes it one of the precursors of these idea but not that of the conclusive ones. This is the price to be paid when you think earlier and faster than the mainstream academic core.

In fact, future-oriented discussions on structural changes of the economy seem to be popular among the futures scholars: García-Olivares & Solé (2015), for example, discusses how we would ultimately move “from capitalism to a symbiotic economy”; while Cohen (2013) claims that we have already moved from consumerism to post-consumerism “expressed in terms of stagnating wages, persistently high unemployment, widening income inequality, sluggish consumer demand, volatile financial markets, contracting middle-class security, and general public malaise” (Cohen, 2013, p.42). Let us also note that this futurological interest in structural changes of the economy is not recent; it dates back to 1970s and onwards with discussions of the role of informal economy in post-industrial society (Gershuny, 1979), “services in the new industrial economy” (Miles, 1993, p.653), and the post-Fordist economy (Belussi & Garibaldo, 1996). But even in these comprehensive accounts, how these changes will influence management theory is missing. Likewise, another popular topic among futures scholars appears to be innovation. These works cover diverse areas such as entrepreneurial innovation (Colwell & Narayanan, 2010), corporate innovation management (Gracht, Vennemann & Darkow, 2010), national systems of innovation (Archibugi & Michie, 1997), how innovation would affect human resource strategies (Johnson, Baldwin & Diverty, 1996), innovation networks (Duin, Heger & Schlesinger, 2014) etc. Again, the focus is on how to support innovation, but not about how management theory would respond to these recommendations. Thus, we need to shift our interest from future studies about management to research on theory building in management.

In the case of theory building in management, converging with our characterization of academic communities above, Trim & Lee (2004) state that “[a] researcher may also need to adopt a rather “risky” research strategy that encapsulates the critical theory approach, if they are to achieve something unique” (p.473). On the other hand, they have a more cognitivist understanding of theory building:

“However, gaps in our knowledge do arise and prove challenging with respect to motivating us to eradicate our deficiencies and at the same time spur us to find new solutions. This implies that it is necessary to generate new insights into management theory and at the same time broaden the parameters of management development” (p.474).

Dent & Bozeman (2014), from a historical point of view provides a more colored and realistic description of theory building in management. They list “*social Darwinism and religion, the rise of social science, the promise*

of the scientific method, and the perspectives of the business tycoons” as “the social ideas and influences that created the conditions for modern management to be formed and established” (p.145). Although this list is far from full-fledged (for example it does not include funders) it is more social than the account provided by Trim & Lee (2004) which was based on the widespread assumption of ‘a curious individual scientist’ rather than aggressive needs of the corporate interests. Theory building in management is not cognitive only, social factors can be said to be stronger, as these theories serve a set of vital social functions such as maintaining the status quo and social control.

Dent & Bozeman (2014) reminding us that in fact the first management theories emerged during slavery period in the United States state that

“What was undecided in mid-nineteenth century America was whether wage-earners would be treated more like partners, apprentices, slaves, or in some other manner. Modern employment has largely forged a different form, often providing health insurance, pensions, and other benefits. Modern management, in its approach to the employed work force, is primarily designed to operate objectively and instrumentally toward human “resources”” (p.147).

3. Trends to influence the future of management theory

Before presenting and discussing the trends to influence the future of management theory, let’s listen to what Scott (2007) says about peer review which is the foundation of the modern science:

“[Peer review] is the main form of decision-making around grant selection, academic publishing and the promotion of individual scientists within universities and research institutions. It also underpins methods used to evaluate scientific institutions. Yet, peer review as currently practiced can be narrowly scientific, to the exclusion of other pressing quality criteria relating to social relevance. It is often also controlled and practiced by scientists to the exclusion of wider groups that might bring valuable perspectives” (p.827).

Furthermore,

“[p]eer review plays a significant role in many of the key moments in science, as it is the main form of decision-making around: who receives money to do what science; who gets to publish in the scientific literature; and which individual scientists are selected and promoted within research institutions” (Scott, 2007, p.828).

