

## **Selected Topics in Business Administration:**

### **Global Management – Part A: Conceptual Heuristics**

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## **PART A      Conceptual Heuristics**

### **1      Mapping the issue**

§1      In order to understand and describe 'global management' there are two ways to go about it.

§2      One, is to adopt what is trivially considered and defined as 'global' or 'international management'. For instance, to say that "Global management concerns the management of employees and resources when carrying on business internationally. This includes all business activities, such as sales, marketing, hiring, and finance practices." (Online 1)

§3      Two, to carry out an ontological analysis, that is to understand the 'being' of 'global management' with all its ramifications. It is the latter that is carried out here. In detail then, it is necessary to appreciate what is meant by 'global' or its common synonym 'international', and what by 'management'.

### **2      Global / International**

§4      Let us start with capturing the 'global'. Etymologically, this term derives from *globus* referring to a sphere. It is only since the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the term refers to "worldwide, universal, pertaining to the whole globe of the earth" (Online 2).

§5      The term 'inter-national' coined by Bentham (Online 3) assumes on the one hand the foundation of a nation by the rule of law and on the other, a convention passed between nations mutually acknowledged. Thus, it is less encompassing than the term 'global' since all that is inter-national is not necessarily global. A case in point are the UN unrecognised nation-states.

### **3      Management**

§6      I contend that there are two ways to approach 'management', namely, transitive and intransitive.

#### **Transitive management**

§7      With the advent of 'Cameralist' public administration (Sewell, 2001: 182), 'management' has become to be considered not only as 'the management of' requiring an object of action, but also a discipline in the Foucauldian sense with its own lexis, norms, and processes. We shall examine both aspects.

#### *Aspect 1: The object of management*

§8      'Management' as 'the management of' requires an object to receive the action of 'management'. It is transitive and corresponds to the etymology of the term 'management' as *manus*, as the handling of (Online 4). The question now at hand is: what is the object of 'management'?

§9 Is it the ‘business organisation’? In its abstract form, the answer is positive if one follows Clemmer (Online 5) for whom management is directed towards things, that is, an *objectum* (Online 6). Then it is necessary to appreciate what is meant by a ‘business organisation’.

§10 Elsewhere (Zamaros, 2011: 18) I have claimed that an “organization can be seen to be a legal and economic unit in constant interaction with some other”.

§11 Let us start by clarifying the term ‘organisation’: it is a community with a purpose built on difference and similarity (Online 7), thus common, which is fundamentally economic. Thus the ‘business’ side of the organisation is included in the conceptualisation of an ‘organisation’ in the sense that *there is no organisation that does not have a business or economic purpose* – the distinction for profit and non-profit thereby becoming futile (even though some tax systems retain it to set apart those organisations that pay tax, such as corporations, to those that do not, such as charities (see for instance Online 8). In other words, a ‘business organisation’ is a euphemism, yet widely in use!

§12 Thus the ‘management of an organisation’ is none other than the praxis of handling a community that is relatively planned and organised and, in most cases, legally so.

§13 There are two conditions attached to it: One, *conducting a community does not occur in the void*: it presupposes a purpose, the community’s, or the handler’s or both. Thus, achieving this purpose (Davis & Meyer, 1998: 2) requires the use or consumption of resources, tangible or not, that the community produces or not, hence a characterisation of the ‘economic’ as the domain of antagonistic resource exchange.

§14 Two, *an organization does not exist in a void* by the mere fact that it has geographical existence, a domicile, even if this is an IP. Thus, the handling of an organization presumes that of the place where the organization is present.

### *Aspect 2: Management as discipline*

§15 The discipline of ‘management’ sets out its lexis, norms, and methods: it is seen to be a science that naturalizes praxis (Lidchi, 1997: 170-178; 183) in exactly the way the lexical and normative system in place describes ‘management’ by means of “clichés” (Miller, 1995: 20), that is rigid and, at times, uncompromising descriptors.

### **Intransitive management**

§16 Elsewhere (Online 9), I have claimed that ‘management’ refers to the “simultaneous and changing process of consumption and production of goods, ideas, language and thought”. As a mere process that takes place without any control or intervention, in spite of the science that seeks the contrary.

