International Management and International Relations

A Critical Perspective from Latin America

Edited by Ana Guedes and Alex Faria



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Preface

This edited collection aims to show that the field of international management has been developed from a dominant perspective that overlooks governance issues 'managed' by transnational corporations and also the interests, voices and 'managerial' practices of other key agents, such as international organizations, transnational institutions, non-governmental organizations, governments and communities in developing countries and regions.

The main objective of the introductory chapter is to show that interdisciplinary developments between the fields of international management and international relations are necessary for the reinvention of the field of international management in Latin America. This chapter draws upon debates and arguments from international relations—and also from international political economy—to bring political and cultural issues that have been overlooked by the dominant international management literature to the forefront in order to provide a critical and comprehensive understanding and also an interdisciplinary ground to its further development from a multicultural perspective that does not depoliticize further academic debates.

In the first chapter, Eduardo Ibarra-Colado states that international management is a discipline that has steadily gained notoriety, mainly from a globecentric position that accepts the supposed existence of this single model. Consequently, this discipline expresses the epistemic coloniality exercised to control the representations of the world as modern, unique and global. He affirms that if we appreciate international reality from a postcolonial approach, it will be easier to recognize the main problems in international management from the point of view of local communities; this is a fight to recover our voices, interest and aspirations as inhabitants of the borders.

In the second chapter, Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann and Monica Herz analyze the importance of regional, institutional and normative discursive environments to a better understanding of how domestic and international business and management activities have been conducted in Latin America since the end of the Cold War. They argue that along with practices and discourses of state and non-state actors within and outside formal institutions, normative consensuses emerge which, in their turn, create new

opportunities and place new constraints on international business and management. Although regional institutions and normative discourses are intertwined with those at the global level, they emphasize the specificity of the region. A proper analysis of the environment in which international business and management take place must therefore include not only the global and national level but also the regional.

Ana Guedes draws, in the third chapter of this volume, upon international political economy to analyze international management from a critical perspective in order to point out the interplay between management and governance as a result of the growing influence of international organizations (governmental and non-governmental) and transnational corporations in Latin America. She addresses political economy aspects of international business and management in developing countries to sustain the development of an interdisciplinary approach that recognizes the governance level of international management.

The fourth chapter, by João Feres Júnior, aims to contribute to the critique of the concept of Latin American from an outsider disciplinary perspective. He develops an analytical model to study what Koselleck has termed 'asymmetric counterconcepts'—dyadic conceptual formations used by groups of people to name the ones who are perceived as 'not belonging'. Accordingly, the decolonial project proposed for international management cannot achieve its goals without a thorough critique of the concept of Latin America itself, in its various applications.

Rafael Alcadipani affirms, in the fifth chapter, that management is known as an international discipline. However, 'international' tends to mean that management knowledge and concepts are generated and developed in Western countries, most notably the United States, and translated to other contexts. He states that it is necessary to discuss and explore what the specificities of managing in Latin America are and also what form management knowledge and practice that respect the characteristics of this complex continent would take. Therefore, he seeks to explore what are key aspects of a Latin American style of management as well as how they might configure a distinct approach to management in both local and international terms.

Bill Cooke takes, in the sixth chapter, the World Bank once again as both representatively and specifically important in Latin America. He states that the World Bank's development management and its 'textual reality construction' through project reports is a political wielding of epistemic power with ontological consequences in the construction of a Latin America to be known from Washington. He follows his earlier work by analyzing the textual outputs and accounts of the World Bank in Brazil, and continues this in his consideration of Colombia in order to connect to Escobar's critique of development's interventions there. In his conclusion, Cuba is analyzed as a kind of counterfactual to claims about alignments between development, managerialism, modernity and the World Bank.

In the seventh chapter, Miguel Imas seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between neoliberalist economic principles, the legacy of dictatorial regimes and democracy in the new managing and organizing of Southern Cone societies. With emphasis on the experiences of Argentina and Chile, he tells how the fundamental economic and political ideological makeup of these nations has stimulated alternative and creative responses to managing from a population who have come to identify these ideologies as oppressive and coercive apparatuses of control, maintaining large sections of the population in poverty.

