

# Critical Management Studies in South Africa

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Directions and contexts

Edited by

**Geoff A. Goldman**



Acta Commercii  
Supplement 2

# Critical Management Studies in South Africa

Directions and contexts



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# Critical Management Studies in South Africa

## Directions and contexts

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Geoff A. Goldman



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## **Research Justification**

This book shows how critical management studies (CMS) scholarship is starting to develop a character of its own in South Africa. It attests to CMS, albeit slowly, gaining momentum amongst South African scholars and that issues are starting to crystallise that are defining CMS in South Africa. Management as a field of inquiry in South Africa is dominated by capitalist ideology and positivist methodology. Although interpretive scholarship has increased in the past two decades, most of this still falls within the parameters of 'mainstream', capitalist thinking. Scholarship outside the domain of capitalist thinking, such as critical scholarship, remains sorely underexplored. Being entrenched in the positivist tradition is arguably a major Achilles' Heel for the progression of management as a field of inquiry. Positivists do not engage in meta-theoretical debate, as it is seen as a fruitless exercise. Positivists value neutrality, autonomy and impartiality in scholarship, leaving no room for the cultural, political and social realities that discourse functions within.

More than a quarter of a century after the transition to a full-fledged democracy, South Africa is struggling to come to terms with realities brought about by a distinct history, political and economic legacy. These things cannot – and should not – be separated from any discourse in South Africa. Management is no exception. Our entire management discourse is the result of political, ideological and economic manoeuvring through time. The pervasiveness of capitalism in management is so great that it does not leave any room for envisioning anything else. The capitalist ideology has created structures and mechanisms to perpetuate and entrench itself. Business schools, management courses and business faculties promote capitalism, and management scholars are the 'disciples' of the ideology. The likelihood that people schooled in this tradition will be susceptible to alternative ideas about management is slim.

Critical management studies presents a vehicle for alternative epistemologies to be heard in the management discourse. With its focus on power imbalances, struggles for emancipation from oppression and distrust of capitalism, CMS provides the peripheral point of view with a voice. Critical management studies presents a space where scholars can engage with South African realities surrounding political, cultural, social and historic contexts and issues in management.

This book is an effort to promote CMS to the scholarly community, to show that there are exciting possibilities being offered by a different approach to the scholarship of management. This is part of the larger project of growing CMS in South Africa and is a collection of original works by academics actively working in CMS, following various methodological approaches, which can be categorised into two broad methodological categories, namely, work of a conceptual nature and empirical work following an interpretive approach.

The intention behind this book is to encourage more debate between South African management scholars on CMS, to explore new possibilities and to address pertinent issues that the mainstream discourse might not have sufficient responses for. This book also represents the highest standards of authorship, and every effort was made to ensure that it is original and free from plagiarism

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# Abbreviations, Figures and Tables Appearing in the Text and Notes

## List of Abbreviations

BRE	Business Rescue Event
CBM	Consultative Business Movement
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CES	Critical Entrepreneurship Studies
CMS	Critical Management Studies
CMT	Critical Management Theory
CT	Critical Theory
GBC	Grace Bible Church
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GECMT	Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NRF	National Research Foundation
PCC	Pentecostal Charismatic Christian
PCE	Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelical
PIT	Probabilistic Innovation Theory
RBT	Resource-based Theory
RBV	Resource-based View
SAMP	South African Management Project
SME	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises
UCT	University of Cape Town

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# Introduction

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'Critical management studies in South Africa: Directions and contexts' represents the second formalised work on critical management studies (CMS) in South Africa. Following 5 years after 'Critical management studies in the South African context', this book shows how CMS scholarship is starting to develop a character of its own in South Africa. It attests to the fact that CMS, albeit slowly, is starting to gain momentum amongst South African scholars, and that issues are starting to crystallise that are defining CMS in South Africa.

Management as a field of inquiry in South Africa is dominated by capitalist ideology and positivist methodology. Although interpretive scholarship has increased in the past two decades, most of this still falls within the parameters of 'mainstream', capitalist thinking. Scholarship outside the domain of capitalist thinking, such as critical scholarship, however, still remains sorely underexplored.

Being entrenched in the positivist tradition is arguably a major Achilles' Heel for the progression of management as a field of inquiry. Positivists do not engage in meta-theoretical debate, as it is seen as a fruitless exercise (Sousa 2010). This represents a form of 'intellectualist prejudice', where other forms of human knowledge and epistemologies are disregarded (How 2003). Positivists value neutrality, autonomy and impartiality in scholarship (Kalelioglu 2020),

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leaving no room for the cultural, political and social realities that discourse functions within (Prasad 2015). The positivistic focus is therefore on the 'facts', with little regard for the social realities that surround these 'facts'.

More than a quarter of a century after a transition to a full-fledged democracy, South Africa is still struggling to come to terms with current realities brought about by a distinct history, political legacy, economic legacy and societal chronology. These things cannot - and should not - be separated from any discourse in the South African context (Nkomo 2011). Management is no exception. Our entire management discourse is the result of political, ideological and economic manoeuvring through phases of time. From Dutch mercantile expansionist ideals to British imperialist and colonial agendas, which saw the subjugation of indigenous peoples of South Africa, to the years of apartheid, which forged Cold War era alliances against the 'communist threat', in favour of the capitalist doctrine, into the democratic era typified by grappling with past imbalances and trying to redress the past, management cannot be seen in isolation from these eras and variables associated with them.

This has become very obvious with the call for decolonisation of the curriculum, which experienced a new lease on life during the 2015 #FeesMustFall student protests. The pervasiveness of capitalism in management is so great that it does not leave any room for envisioning anything else. As a field of inquiry, mainstream management ascribes to the notion of 'unity of science' and universality, which sidelines non-Western epistemologies (Goldman 2016). This forms part of the capitalist ideology, where structures, institutions and mechanisms have been created to perpetuate and entrench it to ensure longevity. Management as a field of inquiry has witnessed the creation of business schools, management courses and business faculties to promote and perpetuate the ideology of Capitalism, with management scholars being the 'disciples' of the ideology (Maserumule 2015). The likelihood that people who have been schooled in this tradition will be susceptible to alternative ideas about management is slim. Yet, decolonisation requires that management academics be open to thinking that falls outside the mainstream. This is a main contributing factor in the slow pace of decolonisation in the management curriculum at most universities in South Africa.

CMS presents a vehicle to have alternative epistemologies heard in the greater management discourse. With its focus on power imbalances, struggles for emancipation from oppression, and distrust of capitalism, CMS provides the peripheral point of view with a voice. Critical management studies presents a space where scholars can engage with the South African realities surrounding political, cultural, social and historic contexts and issues in management.

'Critical management studies in South Africa: Directions and contexts' is also an effort to promote CMS to the scholarly community, to show that there

are exciting possibilities being offered by a different approach to the scholarship of management. This is part of the larger project of growing CMS in South Africa. In this regard, the book has been divided into two distinct sections: Directions and Contexts. The first part of the book, 'Directions', ventures into big picture and long-term issues that are currently defining CMS in South Africa and that will shape the future of CMS scholarship in South Africa. The 'Directions' include issues surrounding what to be critical of in CMS (ch. 1), redressing the mismatch between the global research agenda and current realities (ch. 2), the sustainability of the CMS project itself (ch. 3) and the resurgent call for decolonisation of the curriculum (ch. 4). The second part of the book, 'Contexts', looks at specific applications of critical management scholarship in South Africa at present. The 'Contexts' investigated include a look at management education through student eyes (ch. 5), a critique on entrepreneurship education (ch. 6), as well as a critique on systemic issues that exacerbate enterprise development failure (ch. 7), and a fascinating look at the world of pastorpreneurs (ch. 8).

'Directions' begins with Geoff Goldman's investigation of criticality in CMS in South Africa in Chapter 1. He argues that although CMS has been a field of inquiry since the early 1990s, it remains virtually unknown in South Africa and is now only starting to emerge as a field of inquiry. In the chapter, the concept of emancipation is unpacked as a focal point of critical scholarship and CMS. It is argued that in order to work towards a consolidated CMS project in South Africa, emancipation needs to be engaged with in order to understand what a South African CMS project should concern itself with and what 'criticality' means in the South African context. The states of criticality, proposed by Verduijn et al. (2014), are presented to engage with the notion of criticality in the South African CMS project. The chapter concludes by suggesting areas of focused inquiry for South African CMS and suggests the possible guise criticality could assume in South Africa, but ultimately calls for a concerted effort to formalise South African CMS for it to meaningfully contribute to the overall management discourse in South Africa.

In Chapter 2, Chris W. Callaghan argues that a novel research agenda to extend Critical Theory and Critical Management Theory might provide the kind of novel thinking required to emancipate human beings from catastrophic existential threats. This proposed research agenda is described as 'Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory', a project focused on addressing the mismatch between the global research management system and current technological and theoretical opportunities. This agenda is then discussed in relation to certain challenges that it would need to overcome; the challenges are being categorised as theoretical, those relating to power relations and ethics in science, those concerned with temporality and technologically enabled science, and those relating to radical humanist future science.



Chapter 3, by Whitey van der Linde and Ruan Taljaard, starts from the premise that scientific management is a failure. The failures of 'Scientific management' can be encapsulated in one word 'Exploitation' – Exploitation of resources (Natural and human), Conglomerate and Corporate scandals and failures, and more. Critical management studies has established itself as a critique on scientific management, but the authors question the sustainability of this critique as it is based on the same foundation and principles of the scientific method, that is, the future is known (Strategic management), the future can be managed (Budget), linear causality (Marketing and sales) and more. If we do not challenge and change the foundation and principles of scientific management, CMS runs the risk of being just another management fad.

In Chapter 4, Chimene Nukunah and Neil Eccles engage with the growing and challenging call to decolonise management education. Towards this end, they present results from a series of qualitative interviews with postgraduate management students, academics in the management field and academic managers in the management field. In particular, they zoom in on the strong recurrent theme of a Western superiority complex or an African inferiority complex. Within this theme, Western perspectives on management were seen as 'tried and tested' and as '*the* global standard'. To try and understand this theme better, they then ventured into the works of three of the seminal decolonisation scholars: Frans Fanon, Paulo Freire and Bantu Stephen Biko. In these works, they discovered that the theme that they had so meticulously unearthed was, in fact, not new at all in the broader decolonisation literature. They also discovered a proposed antidote in the form of consciousness. Armed with this, they returned to their interviews in search of traces of consciousness which they find and discuss. These are important. They offer some ray of hope that at the very least, seeds of decolonisation exist. Throughout this chapter, their engagement with their results is very personal. In places, one can sense their frustration, even outrage as they critically unpacked some of the interview excerpts and the underlying assumptions and assertions become exposed. This level of honest subjectivity is unusual in the academic literature. But it serves a purpose here, a purpose encapsulated in the single word that they end this chapter with: 'Consciousness'. This is clearly a challenge for us to which extends beyond debates around decolonising management education. Actively cultivated critical consciousness is central to the pursuit of critical management studies.

'Contexts' begins with a foray into management education. In Chapter 5, the role of management education in sustaining the dominant management discourse is challenged by Josephine Katumba, Pheny Maboke, Daniella Teles and Whitey van der Linde. The challenge to the dominant discourse of management is not new. In the 1970s, Ansoff responded to Mintzberg's critique of strategic planning through the statement 'You have resigned 30 years of work to the dustbin' – but strategic planning is still dominant. Stewart (2009)

exposed the 'Management myths on which the dominant management discourse is based, but it is still taught in management curricula. The chapter reflects on the role of outdated 'Management' curricula and teachings that just entrench the dominant discourse of management even more in students.

In Chapter 6, Maria Smit and Marius Pretorius extend the nascent field of critical entrepreneurship studies (CES) by critically analysing the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse in South Africa to identify if and how the assumptions and discursive practices in mainstream entrepreneurship theory are extended to the scholarly discourse in South Africa. They argue that, by continuously presenting these assumptions as academic knowledge, the scholarly entrepreneurship community is influencing development policy that is continuously failing to create any upward mobility for the economically marginalised. The unemployed and impoverished thus fall victim to inefficient policies which are, in turn, fuelled by academic knowledge claims. In this regard, the scholarly community is accused of epistemic violence. This chapter implores the scholarly community to respond ethically to this accusation by firstly abandoning the core assumption that entrepreneurship (in all its defined manifestations) is a successful vehicle for economic development and job creation and secondly becoming appropriately sceptical of the perceived ability of mainstream entrepreneurship theory to answer questions about economic development beyond the context within which it was developed. It concludes by proposing that entrepreneurship be reconceptualised beyond the constraints of mainstream entrepreneurship theory by differentiating entrepreneurship as a development apparatus.

Artificial entrepreneurship and the fallacy assumptions that inform the failure of enterprise development are the issues that Marius Pretorius, Ingrid le Roux, Wesley Rosslyn-Smith and Reba Letsholo unpack in Chapter 7. They purport that enterprise development (start-up, growth, retention, turnaround and rescue of venture initiatives), especially in developing countries, is patronised as the silver bullet to economic growth in a desperate bid for job creation because of its believed 'transformation powers' (Poole 2018:35; Smit & Pretorius 2020:62). However, empirical observations of high SMME failure rates seem to suggest that the believed effects are not realised in the format of economic growth and increased employment claimed (i.e. Herrington & Kew 2013). With significant resource inputs to develop enterprises from various sources and initiatives, there now arises a new realisation (emperor's clothes) that an improved understanding of and, if necessary, alternative views on the non-achievement problem are needed. By presenting several paradoxes in thinking, this chapter challenges the current enterprise development failure by exposing the fallacy assumptions underlying enterprise development's main liability as artificial entrepreneurship. It then proposes the differentiation between artificial and fidelity entrepreneurship to be acknowledged as a prerequisite to address the non-performance problem. From a CMS view, their

argument is conceptual and aims specifically at exploring abductively an 'alternative' sense and understanding of the response to enterprise development and distressed business ventures, as it appears that the mainstream resource-based view-driven logic has become insufficient to address practice observations. The existing, normative assumptions underlying the application of the RBV logic do not produce practical solutions that address the real problems, therefore our search to address its inability to solve the practice application. Potentially, critically assessing the problem from the paradox theory (Lewis 2000) perspective may inform alternative insights leading to alternative strategies. Simply stated, in this chapter, we ask: (1) Why do we keep getting it wrong and then repeat enterprise development strategies that do not work? (2) Are we ignoring the real problem? (3) Are we deliberately not acknowledging the absence of the emperor's clothes?

Applying a contextualist lens, Frederik (Freddie) Crous argues, in Chapter 8, that globalisation and its neoliberal ideology facilitate a particular form of Christianity, Neo-Pentecostalism, to flourish in South Africa. True to neoliberalism, the Neo-Pentecostal church movement, embedded in prosperity dogma, entrenches and bolsters a belief system that internalises an entrepreneurial attitude, mindset and orientation within its leaders, referred to as pastors. By fusing spirituality and materialism/commercialism prosperity, gospel is commodified and 'sold' to millions of South African believers by the so-called pastorpreneurs. He provides evidence of how prosperous pastorpreneurs are able to establish a simple but powerful pattern of constructing, enacting and performing three contexts, namely, a career, organisational and market context for entrepreneurial success. These three interrelated entrepreneurship contexts can be replicated with relative ease by start-up pastorpreneurs, providing a possible explanation for the boom of Neo-Pentecostal churches in South Africa.

**Part 1:**

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**Directions**



# Exploring ‘criticality’ in critical management studies in South Africa: What should we be critical of, why should we be critical of it and how critical should we be?

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## ■ Abstract

Critical management studies (CMS), although a peripheral discourse, has been a formalised discourse for close to three decades now. Yet, in South Africa, CMS remains the realm of a scattered few scholars working in isolation without any consolidation of effort. In keeping with the critical theory tradition, emancipation is a crucial focus of critical scholarship, one which is still an ongoing debate within CMS circles. To work towards a more formalised, consolidated CMS discourse in South Africa, emancipation must be engaged

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with to understand what South African CMS should concern itself with and what 'criticality' implies in the South African context. To this end, this dialectical chapter utilises the states of criticality as proposed by Verduijn et al. (2014) to engage with the notion of criticality in South African CMS. Although the chapter concludes by suggesting areas of focused inquiry for South African CMS, as well as suggestions on which guise criticality could assume in South Africa, the chapter calls for a concerted effort to formalise South African CMS for it to meaningfully contribute to the overall discourse on the management of organisational theory in South Africa.

## ■ Introduction

As an underexplored realm of inquiry, CMS in the South African context provides vast scope and opportunity for scholars who are bold enough to immerse themselves in it. Yet, at the same time, there are a couple of crucial issues that need to be engaged with in order for CMS in South Africa to stand as a worthy body of knowledge. One of these issues surrounds exactly what CMS in South Africa should be critical about. In other words, is there really a need to be critical in the first place, and if so (1) what should we be critical about and (2) to what extent should we be critical about it?

When delving into these intricacies of criticality, it is crucial to engage with the concept of emancipation. Emancipation is a prominent theme in critical theory (CT), as the goal of CT is to (Fay 1987):

[E]nable members of society to alter their lives by fostering in them the sort of self-knowledge and understanding of their social conditions which can serve as the basis for such an alteration. (p. 23)

From this quotation, it is evident that CT is not undertaken for the mere purpose of just being critical; it focuses on bringing about positive, real change to society and societal role layers. So too CMS seeks to bring about change in the organisational landscape. Yet, the debate around what exactly emancipation should entail, how it can be achieved and in what form it should present itself is an ongoing and contested debate within CMS circles (Alvesson, Bridgmann & Willmott 2009).

This chapter, therefore, aims to unpack the key issues of criticality for CMS in the South African context to direct and guide scholarly efforts in this realm. The chapter uses the dimensions of criticality presented by Verduijn et al. (2014) as a point of departure to dialectically and critically engage with the questions posed above. The chapter will firstly delve into the need to define criticality in CMS. Thereafter, the discussion will hone in on the debate around emancipation in CMS before presenting the dimensions of criticality proposed by Verduijn et al. (2014). Thereafter, the discussion turns to the context of organisation studies and business management as an academic discourse in South Africa.

The chapter concludes with a proposal on what CMS in South Africa potentially could concern itself with and where CMS in South Africa can be positioned in the framework presented by Verduijn et al.

## ■ The need to define criticality

One of the criticisms often launched towards CMS is that it is critical just for the sake of being critical and that it wishes to attract attention to itself by being unjustly critical. As Grey and Sinclair (2006:445) stated, CMS is 'too often pretentious, obscurantist and dull'. This critique implies that CMS becomes meaningless to anyone outside of itself, and thus, it has no impact on a practical level (Bridgman & Stephens 2008).

Critical management studies scholars are very aware of this criticism and do not view this merely as a 'knee-jerk reaction' or a 'cheap shot' by those who see no worth in critical scholarship. Instead, the wider applicability of CMS to practice is an ongoing debate in CMS circles and has been identified as a burning issue that CMS has to find solutions for (Academy of Management CMS Division 2008, cited in Bridgman & Stephens 2008).

In attempting to engage with this main critique, I believe that it is essential to grapple with the notion of criticality itself. If one understands what you need to be critical of, why you need to be critical of it and to what extent you should be critical of it, one will also address issues of applicability to practice and society. Furthermore, one can also legitimately ask why it is imperative to expound these issues of criticality for CMS specifically in South Africa? To this end, many scholars have pointed out that there is no singular definition of CMS (Adler, Forbes & Willmott 2007; Alvesson & Willmott 2012; Alvesson et al. 2009; Dyer et al. 2014; Fournier & Grey 2000; Goldman 2016b; Grey 2004; Spicer, Alvesson & Kärreman 2009) and that CMS is heavily dependent on the worldview of the researcher(s) (Goldman 2016a). Yet, CMS scholars are linked by (1) an innate belief in the fallibility of mainstream thinking and dominant ideology, (2) a distrust in the methods of inquiry that pervade the dominant ideology to create knowledge, and (3) an astute awareness of the paradoxes that are borne out of the mainstream ideology. In the context of management as an object of scholarly enquiry, this equates to recognition of the fallibility of the capitalist doctrine, a distrust in positivist inquiry that pervades management research and a sensitivity towards the injustices and unethical practices that are encountered in business organisations. Furthermore, CMS scholars recognise that management takes place within a specific political, wthinking does not recognise (Alvesson & Willmott 2012; Clegg, Dany & Grey 2011). Critical management studies scholars, therefore, recognise that there is a value-laden reality that management operates within and that context plays a far more important role than mainstream convention acknowledges.



The preceding discussion highlights the notion that CMS is very much context bound. Although CMS scholars all share a belief in the fallibility of the mainstream and a distrust of positivism, the context within which they conduct their inquiry differs. Thus, the critical agenda will differ from context to context. It would therefore be safe to assume that European CMS scholars, for example, will differ in what they feel is necessary to be critical about to, say, South American CMS scholars. As CMS has yet to enter into a phase of consolidated discourse in South Africa, it would be important to establish parameters in terms of exactly what South African CMS should be critical of and to what extent it should be critical of it. By doing so, the efforts of a fragmented few individuals can strive towards a common purpose and in the process address the burning issue of applicability of CMS.

As mentioned in the introduction, the notion of emancipation permeates through CT and is also significant in CMS. The link between criticality and emancipation might not be immediately apparent; however, insights into what to be critical of and to what extent to be critical of it are heavily dependent on what one wants to achieve with CMS, that is, what is the outcome that is being pursued? As emancipation is viewed as a desired outcome of critical scholarship in general, and therefore also as an outcome of CMS, it is vital to clearly understand emancipation and the dimensions thereof. The logic is that one first needs to understand the nature of the outcome to be achieved before one can attempt to understand what is required to achieve this outcome. Thus, one needs to understand the nature of emancipation before one can focus on critical scholarship in a specific direction. Based on this contextualisation, the notion of emancipation in CMS will now be expounded upon.

## ■ Emancipation and critical management studies

From a broader, CT perspective, the social sciences can, and should, strive for the attainment of the liberation of people and society from unnecessarily restrictive behaviours, assumptions, ideologies, identities and power relations that inhibit and distort self-determination, autonomy and the expression of sincere needs and wants (Habermas 1984; Horkheimer & Adorno 1947; Marcuse 1964). CT accepts the world as imperfect and unjust, but sees potential in itself to tackle these anomalies and bring about an improvement in this imperfect and unjust status quo (Stahl, Tremblay & LeRouge 2011; Susen 2015).

The notion of emancipation *per se* usually conjures up revolutionary images and is associated with a call to usurp the bourgeois ruling elite of some form or another. It is usually a call to action made by revolutionaries, intellectuals and groupings of society labelling themselves as oppressed (Huault, Perret & Spicer 2014). One would not necessarily expect that the notion of emancipation

would form part of the management discourse, and yet, it occupies a central position in the more peripheral management discourses, such as humanistic management theory (Alvesson 1982), new-wave management theory (Fleming 2009) and the critical discourse on management that is the backbone of CMS (Alvesson & Willmott 1992). Interestingly, the antithesis of emancipation – that is oppression – is also the main driving force behind many entrepreneurial ventures (Goss et al. 2011; Rindova, Barry & Ketchen 2009).

From a CMS perspective, emancipation implies a struggle for individual and collective self-determination. Emancipation is therefore not something that is just granted; it implies resistance to, revolt against and the defeat of generally redundant constraints that are imposed upon self-determination (Alvesson & Willmott 1992). In a practical sense, this implies that self-governance of individuals and groupings in the organisational context is something that is constantly under threat by managerialist agendas or the personal agendas of those that occupy management positions. Thus, individual and collective rights to sovereignty in the workplace are constantly under threat, and attainment of this sovereignty, in any form, represents a constant struggle against oppressive forces. Emancipation is affiliated with the construct of freedom. Freedom denotes capacity, or a ‘state’ of being, which requires acts and processes of seeking freedom. These acts and processes of seeking freedom are what emancipation is concerned with (Blauner 1964; Huault et al. 2014), and hence, the discourse on emancipation focuses heavily on the struggles, pains and discomfort associated with resisting oppression and achieving freedom.

When interrogating the concept of emancipation in CMS, one can quite fairly ask the question ‘what is emancipation for?’ Here, it is essential to conceptualise how we think about freedom in relation to work. Fleming and Mandarinini (2009, cited in Alvesson et al. 2009) proposed three ways to think about this relationship:

- *Freedom in work*: Here, the interest is in how people create spaces that represent freedom for them within the contemporary business organisation. This is manifested in practical, somewhat haphazard improvements and speaks to the expectations of those who create these spaces.
- *Freedom through work*: This position draws from Marxist dialectics and suggests that work is the starting point in the realisation of certain freedoms which may arise through the radicalisation of certain current states of being. Marx suggests that workers interested in administration can, through reimagining the workplace in a radically different way, achieve a new state of political economy motivated by the interest of the working class.
- *Freedom from work*: This position suggests that work needs to be totally reimagined, and it challenges the ideological dominance of work as an economic endeavour. This represents a far more radical stance than the

previous two positions, as it questions the underlying assumptions of work itself and urges people to challenge these and forge new assumptions that govern our understanding and attitude towards work.

Analysis of these three positions suggests that freedom in work is a far more micro-oriented position than freedom through work and freedom from work. Also, freedom from work imagines a totally new paradigm of 'non-work' (Hardt & Negri 2004), whereas freedom in work and freedom from work still move within the traditional paradigm of work. These three positions also present increasingly more radical conceptualisations of the freedom/work relationship (with freedom in work being the least radical). As a result, these three positions can also be seen as being increasingly more ambitious as an endeavour, with freedom from work representing a far more aspirational position than freedom in work. The argument, however, is not which one of these positions needs to be pursued, but rather how ambitious and radical CMS scholars want to be.

Within the CMS discourse, emancipation is a heavily contested debate. Although CMS scholars agree on the central position emancipation needs to occupy within CMS, there is disagreement about exactly what emancipation implies. The concept has traditionally been associated with revolutionary ideals of large-scale organisational and societal transformation enacted by dominated sections of society, driven by a group of intellectuals who have an enlightening influence on the dominated (Stablein & Nord 1985). Thus, the focus fell on transformation of both the workplace and society in general (Parker, Fournier & Reedy 2007). This 'macro-emancipation' focus meant that emancipatory research either focused on:

1. A discourse that sought enlightenment of its audience through provocation to bring about large-scale organisational and social change.
2. A discourse that sought to sensitise both management scholars and practitioners to the CMS discourse through uncovering more universal challenges posed by Western capitalism and the managerialist canon (Huault et al. 2014).

Over time, this 'macro-emancipation' argument has been the subject of much critique and fell out of favour with CMS scholars. The main critique against this argument is that it was perceived to be far too grandiose (Alvesson & Deetz 2006). Managerial knowledge was seen as subjugating people, and the only deliverance was by means of the guidance offered by enlightened CMS scholars (Huault et al. 2014). Thus, this perspective held that reason alone will enable CMS to realise emancipation. Alvesson and Wilmott (1992), however, pointed out that dominance is not sustained through reason, but it in fact also entails a corporal and emotional hold over people. This, in turn, ignores that merely observing the enacted dominance leads scholars to actually distance

themselves from such practices as no practical solutions are put forward, thereby sustaining these practices in reality (Fleming & Spicer 2003).

'Macro-emancipation' also treats the issue of emancipation as a universum, a total entity that is not a constituent of the sum of its parts (Alvesson & Willmott 1992). In doing so, the finer nuances, paradoxes and tensions that are unique to each constituent part (i.e. context) are lost, as aspects such as culture, group dynamics and collective interest are not taken into consideration (Spicer et al. 2009). Another critique of the 'macro-emancipation' view is that it can result in an overly negative and cynical view of CMS, which has the potential to deter support in CMS. CMS needs to inspire participation through inspiring a better end state, and not deter participation with cynical future projections of gloom and doom. This cynical outlook can result in a dismissal of important developments in management thinking, with scholars fixated on cynical submission rather than professing a message of hope for an improved future (Huault et al. 2014). Indeed, this cynical view that the capitalist project is so powerful that emancipation will never be achievable even pervades the discourse of certain CMS groups (WOBS 2001).

Increasingly, CMS scholars have called for a more 'micro-emancipation' focus to CMS. This involves a more focused search for anomalies that represent localised, albeit more temporary, instances of emancipation in the organisational context (Alvesson & Willmott 1992). In the 'micro emancipation' sense, emancipatory processes are undefined, perilous, often ambiguous and riddled with contradiction' (Huault et al. 2014). It requires being alert to various forms of emancipation that play out on a daily basis where people rise up and challenge domination by a managerialist agenda. Micro-emancipation, therefore, represents the small struggles and victories embarked upon and gained on a regular basis. 'Micro-emancipation' is a far more engaged endeavour than the distanced CT embodied by 'macro-emancipation'. It attempts to unveil employee-driven instances of workplace emancipation that rely on lived experiences of workplace oppression, struggle and (ultimately) emancipation (Spicer & Böhm 2007; Zanoni & Janssens 2007). These lived experiences inform scholars' understanding of how such micro-emancipations are to be realised.

Although the 'micro-emancipation' view offsets the critique laid before the 'macro-emancipation' perspective, this view itself has been the subject of criticism in recent times. Huault et al. (2014) warned that this view can cause a fixation by scholars on workplace acts that are so mundane, minor and insignificant that they turn everyday working life and routines life into celebrated and glorified acts of rebellion. These small acts are exaggerated beyond their actual span of influence, resulting in employees being viewed as rebellious and unfairly questioning the practical functioning of business organisations.

Furthermore, micro-emancipation could also be viewed as instances of deviance and disobedience, an exhibition of disregard for organisational rules, norms and values. As such, researchers often fixate on the intent eminent from this disobedience, thereby ignoring that these acts might not lead to emancipation at all, but could actually have the adverse effect of tightening the dominance of the management corps. For example, Ford, Ford and Amelio (2008), as well as Courpasson and Thoenig (2010), pointed out that some organisations do not oppose certain form of resistance to change. In some instances, organisations even embrace it, thereby learning to not only deal with disruptive hostility towards change but also learn from and implement any potential innovations regarding dealing with change that might have been forthcoming from these micro-emancipatory dissensions. Lastly, micro-emancipation has been criticised for leading to a very fragmented understanding of the fundamentals of resistance, struggle and ultimately emancipation, in the organisational context. The danger is that scholars can get so caught up in the particulars of different contexts where micro-emancipation occurs and that important connections that exist between these contexts are overlooked (Ganesh, Zoller & Cheney 2005; Willmott 2005). CMS will effectively be reduced to a collection of tactical moves, and the utopian ideal of hope for a better future, however absurd, will be diluted (Parker 2002).

The preceding discussion illustrates that the debate on emancipation within CMS is by no means a simple one, nor is it one where scholars have reached consensus. Yet, this is an important debate to take cognisance of in CMS, as it shapes what scholars should be critical of in that it defines the research agenda for CMS scholars. The issue of emancipation is also especially pertinent to the South African context. Years of colonial subjugation, followed by oppressive apartheid rule, have left the vast majority of the South African population reeling from the effects of oppression, marginalisation and disenfranchisement. As South Africa struggles to get to grips with the effects of its history in all spheres of life, business and management being no exception, it is imperative to engage with discourses on oppressive practices, and legacies are to be overcome to move towards a more emancipated society in general. Building on the concepts discussed in this section, the next section introduces a framework that utilises the construct of emancipation *vis-à-vis* oppression and the stances of 'macro-emancipation' and 'micro-emancipation' to consider different options of criticality.

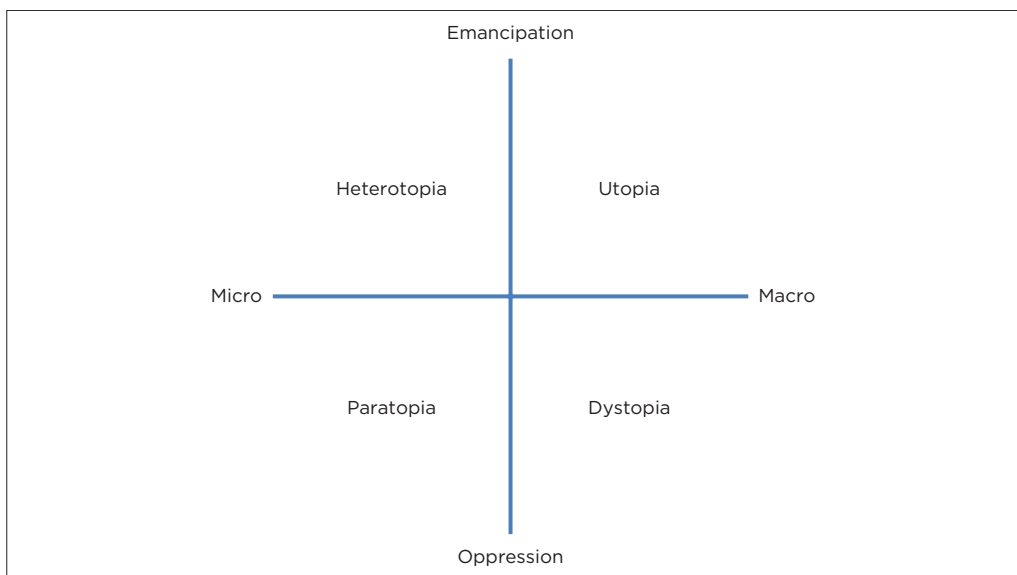
## ■ A framework for assessing criticality

Verduijn et al. (2014) offered a fitting theoretical framework for assessing criticality. This framework draws mainly on the work of Laclau (1996) and incorporates the views of a whole host of critical scholars. In their conception of criticality, Verduijn et al. (2014) pointed out that criticality primarily posits

an inherent tension between the forces of oppression and emancipation and that this tension plays out on either a micro-level or a macro-level. This results in four states of criticality, as portrayed in Figure 1.1.

In the depiction above, emancipation and oppression should not be seen as outcomes of critical inquiry. Rather, they should be seen as ‘comprehensions of criticality’, where both emancipation and oppression are seen as ‘states of knowing’ as a result of the critical endeavour. Furthermore, ‘emancipation’ refers to an optimistic outlook and a belief in a better future state than is currently experienced. In contrast, ‘oppression’ denotes a more pessimistic (but not cynical) stance, where the pervasiveness of the capitalist project is seen as very strong, and the suggestion of an ideal future state is not necessarily or directly achievable. Instead, the oppressionist outlook requires one to suspend notions of an ‘idealised’ future state and understand the real nature of the oppressive forces that manifest themselves through the capitalist project. It represents a sort of ‘reality check’, as it were. This understanding can then be used as points of departure to attempt to achieve emancipation in one form or another.

The framework depicted in Figure 1.1 also considers a micro versus a macro-application of criticality. It requires the inquirer to assess the scope of application of critical inquiry. If the scope of the inquiry strives towards a state of total emancipation which is free from all oppression, or if one conceives criticality as comprehending that oppression is pervasive, then the scope of



Source: Verduijn et al. (2014:101).

**FIGURE 1.1:** States of criticality.

application tends to lean to the macro-perspective (Jameson 2005; Verduijn et al. 2014). Adversely, if one considers localised incidences where states of emancipation and realisation of oppression have been achieved in one form or another, and where the prevalent 'micro' status quo presents a different picture to that of the 'macro' status quo within which it is positioned, then the focus of criticality becomes distinctly micro (Verduijn et al. 2014). This is not dissimilar to the concepts of 'macro-emancipation' and 'micro-emancipation' expounded upon in the previous section. The four states of criticality, as depicted in Figure 1.1, will now be discussed in turn.

*Utopia* refers to an envisioned state that is superior to the current state, a vision of a better world for all who occupy it. The utopian view is fundamental to Frankfurt School Critical Theory and is viewed as an act of liberating people from the circumstances that enslave them (Horkheimer 1982; Verduijn et al. 2014). As such, a utopian view demands that CMS focuses on broader, structural, issues of society, business and management (Huault et al. 2014). Thus, normative judgements are pursued which serve as principles for emancipatory forms of discourse relating to management within a more unprejudiced and equitable form of capitalism. Think, for example, of Michael Porter in this regard. Porter attempts to rethink how modern capitalism ideally should work and proposes ideas on how to conceive a better kind economy (Driver 2012). The utopian view is not dissimilar to the 'grandiose' ideals proposed by the 'macro-emancipation' point of view, and this viewpoint is heavily criticised for being far too idealistic in its envisioning of an autonomous future where the shackles associated with capitalism are cast aside in totality (Verduijn et al. 2014).

Whereas a utopian view implies an idealistic future, *heterotopia* suggests a far more realisable future (Levitas 2013). Heterotopias are spaces that exist in opposition to what is suggested by mainstream management convention, thus focusing on practices of managers and business organisations that have created conditions of empowerment, emancipation and different conceptions of identity on a localised level (Hjorth 2005; Verduijn et al. 2014). These can be equated to small-scale utopias or 'micro-utopias'. The heterotopian view venerates localised struggles and pays close attention to ongoing acts of resistance in opposition to the intricacies of oppression. These are therefore actual business organisations that do not employ management practices as specified by mainstream convention. Yet, it is reasonable to argue that each one of these 'micro-utopias' will enforce a different form of opposition against mainstream convention, and therefore, each 'micro-utopia' represents a different realisable state. Heterotopia suggests that emancipation can be realised and has been realised in the 'real' world, albeit temporary and localised. It celebrates the 'small victories' and highlights the highly contextualised nature of management as an academic discipline.

These 'micro-utopias' can be equated to the outlook presented by 'micro-emancipation', as discussed in the previous section.

