

# FORUM

Invited Article

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## CHALLENGING ANGLO-SAXON DOMINANCE IN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The international scene of management and organizational knowledge (MOK) is dominated by concepts, models and theories originated in the Anglo-Saxon World. Such hegemony in the field can be understood as a form of epistemic colonialism, sustained and reproduced by power relations within the academic world (Ibarra-Colado, 2006). It is, then, pertinent to question the desirability of this state of affairs, especially in a scenario of international crisis that is challenging the long established Western global prevalence. The fact of Anglo-Saxon hegemony in MOK is not new, its consequences are clear: the exclusion or subalternization of alternative perspectives originated in other national contexts. It is hard to talk of true “international” context in the discipline if there is a continuing process of hegemony construction that blocks, or at least hinders, the participation of scholars working in non-Anglo-Saxon countries (Alcadipani & Reis Rosa, 2011). The goal of this special forum is to explore whether, and how, this hegemony can be effectively challenged.

To gain attention in “international” academia, it is essential to be heard in the English-speaking world. Paradoxically, even those who opposed Anglo-Saxon hegemony, or more broadly the hegemony of Western thought, such as the postcolonial theorists, publish their works in English to make them known to a wider audience. An interesting example in this regard is that of the Argentine scholar Walter Mignolo, one of the most prominent theorists of postcolonialism in its Latin Americanist version and professor at Duke University. When asked why he wrote his “The idea of Latin America” in English, being an academic trained in Argentina and France, Mignolo (González, 2006) just answered “in the domain in which the book operates, I suspect there are more Spanish speakers who read English than the other way around”. This suggests that the key to success in social sciences is largely the ability to participate in the academic system of the Anglosphere. Would Mignolo have acquired the same theoretical relevance if he had developed his academic career in his native Argentina? It is highly unlikely. Does this mean that scholars from peripheral countries must spend some time working in the Anglosphere, or even their whole academic career there, as did Ernesto Laclau, to effectively spread their ideas? Although there are examples to the contrary — such as Enrique Dussel, an Argentine philosopher currently residing in Mexico and a prominent representative of Latin American social thought; Jacques Rancière, one of the most important French philosophers who offers a radically new conception of emancipation; and, the Mexican organizational theorist Eduardo Ibarra-Colado, the alluring power of the material and symbolic resources (i.e., prestige) provided by English-speaking countries, and mainly the U.S. and U.K., is a decisive factor in the construction of the epistemic hegemony of these countries as engines of knowledge in the social sciences and privileged locales for its diffusion.

Moreover, the evaluation system of individual scholarly productivity, which has promoted the growth of “international” scientific databases, is clearly biased towards English-language

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publications with great prestige and impact; and so it becomes another factor that perpetuates Anglo-Saxon dominance in the scientific world. Of course, it could be argued that the linguistic imperialism of English has a positive side, as it facilitates communication within the global community of scientists, thus reducing an inevitable “Babel tower” effect. However, in social sciences, this linguistic aspect, more than an element that assists communication, acts basically as a filter, an exclusion parameter, since what is regarded as scholarly publications require a high level of stylistic proficiency that almost only native speakers possess. The advantages that this brings for them are huge. For social scientists who are not from the Anglosphere, a solid mastery of English is a necessity for survival. In contrast, in the Anglosphere, foreign language learning is only relevant for specialists in area studies and, even for them, high proficiency in writing is not quite essential. Parochialism thus becomes very common in social sciences, which nevertheless should be more open to what is produced in other nations and cultures. [Ventriss et al. \(2010\)](#), for example, claim that the contributions of the Brazilian sociologist Alberto Guerreiro Ramos to the study of organizations did not have the reception that they really deserved among US scholars, and they attribute this problem to the parochialism that prevails in this academic environment.

Moreover, the Anglo Saxon world is home to what can be regarded as the “world class” publishing houses, universities, business schools, accreditation bodies and all sort of paraphernalia that allow knowledge to travel among different locations. The periphery in MOS is created and sustained via everyday practices and actions that confer the Anglo-Saxon world a prevalent and dominant position. Besides, scholars outside the Anglosphere, including those in less developed countries, actively take part in the creation of centers and peripheries in MOS, as we also tend to deem our knowledge and academic practices as “inferior” to those of the North.