In fact, this is no longer completely true. Some of the functions usually attributed to peer review are now assigned for non-academic actors of the neo-

liberal model such as CEO of the university, Human Resource Departments etc. Nevertheless, even in the ideal situation, peer review can't be 100% reliable. It is where some of the ideas are marginalized and underfunded especially in social and administrative science fields.² Recognizing this fact and summarizing the relevant reports, Scott (2007) adds that

“other problems with peer review include fraud, bias (i.e., institutional bias, bias in favour of positive results, bias against women or young researchers), ‘cloning’ (i.e., favouring topics and researchers with characteristics similar to those of incumbent paradigms and researchers), and inefficiency” (p.834).

Within this context of imperfect peer review systems, a set of trends are expected to influence the future of management theory. Some of these have been very-well recognized by futurologists while some others have rarely been under the spotlights. Let us stress the fact that they are not only influential over management and companies, but also management theory. The reason is that there are already a reasonably high number of marginalized researchers mostly in the academic peripheries that form a loose coalition of heterodox voices in academic circles of management. In our next time horizon (i.e. in half-century or in a century) they can be a part of the mainstream if the conditions will be ripe for their academic revolutions. These trends are:

- Decolonization
- Sinification
- Empowerment and precarization
- Feminization, degendering and egalitarianism
- Transdisciplinarity
- Environmental and natural challenges and issues (including global warming, increasing number of disasters, peak oil, energy crisis, sustainability, green management)

2 As a reviewer for some other scholarly journals, of course I am not against peer review, however I think we need to find better ways to do it. The reviewers in all the occasions listed by Scott (2007) need to be aware of their own blind spots, biases and other forms of subjectivities; and never think for a moment that they are infallible. Secondly, I feel lucky that we have futures studies journals that are more receptive, if not accepting for heterodox views. Finally, let us also note that in a considerably high number of countries, the endowers of research funds are explicitly or implicitly ideologically-oriented in their funding decisions. This is the case in almost all undemocratic countries which corresponds to more than half of the world population. In those countries, in addition to reviewers' blind spots, biases and other forms of subjectivities, the researchers also need to tackle with discrimination, mobbing, threat of unemployment and hunger, civil death, and other forms of social and political repression.

Some of these are belated and some others are just-in-time responses to the outdated model of *the* management theorist: This theorist is a Western patriarchal, colonial, individualistic, anti-egalitarian, anti-democratic, narrow-disciplinary male theorist which take natural and environmental resources and conditions as granted. This model is challenged through these trends to be presented and discussed below.

3.1. Decolonization

Management theory still has colonial relics in its workings. Usually we have Western-originated theories which claim universality without considering non-Western work settings. In fact, these theories can be applicable only if its assumptions about society hold true. Western-originated theories are useful in former colonies only if those distant lands were completely colonized not in terms of military and economic relations, but also through sociological and psychological dimensions. When non-Western people act as if they are Westerners, and if they act so well that their act becomes the reality, then the Western management theory is applicable for a former colony. This shows the hidden connection of management theory and colonialism. Despite of the enormous harm inflicted on colonized, subjugated subjects and countries as a whole, with the rise of countries like BRICS, management theory will be forced to question itself as a response to the challenges posed by former colonies. Research viewing management theory from a post-colonial perspective is rare (e.g. Banerjee & Prasad, 2008), but some other vocal critiques using other terms are notable such as Fang (2010):

“Hofstede’s cross-cultural paradigm has stimulated academic interest in value and behavioral variations across national borders and helped practitioners to capture national cultural stereotypes in concrete and measurable terms. Nevertheless, the Hofstede paradigm with its focus on cultural differences can hardly capture today’s new cross-cultural management environment characterized by change and paradox in borderless and wireless cultural learning, knowledge transfer, and synchronized information sharing. In the twenty-first century, management faces new challenges because people in the twenty-first century are increasingly no longer bipolarized and isolated creatures but of multicultural identities and multicultural minds. Asian management researchers need to learn from the West but at the same time need to have self-confidence and courage in using indigenous knowledge to make contributions to theory building with global relevance” (Fang, 2010, p.155).