*Dystopia* refers to the antithesis of utopia. Here, the emphasis is placed on how management practices and business conventions continually and persistently prevent emancipation from the distortions of the capitalist endeavour. The dystopian view illuminates how 'mainstream' management discourse lends ideological support to the conception that capitalism is the best way to the creation of value and wealth in society (James 2008). However, dystopia points out that the 'dark side' of management is actually part of management's normal functioning (Spicer 2012). Showing how management is, for example, linked to bribery, corruption, human exploitation and ecological degradation sheds light on why mainstream management thinking suppresses analysis of, and discourse on, this dark underbelly of management (Verduijn et al. 2014). Although dystopia reminds strongly of the more cynical side of the 'macro-emancipation' point of view, it is not cynical as a default position. Instead, it tries to uncover and expose the real nature of things in the organisational context. Although the intent is not to be overly negative and cynical, the dystopian position would require a lot of self-reflection to guard against decaying into cynicism.

*Paratopia* can be equated to a form of 'micro-dystopia', where management is seen as inciting oppressive notions manifested in negative, inadvertent and random events or minor indiscretions (Verduijn et al. 2014). This can be seen as an unintended and unintentional oppression. Just as the heterotopian view, paratopia is very real, and these manifestations can be found in real-world business cases and practices. Thus, paratopias are not viewed as positive and are seen as exacerbating the very issues they wish to positively address. As an example of a paratopia, one can think of the white, Western and male-dominated management archetype which is taken for granted in the contemporary business organisation, and how this effects groupings that do not fall into this category (Verduyn & Essers 2013). Because of the unintentional and unintended nature of the paratopian view, this can be equated to the unintended, unintentional and unconsidered consequence of a perpetuation of mainstream management thinking. In this regard, 'unconsidered' represents the potential for oppression, as it implies that mainstream convention is taken for granted, and has not been debated and engaged with enough to conceptualise such an eventuality. It can thus be postulated that paratopia is borne out of a myopic dysfunctionality of mainstream thinking. The paratopian view also reminds strongly of the 'micro-emancipation' view purported in the previous section, but the paratopian view could very easily become the exercise of the mundane and the collection of tactical moves that actually mean very little in the bigger picture that critics of 'micro-emancipation' warn against.



These four positions are not mutually exclusive, and CMS research is likely to fall across more than one of these positions simultaneously. However, as an emergent discourse, CMS research within the South African context needs to engage with where it sees itself in terms of furthering the overall CMS agenda of striving for a better organisational life. The discussion will now turn to the current state of CMS in South Africa to provide suggestions as to what South African CMS should concern itself with.

## ■ Critical management studies scholarship in the South African context

Although CMS is now an established discourse within the broader field of management as a realm of scholarly enquiry, it is very much an unexplored area of inquiry in South Africa. Indeed, a Google Scholar search on CMS in South Africa will reveal only one work. However, as Ruggunan (2016) pointed out, a handful of scholars have published work dealing, or attempting to deal, with aspects relating to CMS and critical scholarship in management in South Africa, although not labelled as such.

With the transition of South Africa to a full-fledged democracy in 1994, a lot of energy, in both practice and academia, was diverted to finding 'uniquely South African solutions to uniquely South African problems' in business and management (Nussbaum 2003). At the so-called Broederstroom meeting in 1988, representatives from the corporate sector, democratic movements and academia came together and paved the way for the establishment of the Consultative Business Movement (CBM), aimed at enabling the democratic transition in South Africa by rallying business as a change agent (Van der Heuvel 2008). Although the CBM facilitated dialogue on change in the realm of South African business, politicking from trade unions meant that these efforts were abandoned in the mid-1990s (Nattrass 1997). Although neither the Broederstroom meeting nor the CBM was scholarly in their endeavour or critical in the scholarly sense of the word, they did pave the way for discourse on the future of business and management in South Africa. More importantly, they created a milieu for imagining a better future state as far as business and management in South Africa are concerned, both in terms of practice and in terms of scholarship.

This quest for a better future state saw the formation of the South African Management Project (SAMP) under the auspices of the University of the Witwatersrand Business School (WBS). The SAMP sought to seek out and develop management approaches relevant to South Africa and to support business leaders in meeting the challenge posed by unique South African problems (Christie, Lessem & Mbigi 1994). The SAMP focused on the African philosophy of Ubuntu and tried to use Ubuntu as the point of departure for a

unique South African management approach to solve unique South African management problems. However, despite initial enthusiasm, the SAMP lost momentum and is now confined to the annals of history. The SAMP can be viewed as the first South African scholarly project in management concerned with a marked departure from the 'mainstream'; however, it cannot necessarily be seen as a critical endeavour. Although it can be argued that there is a hint of an emancipatory focus, the SAMP and the ensuing efforts especially by Lovemore Mbigi, a major proponent of Ubuntu management principles (cf. Mbigi 1997), did not challenge the underlying capitalist assumptions of the mainstream management discourse in South Africa. Instead, it attempted to complement and entrench these assumptions with the application of Ubuntu.

The first recognised scholarly dabblings into critical organisational scholarship and CMS in South Africa are the publications of Stella Nkomo from the University of Pretoria, who published in the areas of post-colonialism, African leadership and organisational identities of black women (see Alcadipani et al. 2012; Jack et al. 2008; Nkomo 2011; Zanoni et al. 2010). Over the last five years or so, it has become apparent that CMS and critical organisational scholarship have spread somewhat. Critical management studies has shown the beginnings of focusing on a consolidated effort to promote and grow CMS in South Africa. In 2015, a CMS colloquium was hosted at the University of Johannesburg, featuring Hugh Wilmott and Bobby Banerjee. In 2016, a book entitled 'Critical Management Studies in the South African Context' was published. This book represented the first formal work on CMS in South Africa. Edited by Geoff Goldman, this book is a collection of CMS-related articles denoting the current state of CMS thinking in South Africa from the perspective of a handful of isolated scholars working in the CMS space.

In the book edited by Goldman (2016c), the last chapter reports on a study dealing with, amongst others, the extent to which South African management scholars were familiar with the notion of CMS (Goldman 2016b). What is interesting to note from this study is that from a sample of 88 senior management academics (i.e. Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Full Professor) from 15 South African universities, 56% of respondents had never heard of CMS. Furthermore, 36% of respondents had limited knowledge of CMS (ranging from 'have heard of it' to 'know the basics of it'), while only 8% of respondents had a thorough knowledge of CMS (Goldman 2016b). These results are both disconcerting and encouraging at the same time.

They are disconcerting in that these findings serve to illustrate just how many senior management scholars in South Africa are actually unaware of CMS, thus underlining just how pervasive and deeply entrenched the mainstream doctrine is in management thinking in SA. Yet, at the same time, the 36% of respondents who have heard of CMS but do not profess to have a

good understanding or knowledge thereof present opportunities for the expansion of CMS as a scholarly tradition in South Africa. Irrespective of whether these scholars have an innate affiliation with CMS or not, they can be targeted as potential participants in the CMS debate. The logic is that these scholars at least have *some* knowledge on CMS and therefore will require less input (when compared to those scholars who have never heard of CMS) in developing them to be contributing CMS scholars. In attempting to grow CMS in South Africa, these scholars should be the immediate target audience, and then over time, efforts can be launched to introduce CMS to a 'new' audience, consisting of those scholars who have never heard of CMS.

From this discussion, it is evident that there is a lot of scope for the development of CMS in South Africa. Although very much a marginal discourse at present, certain situational factors are present in the South African context that make a perfect opportunity for critical scholarship. The ensuing discussion will expound upon these factors and explore possible directions for future CMS research in South Africa. This, then, will address one of the key questions this chapter set out to answer, namely, 'what should we be critical about?'

## ■ Imagining a research agenda for critical management studies in South Africa

Apart from the perennial, omnipresent issues that CMS concerns itself with, such as exploitative workplace practices, unequal distribution of power and opposition to managerialism, there are certain unique South African discourses where CMS can engage with, and contribute to, the current state of these discourses.

The first of these is the issue of 'decolonisation of the curriculum'. Although not entirely a new debate in South Africa, the call for 'decolonisation of the curriculum' received renewed, and hitherto unprecedented, attention with the #FeesMustFall student protests that flared up in October 2015 and continued well into 2016 (Heleta 2016). The challenge laid down by decolonisation was one of the speeding up transformations at South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Rahlaga 2015). However, decolonisation also involves a total rethink of the educational content that is being disseminated at HEIs. Decolonisation is a demand to transform the curriculum away from the one that perpetuates colonial and apartheid thinking and is centred in the 'west', towards one where African epistemologies and thinking place Africa at the centre of how Africa understands itself and its place in the world (Wa Thiong'o 2004). Decolonisation does not only have bearing on subject matter but also have a profound bearing in knowledge creation, in that it is a call to promote and provide voice equity to marginalised, African epistemologies and knowledge claims, as this has not always been the case in the past.

Yet, in terms of management as an academic discipline, decolonisation extends further than the classroom and even further than the university milieu. Management is very much a descriptive discourse as more often than not, it describes what has transpired in practice to analyse certain behaviours or to predict certain trends. Also, the capitalist project is viewed as economic colonialism (Banerjee & Linstead 2001; Linstead, Marechal & Griffin 2014). Therefore, if the mainstream body of management knowledge is deemed to be 'colonised' in itself, and if the discourse is seen as reflective of practice, then one can assume that management practice is also colonised.

The challenge of decolonisation, therefore, presents vast opportunities for CMS scholarship, not only in terms of Critical Management Education, dealing with issues of management pedagogy, curriculum and epistemology, but also in terms of the practice of management. Decolonisation seems to bear prominent similarities with the discourse of post-colonialism, and decolonisation can be easily viewed as a radicalised, politicised form of post-colonialism. Post-colonialism is embedded in, inter alia, anthropology, history and literary studies (Westwood & Jack 2007). As a field of inquiry, post-colonialism attempts to (Said 1986:45) 'retrospectively reflect on colonialism, the better to understand the difficulties of the present in newly independent states'.

Thus, the post-colonial discourse seeks to uncover, challenge and problematise matters arising from colonial relations (Banerjee 1999; Joy 2013). However, there are focal differences between decolonisation and post-colonialism. Decolonisation in the true sense of the word is vehemently anti-colonial and wants to break down colonial structures and legacies, whereas post-colonialism tries to understand the consequences of exploitation and control of once colonised people. Although post-colonialism is often criticised for perpetuating colonial thought and assumptions of a common past amongst subjected nations (see McEwan 2003; McKinnon 2006; Nkomo 2015), post-colonialism does seek to uncover the present difficulties faced by once colonised nations. It does this by first understanding how the colonial project impacted upon these states, what the nature of the current challenges are arising from colonialism and how best to deal with the challenges that are presented. This is also what decolonisation, in the South African sense of the word, sets out to achieve. It would, therefore, seem as though decolonisation has assumed a distinct connotation in South Africa, which seems to be more post-colonial than anti-colonial, if one looks at Krishnan's (2009) distinction between post-colonialism and anti-colonialism/decolonisation. So in South Africa, decolonisation does in fact seem like a politicised version of post-colonialism in the aftermath of the #FeesMustFall student protests and in essence bears striking resemblance to the notion of the post-colonial.

Post-colonialism is very applicable to organisation theory (Jack & Westwood 2006; Johnson & Duberley 2003; Westwood 2001), especially if one recognises

that the mainstream management discourse represents a continuation of the colonial project (Goldman 2016a). In the South African context, thus, post-colonialism offers vast opportunities, especially from a critical scholarship point of view. As is evident, it is intertwined with the notion of decolonisation and as such represents a topical issue, not only in terms of scholarly inquiry but also in terms of practice.

A third potential area of application for CMS in the South African milieu lies in the contemporary debate around the Fourth Industrial Revolution, also known as 4IR. There is not only potential within 4IR for CMS but also for the entire field of inquiry on management as a whole. The debate around 4IR postulates that technology is advancing at an unfathomable, exponential pace, and this advancement has brought about possibilities that were not imaginable even one generation ago (think, e.g., of artificial intelligence, the internet of things and machine learning). These advancements have the potential to fundamentally disrupt current conceptions of how business is done and what the role of management is therein. Scholarship has a responsibility to address these issues, as 4IR does not only have the potential to disrupt business and management but also has the potential to assert its presence on scholarly agendas, thereby disrupting scholarship. Indeed, at some HEIs in South Africa, 4IR has already become an integral part of the institutional agenda, with these institutions placing pressure on scholars to focus their scholarly attention on 4IR.

Management scholars need to be proactive by shaping the research agenda of 4IR in a business and managerial context for themselves, before they find agendas imparted on them because of their own inaction. In this regard, CMS scholars could speculatively ascertain the potentially exploitative and oppressing effects that a 4IR world holds for those affiliated to the organisation. Thus, potentially, CMS scholarship into 4IR could take the form of a dystopian thesis, by presenting a picture of a 4IR world where oppression and exploitation in the workplace could take on a different guise. The South African perspective would provide perspectives from the developing world, as well as the global 'south' in the developing 4IR body of knowledge.

Furthermore, it can also be postulated that the debate surrounding entrepreneurship provides a fertile avenue for potential CMS scholarship in South Africa. Entrepreneurship is a 'hot topic' amongst business management scholars in South Africa at present. This is fuelled in part by the national agenda to promote and encourage entrepreneurship as a mechanism to boost the economy through starting new business ventures, which in turn would lead to a drop in unemployment, thus helping to eradicate poverty and the social ills associated with it, such as crime. Thus, the interest in the entrepreneurship discourse abounds.

Within CMS scholarship, it is evident that there are defined areas that CMS scholars hone in on. So one finds, amongst others, CMS scholarship into the spheres of marketing, strategy, management education and human resources. Entrepreneurship is no exception, with a very distinct critical entrepreneurship studies body of knowledge evident from a simple internet search. This, then, presents a superb opportunity. On the one hand, there is a lot of interest in the entrepreneurship discourse from South African business management scholars, and on the other hand, a distinct niche of CMS scholarship exists. This scenario calls for entrepreneurship scholars to take up the challenge of critical scholarship, as this is literally a virgin territory in South Africa.

This discussion is an attempt to initiate a debate that will hopefully lead to the establishment of a research agenda for CMS in the South African context. I have presented a few areas of investigation which, in the current milieu, are well suited to critical scholarship and where South African insights might prove to be a point of differentiation. The discussion will now turn to the state, or states, of criticality that CMS should assume in the South African context.

## ■ What type of critical scholarship should critical management studies pursue in South Africa?

The question posed above necessitates one to draw from the model of Verduijn et al. (2014) suggesting the four different states of criticality as depicted in Figure 1.1. When addressing this issue, a couple of assumptions need to be addressed. Firstly, as mentioned when the framework of Verduijn et al, was discussed, these four states of criticality are not mutually exclusive. The pursuit of critical scholarship should not focus on one of these states, but rather is likely to cut across them. Thus, and by way of illustration, the micro-perspective should not be pursued at the expense of the lessons that are transferable to the macro-perspective. Secondly, it would be myopic to suggest that the particular form or state(s) of criticality to be pursued would be static. One has to consider that the state(s) of criticality initially pursued will, and must, change over time as the discourse evolves. The notion of reflexivity is of prime importance here, as the evolution of the discourse will dictate the future direction thereof.

Having highlighted these assumptions, a few points are evident when considering the state(s) of criticality that could be pursued by CMS scholarship in South Africa. As a relatively new and under-researched field of inquiry, the temptation exists to immediately pursue the more grandiose, macro-perspectives. The inherent danger thereof with a burgeoning, underexplored area of inquiry is that knowledge claims forthcoming are likely to be

insubstantial and speculative at best. Informed speculation is not necessarily reproachful, as it suggests what could be possible and what might not be possible within a particular discourse, especially when the field of inquiry is underexplored. However, a speculative view alone is not enough to build a substantial thesis.

Yet, where the macro-perspective could be a possibility to CMS in South Africa is in terms of the dystopian state of criticality. For South Africans, a dystopian outlook is almost ingrained, as through history South Africans have become accustomed to the politics of problematising the current status quo as a point of departure to envisage a better future state. Struggles against both colonial and apartheid regimes bear testament to this. In much the same vein, it would also be logical to assume that in order to pursue emancipation in the South African organisational context, one would first need to fully understand the nature of the oppressive forces one is faced with. It is therefore suggested that a dystopian thesis is essential as a point of departure for CMS in South Africa. However, a dystopian thesis needs a basis of substantiation, and thus, it is suggested that a paratopian view of micro-oppressive forces at work needs to continually inform the main dystopian thesis. Thus, a symbiotic relationship between paratopia and dystopia is suggested.

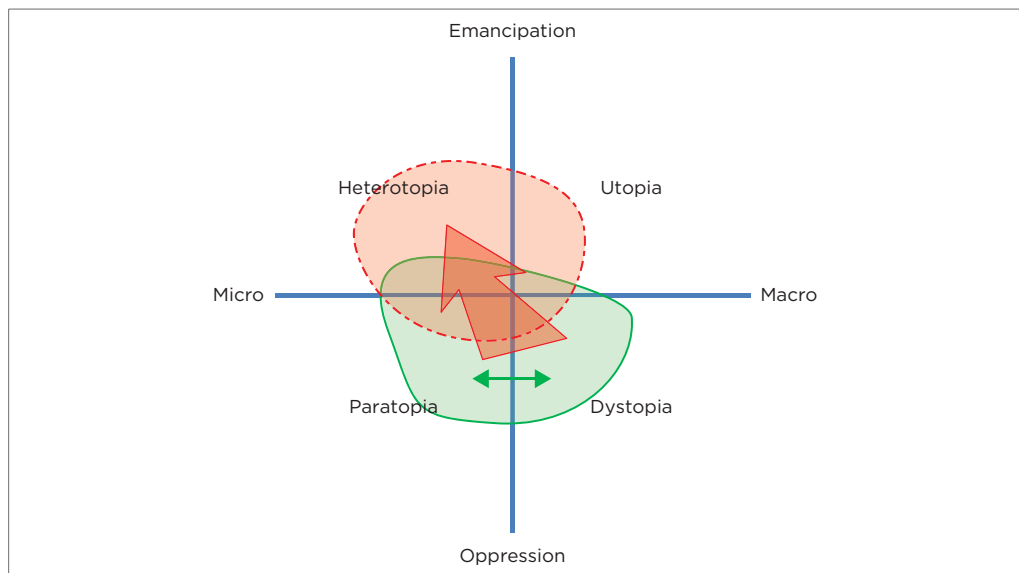
Although Laclau reminds us that there can be no emancipation without oppression, at the same token there can be no emancipation with *only* oppression. The main driving force behind the critical inquiry is to strive for the betterment of society through emancipation. However, focusing on oppression alone will create a discourse that is cynical, obstructionist and destructive. There is a place for an oppressive discourse only insofar as it can serve to thoroughly problematise and serve to aid understanding of the dynamics of oppressive and exploitative forces in the organisational setting. Once a firm grasp of the nature of these issues has been established, the discourse needs to change towards one that can contribute to real and meaningful change in both the scholarship and practice of management. To summarise thus, although CMS might need to engage with issues from a dystopian and paratopian platform as efforts are embarked upon to create a more consolidated CMS discourse in South Africa, over time there needs to be a conscious shift away from the oppressive side of the discourse towards the emancipatory side of the discourse.

The question that now arises is whether the emancipatory discourse that will be embarked upon should adopt a macro or micro focus. In this regard, it is suggested that a more micro-perspective, thus a heterotopian view, should be adopted. This is in line with the thinking within CMS circles that the focus should rather be on micro-emancipation, rather than the more grandiose (and often pompous) macro-emancipatory, or utopian, conception. Furthermore, a heterotopian view assumes recognition of diversity and context, which is of

crucial importance, not only in organisation studies where we constantly profess that each business is different but also in the South African context as a whole, which is signified as being a very cosmopolitan environment. CMS in South Africa recognises diversity and the contributions made by all societal groupings to further the discourse.

However, to guard against the heterotopian view spiraling into the realm of the banal and insignificant, it would be important to be cognisant of the macro-lessons that can be learnt from each micro-emancipatory struggle and victory studies by CMS scholars. It is thus inevitable that a macro-emancipatory, utopian thesis will be built over time, but this should not be the primary focus of CMS scholarship in South Africa. Rather, this should be a logical extension that sprouts from a definite heterotopian focus.

The discussion presented thus far in this section is depicted in Figure 1.2. The green shaded area represents the suggestions presented on the positioning of the criticality of CMS in South Africa. The double-sided green arrow between the dystopian position and the paratopian tradition reiterates the symbiotic relationship between the two, to ensure that any dystopian view remains grounded in reality. The red shaded area represents the shift to a more emancipative discourse over time once issues have been sufficiently problematised. As can be seen, the emphasis would fall on the more micro-emancipatory, heterotopian perspective, with the establishment of a pure



Source: Adapted from Verduijn et al. (2014:101).

**FIGURE 1.2:** Positioning critical management studies in South Africa.



utopian thesis being developed as a mechanism to ensure that the micro-perspective does not become obsessed with the insignificant.

Figure 1.2 also encapsulates the two assumptions alluded to in the discussion above. As can be seen, the current suggested state and the future suggested state span more than one state of criticality, thus recognising that these states are not mutually exclusive and that more than one state can be pursued at any given time. Secondly, Figure 1.2 also takes cognisance of the assumption that any given state(s) of criticality should not be seen as static, but that it shifts over time as the discourse evolves. The red arrow between the current suggested state and the future suggested state represents directional movement as the CMS discourse in South Africa evolves.

## ■ Conclusion

This chapter has examined the fledgling discourse of CMS in South Africa. The discussion has not only suggested certain issues that South African CMS might find worthwhile pursuing as areas of focused inquiry but also made suggestions in terms of the 'flavour' that South African CMS could assume to be of scholarly value and to be of pragmatic, practical value to management scholars and management practitioners alike. However, this is heavily dependent on concerted and consolidated effort from the smattering of CMS scholars that currently work in this space in South Africa. Without their efforts to work towards a more consolidated CMS scholarship in South Africa, South African CMS will remain exactly where it is now as a peripheral discourse that is totally unknown to the majority of South African management scholars.

South Africa needs critical scholarship in the management discourse. In a country where many spheres of society are calling for a move away from Eurocentric thinking towards a more Afrocentric world view, critical scholarship has a crucial role to play in reframing and reshaping management thought in South Africa. The scene is set, and the time is right to take advantage of the benefits CMS offers to the overall South African management and organisation studies discourse. Those lone, isolated South African CMS must get together and formalise CMS in South Africa.

# What the world needs now: Global emancipatory critical management theory

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## ■ Abstract

This chapter presents a novel research agenda that extends critical theory (CT) and critical management theory in seeking to tackle the problem of human emancipation from catastrophic existential threats. This proposed research agenda – Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory – seeks to provoke novel ways of thinking about the ultimate promise of critical management theory and new ways to solve wicked problems such as research innovation failure, which may have played a role in our continued failure to address existential threats. An example of this failure is the failure of research to anticipate or adequately address the current COVID-19 pandemic. It is argued that the current scientific research system (which includes both social and natural science) is fundamentally mismatched to current technological and theoretical opportunities and that a critical lens that provokes uncomfortable

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introspection may help us to become more innovative and to find research solutions to existential problems before it is too late.

## ■ Introduction

Critical theory can be considered to draw its *raison d'être* from the enlightenment tradition. More generally, social science is concerned with liberation from ideologies and power relations that constrain genuine human needs and wants (Alvesson & Willmott 1992). What are the most important of genuine human needs and what unnecessarily restrictive ideologies and power relations hold us back from these needs? Recent experience of the global COVID-19 pandemic might be taken to suggest new answers to these questions. The COVID-19 crisis seems to highlight a fundamental problem associated with distorted or incorrect assumptions underlying the practice of research itself and those underlying the operation of the scientific research system itself.

Arguably, this fundamental problem relates to the fact that investments in preparing for, and addressing the pandemic before it occurred, could have saved lives and lessened the economic costs of the catastrophe. It might be argued that the positive externalities (positive consequences that are not observable) of these investments were simply invisible to those responsible for managing scientific research. However, given repeated warnings in leading scientific journals of an impending pandemic, and of our scientific and methodological inability to respond to it (see Callaghan 2015, 2016), this chapter argues that the pandemic resulted primarily from a *failure of moral responsibility*, inadvertent or not.

If the natural and social scientific research system, our *discovery system*, is simply not capable of heeding warnings of this nature, or of being responsive enough to life and death human needs, then this problem might fall squarely into what Alvesson and Willmott (1992) described as a category of problem from which we need to be liberated. Kuhn (1962) described how scientific fields can reject novel information and knowledge and how innovation can be stalled – a natural process of ‘normal science’. Alvesson and Willmott’s description of liberation is useful in this regard, as it explicitly addresses the systemic problem Kuhn explicates – a chronic lack of responsiveness of a complex scientific system which, like all human systems, is characterised to some extent by restrictive traditions, power relations, ideologies and assumptions that interact to influence the complexity of the discovery system and its operations.

Given the catastrophic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the novel insights we have gained from our experience of it, it is argued here that efforts to improve the discovery process may be disproportionately important, in that their positive externalities remain essentially invisible, and are difficult

to quantify. Considering this importance, the objective of this conceptual essay is to argue that there is a fundamental mismatch between the problems we are currently experiencing (including COVID-19) and the ability of our discovery system (which includes both the social and natural sciences) to solve them. A unique solution is proposed, in the form of a proposed research agenda, namely, Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory (GECMT). Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory is introduced and discussed as a theoretical framework concerned with a 'return' to the values of CT and its 'human responsibilities' and emancipatory principles. A practical research agenda is outlined, with a focus on human emancipation from serious and catastrophic problems, including those similar to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten sets of principles, or core tenets, are suggested to provide a theoretical structure for further theorising and to guide further empirical research. The discussions that follow also serve to differentiate GECMT from 'mainstream' critical management theory (CMT) and to explain how these research agendas will continue to complement each other.

## ■ A return to the values of critical theory and its emancipatory responsibilities

If large-scale and potentially catastrophic threats to human populations can be taken to be caused by the inability of our discovery system to anticipate and solve them, then the task of keeping us safe from them might be considered a form of 'research management'. Although it is obvious that COVID-19, for example, was caused by a virus, its consequences might be taken to be caused by a failure of research management. What would be needed to re-focus sufficient research efforts on societally important problems/threats faced by human populations, to improve our research responses to them? This is surely a difficult feat, given longstanding and extensive descriptions of its nature (see Kuhn 1962; Lakatos 1978), and may require an explicit focus on the management of research itself, which is guided by the types of principles that make positive externalities a central aspect of research endeavour itself. This normative stance is at odds with certain tenets of economics, which strives for a value-neutral frame of analysis. However, it is perhaps a normative theoretical framework that is necessary, given the failure of value-neutral analysis to spare us the consequences of research failures associated with COVID-19.

Critical theory might be a useful starting point in this endeavour, as it explicitly incorporates the idea that humans require emancipation from the oppressive nature of a system that seems to simply be unable to solve important societal problems. According to Steffy and Grimes (1986:334), CT should both interrogate and critique methodology as well as influence the activities and the structure of science, and its communities.

Indeed, for Steffy and Grimes (1986), CT may also affect notions of what a valid scientific product is. Where value-neutral scientific approaches to the management of research have to date failed us, it may be time to re-visit research into what determines the validity of research agendas and what influences the social structures of scientific endeavour to constrain research responses to important societally important research problems.

## ■ Technological change

Critical theory of technology, drawing from the Frankfurt School (Feenberg 1991, 2005), suggests that changes in technology do not necessarily imply conflict between technological advancement and human values (substantivism), but can rather foster democratic participation in social choices. Technological change can itself pose threats to human populations, in that it can change power relationships, enable elites, increase the scale and consequences of human conflict, and can itself enable technological proliferation (Callaghan 2018). It can also be used to reduce inequality and to solve important social problems, but a normative framework may be required to give direction to its development – the role of ethics and responsible innovation in technological change. Critical theory can provide a check on changes in power relationships that disadvantage those vulnerable to such changes.

Indeed, with environmental change and the health struggles of people to access medicines, CT seems to be increasingly focused on technological change, as its political dimensions become clearer. Technological change is therefore taken to be a key concern of GECMT, as part of the scientific discovery system, notwithstanding the closer relationship of technology to commercial enterprise than scientific endeavour.

## ■ The need for theoretical responsiveness to societal threats

Framing research failure as a failure of research management allows us to use management theory to interrogate this failure. To what extent could seminal theoretical frameworks have set the stage for this failure? Burrell and Morgan's (1979) paradigmatic differentiations formed the basis for theory development at the time, reinforcing assumptions about the incommensurability of different research paradigms. To what extent could silo thinking have been enabled by these perspectives? Although control of resources and the sustainability of academic fields might be enabled by silo approaches that firewall fields from others, there is a cost to paradigm incommensurability, in that fields may develop different languages and have as their ultimate goal their own sustainability rather than innovative knowledge creation *per se*. This reality is to some extent reflected in Kuhn's (1962) predictions.

A lack of academic innovativeness in the social sciences is particularly troubling, in that it is social science that is tasked with unravelling the complexity inherent in the systems of human activities that underlie natural science and their management. Theory is required to understand and manage the complexity of human behaviours, but this complexity is compounded when different academic fields develop and speak different academic languages.

Given these challenges, it is perhaps only a unified theoretical research project focused on the management of research that can bring together the different approaches and methodologies needed to mount a concerted challenge to academic gridlock. Academic gridlock describes a condition whereby important societal problems are not solved for extended periods of time.

What is required is a radical shift in thinking about how we do research, but the source of this radical shift might not be able to come from any of the silo fields of academic endeavour. This shift is well suited to management as a discipline because it already offers a theoretical toolbox for managing human systems across contexts. When viewed as a management problem, an inability of the discovery system to respond innovatively to societal threats is a challenge that might be open to novel approaches that simply cannot be seen when viewing the problem from lenses grounded in the natural sciences or even in other social sciences.

In short, radically improved theoretical responsiveness to the problem of slow or gridlocked innovation in the discovery system is of vital importance, but a core rationale for why this is necessary needs to be provided, and GECMT can contribute to this goal. The *Global* in GECMT, therefore, refers to the global nature of the framework and its incorporation of the management field's overarching theory-building approaches.

## ■ Power relations and global emancipatory critical management theory

To some extent, the power relationships entrenched in the discovery system have taken root over time, and there is no guarantee that the values they prioritise are aligned with those required to emancipate human populations from the threats to life and limb posed by COVID-19 and other catastrophic threats. It is unclear to what extent these entrenched power relationships constrain the responsiveness of the discovery system. The literature suggests that power structures that are not responsive to the needs of populations are already under threat from movements concerned with the democratisation of science.

Democratisation of science as a movement reflects others prioritising access of stakeholders to the scientific research process itself, or citizen

science (Bonney et al. 2009) as well as increased accountability in science – a ‘post-normal’ science (Funtowicz & Ravetz 1994).

Technology can either reinforce power differentials or be used to empower citizen populations in their quest for emancipation from oppressive scientific systems (Callaghan 2018). Although blue sky research and other types of research may not explicitly have an emancipatory agenda, this may be harder to justify for pharmaceutical and other branches of biomedical research. The COVID-19 pandemic seems to cast new light on these issues. As discussed, value-neutral approaches to research management failed to protect us from the pandemic.

Participant-led research is another example of a movement that seeks to break down barriers that restrict affected populations from accessing the scientific research process itself. Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory may provide the bedrock values required to legitimise research management as a scientific movement in itself that can unite these other movements under a single banner – the emancipation of human populations from a lack of scientific responsiveness to serious and catastrophic threats. Key to the ability of GECMT to achieve this emancipation, however, might be a novel way of thinking about the relationships between natural and social sciences.

## ■ Social science and natural science: Synthesis as a prerequisite for management

Issues of relationships between natural and social science have produced an uncomfortable literature. Latour (2000:117, 118), for example, suggested that the social sciences would be foolish to imitate the natural sciences.

Latour (2000) suggested that the goal of social science is to reveal the hidden structure which manipulates agents and that by understanding its fundamental laws (in the same way as natural science models) it may be possible to circumvent the political processes of human systems of behaviour. Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory seeks to recognise the inherently political nature of the discovery system, in both its branches – social and natural. However, GECMT offers a useful heuristic or analogy to unite these branches – a need for emancipation from the desperate suffering caused by catastrophic threats, be they disease, climate change and environmental degradation, or human conflict.

By focusing on human emancipation from disease and suffering, it may be possible to obtain consensus across the complex human systems that underlie the discovery system. Social scientific works, such as that by Kuhn (1962) and Lakatos (1978), show us how and why a lack of innovativeness and responsiveness might persist in discovery. The marriage of social and natural

science in support of this emancipatory agenda might be possible if CT provides a theoretical engagement that keeps the emerging literature 'honest' and focused on the task at hand. When the costs of COVID-19, for example, are added up – in human life and suffering as well as socio-economic – this gives us a useful understanding of the scale of the positive externalities that might accrue to a 'research management' agenda that derives its legitimisation and justification from CMT.

## ■ A new ethics calculus with a focus on human suffering

The Ebola outbreak spurred new thinking about scientific ethics and the notion that failing to respond timeously to human suffering is unethical (Fenton, Chillag & Michael 2015). Kuhn (1962) suggested that although a lack of innovativeness may persist in normal science, paradigms can change once the values of researchers change, and a tipping point is reached, where accumulated evidence is sufficient to result in a new paradigm. Critical management theory provides a critical lens that can be turned on human systems that maintain the status quo. Have we become complacent in our acceptance of the status quo in the discovery system? Applying the conceptual lens of an emancipatory agenda, research failure to anticipate or address societally important problems like COVID-19 is essentially *unethical* in itself.

Is it not time to advance a radical emancipatory agenda in scientific research? Are Burrell and Morgan's (1979) notions of paradigm incommensurability not anathema to the requirements of validity in social science research – that different perspectives provide discriminant validity (Campbell & Fiske 1959)? This would not be an attack on academic freedom, but rather a movement to supplement the discovery system with additional resources and an additional stream of research with an explicit focus on improving its responsiveness to catastrophic threats. A useful core ethical principle underlying GECMT is that investments in research should equal the positive societal externalities of this research. For example, the positive externalities of COVID-19-related research prior to its onset may have been so large as to be incalculable.

In hindsight, the scale of investments in research should have been much greater. Given that policy can be informed by value-neutral theory development and empirical analysis, a discovery system needs to satisfy different priorities and stakeholders. Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory offers an overriding logic to unite these stakeholder constituencies – the emancipation from catastrophic threats. Such an overriding logic may be necessary given the inconsistencies inherent in stakeholder claims on a discovery system.



## ■ **Temporality as a primary constraint to emancipation**

A key problem with the current discovery system, which might have been relevant to its failure to fully anticipate and address the COVID-19 pandemic, relates to temporal inconsistencies in stakeholder claims on the discovery system itself. In other words, the different contributions of the discovery system and its outputs may be focused on different time horizons. Addressing catastrophic threats may require research efforts to be united in a longer term focus.

Long-term research investments without immediate payoffs could require a different approach. Much pharmaceutical research, for example, can only be motivated by the likelihood of timely payoffs. How do we encourage research that does not make financial sense, or does not seem to offer any short or medium hope of a payoff? It is this long-term research that may be needed to address societal threats. Research seeking to address these kinds of threats will surely pay off, but in time, and this may require a new kind of thinking that is not well matched to economic rationales, in that these positive externalities are essentially invisible to economic or empirical estimation.

Lengthening research investment horizons might be especially problematic when the academic career system is geared to rewarding short-term payoffs, with the units of academic output being journal articles and funding grants. Could there be a fundamental mismatch between the temporal horizon of these units of output and the types of output associated with the elimination of societal threats like climate change, natural disasters, global conflict and pandemics?

## ■ **A new paradigm of technologically enabled science**

The concept of GECMT essentially suggests an extension of the critical management literature to engage more radically with the liberation of human beings from the oppressive influence of human systems on the scientific system itself, and how it stifles much-needed scientific innovations. In a post-COVID-19 world, it is perhaps easier to see the positive externalities that might have resulted from radically increased investments in appropriate scientific research if the catastrophic pandemic could have been better managed or even stopped. The key to internalise these externalities may be the application of management theory to a new field – the management of research as a sub-field of the management field.

Underlying GECMT, however, is also a call to focus on the emancipation of human beings from oppression that seems to largely have been taken for

granted over time – by a discovery system that has excluded human populations from participation and from decision-making in science that affects these same populations.

This is more than science populism, in that it calls for a much more extensive revolution in thinking about science itself. This revolution, however, is a supplementary revolution – it does not seek to tear up the functional structures of science, but rather to supplement these structures with a sense of responsibility for the needs of human populations and societies.

If discovery were to proceed logically, and in the interest of those affected by its progress, then one might expect it to proactively integrate novel technologies and develop new scientific methodologies derived from the new opportunities provided by technological change. If this is not happening, it must be asked – does the career system of academia incentivise the development of novel methodologies that apply new technology? Rubin and Callaghan (2019) found that academics seem to display little interest in applying new technologies to improve the research process itself. Callaghan (2015) was the first to introduce the term ‘Crowdsourced R&D’, as crowdsourcing techniques were applied to all aspects of the research process itself, differentiating the term from other commonly understood concepts of crowdsourcing.

Crowdsourcing, or crowdsourced R&D, as defined here, has a growing track record in medical research (Adams 2011; Allio 2004; Armstrong et al. 2012) and is perhaps a useful technology-based method that is ripe for development as a full-scale scientific research methodology. Its integration with internet-based capabilities can enable human swarm solving (Rosenberg 2015) and artificial intelligence applications that can leverage crowdsourced data (Davies 2015), making radical improvements in the capabilities of biomedical and other research fields.

