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# Introduction

North America stands as the Mecca for management. It took less than a century for American Management to establish itself as a leader in both practice and academia. As a result, Business and Business Education throughout the world are strongly influenced and, to a large extent, dominated by the US.

Will this remain so? Could it be that some of the various criticisms periodically formulated from within the US academic community itself and most often targeted at the MBA, the most visible symbol of American management education, would turn out to undermine an otherwise quite successful model? Could the model also be affected by some of the rare but incredibly damaging scandals of the beginning of the twenty-first century (unethical behavior, inappropriate governance, top management and board greediness, leading to focus all attention on financial profit whatever the social or environmental costs, such as child labor or improper disposal of hazardous wastes, etc.)?

In this context, will other regions of the world continue to choose to follow the US model? Could some regions be waking up to challenge the current dominant model? Could the dominant model be challenged through other means, e.g. technological innovation via e-learning? Could some alternate models emerge?

We conducted a Foresight exercise to bring some light on these issues. We did this by adopting a European viewpoint looking at both the US and EU models but we also discussed other regions of the world. We believe that most of our findings may be useful beyond North America and Europe, as they can be extrapolated and adapted to other regional contexts, at least to some extent.

All in all, we came to the conclusion that while the US is dominating the scene of management education worldwide, other players, including

Europe, may be waking up, not necessarily in a catching up paradigm, but possibly on a differentiation mode, thus offering the world alternate ways of thinking and educating for business practice. The game is not over yet, but we argue that this is a relevant scenario, i.e. a potential context for which the stakeholders in the world of Management Education may want to prepare. (Along the way, as Europeans, we go one step further. Turning specifically to Europe we argue that some key players there need to recognize the importance of the issue of proper management education and react accordingly. We thus send a call to key European players in the system: the Commission of the European Union, governments in member states, regional governments and Industry). *"The future is not to be discovered. The future is primarily to be invented"* (Gaston Berger). *"A Foresight exercise aims at thinking about a variety of possible futures (the 'futurable') as a way to bring light on what we intend to do today"* (Michel Godet).

\* \* \*

History is filled with stories of empires which were built through military conquest, maintained through economic domination and then in-printed or rooted via the cultural influence of the leading power, until the softening of the whole empire made it a tempting prey for external attacks or implusive internal pressures. The old Egypt, the Greeks and then the Romans in the Mediterranean sea, the Arab domination from Spain to Pakistan and Indonesia, the Spanish and Portuguese colonies from the Americas to the Philippines or Macao, or more recently, the Victorian British empire give us examples of a sequential model of domination: first the soldier for the territory, then the merchant and businessman for the economy, and the teacher and the priest for the mind and the soul of the people.

This may appear as an overly simplified and rather deterministic view of historical cycles. Yet, this may bring some light on the current domination of the US on management education.

The nineteenth century saw the rise of the US as a giant-to-be. In his *"De la démocratie en Amérique"* (1832) Alexis de Tocqueville clearly identified the potential of the fascinating country emerging at that time in North America. He recognized the immense reservoir of open space on the land, the political promise of the democracy prevailing in the young nation, the pragmatism of the American people, the blending power of free initiative as a way to reach for money and status – away from the old European tradition of aristocracy through birth, etc. He described a promising nation, a power-to-be.

The twentieth century saw the fall of the British and French empires and the full establishment of the US as a super-power. The two world wars brought the GI around the globe as the sword against anti-democratic rulers. From then on, apart from a trail of US military bases left along the way, businessmen progressively substituted for the GIs in most countries, with some painful exceptions such as Korea or Vietnam as the cold war was in fact being hotly fought on the territories of third parties. At the same time, American universities soon become the place where the elite throughout the world would send their children for a good education. And Hollywood also followed, disseminating images of the American way of life and its cultural heritage around the globe. The implosion of the former USSR and the fall of the Berlin wall finalized the establishment of the US as the one and only superpower offering its model to the world for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It may be too early to tell whether the 9/11 attack and the subsequent Afghanistan – Iraq move will be remembered as the sign of the beginning of some form of a (relative) decline – the withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975 being thus essentially an early signal. In any case, it may be argued that America will stay on as a key power throughout the century, as our modern times may be witnessing the emergence of a multi-polar world with several blocks of power bound to co-exist as co-opetitive entities.