Likewise, Blunt & Jones (1997) compare and contrast ‘current Western leadership ‘ideal’ with leadership in East Asia and Africa on the basis of

“influences on leadership practices”, authority, uncertainty and relationships (p.19), and concludes that the differences are paradigmatic, in other words the Western leadership theories largely diverge from the real situation in East Asia and Africa.

Jack et al. (2013) ask a timely and useful question which will be relevant for the next trend as well (i.e. Sinification):

“Is it possible and desirable to create a universal theory of management and organization? Scholarship about the boundary conditions of endogenous theory and the need for indigenous theories of management as well as geopolitical changes in the world order have animated this debate” (p.148).

3.2. Sinification

The rise of China is discussed usually in international relations, politics, economics, trade and military circles. But futurological discussions of the implication of this Sino-rise is rare in the discipline of management. Chinese management scholars are quite active. They have their own journals in which the implicit, underlying discussion is the following: Should we fix the false and self-proclaimed universality of Western-oriented management theory by introducing Chinese inputs including concepts, methodologies, approaches, facts, findings etc. or should we rather develop our own Chinese management theory? This question will be even more meaningful as China will progress in One Belt One Road project (also known as the New Silk Road) (see State Council, 2018), merger and acquisitions operations directed towards European and American companies (cf. Drahoukoupil, 2017; Yang et al., 2011), and investments elsewhere such as in Latin America and Africa (cf. Narins, 2018). So Chinese management research (e.g. Cao, Zhang & Xi, 2011; Li & Peng, 2008; Qi, 2012; Stening & Zhang, 2007; Xi, Cao & Xiangli, 2010; Xi, Zhang & Ge, 2012), following these economic trends will stop being a matter of Chinese only. The first answer for the question above will be the strongest challenge against Western-originated management theory, as it will not only question its epistemology, but also cultural givens and hidden motivations.

These discussions will be coupled with those asking whether China is the new colonialist power considering its interest in buying raw materials from low and middle income countries and selling processed products (Larmer, 2017; Mourdoukoutas, 2018).³ In this way, the argument goes, and with

3 A Forbes article was provocatively, unfairly and unrealistically entitled ‘China is treating Africa the same way European colonists did’; however possibly due to world-wide reaction it was revised as ‘What is China doing in Africa?’ after release. However, the extension of the article

the infrastructure projects, China makes these needy countries economically dependent on himself. However, Chinese would reply stating that the data are distorted with a Western bias (Yafei, 2014), they have no military goals to conquer the world and they committed no massacres among Africans in the name of colonialism nor involved in slave trade, unlike what Western colonialists did. So overall, this analogy is not applicable, but obviously it serves ideological functions for Western and pro-Western commentators through hiding the brutal history of Western colonialism. In summary, one thing we can be sure of for the next century is that China will be more powerful, Chinese will have larger share of media time, and Chinese management scholars will publish more works that will be even more influential in global management circles.

3.3. Empowerment and Precarization

Let us note that management theory was developed by managers and employers without any participation of employees. Thus it needs to be debunked to come up with a more democratic and egalitarian theory that empowers employees. However, recent forms of capitalism is increasingly getting more characterized by the notion of precarization, while struggle for empowerment continues. Precarization means labors' forced transformation into becoming 'copy-paste' elements of insecure job conditions, usually without a contract or with an unfavorable one (i.e. zero-hour contracts or adjunct positions or sessional lecturing in academia). Precaria, as the new proletariat has no job security, they can be fired any time without any compensation. They are not offered permanent contracts which also mean that neither social security nor health insurance are provided. This is the best arrangement for the employers as the labor force will be docile, easily replaced (i.e. made to function as a copy/paste element) and will not be associated with costly payments such as social rights. Increasing number and percentages of people are precarized all over the world with the obvious example of higher education where adjuncts, part-timers and sessionals are plenty and appear to constitute most of the academic staff in the future. From a different perspective, but with a similar result, Williams & Windebank (1999) discuss informalization and post-formalization of labor in our times of high formal and informal unemployment and underemployment.