Poor populations are often denied access to the outputs of a discovery system that is incentivised to produce scientific outputs for wealthier markets with less risk and higher returns. The poor and most vulnerable in societies are therefore disproportionately vulnerable to slow innovation in the discovery system. Similarly, disasters such as COVID-19 seem to disproportionately affect poor and vulnerable populations, as do natural disasters and geopolitical conflict.

An emancipatory agenda inspired by CMT could turn its lens of enquiry inwards, to focus on the productivity of the research system itself, and in that the easiest way to improve access of the poor and most vulnerable to the outputs of the discovery process might be to radically reduce costs throughout the system. By reducing costs, risks may also be reduced, and wealthy markets may no longer be a necessary condition for biomedical research production.

These changes might herald a new era of technologically enabled science, but social scientific engagement is needed to ensure that human systems are able to adapt to this type of emancipatory agenda. Natural science cannot do this on its own, as it is nested within complex human systems that have very different existential logics than those proposed by GECMT. Also, it is perhaps only the management theory that can unite discovery activities under the umbrella of an emancipatory 'management' agenda. Management is required, in order to plan, organise, lead and control complex systems to produce coherent envisioned outcomes. But following the dictates of markets and market incentives blindly cannot be expected to deliver humankind from the oppressive forces of physical tyranny associated with disease and death.

## ■ The emergent theoretical frameworks of Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory

The ideas of GECMT will require development to be able to offer theoretical guidance for those interested in pursuing its emancipatory agenda. Theoretical frameworks are needed to be able to take advantage of rapidly emerging technological opportunities. Which candidate frameworks might fit this bill?

Probabilistic innovation theory (PIT) (Callaghan 2014, 2015) is a theoretical framework that suggests that the only way to improve science is to ensure a match between scientific processes and the opportunity environment within which it is nested. Probabilistic innovation theory suggests that there should be a balance between specific research investments (the numerator) to solve a problem and the specific consequences of a failure to address such a problem (the denominator). For example, the ratio of investments in research to prepare for COVID-19 prior to the pandemic to the costs of a failure to stop it is infinitesimally small - if this is taken to be a societal benefit ratio, then societal benefit ratios of research concerning societally important threats may be far too small. The notion of societal benefit ratios incorporates the idea of positive externalities.

Probabilistic innovation theory might also be thought of as a structural theory that proposes that only structural change in the discovery system can produce radically improved economies of scale in the research process. It is therefore a radical theory of change relating to research itself. Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory is well suited to such a radical approach to re-ordering investments in research to drive an emancipatory agenda. The emancipation of humankind from existential threats such as climate change, pandemics and global conflict is an urgent project.

What other theoretical frameworks could be a useful fit with the guidance offered by PIT? Probabilistic innovation theory seeks to radically improve

research productivity in the service of humanity. To radically improve research productivity and to obtain these economies of scale, a theory is needed that can show the way – to show how these economies of scale can be attained.

Crowdsourced R&D essentially seeks to distribute tasks of the research process over large numbers of people and networks to radically improve the speed and rigour of scientific research. The theory that shows how crowds can contribute to problem-solving is useful in this regard, and some have suggested that the collective intelligence of crowds can be a powerful mechanism to be harnessed for scientific problem-solving.

Crowds can have emergent properties. They can act irrationally, as mobs (Le Bon 1896), but under some conditions they can exhibit powerful collective intelligence (Surowiecki 2004). Similarly, research concerned with swarm intelligence (Bonabeau & Theraulaz 2000; Callaghan 2016) can offer insights into ‘pieces of the puzzle’ of crowd-based problem-solving – of how to radically accelerate emancipatory biomedical and scientific research.

Critical theory can advance emancipatory agendas (Willmott 1993a, 1993b) and integration with literature regarding how knowledge can be better managed (see Hayek 1945; Von Hippel 1994), and literature on power relationships (Carlile 2004; Foucault 1982) can provide useful insights into how to democratise knowledge creation more broadly and improve access to its outcomes.

Post-normal science (Funtowicz & Ravetz 1994) theory has also led the way in criticising inconsistent and contradictory scientific research, particularly that which has serious potential consequences for stakeholders, particularly those affected by science and its failures. Ethical issues are increasingly salient in biomedicine (Kimmelman 2008). Post-normal science advocates for heightened accountability and transparency in science and enhanced visibility. This perspective is therefore well suited to the inclusive paradigm of the new democratised science.

## ■ Radical humanist future science

Burrell and Morgan (1979) described a radical humanist paradigm of historical thought, a discussion of which might also be useful in describing the vision of GECMT. The radical humanist paradigm is concerned with the overthrow of limitations of societal structures (Burrell & Morgan 1979:32). People interact with these ideological superstructures, which separate individuals from life satisfaction.

The radical humanist perspective draws from a historical tradition of work on human consciousness and German idealist thought and the work of Hegel, Kant, Husserl, and the Frankfurt School theorists (Burrell & Morgan 1979).

Radical humanists have typically sought to change states of consciousness (Burrell & Morgan 1979:33), an agenda that has also been taken to be anti-organisation in its stance in that it is opposite to functionalism.

To achieve radical humanist goals envisioned by GECMT, which are anchored specifically on the emancipation of humankind from existential threats, including disease and suffering, to which the poor and most powerless are disproportionately vulnerable, it is necessary to take a different view of anti-organisation theory. It is necessary to incorporate mainstream management and all the tools and techniques of CMT into a coherent framework that can drive emancipatory research productivity.

Such an approach is radical – it advocates for the maximisation of scientific progress and an uncompromising pursuit of the physical emancipation of vulnerable populations by way of scientific advances. But what of the threatening aspects of scientific and technological advancement? In this regard, Feenberg (2005) suggested that the democratisation of technology is necessary to address the destructive consequences of technological change.

The democratisation of science is therefore an important political movement that may make the attainment of this vision possible. Further post-normal science theory building might incorporate insights from research into multiparadigm approaches, in that GECMT needs to incorporate organisational theory together with anti-organisation perspectives. Lewis and Grimes' (1999) multiparadigm approach to complex and paradoxical phenomena uses metatriangulation theory building, building on its tradition (see Bradshaw-Camball & Murray 1991; Grimes & Rood 1995; Hassard 1991; Schultz & Hatch 1996; Weaver & Gioia 1994; Willmott 1993b; Ybema 1995).

A value-based approach to the management of science might be needed in that science and scientific discourse are often politicised. Some authority figures and politicians have been found to manipulate information, and misinformation has been spread regarding climate change and vaccines (Mainous 2018).

How do we protect ourselves from these threats, as pseudoscience seems to also result from the politicisation of science? Popper's notion of falsifiability suggests that evidence is key to combat pseudoscience, but Lakatos (1978) disagreed that Popper's criterion can differentiate pseudoscience from legitimate social and natural science. Lakatos (1978) suggested that scientists do not really abandon theories that are discredited by evidence, and often simply regard such evidence as anomalies, and that Kuhn may be correct in suggesting there may be no real differentiating line between science and pseudoscience.

The focus of this work is not on the proliferation of pseudoscience, which can pose a threat to legitimate science in that it muddies the waters and

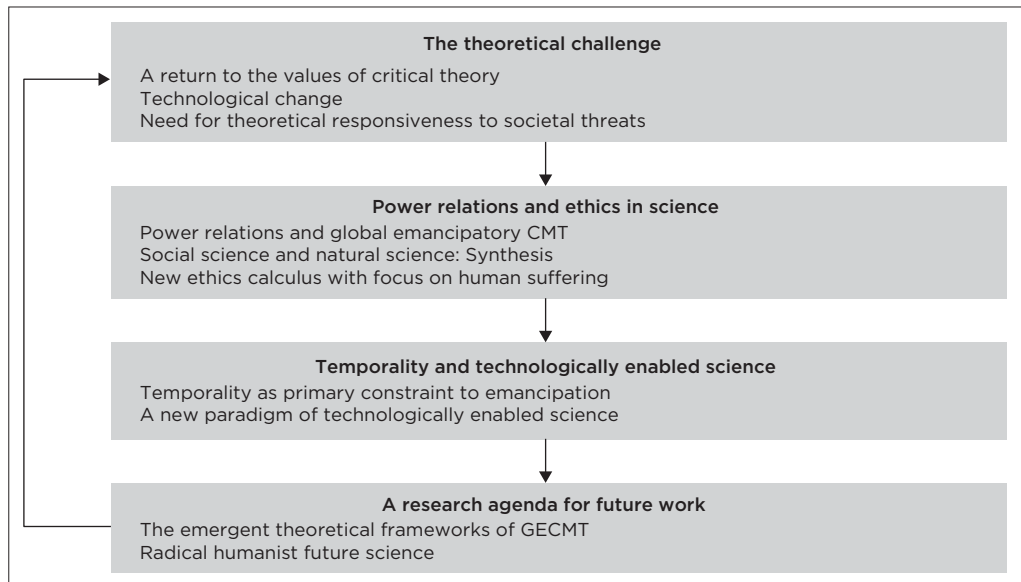
contributes to the noise that makes it difficult to understand the contributions of legitimate work. Further research should, however, seek out the costs of what Lakatos described as intellectual decay.

Overall, what is necessary to achieve the vision outlined here is perhaps a revolution in thinking about how and why we do research. Malthus (1798) warned of the consequences of catastrophic threats, and although his predictions were not correct, COVID-19 has shown that they can occur. Supplementing research practice and theory development with a stream concerned about the emancipation of vulnerable populations from the problems that affect them the most seriously is surely a legitimate objective for CT.

## ■ Synthesis

Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the core discussions here. These discussions seem to suggest 10 broad principles, which might be the necessary conditions to develop a future GECMT research agenda. These 10 broad principles seem to reduce to four key areas.

The first cross-cutting set of principles concerns a need to ground research going forward in the core principles and values of CT in general, and CMT in particular, in order to develop theoretical frameworks capable of breaking new ground to emancipate human populations from existential threats. The creation of these frameworks may be particularly important at this time as



CMT, Critical Management Theory; GECMT, Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory.

**FIGURE 2.1:** Necessary conditions for the development of the Global Emancipatory Critical Management Theory paradigm.

technological change increases uncertainty, and this change needs to be incorporated in these models. Theory development needs to become more responsive to catastrophic threats, as it may be social science that holds the key to ensuring the innovativeness of natural science, which is nested within the complex human systems that social science concerns itself with. The field of research management could provide useful insights into how to do this, if it incorporates the values of GECMT as its guiding framework. Simple economic logics will not cut it, as there is no other way to legitimise the management of research across different scientific fields.

The second set of principles relates to power relations and ethics in science, and the need for power relations to balance enough to also facilitate flows of scientific outcomes to those who need them the most. To do this, social science and natural science need to work together, and research management literature can assist in this regard, united in a common cause to address human suffering, an example of which is the COVID-19 pandemic.

The third set of principles relates to temporality and the need for a match between the current processes and practices of science and the opportunity frontier associated with novel technologies that can improve research productivity. A new focus on real-time research can revitalise slow and gridlocked states of research practice. The COVID-19 crisis highlights the dangers of scientific complacency and lack of urgency. A new paradigm of real-time and fully technologically enabled scientific endeavour can radically reduce the costs of research production and can produce more research breakthroughs, improving the accessibility of research to the poorest and most vulnerable in our societies.

Finally, the fourth and final set of principles relates to the need to synthesise and link literatures that already exist. Numerous theoretical frameworks that already exist can guide a radical expansion of real-time research capability. Crowdsourced R&D, swarm intelligence and collective intelligence seem to be topic areas that can enrich a future GECMT research agenda. Ideas drawn from Linux, InnoCentive, FoldIt and other examples show how biomedical research in particular can achieve research economies of scale.

The approaches advocated here regarding emancipation in CMT are not without their challenges and limitations. Emancipating human beings from subjugation in all its myriad forms is a utopian notion. But we need to decide on the future we want, and we need to order the importance of our priorities. Emancipation faces many challenges, be they economic, political, social or biological. By being aware of our goal of emancipation, we might each day draw nearer to accomplishing it.

One of the most important implications for a future GECMT research agenda is its ability to drive the development of these theoretical insights in

such a way as to synthesise all these literatures so as to develop formal scientific methodologies based on crowdsourced R&D and other opportunities. Formalising these methodologies can bring this literature into a unified academic research agenda focused on the emancipation of human beings from catastrophic threats.

## ■ Conclusion

This chapter's objective was to conceptually discuss and synthesise different literatures to propose a research agenda that builds on CMT, namely, GECMT. The G in GECMT stands for the need for a global approach to emancipatory theorising, as the most serious problems faced by vulnerable and powerless populations include the catastrophic threats they face – be they pandemics, climate change, environmental disasters or unequal access to resources (and particularly to the outcome of the discovery process itself).

The E in GECMT relates to the idea that the emancipation of human populations from catastrophic threats is an overlooked aspect of human emancipation and that there is a need to address power imbalances in the discovery system that constrain innovation and deny poorest and the most vulnerable populations access to outputs of the research process that could solve many of their most pressing problems. The example of COVID-19 was used to highlight the problem of innovation failure in the discovery system and the difficulties inherent in incorporating externalities into research management decisions.

The C in GECMT stands for critical, in that the discovery system that failed to address COVID-19 has largely been managed according to the largely value-neutral economic logics and that to provide a unifying logic to research management alternative approaches may be needed. Critical theory provides a useful basis for theorising as it can hold systems of power and inequality to account – including those associated with a discovery system with different agendas and priorities than addressing catastrophic threats that affect us all.

The M in GECMT refers to the management of the research process itself. Nothing may be as effective as turning the critical lens upon ourselves and holding ourselves to account for how we have addressed the most pressing problems of our time. Of course, academics are free to research what they will, but a complementary GECMT research agenda may be helpful in addressing catastrophic existential threats, before it is too late. Management is needed because these threats are simply too extensive to be addressed by a single discipline or by *ad hoc* approaches that do not build on management theory and its applications to human systems of behaviour.

The T in GECMT represents the potential for theory development to lead the way in incorporating all the technological opportunities becoming available,



to produce a truly technologically enabled discovery process. Theory is needed to bring new ideas to bear to solve important societal problems, and few research problems are as serious as COVID-19 and other potentially existential threats.

Overall, this chapter sought to provoke new thinking about how to solve existential threats facing humankind at this time. The experience of COVID-19 may help to shake up academic thinking, and the ideas associated with GECMT might also be helpful in this regard, before it is too late.

# Critical management studies: Beginning or end?

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## ■ Abstract

Society is in a mess that can be directly assigned to the exploitation of natural and human resources and 'profit at all cost'. This is based on the scientific project of observe, analyse and report, as well as the fallacies on which the scientific project is based. The enquiry first establishes the origins of the dominant discourse, the doubtful assumptions on which the scientific project and the dominant discourse of management are based. Alternatives (as a brief mention) taught at business schools are introduced as well as the main reasons that it is also a failure. A return to the 'essence' of being and the 'mysterion' of being is proposed as a solution.

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## ■ Introduction

Students of society,<sup>1</sup> and in particular that sub-section of society called management, are faced with a dilemma in which the world as they experience it has gone 'wrong'. Wrong in the context of this chapter implies as Žižek (2011) referred to as the imbalance of the economic system that results in the growing gap between the rich and the poor (haves and have nots), overpopulation, the further exploitation of not only natural resources but also the human being and the fallacy that technology will save the human race (Hardin 1968). These 'wrong' consequences presented by Žižek, and in particular the exploitation of natural resources and the human being, are the direct result of management gone wrong in a society gone wrong. The responses to this 'wrong' came in various forms from within the 'discipline' of management and from others outside the ambit of management but within the knowledge field of the social sciences. But the driver of our discussion is the dominant discourse of business, management and the role of the manager as established by Taylor in the economic system that is being practised today and subjected to critique, not only from a CT perspective but also from a living perspective.

MacIntyre (2007:74) further attacked the manager (as a representative of business and the dominant discourse of management) where the third character in his social context is the manager. MacIntyre linked the manager to the failure of the enlightenment project (scientific project) in which the manager seeks to achieve maximum bureaucratic efficiency through the scientific project without regard to the end. A case in point is where the CEO of Rio Tinto resigned after public protest over the destruction of ancient aboriginal burial sites (BBC News) where it was profit at all cost (Pope Francis I 2020). This profit at all cost (apart from the deadly sin of greed) is driven by the scientific project where the manager concentrates on 'mastering techniques and the application of law-like generalisations' without any evaluation of the end or *causa finalis* [final cause]. It is just in these techniques and law-like generalisations applied by academics and managers that alternatives to the dominant discourse such as CMS find their beginning as well as their end. The moment you are born your death is predetermined, and the same applies to any critique of the dominant discourse in management. Its end (demise) is built into its beginning.

It is submitted that this discussion does not intend to provide a chronological review of the responses to 'management has gone wrong' but explore a deeper necessity that is totally ignored by the 'students' of

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1. In the context of this chapter 'students of society' and for that matter 'students of management' refer to researchers, educators (academics), practitioners (managers) and ordinary human beings who are exposed to the whims of management.

management and the role of human nature that manifest itself in alternative forms such as CMS, but it is required that certain key moments in history be highlighted to facilitate the discussion. Held (2004:13) emphasised that CT (and all critiques against the dominant discourse such as CMS, systems theory and strategy as practice) does not form a unity that has the same meaning for all its adherents. What it has in common is a shared frustration with management practices in society, all organisations across the world and the failures (Read disasters) they produced.

## ■ Philosophical foundation of the inquiry

The philosophical foundation on which this inquiry is based is existentialism. Existentialism is the ethical theory that freedom is the core of human existence, and it is the foundation of all other human values. Classical existentialism is 'the theory that existence precedes essence'. The term 'existentialism' first appears in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre but Søren Kierkegaard is seen as the first philosopher who used the principles of existentialism (Crowell 2020:3-10). Maritain (1948:Loc. 163) questioned this and claimed that existentialism can be traced back to the work of St Thomas Aquinas. Existentialists claim existence before essence and that there is no such thing as human nature. You are not born with ideas. You are a blank canvas on which your experiences are written that forms you. There is no God – no *téleos*, and as there is no God and no *télos* you are free to do whatever you want. You have a free choice in deciding your experience as well as freedom in choices and decisions (Crowell 2020:5). Existentialism is grounded in the autonomous free thinking human subject as posited by Descartes – we are autonomous human beings who are free to think, act and do as he or she wanted to (Wall 2005:202-203).

It must be stated that this inquiry is demarcated to the thinking of the human beings and the nature of the human being, and in particular the nature of the Western human being. Out of scope is any psychological contamination from Freud, psychoanalysts and psychodynamics onwards. But our inquiry needs a starting point.

## ■ A critique (critical management studies) and rational man: In the beginning

In the beginning, there was Rene' Descartes (1596-1650). The contribution of Descartes to the development of Western thought needs to be seen against what was inherited from the Socratic philosophers with their main proponent Aristotle and the *Corpus Aristotelian* and the influence of Aristotelian logic on the middle age and Renaissance philosophers (Hoffecker 2007:193). Hoffecker also indicated that the comprehensive nature of the

*Corpus Aristotelian* dominated even science until the 18th century. With Copernicus the hold of Aristotelian logic began to slip but an important scholarly effect took place, Latin became the *lingua franca* of the academia (Hoffecker 2007:190). Latin as the *lingua franca* of the academia played a major role in the establishment of a common universal academic language that provided scholarly access and a uniform academic language. Another contribution of the renaissance was a new faith in human reason to discover the truths of nature through observation and reason and according to Wall (2005:189) 'This new way of knowing was called science, science as we know it today'. What this science did do was to start questioning the prominence of God in the affairs of nature and humans (*Mysterion*)<sup>2</sup> and questioning that there can be such a thing as inherent *human télos*. It is within this inheritance that Descartes finds himself.

It can be asked why Descartes? Why not, for example, Erasmus or Copernicus, Martin Luther or Francis Bacon? Like the peers of his time, Descartes need answers to the philosophical questions of 'How do I know that I know? How much can I know', and 'Where does my knowledge came from?' (Wall 2005:191). The scientific project established by these philosophers is based on careful observation, the discovery of general laws and the mathematical description of these laws.<sup>3</sup> Descartes holds the belief that the scientific method can assist in proof that nature works as it does because of mechanical forces that are established through these general laws and the mathematical description of these laws, and not because of any teleological urge that strives for perfection. The first step Descartes took in his quest to answer the three questions stated above was to inspect his current belief systems, mental models, assumptions and if they all three can be doubted. In doing this, he rejected all that he has learnt (Wall 2005:194). Given the definition of critical thinking below (And the Revolutions in Western Thought; Hoffecker 2007), it can be stated that Descartes was the first philosopher of the 'Enlightenment era' that questions his own knowledge, mental models and assumptions (it can be stated that Descartes was the critical thinker if we apply the definition of critical thinking).<sup>4</sup> In doubting his own knowledge, belief systems, mental models and thinking, Descartes established what is known as the Cartesian method of doubt. In applying doubt, Descartes concluded that there are only two undoubtable truths, that is, God is, I am (*Deo est, esse est*).

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2. *Mysterion* in this context does not refer to the contemporary English 'mystery' but to the biblical Greek that refers to 'that which await disclosure or interpretation'.

3. We will come back to the scientific method as it is the Achilles' heel of social and management science.

4. Critical thinking is defined as 'A skeptical or questioning approach to knowledge'. Someone who is thinking critically will question assumptions and think about the issue from various perspectives (The Open University 2016:Loc. 125). See the alignment with Cartesian 'Method of Doubt'.

But we need to return to the mechanistic world that works according to general (general in this instance means universal) laws that can be expressed in mathematical descriptions. Descartes explained that the mechanistic world works the same as a clock. It is cogs and gears that work together to indicate time. If an event happens that the clock does not work (although the cogs, gears, weights and pendulum are in place and working), the time is incorrect, or the hands would not move – he would ascribe it to the ‘ghost in the machine’ (*Deus ex machina*). Another important aspect of the mechanistic world view is that current movements of the machine are determined by previous events. This in itself led to the Western linear concept of linear causality; if A ... then B (to which we will return).

The last important contribution of Descartes for this inquiry is that of human nature, and it starts with the Cartesian statement of *Cogito ergo sum* ‘I think therefore I am’. For Descartes, the thinking is that human being is the ‘First and foremost an autonomous individual, one who is free to think and to act, and to create a life according to his or her own experience and reason’ (Wall 2005:202–203). This then also provides the difference between Descartes and his peers, in particular Hobbes. For Hobbes and the other rationalists, humans are part of nature, and we cannot escape the determinism of nature (*Telos*). For Descartes, while nature is true in itself and of itself, the same cannot be said of human beings. Human beings are not entirely physical, humans are also non-physical – we have minds. Science studies bodies. The non-physical is the job of philosophers and theologians (psychology only became prominent with the work of Freud). Thus, this mechanistic world that can be observed, analysed and described in terms of mathematics established the scientific project as analysed and described by an autonomous human being.

It is prudent, that before we take leave of Descartes, to note that the scientific project was faltering. Although the seeds of the scientific project were firmly established by Descartes, Newton and their peers, Descartes also provided the opening for its downfall. He (Descartes) was also of the opinion that what we think of as ordinary experience may just be a dream. Just as dreams only exist in his mind, if he sees his hands there might not be anything and his hands are only in his mind. ‘Perhaps all of my beliefs about the world and the persons existing in it are false’ (Wall 2005:195). This was further espoused by David Hume (1711–1776) who doubted his own existence in stating (Wall 2005):

When I speak of the self or a mind, my words refer to nothing [...]. I do not experience myself as the subject of my conscious experiences. I may simply be a collection of experiences flowing in time. (p. 236)

Hume even went further by stating that the findings of science are unreliable.<sup>5</sup> This view left philosophy (and science) with nothing, and observations through

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5. It must be stated that a rift started to appear between the British philosophers (And later the USA) and their counterparts on the European continent (Wall 2005:6–7). This rift is more evident today as we classify Western

the senses (the hallmark of the scientific project) may just be a dream. Philosophy and the scientific project were in a dead-end state. But to the rescue came Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). With his publications ‘Critique of Pure Reason and Critique of Practical Reason’, Kant reasoned that ‘Yes – your experiences (Scientific observation) came to you through your senses, but you must be aware that your senses can lie to you’.

We can conclude this part of our enquiry with a direct quote from Wall (2005):

His [*Descartes's*] success in clarifying and defending this scientific concept of reality helped pave the way for the scientific and technological revolution that would soon follow and become a defining characteristic of western civilisation. (p. 203)

The next discussion will attempt to briefly put the scientific project in context.

## ■ The scientific project and management: Establishment of the dominant discourse

For the last 400 years (The general rate at which Western human thought changes; Wall 2005:6), scientists (researchers and academics) understood the world in terms of machine-like regularity that acts according to universal laws and rules. This holds for both natural science and the human sciences. This machine-like regularity is known as science or scientific research.

### ■ Scientific management

It can be stated that with Cartesian thought, modern Western thought and logic were truly established. The scientific project from both a rational and empiricist view was firmly established as a hallmark Western culture and thought. The application of the scientific project (not research per se but the project in itself) in management came to fruit through Frederick Taylor. It must also be put that Taylor himself was a mechanical engineer (Taylor n.d.:11) and thus steeped in the inherited tradition of the mechanistic world of observation, universal laws and mathematical description.

Taylor noted four principles of scientific management (Taylor n.d.:106–107). Firstly, that the rule of thumb in working to common sense and just getting the job done had to be replaced with a scientific method that proposed the most efficient way in which a worker should conduct his work. Secondly, workers and job positions should be matched to ensure compatibility and fit between the worker and what the job entailed. Harmony, not discord should

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(footnote 5 continues...)

philosophy into two groups, that is, Continental philosophers and Analytical philosophers. This is confirmed in management theory where Taylor (in the USA) and Fayol (in France) at the same time developed the concept of scientific management.

exist between individual employees. Thirdly, management had to monitor and observe workers to ensure that the scientific work method was being followed and lastly that managers and workers had to work together to achieve goals and work had to be shared, Cooperation is needed not individualism, and lastly, maximum output from the individual must be emphasised.

Because of this thinking which formed the perspectives and method introduced by viewing management as a science, management sees people as mere objects set to complete tasks in a manner that fits the organisational strategy designed and given by management (people/humans that knows better). Workers are to be seen as identical objects doing tasks in a standardised method, thus providing stability so that management can try to accurately forecast production and strategy assumptions.

But in a mechanistic world where the autonomous human being (subject) is replaced as an object certain unstated assumptions had to be made which are linear causality, the future is known, the autonomous human being, control and the objective observer. We can conclude Taylor's work with one of his closing statements (Taylor n.d.:109): 'This [Scientific management] means increase in prosperity and diminution in poverty, not only for their men but for the whole community immediately around them' and contrast it with the statement from Forbes (Cassidy 2020) who forecasted that 'More than 115 million people will be forced into extreme poverty during 2020'. The preceding statement can be summarised as that the 'Proposed prosperity and diminution of poverty as predicted by the scientific method of management is a fallacy if compared to reality'.

Following the Cartesian method of doubt, the highly 'Doubtable' assumptions of the scientific project are introduced, which are linear causality (not complexity), the future is known and can be predicted (made), the existence of an autonomous human being, control and lastly the fallacy of the objective observer.

## ■ Linear causality

Sparkin (2020) defined causality as 'The connection of phenomena where an event exists and rises because of the result of the existence of another event'. In other words that the behaviour and change of one phenomenon that can be seen (observed through the senses) as the cause give rise to another phenomenon and also its behaviour and change which can be seen as the effect of the cause. Although there are various forms of causality, management over time has adopted linear causality as an aspect of its dominant discourse (Stacey & Mowles 2016).

Linear causality entails that there is a direct relationship between two phenomena or elements, and that if one element changes the effect, that



change will result in changes within another element proportionately (Colchester 2020). For example, if managers give their workers new equipment, then they will be more productive, and the newer their equipment is, the more productive they will be. This way of thinking regarding the relationship between elements poses a stumble block to the reliability and validity of a decision as linear causality truly limits the view and understanding of the connections' complexity influencing the behaviour of elements and phenomenon (Stacey & Mowles 2016).

The flaw within linear causality for management is that it relies on an assumption based on previous results and occurrences, and for that assumption to be trustworthy, the elements need to be isolated and tested under similar circumstances. For example, in an isolated event linear causality implies that lowering the price of a product demand will increase. This is a simple 'If A ... then B' causal relationship. It assumes that all other factors will remain static. But in reality it is not the case as within the business world elements are not isolated and always under the same circumstances, for instance, lowering a products price during the 2008 economic recession would not necessarily have resulted in more demand or sales as the demand of customers would have been influenced by other external effects, thus emphasising the flaw and limitation of strategy leaning on the linear causality between phenomenon (If A ... then B) (Stacey & Mowles 2016). It is because of this concern and notice of lack in which we should evaluate the validity and reliability of the way of thinking that management has adopted as an element within its dominant discourse.

## ■ **Management: The future is 'known' and predictable**

The use and dependency that strategy has on assumptions indicate that strategy and managers rely on knowing the future or well acting as if the future is known to establish a strategy and make managerial decisions (Stacey & Mowles 2016). Discussing the presence of knowing the future when conducting any organisational plan is relevant as any form of planning is made of the assumption that the future is known. The future is known and manageable to find its way into the 'non-negotiable' concepts of vision, mission and objectives'.

To act as if the future is known is ingrained in Western human nature (as long as the cogs in the clock [mechanistic world] are turning, we can forecast the future time). People believe that they are right and that their ideas within their mind are justified and logical and more than often assume that if something is possible it is most likely to occur and therefore people place misled trust in these assumptions. With the above mentioned, it is clear that the assumptions of the scientific project are based on the perspective of knowing the future but as Hume noted that knowing the future is impossible

no matter how many times an outcome of an event occurs in the past (also known as Hume's problem of induction). It is proposed that it is unrealistic to apply this unstated assumption in human affairs that has no certainty of becoming reality (Stacey & Mowles 2016).

## ■ Autonomous human being

We can start this brief discussion with a position of Descartes himself in respect of the mechanistic world where he believes that (Wall 2005):

We are not part of nature, we transcend the deterministic flow of natural events; we are free. Our choices are not caused by anything. They are undetermined. Society may determine our behaviour, but it still is our choice. We simply choose the desire we wish to act upon and the action follows. We have the power to govern our desires,<sup>6</sup> to suppress some, to release others into action, and to hold some at bay for the moment. (p. 209)

The autonomous human being supports the existential philosophical underpinning of this enquiry.

But the scientific project ignores this. It treated human beings as homogenous, a cog in the mechanistic world that operates according to universal laws and rules. Humans do not have free choices, and they cannot control their emotions and desires as these will always have the same outcome. Humans (employees) are rule followers, and they cannot think for themselves. It is thus the task of the manager to identify these rules, present them as policies, rules and procedures and thereby equate the human being as 'just another law/rule following' cog in the machine, and thus govern the behaviour of human beings. This notion is thus also imported from Taylor that the 'homogenous human being' is not a free thinking human being, but a homogenous one that needs to be controlled.

## ■ Control

Management (the scientific project) dictates and strives to achieve the behaviour needed from the autonomous human being to achieve a goal or form of success sought after (Edwards 2020). But in order for management to achieve the desired behaviour, it relies on exhibiting some form of control over behaviour. There are many forms in which management can exert control over behaviour.

Control is another unstated assumption that management assumes it can exhibit but this is not entirely true as management (consisting of autonomous human beings) and the phenomena to be influenced are being influenced by external forces that are beyond the 'Control' of management. Control attempts

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6. This also refers to the Platonic analogy of the charioteer and their horses, emotions, desires and rational man.

to ensure proper (whatever proper may mean) behaviour in an organisation as individuals are not found to act in the best interest of the organisation.

Control starts with the setting of objectives. In organisations, the essence of control starts with the Budget' (Stacey & Mowles 2016:75). The authors indicate that the essence of control is negative as it compares the actual outcome of an activity with the desired outcome. This negative form of control is also imported from the 'mechanistic view' of the world and is also presented as a cybernetic control. This is where the previous action of the machine is compared with some desired action and the difference is fed back into the machine that will guide the outcome of the next action. Control in the affairs of human nature dispels the autonomous human being and requires that all human beings and employees are homogenous.

## ■ Objective observer

The last point in our discussion of the scientific project is the notion of an objective observer. The scientific project holds that in research (science – observe, analyse, report), the subject (researcher) is removed from the object (phenomena under observation). That the observer is objective, unbiased and rational. But this is not correct as Gadamer (1975:5) claimed that 'practice of induction [analysis and reporting] in human sciences is tied to a particular psychological condition. It requires [...], a well-stocked memory and the acceptance of authorities'. Your scientist (objective observer) is biased, cannot be objective, falls back into historical experience (well-stocked memory) and accepts the reasoning of the 'authorities'. The doubtful concept of an 'objective observer' is summarised by Anaïs Nin (1903–1977) statement that 'We don't see things as they are, but as we are'. The concept of the objective observer is not only highly dubious but outright intellectual fraud.

These unstated and highly dubious assumptions on which the scientific project in management and human affairs is based still form the foundation of management. They are part of the dominant discourse in management that we can conclude this section with the following from Stacey and Mowles (2016:203): 'If you want a visibly successful academic career, you do not stray too far from the [scientific project] dominant discourse'. The doubtful assumptions introduced above in the '... history of Western thought [management] tend to be completely taken for granted' and acts as an axiom.<sup>7</sup>

The next section of our enquiry will not cover the application of the scientific project, and management in contemporary organisations and its application is accepted. We will instead move to a critique of and the contemporary

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7. An axiom is 'statement that are not proven, but simply take to be true' (Wall 2005:193).

alternatives to the dominant discourse and indicate that it is just a further entrenchment of the dominant discourse in management and the highly doubtable assumptions presented above.

## ■ The scientific project and management: A critique and its end

There are various critiques and alternatives proposed to the scientific project and its offspring; the dominant discourse of management. Although the main critique is ideological, this enquiry will focus briefly on the alternatives of which CMS is one. Some of these alternatives have their origins in other knowledge fields such as the natural sciences, other social sciences such as education, psychology and computer sciences. The positioning of the critique is briefly presented below and serves as a starting point to the alternatives proposed.

### ■ Critical theory

A critique of the dominant discourse is started well before Taylor and scientific management. The first major (and still foundational) critique we encounter is that of Karl Marx and his publication '*Das Kapital*'. The starting point for Marx was not to understand society (The premise of research in the human sciences) but to change society. For Marx, the scientific project (and management) has managed to corrupt the 'natural ways' in which human beings are thinking and producing (work) goods for the good of others (see Taylor above). Marx wants to change society and return it to its natural state of work (production) (Wall 2005:274).

The essence of Marx's work was in the way society was transformed; the human (employee) was divorced and alienated from its true purpose through the scientific project and is encountered in the results (even unintentional) of the scientific project. This ideological base to which Western society was transformed is called capitalism. According to Wall (2005:274), capitalism is the doctrine of private property, and this right to property allows the owner of the property to use others to create products [and services]. In the 16th century, a world-embracing market was created, and the flow of commodities is the first form in which capital appears (Marx 1867:123). Marx then went further and explains how 'landed property' was replaced by the capital (money) of the 'merchant and usurer'. In creating these products and services, Marx<sup>8</sup> expressed the opinion that the human being (worker) was divorced from his true purpose. What Marx observed in London was the evils of capitalism (Wall 2005:185). Firstly, capitalism is *inefficient* and *wasteful* as

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8. For Marx the true purpose of man was in his production of goods and the use of these goods (Marx 1867).

'... much of the wealth it creates is spent on advertising and sales instead of production'. Secondly, *it is irrational*. The claims of capitalism are that it benefits the whole society (all-inclusive capitalism as promoted by Rockefeller) but it only promotes the 'selfish desires of individuals and control for profit', and lastly, capital is *unjust* as the wealth it creates ends up in the hands of the very few. In these evils of capitalism (and management) lies not only the critique of capitalism but also the critique of the owners of capitalism and the manager. It is against this background that we encounter the birth of the Frankfurt School and CT.

At the heart of CT (and the Frankfurt School)<sup>9</sup> is a search for a possible alternative to capitalism (and communism) as a path for social development. Held (2004:13) made it very clear that CT '[...] does not form a unity: it does not mean the same thing for all its adherents'. Yet (Held 2004):

[T]he issues they address went beyond a focus of the past and embrace future possibilities. They were focused on the forces which will move society towards rational institutions<sup>10</sup>; institutions which would ensure a true, free and just life. (p. 14)

Critical theorists believe that through an examination of contemporary social and political issues, they could contribute to a critique of ideology and to the development of a non-authoritarian and non-bureaucratic politics (Held 2004:15). Held (2004:13) must be re-affirmed in that a critique (and for that part alternative proposals to the dominant discourse that is firmly rooted in the scientific method) does not form a unity of knowledge, but the underlying frustration that it is 'Not working' provides a unifying base to encourage discussions and to develop some unifying concepts.

We can now present the past and present alternatives to the dominant discourse of management that proposed changes to societal thinking and structures.

## ■ Alternatives to the dominant discourse

Alternatives to the dominant discourse have their followers in various disciplines. The presentation below does not necessarily follow a chronological order, but present main thoughts in challenging the dominant discourse. The end (death) of all these alternatives will be presented lastly as the cause of the mortality is entrenched in the dominant discourse and the doubtful assumptions of the scientific project.

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9. The Frankfurt school was established as the Institute of Social Research at Frankfurt in 1923. Critical of both capitalism and Soviet socialism they sought after an alternative path for social development (Held 2004:13).