The aim of the eighth chapter, by Maria Ceci Misocsky, is to analyze this recent wave of green desert expansion, focusing mainly on the role of international agencies and national states. The analysis includes the resistance of social movements, the role of national states and the World Bank's Forest Policy. The Bank is central to her analysis because it is the single largest source of financing and investments in the forest sector, including lending to companies through the International Finance Corporation and granting of financial guarantees through its Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; consequently, the Bank's Forest Policy is a very influential model for other multilateral agencies.

Finally, in the concluding chapter we explore the interfaces among the chapters of this volume in order to point out some issues related to 'international management' that might be taken as major contributions of this 'critical perspective'. More specifically, we sustain that a key feature in this volume is the attempt to create conditions for the development of a hybrid field in/from Latin America. We also try to establish a more realistic representation of Latin America, in academic terms, that can be useful to further developments in both international management and international relations.

We would like to thank Eduardo Ibarra-Colado, Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann, Monica Herz, João Feres Junior, Rafael Alcadipani, Bill Cooke, Miguel Imas and Maria Ceci Misoczky for all their support and effort in the preparation of this edited collection. At the Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration, Getulio Vargas Foundation, we acknowledge the research funds allocated to this editorial project and the support of our colleagues Marcelo Milano Falção Vieira and Deborah Moraes Zouain. Fabiana Leal provided research assistance, and Robert Stewart the language review. We also thank Routledge Research: the editors Terry Clague for encouraging the development of this 'perspective from Latin America' since our first meeting at the Critical Management Studies Conference in 2005, and Laura Stearns for supporting the submission of this edited collection; and Nicholas Mendoza for guidance and editorial assistance.

Ana Guedes Alex Faria

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Introduction

What Is International Management?

Alex Faria and Ana Guedes

What is international management (IM)? This question has been asked repeatedly by different authors in recent years in the specialized literature without a definite answer. What has not been asked is, why this has become a crucial question in the United States (US) rather than in every country or region? The virtual silence in Latin America, in particular, about what IM is or should be and the lack of understandings or worldviews of IM from different countries or regions in an era of globalization constitute a problematic picture given the general argument that cross-cultural issues, diversity and eclecticism constitute the core of IM as an academic field.

Actually, the more recent concern in the US with cross-cultural issues and diversity in an era of globalization by academics committed to define IM should not be taken as too odd. Globalization is not just about homogenization and convergence; the dominant homogenizing processes lead inevitably to diversity and multiculturalism. Despite the prevailing ideas that globalization leads to unification and convergence and that its opponents should embrace localism and purism, globalization should be correctly taken as "a homogenizing process as well as a differentiating" (Banerjee and Linstead 2001, 698). A central issue to IM academics is that these processes are asymmetric and tend to result in the reinforcement of hegemonic modes of relations in a global scale, especially if we take seriously the argument from the past president and chairman of the Board of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general scientific society, that globalization "brings security risks and facilitates the unchecked movement of terrorists and illicit activity" (Jackson 2005, 1636).

We understand that this challenging picture can be addressed through the development of a critical perspective from Latin America which takes into consideration similar problems within the field of international relations (IR) and unexplored connections between IR and IM. Despite the dominance of traditions or worldviews from the North, a flurry of intellectual activity concerning the state of IR has been undertaken over the last twenty years based on the argument that "different world views can coexist" (Cox 2007, 513) within the contentious and asymmetric realm of

'international theory'. This chapter draws upon those debates and arguments from IR—and also from international political economy (IPE)—to bring to the forefront political and cultural issues that have been overlooked by the dominant IM literature to provide a critical and comprehensive understanding of IM and also an interdisciplinary ground to its further development from a multicultural perspective that does not depoliticize further academic debates.

It is argued that the process of construction of the field of IM was highly influenced by US political interests and foreign policies during the Cold War which were informed by the dominant perspective in IR—that is, realism (Guzzini 2004). This perspective in IR focuses on the political and military interaction of states within a context of international anarchy and assumes that "Great Powers must be Great Responsibles" (Jackson and Sorensen 1999, 88) to maintain the international order. Those policies aimed to—and for some IR analysts still do—impose particular theories of development and modernization, including management knowledge and discourses, on less-developed countries and regions allegedly to deter anarchy. This background explains why the contemporaneous literature in IM stands for 'cultural diversity', also in line with contemporary calls for multicultural globalization of science in the US, but reproduces the prevailing discourse of globalization which overlooks national political interests and asymmetric structures of the international system.