How did we come to these dire conditions for labor? We have mainly 3 interconnected reasons: The decline in trade union membership, the collapse

still reveals the original title: china-is-treating-africa-the-same-way-european-colonists-did/ (Mourdoukoutas, 2018).

of Soviet Union and almost all of its ideological allies, and the implementation of neo-liberal policies. With a higher number of ununionized labor, each worker became more expendable. European bourgeoisie had been afraid of a Soviet-like revolution in Europe, and by then labor and social rights movements were strong, that is why European governments had granted social rights to people. With the collapse of Soviet Union, this 'red scare' ended. Finally, neo-liberal policies cut government funds over schools and hospitals which were supposed to operate for public benefit rather than profit. They turned all sectors into profit-making companies, success of which was evaluated on the basis of private profit rather than public benefit. As a result of these 3 factors, precarization is fast approaching unexpectedly high proportions. Let's also add the fact that China's inhumane work conditions also dovetail with worldwide precarization. The rise of China will be the 4th factor behind this process.

We can change its name, we can call it in another way, but it doesn't matter: Class struggle is a reality of life and it persists in different forms in different centuries. A higher level approach to the notion of class struggle would focus on the relations of hierarchy in work settings to cover not only economic differences, but also social ones. Contrary to what the mainstream human resource management discipline tries to convince us, the interests of the employer, managers and employees are irreconcilable. With due respects to exceptions, in most of the capitalist enterprises of the world, the workers are made to believe that the company interest is identical with their own interest. So if the company wins, they win. We incisively saw that that was not the case considering the bonus schemes the CEOs were entitled to for failing their companies in 2008 Economic and Financial Crisis.⁴ The notion of class struggle will pop up again and again, and a future outlook without considering this is far from reality. So we will see whether empowerment and industrial/economic democracy movements which apply the notion of political democracy to work settings will prevail or not (cf. Johannisova & Wolf, 2012). The class struggle, as well as the trends towards precarization vs. empowerment will be influential over management theory. A theory aiming for precarization would focus on how to motivate staff although they are stripped of all their rights, while another for empowerment will focus on humane work conditions. That is a big difference.

4 Why are we insisting that the crisis was both economic and financial, why don't we say financial only? If a crisis is economic, we should be able to find the reasons in the real economy such as oversupply of housing which was applicable for 2008 in addition to the financial reasons.

3.4. Feminization, Degendering and Egalitarianism

The management theory was developed by predominantly male theorists. A number of challenges posed by feminists are to be noted. For example, under capitalism the low-paying jobs are mostly allotted to women; support workers which are mostly women such as cleaners are demeaned; house work is not counted as productive activity (but in fact it helps labor to refresh for the next day) etc. Women's studies scholars are expected to come up with even more radical criticisms of the male theorist behind the management theory. While currently, feminist and pro-feminist future studies are rare (e.g. Milojević, 2008; Szalai, 1975), the disconnect between women's studies in general and feminist studies in particular and future studies will likely be mended in the future through the collaboration of scholars from both sides.

3.5. Transdisciplinarity

While the mainstream academia is getting more and more specialized, transdisciplinarity is also recognized as a drawer of a more realistic picture. In fact, in the future some of the management theories may go extinct as they are too narrowly engaged with their subject forgetting to look at a greater picture. This move towards transdisciplinarity is also visible in future studies (e.g. Cilliers & Nicolescu, 2012; Darbellay, 2015; Jahn & Keil, 2015; Klein, 2014; Serrao-Neumann et al., 2015). Transdisciplinarity requires team work as each individual scientists' cognitive capacity is more limited than needed. As a result, transdisciplinarity emerges as a way to refute the individual and individualist theorist behind management theory.