10. Refer the discussion preceding on Descartes.

## ■ Critical Management Studies

Alvesson, Bridgman and Wilmot (2009) believed that CMS provides an intellectual counter force to:

[T]he ego administration of modern, advanced industrial society, critical theory apprehends how personalities, beliefs, tastes, and preferences are developed to fit into the demands of mass production and consumption [...] where human beings tend to become reduces to components in a well-oiled machine. (pp. 5–6)

This is confirmed that in management, the axiom is (Alvesson et al. 2009):

[S]omeone has to be in charge, that of course they knew more, and of course they need more money due to the additional responsibility they carry [*and if they can't predict the future they can at least create it*]. (p. 9; [*author's added emphasis*])

These views (rational and emotional) attracted numerous academics, theoreticians and followers, but it is a failure. As with all the alternatives and critiques, the failure is built in the unstated and doubtful assumptions of the scientific project.

## ■ Communities of practice

Communities of practice fall within the learning school of management and organisational learning. Humans are in essence social animals that engage in social practices through which humans learn and became who they are. Learning is not an individual process but also consists of the lived experience of participation in local situations engaging the world. It is through these local actions that a society and social structures are transformed (Stacey & Mowles 2016:220–221). The authors also express the opinion that although it appears that communities of practice left behind some of the assumptions of the dominant discourse, it struggles to leave the idea of a system and see 'practice' through a theoretical lens, but still practising the assumptions of the dominant discourse. One of the developments in the sphere of communities of practice is 'Strategy as practice', which suffers the same fate as the other alternatives under the influence of the assumptions of the dominant discourse.

## ■ Systems theory

Systems theory attempts to understand that the whole (what 'whole' might mean) is more than the sum of its parts. The focus moved away from understanding the particular (individual parts) to the sub-systems and the interaction between these sub-systems to achieve the end of the 'whole' system. In this category, three different strands of theories were developed (Stacy & Mowles 2016:58). The central concept of general systems theory is homeostasis that implies a system has strong tendency to move towards a state of order or equilibrium. Cybernetic systems are self-regulating,

goal-directed systems that adapt to their environment. All management practices are in essence 'negative' cybernetic control systems (Stacey & Mowles 2016:61).<sup>11</sup> Lastly, these are dynamic systems that are simulations of how a system changes its state over a period of time. Senge (1990:67-135) brought systems theory into the sphere of management and organisational dynamics with his publication 'systems theory and the art of organisational learning'. Systems thinking embraces 'both ... and' thinking versus 'if A ... then B'. Alvesson and Wilmot (2012) argued against systems theory (thinking), in that it produces abstractions that marginalise human beings and the political (power) processes they are engaged with.

## ■ Complexity theories

The dominant discourse and the alternatives presented so far are all deterministic (The proverbial Cartesian mechanistic clock), in that they act according to the general laws, but these laws also incorporate some interactions, that is, some form of relationships (Stacy & Mowles 2016:239-241). The authors also pointed out that complexity theory is an extension of systems dynamics, but with the exceptions that *uncertainty* becomes a basic feature, *stable instability* or *unstable stability* produces a shift in behaviour which cannot be predicted from previous patterns and/or experiences. Complexity theories are based on chaos theory, the theory of dissipative structures and mathematical chaos theory which are models that have unpredictable outcomes. Complexity theory seriously challenges the scientific project's assumptions that require stability (equilibrium) so that the future can be forecasted. The resultant from systems and complexity theories is the complex adaptive systems.

## ■ Complex adaptive systems

According to Gell-Mann (1994), Holland (1998), Kauffman (1995) and Langton (1996) (as cited by Stacey & Mowles 2016), a complex adaptive system entails a large number of agents as a population, acting in a certain way, as if adhering to a certain set of rules (*Telos*). These rules demand adaptation from each agent to act and react to the actions of another agent which ultimately forms a system as a whole and a population-wide pattern (Stacey & Mowles 2016). Complex adaptive systems assume that there exists non-linear causality between different agents within a system and that the behaviour of one agent could have an unpredictable effect on the behaviour of another agent

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11. All the tools and techniques being taught at business schools are in essence negative cybernetic control systems with the first being the 'annual' budget. Other techniques include concepts such as having a vision, a mission statement, objectives, TQM, Six sigma, Risk and Compliance Management.

(Holland 1998). According Holland (1998), all complex adaptive systems share three similar characteristics, namely, evolution, aggregate behaviour and anticipation. Agents are constantly in pursuit of adapting to their surrounding environment and evolving into the form that ensures the best fit or highest chance of survivability (Holland 1998).

## ■ The end

Our enquiry, from our philosophical positioning with existentialism, through the scientific project, the doubtful assumptions of the dominant discourse, CT and the alternatives to the dominant discourse presented the paradoxical nature of human beings and the concept of scientific management. It can be summarised that we critique our colleagues but do not stay too far from the dominant discourse as our academic careers are in danger (Van der Linde 2016):

We critique management but are managers. We critique capitalism while we partake in the processes and proceeds of capitalism. We ask for a different social system than capitalism, but we require the fruits of capitalism to power a different social system. (p. 45)

We ask for critical thinking (continuously doubting our own thinking, assumptions and mental models) but are one-dimensional (Marcuse 2002). It is time to bury our mental models, to accept that the doubtful assumptions of our knowledge base are corrupt and that the alternatives to the dominant discourse are a failure as they are based on the same doubtful assumptions of the dominant discourse. In our enquiry lies the end (death) of any critique of society and social practices, social structures (such as organisations), management and the hope to change society. This lies in the unstated, highly doubtful assumptions of the scientific project, linear causality, the future is known and predictable, the autonomous human being turned into a homogenous object and control.<sup>12</sup> The time buries our doubtful assumptions of the scientific project and starts anew. But as in nature in every death, there is a new beginning.

## ■ Birth: A new beginning

We can start this section of our enquiry with a note of wisdom from Steve Jobs (Isaacson 2011:592) that 'You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something.

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12. For further reading on the tragedy of the scientific project readers are referred to Sokal and Bricmont 'Fashionable Nonsense' and Blaauw 'The number Bias'.



Your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever'. What Jobs in essence is saying is that there is a thing such as a mystery (*Mysterion*) that controls human future, there is such a thing as a human purpose (*télos*) and as a practitioner of Zen Buddhism Jobs was totally aware of the mystical. The mystical is the third level of reflection, learning and consciousness that Bateman proposed and that is a deep religious conversion and personal change (Stacey & Mowles 2016:206). To ignore, it would be challenging as we can see from the popular readings of Deepak Chopra with titles such as 'The seven Spiritual Laws of Success', 'Ageless Body, Timeless Mind' and others. But he is not alone as we can see from the titles published by Robin Sharma 'The Monk who sold His Ferrari', 'The Leader who had no Title' and more. This is an indication that Western thought is in need of a serious review, and thus, Western thought is starting to embrace not only Eastern philosophy but also African philosophy. But let us progress from the popular discourse to an academic discourse and challenge the idea of existential man that can control his or her future by being free, making free choices, and if these choices turn out to be harmful (bad), they blame the mystics and not their freedom.

Classical existentialism died a timely death and belongs to intellectual history (Crowell 2020:1). The scientific project and existentialism changed the Cartesian concept of 'Deo est, esse est' to 'Esse est, Deo est'. The self - the existent takes preference. The individual (You) became the centre of the universe. Everything you do, think and act is focused to the 'Greedy' self. (Maritain 1948:Loc. 1377-1535). Maritain proposed that the only 'workable' alternative is a re-instatement of the Cartesian concept *Deo est, esse est* [God is, I am], place 'God' first - the 'I' second. To establish the essence of existence requires a return to the primordial good of man and the re-introduction of the purpose of life through the recognition of a *télos* (Van der Linde 2016). This *teleological* approach is re-confirmed and supported by Pope Benedict when he speaks of 'reason' he 'speaks of a pre-modern teleological reason, the view that the universe is a harmonious whole in which everything serves a higher purpose' (Žižek 2011:92).

## ■ Conclusion

If you want to commit academic suicide stay too far from the dominant discourse of management. If you want to attend your own academic and career funeral challenge management. The current critique against the social order, management's involvement in enforcing the social structure and the exploitation (natural and mental) will carry on un-abated. 'Crises created by modern man will become more frequent and more severe as it wants to disrupt the current social order, the one-dimensionality of human thinking' (Van der Linde 2016:57). A critical re-think is all that it is 'think'. Action is required.

This required action is an ingrained doing (*praxis*) linked to a higher purpose *télos*, a return to a rational logic that includes the mystical and the recognition of a *metaphysical* that will create a whole that recognises the natural and cosmic order in which humans exist that will result in humans (including academics and managers) living and acting according to their *telos*. A return to the essence of Greek philosophy that forms the foundation of Western human thought.



# Western superiority complex/African inferiority complex as impediments to decolonising management education

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## ■ Abstract

The demand to decolonise the curriculum in South Africa became prominent during the #FeesMustFall movement in 2015/2016. In response to this demand, HEIs in South Africa have begun to grapple more earnestly with what this might mean. In this study, we sought to consider decolonising curriculum in

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the field of management specifically. To do this, we conducted a series of qualitative interviews with (1) master's level management students, (2) faculty in management departments, and finally, (3) academic management (deans and heads of department) in management faculties in 12 private and public institutions of higher learning in South Africa. One of the strongest persistent themes across all these participant groups was the feeling that African knowledge and systems are inferior to their Western counterparts that are seen as 'tried and tested' and 'the standard'. On the first examination, there seemed to be a persistent desire amongst these participants to hold to Western knowledge that is seen as superior. We discuss these findings with reference to the literature on colonial Western superiority/African inferiority complex and its antidotes embedded in critical consciousness. And we note traces of such consciousness in our interviews.

## ■ Introduction

The years 2015 and 2016 will be remembered by many in South African universities as a time of violent student protest that shook the foundation of higher education in the country. Several authors have traced the start of these protests to Chumani Maxwele's defacing the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (UCT) with excrement on the 09th March 2015 (Pillay 2016; Xaba 2017). For Maxwele, like many other students of colour, the UCT statue of Rhodes, an ardent colonialist, was a symbol of the persistent toxic cultures of patriarchy, racism and colonialism/neo-colonialism in these institutions of higher learning (eds. Kwoba, Chantiluke & Nkopo 2018). Given this symbolic attack on colonial legacy and persistent neo-colonial sympathy within institutions of higher learning as the starting moment of the student uprising, it was inevitable that decolonisation of higher education would be a central demand of these protests under the hash tag #RhodesMustFall (Pillay 2016).<sup>13</sup>

Within the academic literature, different authors have interpreted the application of the word 'decolonisation' in the context of higher education in different ways. Tuck and Yang (2012) rejected its application altogether, arguing that doing so eradicates the possibility of decolonisation proper by re-centring whiteness in higher education and making the settler free from their most fundamental transgressions and thereby securing a settler's future. They defined settler's colonialism as a structure where land was forcefully seized from indigenous people with the intention of making the place home and assuming sovereignty over everything in the domain. From this premise, they argued that the decoloniality project must consist of nothing less than

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13. The other central demands were the more material demands of (1) free higher education under the hashtag #FeesMustFall and (2) the insourcing of workers such as cleaners and security personnel under the hashtag #OutsourcingMustFall.

the repatriation of land and life, power and privileges in their entirety to indigenous people. Until this can be said to have been achieved, the use of the term 'decolonialisation' would simply be metaphorical. Similar arguments have been advanced by Mignolo (2011) and Zembylas (2018).

Others, however, have adopted a less fundamental stance and have thus given concerted attention to what the decolonisation of higher education might entail. For example, in South Africa, Fomunyam and Teferra (2017:197) defined decolonising the curriculum as 'the foregrounding of local and indigenous knowledge and experiences in curricula content, thereby downplaying or eradicating Eurocentric or Global North experiences which have dominated curriculum contents for centuries'. This position is of course very general, positing higher education as relatively homogeneous. This is limiting. After all, it stands to reason that different faculties and fields within the academe are differently premised on Western colonial and neo-colonial ideas, differently complicit in the transmission of these ideas and differently free to think about alternatives.

In this regard, the literature on decolonising management education, the focus of this chapter, is scant. Management education has of course been criticised as giving primacy to individualism (Ghoshal 2005), the ascendancy of managerialism (Grey 2002) and the market (Cunliffe, Foray & Knights 2002). Furthermore, in Western universities (and increasingly in all universities), capitalism has become the central rationality governing what is taught under the rubric of management education. For example, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) is believed to provide knowledge that will lead to the better functioning of organisations for profit maximisation, capitalism's opium (Roberts 1996). And the link between capitalism and colonialism has long been recognised (e.g. Marx 1990). All of these constitute part of what we frequently refer to in this chapter as the 'Western standard' and sometimes as the 'Western colonial and neo-colonial standard' that is individualist, managerialist and market oriented (capitalist). To these, we would add that the 'Western standard' is characterised by its Western European origin<sup>14</sup> but draped in self-proclamations of universality, of being 'international' or 'global'.

All of this theoretical recognition of the Western colonial and neo-colonial character of management education is of course lovely. However, on a practical level, the call to decolonise management education seems to have been met with trivialisations and veering towards grabbing low-hanging fruits.

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14. In this, we include not just the geographical region of Western Europe but also those domains where, through a combination of very extensive genocides and the introduction of diseases, indigenous peoples were reduced to small minority populations in comparison with settler populations originating from Western Europe. The most prominent instance would of course be the United States which has in many ways become the vanguard of Western identity. Canada and Australia would also fall into this category.

These have included things like having economic discussions in African currencies rather than in US Dollars (\$), prescribing textbooks by African authors and using African case studies. But these really do not go very far towards changing mindsets, which, as we have just argued, remain strongly premised in Western standards of thought.

With the benefit of hindsight, this apparently tepid response to decolonisation of management education ought to have immediately suggested the need to ask the ‘Why?’ question. Indeed, as we were to discover after we had begun our study, Bird and Pitman (2020) had already noted that there was a lack of theoretical and empirical analysis investigating barriers to decolonise higher education generally. However, this was not the basic research question that we had in mind when we originally embarked on our study. Our question was the much more open-ended (perhaps grounded?) question of: Since the 2015/2016 #RodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, there have been growing calls to decolonise higher education. How might this apply to management education?

Very early in the process of our interviews, the question of barriers emerged and screamed for attention. And it is these screams to which we respond in this chapter. The chapter unfolds in a more or less conventional manner initially. Following on from this short *Introduction*, we take a moment to locate ourselves as authors, beyond what might be implied by the fact that we are writing this chapter. Following on from this, we present a section describing our *Methods*, with a particular emphasis on the grounded theory posture which we adopted. We then present *Findings* that emerged out of our interviews. After this, however, our chapter takes a somewhat unconventional turn in the sense that we return to the literature afresh in search of material to provide more substance to the theoretical inklings that had emerged. Finally, having found this material, we return again to our data in search of traces of ‘the audacity to be’ (Mngxatama, Alexander & Gibson 2008:8), before we conclude this chapter.

## ■ Authors’ locations

The practice of taking a moment to locate oneself when one ‘takes the stage to speak one’s mind’ is traditional protocol in many parts of Africa. This is perhaps a reflection of a fairly widespread continental existential ontology that recognises a collective human continuum spanning past, present and even future and that downplays the individual somewhat.<sup>15</sup> Under this ontological perspective, ‘one’s mind’ is not really ‘one’s mind’ at all, but rather a mind that is shaped by a particular history, and that in turn, shapes a greater

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15. This is an observation that was advanced by Lewis Gordon during a decoloniality summer school hosted by the University of South Africa in 2020.

collective wisdom. Not only does this protocol have utility in terms of the audience being able to place the ‘speaker’, but, if done with ‘proper’ intent, presents a wealth of opportunity for the one ‘speaking’ to reflect on and acknowledge (and indeed revel in) their inherent subjectivity.

This practice has found its way into scholarly practice (what we would broadly call science) only relatively recently, with the rising popularity of qualitative epistemologies (see, e.g. Girei 2017). It seems that for some reason, these epistemologies have a need and/or willingness to be more honest<sup>16</sup> about the inherent subjectivity of participating scholars than quantitative epistemologies which have dominated so much of what has been viewed as science or scholarship for the past 300 to 400 years.

With both of these ontological and epistemological perspectives in mind, this is how we would locate ourselves as we wrote this chapter. We write in first person for obvious reasons:

**Chimene Nukunah** – I am a black woman in my late 30s from central Africa. Growing up, I admired my dad who happened to be the first businessman in our town to own a private higher education institution. In the context of our community, he was referred to as a ‘commerçant’<sup>17</sup> which informed my passion for commerce. I remember getting the prize for the best commerce student in high school. This background contributed significantly to my choice to read business management at university at the level of my BCom, Honours and master’s degrees. In my career, I have managed, taught and carried out research in the field of business management.

But as I decided to embark on my PhD, I began to feel a sense of weariness to continue with the same old mundane interpretation of management education. Fortunately, I was introduced to CMS by my supervisor while I was searching for a suitable topic for my study. Even though, I initially found this area of management difficult to understand, I realised that it began to resonate with my personal values as I delved deeper into the area of decolonisation specifically. My exposure to the literature on decolonisation made me reflect and question my own personal assumptions and how my actions affected the community in which I live. During this period, I also had the privilege to attend a decoloniality summer school at the University of South Africa where I became more aware of how my thinking, choices, beliefs and actions were informed by essentially Western ideas.

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16. The myth of the ‘objective’ scholar was very effectively debunked in Kuhn’s (1970) historical analysis of nothing less than the paragon of supposed objectivity: natural science.

17. The direct translation of the French word *commerçant* in English is *trader*. It was a term associated with a rich person or someone who takes advantage of business opportunities. As I reflect on this now, this interpretation seems highly problematic in the field of education.



Moreover, I began to question this discipline (management education) which I had cherished my whole life and how the concepts I had learnt and indeed taught contributed to the impoverished state of the society in which I lived. This became personal. I began to pay more attention to what people said and how they said it. I found myself reacting when my colleagues complained about the smell of my central African food, my African dress or even how I chose to keep my hair. I will not say I am now a 'decolonised' black woman, but I am certainly a work in progress towards a more humanised individual, yearning to make the slightest contribution for a socially just society.

**Neil Eccles** – My family name is Eccles. From this, one might be able to deduce that my father's family at least, originated in England. As it turns out, so did my mother's family. However, in the English context, these two families came from very different sides of the tracks so to speak. My father's family would have been considered upper-middle-class with a family tree that can be traced back hundreds of years to some or other English royal dynasty. My mother's family on the other hand was working class. To the best of my knowledge, her family tree peters out somewhere in the horrors of late 19th century industrial England that Marx (1990) captured so compellingly in *Capital*.

Of course, a class divide that would no doubt have been important in England was irrelevant in the late colonial context of Africa where my parents found themselves and each other in the mid-20th century. It is at this point that the story becomes a little inconvenient. Here, as 'colonisers', whatever class differences might have existed in England paled in comparison to the differences between 'coloniser' and 'colonised'. Here, both of my parents existed in a state of extreme blissful privilege.

It was into this state of extreme blissful privilege that I was born. And really between my birth and now, all that has happened is that privilege has been sustained. This is in spite of the supposed complete liberation of Africa from the yoke of colonialism. No doubt the most profound dimension of this privilege has been the best 'white' education that apartheid money could buy, the end point of which was a PhD in ecology.

From this, I gradually migrated to the field of business ethics via an apprenticeship as a management consultant. It was from within this field of business ethics that I came into contact with Marx, CMS and a particular graduate student with an emerging interest in decolonisation. Together, and also from our own places, we have undertaken this study into the prospects of decolonising management education and much else beneath this surface. For me, this has been uncertain, painful and frequently shame-filled. I have felt enlightened, enriched and then again humbled. And as I moved through the analysis of the findings I increasingly found myself feeling enraged by the

fallacies and injustices. Finally, my participation in writing this chapter is filled with a sense of unease and uncertainty. I am not at all sure whether it is even appropriate given my obvious coloniser identity. I just don't know?

## ■ Methods

Although we are hesitant to say that our study adopted a grounded theory design,<sup>18</sup> as we have already noted, it certainly adopted a grounded theory posture. Our aim was to pursue inductively the formation of theory (Creswell & Creswell 2018) that might allow us to grapple authentically with the call to decolonise management education. In this regard, the applicability of a grounded theory posture finds support in a number of sources. Lincoln and González y González (2008) made direct reference to grounded theory as a potential decolonising methodology. Du Plessis and Van der Westhuizen (2018) suggested that it could be used to make a significant contribution towards decolonisation in the context of educational knowledge specifically. And slightly more remotely, but with the added authority of coming from one of the seminal authors in the field, Charmaz (2017) proposed a transformational grounded theory with critical perspectives including reconceptualisation.

Towards this end of inductive theory formation then, in early 2020 we conducted a series of 30 qualitative interviews with a sample of 'stakeholders' in management education and other interesting/interested parties. These included: (1) master's level students in the field of management,<sup>19</sup> (2) management academics, (3) academic management (deans and heads of department) in management faculties, (4) management recruitment agents representing 'the market', and (5) what one might refer to as decoloniality scholars. In this chapter we only make use of excerpts from groups a, b and c (Table 4.1). The interviews lasted between 45 min and 60 min.

Our approach to these interviews was both recursive and iterative (Chun Tie, Birks & Francis 2019). We started with the humble open-ended question that we noted in the *Introduction* and asked this to the participants from all categories. However, we also conducted preliminary data analysis in parallel with our collection, and through this, we were able to pursue emergent lines of questioning such as the barriers question that is the focus of this particular chapter. Taken together with the fact that we moved to select our samples with view to finding people who might indeed have thoughts about decoloniality, our approach is

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18. Although three main schools of grounded theory seem to have emerged (the *Classic Grounded Theory* of Glaser [1992], the *Straussian Interpretivist Grounded Theory* of Corbin and Strauss [2008] and the *Constructivist Grounded Theory* of Charmaz [2006]), a number of authors have only half-jokingly suggested that there are as many approaches to grounded theory as there are grounded theory scholars (e.g. see Dey 1999).

19. We limited our attention to students in coursework Master's programmes.

**TABLE 4.1:** Summary of participants quoted in this chapter.

Code <sup>a</sup>	Age	Gender	Race	Current job	Type of institution	Highest qualification
MS2	33–38	Male	White	Key Account Manager	Investment Company	MBA in progress
MS3	38–43	Female	Black	Manager: Human Capital	Financial Institution	MBA in progress
MS4	33–38	Female	Black	Banker	Financial Institution	MBA in progress
MS5	28–33	Female	Black	Academic trainee	Public Institution of higher learning	Master in progress
MS6	38–43	Male	White	Software development team manager	Private Institution of higher learning	MBA Completed
MS7	28–33	Male	Black	Sales Consultant	Public Institution of higher learning	Master in progress
AC2	33–38	Male	Black	Lecturer	Public Institution of higher learning	Masters
AC3	53–58	Male	White	Lecturer	Public Institution of higher learning	PhD
AC5	48–53	Female	Black	Lecturer	Public Institution of higher learning	PhD
AC6	48–53	Female	Indian	Senior Lecturer	Public Institution of higher learning	PhD
AC8	48–53	Male	Black	Senior Lecturer	Public Institution of higher learning	PhD
MGT5	58–<63	Female	White	Director Business School	Public Institution of higher learning	PhD (Prof.)

<sup>a</sup> Codes used represent the following: MS, master's student; AC, management academic; MGT, academic management; MBA, Master of Business Administration.

somewhat similar to the process of 'theoretical sampling' (Glaser & Strauss 1967:45). This they defined as (Glaser & Strauss 1967):

[D]ata collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. (p. 45)

The process of memo-ing (Chun Tie et al. 2019) was particularly valuable in terms of our parallel preliminary data analysis. Memos are reflective, interpretive pieces that build a historic audit trail to document emergent feelings, events and preliminary analytic schemas inherent in the research process (Chun Tie et al. 2019). It was out of our memo-ing that the question of barriers emerged, with the key sub-theme of Western standard/African inferiority. Once this emerged, we proceeded to more nuanced coding based on integration and story line techniques.

## ■ Findings

Our preliminary analysis of the data revealed that barriers to decolonisation of management education were vital. And in this regard, perceptions of Western superiority/African inferiority were so prominent that it would have been impermissible to incorporate it with other factors and dilute its effect. Two main sub-themes were detected in relation to this: (1) Western knowledge, and (2) Globalisation.

## ■ Western knowledge: The tried and tested standard

A significant number of participants from groups a, b and c referred to the fact that Western knowledge has to be used as the yardstick or 'standard' in developing anything that is African. As one master's student put it:

'Yes the content should be based on local examples and all of that. But if the process and the way is not recognized on an *international standard* then is the education still as valuable? So while I want to make sure that blacks and whites are on an equal level, and understand what happened in the background, you know-how much of our education is going to be compromised to get into this decolonized state?' (MS6, male, date unspecified)

The 'international standard' imagined here is of course the status quo, a management education standard that has its origins in Western Europe, that is individualist, managerialist and capitalist in identity that is Western. The suggestion that decolonising the curriculum would necessarily 'compromise' the education becomes striking when turned upside down - leaving the curriculum colonised will not 'compromise' the education. In other words, colonised curriculum equals uncompromised while decolonised curriculum equals compromised.

There was a very powerful sense that the basis for this Western standard was that it was 'tried and tested' and in some way objectively superior. This view was particularly prevalent amongst master's students:

'South Africans with the rest of the world and how the rest of the world operates, so to abandon the education system as it stands currently, would mean to a certain extent that we would no longer be engaging on the same level or in the same format with the rest of the world. Our management philosophies and principles would no longer be based on *tried and tested* philosophies within economics and the management space'. (MS2, male, date unspecified)

Another participant reiterated these views stating that:

'We are not yet there. Their models have been *tried and tested* and receiving benefits'. (MS4, female, date unspecified)

Benefits for whom should no doubt be considered here (see Chomsky & Waterstone 2021)! Lastly, MS7 went so far as to almost insinuate, perhaps a little sarcastically, divine inspiration:

'If you look at management education, everything that we learn about the *tried and tested* things, everything in management education - this method or that model or this strategy or here's a case study, this happened. So it's sort of a historical. Sort of like a Bible, that's being presented of this is what has worked for businesses in the past and now you need to learn these things and then you need to go and apply them wherever you are going'. (MS7, male, date unspecified)

Amongst academics, it was equally apparent that there was a sense that to significantly disregard of Western thought would affect the quality of education and disadvantage management students from Africa. This view was perhaps expressed most strongly by AC3:

'[...] and all due to the fact that their educational system has been decolonized. So my question is, is it so beneficial for us as students and as academics to go a route where we actually say: "Right we want to decolonize"? But it will be at a price and the price is going to be that the standard of our education is going downwards. That is my challenge, which is my big challenge'. (AC3, male, date unspecified)

And again:

'I was listening to some of the arguments in terms of the curriculum and I thought: "Good Lord! If we're going here, we're going backwards"'. (AC3, male, date unspecified)

## ■ Globalisation

Ironically, but not surprisingly, to a significant extent, this reverence to a Western standard was legitimised on the basis of globalisation. Participants felt that management education in Africa must be 'globally' relevant. And, in their minds, global relevance meant adopting or fitting in with Western expectations rather than bringing that which is African to the global platforms. This was perhaps most emphatically articulated by MS3 who suggested that:

'Okay let me say from an African perspective we are part of the globe and when you speak management you speak commercial and you speak perhaps looking at your – your economic systems whether they apply. So as much as I understand that we need to look at every region and look at what works within those regions, I think unfortunately you will also have to incorporate things like economic systems that guide what people do and how people make money and how they make economies thrive. Which also talks to management practices because we are part of one globe'. (MS3, female, date unspecified)

Clearly, there is no possibility of 'economic systems' inherent in or evolving out of Africa according to the imaginative capacity of MS3 at this moment in the interview. Another master's student put it like this:

'The question I asked: is your education still going to be globally transferable so if you say decolonize remove all European elements of our education? Now yes you've got an African education. Is it still on the same level as a global education? So which elements did you remove to decolonize it?' (MS6, male, date unspecified)

There are at least two interesting details in this excerpt. Firstly, there is the focus on what it is that decolonisation will *remove* from the curriculum, rather than on the possibility of what it might *add*. Secondly, there is the common suggestion that 'European' is global while the 'African' is deemed parochial. A little later, the same participant stated that:

'You kind of cut your nose off to spite your face. There is a balance between holding onto your own culture and making yourself attractive to a global economy and having education and knowledge that transcends all the culture. In terms of global

economy, I think we're getting to a place where cultures are going to kind of in the long run assimilate and kind of just become this cosmopolitan global society'. (MS6, male, date unspecified)

In other words, one's own culture makes one 'ugly' to the global economy. And one might of course wonder whether 'cosmopolitan' = 'European'?

This same sentiment also found strong expression amongst academic participants. In particular there were strong calls from academics to take into consideration requirements from international bodies when considering the decoloniality project. For example:

'Decolonising and only looking at South Africa things but remember as universities there are also international bodies. So if we say we are dumping everything Western and only looking at ourselves and take it or leave it we are going to be left out'. (AC5, female, date unspecified)

Another participant said:

'We live in a global society. As much as South Africa is part of a larger continent and we are part of Africa, but Africa is also part of the world and I think if we are not going to consider Africa as part of the world, we're doing a disadvantage to our students in a business curriculum. If we're just going to get African epistemic, we're disadvantaging students; we're giving them half of what they are entitled to. That's the only way. We don't need to get to the point to say we're Africanizing but at the cost of wonderful academic knowledge'. (AC6, female, date unspecified)

The irony here is, or at least ought to be, jarring. What currently happens in management education is that the 'African epistemic' is completely absent, beyond the trivial efforts alluded to in the Introduction. And this is not seen as in any way 'disadvantaging students'. This sentiment was expressed all the way up to academic management (group 3):

'You see one of the big mistakes that educators make in our country, is to change content, you know to make it more Africanised. I don't think that will bring us very far if we want to operate in a global village'. (MGT5, female, date unspecified)

Again, unreasonableness is tangible here. Let's be honest, no one has moved to actually make the management curriculum 'more Africanised'. So what possible basis can there be for drawing the conclusion that that this *is* (as opposed to might be) a big mistake?

## ■ Return to the literature: On the inferiority complex

The fact that these powerful sub-themes declaring the superiority of Western standards in management education were expressed by Africans points strongly to the corollary of Western superiority too – it points to a sense of African inferiority amongst participants. It was this realisation that prompted us to turn to the literature on the subject of inferiority complexes. When one

searches blindly for this concept on 'global' academic search engines, one inevitably ends up at seminal scholars in psychology such as Freud and Jung, and particularly Adler. Adler (1929) is interesting in his attribution of all 'psychological life' to inferiority:

Inferiority is the basis for human striving and success. On the other hand the sense of inferiority is the basis for all our problems of psychological maladjustment. When the individual does not find a proper concrete goal of superiority, an inferiority complex results. The inferiority complex leads to a desire for escape, and this desire for escape is expressed in a superiority complex, which is nothing more than a goal on the useless and vain side of life offering the satisfaction of false success. This is the dynamics of psychological life. (p. 131)

Turning to these eminent Western psychologists and the ideas that they have spawned would no doubt have proven a valuable intellectual pursuit in relation to our data. However, a little more digging into the literature revealed to us that doing so would have been an act of grave ignorance on our part in the specific context of this study. This is because a plethora of prominent African intellectuals, perhaps most notably Frantz Fanon and, even closer to home, Steven Bantu Biko have dealt with the interplay between the Western superiority/African inferiority complex and colonialism specifically (Ahluwali & Zegeye 2001).

Both Fanon and Biko were fascinated with the political psychology of colonisation, and in Biko's case, apartheid as a specific mutation of colonisation. This fascination led them inevitably to the recognition of the profound dehumanisation associated with colonialism. Importantly, they recognised that this dehumanisation was complete in the sense that it sucked in *both* the colonised *and* the coloniser. As Freire (1970:44) put it: 'Dehumanization, [...] marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it'. Importantly in terms of our findings, Fanon and Biko both noted the emergent inferiority complexes associated with the oppressed *and* the corollary superiority complexes associated with the oppressors. In relation to knowledge systems specifically, Ahluwali and Zegeye's (2001:463) description of Biko's recognition of a 'deformed modernity' is important. They noted Biko's recognition of a perverse rationality which could hold in mind a sense of 'modern' civilisation while at the same time banishing from mind the oppression and exploitation upon which this was premised. The great Athens as the cradle of Western knowledge ... and the little matter of its slaves and women if you like.

It was a recognition of this sort of 'deformed modernity' which caused a certain amount of outrage to boil over in our discussion of the sub-theme of globalisation in particular as we grappled with the irony inherent in these perceptions that Western = 'global', that 'European' = 'cosmopolitan', that 'economic systems' are endemic to the West alone. It seems quite obvious to

us that the ‘deformed modernity’, with its political psychology of the Western superiority/African inferiority complex that characterised the Africa of Fanon and Biko is still very much alive and well. As such, their diagnostic theories still hold great explanatory power.

But Fanon and Biko went beyond simply diagnosing the pathology of the Western superiority/African inferiority complex. Both moved to propose treatments for it. Biko, being the more recent of the two thinkers, had the benefit of reading Fanon and integrating his thoughts. But he also drew on other key liberation thinkers for inspiration. Perhaps most notably was Paulo Freire. In Freire, Biko found his own discomfort with the dominance of white liberals in liberation movements and discourses in South Africa given profound theoretical treatment with Freire’s assertion that the oppressor cannot liberate the oppressed.<sup>20</sup> But perhaps most importantly, from both Fanon and Freire, Biko took the idea that the active cultivation of consciousness (of this ‘deformed modernity’) amongst the colonised had to be the centre piece of any sort of treatment plan for the Western superiority/African inferiority complex. It was only out of such heightened consciousness that the essentially human ‘audacity to be’ (Mngxatama et al. 2008:8) could possibly emerge. Freire had presented a very specific pedagogical proposal in relation to the development of this consciousness (what Freire called ‘conscientização’) amongst the oppressed in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, namely, his ‘problem-posing pedagogy’. The challenge of course is that this requires that there is someone who is *a priori* conscious and can become Freire’s ‘teacher-student’ (Freire 1970:80).

This reading around Fanon and Biko and our realisation of the challenge of finding those who are *a priori* conscious to become teacher-students, inspired us to return to our interviews to look for traces of consciousness of a ‘deformed modernity’ in the context of management curriculum. And we found several. For example, MS3 alluded to the issue of the ‘deformed’ ownership of knowledge and its consequences:

‘[...] but again, because we do not own, we adopt, we unfortunately are always on the back foot’. (MS3, female, date unspecified)

MS7 also noted consequences of this ‘deformed’ ownership of knowledge, in particular highlighting how cases illustrating success stories tend to perpetuate a ‘deformed modernity’:

‘In the classroom, we are taking most of our literature from the Americas so it’s mostly American literature that we learn, and we all read if you are learning about McGill, McCaffee, all these whites. Like you don’t learn about Makau or Nkuna who

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20. Only the oppressed can liberate themselves. And ironically, in so doing liberate the oppressor too. This perspective was particularly troubling to the second author for obvious reasons.



has done this or that. So you are already actively looking down on blacks, because you are learning about white success stories. So your approach? If you have a white name you probably know what you're doing, you would trust them much more than you would the black brothers and sisters'. (MS7, male, date unspecified)

More or less the same 'deformed modernity' was raised by MS5, although in this case the consciousness was matched with evidence of rebellion, of an 'audacity to be':

'We need to take away that whole concept that the Western culture is the professional way of doing things. Even the way Africans do things is also in a way professional in their own African sense. I think that is what they need to consider'. (MS5, female, date unspecified)

By interpreting a bit of irony into the word 'learning', a comment by AC5 which highlighted the imbalance in flows knowledge also suggested embryonic consciousness of the deformed modernity:

'Right now we are learning from the west and the west is learning nothing from us. That's how we keep trying to solve African problems using western ways of thinking'. (AC5, female, date unspecified)

This interviewee went on to reflect on the intimate relationship between research (knowledge creation) and teaching (knowledge dissemination) and how this exposed 'deformed modernity'. She noted how career progression, and the inevitable academic influence associated with this, was fundamentally premised on publication in so-called 'international journals' (i.e. journals that are essentially 'owned' by the West, and 'governed' by Western curiosities if we must call a spade a spade). She noted that:

'I was in an interview where people actually said to me: "But if you're only publishing in local, in African journals then you really haven't started, because you must publish in international journals to be recognized"'. (AC5, female, date unspecified)

Although there is of course some global curiosity about Africa, any African scholar who has routinely tried to publish African research in so-called 'international journals' will be able to relate demeaning stories about reviewers who will say things like: 'This is a very well written chapter but what is the international relevance of this research?' Given the fact that equivalently parochial studies based in America and Western Europe dominate these very same so-called 'international journals', apparently passing the test of global relevance with ease, 'international' here can only be seen as code language for 'generally Western'.