In this context, in which prestige and financial resources are almost monopolized by the Anglosphere academia, in a process continuously fed by the major academic publishers and « international » scientific databases, Anglo-Saxon hegemony appears as monolithic, formidable. Yet the development of the social sciences is not limited to the Anglo-Saxon countries, even despite the parochialism of some English-speaking scholars. In sociological theory, the enterprise of knowledge creation is more plural, although with a heavy Eurocentric bias. For example, in a book of readings on contemporary social theory, [Calhoun et al. \(2002\)](#) devote nearly half of it to theorists outside the Anglosphere (even considering Zygmunt Bauman, a Polish émigré). If this occurs in social theory, could MOK achieve a similar level of plurality? This seems unlikely, especially

given the historical imprinting of the US on the evolution of management education, unless academic parochialism in the Anglosphere diminishes and there is also an increase in research collaboration between Anglo-Saxon scholars, currently the main gatekeepers in the field, and scholars working in other countries. In addition, researchers from other countries should pay more attention to traditions of thought that do not come from the Anglosphere. Otherwise, their works would still be a mere reflection of the dominant paradigms and theories in MOK and, thus, an instrumental form of internal epistemic colonialism ([Ibarra Colado, 2006](#)).

However, despite financial and intellectual pressure to standardize itself according to US criteria, this hegemonic process has also been met with varying levels of resistance. One can observe examples in some European countries ([Chanlat 1994](#), [Berry 1995](#); [Taskin & de Nanteuil, 2011](#); [Golsorkhi, Huault, & Leca, 2009](#)), Latin America ([Ibarra-Colado, 2006](#); [Guedes & Faría, 2010](#); [Misoczky, 2011](#); [Paes de Paula, 2012](#); [Ibarra-Colado](#)) and Africa ([Nkomo, 2011](#)). Besides, some scholars in the Anglo-Saxon world such as [Prasad \(2003, 2012\)](#), [Cooke \(2004\)](#), [Westwood \(2006\)](#), [Mir and Mir \(2013\)](#), to name but a few, have been critical to the colonial dimension attached to Anglo-Saxon MOK, and our special forum is another step to add to a growing body of work aimed at offering alternative ways to think about management and organizations. So far, MOK knowledge in the peripheries have been produced emulating the Anglo Saxon world, but it is essential to generate MOK that is related to the problems and circumstances of the non-Anglo-Saxon world.

We hope that the papers selected for this special forum will help opening the game of MOK to new approaches to studying organizational phenomena. If greater plurality in the discipline is considered a worthy goal, and we believe it should, then the contributions that we outline below are a positive step in this direction. Since language and content are dialectically interrelated, we have made the choice of keeping the selected articles in the original language in which they were written.

The article entitled “An anti-management statement in dialogue with critical Brazilian authors in organization studies” by [Misoczky, Kruter, and Goulart \(2015\)](#) present a clear example of indigenous organizational knowledge that, despite its relevance, and pioneering role, to critical management scholarship has not received much attention at the international level. [Kruter et al. \(2015\)](#) present and briefly discuss the works of Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, Maurício Tragtenberg, Fernando Prestes Motta and José Henrique de Faria, and argue that these authors represent a particular stance of an anti-managerialist perspective to organization studies in that they do not subordinate the latter to a managerialist emphasis in practice