The contemporaneous IM literature, mainly from the US, aims to define international management from a perspective of diversity but overlooks the political role of states, international organizations and large corporations in shaping markets, policies and knowledge worldwide (including diversity). Such endeavor within IM from the US blocks the effective construction and coexistence of worldviews. It has been more about disciplining difference—that is, "establishing what the norm is and what deviance is" (Munck 1999, 68)—than about recognizing and valuing difference and diversity from a multicultural standpoint that does not depoliticize further academic debates.

Expectation of universal or, more modestly, generalizable knowledge is, after all, a very local position, and a historical accident of business schools, mostly in the United States. But when such expectations become the international norm—a product to be exported to universities all over the world—there is little else that can be said, since anything novel, or contradictory, becomes easily tagged as 'the other's ignorance.' The irony, of course, is that such social construction of 'convergence' for our worldwide 'knowledge' is a major contribution to our own ignorance. (Jack et al. 2008, 881)

The contemporaneous IM literature reinforces US dominance in this field in an era of globalization, at the expense of interests, perspectives and

voices from other countries, regions and cultures. Accordingly, we argue in this chapter that the field of IM should be challenged by a critical perspective from Latin America. The importance of proposing a critical perspective from Latin America in IM is twofold. First, because the asymmetry between North America and Latin America has been reinforced in an era of globalization and blocks the effective mobilization of interests and voices from the latter within IM. Second, because it is fairly accepted that "in Latin America there has always been a creative rendering of theories and concepts developed in the West/North" (Munck 1999, 69).

From the standpoint of developing or peripheral countries or regions, such as Latin America, a key issue is that the contemporary IM literature calls for the recognition of "continued differences across nations" (Contractor 2000, 4) but it overlooks the fact that the field of management studies (MS) has not helped much to foster diversity—actually, the contrary—in the same way as US foreign policies and the prevailing theory of globalization. The widespread understanding or common sense in the US that 'international' in management means "crossing borders" (Boddewyn, Toyne and Martínez 2004) from an apolitical standpoint is explained by the position of that country as a 'Great Power' in the contemporaneous international system, by the historical divide between management and political science in the US academic setting and also by the dominant idea within IR that 'international' does not have anything to do with 'national'.

From a critical perspective, however, internationalization and imperialism are virtually synonymous (James 2008). From such a perspective that privileges high politics in a particular way, the internationalization of big corporations is defined as "cross-border practices in which state agencies and actors working through national institutions, directly or indirectly state-owned, strive to achieve clearly articulated objectives of 'national interest'" (Sklair 2001, 81). Accordingly, through the recognition of a critical perspective in IR, and by exploring dormant connections between IM and IR, 'international management' could be defined as an important component of cross-border strategies and practices in which state agencies and actors working through national institutions, directly or indirectly state owned, strive to achieve objectives of national interest.

Interestingly, the misleading separation of 'international' and 'national' reproduced by the IM literature is an assumption that has been reinforced by the realist perspective in IR. This perspective still is dominant in the US (see Tickner 2003b) in accordance with the argument from IR analysts that "changing US domestic political culture is likely to be extremely difficult" (Desch 2008, 40). The enduring influence of such culture on different fields of knowledge might help explain why authors who aim to define IM in the US fail to problematize the political features of 'crossing borders' from the perspective of high politics privileged by IR. It also explains why they keep rejecting critique in broad terms. For different reasons, a major problem is that they overlook political, economic, social and military dimensions that

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influence the complex processes of production, legitimation and diffusion of academic knowledge in both national and international terms (Locke 1996; Mir, Mir and Srinivas 2004; Grant and Mills 2006; Westwood and Jack 2008).

The overlooking of asymmetries in the international system and of corresponding political and cultural issues, in both national and international terms, regarding the creation and functioning of markets, business corporations and academic knowledge is a central obstacle to the implementation of a field of IM that is truly international. The construction and diffusion of a field of IM that accepts different worldviews in an era of globalization has become crucially important also from the standpoint of IR and high politics because management academic institutions from the US have been crossing an increasing number of borders; these processes have been supported by important institutions, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, and by an increasing number of international non-governmental organizations.