Local research institutions such as the National Research Foundation (NRF) were specifically pinpointed in perpetuating this particular hegemonic control over African knowledge generation and inevitably African knowledge dissemination. For example, one participant noted that:

'They [*the NRF*] also start with benchmarking, they go for international practice which might not necessarily be true. When they are rating academics, they

usually ask you to have published in these international journals and in the most cases we try to bring in articles which talks about Africa. And so that is a problem because now they kind of split our own knowledge and our own qualities and that actually causes us to be always dependent on them'. (AC8, male, date unspecified)

The final excerpt that we would have decided to include is rich with matters for discussion:

'What we've done in the past is to take the African and try to fit it into a curriculum module that is Western and then we find ourselves being in the last chapter, or people saying: "Which I need why?" - that's what bugs me. So I think it feels like a compromise. But we as Africans shouldn't fall into the trap of trying to get into some sort of war with the Eurocentric viewpoint. It exists, we acknowledge it'. (AC2, male, date unspecified)

There is of course the healthy sense of outrage at the obvious injustice associated with of the location of African content in management curricula. There is also a healthy sense of outrage (echoing some of our own emerging outrage) at the *inevitable* questioning of the usefulness of African content. The specific word 'compromise' is loaded with irony here and it is clear that AC2 does not perceive any worthwhile compromise but rather sees an oppression. Finally, AC2 moved to discourage a war - admittedly epistemic and ontological rather than physical. One can't help wondering in this regard whether AC2 or Fanon (see Sonnleightner 1987) was correct in this regard?

But it is not Fanon's views on violence, terrorism or war that we would like to end this chapter with. Rather, it seems most appropriate to us to end with reference to his dialectic consciousness (Fanon 2001):

The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication. Philosophic thought teaches us, on the contrary, that it is its guarantee. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension. (p. 247)

## ■ Conclusion

In this chapter, we relate our own journey through an analysis of what emerged in our inductive study on the decolonisation of management education in Africa, as a profound barrier: the Western superiority/African inferiority complex couched in the languages of the 'Western standards' and 'globalisation'. It seems that the stakeholder groupings in management education in our study context are very commonly inclined to promote the adoption of curricula to meet what they see as Western requirements with a profound, perhaps even 'deformed', desire for acceptance from the West. In short, it seems that there is a prevailing lack of confidence amongst participants of this study in our capacity to construct management curricula which might

challenge this hegemony of 'Western standards'. Sadly, this result would hardly come as a surprise to anyone steeped in the decoloniality literature. Indeed, this Western superiority/African inferiority complex has been noted by many (including prominently both Fanon and Biko) as both a consequence of oppression inherent in colonisation and a cause for its persistence. The cure? Consciousness.

# **Part 2:**

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# **Contexts**



# Management education: A barrier to critical management studies

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## ■ Abstract

Current management education is based on outdated and old principles and theories based on the works of individuals such as Smith, Taylor and Weber. This outdated information that forms the basis of current management

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education has resulted in more harm than good yet there has been little change to modernise the current discourse of management education. Times have changed yet management education has remained stagnant. It can be said that human nature has played a vital role in the continued acceptance of the dominant discourse of management education. Various approaches are needed to facilitate change in the dominant discourse and one such approach is Kant's Copernican revolution. Such theories will help facilitate and accommodate the needed acceptance of a new knowledge base to management education that will incorporate critical thinking,<sup>21</sup> will allow for the needed change to take place and finally assist in changing the course long winded that the dominant discourse in management education was on.

## ■ Introduction

Alvesson, Bridgman and Wilmot (2009) started their argument in favour of CMS with an assumption that:

[*Critical management studies*] has emerged as a movement that questions the authority and relevance of mainstream thinking and practice. Its focus is on 'management' not as a group or as a function but as a pervasive institution that is entrenched within capitalist economic formations. (p. 1)

In the same paragraph, the authors stated that 'CMS challenges prevailing relations of domination-patriarchal, neo-imperialist, as well as capitalism – and, anticipates the development of alternatives to them'. The two quotations captured what should be guarded against the temptation and/or interpretation of seeing and discussing CMS as a separate development divorced from any alternative (Alvesson et al. 2009:5). All of the critiques have a common denominator and that is the dominant discourse and the role it has played in the creation of management information as we know it today. CMS needs a foundation and that is CT (Stacey & Mowles 2016:226). Its ontological purpose should be to open the discourse on management and a critical examination of the way organisations and institutions are 'managed'. How the modern organisation is being managed leaves much to be desired and the notion of 'Scientific management' is being questioned. The fallacy of 'Scientific management' is adequately presented by Stewart in his publication '*The management Myth*'. Stewart presented in detail the 'Scientific fraud' that the so-called fathers and gurus of scientific management committed, as well as a short history of how these 'fathers' of scientific management came to the rescue of business schools (Stewart 2009). But it is not only these foundational 'management principles' that are being questioned. Van der Linde (2015)

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21. *Critical thinking* is defined as 'Essentially a sceptical or questioning approach to knowledge'. Someone who is thinking critically will question assumptions, belief systems and views, thinking about issues from a variety of perspectives. It attempts to set aside personal values and opinions, and look for evidence to bring to bear on the issue under scrutiny (Open University 2016).

indicated that a Copernican revolution is required in management thinking. This aligns with Kuhn's idea of a paradigmatic change or the way we think about society and the social sciences (McLeod 2020).

From the above, the primary research question has been identified as 'why has management education allowed the continued teaching of outdated management principles from individuals such as Taylor, Weber and Smith?' Furthermore, 'how has the lack in change impacted the need of a paradigmatic change?' It will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

The importance of identifying and understanding the underlying reasons that have resulted in outdated management education somehow remaining relevant in this day-and-age needs to be dealt with critically. Times have changed meaning a change in societal values and principles, yet management students in the capitalistic world are still taught using the same theories and concepts as in the 1800s (Van Der Linde 2015) and these concepts make up the majority of management education irrespective of their biasedness, outdatedness and not aligned with developments in society and other fields of knowledge creation (Sciences). This needs to be dealt with accordingly, but we need to firstly understand human nature and how it has protected the dominant discourse in management education and prevented it from being updated and modified over these years. This 'management education' with its outdated, biased and capitalist approach has created one-dimensional thinkers that hardly ever think out the box or question existing information and this has led to catastrophic consequences like the destruction of value by exploiting the earth and humans instead of the creation or preservation of value (Van Der Linde 2016). A paradigmatic shift is needed to change and address the current issues created by current management education to ensure a much better and aligned management education that can be introduced to society as the new and accepted paradigm that requires a revolution in thought (Kuhn 1996). To address this challenge a structured methodology that meet the objective of this investigation needs to be followed.

## ■ Objectives

The main objective of this chapter is to provide an understanding of how and why outdated management education has managed to remain relevant and how this can be changed to allow the introduction of a much more current and relevant paradigm in management education. The following secondary objectives will be used to provide a deeper understanding of the primary objective:

- To present an overview of the dominant discourse in management education.
- To reflect on how human nature has played a part in the protection of the current management education.



- To present the requirements needed for a paradigmatic change to take place.
- To propose a paradigmatic change in management education and then propose how human nature can be influenced to accept this change.

## ■ Methodology

The enquiry will be conceptual in nature. The focus of a conceptual paper is the integration of various previous works on a particular topic and the proposal of new relationships amongst constructs (Gilson & Goldberg 2015). In the case of this investigation, the focus will be on the dominant discourse of management education and the relationship between its foundations, accepted theories, critique against the dominant discourse and finally a needed paradigmatic change.

The research paradigm which the paper will follow is that of interpretivism. Interpretivism can be defined as a study that allows for the researcher to interpret various aspects of the study at hand with the interrogation of human interests. The assumption is made that understanding social constructs provides an access to reality (Myers 2008). Interpretivism allows for various constructed realities to be studied which can then be integrated. An analysis of each reality is conducted which then leads to more questions rather than concrete answers (Girod-Séville et al. 2011).

Because of the nature of the research paradigm selected, the research will be qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is investigative in nature and therefore allows understanding views and perceptions (Carol 2016). As various constructed realities are being analysed in the chapter, it is imperative that the research focuses on providing an in-depth understanding of these said realities, through qualitative theory. Qualitative research will assist in understanding concepts, opinions and experiences. It is important to understand this in order to make sense of the dominant discourse of management education and how it can be changed. It will also be used to gather in-depth insights into the challenge that the dominant discourse of management education faces.

Through the provision and interpretation of different views and understandings, the authors will aim to provide a description of subjective constructed realities (Formplus 2020) and relationships which relate to the dominant discourse of management education. The authors of the paper do not aim to provide concrete answers to the research problem but rather allow the reader to reach some level of understanding from own experiences and reflect upon them (Stacey & Mowles 2016) and then endeavour into their own

journey of a paradigmatic change regarding the dominant discourse of management.

## ■ The dominant discourse of management

### ■ Adam Smith – The invisible hand

Adam Smith's economic theory is often viewed as a substitute for what many consider today as the world's main economic system of 'capitalism'. Smith, an 18th-century Scottish philosopher and economist is widely recognised as the original and leading theorist of capitalism (Smith 2015). Known as the 'father of economics', Smith is well known for his work, *The Wealth of Nations*. Through his theory on the 'invisible hand', Smith discovered and thoroughly detailed the main principles of capitalist economic life which today is still championed by laissez-faire capitalists (Ward 2020). In this theory, Smith implies that through the self-interest of individuals in societies, favourable economic results will arise for the society, with little or no government intervention (Jaffe 2017). As the 'father' of modern economics, nearly every branch of management education bases its foundations on Smith's capitalist theory (Norman 2018). An example of this can be seen in this summary of management education instruction. Management students are given an isolated business case study. Its challenges clearly outlined; its impact on society briefly summarised. The students' main objective is profit maximisation. An example of self-interest is clearly manifested (Benjamin 2018). Through his major influence on capitalist thinking and most importantly in the context of our review which is the dominant discourse of management education, we can establish that Smith is more than the father of capitalism but also of management theory (Van der Linde 2016).

### ■ Frederick Taylor – Scientific management theory

Fredrick Taylor, an American mechanical engineer is recognised to be one of the first management consultants (Sack 2016). Taylor's book 'Principles of Scientific Management' he states four scientific management principles which are: (1) decide on the most efficient methods of work through science and not the 'rule of thumb', (2) assign workers to roles based on aptitudes and not at random, (3) continuously monitor worker performance, and (4) allocate work between managers and employees (Economist 2015). Many principles that form the basis of the Harvard Business school curriculum were based on Taylor's principles (Schein 2018). Taylor's work was introduced to the business school curriculum at the point where management education was becoming compulsory for success in the field of management.

Despite the fact that Taylor used the word 'scientific' in his theory, many onlookers realised that there was no actual science in this theory. However, these observations were ignored by faculty in business schools who embraced Taylor's theory with open arms. Taylor's theory also birthed a notion that is still ingrained in the dominant discourse of management education. The notion is that management is a distinct function that only a certain group of qualified individuals are worthy to carry out (Stewart 2009). Today, with over 30 000 business schools worldwide, Taylor's 'scientising' of management is still prevalent in business schools around the world. The message that these teachings imply is that capitalism is inevitable and that the techniques for running this system are a form of science.

## ■ Max Weber – Bureaucratic management principles

Max Weber was a 19th-century German philosopher and political economist who showed interest in industrial capitalism. Industrial capitalism is viewed as an economic system where large sectors of industries are privately controlled and concentrated on profit maximisation (Bannister 2016). Through this interest in industrial capitalism, Weber established his theories on bureaucracy. Weber's theories on bureaucracy were his main contributions to management theory. In his theory, Weber outlined six main characteristics of bureaucracy which comprised: (1) hierarchical management structure, (2) division of labour, (3) formal selection process, (4) career orientation, (5) formal rules, and (6) regulations and impersonality (Weber 1978). Weber believed that bureaucracy would lead to optimum efficiency, worker satisfaction and rationality. Today, we see examples of Weber's theory on bureaucracy in various aspects of management such as fixed salaries, hierarchical structure in firms, the requirements of formal education to have certain jobs and organisational code of conduct (Szelenyi 2016). Weber claimed that the primary source of superiority in a bureaucratic administration lied in having technical knowledge. This implies that bureaucracy is the domination through knowledge. Today we see this through the link between having a management qualification and the level of authority that one has in an organisation. Having a management qualification is viewed by many as the 'golden passport' to achieving organisational success (McDonald 2017). Today, MBA is the most popular graduate degree worldwide and business is one of the most popular majors chosen by students (Byrne 2018). Many organisations seek management graduates as they are perceived to have the know-how on how to run organisations successfully. Therefore, the majority of students who enrol in business degrees do not merely do so to become better managers/leaders but to increase career prospects. The amount of MBA graduates who hold C-suite positions are evidence of this. A career in management, therefore, resembles a bureaucratic career, and like many of these careers, titles and degrees are inevitable (McDonald 2017).

## ■ Critiques against the dominant discourse of management

The following section will provide various critiques to the theories which form the foundation of the theory of the dominant discourse of management education. Although not comprehensive it outlined major milestones in the development of a critique against the nature of management.

### ■ Karl Marx

Amidst all the widely accepted theories in the dominant discourse of management lies some critics. The first major (and still influential) critic against capitalism was Karl Marx. Although Marx did not critique management he critiqued the ideology on which management is based, namely, capitalism. Through his book 'Das Kapital', Marx gave eminence to criticism of capitalist theory. In 'Das Kapital' Marx paints a picture that capitalism is deeply contradictory. On one side, when we look at the technological advances it produces, it is innately progressive. This leads to increased productivity and growth in labour. However, on the other hand (which is oftentimes ignored) profit maximisation and mindless capital accumulation are the confines in which capitalism finds itself entrenched in. This, in turn, leads to technology turning a blind eye to the extensive pressure that it places on nature and labour which are fundamental to human life (Basu 2017). This theory was established when Marx stated the following 'Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in art, not only of robbing the labourer, but robbing the soil' (Marx 1867:24). One of the aims of 'Das Kapital' was disproving a major point in classical economic theory which was capitalism (Ziesemer 2017). The theory of capitalism is well ingrained in the dominant discourse of management education, and Marx aimed to disprove and critique such theories through his various works.

### ■ Other critics of the dominant discourse of management

A more current critic of the current discourse of management education is Canadian professor Henry Mintzberg. Mintzberg proposed that if business schools want to assist in creating better leaders, then they need to stop assuming that the classroom is the right place to do it. He further goes on to suggest that the current discourse in management education curriculum encourages the solution of challenges faced by organisations to be fed through a theory machine to produce testable hypotheses and teachable procedures. Mintzberg believed in a more humanist and pragmatic approach to management. That management is a skill, an art based on insight, intuition

and a type of wisdom that only comes from experience in many things and having understood the complexity of the world. Not merely learning about theories established centuries ago (Parker 2018).

## ■ Critical management studies

In essence, CMS can be seen as a field of study that comprises various opinions with the common goal of critiquing the dominant discourse of management and working towards the radical change in the field. The study of CMS questions the relevance of oftentimes accepted mainstream thinking and practice. It disapproves established social practices and institutional arrangements. It challenges accepted theories of capitalist domination, amongst others (Parker, Fournier & Reedy 2007). In doing so CMS does not claim to provide all the answers to achieving this radical transformation, but rather it sets out to raise the awareness of management academics through a series of questions (Goldman 2016). Management is hailed by many as the sanctum that creates the most efficient organisations with the highest profits. Yet, this same management is accused of causing a series of problems such as environmental issues, ethical challenges and societal problems. The most common response to these issues caused by management is to 'better' management, despite continuous failures in society caused by management.

In the dominant discourse of management, many textbooks, research papers represent organisations as the ultimate force for good and any negative issue that arises from this 'force for good' is oftentimes just viewed as a 'spoilt apple' which can be removed and not the malfunction as the system as a whole (Alvesson 2009).

Alvesson (2009) states that CMS is mainly concerned with four areas which comprise the following:

1. A critical interrogation of four I's which are, Ideologies, Institutions, Interests and Identities. These are thought to be dominant in society, harmful to society and the environment and under-challenged by institutions, individuals in power and even students.
2. Providing thorough disapprovals on the dominant discourse of management. Deconstructing accepted theories and ideologies. Re-voicing new opinions and ideologies.
3. The aim of inspiring a reform in ideologies and ways of thinking.
4. Highlighting the constraints in organisations and human lives in contemporary organisations.

For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to note the emphasis that CMS places on emancipation – emancipation from the dominant discourse of

management in particular. Through its critique on the current discourse of management, CMS may assist in attempting to bring a paradigmatic change to the current discourse of management. Furthermore, a paradigmatic change may help change the approach and outlook of management education.

## ■ Paradigmatic change

Well-known philosopher and historian of science, Thomas Kuhn explained paradigm change as ‘an important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way’ (Lombrozo 2016). Kuhn went on to explain how a paradigm change takes place through his version of the Copernican revolution which aimed at challenging the already existing thinking ‘paradigm’ process connected to the evolution of science. Many scientists thought the science evolution to be cyclical, which was wrong, as the science evolution was instead punctuated as stated by Kuhn (Gould 2017). Kuhn argued that science had a paradigmatic element that remained constant and unchanged until it is unable to explain and answer newly identified issues. Once this happens, new theories that could challenge the already accepted paradigm but better explain and provide answers for these newly identified issues and would then need to be developed. From these developed theories, the most appropriately fitting theory will be chosen as the newly accepted and normalised paradigm in society and this process is what Kuhn refers to as a paradigm shift (McLeod 2020). Kuhn provided four stages of how a paradigm shift is developed and they are explained in detail by Leiden University-Faculty of Humanities (2017) in conjunction with Saul McLeod (2020) and they are as follows: (a) Pre-paradigmatic phase, (b) normal science, (c) crises, and (d) scientific revolution.

### ■ Pre-paradigmatic phase

In this phase, scientists have no shared ‘theories, methods and concepts’ meaning each scientist is working on different problems or issues and coming up with their theories of the current paradigm as there is no or little form of communication amongst each other because of their different languages and vocabularies so this makes it that much harder to know if they are working on the same problem or not which then fuels the individualism of their work. They each believe that the concept or theory that they are working on is much more important than that of other scientists. They each will have their views and understandings on concepts and therefore will conduct different measurements to back up their work based on the problem they have decided to investigate. Nothing much comes from this phase as no consensus is ever reached because of different views and understandings.

## ■ Normal science

In the words of Kuhn (1996):

Normal Science, the activity in which most scientists inevitably spend almost all of their time, is predicated on the assumption that the scientific community knows what the world is like. Much of the success of the enterprise derives from the community's willingness to defend that assumption, if necessary, at considerable cost. Normal Science, for example, often suppresses fundamental novelties because they are necessarily subversive of its basic commitments. (p. 5)

This is now when scientists start working within a set paradigm. They all have a clear picture of what they are supposed to work on and can finally start working on the identified problem(s) as a team. While working on these paradigm problems, anomalies may come up, these are problems related to the paradigm at hand that scientists have no way of figuring out.

## ■ Crisis

A crisis phase is reached once the scientists doubt their paradigm and feel like it is not working because of that paradigm being unable to solve anomalies that keep popping up. They start feeling like they need to change the paradigm they are working on to another one that will be more 'effective'. In normal science, scientists have confidence in their paradigm but in the crisis phase, scientists start criticising their paradigm and feel like it should be changed, and new theories and concepts need to be introduced to modify the paradigm they currently working on. They start being creative and innovative by thinking out the box. The longer the crisis phase, the more critical scientists become and the radical ideas start popping up.

## ■ Scientific revolution

This happens once the majority if not all scientists working on the paradigm agree on a new and better paradigm, this means the previous is scratched out and the new paradigm is now accepted leading to a new thinking manner to accompany this new accepted paradigm. This is then what Kuhn refers to as a paradigm shift. For a paradigm shift to be effective and accepted, it needs to be accompanied by relevant human nature otherwise the previous human nature linked to the previous paradigm shift will hold back the introduction and acceptance of the new paradigm.

## ■ Human nature

Human nature is said to be 'core characteristics (feelings, psychology, behaviours) shared by all people' (Sweeney 2015). The Cambridge Dictionary explained human nature as 'the behaviour and feelings common to people'. From these two definitions of human nature, one could conclude that human

nature is a shared form of feelings and behaviour characterised by most if not all human beings. A paradigmatic shift requires a change in human nature which is not always easy and because of this, it is important to understand the role that human nature has played in the rejection of the needed paradigmatic change in the dominant discourse of management education still has not taken place after so many years and so many alternatives (Stacey & Mowles 2016).

One of the reasons for the staying power of the dominant discourse in management is continuous reinforcement of the information used in current management education and this can be seen in schools, organisations and society at large. Times have changed yet management education still puts outdated 19th and 20th-century principles at the forefront of its education structure and systems (Martin 2017) irrespective of the value destruction this outdated management education has contributed for many years (Van Der Linde 2016). The dominant discourse faces some inherent flaws.

## ■ **Flaws in the foundations of the dominant discourse in management education**

Through a critical analysis of the foundations of the dominant discourse of management education, it is clear that there are major flaws in the theories and ideologies developed by the said ‘founding fathers’ of management education (Stewart 2009). An example of one such flaw can be seen in Taylor’s theory of scientific management as mentioned previously in the paper. Unfortunately, many of these flaws were and are still being overlooked in the sphere of management education and therefore form many fundamentals in the dominant discourse of management education.

### ■ **Profit maximisation**

One such of these flaws is that of profit maximisation introduced by Smith’s theory on capitalism. Over two centuries after Smith’s capitalist theory was established, we recognised the major influence that it still plays in the dominant discourse of management education. Management education has placed itself at the heart of the capitalist system by teaching key principles that drive global economies. Common capitalist success metrics such as high stock prices and profit maximisation are examples of commonly taught capitalistic principles in management education (Friedman 1979). To base an area of study around such theories can be detrimental as it manifests through a malfunction of the system as a whole from the exploitation of workers and the environment to the destruction of economies (Alvesson 2008). One does not have to look far to find examples of this, globally we see the exploitation of workers all for the benefit of the capitalistic system. From sweatshop workers



in Southeast Asia who work in terrible conditions for global clothing brands to the exploitation of young children in the mines of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for precious minerals.

## ■ Management is a science

Moreover, another deeply embed flaw in management education is described in Matthew Stewart book, the management myth. This flaw is the view of management as a science by Taylor. Stewart states that, Taylor's theory on claiming that management of a science has led to four senseless dogma. The dogma of efficiency claims that the single most important goal of management is efficiency. The dogma of the singular metric claims that there is a single metric in which managerial activities should be measured. The dogma of hardness focuses on the overestimation of 'hard' data and underestimation of unknowns. Finally, the dogma of functional social classes claimed that managerial functions can only be carried out by a certain group of distinct individuals with specific educational titles (Stewart 2009).

## ■ Influencing the re-think of the current management discourse

Understanding how human nature has protected the dominant discourse in management education allows for the creation of ways that may help slowly bring about the needed paradigmatic change which will improve the acceptance levels of the desperately needed paradigmatic shift in the dominant discourse in management education. Karl Marx once tried this, but his views were rejected because of the emergence of scientific management as proposed by Taylor in the USA (which became the dominant discourse of scientific management) and Fayol in Europe (France). Powerful groups combined with large media houses have also played a huge role in the protection of this dominant discourse by selling the capitalist dream to the public which in turn has made the public believe that capitalism is the only way to make it big in not only the business world but the world in general (Denning 2020). Educators and researchers can be influenced to re-think this discourse of management education and they include: (a) challenge management curriculum, (b) the other side of capitalism, and (c) encourage alternative views and thinking.

## ■ Challenge management curriculum

Parker (2018) suggested students be allowed to criticise their management courses. This criticism should be seen as 'constructive criticism' as it will allow educators to question the information being taught to students and its relevance. This will be a much more in-depth analysis of management

education together with its core principles and theories. This brings the taken-for-granted assumptions to light, forcing educators and research to confront them therefore making way for better management educational courses and core principles and theories. This will allow students to think outside the accepted boundaries of management education. Management courses should further have or rather educators should allow students to voice their disagreements with the current management education and what they think would be better. Management schools and universities should focus more on educating students so they become the change that is needed in management and this will only be made possible by building critical management skills within students (Venard 2020).

## ■ The other side of capitalism

Educators and researchers should start bringing forth the disadvantages caused by the currently used and trusted outdated management education and how it has caused the destruction of value over the years and has fuelled the exploitation of the earth and humans like Parker, Denning, Žižek and Pope Francis has done. Explanations should be provided with these disadvantages of why they have to come to an end and the importance of why the introduction of new and much more century appropriate management education is overdue as stated by Van Der Linde (2015) and Denning (2018). This approach will not only affect management education but organisations and society as all parties involved in the reinforcement are needed to work together to allow the creation of a new manner of thinking that will be more welcoming of the new management education that is much needed.

## ■ Encourage alternative views and thinking

The continuous destruction caused by the dominant discourse in management education requires an urgent paradigmatic change before the value and importance of management education is destroyed all in the name of acceptance of old and outdated information (Van Der Linde 2015). This means, through the use of Kant's Copernican revolution and Kuhn's paradigmatic change, the fundamental concepts and beliefs surrounding the dominant discourse in management education should be challenged leading to new propositions about management education as a whole. It clearly does not solve current issues faced in management (Stacey & Mowles 2016) meaning a new paradigm in management education is a necessity more than ever. An effective change in paradigm requires a change in attitudes, perspectives and manner of thinking (human nature) for it to be accepted which is not always easy based on the rejections that question the core principles that management education is built upon (Stacey & Mowles 2016).

## ■ First steps in challenging the dominant management discourse

Clearly, human nature is the biggest barrier to any new paradigmatic shift needed to modernise the management education and make it more relevant to the 21st century. Some of the tools that could be used in assisting human nature to be more accepting of the overdue and needed paradigmatic change in management education could include the following.

Critical management studies, specifically that which focuses on the critique of management education, could be made a major module in all management courses as this course will encourage students to start being critical about the world around them, the work being taught to them, its relevance in this current day-and-age which will open and start conversations about how and why the dominant discourse in management education has prevailed for so long with no huge changes (Parker 2018). Times have changed yet management education still uses old, outdated principles and theories (Bennis & O'Toole 2005). CMS should not only be aimed at schools but organisations and society at large; but reluctances from organisations or society to any new paradigm shift may lead to students questioning the relevance of the new paradigm if it would not be used leading to students to go back to the old paradigm that was holding back the acceptance of any new paradigms in management education. Only the courageous will stand firm with the new paradigm and not go back to the outdated paradigm like many have done over the years, and these will be the leaders needed to enforce new paradigms in the management education system.

Educators and researchers should bring forth the disadvantages caused by the currently outdated used management education and how it has caused the destruction of value over the years and has fuelled the exploitation of the earth and humans alike. Explanations should be provided with these disadvantages of why they have to come to an end and the importance of why the introduction of new and much more century appropriate management education is overdue as stated by various authors, most notably since Mintzberg. This approach will not only affect management education but organisations and society as all parties involved in the reinforcement are needed to work together to allow the creation of a new manner of thinking that will be more welcoming of the new management education that is much needed.

Managers, educators and the so-called management scientists should move away from the 'subject-object' approach to a critical self-reflection attitude by asking fundamental questions of themselves such as 'Did it work in the past', 'What was my contribution in enforcing the dominant discourse', 'How did I contribute in challenging the "profit at all cost" and the exploitation

of resources (Natural and humans)' and the most challenging self-reflection question 'Did I exploit someone today'.

## ■ Conclusion

Based on the information provided above, the constantly neglected and trust dominant discourse in management education is made very clear. The needed paradigm change that will modernise this management education has never been this urgent to reduce and finally stop the chaos constantly caused by this outdated management education.

Too many management curricula are too dependent on outdated information and blocking students or lectures that beg to differ or question the management education. There is always importance in understanding the history of management to avoid falling into the same traps as those that came before us but it's not time to give this management education its much-needed change.

The main challenge remains 'How do we change human nature' to fit in with the new socio-economic realities of the future?



# Academic hubris in the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse

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## ■ Abstract

Entrepreneurship is painted as a silver bullet for economic development and job creation. It is furthermore hailed as a panacea for emancipation and wealth creation for everyone, even and, especially, those in marginalised positions. Based on this narrative, entrepreneurship has been extended as a development apparatus, specifically in a Global South context where job creation and poverty alleviation are a dire need. However, previous studies have shown that any and all types of entrepreneurs do not necessarily contribute to economic growth or job creation. Critical entrepreneurship studies (CES) posits that mainstream entrepreneurship theory is built on a number of theoretical assumptions that do not adequately take into consideration the value-laden

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reality underlying the ideology of entrepreneurship. This chapter extends on the nascent field of CES by critically analysing the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse in South Africa to identify if and how the assumptions and discursive practices in mainstream entrepreneurship theory are extended to the scholarly discourse in the Global South. Based on the findings of this study, it is proposed that entrepreneurship be reconceptualised beyond the constraints of mainstream entrepreneurship theory by differentiating entrepreneurship as a development apparatus.

## ■ Introduction

Mainstream entrepreneurship studies are grounded in a meta-theoretical framework that presents entrepreneurship as a desirable, purely economic activity, a capitalist and individualist phenomenon (Calás, Smircich & Bourne 2009:552; Naudé 2011; Verduijn & Essers 2013:614). 'The entrepreneur' is presented as a wholesome, virtuous superhero (Verduijn & Essers 2013:614; Williams & Nadin 2012:297). The term is shrouded in ideological mystification (Jones & Murtola 2012:643) and elevated to celebrity status (Luiz 2010:63). This mysterious image is reinforced by the media, government and academics alike (Verduijn & Essers 2013:614). The grand narrative is that entrepreneurs play an irreplaceable role in the machine of the economy and that the entrepreneurial enterprise is the only possible model for generating wealth, income and employment in society (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva 2012:609). Therefore, 'the more entrepreneurs the merrier' (Verduijn & Essers 2013:614). As a mechanism of capitalism, entrepreneurship promises increased prosperity without limits for everyone (Fairclough 2013:16). It is promoted as the key driver of both economic and personal growth (Verduijn & Essers 2013:612). Entrepreneurship is painted as a silver bullet for emancipation and wealth creation for everyone, even and, especially, those in marginalised positions.

Based on this narrative, entrepreneurship has also been extended as a development apparatus, specifically in a Global South context where job creation and poverty alleviation are a dire need. This is illustrated by scholarly texts in the Global South that describe entrepreneurs as 'playing an important role in most businesses, they contribute significantly to employment, job creation and wealth creation' and that 'economic development can be directly attributed to the level of entrepreneurial activity in a country and entrepreneurial businesses ensure growth in the economy' (Nieuwenhuizen 2018:4). However, previous studies have shown that any and all types of entrepreneurs do not necessarily contribute to economic growth or job creation (Naudé 2011; Shane 2009) and the mainstream entrepreneurship discourse is making fallacious claims based on assumptions. These assumptions inherent in the entrepreneurship ideology are furthermore manipulated to support political hegemony in the Global South (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva 2012).

This chapter extends on the nascent field of CES by critically analysing the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse in South Africa to identify if and how the assumptions and discursive practices in mainstream entrepreneurship theory are extended to the scholarly discourse in the Global South. It further contributes by making recommendations on an ethical response to the critique flowing from the discourse analysis.

## ■ Critical entrepreneurship studies

There appears to be a number of reasons why the field of entrepreneurship should be ‘placed under ideological scrutiny’ (Ogbor 2000:611), yet only a small number of studies have questioned the presupposed foundations of entrepreneurship theory to engage openly with the dark sides of entrepreneurship – the contradictions, the paradoxes, the ambiguities and tensions (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva 2012:588; Tedmanson et al. 2012:532; Verduijn & Essers 2013:615, 627). The term CES, first used by Calás et al., is an extension of the broader field of CMS. CES posits that mainstream entrepreneurship theory is built on a number of theoretical assumptions that do not adequately take into consideration the value-laden reality underlying the ideology of entrepreneurship (Alvesson & Deetz 2000:55; Alvesson & Willmott 2003:23; Urban 2010:42). A short overview of the existing argument critical of mainstream entrepreneurship theory is given here with reference to a number of prominent contributions.

## ■ Entrepreneurship as a capitalist mechanism

The mainstream entrepreneurship discourse lends ideological support to capitalism. Fairclough (2013:11) warns that, although capitalism can be praised for creating an enabling environment in some aspects, it can also be accused of preventing and limiting human well-being in other aspects. Societies are becoming increasingly disillusioned by the limitations of capitalism. In fact, the flaws and fallacies inherent to the current economic system have come to be widely recognised and not only by critical scholars. There appears to be consensus that the current system needs to be repaired or replaced (Fairclough 2013:16). However, studies that militate against the unequal, exploitative nature of capitalism are still the exception and entrepreneurship is increasingly romanticised and eulogised (Tedmanson et al. 2012:532). The critical contribution by Verduijn et al. (2014) highlights how, by supporting the ideology of capitalism as the most favoured economic system for producing wealth and value in a society, entrepreneurship has the potential to exploit, destruct and oppress. It, furthermore, illustrates how entrepreneurship (as a mechanism of capitalism) not only consistently and pervasively prevents emancipation from taking place but is also systematically linked to environmental pollution, corruption and human exploitation. They find,



however, that mainstream research downplays this dark side of entrepreneurship in favour of a utopian view of the phenomenon.

The mainstream entrepreneurship ideology furthermore suggests that, given a chance, anyone can be a successful entrepreneur with an ever-expanding wealth of choice and economic security (Fairclough 2013:16). In fact, entrepreneurship is promoted as ‘the attitude of a people who seek the social and economic development of their country’ (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva 2012). Within the context of Brazil, the study by Da Costa and Silva Saraiva (2012) finds that discourses are producing and reproducing the exemplarity of the neoliberal capitalist entrepreneurial model and the absence of feasible alternatives. Through a critical discourse analysis methodology, this study highlights how the ideology of entrepreneurship can create support for capitalist hegemony, by regarding the contemporary capitalist enterprise as the only possible model for generating wealth, income and employment in a Global South Society.

Another notable contribution in this regard is the study by Jones and Murtola (2012), which emphasises that entrepreneurship is a political project that has to be understood in terms of the context of the political economy. It points out that mainstream entrepreneurship theory recognises the positive idea of ‘production in common’ yet fails to recognise the negation of this condition: that within the context of production in the common, entrepreneurship also simultaneously exploits the common. What mainstream theory thus fails to acknowledge is that the entrepreneur in fact exists thanks to the common and is a product of the common. Jones and Murtola regard it as blind optimism to assume that the ‘production in common’ will necessarily lead to the recognition and liberation of the common. In fact, the study describes entrepreneurship as the act of finding new ways to expropriate and exploit the common. The conclusion drawn is that it cannot be taken for granted that entrepreneurship offers a solution to crisis (such as the current international economic crisis), but that entrepreneurship could in fact be structurally linked with the emergence of the crisis.

## ■ **‘Entrepreneurship’ and ‘the entrepreneur’ as homogenous concepts**

‘Entrepreneurship’ has become an umbrella under which a broad ‘hodgepodge’ of research is included (Shane & Venkataraman 2000:217). In the words of Katz (2003):

It [...] refers to a collection of academic disciplines and specialties including entrepreneurship, new venture creation, entrepreneurial finance, small business, family business, free enterprise, private enterprise, high-technology business, new product development, microenterprise development, applied economic development, professional practice studies, women’s entrepreneurship, minority

entrepreneurship and ethnic entrepreneurship. The advantage of the term as used here is that it is very similar to the way the general public views entrepreneurship and its myriad subspecialties – i.e., as one field. The intent is to establish a definition and chronology that is inclusive, in the hopes of crafting as comprehensive a list as possible, leaving subsetting-by-definition to others with particular theoretical models to promote. (p. 284)

In the process of establishing a definition that is inclusive, the word has come to mean both everything and nothing (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva 2012:589). The terms included in the conceptual umbrella are often used interchangeably and without precision (Poole 2018:35). ‘Entrepreneur’ can by no means be considered a homogenous concept, but mainstream research is continuously conceptualising it as a uniform concept and in doing so protecting a number of mainstream assumptions from being questioned (Calás et al. 2009:553).

The field of entrepreneurship is largely built on a range of established stereotypes (Achtenhagen & Welter 2007:199). Ogbor (2000) critically examined entrepreneurship theory to determine which societal myths and ideologies are perpetuated in the conventional discourse. He found that the predominant discourse in entrepreneurship research is reproducing the myth of ‘the entrepreneur’ as a white, dominant, rational, European/North American, male hero. He further highlighted how this ideology is legitimated within academia. In fact, very few studies have actually challenged these ideological stereotypes underlying mainstream entrepreneurship theory, especially not in the Global South.

The study by Calás et al. (2009) is one of a number of other influential contributions critiquing entrepreneurship ideology from a feminist analytical perspective, critiquing and challenging the male-dominated assumptions in mainstream entrepreneurship discourse. These studies have found that ‘the entrepreneurial archetype is based on male rationality, risk taking, conquest, domination and control’ and that female entrepreneurs in general and ethnic minority entrepreneurs are painted as ‘the other’ entrepreneurs (Verduijn & Essers 2013:614). Although the paper by Calás et al. uses feminist theory as a point of departure, it goes beyond a critique of entrepreneurship from a feminist perspective. Coining the term ‘critical entrepreneurship studies’, the study emphasises the importance of bringing a critical, reflexive, meta-theoretical perspective to entrepreneurship study and to question and challenge the assumptions embedded in the current mainstream theorising. It argues that the theory of entrepreneurship cannot be further developed and expanded if it is not reframed epistemologically from a positivist to a critical perspective.