3.6. Environmental and Natural Challenges and Issues

A number of environmental and natural challenges and responses such as global warming, increasing number of disasters, peak oil, energy crisis, sustainability, renewable energies, green management etc. are on the table, and how these can transform the management theory should be discussed. A high number of future studies articles address these issues (e.g. Abas, Kalair & Khan, 2015; Almeida & Silva, 2011; Crivits et al., 2010; Eastin, Grundmann & Prakash, 2011; Enserink, Kwakkel & Veenman, 2013; Floyd & Zubevich, 2010; Heinonen, Jokinen & Kaivo-oja, 2001; Hjorth & Bagheri, 2006; Hughes & Johnson, 2005; Jamison, 2003; Jokinen, Malaska & Kaivo-oja, 1998; Kemp, 1994; Maiteny, 2000; Mathews, 2012, 2013; Moriarty & Honnery, 2015; Newman, 2006; Roy, 2000), but discussions about their implications for management theory is rare.

Economically speaking, management theory is usually based on the notion of homo economicus championed by classical economics. According to this approach, human beings are rational, they pursue their self-interest following a simple hedonistic algorithm: Pursue joy, avoid pain; or get rewards, avoid punishment. This approach further assumes that markets are naturally self-balancing. However we have seen on every occasion that these two assumptions are not true. As Freud and many other psychodynamically and cognitively oriented psychologists showed us, unconscious, subconscious and preconscious processes are more important than publicly recognized in decision making and human behavior. So irrationality can't be discarded. Furthermore, for numerous times, the so-called 'free markets' fail and their failure may lead to even worse problems such as economic crisis. Despite of these deficiencies peaked on 2008 Economic and Financial Crisis, the homo economicus assumption of the management theory persists in the mainstream academic core, but it may change in the future with increasing pressure from the marginalized peripheries.

A statement closely tied with this outdated notion of homo economicus was that "the resources are scarce". But this scarcity was a relative and conditional one: Our needs were infinite, thus we could never have sufficient resources to meet our needs. This hedonistic assumption is also problematic. The whole idea of Buddhism and the discussions of degrowth are based on the idea that we can minimize our needs. The notion of needs is not a universal and ahistorical given. Our needs depend on our times. However, in the next century or so, this notion of scarcity will have another form with the recognition of the fact that the scarcity is not relative or conditional, but absolute and universal. Why? That is because the environmental and natural resources that were taken for granted, for example clean air will be recognized to be vulnerable to anthropogenic harms such as ozone depletion.

Other likely trends can be noted as well. For example, the exploding uses of AI for production will be another trend for management theory to reckon. To what extent the epistemic assumptions reserved for human workers will be granted to AI would be one of the questions to consider. Let us remember one of our discussions above which reminds us that management theory emerged during slavery in the United States. This situation may have its parallel in AI discussions.

One view is that in fact the prevalence of AI does not bring a categorical, qualitative difference for capitalism: Machines are always used in capitalism, and in fact they are the basis of capitalism. So use of more machines in production does not make any difference. Whereas some others claim it

to be a major difference (e.g. Makridakis, 2017). Whatever the conclusion would be, this discussion will be one of the agenda items of management theory in the future.

Other than Makridakis (2017) and AI as a trend, we can also mention social media as another trend. Pang (2010), rather than talking about social media use, propose to study social media contents to come up with new information; while Kostakis et al. (2015)'s arguments revolve on 'commons-based peer production' which is expected to take place in the post-capitalist future.

4. Conclusion

In this article, we tried to reflect on the future of management theory. We proposed that it is not homogeneous. We mentioned 3 factors behind this situation. We proceeded to present and discuss 6 trends that have been affecting management theory: Decolonization, Sinification, degendering, empowerment and precarization, transdisciplinary, and environmental and natural challenges and issues. Of course there may be other factors that are not discussed here. However, as a starting point, the presentation of these 6 trends would hopefully help the interested readers to reflect on their implications for the future.