This may lead to the reinforcement of asymmetries that the field of IM aims to oppose. The dominant way of thinking in IM should be challenged through the development of a critical perspective from Latin America, in spite of all the expected difficulties and inevitable contradictory outcomes that may arise, in order to enable in a more effective way the elimination of the "US-phobic approach to management education and research in the US" (Hitt 1998, 222).

Actually, the importance of fostering a more diverse field of IM in order to enable management to cross borders more effectively in an era of globalization has been pointed out as a key concern even by the Academy of Management:

[T]he Academy of Management is now facing 'a brave new world'. Therefore, to continue to prosper, the Academy must take at least four general actions in the coming years. First, the Academy must become a part of the world, which means that we must eliminate our 'U.S.-phobic' approach to management education and research and to the operation of the Academy of Management . . . And we have taken steps in this direction, as evidenced by the development of the International Management Division; the formation and implementation of the International Programs Committee, which has been quite active; our membership in the International Federation of Scholarly Associations of Management; and, more recently, our appointment of an editor for the Academy of Management Journal who resides and works in Asia. (Hitt 1998, 221–222)

The neglect of asymmetries of the international system and the overlooking of political and cultural issues that shape academic knowledge by the field of IM and US management institutions could lead, however, to a more problematic picture. It could lead, for instance, to the political manipulation of multiculturalism in order to depoliticize further academic debates and reinforce colonialism and asymmetries. More specifically it could create conditions to the manipulation of recent calls for critique in IM, such as those published by the Academy of Management Review (e.g., lack et al. 2008), in order to reinforce and spread the discourse of apolitical multiculturalism from the US through IM.

The IM literature is concerned with the consequences of globalization for business corporations and business education in the US. This apparently universal concern actually represents a particular perspective. Different authors argue that the field of IM requires not only 'cultural diversity' but also a better definition of its boundaries, especially in relation to the field of MS and to the disciplines of international business (IB) and global management (see Clegg, Ibarra-Colado and Bueno-Rodrigues 1999). In line with claims for multiculturalism in science, which has become a key issue in US foreign policies in an era of globalization, IM is expected to tackle parochialism, ethnocentrism and even xenophobia in the field of MS in the US (e.g., Contractor 2000; Martinez and Toyne 2000; Kedia 2006; Hitt 1998) through a scientific standpoint.

Diversity and multiculturalism in IM are portraved as chiefly important for the sustainable performance of business corporations in global markets. Multiculturalism becomes important as it "offers opportunities for novel (big and different) questions to revitalize the intellectual stagnation" (Tsui 2007, 1360) that exist in most management disciplines. A key feature of these arguments is that they overlook the conditions that have made possible the hegemonic position of the US in the field of MS (see Chapter 5 of this volume) and in IM itself. They also overlook the legitimacy of the US claiming and fostering diversity in IM in an era of globalization without competing worldviews. Finally they overlook the privileged position of big corporations in the field, at the expense of other types of organizations, societies and development that have been asymmetrically 'absorbed' by the big corporation in the US (Perrow 1991) and also at expense of other types of organizations, societies and development that are chiefly important in Latin America (Ibarra-Colado 2006), for instance.

The neglect of such political and cultural issues is at odds with key arguments put forward by IR and IPE authors.1 The first argument2 is that the political relationships between business corporations (especially those from developed countries) and governments have increased in importance in recent years³ (Stopford and Strange 1991; Strange 1994; Vernon 1998; Grosse 2005) as the power of big corporations to shape outcomes has increased in relation to governments and other societal actors and institutions. This is in spite of the prevailing theory of globalization and the neoliberalist discourses from the US that call for convergence and the intransitive superiority of free markets and free enterprises in global terms. The second argument from IR and IPE is that states, governments and international organizations (especially those sponsored by developed

countries) play a central role in the creation and functioning of markets, business corporations and other international organizations (Gilpin 2001; Walter 1998) in spite of the contemporaneous discourses to the contrary. The third argument is that international concepts and theories are not free from specific national interests—"theory is always for someone and for some purpose" (Cox 1981, 128)—despite the general understanding that MS and IM are 'universal'.