## ■ The dominance of the positivist paradigm

Positivism is rooted in the ontological view that the world exists free and independent from an observer and conforms to permanent laws and rules of

causation (Aliyu et al. 2014:81). By observing and measuring the natural world, the researcher can uncover these rules and laws neutrally and objectively. Positivism is the prevalent research paradigm in the natural sciences such as physics and chemistry (Guba & Lincoln 1994:105). Over time, social scientists have been encouraged to emulate the natural sciences to establish social science as a 'hard' science and to emancipate it from the philosophical and theological strictures that are thought to be limiting the field (Callaghan 2016:66; Guba & Lincoln 1994:106). Thus, social scientists place increasing emphasis on impartiality, measurement, objectivity and repeatability to produce value-free, objective knowledge (Aliyu et al. 2014:81) achieved through the use of quantitative methods. Positivists view the 'science' resulting from quantitative research techniques as superior, and quantitative methods are thus strongly associated with the positivist paradigm. Entrepreneurship research globally has adopted a largely positivist ontology.

Critical entrepreneurship scholars view this emphasis on positivist ontologies as an attempt to legitimise the field of entrepreneurship (Alvesson & Deetz 2000:55; Alvesson & Willmott 2003:23; Calás et al. 2009:553; Tedmanson et al. 2012:532; Urban 2010:42) and entrepreneurship education (Achtenhagen & Welter 2007:199). Bygrave (2007:25) attributed entrepreneurship scholars' exaggerated emphasis on quantitative methods to 'physics envy'. Regression analysis is viewed as the trick that puts entrepreneurship research on par with physics. 'We run our regressions and, eureka, if the  $R^2$  approaches 1, we interpret the equation as if it were a causal law of nature' (Bygrave 2007:43). By describing observed phenomena through mathematical means in this way, researchers assume that they have created knowledge (Van der Linde 2016:38). Scholars often do not even reflect on epistemology and ontology, but merely assume some version of positivism. In cases where the methodology is discussed, it is restricted to methods and statistical techniques (Fournier & Grey 2000:182). The result is that, in an attempt to determine the causal relationship between 'heroes and non-heroes', ideological myths regarding 'the entrepreneur' are simply reified into measurable constructs (Ogbor 2000:622).

Entrepreneurship is still a relatively nascent field of research and the use of so much 'mathematics' is simply not justified (Bygrave 2007:32). The field lacks methodological diversity and rigour (Neergaard & Ulhoi 2007:1). In the pursuit of what is thought to be superior scientific findings, the value-laden context and complexity underlying the entrepreneurship phenomenon are ignored. Even if the statistical techniques have been implemented flawlessly, this disregard for the complexity of the phenomenon compromises the theoretical validity of the findings (Bygrave 2007:31). Ironically enough, Schumpeter himself views positivistic methodologies as inadequate to understand and explain the entrepreneurial phenomenon (Ogbor 2000:623). Moreover, it is also

not adequate to address the 'inequalities and divisive realities' associated with capitalism (Goldman 2016a:235). However, in spite of regular calls for expanding the types of research designs and analytical approaches in entrepreneurship studies, qualitative studies remain underrepresented in mainstream journals globally (Neergaard & Ulhoi 2007:1-2). The result is that research may be technically competent, but is becoming increasingly formulaic and dull (Alvesson & Sandberg 2013:130) and it is failing to question the 'flimsy' assumptions underlying established literature (Alvesson & Sandberg 2013:129; Bygrave 2007:20).

## ■ Research objective

Through a critical analysis of the academic entrepreneurship discourse in South Africa, this study aims to identify if and how the dominant assumptions and discursive practices in the mainstream entrepreneurship discourse are extended to the scholarly discourse in the Global South where entrepreneurship is considered a major development tool.

## ■ Methodology and sampling

### ■ Discourse

Foucault introduced the term discourse to describe 'systems of thought, or knowledge claims, which assume an existence independent of a particular speaker' (Stoddart 2007:203). The aim of a discourse is to produce and reproduce certain power relations within a society through 'institutionalising, regulating and normalising specific ways of talking, thinking and acting' (Jäger & Maier 2009:36). Discourse can thus be used to produce and legitimise specific versions of social reality while excluding others and even rendering them unthinkable (Greckhamer & Cilesiz 2014:424; Ziai 2013:125). Societies take up transmitted discourses and incorporate them into their subjectivities. When a specific discourse is produced enough it becomes normalised and any critical consciousness is dissolved. A society then becomes convinced that the social system is the way that it has always been, the way that it should be and that it cannot be transformed. Like in the broader management discourse, a number of assumptions have become normalised in the entrepreneurship discourse (Achtenhagen & Welter 2007:193).

### ■ Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) presents a method to identify which assumptions have become naturalised in the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse in the Global South. Critique of discourse plays an inherent role in any application of the critical method in social research (Fairclough 2013:8).

Since the 1972 seminal work by Foucault, the body of literature on discourse analysis has grown vastly and it has proven a valuable and important method for social and organisational research (Achtenhagen & Welter 2007:213; Greckhamer & Cilesiz 2014:424). The use of CDA is also becoming more mainstream and institutionalised (Fairclough 2013:10). CDA has proven effective as a method to critically analyse different topics within the entrepreneurship field (Achtenhagen & Welter 2007:211).

Conducting a CDA does not come without its challenges (Greckhamer & Cilesiz 2014). It does not prescribe rigid rules or a formula that can be followed to the letter (Fairclough 2013:10; Jäger & Maier 2009:56). There is not currently a best-practice approach and no method is considered superior to another. To ensure that this analysis was conducted methodically and rigorously, Ahl's 2007 guidelines (which are in turn based on Foucault's procedures) were used as a departure point to determine which questions to ask of the texts and incorporate in the analysis (Ahl 2007:221–223). The guidelines are as follows:

1. Determine what assumptions are made.
2. Determine what influence the institutional context and writing and publishing practices have on the issues that are studied and the questions that are being asked.
3. Determine if the text under investigation is celebrating or criticising the seminal ideas.
4. Identify the writing and publishing practices that shape and delimit the discourse.
5. Determine what counts as 'proper' knowledge and 'proper' entrepreneurship research and what are viewed as legitimate methods for researching entrepreneurship.
6. Determine who is 'allowed' to speak on the specific topic and what voices are left out of the discourse.
7. Determine the ontological and epistemological premises guiding (and limiting) the production of knowledge.

The CDA in this study involved two processes. In the first process, the themes to be searched and registered were largely predetermined. These predefined themes were informed by the extant literature on entrepreneurship, CES and findings from a previous CDA on the media discourse on entrepreneurship in South Africa (Authors 2020). The frequency of specific words and themes was quantified, because discourses can be recognised through emerging patterns and frequencies in texts (Achtenhagen & Welter 2007:198). From here, the analysis became more interpretive and reflective and mobilised knowledge that was wider than merely the texts included in the sample, taking into account the social processes and structures from which these texts were produced (Wodak 2011:3). This was done to identify possible ideological

developments (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva 2012:596) and reflect how the institutional context may be influencing these developments. From there it became possible to determine what the ideological implications of these items and relationships may be in practice.

Although presented as such in the findings, the process of analysis was not linear, but rather a circular, continuous dialogue between the researcher and the texts. During this iterative analytical process, the aim was to continuously identify, contextualise and interpret certain discursive items and the relationship between these items.

## ■ Sampling

When conducting a CDA, the specific discourse to be analysed must be predefined in order to focus the data collection from the onset (Achtenhagen & Welter 2007:201). The phenomenon under investigation in this study is the extension of the entrepreneurship ideology as a major development tool in the Global South. For this reason, it was decided to focus on the discourse relating to small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) and exclude the discourse on corporate entrepreneurship (SEDA 2016):

The definition for SMMEs encompasses a very broad range of firms, some of which includes [s/c] formally registered, informal and non-VAT registered organisations. Small businesses range from medium-sized enterprises, such as established traditional family businesses employing over a hundred people, to informal micro-enterprises. The latter includes survivalist self-employed persons from the poorest layers of the population. The upper end of the range is comparable to the small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME) segment found in developed countries. In South Africa, a large majority of SMMEs are concentrated on the very lowest end, where survivalist firms are found. These firms can take the form of street trading enterprises, backyard manufacturing and services, and occasional home-based evening jobs. The informal sector comprises almost exclusively of SMMEs; those classified as survival entities have very little growth potential and are less likely to hire staff. (n.p.)

The sample was collected in the following manner: firstly, four leading South African journals in which articles pertaining to entrepreneurship are regularly published were identified. Thereafter all articles from these journals from the three-year period January 2017 to December 2019 were retrieved. The abstracts and introductions of these articles were scanned to determine if they contributed to the discourse under investigation. In order to focus on the entrepreneurship discourse surrounding SMMEs, articles were excluded if the setting was in large corporate organisations. If the research was done outside of South Africa, but published through a South African institution, the article was included and regarded as valid to the South African academic discourse. This left a sample of 53 articles: eight from Development Southern Africa (journal A), seven from South African Journal of Economic and

Management Sciences (journal B), 28 from Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management (journal C) and 10 from South African Journal of Business Management (journal D). These articles were numbered from 1 to 53 and imported into Atlas.ti. During the first round of coding, two articles were found to not bear relevance to the discourse under investigation and were therefore deleted (articles 1 and 4, both from journal A). This left a final sample of 51 articles.

## ■ Findings

### ■ Research methodology

Because there is an intimate relationship between a scientific community's criteria for what constitutes a scientific product and the choice of methodology (Callaghan 2016:60), determining the frequency of specific methodologies and whether one method is favoured above another can give insight into the theoretical grounding of the academic entrepreneurship discourse in the Global South (Ogbor 2000:622). A similar quantification of other management fields in South Africa found that positivism was the dominant methodological philosophy in management studies in general (Goldman 2016b:5) and human resource management in particular (Ruggunan 2016:120). However, a similar assessment of entrepreneurship research in South Africa could not be found. Therefore, the choice of research methodologies was quantified as a first step in the textual analysis.

In the 51 journal articles analysed for this study, 33 (65%) were found to be quantitative studies, seven (14%) were mixed-method studies and 11 (21%) were qualitative studies. This dominance of quantitative studies is in keeping with the international trend that qualitative studies remain underrepresented in mainstream entrepreneurship journals (Neergaard & Ulhoi 2007:1-2). It cannot be assumed that all qualitative studies will necessarily be critical of mainstream entrepreneurship research. Indeed, none of the qualitative or mixed-method studies were found to contain a critical perspective.

Only nine of the analysed articles offered some reflection on the choice of ontological paradigm. Six explicitly mentioned that they were rooted in a positivist paradigm, two in interpretivism, and one justified the use of positivism and interpretivism combined. This correlates with findings by Fournier and Grey (2000):

[/]n general, some (often rather weak) version of positivism is simply assumed, there is no explicit reflection on epistemology and ontology, and discussion of methodology becomes limited to restricted issues of method and statistical technique. (p. 18)

From this finding, it can be deduced that the South African entrepreneurship discourse is firmly rooted in the positivist paradigm.

## ■ Performative research

In mainstream, non-critical entrepreneurship research in the Global North, performativity is the imperative that guides knowledge and research. This implies that research is viewed as valuable only if it can be applied to improve the effectiveness of entrepreneurship practice or build a better model of the entrepreneurship phenomenon. The desirability of entrepreneurship is not questioned, but accepted as a given (Fournier & Grey 2000:15). Critical studies, on the other hand, advocate that non-performative outcomes should be sought, and business management knowledge should not merely be focused on obtaining outcomes that are promoting the agenda of the mainstream and enhancing the achievement of existing outcomes (Goldman 2016b:14). The following quantification determined if and to what extent the entrepreneurship phenomenon is held as desirable in the scholarly discourse in the Global South.

All the articles included in the sample were found to be performative by either claiming to contribute to the effectiveness of entrepreneurship practice, or by building a better model or understanding of the entrepreneurship phenomenon. In the analysed sample an explicit performative pattern emerged that could be described along the following lines: “Entrepreneurship” is the undisputed saviour of economic growth and job creation. This study acknowledges one area that might be holding “entrepreneurs” back and will contribute to making “entrepreneurs” even better’. Of the 51 articles, 31 were found to fit into this explicit performative pattern of reasoning. One example is highlighted below (article 31, Reynolds, Fourie & Erasmus 2019):

South African small and medium enterprises (SMEs) contribute up to 22% of gross domestic product in the economy. Yet the survival rate of South African SMEs is very low, with nearly 80% of all SMEs failing over the long term [...] As an important contributor to the South African economy, how can SMEs’ sustainability be improved? The balanced scorecard (BSC) is a measurement tool that may be used by an organisation to measure its financial and non-financial performance... As a result, the BSC is considered a useful management tool for SMEs [...]. (p. 1)

## ■ Knowledge claims made

In order to question and challenge assumptions embedded in the current mainstream theorising, it is necessary to identify what these assumptions are. The third quantification was thus done to determine if and how knowledge claims or assumptions inherent in the global entrepreneurship ideology were produced and reproduced in the scholarly discourse under investigation. The emphasis from the onset of the analysis was to identify the frequency of a very specific normative knowledge claim: ‘Entrepreneurship is a successful vehicle for job creation and/or economic growth’ (Naudé 2011; Shane 2009). Of the 51 articles, 40 (78%) were found to reproduce this knowledge claim. Of these, 34 made the claim explicitly, while it was implied



in six more. What is more, of the 40 articles that did make this knowledge claim, 36 did so in the introduction section. In fact, 21 of the articles did so in the very first sentence. In four additional instances, the claim was made in the literature review section.

Some examples of the explicit knowledge claims include:

[...] informal micro-enterprises have much potential for job creation. (Article 9, Charman 2017:1)

South Africa as one of the developing markets aims to improve the economy and create employment through entrepreneurship. (Article 16, Mamabolo, Kerrin & Kele 2017:1)

Entrepreneurship brings labour and capital together, and it is the pathway to employment and economic growth. (Article 23, Mahadea & Kaseeram 2018:1)

Small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) contribute significantly to employment and the economy in South Africa. (Article 27, Kirsten 2018:1)

In South Africa, SMEs play a critical role in the country's economy [...] Small and medium enterprises play a crucial role in creating employment in an economy. (Article 34, Madzimure 2019:2)

Entrepreneurial businesses play a key role in addressing unemployment and promoting economic growth in countries all over the world. (Article 53, Van den Heever & Venter 2019:1)

Some examples of the implicit knowledge claims include:

Manufacturing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya have performed dimly over the years despite their significance to the economy. (Article 24, Mageto, Prinsloo & Luke 2018:1)

Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form a crucial part of emerging economies. (Article 48, Gurahoo & Salisbury 2018:1)

This finding is in line with findings in the Global North where, with few exceptions, entrepreneurship is positioned as positive economic activity (Calás et al. 2009:552). It has been 'romanticised in the way it is construed as a 'Holy Grail' of elevation and emancipation' (Verduijn et al. 2014:100).

## ■ Gaps in the discourse

A critical discourse not only reveals general patterns through what is voiced in the discourse, but also identifies hidden discourses, in other words that which is not voiced (Achtenhagen & Welter 2007:198).

## □ Contradicting knowledge claims

The foundational texts upon which the knowledge claims are grounded are multiple and diverse. Of the 40 articles that made the knowledge claim that 'entrepreneurship is a successful vehicle for job creation and/or economic development', five did not cite any references. The remaining 35 articles cited

64 references to support the knowledge claim (only two of which were cited twice), effectively citing 62 unique references to support the knowledge claim. It is not surprising that the multitude of references would produce diverse knowledge claims. One such example is regarding the role that SMEs play in South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP). These two articles were published in the same journal in the same year:

South African small and medium enterprises (SMEs) contribute up to 22% of gross domestic product in the economy. (Article 31, Reynolds et al. 2019:1)

In South Africa, SMEs play a critical role in the country's economy. Small and medium enterprises contribute between 52% and 57% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). (Article 34, Madzimore 2019:2)

Another article (article 8, Nieuwenhuizen 2019) in the sample (although not in the same journal) states that:

In South Africa, there are differences in the estimated contributions of SMMEs to GDP due to the large number of informal or non-registered businesses in the country. Therefore, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the actual contribution of SMMEs to the economy, GDP and employment in South Africa. (p. 667)

## □ Job creation versus self-employment

Not all types of enterprises can be expected to contribute equally to job creation (Shane 2009). However, studies are continuously failing to classify entrepreneurs in a manner that guides economic development policy, especially in a Global South context where the entrepreneurship ideology hails any and all types of entrepreneurship as the undisputed saviour of job creation (Kuada 2015:149; Poole 2018:35). In this regard, the sample was analysed to determine if and how a distinction is made between enterprises that are expected to contribute to job creation through growing the venture to create a significant number of additional jobs and enterprises that are not expected to move beyond self-employment. Not one of the articles that made the knowledge claim that entrepreneurship is a successful vehicle for job creation, distinguished between additional jobs as opposed to self-employment.

## □ Definitional voids

In this quantification, the sample was analysed to determine if and how the analysed discourse acknowledges the heterogenous nature of the complex entrepreneurship phenomenon. The total terms are not equal to the number of articles in the sample, because in some articles more than one term was applied (such as the use of 'informal women entrepreneurs' [article 18, Henning & Akoob 2017]) in which case the term was specified in two categories 'informal' and 'female'.

Listing the quantification of the terminology in a table as above may give the impression that a clear distinction is made between the different types

**TABLE 6.1:** Usage frequency for selected terms.

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
SME	16
Small business	7
SMME (not specified)	6
SMME (specified as formal)	2
Entrepreneur (general, not specified)	5
Informal (entrepreneur or enterprise)	4
Female (entrepreneur)	3
Township (entrepreneur or enterprise)	3
Micro (enterprise)	3
Nascent (entrepreneur)	2
Rural (entrepreneur or enterprise)	2
Immigrant entrepreneur	1
Tenant entrepreneur	1
Tourism (entrepreneur or enterprise)	1
Social entrepreneur	1
Franchisees	1
Spaza shop (owner)	1
Technology based (entrepreneurial business)	1

of entrepreneurs. However, a deeper analysis reveals some assumptions inherent in the definitions of the discourse. For instance, by using a term (such as ‘SMME’ or ‘small business’) researchers fail to acknowledge that their datasets are potentially dominated by micro-enterprises that are merely self-employing and the findings are possibly inadequate to generalise for all enterprises (Bygrave 2007:26; Poole 2018:40). A further analysis was therefore done to determine the extent to which the size of enterprises are specified as a distinguishing characteristic of enterprises in a study. In some cases these studies did distinguish between other demographics, such as the gender or age of the entrepreneur, but this analysis looked specifically at whether a distinction was made between different sizes of enterprises in the sample. The analysis also determined if the representation of each subgroup in the sample was indicated in the study and if potential overrepresentations were acknowledged.

Of the studies in the sample, 45 had some form of enterprise as the unit of analysis. The size of the enterprises in the sample and the representation of each size of enterprise in the sample were clearly indicated in 20 of the studies, by indicating either the number of employees, the turnover or both. In 25 studies, the sizes of the enterprises and their representation in the sample were not clearly demarcated, presenting the sample as homogenous. For example:

For the sampled participants to be representative of the small-business population, participation in the research was limited to individuals who owned or were involved in the management of small businesses that operated within South Africa. These businesses could operate within any industry sector and were

considered small if they employed fewer than 50 people. (Article 10, Du Plessis & Marnewick 2017:7)

Information was collected from 71 qualitative 'life-history' interviews with different types of local entrepreneurs... (Article 3, Adiya et al. 2017:109)

In the 25 articles where a distinction was made between the subgroups (in terms of size of the enterprise) and how each of these was represented in the sample, it was merely presented as part of the demographics of the sample. The influence of specific enterprises and its representation in the sample were not discussed in the findings. The findings were rather generalised for the identified unit of analysis, such as 'small business' or 'local entrepreneurs' in the examples above.

In one example (article 39, Esterhuyzen 2019:4), the unit of analysis in this study is indicated as 'small business'. The study defines small business as a business with 'an annual turnover of less than R50 million and fewer than 50 employees'. It indicates how the different subgroups were represented in the sample of 350 enterprises. In both examples, more than half the sample were businesses with five or fewer employees, and yet, the findings were represented as applicable to 'small business' in general:

1-5 employees	- 53.3%
6-10 employees	- 24%
11-15 employees	- 11.4%
16-49 employees	- 11.1%

In a similar example (article 27, Kirsten 2018:5), the sample of 'small business' was represented as follows:

0 employees	- 23.3%
1-5 employees	- 58.1%
6-10 employees	- 18.6%

A related finding is that the reasons for choosing a specific term over another are not adequately presented in the studies. In some cases, the term used is descriptive of the group that it represents, such as 'informal micro enterprise' (article 10, Du Plessis & Marnewick 2017:7) or 'spaza shop owner' (article 51, Hare & Walwyn 2019). The same cannot be argued for terms such as SME, SMME or small business - the ambiguous terms used by the bulk of studies in the sample. Even if the textbook definition of a term was given, the implication of choosing one term above another was not considered, or at least not presented. In other samples, more than one term is used without indicating the reason for using both, for example (article 29, Kunaka & Moos 2019:1):

[M]entoring is important for entrepreneurs and small business owners to develop sustainable businesses that create jobs. (p. 1)

## □ Entrepreneurship as a development apparatus

Entrepreneurship development programmes are considered a major development tool in the Global South (Poole 2018:35). The analysis divided the discourse to distinguish between studies that focus on entrepreneurship as a development apparatus from other types of entrepreneurship. The analysis revealed that 18 of the 51 articles, roughly a third of the studies in the sample, were aimed at entrepreneurship as a development apparatus. These 18 articles were spread throughout all four journals. In none of the 18 articles was it indicated that the metrics and/or results were limited to entrepreneurship in the context of development. Of these 18 articles, 14 also reproduced the knowledge claim that entrepreneurship is an effective vehicle for job creation and/or economic development, implying that the appropriation of entrepreneurship as a development apparatus is considered equally effective in this regard.

## ■ Discussion of findings

The capitalist dream promises ‘increasing prosperity without limits, an ever-expanding wealth of choice, possibility and opportunity, security and comfort in old age’ for everyone (Fairclough 2013:16). However, societies are becoming increasingly disillusioned by the limitations of capitalism with especially communities in the Global South drawing the short straw. As agents of social change, the scholarly community in the Global South has a responsibility to question the assumptions inherent in the capitalism ideology and its mechanisms, including entrepreneurship. It should also recognise and critically evaluate the effects that scholarly discourses have on entrepreneurial praxis (Ogbor 2000:630). If this is true for mainstream entrepreneurship in general, it is especially true in a Global South context where entrepreneurship is presented as a major development tool. Against this background and from a CES perspective, the findings in the study are presented.

## ■ Fetishisation of positivism

The analysis revealed that the dominance of quantitative methods and the associated positivism are also extended to a Global South context. The exaggerated emphasis on positivism has definite consequences, both in theory and in praxis (Verduijn & Essers 2013:627). Globally, CES scholars are critical of the one-dimensional focus on positivism because it results in research that is becoming increasingly formulaic and dull and does not contribute much to the theory of entrepreneurship (Alvesson & Sandberg 2013:130). Moreover, in a Global South context where entrepreneurship is also extended as a tool for development in an attempt to address unemployment and poverty, it could be argued that the normative positivistic focus may be doing more harm than good. This will be elaborated on further.

Mainstream entrepreneurship theory is structurally and ideologically rooted in the Global North. The bulk of the empirical studies done on the link between entrepreneurship and economic development have been conducted in Global North economies and the findings of these studies have very limited use for answering questions about economic development in the Global South (Naudé 2011:37). Furthermore, the epistemic standards of what constitutes knowledge as well as accepted modes of knowledge production are also hegemonically determined in a Global North context (Khan & Naguib 2017:90). This analysis has revealed that, in the pursuit of what is thought to be superior scientific findings, the value-laden context and complexity underlying the entrepreneurship phenomenon in the Global South is ignored. The entrepreneurship ideology, rooted in a positivist paradigm, is extended undisputedly into the Global South context when there is, in fact, very little research to confirm that entrepreneurship does indeed lead to economic growth (Naudé & Havenga 2005:107).

Scholars cannot be content with the abysmal failure of entrepreneurship to deliver on its promise of job creation and economic growth in the Global South. It is imperative that the inability of the normative positivistic thinking to address the inequality and divisive realities in the Global South must be recognised (Goldman 2016a:235). Research can no longer merely maintain the academic status quo (Goldman 2016b:5).

Based on the findings in the analysis, it is proposed that:

- **P1:** The paradigmatic grounding and methodology of mainstream entrepreneurship theory are extended to and replicated in a Global South context.
- **P2:** The paradigmatic grounding of the Global South discourse on entrepreneurship fails to interrogate the assumptions inherent in the mainstream entrepreneurship ideology.

From a CMS perspective, this study is explicitly sceptical of the core assumption upon which 78% of studies in the sample stake their relevance, namely, that 'entrepreneurship' is a successful vehicle for job creation and/or economic development. Entrepreneurship is presented as a given desirable because it is assumed to be a silver bullet for job creation and economic development. However, studies are showing that any and all types of entrepreneurship are in fact not delivering on these promises (Naudé 2011; Shane 2009). Achtenhagen and Welter (2007:199) observed that '...a typical discourse in entrepreneurship research draws heavily on the need for job creation focused in the social and political discourses (to legitimize its existence)', even if its role in job creation has not been confirmed. In line with Achtenhagen and Welter (2007), it is thus proposed that:

- **P3:** The scholarly entrepreneurship discourse draws heavily on the need for job creation to legitimise entrepreneurship as a desirable given in the Global South.

## ■ Knowledge claims and obfuscation of terms

One of the ways in which the entrepreneurship discourse is legitimising the assumptions inherent in entrepreneurship ideology is by presenting entrepreneurship as a homogenous concept. Even when the heterogeneous nature of the phenomena included in the conceptual entrepreneurship frame is recognised, different terms are often used interchangeably without explicitly defining what the specific terms mean (Poole 2018:36). The findings of this study confirm findings in previous CES: 'entrepreneurship' has become an umbrella term that includes a myriad of heterogeneous phenomena, yet it is continuously presented as a uniform concept. The mainstream entrepreneurship discourse is furthermore based on commonly accepted, taken-for-granted definitions of phenomena included in the umbrella. When the key terms are treated so fluidly, it obscures the inability of some mainstream categories included under the entrepreneurship umbrella to deliver on its promise of economic growth and job creation (Poole 2018:41). Entrepreneurship scholars (not only CES) have warned that any and all kinds of phenomena included under 'entrepreneurship' cannot be regarded as the same activity or expected to contribute equally to economic development or job creation:

- The dynamics of entrepreneurship can be vastly different depending on institutional context and level of economic development (Acs, Desai & Hessels 2008:219).
- Their (business owners out of necessity) contributions to overall economic growth, including job creation and tax revenue generation, may therefore be limited (Kuada 2015:148).
- Taken together, these findings indicate that policy aimed at fostering job creation should carefully consider how firm size is defined (Aga, Francis & Meza 2015:25).
- We are fooling ourselves if we believe we are researching entrepreneurship when we are really studying micro-businesses (Bygrave 2007:26).
- Entrepreneurship is not a binding constraint on growth and development in the poorest countries (Naudé 2011:33).
- Policy makers need to recognize that only a select few entrepreneurs will create the businesses that will take people out of poverty, encourage innovation, create jobs, reduce unemployment, make markets more competitive, and enhance economic growth (Shane 2009).

This discourse analysis in particular found the absence of a standardised classification or typology that goes beyond the commonly accepted definitions of terms such as SME, SMME or small business. The obfuscation of key terminology leaves the analysis with a number of questions. For instance, 16 articles preferred the term 'SME' (small and medium-sized enterprise), eight articles used 'SMME' (small, medium and micro-sized enterprise), while seven others used the term 'small business'. Should it be inferred that the term

SME was intentionally chosen in a study to exclude micro-enterprises? If so, are the findings of the study not applicable to micro-enterprises? When a claim is made that 'entrepreneurship' is the driver of job creation, does that mean that everything included in the entrepreneurship umbrella is a driver of job creation? In instances where more than one term is used in one study, is it implied that 'entrepreneurs' are different from 'small business owners'? If not, why are both terms used? If they are different, how are they different? What is the implication of the use of different terms for the findings of the study? Even in cases where a textbook definition is given, the analysis revealed a general lack of consideration as to why a specific term is favoured and whether the choice of term has implications for the generalisability of findings.

Furthermore, 78% of the sample reproduced the knowledge claim that entrepreneurship (or one of the related terms included in the discourse) is a successful vehicle for job creation and/or economic development. At worst, claims were made with which most mainstream entrepreneurship scholars would disagree, for example, that 'informal micro-enterprises have much potential for job creation'. But even when claims are made that 'SMMEs contribute significantly to employment and the economy in South Africa', does it imply that both 'Ms' in 'SMME' contribute significantly to employment? When it is claimed that 'entrepreneurial businesses play a key role in addressing unemployment', does it imply that everything included in the entrepreneurship umbrella play a key role in addressing unemployment?

Throughout the analysis, terms are used interchangeably, often conflated and seldom defined beyond commonly accepted definitions. Terms used and claims made leave much room for interpretation and create the impression that everything included in the entrepreneurship umbrella is largely the same activity. This distinct impression is not refuted by any of the articles included in the sample. This failure to clearly differentiate between the categories included under the entrepreneurship umbrella coupled with a failure to standardise the metrics used when conducting research could explain the vast differences found in claims made in the sample (Aga et al. 2015:3). Furthermore, it could be explanatory of the term confusion in the public discourse surrounding the perceived causal relationship between entrepreneurship and job creation (Smit & Pretorius 2020). Such a fluid use of the key terms are making it exceedingly difficult for policymakers to formulate, implement and measure the effectiveness of policies that would lead to economic transformation and job creation (Poole 2018:41), especially in the Global South where entrepreneurship is appropriated as a major development tool.

Failing to use key terms consistently supports the knowledge claim that any and all types of entrepreneurial activity is essentially the same. Based on this finding it is proposed that:



- **P4:** The obfuscation of terms in the public discourse on entrepreneurship is an extension of the obfuscation of terms in the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse in the Global South.
- **P5:** The obfuscation of terms in the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse is obscuring the fallacious assumptions inherent in the mainstream entrepreneurship theory.

## ■ Ideology that supports epistemic violence

In any research project, there is a subject (the researcher), an object ('the Other', such as subaltern groups) and an action (the interpretation of data that is presented as knowledge) (Teo 2010:295). The researcher's action, the interpretation of the data, has consequences for the object. When these (Teo 2010):

[C]oncrete interpretations have negative consequences for groups – even though alternative, equally plausible interpretations of the data are available – then a form of violence is committed. Because the interpretations are presented as knowledge, or because they emerge from science, they represent epistemic violence. (p. 296)

When the assumptions underlying the interpretation of data are not challenged, the epistemic violence can be extended further to a sociopolitical level when, based on the academic knowledge claims, specific policy recommendations are made (Teo 2010:296).

In the first instance, epistemic violence refers to the way in which knowledge from the Global South is marginalised and subordinated to the knowledge from the Global North which is presented as superior (Khan & Naguib 2017:91). This form of epistemic violence is often illustrated in studies that advocate for the decolonising of education and knowledge systems in the Global South. Postmodern theories (and from a Global South perspective specifically post-colonial theory) have led to strong critique of 'the pathologies of Westernisation' (Castro-Gómez 2019:211) inherent in the Global South education system, extending also to management studies. Although not yet labelled as 'epistemic violence', critical entrepreneurship scholars globally have identified the way in which the mainstream entrepreneurship discourse is reproducing the myth of 'the entrepreneur' as a white, dominant, rational, European/North American, male hero – and how academia is legitimising this discourse (Calás et al. 2009; i.e. Ogbor 2000). This study recognises that this global critique of epistemic violence can be extended to mainstream entrepreneurship research. In this regard it was found that the analysed discourse legitimised the conceptualisation of entrepreneurship as a development apparatus, flowing from the assumption that entrepreneurship (as a Western, capitalist mechanism) should be and can be successfully implemented in a Global South context.

However, this analysis also highlights the form of epistemic violence that is extended to a sociopolitical level, specifically when entrepreneurship is promoted

as a development apparatus that will translate into job creation and economic development. Data is showing that the survival rate of start-up ventures in the Global South is abysmal, that SMEs' contribution to job creation is steadily declining (Rankin, Darroll & Corrigan 2013:3) and that certain types of enterprises are not moving beyond mere self-employment, nor can they be expected to (Kuada 2015:148; Shane 2009). There is, in fact, very little research to confirm that entrepreneurship does indeed lead to economic growth in an African context specifically (Naudé & Havenga 2005:107). Yet every economic development plan since the mid-1990s has emphasised the development of SMEs to absorb the unemployed (Rankin et al. 2013:2), including the large-scale promotion of entrepreneurial education programmes for unemployed persons (Mahadea 2012:13). In spite of the evident failure of entrepreneurship to deliver on its promise of job creation and economic development, this study shows that the South African scholarly discourse is pertinently reproducing the knowledge claim that 'entrepreneurship' (or any of the associated terms) is vital for job creation and/or economic growth. The analysed discourse also failed to distinguish between different types of ventures, creating the impression that any and all types of entrepreneur and enterprises have the potential to contribute equally to economic development and job creation. The discourse was found to be overwhelmingly performative and even when studies recognise the underperformance of entrepreneurship, the remedial research action remains limited to improving the effectiveness of entrepreneurship praxis. The possibility that entrepreneurship is a Global North construct that may have little value in a Global South context was not considered in any of the articles in the sample. The desirability of entrepreneurship – a capitalist mechanism – in a Global South context is not questioned, but rather continuously promoted and endorsed as the saviour of economic development and job creation. Based on this fallacious assumption, numerous entrepreneurship training and support programmes are implemented by both governments and development organisations across the Global South.

By presenting the taken-for-granted assumptions as academic knowledge (the first action of epistemic violence), the scholarly community (the subject) is influencing development policy (the second act of epistemic violence), yet the policy is not creating any upward mobility for the unemployed (the object). The unemployed and impoverished thus fall victim to assumption-based policies which are in turn fuelled by academic knowledge claims. Based on the above it is proposed that:

- **P6:** The scholarly entrepreneurship discourse is complicit in epistemic violence towards the marginalised communities in the global South.

This epistemic violence is even further extended when the entrepreneurship ideology becomes manipulated as a political tool that justifies economic inequality and creates political hegemony (Honig 2017). Ogbor (2000) warns that:

[B]y remaining uncritical to the social, ideological and institutional forces shaping the pattern and development of entrepreneurship in contemporary society, the

traditional discourse has not only served to sustain prevailing societal biases, but has equally operated as techniques of power (and) domination [...]. (p. 629)

This exploitative power of the mainstream entrepreneurship theory has shown to be especially prevalent in the Global South context where entrepreneurship is also appropriated as a major development tool.

In 2017, Honig highlighted that the mainstream entrepreneurship ideology is not creating any empowerment or upward mobility for the unemployed in the Global South, but rather used by the ruling elite as a 'method of promoting symbolic justification for inequity of economic and political power' (Honig 2017). Calling the phenomenon compensatory entrepreneurship, he defines it as 'the political endorsement of entrepreneurial promotion activities, including training, incubation and media dissemination, for the primary objective of maintaining political and/or economic control of one population over another'. Compensatory entrepreneurship shifts the responsibility of creating successful ventures from the ruling elite to the marginalised individual by convincing the unemployed that their inability to capitalise on entrepreneurial development and support initiatives can only be blamed on their own shortcomings or lack of motivation. In this way, the political elite becomes exempted from any responsibility towards the economic emancipation of the unemployed (Honig 2018). These communities then have no reason to protest against the ruling elite, because they are convinced that the social and economic inequality they experience is of their own doing. The inequality becomes acceptable. When a discourse such as the mainstream entrepreneurship discourse has been incorporated into our individual subjectivities, social inequality becomes accepted and the discourse has reached its aim of producing hegemonic effects (Stoddart 2007:208), as compensatory entrepreneurship illustrates.

By failing to recognise the sociopolitical effects of the assumptions inherent in the mainstream entrepreneurship discourse, it can be proposed that:

- **P7:** The entrepreneurship ideology is legitimising the inequalities and hegemonic power relations brought about by the entrepreneurship discourse in the Global South.

## ■ An ethical response to initiate epistemic healing

Presented with serious claims of being complicit in epistemic violence and legitimising political hegemony, the response of the scholarly community could very well be to merely attempt to refute the claim and continue with business as usual. However, this study argues that the abysmal failure of entrepreneurship to deliver on its promise of job creation and economic development would make such a knee-jerk reaction unethical. Academic discourses matter, especially when the knowledge claims presented in these

discourses are used to influence policy. Just as academic discourses can become an instrument of epistemic violence, discourses can be changed and used to disrupt the status quo. Members of the scholarly community in the Global South have to take up their ethical responsibility as actors of social change. What is called for is an ethical response that would initiate a process of epistemic healing (Khan & Naguib 2017).

A first step in a process of epistemic healing would be to recognise that the field of entrepreneurship is built on a number of theoretical assumptions and that the value-laden reality underlying the ideology of entrepreneurship is not adequately taken into consideration (Alvesson & Deetz 2000:55; Alvesson & Willmott 2003:23; Urban 2010:42). This study has shown that the assumptions inherent in mainstream entrepreneurship theory have been extended to the Global South discourse when there is, in fact, very little research to confirm that entrepreneurship does indeed lead to economic growth beyond the Global North context. Through naturalising these assumptions, the mainstream entrepreneurship theory has become an ideology discourse that deadens all critical faculties (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva 2012; Verduijn et al. 2014:100).