References

- Abas, N. Kalair, A. & Khan, N. (2015). Review of fossil fuels and future energy technologies. *Futures*, 69, 31–49. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2015.03.003
- Al-Saleh, Y. (2009). Renewable energy scenarios for major oil-producing nations: The case of Saudi Arabia. *Futures*, 41, 650-662. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2009.04.005
- Almeida, P. & Silva, P.D. (2011). Timing and future consequences of the peak of oil production. *Futures*, 43, 1044-1055. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2011.07.004
- Archibugi, D. & Michie, J. (1997). Technological globalization or national system of innovation? *Futures*, 29(2), 121-137. doi: 10.1080/09692290110101126
- Banerjee, S. B. & Prasad, A. (2008). Introduction to the special issue on critical reflections on management and organizations: A postcolonial perspective. *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 4(2/3), 90-98. doi: 0.1108/17422040810869963
- Belussi, F. & Garibaldi, E. (1996). Variety of pattern of the Post-Fordist economy: Why are the ‘old times’ still with us and the ‘new times’ yet to come? *Futures*, 28(2), 153-171. doi: 10.1016/0016-3287(95)00087-9
- Best, M. & Neuhauser, D. (2004). Ignaz Semmelweis and the birth of infection control. *Quality & Safety in Health Care*, 13(3), 233-4. doi: 10.1136/qshc.2004.010918
- Blunt, P. & Jones, M.L. (1997). Exploring the limits of Western leadership theory in East Asia and Africa. *Personnel Review*, 26(1/2), 6-23. doi: 10.1108/00483489710157760
- Cao, X., Zhang, X. & Xi, Y. (2011). Ambidextrous organization in harmony: A multi-case exploration of the value of HeXie management theory. *Chinese Management Studies*, 5(2), 146-163. doi: 10.1108/17506141111142799
- Cilliers, P. & Nicolescu, B. (2012). Complexity and transdisciplinarity – Discontinuity, levels of Reality and the Hidden Third. *Futures*, 44, 711-718. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2012.04.001
- Cohen, M.J. (2013). Collective dissonance and the transition to post-consumerism. *Futures*, 52, 42-51. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2013.07.001
- Colwell & Narayanan, (2010). Foresight in economic development policy: Shaping the institutional context for entrepreneurial innovation. *Futures*, 42, 295-303. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2009.11.015
- Crivits, M., Paredis, E. Boulanger, P.M., Mutombo, E.J.K., Bauler, T. & Lefin, A.-L. (2010). Scenarios based on sustainability discourses: Constructing alternative consumption and consumer perspectives. *Futures*, 42, 1187–1199. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2010.07.002

- Darbellay, F. (2015). Rethinking inter- and transdisciplinarity: Undisciplined knowledge and the emergence of a new thought style. *Futures*, 65, 163–174. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2014.10.009
- Dent, E.B. & Bozeman, P. (2014). Discovering the foundational philosophies, practices, and influences of modern management theory. *Journal of Management History*, 20(2), 145-163. doi: 10.1108/JMH-09-2012-0056
- Drahokoupil, J. (eds.) (2017). Chinese Investment in Europe: Corporate Strategies and Labour Relations, Brussels: European Trade Union Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.etui.org/content/download/32418/300918/file/17+Chinese+investments+in+Europe+Drahokoupil+Web+version.pdf>
- Duin, P., Heger, T. & Schlesinger, M.D. (2014). Toward networked foresight? Exploring the use of futures research in innovation networks. *Futures*, 59, 62-78. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2014.01.008
- Eastin, J., Grundmann, R. & Prakash, A. (2011). The two limits debates: “Limits to Growth” and climate change. *Futures* 43(1), 16–26. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2010.03.001
- Enserink, B. Kwakkel, J.H., Veenman, S. (2013). Coping with uncertainty in climate policy making: (Mis)understanding scenario studies. *Futures*, 53, 1-12. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2013.09.006
- Fang, T. (2010). Asian management research needs more self-confidence: Reflection on Hofstede (2007) and beyond. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 27, 155–170. doi: 0.1007/s10490-009-9134-7
- Floyd, J. & Zubevich, K. (2010). Linking foresight and sustainability: An integral approach. *Futures*, 42, 59-68. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2009.08.001
- García-Olivares, A. & Solé, J. (2015). End of growth and the structural instability of capitalism - From capitalism to a Symbiotic Economy. *Futures*, 68, 31-43. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2014.09.004
- Gershuny, J.I. (1979). The informal economy: Its role in post-industrial society. *Futures*, 11(1), 3-15. doi: 10.1016/0016-3287(79)90065-X
- Gracht, H.A., Vennemann, C.R. & Darkow, I.-L. (2010). Corporate foresight and innovation management: A portfolio-approach in evaluating organizational development. *Futures*, 42, 380-393. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2009.11.023
- Heinonen, S., Jokinen, P. & Kaivo-oja, J. (2001). The ecological transparency of the information society. *Futures*, 33, 319-337. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(00)00073-2
- Hjorth, P. & Bagheri, A. (2006). Navigating towards sustainable development: A system dynamics approach. *Futures*, 38, 74–92. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2005.04.005