Theory is always for someone and for some purpose. All theories have a perspective. Perspectives derive from a position in time and space, specifically social and political time and space. The world is seen from a standpoint definable in terms of nation or social class, of dominance or subordination, of rising or declining power, of a sense of immobility or present crisis, of past experience, and of hopes and expectation for the future . . . There is, accordingly, no such thing as theory in itself, divorced from a standpoint in time and space. When any theory so represents itself, it is the more important to examine it as ideology, and lay bare its concealed perspective. (Cox 1981, 128)

SKETCHING A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE FROM LATIN AMERICA

Given our purpose of construction, legitimation and diffusion of a critical Latin American perspective in IM, which recognizes that representing the diverse worlds and voices that exist in Latin America is not an easy task (Ibarra-Colado 2006); that there are other regional representations such as Central America, South America and the Southern Cone that compete and conflict with the concept of Latin America (Lima and Hirst 2006); and that the idea of Latin America itself is problematic from ideological, cultural, nationalist and postcolonial standpoints (Nef 1994; Mignolo 2008; Munck 1999; Feres 2005)—we argue that IM demands interdisciplinary developments with IR and IPE in/from Latin America as a way of getting less distant from what it claims to represent—that is, "the most eclectic" of all fields (Contractor 2000, 7).

Such a perspective from Latin America is committed to a specific type of "pluriversality, not universality" (Mignolo and Tostlanova 2006, 210) that aims not to depoliticize further academic debates within IM. This perspective is in line with the argument from IR that a legitimate field of IM in an era of globalization would have to be based on the acceptance of the fact that "different world views can coexist" (Cox 2007, 513). Nevertheless, taking into account that diversity and multiculturalism in themselves are problematic concepts because they tend to depoliticize and naturalize the debates in an era of globalization (Banerjee and Linstead 2001), the main purpose of such perspective is to attenuate, rather than eliminate, asymmetries within (and perhaps through) IM.

In this respect our critical position is in line with the recent arguments on behalf of critique within IM from management scholars in different countries (see Jack et al. 2008). Nevertheless, we aim to go beyond such important calls for critique by not fostering the development of IM from some 'universal' standpoint from the margins and also by not trying to locate IM only within the disciplinarian boundaries of management.

First, we aim to foster a perspective from Latin America rather than a general perspective from the margins, despite the fear that it could "provoke [some type of] separatism" (Westwood and Jack 2007, 257) and block partially the recognition of different types of hybridism pointed out by the postcolonial literature. We understand that the construction of a critical perspective from Latin America is a way of creating better conditions to "cross-cultural encounters of difference and the conjoint construction of meaning and identity in such encounters" (Westwood and Jack 2007, 257) even within Latin America itself.

By drawing upon the idea of Latin America, we agree with the argument that 'the international' does not necessarily refer only to the state as a fixed entity, but also to the nation as a subjective and inter-subjective concept. In other words, we agree with the argument that the 'international' extends "more broadly to groups of people who identify themselves as collective actors in relations to others" (Cox 2007, 515). Accordingly, in this book we engage with academics from different countries and regions who identify themselves with Latin America and with different types of critique. However, we do not understand that cross-cultural encounters between IM academics, even within Latin America as a fixed entity, would become automatically free from asymmetries within the international context just because they recognize themselves as hybrids who transcend the fixed categories or entities that are pointed out by the IR literature and systematically neglected by the IM literature.

Second, through such critical perspective we also aim to move IM toward the field of IR in order to enable the construction of a hybrid field in/from Latin America. This hybrid field might be capable of recognizing and addressing tensions, ambiguities and structures at the international level that both constrain and enable the development of academic knowledge. We disclaim the objective of bringing contributions from IR into IM to sort out problems that have been defined through the standpoint of the dominant view in management. We posit that 'international management' should be addressed also through and within IR as it is mostly subordinate and a valuable resource to IR.

Our call for such interdisciplinary development from Latin America should not be taken as a mere intellectual exercise. It is also grounded in two 'empirical' facts that attracted our attention at the time the second author was doing her PhD in IR and the first was doing his PhD in MS, both in the United Kingdom (UK). The first fact was the realization that both IR and IPE recognize the theory of dependency⁴—an important theoretical

tradition in/from Latin America with both virtues and limitations (Munck 1999)—but IM does not (Guedes and Faria 2007). The second was that IR and IPE academics ignore management academics, and vice versa, due to historical academic constraints that set MS and political science apart, especially in the US (Vogel 1996).