and novelty. In this regard, it demonstrates that some Brazilian scholars have successfully developed organization studies (OS) in Brazil in an autonomous fashion from management (M) theory and praxis. Misoczky et al. (2015) briefly discuss the thesis that OS is subordinated to M, and then present the contributions of the four Brazilian pioneers in CMS. Interestingly enough, some of the works mentioned in the article not only predate CMS, but also the labor process theory originated in Braverman's Labor and Monopoly Capital. The relevance of the first three authors considered (the work of Faria (2015), a disciple of Tragtenberg, dates from more recent decades) can be easily observed in recent Brazilian critical management scholarship (Davel & Alcadipani, 2003; Paes de Paula et al., 2010) and Guerreiro Ramos even had some influence on public administration theory at an international level, possibly because he spent his last years teaching at the University of Southern California (Ventriss & Candler, 2005). However, they do not suggest that Northern OS should be substituted by Southern OS, but rather their basic claim is that OS should be emancipated from M, a contention that has no "cardinal priority" (West, South or whatever one may prefer). Thus, what is needed is a pluriversal approach to understanding organizational phenomena, and the Brazilian critical tradition in the field is a step forward in this regard, providing a direction that has been consistently followed by contemporary Brazilians theorists (among others Alcadipani & Reis Rosa, 2011; Alcadipani & Faria, 2014; Faria et al., 2010; Misoczky & Kruter, 2012).

We have included two articles in Portuguese. In the first one, entitled "Resgatando o nexo governança-gestão internacional: por uma nova ordem em gestão", Faria, Guedes, and Wanderley (2015) attempt to overcome the western order underpinning the literature on International Management and International Business, or the international management-governance nexus. The manuscript does so by (re)construction of a Luso-Brazilian or Brasilo-Portuguese order that challenges the hegemony of the neoliberal order attempting to build a new order in management towards a world in which many worlds and knowledges would be able to coexist. The second article, "O cotidiano e a história: construindo novos olhares sobre a Administração" authored by Barros and Carrieri (2015), aims to discuss how studies in history and everyday life can contribute to the development of new perspectives on management. The paper proposes to approximate management, history and studies on everyday life in order to produce alternative approaches within management. Both articles show that Brazil has a long tradition in challenging the epistemic dominance of the Anglo Saxon World. Finally, in his paper "L'apport de la sociologie pragmatique française aux études critiques en

management", the French scholar Taupin (2015) argues for the importance of French pragmatic sociology, mainly from Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, to the critique of domination in organizations. The paper suggests that such an approach can help us make sense of the new forms of domination in contemporary organizations.

We have also included two invited essays. The first was authored by Carlos Jesús Fernández Rodríguez, a Spanish sociologist who has done a pioneering work in introducing CMS to a Spanish-speaking audience (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007a) as well as contributing to a critical understanding of the functions of management discourse in contemporary society (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007b; Alonso & Fernández Rodríguez, 2013). In his essay, Fernández Rodríguez (2015) makes a brief historical sketch of how Anglo-Saxon, and mainly US, perspectives became hegemonic in the field of Spanish business education. He acknowledges that there were some indigenous perspectives in Spanish MOS, mostly as a result of a process of hybridization between the new theories and concepts created in the US Academia and the domestic cultural influences on Spanish scholars, although the current situation is that Spanish management scholars are mostly interested in producing publications that could be accepted in top US management journals, which requires following the theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches dictated by the orthodoxy in the field. Fernández Rodríguez is not too optimistic about a drastic change in this state of affairs, but also stressed that there is some limited space for working in new, critical directions in MOS. In this regard, he suggests that the construction of an alliance with Latin American and European scholars is of paramount importance to generate new scholarly research in the field that goes beyond the reproduction of Anglo-Saxon theories and models.

In the concluding invited essay, the renowned French scholar Jean-Francois Chanlat offers some reflections on the main topic of this forum. According to Chanlat (2015), the production of management and organizational knowledge can be characterized as a field, following Bourdieu's concept, with a clear North-American hegemony. However, he observes the existence of regional and national loci of resistance, where there is a certain degree of autonomy relative to the hegemonic theoretical and methodological approaches. He also notes that US hegemony forces scholars outside the Anglosphere to adapt their research to the dominant concepts and methods in order to conform with the expectations of the top journals in the field, as they seek international recognition. Chanlat also discusses the emergence of a possible Latin space in MOS. Finally, given the contemporary social problems and the challenge of

attaining some form of sustainable development, he claims there is a sociopolitical agenda that organizational scholars working outside the Anglosphere are well-equipped to address, especially in the context of a new, multipolar world order.

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