Secondly, the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse's claim of being a silver bullet for job creation, contrasted by an abysmal failure to do so in the Global South, has to be recognised. 'Entrepreneur' is by no means a homogenous concept, and the conceptual frame has been defined and redefined to include a myriad of observed phenomena. In the process of establishing a definition that is inclusive, the word has come to mean both everything and nothing (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva 2012:589). The terms 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship' have been misappropriated to an extent that they now include more or less all of humanity (Poole 2018:41). Conceptualising these structurally different phenomena under the same umbrella is further protecting a number of mainstream assumptions from being questioned (Calás et al. 2009:553). What is more, the terms included under the conceptual umbrella are used interchangeably, often conflated and seldom defined beyond commonly accepted definitions. Failing to use key terms consistently supports the knowledge claim that any and all types of entrepreneurial activity is essentially the same. It also makes it exceedingly difficult for policymakers to formulate, implement and measure the effectiveness of policies that would lead to economic transformation and job creation (Poole 2018:41). The result is that existing policies are not achieving the twin goals of job creation and poverty alleviation (Edoho 2016:280).

Mainstream entrepreneurship theory is structurally and ideologically rooted in the Global North, and the epistemic standards of what constitutes knowledge, as well as accepted modes of knowledge production, are determined in a Global North context. This study argues that entrepreneurship theory has reached a theoretical impasse. It cannot move beyond this impasse as long as the answers are sought within the same paradigm that created the

problem in the first place – an impossible feat according to Einstein (Esteva & Escobar 2017:2569). The scholarly community in the Global South is, therefore, implored to ‘revive and formalise the indigenous knowledge schemes unique’ to the Global South context (Goldman 2016b:23). These indigenous alternatives may unlock viable and credible alternatives to the mainstream, naturalised, taken-for-granted assumptions inherent in mainstream theory, even when these alternatives seem unrealistic and radical at the onset (Demaria & Kothari 2017:2589).

## ■ Conclusion

The abysmal failure of entrepreneurship to contribute significantly to job creation and economic development implores the scholarly community in the Global South to abandon the core assumption that entrepreneurship (in all its defined manifestations) is a successful vehicle for economic development and job creation. By continuously presenting this assumption as academic knowledge, the scholarly community is influencing development policy, yet the policy is not creating any upward mobility for the economically marginalised. The unemployed and impoverished thus fall victim to inefficient policies which are in turn fuelled by academic knowledge claims. In this regard, the scholarly community is accused of epistemic violence.

The scholarly community in the Global South has to respond ethically to this accusation by becoming appropriately sceptical of the perceived ability of mainstream entrepreneurship theory to answer questions about economic development beyond the context within which it was developed. Through continuously reproducing assumptions, discourses have the ability to legitimise and naturalise specific ideologies, rendering others unthinkable. But discourses can also change the status quo. One way of moving the process of epistemic healing forward is to recognise the endogenous contributions that have been silenced by the mainstream ideology and incorporating it into the academic discourse in the Global South.

Mainstream entrepreneurship theory created an expectation that taking on the qualities of the Global North will exterminate poverty and inequality in the Global South. This resulted in the appropriation of entrepreneurship as a major development tool. When entrepreneurship is extended as a development apparatus in a Global South context, it creates unique characteristics and challenges that cannot be adequately addressed by the instruments and indicators developed in the Global North. This study argues that the current paradigmatic frame of mainstream entrepreneurship theory will remain inadequate to address the failures of entrepreneurship in the Global South. This study, therefore, proposes that entrepreneurship theory be reconsidered at a conceptual level in the Global South. Specifically, it proposes reframing entrepreneurship as a development apparatus beyond the constraints of

mainstream entrepreneurship theory. This reconceptualisation of entrepreneurship theory has to be driven from a critical scholarly discourse in the Global South. It is proposed that reframing entrepreneurship within a development framework will open new insights into the failure of entrepreneurship to live up to its promise of job creation and economic growth in a Global South context.

This paper extends on the nascent field of CES by critically analysing the scholarly entrepreneurship discourse in South Africa to identify if and how the assumptions and discursive practices in mainstream entrepreneurship theory are extended to the scholarly discourse in the Global South. It furthermore proposes that an ethical response to the critique flowing from the CDA would be to reconceptualise entrepreneurship beyond the constraints of mainstream entrepreneurship theory by differentiating entrepreneurship as a development apparatus.



# Artificial entrepreneurship and fallacy assumptions that inform enterprise development failure

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## ■ Abstract

Persistently poor results and survival rates in enterprise development and retention initiatives remain problematic for stakeholders, especially governments who want to grow their economies. Applying abductive reasoning based on

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empirical case observations, this research firstly critically challenges the mainstream resource-based view (RBV) theory to be an insufficient perspective based on fallacy assumptions that inform the non-achievement of enterprise development, growth and retention initiatives. The RBV tends to perpetuate attention towards increased physical resource inputs as a key strategy. Many business ventures, however, do not survive beyond 3 years despite public funding stakeholders pouring billions into its start-up, growth and retention initiatives and strategies to overcome distress and avoid failure. Secondly, a critical entrepreneurship stance towards the phenomenon was adopted which proposes artificial entrepreneurship as an alternative explanation. Artificial versus fidelity entrepreneurship as concepts are construed as a response to the context based on the paradoxes that inform the proposed fallacious assumptions. Finally, responses to address the fallacy are presented.

## ■ Introduction

We have two alternatives: either we question our  
beliefs – or we don't.

Either we accept our fixed versions of reality – or  
we begin to challenge them.

- Pema Chödrön (2008:36)

In many developing countries like South Africa, government decision-makers believe that enterprise development is a silver bullet to economic growth in a desperate bid for job creation because of its believed ‘transformation powers’ (Poole 2018:35; Smit & Pretorius 2020:62). However, empirical observations seem to suggest that the believed effects are not realised in the format of economic growth and increased employment claimed (i.e. Herrington & Kew 2016). With significant resource inputs to develop enterprises from various sources and initiatives, there now arises a new realisation that an improved understanding of and, if necessary, alternative views on the non-achievement problem are needed.

Enterprise development initiatives in this chapter include start-up, growth, retention, turnaround and rescue of venture initiatives to pursue a vibrant micro, small, medium and large business sector in the expectation that it may enhance both social and economic development. Turnaround and retention initiatives are included as they involve strategies that are becoming more and more relevant to social impacts. For example, business rescue in Chapter 6 of the *South African Companies Act of 2008* and Chapter 24:03 in Zimbabwe's newly proposed legislation aims to protect employment and contribute to economic conditions for sustainable future business. Alas, the assumed silver bullet (magical solution to a complicated problem) of saving many distressed small businesses (distress as the advancing werewolf) has shown little shine as the success rate is reported below 10% (CIPC Report 2015). Rather, distressed businesses have become the Achilles heel for

government to grow the small and medium enterprise sector and thereby create and preserve the associated employment that will follow. While previous research confirmed governance to be absent for private companies that filed for business rescue (Fairhurst 2017), several additional sources of tension (Hahn et al. 2014) have been observed that directly influence risk and failure in the distressed business environment. These tensions require critical reflection and alternative research attention to make sense of them and create orderly and coherent understanding (Lüscher & Lewis 2008). The relevant tensions are expanded in the literature section.

From a CMS view, this essay's argument is conceptual and aims specifically at exploring abductively an 'alternative' sense and understanding of the response to enterprise development and distressed business ventures, as it appears that the mainstream RBV driven logic has become insufficient to address practice observations. The existing, normative assumptions underlying the application of the RBV logic do not produce practical solutions that address the real problems, therefore our search to address its inability to solve the practice application. Potentially, critically assessing the problem from the paradox theory (Lewis 2000) perspective may inform alternative insights leading to alternative strategies. Simply stated, in this chapter, we ask: (1) Why do we keep getting it wrong and then repeat enterprise development strategies that do not work? (2) Are we ignoring the real problem? (3) Are we deliberately not acknowledging the absence of the emperor's clothes?

Distressed businesses often exhibit extreme contexts and cases that demonstrate a lack of basic business and financial principles to operate as 'going concerns'. Being distressed suggests operating under resource constraints, therefore driving the perception that more resources will address business retention. However, during distress resource and environmental scarcity are boundary conditions (Parmar et al. 2010:407) that delineate distress when firms move from going concern status to operating in the zone of insolvency. Causal ambiguity may also be relevant as it magnifies paradoxical contexts associated with adverse and environmental jolts (Meyer 1982), which expose non-linear responses challenging causal relations. Causal ambiguity often obscures the relationship that needs recognition during distress.

This normative view fails to sufficiently question the relentless distressed and failing businesses, and therefore, critical scrutiny of the phenomenon is called for. Paradox is but one type of tension that operates within these distress boundary conditions for turnaround strategy decision-making. Accepting and operating within the paradox lens provides a critical view for generating alternatives to face aggravated conditions brought about by distress.

In this chapter, we proceed as follows: Firstly, we critically and abductively explore tensions and assumptions observed and apply paradox theory to seek an improved understanding of the state of enterprise development and

retention. Secondly, the abductive observations are briefly shared. Thirdly, we put forward propositions based on paradoxes that we have identified in the context of business development, retention, turnaround and rescue to be addressed. Fourthly, we present an alternative view (conceptual insight) to the problem of non-achievement presenting the interrelations suggested by the theory to seek future research culminating in proposed actions. Finally, we expand artificial entrepreneurship as the resultant concept that may explain the non-achievement of enterprise development.

## ■ Main arguments

We argue that the dominant logic (Cunha & Putnam 2017:1) of the belief in enterprise advancement as a facilitator of economic growth is built on fallacious assumptions and illogical causation originating in resource-based theory (RBT). Simply put, RBT suggests that firms will achieve competitive advantage depending on the resource adequacy and combinations to create value. Owning or having access to such resources (current and future), it is believed, fixes distress and creates future competitive advantage and will enable enterprise growth (Castrogiovanni 1991). This view has become taken for granted and any critical reflection on this assumption is scarce to non-existing.

Often politically motivated and associated with compensatory entrepreneurship (Honig 2018), it is believed that mathematically more venture start-ups create enterprises which may address unemployment and therefore the more such ventures the merrier (Tedmanson et al. 2012:532). However, worldwide, especially in developing countries, the survival rate of start-ups is reported at a dismal 20% - 30% or worse after three years compared to around 50% in Europe. While failure is an accepted and natural phenomenon, somehow, alternative insights are required to address it. Simultaneously, resources to the value of millions of dollars are poured into enterprise development to fuel continuous start-up creation. Similarly, huge resources are poured into saving distressed businesses. We argue, in line with Shane (2009) that this is an ineffective, unsustainable and questionable practice. Yet, this happens continuously. This status quo can no longer be uncritically accepted.

This essay critically reflects on the assumptions that have been naturalised in the mainstream view regarding business distress and failure. By exposing the contradictions, tensions and paradoxes inherent in the phenomenon, previously unexplored alternatives are presented. Paradox theory is proposed in this chapter as an alternative lens (Prieto, Revilla & Rodríques-Prado 2009:157) by means of which to critically re-evaluate and restate the tensions within the development and distressed business environment. There is a need for an alternative realisation and improved view to understand the

problem because applying more of the same is not helpful. The status quo has to be questioned. Paradox theory provides a critical lens to expose contradictions in and causal ambiguity of the poor performance, with the main aim to better understand the underlying complexity of enterprise development.

In doing so, the challenge makes a theoretical contribution to the field of CMS by applying a paradox lens to make organisational contradictions explicit (Van Bommel & Spicer 2017:146). It further makes a practical contribution by presenting a proposed framework that could inform the policy on business distress and business rescue by challenging the assumptions inherent in the mainstream RBV.

## ■ Literature review

### ■ Critical management studies

In an attempt to generalise theory, the mainstream approach in entrepreneurship research imposes *a priori* and taken-for-granted definitions and meta-theoretical assumptions onto an ambiguous social reality (Alvesson & Deetz 2000:55; Alvesson & Willmott 2003:23; Calás et al. 2009; Fournier & Grey 2000). CMS provides for methodological vehicles to question these assumptions regarding enterprise development in South Africa.

The three central tenets of CMS as developed by Alvesson and Willmott (1992) can be applied to the context of this study as follows:

1. Government decision-makers assume that developing enterprises is the silver bullet solution to economic growth in a desperate bid for the associated job creation. However, it appears that the assumed effects are not realised in the format of economic growth nor the associated increased employment in spite of significant resource inputs. CMS aims to de-naturalise these taken-for-granted assumptions that are regarded as common sense.
2. The mainstream view suggests that enterprise performance can be improved by better equipping enterprises with physical over tacit resources. Knowledge creation and practice thus remain restricted to the 'norms of instrumental means-end rationality' (Van Bommel & Spicer 2017:145). This implies that research is viewed as valuable only if it can be applied to improve the effectiveness of enterprise performance. CMS takes a non-performative stance and implies that alternative, de-naturalised outcomes for business distress and business failure in a South African context should be sought, moving beyond the mainstream RBV assumptions.
3. Whereas the mainstream positivistic management research emphasises objectivity and neutrality (Alvesson & Deetz 2000:49), CMS is reflexive and recognises that it will be influenced and mediated by the philosophical view

of the researchers. In this regard, this essay is influenced by the principal author's epistemology as a business rescue researcher and turnaround practitioner balanced by the other authors' enterprise development experience.

## ■ Critical management studies and paradox theory

There appears a recognised relationship between CMS and paradox theory (Van Bommel & Spicer 2017:150). CMS provides a vehicle through which the paradoxes inherent in organisations can be identified, evaluated and critiqued as in the dialectic conversation. However, the paradoxes inherent in the enterprise development landscape in South Africa have not been investigated or voiced.

Tensions in business have always influenced decision-making, especially at a strategic level (De Wit & Meyer 2010). These tensions are receiving more attention owing to the rapidly changing contexts that businesses face. These tensions involve dilemmas, trade-offs, puzzles and paradoxes. Paradox, however, seems to receive the bulk of the research attention, probably because of its vague nature and potential to incorporate and extend the other terminologies. We now proceed by expanding the paradox construct to inform the observations and arguments thereafter.

## ■ Paradox as a lens

Various perspectives exist but converge where paradox is defined as 'contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously over time' (Smith & Lewis 2011:382). Thus, it involves situations with seemingly opposing, or even mutually exclusive factors, that appear to be true at the same time; its main characteristic is contradiction. Mainstream approaches are not providing adequate solutions to solve paradoxes because the problem remains defined from a pragmatic performative stance (Spicer, Alvesson & Kärreman 2009). Failing to reframe the problem from a critical perspective continues to create the impression that there is little room to integrate the opposites into an internally consistent understanding of the paradox problem. Naisbitt (1994:12) suggested that the contradiction may even appear absurd while it is true or valid. Thus, the same practices that lead an organisation to become successful may simultaneously push them to a downfall (Elsass 1993) as they repeat the same strategies over and over and these become obsolete in a disrupted environment.

A paradox cannot be understood by 'either-or' reasoning but rather requires 'both-and' reasoning, thus suggesting one factor to be true while its opposite is also true. The contradiction of being both true and not true brings about the tension that is unsolvable and can only be managed. Typically, paradoxical reasoning involves 'on the one hand this but/and on

the other hand that' as part of the explanation. Handy (2002) further proposed that paradoxes are like the weather, something to be lived with, not solved.

By de-naturalising the assumptions regarding enterprise performance and RBV and by framing the problem from a non-performative perspective, CMS can reveal the proposed paradoxes inherent in the mainstream theorising. Potentially, the paradoxical lens could also bring about alternative insights as a result of the underlying contradiction that challenges the mainstream reasoning. With the paradox perspective, we argue that long-term sustainability depends on continuous efforts to address the multiple demands faced by the enterprise development sector.

Recognising the extent of paradox application, De Wit (2017) extensively categorised paradoxes of relevance to strategic thinking to include the generic paradoxes of: logic versus creativity, deliberateness versus emergence, revolution versus evolution, markets versus resources, responsiveness versus synergy, competition versus coopetition, compliance versus choice, control versus chaos, globalisation versus localisation and profitability versus responsibility. None of these business paradoxes directly assist in better understanding the relevant tensions of enterprise development failure but do inform the context (boundary conditions) wherein start-up and distressed ventures operate.

## ■ Introducing paradox theory as background

Smith and Lewis (2011) have extensively reviewed the paradox literature which we do not intend to repeat or expand on. Rather, we explore the practical applications of particularly two relevant example paradoxes in relation to enterprise development failure. Paradox theory refers to a particular approach to oppositions which set forth a (Smith & Lewis 2011):

[D]ynamic equilibrium model of organising [*that*] depicts how cyclical responses to paradoxical tensions enable sustainability and [*potentially produces*] [...] peak performance in the present that enables success in the future. (n.p.)

The two components that their paradox definition highlights are: (1) the underlying tensions of elements that seem logical individually but inconsistent and even absurd when juxtaposed and, (2) responses that embrace tensions simultaneously (Lewis 2000:762). These responses include acceptance, confrontation and transcendence.

A paradox perspective argues that long-term sustainability requires continuous effort to meet multiple, divergent demands. To explore this paradox perspective, we propose causal ambiguity and the success paradox as relevant to this study from the literature as triggered by the abductive reasoning process pursued in this research: (a) causal ambiguity as boundary condition, and (b) paradox of success example.

## □ Causal ambiguity as boundary condition

Causal ambiguity is a construct central to RBV (McIver & Lengnick-Hall 2017) and therefore salient to our argument. Defined as a lack of knowledge and understanding ‘concerning the nature of the causal connections between actions and results’ (McIver & Lengnick-Hall 2017:1), it is highly relevant to this research. Causal logic is mostly used by decision-makers in the search to explain why things happen or what actions should be pursued for superior performance in the future. Rogers et al. (2013) pointed out the limitation of causal logic when considering complexity paradigms and subjectivity to fallacies and biases. Causal logic is the base assumption of the RBV.

Central to this research is the pursuit of ‘why we do not get it right’ (perceived inferior performance) which affirms the search for a judgement on causality. Until now the dependence on increased resource inputs (associated with RBT) has not served the intended consequences well, hence the search for alternative views. Performance has typically depended on correct attribution of cause and addressing such.

## □ Paradox of success example

The paradox of success (Cunha & Putnam 2017) may also have some relevance to this research where we challenge the success beliefs of enterprise development. It suggests that following the ‘same practices that lead organisations to becoming successful often simultaneously push them to a downfall’ (Cunha & Putnam 2017:2). While the industry environment is not an organisation, the principles hold true to our investigation – [It remains subject to causal ambiguity and unchallenged research factors associated with success and failure]. One such fallacy to emerge when interviewing participating officials (see research methodology) is the causal belief that access to resources (finance) is the main cause of non-start-ups and addressing distress. Another such belief in cases of turnarounds and rescues is the absence of post-commence finance availability as the ‘cause’ for intervention failures. Thus, it is believed, increased resource inputs may help businesses towards success while simultaneously damaging the innovation of business value models that may lead to distress in the future – a typical example of the success paradox.

At the same time, not considering specific contextual elements may render the use of causal logic ineffective. While generic factors associated with distress and failure do exist, the unique circumstances (particularity)

of the specific enterprise context weigh heavily in the judgement of distress causality.

## ■ Distress and failure in ventures creating turnaround and rescue events

Research into the field of business venture failure is not new. Associated with it are the fields of start-up, distress, turnaround, rescue, mergers and acquisitions, and insolvency – all extensively investigated and reported on. Underlying most of these fields is a strictly non-critical, performative stance that is limited to the search for success formulae and approaches. However, these studies fail to deliver satisfactory solutions and the answers remain elusive. While failure appears to be a natural phenomenon, its consequences can be devastating. Thus, the natural selection process suggests that the fittest enterprises will survive while the rest will fail is not always accepted by development institutions; therefore, initiatives to counter such failure are sought. Resource injection is the common first response. Intervening while businesses are in distress has also become part of the extended interventions to enhance retention and turnaround.

The business rescue event (BRE) describes a situation for a business in distress where the turnaround (or reorganisation) strategy is chosen to address distress. Plans to address the BREs typically consist of new resource inputs in the form of post commence funding. Such an event requires insight into causality, severity, origin and reasonable prospect by the officials involved. Business rescue has become such an important issue that it is governed by specific legislation in many countries (also known as insolvency procedures, depending on the country) and driven by the philosophy that saving jobs is equally important to creating jobs for an economy. BREs are characterised by severe uncertainty, liability of data integrity and asymmetry of information between stakeholders (Pretorius 2017:64). Therefore, turnaround professionals are required to show high levels of competency in sense making, collaboration, decision-making and integration (Pretorius 2014). The paradoxical nature of distress situations influencing their decisions is therefore extending the decision-making demands.

Finally, it is important at this juncture to recognise that there is an integration level relationship between enterprise creation, development and growth with retention/turnaround/rescue all part of the same development initiatives. For both, the evaluation of the new venture opportunity and distressed venture opportunity is a critical requirement. While the focus of this research is on the latter, there is application for the start-up context as the one feeds into the other in a circular fashion.



## ■ **Abductive reasoning underlying the research methodology and arguments**

It has been observed in the enterprise development sector that venture failure rates remain high. This is true for survivalist, micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses – all served by enterprise development initiatives. Cooperatives and new start-up businesses are not excluded but less emphasis was put on ‘start-up’ failures in this chapter. Especially relevant to this study is the distressed business sector where strategies of turnaround and rescue are pursued, unfortunately also with very low success (Conradie & Lamprecht 2015). This research aimed specifically at exploring ‘alternative’ understanding of the antecedent phenomenon of continuous enterprise distress, as our existing understanding seems to lack solutions that address the real problems (Santana, Valle & Galan 2017).

Practice exposure in government stakeholder interventions, problems and challenges directed us to attempt a better understanding of the enterprises before suggesting strategies for improvement through business rescue, turnaround and retention. We followed a critical, abductive reasoning process of observed practice considerations that led us to conceive the tensions of the distressed enterprises and thereby propose alternative theory. Abductive analysis rests on the cultivation of anomalous and surprising empirical findings against a background of multiple existing sociological and economic beliefs (cf. Timmermans & Tavory 2012:174).

Firstly, based on the reflexive practices of the authors, paradoxical tensions are presented as outcome. Interviews to confirm this framework were also undertaken. Underlying the reasoning involved a process of post-interview dialectical conversation (Goldman, Nienaber & Pretorius 2015:2) between the authors, co-workers and participants after individual interviews with sector role players. Similar to Blome and Schoenherr (2011), we developed a set of propositions about alternative perspectives on a complicated problem.

We were informed/triggered by interviews with officials from the governmental economic cluster as pivotal stakeholder (Dahan, Doh & Raelin 2015) during contract research projects, as well as artefacts provided in the form of reports, formal policy documents and internet available information from official websites that informed vision, mission, purpose and core business statements of the various departments of the cluster (DSBD Report 2017). The 23-member departments all have some involvement (be it initiating, participating or cooperating) with development initiatives and activities, as the cluster is a salient stakeholder (Decker 2016).

Interviews were unstructured despite a formally prepared protocol. It followed the reasoning of what is happening, what has worked, what did not work, why, what is needed and so forth. As interviews progressed, we added

devil's advocacy (Berniker & McNabb 2011) to challenge interviewees on the proposed paradoxes as we conceptualised them. Thereafter, we used dialectic conversation with co-workers to challenge our assumptions and thinking for trustworthiness.

From a critical empiricist view and seeking practical understanding, the paradoxical enquiry process (Lüscher & Lewis 2008) lent itself well to improve our understanding. Forced to move towards complexity thinking (Rogers et al. 2013), we deliberately focused on acknowledging that we did not know the deeper relations but we were willing to unlearn knowledge that may hamper any new understanding we may require for sense-making (De Jaegher & Di Paolo 2007:486). As in abductive reasoning (Timmermans & Tavory 2012), understanding based on what happens in practice (even if it is only a single case) may bring about alternative understanding.

We pursued the research, drawing on the principles of analytic auto-ethnography (Fine, Morrilli & Surianarain 2009), and depended on the processes of Anderson's (2006) five key features of such research. We closely followed the process described by Venter and De Villiers (2013).

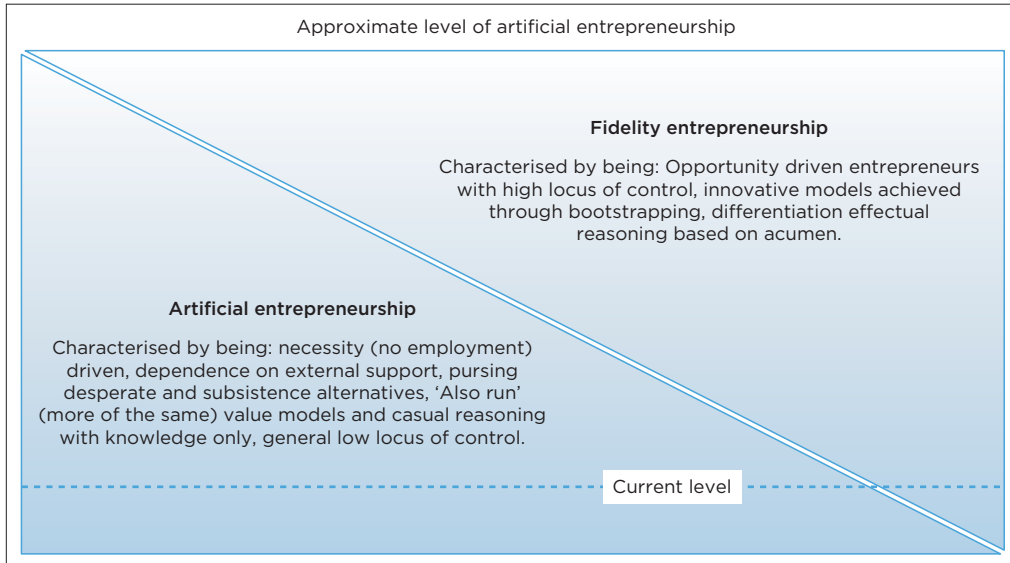
## ■ Investigative questions that informed our reasoning

The research questions that drove this essay were aimed at arriving at a better understanding of and reflection on the following:

1. What is it that we do not understand about the poor performance in enterprise development and specifically responding to distress? We focused on the assumptions inherent in enterprise development, retention, turnaround and rescue initiatives.
2. In adopting a non-performative stance towards the phenomenon, what insights about the limitations to the performance of initiatives should become the focus of sector and government interventions?
3. How does one respond to and address the identified paradoxes?
4. Can artificial entrepreneurship inform/explain the central tenet of non-achievement of these enterprise development initiatives?

## ■ Findings, arguments and informing paradoxes

Four tensions associated with business distress were conceptualised and eventually formulated as paradoxical propositions. Once stated, they allowed for an understanding of the underlying assumption of each which challenges the fallacy thinking of RBV as limited. Each tension is explored within the proposed artificial versus fidelity entrepreneurship concept that will follow. Using these four tensions informed the proposed concept. While being the



**FIGURE 7.1:** Distribution of the proposed artificial:fidelity entrepreneurship ratio and the proposed level of existence.

outcome of this essay, Figure 7.1 is presented at this early junction to introduce the reader to the fallacious assumptions presented later and clarify the core concepts that will be informed by the paradoxes.

We proceed with introducing the paradoxes and then expand the artificial and fidelity entrepreneurship concepts and assumptions informing the arguments.

## ■ Resource-feasibility paradox

As mentioned, following the RBV and in the widely held belief that entrepreneurial and enterprise development is the silver bullet to improve economic growth, sustainability and specifically create employment, there are significant resources, funding, infrastructure provision, programmes and initiatives being made available to increase start-ups, support existing businesses and invest (also reinvest) in distressed businesses. Practice findings show the nature of the resource support often includes both physical goods such as funding, tools and equipment and non-physical goods such as technical support, network incorporation, introductory opportunities (tenders) processes, procedures, methods and recipes (DSBD Report 2017). Many of the non-physical resources are pursued through education and development programmes.

While the government and parastatal stakeholders, through these mostly 'grant type' investments, are willing to increase resource provision,

unfortunately, they appear to 'fund' more and more fallible ventures as there are only a very few feasible (fundable) ventures that can successfully utilise the resources 'sustainably'. The eventual effect is increased numbers of start-up businesses operating in the zone of insolvency as distressed ventures rather than complying with reasonable prospect and a going concern's requirements.

Thus, the paradox: increased physical (financial mainly) resource provision does not bring about the expected increased venture growth or turnaround. At the same time, other interventions like acumen development (implicit knowledge) seem to be missing to address the lack of this expected economic growth in this sector. The paradoxical hypothesis lens provides for the following proposition, namely:

- **P1:** Despite sustained resource injection for enterprise development, the associated effects of such physical resource injection lead to supporting entities with fewer reasonable prospects for long-term survival. Thus, more and more poor ventures with poor feasibility judgements are funded and adding to the failure rate.

Underlying and informing this paradox is the factually observed situation that government providers of resources are measured by their achievement of expenditure targets (monetary targets and value of support given) rather than the success and sustainability of the ventures they support. During interviews, officials reported that pursuing targets was very important to them to show that they were doing their jobs. This raises questions about selection processes, feasibility judgements, viability analyses and opportunity decisions for the benefitting ventures as described by the other paradoxes. Expanding the resource-feasibility paradox, it appears to be further informed by the next paradox.

## ■ Responsiveness/response-ability paradox

Through the business distress lens, business ventures are required to respond quickly to adverse conditions that may arise from changing environments, especially those originating from external sources. It is well known that quick and early recognition and response to distress (environmental scarcity/deficiency) is vital for successful turnaround or reorganisation, yet it is cited as a mostly absent response. These rapid responses do not seem to happen in practice. The reason for this inability to respond lies in the cognitive abilities of stakeholder decision-makers and directors/management who seems to lack the ability to respond early, correctly, meaningfully and timeously. This diminished ability (Schweizer & Nienhaus 2017:4) originates within the external environment. However, blaming entrepreneurial inability may be the easy and biased causal attribution grasped to explain a more complex problem. Alternative explanations would inter alia involve cognitive competencies and

skills such as sense-making, collaboration and decision-making (Pretorius 2014). Ventures often depend on the views of relatively small decision-making teams (Fairhurst 2017). This tension associated with this lack of response-ability is moderated by factors found in the paradoxes of limited spillover, as well as business acumen (both discussed later). It leads to the proposition that:

- **P2a:** In response to the demands of environmental scarcity, entrepreneurs and distress decision-makers have limited associated cognitive competencies and skills (response-ability) to respond early, correctly, meaningfully and timeously despite significant financial and non-financial resource availability. Thus, there exists a response required and response-ability mismatch.

Furthermore, the core of the argument is that the potential of resource injection as a response to distress originating from the strategic environment and which requires forced repositioning as a strategy (Pretorius 2008) is limited. Responding to strategic distress potentially requires an alternative business value model (new ideation) and could be seen as similar to new start-up challenges. Within such environments, typically the main determinant is lack of demand for the original perceived value proposition despite appropriation capacity, a profit model and liquidity that may exist. Given the fast pace of change, the ability to respond to such strategic environmental jolts and disruptions is significantly more important than responding to operational distress conditions as predicted by Pearce and Robbins (1993). Therefore, it is propositioned that:

- **P2b:** Environmental scarcity and jolts demand strategic repositioning responses from distress decision-makers. Such response-ability is embedded in tacit knowledge and acumen that exist only in limited amounts for non-expert decision-makers despite significant educational (explicit) resource inputs.

Therefore, one should question: (1) the ability and levels of existing non-financial resource provision of education and training programmes to achieve the levels of acumen required, and (2) the ability of advisors in the form of turnaround and rescue practitioners (including consultants) to meaningfully respond to strategic distress. It is known that operational distress can be addressed with efficiency strategies which are 'easier' to apply than repositioning strategies that need to address effectiveness (associated with strategic distress). It, therefore, extends the propositions further to:

- **P2c:** Strategic distress within environmental scarcity requires more and higher-level acumen from distress decision-makers than operational distress. Increased resource input is limited in effect to establish response-ability to external distress.

Response-ability rests more on implicit resources in the form of human capital than financial resources.

## ■ Limited spillover paradox

Closely associated with the responsiveness/response-ability paradox above and acumen paradox (explored next), investment in knowledge through training and education is acknowledged as key to address the development of whatever nature (organisational and personal). This is even more relevant in the case of enterprise development. Hausmann (2017:3) referred to it as the 'education myth', which suggests that in the absence of the proper ecosystem (correct conditions), the value of education may be limited. Similar to what literature describes as the well-known 'Swedish paradox' and subsequently termed the 'European paradox', the phenomenon suggests that investments in new knowledge do not automatically translate (spillover) into benefits of growth and innovation. Qureshi and Keen (2005:43) coined the paradox as 'limited knowledge activation'.

While spillover does not fully explain the knowledge and entrepreneurship relationship (Qian & Acs 2013:186), it does seem that the effects of technology may also reduce the spillover, contrary to it being expected to enhance it – the potential effect of data overload (Letsholo & Pretorius 2016). We suggest that within distressed ventures, a similar phenomenon can be observed. After almost 10 years of the 'new' business rescue legislation, there seems to be little improvement in the apparent success rates while the cloud of blame around BRP competencies and ethics remains. It leads to proposing that:

- **P3:** Despite sustained education and professional advisory resource injection for enterprise development, it is not associated with high levels of acumen spillover – both for regular enterprise advisors and distress decision-makers.

## ■ Business acumen paradox

Business acumen includes knowledge, skills, competencies, experience of and insight into the business that is associated with experts but absent in novices. Handy (2002) referred to this as 'intelligence' and ancient writings speak of wisdom over knowledge. Business acumen is the 'know-how' of business and includes the ability to reason differently (effectually), which is an ability that is not easily transferred (see spillover paradox). Hausmann (2017) referred to this know-how as a particular wiring of the brain. For example, Dew et al. (2009) pointed out that expert entrepreneurs use effectuation as a reasoning approach while novice entrepreneurs use logical causation as the dominant approach in making decisions when creating businesses. Remarkably, in their sample, the novices were MBA graduates, thus highlighting the limitations of explicit knowledge for education in isolation.

Rogers et al. (2013:31) reported the explicit-tacit knowledge framework that explains how explicit knowledge (reports, data, facts, formulae) appears to be easily absorbed and transferred but that tacit knowledge

(personal experiences, ideals, values, applications and emotions) is hardly transferable through sharing with others and therefore without enactment. The spillover of acumen required is more about tacit competences and appears much slower and more difficult than the spillover of explicit knowledge.

Business acumen further appears to be characterised by being 'leaky' (widely available, accessible and shared by experts) but being 'tricky' (requires contextual application and unique insight and comprehension), while Knockaert, Spithoven and Clarysse (2010:479) suggested that not all generated knowledge gets translated into commercial products or processes. Acumen further appears to remain with those who have been privileged by socio-economic conditions in the past – sometimes referred to as the 'Matthew effect' stating those who have will obtain more. On top of all, business acumen is mobile and moves with those who hold it when they move to new investment opportunities and conditions.

This paradox, therefore, creates tension between the limited business acumen (despite it being leaky) that can only be attained through long-term involvement – the 10 000-h rule propagated by Colvin (2008) and Gladwell (2009) associated with expert performance compared to short-term education focused on explicit knowledge that is provided as resource now takes prominence.

Our research shows that within the economic cluster respondents interviewed, it was reported repeatedly that advisors (external and internal, extension officers) have limited business and no distress context knowledge that could be defined as acumen. Therefore, it is propositioned that:

- **P4a:** Despite sustained enterprise education, the acumen required for pursuing successful enterprise development is not readily available to funders, aspiring entrepreneurs and decision-makers to enable significant development, growth and retention of ventures.
- **P4b:** Despite sustained enterprise education, the acumen required to address distress through retention, turnarounds and rescue initiatives is scarce to non-existent to decision-makers to enable effective saving of businesses.

## ■ Expanding the paradoxes to inform the fallacy assumptions

The paradoxes identified describe the 'what' of the contextual situation and appear interrelated. When interrogated closely, they inform the antecedent to the main argument of artificial versus fidelity entrepreneurship to follow. Triggered by the resource-feasibility paradox and informed by the responsiveness-response ability, spillover and acumen paradoxes, the question arises why these manifest as they do. Is it possible that these paradoxes exist based on fallacious assumptions that may inform decision-makers differently

once understood and the fallacy is exposed? Anecdotally, the recognition that the emperor has no clothes comes to mind.

## ■ The fallacy assumption of fidelity entrepreneurship

Dialectic conversation led us to potential alternative sense-making given a reflective stance is taken, and there is a willingness to acknowledge what we do not know and to unlearn and re-learn (refer to the opening quotation). Repeatedly asking why, why, why, we propose the concept of 'artificial' entrepreneurship as opposed to 'fidelity'(true) entrepreneurship to explain (not solve) the apparent failure of the current development strategies.

### □ Fidelity entrepreneurship

Drawing on the proposed paradox tensions and their associated insights using the paradox lens, it appears that the resource-feasibility paradox is built on the erroneous assumption that fidelity entrepreneurship is far more common than it is in reality. Fidelity entrepreneurship assumes opportunity-driven entrepreneurs (Baron & Henry 2006), who can innovate differentiated value models, can bootstrap and reason effectually (Dew et al. 2009) in developing their ventures. Inherent to these variables is also the motivation of the individuals who are the entrepreneurs, thus – why they do it. Lewin, Massini and Peeters (2011:81) referred to it as the ability to recognise the value of new, external information, assimilate it and apply it to commercial ends under the concept of absorptive capacity. This type of entrepreneurship is typically associated with a high locus of internal control. If this true entrepreneurship exists in sufficient numbers, increased resource inputs may be a relevant strategy. Van Vuuren and Nieman (1999) proposed entrepreneurial performance to be increased by enhanced motivation, entrepreneurial and business skills as follows:

$$\uparrow\uparrow \text{Entrepreneurial performance} = f \text{ motivation} \times (\text{entrepreneurial skills} \times \text{business skills})$$

Inherently, the multiplication in their equation suggests that any one variable approaching zero also renders the entrepreneurial performance as zero. Both entrepreneurial and business skills are specifically subject to both the acumen and responsiveness-response ability paradoxes which confirm that if acumen is not available, the probability of success is limited. What is glaringly obvious is the absence of physical resource inputs as part of their equation while non-physical human capital resources are the main contributors claimed to enhance performance.