Moreover, since most of the professional trajectory of the second author has been undertaken in the field of MS rather than in IR, we argue that IM needs interdisciplinary developments with IR and IPE because of the extraordinary reach and scope achieved by the field of MS in recent years, to which the more recent process of academic strengthening and international diffusion of IB and IM has contributed (Westwood and Jack 2008).

The increasing scope and international reach of the field of MS, also through the development and diffusion of IB and IM discourses from a US perspective, is problematic not just because it helps block local developments from management scholars, such as in Latin America, but also because it provides more power to management in relation to IR and IPE in the region.

The increasing scope and reach of IM is a bit concerning as it may block the advance of the flurry of intellectual activity concerning the state of IR that has been undertaken over the last twenty years. Grounded on what has been actually achieved by the field of IR over the recent decades, Tickner (2003a) warns us that we should not have illusions about the effective outcomes generated by the intellectual advances and struggles within IR. This helps explain why the critical perspective sketched in this chapter aims at reducing, rather than eliminating, asymmetries within IM.

Tickner points out that the effective transformation of IR remains a distant picture, particularly from the perspective of the periphery. Academics from the core still lead the debates on pluralism within IR, and the incorporation of a multiple and competing knowledge from the periphery has not been achieved.

Although critical self-reflection within IR has undoubtedly led to increased intellectual tolerance and pluralism, the field continues to present a tremendous paradox. Calls for disciplinary opening have not been met by systematic efforts to explore IR from third world perspectives. The rejection of universal knowledge projects and absolute truths has not been matched by concrete actions to map out and incorporate multiple, competing know-hows that are scattered throughout the world. In other words, the 'who' of IR studies continues to be a select number of academics hailing primarily from the countries of the core. (Tickner 2003a, 296)

Tickner points out serious obstacles that IR must overcome in order to tackle asymmetries from a North-South approach and turn into reality the

argument that different worldviews can coexist. She overlooks the increasing importance of IM probably as a result of the divide between political science and management as much as the historical divide between 'high politics' and 'low politics' in IR that bring tensions even between IR and IPE (Jackson and Sorensen 1999). We argue then that the increasing importance and reach of IM should be addressed by IR scholars (especially, but not exclusively, from Latin America as a fixed entity) as a central issue to the field of IR.

We engage with an argument made by Robert Cox in the early 1980s, which has been overlooked by those who have pursued a more extreme critical position, through the mobilization of Cox's argument that "theory is always for someone and for some purpose". In other words, although we agree with the argument that all theories have a perspective, we also agree with Cox's lesser-known argument that "sophisticated theory is never just the expression of a perspective. The more sophisticated a theory is, the more it reflects upon and transcends its own perspective" (Cox 1981, 128).

Accordingly, we posit that the critical perspective sketched in this chapter might lead IM to be developed from a hybrid perspective in two senses. First, it should be developed not only within MS but also within IR. Second, it should be developed not only from within Latin America but also from outside the region. This could enable us to use and define IM not in order to solve specific problems faced by management knowledge and institutions in an era of globalization as defined from a specific perspective through the establishment of a critical perspective from Latin America, but rather to review and reinvent management itself from a broader standpoint (see Chapter 1 of this volume).

REVIEWING AND REINVENTING MANAGEMENT

Authors who call for cross-cultural diversity also argue that IM should be taken as a social construction (Boddewyn, Toyne and Martínez 2004). However, they overlook the definition of management as "irredeemably political" (Clegg et al. 1996, 190) and those who describe management as a process of domination and social control (see Alvesson and Willmott 2003; see Chapter 7 of this volume). They disclaim the argument that management theory and knowledge is "a political discourse par excellence . . . it is also political knowledge in the ways that its theory legitimates some practices while it marginalizes others" (Clegg and Palmer 1996, 3). In sum they aim to define IM through a perspective of social construction and cultural diversity in order to enable further cross-border processes by overlooking critical views on management.

They overlook the fact that the spread of management from large business corporations into the professions, the public sector, the non-profit sector and everyday life in almost every corner of the world after the Cold War