- Hughes, B.B. & Johnson, P.D. (2005). Sustainable futures: policies for global development. *Futures*, 37, 813-831. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2005.01.017
- Jack, G., Zhu, Y., Barney, J., Yoko Brannen, M., Prichard, C., Singh, K. & Whetten, D. (2013). Refining, reinforcing and reimagining universal and indigenous theory development in international management. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 22(2), 148-164. doi: 10.1177/1056492612458453
- Jahn, T. & Keil, F. (2015). An actor-specific guideline for quality assurance in transdisciplinary research. *Futures*, 65, 195-208. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2014.10.015
- Jamison, A. (2003). The making of green knowledge: the contribution from activism. *Futures*, 35, 703-716. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(03)00023-5
- Johanisova, N. & Wolf, S. (2012). Economic democracy: A path for the future? *Futures*, 44, 562-570. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2012.03.017
- Johnson, J., Baldwin, J.R. & Diverty, B. (1996). The implications of innovation for human resource strategies. *Futures*, 28(2), 103-119. doi: 10.1016/0016-3287(95)00083-6
- Jokinen, Malaska & Kaivo-oja, 1998. The environment in an information society: A transition stage towards more sustainable development? *Futures*, 30(6), 485-498. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(98)00054-8
- Kemp, R. (1994). Technology and the transition to environmental sustainability: The problem of technological regime shifts. *Futures*, 26(10), 1023-1046. doi: 10.1016/0016-3287(94)90071-X
- Kessels, J.W.M. (2001). Learning in organisations: a corporate curriculum for the knowledge economy. *Futures*, 33, 497-506. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(00)00093-8
- Klein, J.T. (2014). Discourses of transdisciplinarity: Looking Back to the Future. *Futures*, 63, 68-74. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2014.08.008
- Koski, J.T. (2001). Reflections on information glut and other issues in knowledge productivity. *Futures*, 33, 483-495. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(00)00092-6
- Kostakis, V., Niaros, V., Dafermos, G. & Bauwens, M. (2015). Design global, manufacture local: exploring the contours of an emerging productive model. *Futures*, 73, 126-135. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2015.09.001
- Larmer, B. (2017, May 02). Is China the World's New Colonial Power? The New York Times Magazine. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/02/magazine/is-china-the-worlds-new-colonial-power.html>
- Li, Y. & Peng, M.W. (2008). Developing theory from strategic management research in China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 25, 563-572. doi: 10.1007/s10490-007-9083-y