Some may oppose the above analysis arguing that the American way of running business became dominant not because of wars but primarily thanks to the excellence of the model of management and the competitiveness of the American-based multinational corporation. This would just be another interpretation of the same historical data, which would open an interesting debate. We could argue that the Japanese or German modes of management have been rather successful, while significantly differing from what is being taught in US business schools. But we will not go in that direction here.

What we suggest retaining from our brief historical interpretation is two-fold:

Firstly, the long-lasting effect of a dominating power stems from the resilience of the cultural footprint which is brought in the wake of the military and economic domination. This effect may last many decades after the decline of the military and economic power. In a way, the sequence of domination in our simplified model of historical cycles mirrors the path of a comet. The comet itself may be relatively short, but the tail is gigantic. In our analogy, the comet stands for the military conquest while the tail would represent the cultural footprint. The Roman Empire is still present throughout the world in many ways (language, calendar, law and institutions, religion, etc.). The prestige of

Ox-bridge or Sorbonne remains decades after the fall of the empires, to a certain extent irrespective of the strength of the economies of the UK or France. The same may apply to Humboldt in Berlin – despite several decades behind the wall. In that sense, one may expect the US domination on culture, if not on economy, and in any case on management education, to last much longer than the GI presence outside the US.

Secondly, if the world of geopolitics is leaning towards a multi-polar arrangement, one may legitimately ask whether this could have an influence on the variety of models for management and management education which may co-exist in such a new international setting. Things may not change immediately but one may wonder whether the days of the one-model-for-all in management may not soon be behind us.

And if this line of reasoning is worth pursuing, it soon appears that among the emerging blocks in the world which is currently shaping up in front of us in this beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and more specifically when it comes to management education, Europe is a typical candidate to be a challenger to the US model of business schools.

Other candidates may be thought of, Japan being one of them. (We did not give a close enough look at the Japanese system of management education but this would most certainly be an interesting exercise). Apart from Japan, Asia is in great demand for western management training, especially China and India. (China may actually end up building a specific managerial model in the long run, but for the time being it seems that Chinese authorities are doing their best to learn from the outside, primarily from the US and Europe).

Australia and New Zealand are in a situation similar to Europe, facing the US model, but they are geographically part of the Pacific Rim and are thus interested in connecting further with Japan, the emergent economies of China and India and the rest of Asia. Canada may also be seen in a similar cultural situation but its geographic proximity to the US, the very close links existing between the two economies and the high level of mobility of students and managers across the border create a very peculiar situation. As a result, Canada is both very integrated into the North American model of management and, in a way, still searching for its own differentiated path.

Russia is in an intermediate position, having opened up to the West but eager to limit the influence on the way it will run business. Management education in Russia is thus an open but sensitive question.

Latin America is under strong Northern influence and may be interested in getting access to an alternate way to train their elite in business, thus leaning towards Europe as a second source, at least in part. The Middle East is also trying to train managers for its developing businesses

beyond oil, thus turning to America but also Europe. And Africa is trailing, with many difficulties.

All in all, beyond the US itself, Europe is the most obvious candidate which could possibly influence the future of management education in a way which would somehow differ from the dominant current US model. We thus felt that it would make sense to use European lenses to study the future of management education in general.

Yet, some would argue that Europe is currently trying to catch up through direct imitation, importing the US business school model and thus the rules of the game – and its shortcomings. In that sense, Europe would be increasingly aligned on the US model, thus simply running behind.

However, some others would suggest that Europe may be on the verge of choosing to play a slightly different game, at least to a certain extent, leveraging some of its historical and cultural specificities to depart from the dominant mainstream US model of business schools, in a differentiation strategy. But this is yet to be seen.

Our book is precisely a contribution to discuss this possible bifurcation in management education.

It should be stressed that our aim is not to try to oppose Europe to the US. This would be both irrelevant and fruitless. Our intent is to use the case of Europe as a way to discuss whether the future of business schools worldwide may or may not remain aligned to the US dominant model of today. We thus first look at the US model as the baseline and we then look at the future of business schools through the lenses of Europe.