§17 It is a view that puts forward the intransitive aspect of ‘management’ with two stands. One, the object to receive the action of ‘management’ is ill-defined, fleeting or changing. Two, ‘management’ and all actions thereof are at pains or unable to handle the object of action.

§18 The strands put forward the limits of the transitive view since what seems to be the fundamentum of a community, people, is far from being controllable according to Stoner (Online 10) – to the extent of upsetting the very notion of ‘management’ by rendering futile the label ‘intransitive management’ since *manus* is precluded.

§19 This view articulates consumption and production praxis as less than discrete phenomena. The fact that a consumer uses up resources while producing waste, and the fact that a producer offers products and services, which are approximate, while using up resources and producing waste, questions the straitjacket microeconomics of demand and supply with its neat diagrams and superfluous math.

§20 What is more, the view considers that that the domains of consumption and production are de facto vague objectivities unlike the blurring of the economy that Davis and Meyer (1998: 2-4) contend as a result of the increased speed of change, interactions, and exchange. In effect, a consumer handling the economics of demand and that imperfectly for lack of knowledge, is unable to handle those of production, especially waste. At the same time, producers who can manage (to some extent) supply are unable to manage consumers and the economics of waste.

#### **4 Context**

§21 ‘Context’ is about joining or weaving together or fabricating in its 15<sup>th</sup> century meaning (Online 11). The contemporary meaning is that of a setting or environment (Online 12) making a geographical reference. It can also be a situation or a circumstance (ibid.) thus bearing an event-related reference.

§22 Wan (2009: 33) combines these meanings in explaining that “a circumstance is a weaving together of many types of entities”. The entities referred to comprise geographical locales, actors, events, and their properties (ibid.).

§23 With Giunchiglia (in Wan, 2009: 35) the emphasis is geographical to retain the contemporary meaning by claiming that “the notion of context formalizes the idea of localization of knowledge and reasoning”.

§24 I will therefore claim that a *context refers to a setting that is unique as per its geography and actors distinguished by their unique properties and experiencing unique events in a web of interactions with one another at an instance of time.*

#### **5 Contextual management**

§25 With these insights we can explore the ‘transitive contextual management’ as the praxis of handling the actors who are present at a particular locale, and this includes any organisation as an arranged and planned community.

§26 The ‘intransitive’ viewpoint puts emphasis on the web of relations and events that befall these relations premised on the observation that a relation is an active event in itself.

§27 The 'intransitive contextual management' then puts forward *the fact of relations*: that they are difficult to handle, at varying and relative degrees, for they happen, aleatorily.

## 6 The global variants of management

§28 Transposing from the above, the transitive view of 'global management' is concerned with the handling of an organization globally.

§29 It is instructive to clarify then as to whether the organization is 'global' in the sense of its being present in *various* 'contexts', and hence speak of '*the contextual management of a global organization*' in the sense that the organization manages simultaneously the various contexts it is located.

§30 Alternatively, to clarify if the organization is established in one locale yet has dealings which are global, that is, '*the global management of an organization*'.

§31 Some thinkers such as Lamson (Online 13) go into lengths to say that considering the internationalisation of production and the growth of trade, there is today just one and unique 'context' that is 'global', that is a 'global context'.

§32 There are a number of issues with considering one 'global context', and to start with, omitting to examine whether the elements making up the 'global context' are actually global. Indeed, in applying the above-offered definition (§24), if the geography element is possibly met, it is far from obvious to meet the actor prerequisite and their local variations.

§33 There is also another potential confusion between talking about the 'global' factually and quantitatively with reference to trade volumes and the sort and carrying out an analysis of the 'global', which requires defining and delimiting the parameters of the search.

§34 Finally there is an assumption and hence the error to think that organizations have a presence in all the available geographical locales.

§35 'Organizational presence', I contend, is relative, giving credence to the intransitive view in its global variant by highlighting worldwide processes touching various 'contexts' which are not always under the control of organizations. Hence, consumption and production are factually global as phenomena in the sense that they are found in all populated contexts across the globe (*sic*) yet are relatively globalized or not at all depending on the type and strength of the globalization relationship as a process (Online 14).

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