- Maiteny, P. (2000). The psychodynamics of meaning and action for a sustainable future. *Futures*, 32, 339-360. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(99)00101-9
- Makridakis, S. (2017). The forthcoming Artificial Intelligence (AI) revolution: Its impact on society and firms. *Futures*, 90, 46–60. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2017.03.006
- Mathews, J.A. (2013). The renewable energies technology surge: A new techno-economic paradigm in the making? *Futures*, 46, 10-22. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2012.12.001
- Mathews, J.A. (2012). Green growth strategies - Korean initiatives. *Futures*, 44, 761–769. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2012.06.002
- Miles, I. (1993). Services in the new industrial economy. *Futures*, 25(6), 653-672. doi: 10.1016/0016-3287(93)90106-4
- Milojević, I. (2008). Timing feminism, feminising time. *Futures*, 40, 329-345. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2007.08.008
- Moriarty, P. & Honnery, D. (2015). Future cities in a warming world. *Futures*, 66, 45-53. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2014.12.009
- Mourdoukoutas, P. (2018, August 04). What Is China Doing In Africa? Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/panosmourdoukoutas/2018/08/04/china-is-treating-africa-the-same-way-european-colonists-did/#778b1e81298b>
- Narins, T.P. (2018). Chinese Trade in Latin America Compared to the European Union and the United States: The Case of Technology-Intensive Exports. *The Professional Geographer*, 70(2), 219-229. doi: 10.1080/00330124.2017.1347797
- Newman, L. (2006). Change, uncertainty, and futures of sustainable development. *Futures*, 38, 633-637. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2005.09.011
- Pearson (2018). Approaches to organisation and management. Pearson. Retrieved from https://catalogue.pearsoned.co.uk/assets/hip/gb/hip_gb_pearsonhighered/samplechapter/0273757342.pdf
- Qi (2012). A case study of globalized knowledge flows: Guanxi in social science and Management theory. *International Sociology*, 27(6), 707–723. doi: 10.1177/0268580912453729
- Roy, R. (2000). Sustainable product-service systems. *Futures*, 32, 289-299. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(99)00098-1
- Scott, A. (2007). Peer review and the relevance of science. *Futures*, 39, 827-845. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2006.12.009
- Serrao-Neumann, S., Schuch, G., Harman, B., Crick, F., Sano, M., Sahin, O., von Staden, R., Baum, S. & Low Choy, D. (2015). One human settlement: a transdisciplinary approach to climate change adaptation research. *Futures*, 65, 97–109. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2014.08.011

- Stening, B.W. & Zhang, M.Y. (2007). Methodological challenges confronted when conducting management research in China. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 7, 121-142. doi: 10.1177/1470595807075179
- Pang, A. S.-K. (2010). Social scanning: Improving futures through Web 2.0; or, finally a use for Twitter. *Futures*, 42(10), 1222–1230. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2010.09.003
- Szalai, A. (1975). Women's time: Women in the light of contemporary time-budget research. *Futures*, 7(5), 385-399. doi: 10.1016/0016-3287(75)90017-8
- The State Council (2018). The Belt and Road Initiative. Retrieved from <http://english.gov.cn/beltAndRoad/>
- Tonn, B.E. (2004). Integrated 1000-year planning. *Futures*, 36, 91-108. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(03)00068-5
- Trim, P.R.J. & Lee, Y.-I. (2004). A reflection on theory building and the development of management knowledge. *Management Decision*, 42(3/4), 473-480. doi: 10.1108/00251740410518930
- Williams, C.C. & Windebank, J. (1999). The formalisation of work thesis: a critical evaluation. *Futures*, 31(6), 547–58. doi: 10.1016/S0016-3287(99)00013-0
- Xi, Y., Cao, X. & Xiangli, L. (2010). A Chinese view on rebuilding the integrity of management research. The evolving He-Xie management theory. *Chinese Management Studies*, 4(3), 197-211. doi: 10.1108/17506141011074101
- Xi, Y., Zhang, X. & Ge, J. (2012). Replying to management challenges: Integrating oriental and occidental wisdom by HeXie Management Theory. *Chinese Management Studies*, 6(3), 395-412. doi: 10.1108/17506141211259104
- Yafei, H. (2014, March 11). Unfair to paint China as a colonialist in Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1445328/unfair-paint-china-colonialist-africa>
- Yang, H. & Sun, S. & Lin, Z. & Peng, M.W. (2011). Behind M&As in China and the United States: Networks, learning, and institutions. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 28, 239-255. doi: 10.1007/s10490-009-9188-6