It should also be noted that some may argue that there is more than a single model of management in America. We agree that there are variants as the US managerial stage is a complex and lively community where many views and practices confront and interact. As a result, management style and methods in America do vary across sectors, from mature to emerging industries, from the large multinational to the Hi-tech start-up, from the Iron Belt to the Silicon Valley. Yet, in a broader context, we wish to stress that all these tend to belong to the same management paradigm, what we refer to as the American managerial way. This may sound as a sweeping generalization, but this macro view will help us discuss the future of management education and research adopting a worldwide perspective.

\* \* \*

The research behind this book all started when we were invited to write a Foresight report for the French Foundation for Management Education (Fnege) on the future of Business schools in France and Europe. At that point we invited colleagues to join in a working group to contribute

through a series of monthly half-day discussions for about 6 months. We used a Foresight technique known as “Mactor” (Godet, 2005). We also interviewed a panel of insiders from the international academic community (mostly business school Deans and business professors) and practitioners from Industry. Most interviewees came from Europe and North America. We also reviewed the available literature dealing with the topic. This initial Foresight exercise led to five scenarios for European business schools. These scenarios, together with the report, were then extensively discussed in a series of seminars with various audiences. The Foresight report raised a lot of interest and led us to consider extending the analysis.

We thus subsequently decided to broaden our perspective, calling upon European colleagues to establish an informed descriptive base of the current situation and trends in their respective countries or about regions they would know well. We also asked them to revisit the Foresight scenarios with us. We are thus deeply indebted to these colleagues who contributed to the making of the book. Yet, apart from the edited chapters of Part II, the usual disclaimers apply as we, the authors, are fully and solely responsible for the ideas presented and discussed here.

This book is the result of the above process. It is about the future of business schools. It looks at the world of business education in 2020, adopting a broad perspective. This is a Foresight exercise. The book first describes the present situation as it is in various countries, starting obviously from the US as the baseline and then discussing the case of Europe, in the diversity of European countries. We actually use the case of Europe as a “system of systems of management education” typically confronted with the US dominant model of business schools. This serves as a case material to conduct the Foresight analysis: searching for the main families of players in the system, identifying challenges facing the families of players from within the system as well as exogenous pressures exerted onto the system from the outside. In turn, this leads to

Given the lack of overall statistics for worldwide management education, we have made some gross evaluations to generate orders of magnitude. We believe that some 200 000 management faculties teach about 4 to 5 million students every year in about 7600 management programs around the globe, for a business of about 10 to 12 billion US \$. Although these figures are gross estimates, they provide some indication of the scale of the activity conducted in business schools. But the real importance of management education should be looked at through the influence of business schools on the overall economy. To a large extent, this is why we wrote this book.



building scenarios for the future of business schools. On that basis, the book draws strategic implications for the main players in management education in the main regions of the world. We discuss strategies for North America, Europe, the Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and RoW (rest of the World).

We feel that a European system of management education may be currently emerging. We also feel that this emerging European management education raises interest in the rest of the world and may soon challenge the US dominant model. Clearly, Harvard will remain Harvard and the power of American management research will remain for many years ahead. Yet, we feel that something may be happening in the world of business schools and this may be coming from Europe.

The design of the book follows the line of reasoning which we just developed in this introduction.

We start with the US baseline: we invite JC Spender to present his vision of where North American business schools currently stand and where they are heading. We use this as our baseline.

We develop our Foresight view as Part I. The first chapter presents a systematic transversal analysis of the European situation in its diversity, thus introducing the families of players within a typical system of management education (Chap 1). We then introduce the challenges facing the players from within the system (Chap 2). We also introduce the exogenous pressures exerted onto the system from the outside (Chap 3). On that basis, we go for the presentation of our Foresight output in the form of 5 scenarios for the future of business schools (Chap 4). We then draw the strategic implications of the scenarios for stakeholders in management education in various regions of the world (Chap 5). Finally, as Europeans, we go one step further to send a call to key European players, asking them to better support management education and research in the EU (Chap 6).

The background descriptions of the current situations in various geographical zones and specific countries are presented in Part II. In other words, Part II provides the detailed background material which made it possible to discuss the future of business education both in context and in perspective.

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