### □ Artificial entrepreneurship

Opposing the fidelity entrepreneurship concept, our main argument proposes that what really exists is 'artificial' entrepreneurship which is characterised by desperate and necessity motives, push and dependence resource conditions,



the establishment of 'also run' ventures (more of the same) by aspiring entrepreneurs applying causal reasoning only. This type of entrepreneurship suffers from the locus of external control characterised by the blame of and dependence on others. Acumen, therefore, appears absent despite explicit knowledge that may exist and questionable actions being undertaken.

The paradoxes may be informed by the assumption that in reality, the predominant context is one of artificial entrepreneurship and that most probably the existing interventions are not addressing the development of fidelity entrepreneurship and are rather feeding artificial entrepreneurship, thereby aggravating the problem. The proposition is therefore stated as:

- **P5a:** The resource-feasibility paradox arises from the presumption that 'fidelity' entrepreneurship exists in large proportions, while the reality is that it rather originates from and cultivates 'artificial' entrepreneurship which is not the true antecedent to enterprise development, venture performance and effective distress responses.

Thus, for resource input to be effective, sufficient levels of fidelity entrepreneurship are required but appear limited and aggravated by the 'grant' ('dependence') culture leading to:

- **P5b:** The underlying problem of enterprise development failure hinges on the ratio of artificial:fidelity entrepreneurship (see Figure 7.1), which is proposed to be over 80:20.

Revisiting and responding to the investigative questions assist in determining the value of the propositions. We conclude:

1. Before considering the arguments of this essay, what appeared not to have been understood about the poor performance in enterprise development, retention, turnaround and rescue was driven by incorrect causal attribution, based on a non-critical performative stance. Within the causal ambiguity phenomenon, it appears that the naturalised assumption that fidelity entrepreneurship is the dominant causal paradigm is the fallacy. Within this pre-investigation context, most pursued strategies have as their base more resource input which the arguments in this study, namely, the resource-feasibility paradox, nullifies.
2. The key insights about the limitations to the performance of enterprise development can be summarised in the paradoxes of responsiveness – response ability, acumen and spillover – all supporting the lesser effectiveness of financial and physical resource inputs compared to non-financial and human capital resources. Stakeholders should, therefore, acknowledge and accept (Lewis 2000) these paradoxes for the future focus of development and government interventions.
3. Possible responses to the identified paradoxes may inform potential strategies but primarily, from this study, it involves addressing the main

antecedent, namely, acknowledgement of artificial entrepreneurship as a concept. Also, that artificial entrepreneurship transcends fidelity entrepreneurship in the practice environment. From a critical non-performative perspective, it is proposed that the impact of artificial entrepreneurship on enterprise performance be accepted and confronted in future research and in practice.

4. From this study, the proposed concept of artificial entrepreneurship does inform/explain the central tenet of non-achievement of resource input-driven strategies, based on the fallacy belief that fidelity entrepreneurship is the dominant paradigm.

## ■ Management implications and contribution

Four tensions that improve our understanding and decision-making in distressed ventures have been identified. Firstly, the resource-feasibility paradox facing the enterprise development sector is highlighted. Underlying this paradox is the pressure to induce increased resources for enterprise growth. Secondly, the responsiveness-response-ability paradox triggers the postponing of action and appears to be a partial antecedent that opposes the enhancement strategies for application. Thirdly, the underlying limited spillover paradox suggests that existing knowledge activation does not take place as anticipated, resulting in limited viable start-ups and turnarounds (spillover). Finally, the acumen paradox proposes that the key intelligence/knowledge remains bound despite expansion strategies.

Paradox as tension cannot be solved, it can only be managed through acceptance, confrontation and transcendence. Therefore, the paradox is something to embrace and to be lived with (Handy 2002; Lewis 2000). From a critical perspective, it is proposed that the existence of artificial entrepreneurship be accepted in research and practice. Furthermore, the inability of artificial entrepreneurs to significantly contribute to economic development and job creation should be confronted. In recognising and confronting the extent of the artificial entrepreneurship phenomenon, efforts for alternative initiatives can be targeted starting with rethinking the fallacy assumptions. This may include starting a practice dialectic.

However, if the assumption of this chapter about the proposed high proportion of artificial entrepreneurship is correct (Figure 7.1, as shown by the dotted line), we propose that alternatives to transcend the adverse artificial:fidelity entrepreneurship ratio may exist but require deliberate alternative thinking. Several government departments, for example, are 'performance' measured by the input (funds expended towards enterprise development) only. Transcending artificial entrepreneurship would require countermeasures about quality and venture output elements to create balance in resource input models such as fidelity entrepreneurship-related initiatives.

Furthermore, changing the focus of interventions towards non-financial resource inputs can be pursued at different levels. To date, it seems we have not followed what Obschonka et al. (2015:1) have stated as 'shifting away from the physical capital towards being based on new knowledge associated with modern economies'. Broadly alternate strategies may cover alternative education at one end to highly specific education and sustainable development goals at the other end of the continuum. This may be relevant for both development of entrepreneurial thinking, as well as the development of distress decision-makers and professionals (turnaround and rescue) within the government and private sectors. It rather appears that more focus on the development of fidelity entrepreneurship is required. This, however, reiterates the capitalist naturalisation of which the essay leans and despite attempting to denaturalise the assumptions.

The arguments presented suggest mediator and moderator aspects between paradoxes that propose inter alia: firstly, that alternative resource application is investigated to pursue fidelity entrepreneurship if the problem is to be addressed meaningfully. Secondly, that monitoring becomes a prerequisite for addressing early distress to attempt retention strategies and turnarounds rather than pursue business rescue. Finally, standardised measurement instruments to assess fidelity potential and reasonable prospect are fundamental to any development, future retention and turnaround interventions.

## ■ Conclusion

The research was triggered by abductive observations which may lead the argument to originate from a single unexpected result or unique case. While enterprise development is wider than individual cases, much of the essay's arguments and propositions may be limited to the insights of the researchers. We, however, put forward an alternative argument especially to governmental decision-makers who are directly involved in what could be equated to potential resource mismanagement.

Future research needs to investigate and expand on the relevance of acumen, how it can be transferred and how the measurement of its existence can be done, especially in the advisor division of departments.

While artificial entrepreneurship is introduced, extensive research into its conceptual existence and realistic expectations needs urgent attention. It is important to acknowledge that the underlying assumptions differentiating artificial and fidelity entrepreneurship lean heavily on the naturalisation of capitalism and performativity - casting suspicion on the application of the CMS theory in this essay.

# Want to make money? Start a Church: Pastorpreneurs in action

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## ■ Abstract<sup>22</sup>

Globalisation and its neoliberal ideology did not give way to secularism, but paradoxically facilitated the religionisation of South Africa. This phenomenon is explored by linking neoliberalism to the dramatic growth of autonomous Neo-Pentecostal churches in South Africa, with prosperity theology as fundamental to their being. This theology has allowed for a particular type of entrepreneur, the pastorpreneur, to drive the expansion of Christianity by fusing spirituality and materialism/commercialism. To make sense of this phenomenon, a contextual theory of entrepreneurship is applied to synthesise the pastorpreneur's career with organisational and consumer market contexts.

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22. The 'Start a Church' in the title draws its inspiration from the front page of the Financial Mail, 25 July–29 July 2020.

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The inquiry suggests that the pastorpreneur performing in the Neo-Pentecostal movement can construct strong and solid micro-, meso- and macro-entrepreneurial contexts, giving way to an integrated, well-balanced, high-intensity triangulation of entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial performances in each of the career, organisational and consumer market contexts can be readily duplicated by aspiring pastorpreneurs, providing a possible explanation or rationale for the strong growth of Neo-Pentecostal churches.

## ■ Introduction

Five hundred years ago, in 1517, Martin Luther, then a young monk, disgusted with the decadent state of the Roman Catholic church and its all-powerful and corrupt authorities, posted his critique of the church – in the form of the 95 Theses – on the wooden doors of the Wittenberg Castle Church. This act not only set in motion the Reformation and, as such, the irreversible splitting of Christendom, but also (Metaxas 2017):

[V]aulted Luther from the medieval cosmos into the modern [...] in a watershed moment in world history [*becoming*], for good and for ill, the midwife of the irrevocably divided world in which we now live. (p. 2)

Luther's stand and statement opened up the door for the Enlightenment and secularism (Copson 2017). His act, however, also opened the door not only to a new church, the Lutheran Church, but also to a potentially endless number of churches. His critics warned that it would be now possible for 'any fool [to] establish his own interpretation of things and create his own religion' (Metaxas 2017:437).

How did this warning pan out? Fast forward 500 years and Luther would be astonished by Leatt's snapshot of South Africa, which she refers to as a 'religious country' (Leatt 2017:66). Christianity is by far the largest religion in South Africa with 74% of the country's inhabitants adhering to it. In addition, Luther would be amazed to find that 2.5% of South Africans are members of the Lutheran Church, the denomination he established, a denomination that forms part of South African Christianity's splintered picture and a wide range of denominations (Leatt 2017).

Leatt (2017) aggregated these under mainstream Protestant Christianity, Reformed churches, Roman Catholicism, African Independent and Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. Almost all the traditional established churches seem to have declined in numbers with one exception: there has been a rapid and dramatic rise of Pentecostal-Charismatic-Evangelical religiosity, in particular small, autonomous churches. The growing number of these Pentecostal Charismatic churches and the concomitant spurt in membership are not only the result of new converts; many of their members have left traditional churches to join them (Leatt 2017).

Would it be possible for him to do so, if Luther undertook a tour of the inner city of Johannesburg, its surrounding suburbs and even further afield on the city's outskirts, he would notice numerous small, autonomous churches with their roots in Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical Christianity. Some of these churches have taken over traditional church buildings, moved into shopping spaces or gathered in large tents.

Posing on billboards in front of some of these churches will be a preacher, most often referring to himself as pastor or prophet, sometimes accompanied by his wife, inviting people to join the church for services and revivalist meetings with promises of miracles and healings.

On the South African government's Department of Social Development's database, Luther would be able to find 32 399 churches registered as public benefit organisations (Du Plessis 2020). Some of the Pentecostal-Charismatic-Evangelical churches have managed to grow into megachurches, resembling enterprises with a range of offerings to their members, even having commercial outlets on their premises. Some churches' earnings exceed those of small and medium-sized companies. One of the autonomous churches that has morphed into a megachurch, the Grace Bible Church, declared in its annual report on its website that it had assets of more than R200 million (Du Plessis 2020).

Luther, however, would be aghast to learn from reading *The Citizen* newspaper (Mabena 2020) that the young leader of the Enlightened Christian Gathering church, Shepherd Bushiri, at age 37, is not shy about flaunting his wealth. Bushiri allegedly owns a fleet of three private jets and cars such as a Rolls Royce Black Badge, a Bentley Bentayga and an Aston Martin One-77 (reportedly worth more than R2 billion). Living in a mansion in a leafy suburb east of Pretoria – at least before he fled the country recently – he is an established businessman with stakes in real estate, gold mining, telecommunications, an airline, hotel group and an investment company named after himself, as well as the Bushiri University of Agriculture in South Sudan. He has claimed that he can cure HIV and walk on air (Du Plessis 2020; Mabena 2020)

From reporter Carien Du Plessis (2020), Luther would have learnt that the businessman-evangelist (her description), Alph Lukau in 2002 founded Alleluia Ministries in Johannesburg and after a mere 18 years managed to have himself proclaimed as the richest pastor in Africa, having branched out to a number of sub-Saharan countries, South America and Europe. His Instagram timeline is filled with fast cars and private jets and he charges up to R5000 for a ticket to his mega-services, according to Du Plessis.

The case that might intrigue Luther the most, however, is that of the mission station, KwaSizabantu, founded by erstwhile charismatic Pentecostal preacher

of German descent, Erlo Stegen. This mission station at Kranskop, northern KwaZulu-Natal, was transformed into a multibillion-rand enterprise consisting of the plant that produces the popular sparkling water brand, aQuellé, and a farm producing fresh produce, all of which is supplied to major retailers such as Woolworths, Spar, Pick n Pay, Checkers and Shoprite. The farm employs 400 workers who support about 700 families.<sup>23</sup>

It's no wonder that a postdoctoral research fellow in theology at North-West University remarked that the phenomenal growth and popularity of what he refers to as Neo-Pentecostal churches can be ascribed to the leaders/pastors of these churches being 'entrepreneurial' (Du Plessis 2020). How does a Pentecostal Charismatic church movement (for the purpose of this chapter, referred to as the Neo-Pentecostal church movement) provide for an ideal entrepreneurial opportunity? This is the question to be explored in the rest of this chapter.

## ■ Inquiry approach

Systematic philosopher Pepper (1942) investigated the discipline of philosophy's major ideas and those found to be adequate, adhering to the criteria of precision and scope, he subsumed under four major world views or meta-theories. He referred to these as world hypotheses – similar to Kuhn's (1962) paradigm concept – and they are formism, mechanism, organicism and contextualism, each with its own underlying root metaphor.

The root metaphor for formism is similarity; for mechanism, it is the machine; for organicism, it is the growing or evolving organism; and for contextualism, it is the historical event. Pepper proposed that scientists, researchers and scholars employ these root metaphors as cognitive pathways for knowledge refinement.

Such an undertaking, however, is mostly a non-conscious activity (Crous 2019). Because entrepreneurship suggests action within a particular context, contextualism, underpinned by pragmatism (Fishman 1999), seems to be the most appropriate pathway to approach this phenomenon (Crous 2000; Crous & Roodt 2004; Vondracek, Lerner & Schullenberg 1986) (take note: the Latin for context, *cum texere* means to weave, and suggests action).

Contextualism requires a synthetic, rather than an analytic approach (Pepper 1942), necessitating one to order and make sense of knowledge by, for example, constructing a theory and combining ideas into a coherent whole (Gardner 2006, 2020). For the purpose of synthesising the knowledge of entrepreneurship, a brief overview of a contextual theory of entrepreneurship (Crous 2000; Crous & Roodt 2004) will subsequently be presented.

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23. See <https://www.ksb.org.za/>.

## ■ The contextual theory of entrepreneurship

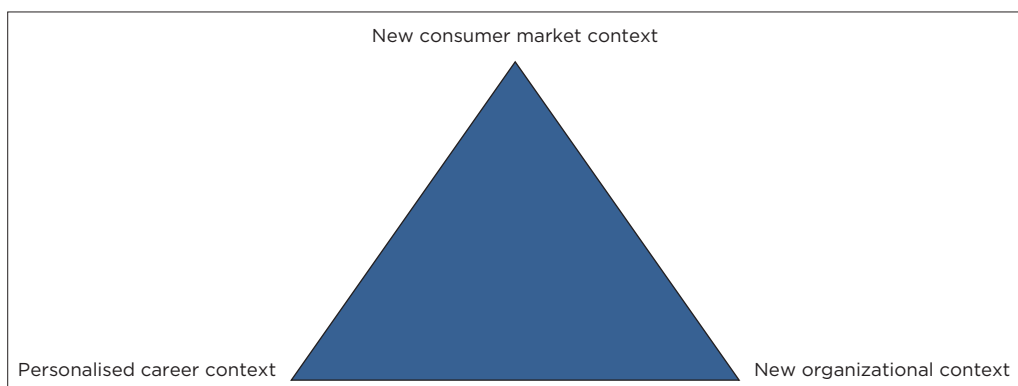
The contextual theory of entrepreneurship is thus named because, hypothetically, the entrepreneur is challenged to apply the required resources in order to construct, enact and perform the following:

1. A personalised career context (this is the subsystem on the individual level and as such is a micro-system).
2. A new organisational context (this is on the organisational level and as such can be described as a meso system – the term ‘meso’: refers to ‘in between’ as in mezzanine, mezzo [middle], or mesomorph [Rousseau & House 1994]).
3. A new market or consumer context (this is the system on the level of the consumer market and, as the highest level, can be viewed as a macro-system).

These three contexts, which the entrepreneur gives expression to in a preferred manner, are interdependent and in constant interaction. In conjunction, they provide structure and quality to the ecology of entrepreneurship (cf. Crous & Roodt 2004:3-4). The dynamic relationship between these three variables also gives rise to certain patterns: because they unfold on three levels, they can be expressed hierarchically (micro, meso and macro) or in the form of a triangle (see Figure 8.1) or, because of their developmental nature they can be depicted as an open-ended spiral (see Figure 8.2).

This triangular and interrelated structure, giving way to the three basic constructs of entrepreneurship, embodies the totality and consistency of entrepreneurship.

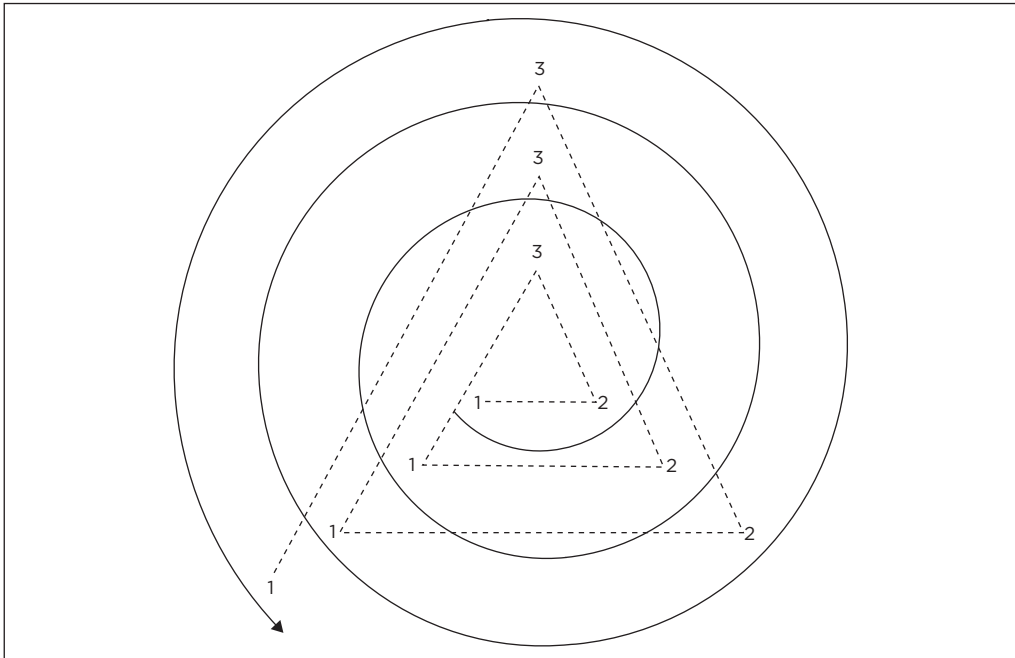
Sternberg (1987) indicated that the structure of a triangle makes it possible to classify and explain types of a phenomenon. Crous (2000) and Crous and



Source: Crous (2000); Crous and Roodt (2004).

**FIGURE 8.1:** The three conceptual units of entrepreneurship as a triangular relationship.





Source: Crous (2000); Crous and Roodt (2004).

**FIGURE 8.2:** Entrepreneurship expressed as a repetitive yet dynamic, changing, generative spiral.

Roodt (2004) used the triangular structure proposed by the contextual theory of entrepreneurship to explain the eight types of entrepreneurship identified in a study at the University of Lund in Sweden (Bos 1986). It is, however, important to note that these are idealised types.

Most entrepreneurs possess something of each component, in different degrees. It is not a case of a component being either present or absent.

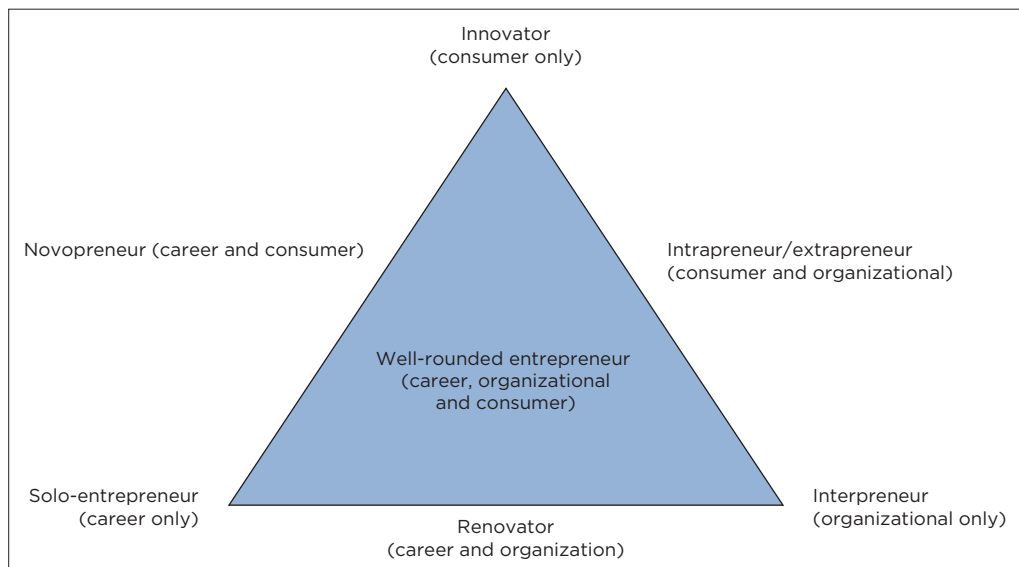
### □ **The construction, enactment and performing of an organisational context only: the interpreneur**

The so-called interpreneur is ingenious in the establishment of new companies by combining a variety of resources (Bos 1986). In terms of the contextual theory of entrepreneurship, this type of entrepreneur creates something new by means of establishing new organisational contexts. This type of entrepreneur will, as indicated by Bos (1986) for example, amalgamate smaller businesses or restructure them into a stronger unit, or will become involved in the merger and acquisitions of companies. This kind of entrepreneur is not that interested in cultivating a unique personal career context or becoming involved in the establishment of new consumer markets.

**TABLE 8.1:** A taxonomy of types of entrepreneur.

Type of entrepreneur	Career context	Organisational context	Consumer market context
Interpreneur	-	+	-
Innovator	-	-	+
Solo-entrepreneur	+	-	-
Renovator	+	+	-
Intrepeneur	-	+	+
Novopreneur	+	-	+
Fully-fledged entrepreneur	+	+	+
Non-entrepreneur	-	-	-

Source: Crous (2000); Crous and Roodt (2004).



Source: Crous (2000); Crous and Roodt (2004).

**FIGURE 8.3:** Types of entrepreneurship as different combinations of the three contextual units of entrepreneurship.

### □ The construction, enactment and performing of a consumer market context only: the innovator

According to the contextual theory of entrepreneurship, the innovator prefers to strategically construct new consumer markets, suggesting that this type of entrepreneur is not that interested in organisational manipulation or in the development of a personal career.

### □ **The construction, enactment and performing of a personal career context: the solo-entrepreneur**

Even though the management guru, Drucker (1985) emphasised that owning a small business does not necessarily equate to entrepreneurship, the contextual theory of entrepreneurship suggests that it would not make sense to divorce the small business owner from entrepreneurship. According to the contextual theory of entrepreneurship, the small business owner (even running a one-person venture) admittedly cannot be regarded as a fully-fledged entrepreneur. But not working for an employer and taking responsibility for his/her personal career development implies that this person adheres to a distinct characteristic of entrepreneurship.

### □ **The construction, enactment and performing of a personal career and new organisational context: the renovateur**

According to Bos (1986), the renovateur is the type of entrepreneur who can revive a struggling enterprise by means of structural changes, particularly by adding something by contributing something new. According to the contextual theory of entrepreneurship, the renovateur is motivated by organisational renewal in conjunction with the development of a personal career, not particularly by becoming involved in consumer market-related changes or the development of entirely new products and services.

### □ **The construction, enactment and performing of organisational and consumer market contexts: the intrapreneur**

The intrapreneur introduces new entrepreneur-like initiatives within an existing enterprise. In terms of the contextual theory of entrepreneurship, this is the type of entrepreneur for which an independent career is not that important, but rather innovative organisational and consumer market context-related actions within an existing organisation, or, as stated by Bos (1986), to start up a new venture within a current company. Should the intrapreneur, however, be constrained to give expression to this particular role he/she will probably resign to start up a new venture, taking up the role of an extrapreneur - an extension of the intrapreneur, according to Bos (1986).

### □ **The construction, enactment and performing of a personal career as well as a new consumer market context: the novopreneur**

According to Bos (1986), the novopreneur is the entrepreneurial type with the most creative ability. According to the contextual theory of entrepreneurship,

the novopreneur functions in terms of optimal career freedom and a strong consumer market alignment. The distinctiveness of his/her products and/or services provides a uniqueness to his/her career identity, shying away from the organisational context, because he/she fears its managerial demands will infringe on his/her creativity.

### □ **The construction, enactment and performing of a personal career, a new organisational and a new consumer market context: the all-round entrepreneur**

All-round entrepreneurship comes into being when all three contextual components are present. Few entrepreneurs meet this requirement and even fewer maintain the process of continuously originating a unique career, as well as organisations and consumer markets.

### □ **The absence of all three the contextual components: the non-entrepreneur**

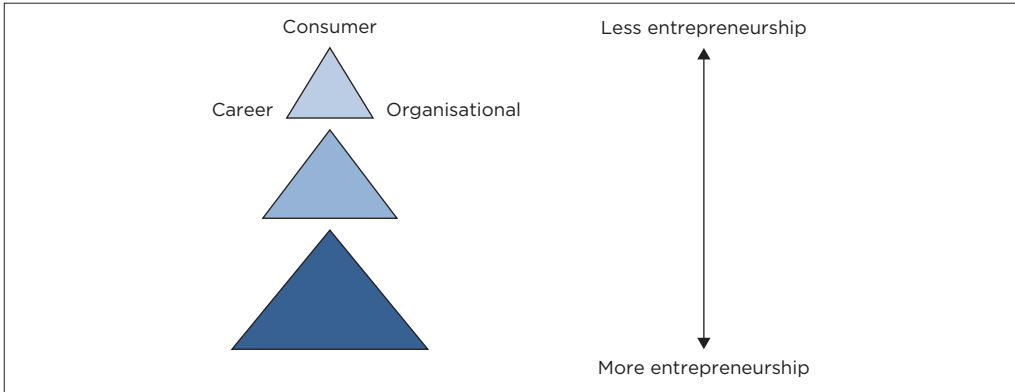
The absence of all three contextual components suggests that such a person will not be able to function as an entrepreneur.

### ■ **The geometry of the triangle formed by the contextual units of entrepreneurship**

Apart from the triangle formed by the three contextual components of entrepreneurship, making a typology of entrepreneurship possible as well as explaining the different types of entrepreneurship, its geometry suggests certain other implications. Two factors determine the geometry of the triangle, namely, intensity and balance (Sternberg 1987). The stronger a person's entrepreneurship orientation, the bigger (in terms of surface) the person's entrepreneurship triangle will be (see Figure 8.4).

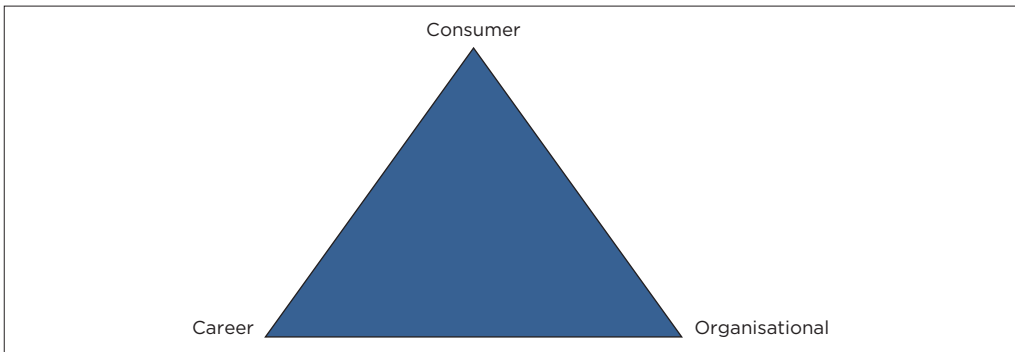
The stronger a person's entrepreneurship orientation the further that particular corner point will be from the centre of the triangle. The balance between the three components of entrepreneurship determines the form of the triangle. A balanced relationship (in terms of the three components of the theory) is presented as an equilateral triangle (see Figure 8.5).

Unbalanced forms of entrepreneurship will find expression in triangles pointing in the direction of the biggest component. As such, the entrepreneur who is primarily consumer market oriented is represented by an elongated triangle. The triangle of the entrepreneur who is primarily organisationally oriented points down to the right, and the triangle of the entrepreneur who is oriented towards an independent career points down to the left (see Figure 8.6).



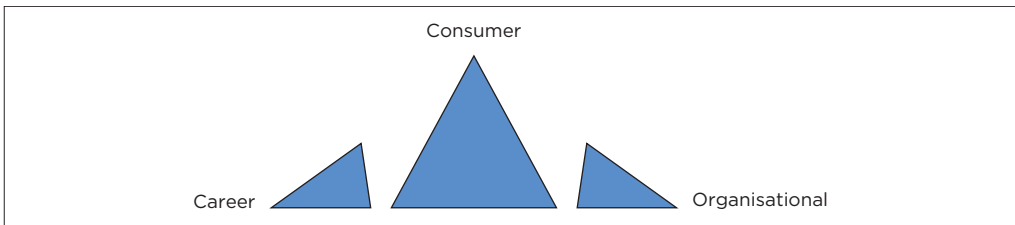
Source: Crous (2000); Crous and Roodt (2004).

**FIGURE 8.4:** Area of the triangle as index of the intensity of entrepreneurship.



Source: Crous (2000); Crous and Roodt (2004).

**FIGURE 8.5:** Balanced entrepreneurship triangle.



Source: Crous (2000); Crous and Roodt (2004).

**FIGURE 8.6:** Balanced and unbalanced entrepreneurship relationships.

The interrelated, interactive, dynamic structure of the contextual theory of entrepreneurship, and in particular the open-endedness of the spiral, gives expression to entrepreneurship as a construction/action/performance that is forever changing, growing and developing, possibly for good, but also for ill. For the purpose of this study, the person constructing/enacting/performing

entrepreneurship in the religious sphere is referred to as a pastorpreneur, and entrepreneurship in the domain of religion is referred to as pastorpreneurship.

What follows is a synthesis of entrepreneurial opportunism in the domain of religion by considering how it is constructed/enacted/performed in the pastorpreneur's career context (the micro-level), organisational context (meso level) and the consumer market context (macro-level). The synthesis heavily relies on the work of Frahm-Arp (2015, 2016, 2018a, 2018b) whose research focus area is what she refers to as Pentecostal Charismatic Christian (PCC) churches or Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelic (PCE) Christianity. For the rest of this chapter, this autonomous movement in Christianity will be referred to as Neo-Pentecostalism.

## ■ Pastorpreneurship through the lens of neoliberalism

Pastorpreneurship can be viewed through the lens of globalisation and its ideology of neoliberalism. Sugarman (2015) indicated that the French philosopher Foucault (2008) revealed the 'neoliberal turn' emerging in the 1970s in a series of lectures from 1978 to 1979. As an ideology, it became entrenched in the 1980s under President Reagan in the United States and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and has dominated the years ever since (Stiglitz 2019). Foucault saw 'enterprise' as a form and function of government (which he referred to as 'governmentality') which advanced far beyond the neoliberal sociopolitical establishments, permeating all areas of human action and experience (Sugarman 2015).

Neoliberalism is the dominant global ideology driving the expansion of global capital accumulation through unbridled free trade, financial deregulation and privatisation (Mensah 2008). Stiglitz (2019) described neoliberalism as a form of market fundamentalism, and as such, according to Phelps and White (2018), neoliberalism is the extension of market logic and practices that encroach all spheres of life and society. Data suggest that in the era of neoliberalism, living conditions have significantly improved worldwide, with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa (Mensah 2008).

In neoliberalism, the technologies of the market work as mechanisms through which persons are constituted as free, enterprising individuals who govern themselves and, consequently require only limited direct control by the state. The idea of enterprise pertains not only to an emphasis on economic enterprise over other forms of institutional organisation, but also, on personal attributes aligned with enterprise culture, such as initiative, self-reliance, self-mastery, and risk-taking. According to Foucault, the language of enterprise articulates a new relation between the economic well-being of the state and individual fulfilment. This relationship consists in the premises that the

economy is optimised through the entrepreneurial activity of autonomous individuals and that human well-being is furthered if individuals are free to direct their lives as entrepreneurs ... in neoliberalism, individuals not only are obliged to be engaged in economic activity, they are expected to create it. (Sugarman 2015:104)

Stiglitz (2019) remarked that spirituality may be the only domain not being subverted by neoliberalism. Considering the unfolding of pastorpreneurship in the Neo-Pentecostal movement in Johannesburg (South Africa's economic hub) and beyond might see him reconsidering his view.

## ■ Pastorpreneurship and Pentecostalism

Pastorpreneurship is rooted in Pentecostalism (cf. Frahm-Arp 2018a). This Christian movement, which originated at the onset of the 20th century, is named after the day of Pentecost, when, it is said, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to his disciples. The spirit appeared in the form of flames above the heads of his disciples, who were then filled with the Holy Spirit. This empowered them to preach in languages previously not known to them.

A belief in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit is key to Pentecostal Christians, who are convinced that they can be taken over by the Holy Spirit in the same way the spirit took hold of the disciples of Jesus. This deep, powerful personal experience is called 'baptism by the Holy Spirit', a form of spiritual renewal (Jones & Palffy 2013). To make sense of this movement in Christianity, Frahm-Arp (2018a) pointed out that researchers have studied it by means of historiography (arranging it under historical categories), classifying it in terms of its perceived characteristics and phenomena, or approaching it according to theological themes, doctrines and ideas.

Neo-Pentecostal churches nowadays, particularly in South Africa, vary greatly, without clear boundaries. These churches are not only influenced by the Pentecostal movement but also by the Charismatic movement, a worldwide revivalist Christian movement with a belief in the charismata - gifts of the Holy Spirit - beliefs that took hold in the mid-1950s (Jones & Palffy 2013), and also by Evangelical Christianity. The Pentecostal-Charismatic-Evangelical Christian churches follow a Christian fundamentalist tradition, meaning they believe every word of the Bible is literally true (Armstrong 2007) and is the divinely inspired word of God (Armstrong 2019; Frahm-Arp 2018a).

Frahm-Arp (2018a) referred to these autonomous grouping of churches as a form of PCE Christianity or PCC churches (Frahm-Arp 2016) - in this chapter referred to as autonomous Neo-Pentecostal churches. To make sense of the fluidity, complexity and eclectic nature of this family or network of churches, Frahm-Arp (2018a) approached them from a constructionist viewpoint to

identify their commonalities and similarities, as they are all related to each other. She (2018a) identified the following common characteristics:

Theologically they (1) are open to and engage with experiences of the Holy Spirit, including the prophetic gifts of many of their pastors; (2) they are 'born again', in other words, their members have experienced a conversion in which they claim Jesus as their saviour, an experience which ensures their access to the community; (3) they see the world as dualist, divided between 'good' and 'evil', Satan and God, illness and health, a world in which their pastors have the ability to drive out evil; and (4) they do not see ancestor veneration as an acceptable practice and demand that their members break with their African heritage. (p. 2)

Moreover, these churches share a common theology, namely, prosperity theology.

## ■ Prosperity theology

Central to the teachings of Neo-Pentecostalism is prosperity theology, also referred to as prosperity gospel. Frahm-Arp (2018a) traced the origins of prosperity theology back to the teachings of the American, Kenneth Hagin. She (Frahm-Arp 2018a) indicates that:

According to Hagin poverty is the result of sin against God, not tithing regularly or giving adequately, and the failure of individuals to understand and apply the divine laws that would allow them to claim their wealth in God's name. (p. 3)

She added that subsequent proponents of prosperity theology have added that 'in order to confess or claim their prosperity through words, people also need to become aware of their specific destiny and calling and, through this, claim their blessings' (Frahm-Arp 2018a:3). Moreover, according to Frahm-Arp (2018a), prosperity theology seems to offer practical teaching that aims to help believers to improve the quality of their lives by imparting them with a range of improvement strategies.

Interpreting data from interviews with 97 Neo-Pentecostal pastors around Johannesburg, Frahm-Arp (2018a) found that the prosperity theology these pastors preach can loosely be clustered along a continuum of prosperity theology based on a particular emphasis. These clusters are 'abilities prosperity', 'progress prosperity' and 'miracle prosperity', each with similar ideas, practices and characteristics. Some Neo-Pentecostal churches fit neatly into any one of these clusters while others appear as a hybrid between these types, suggesting that neither the Neo-Pentecostal churches nor the prosperity theology that is preached in these churches is uniform (Frahm-Arp 2018a).

How each of these types of prosperity theology is constructed/enacted/performed by a Neo-Pentecostal preacher/pastor will be outlined below as per the three entrepreneurship contexts suggested by Crous (2000) and Crous and Roodt (2004). As indicated above, the synthesis relied heavily on



the work of Frahm-Arp (2016, 2018a, 2018b), who has researched Neo-Pentecostal churches in the larger Johannesburg area extensively.

## ■ **The pastorpreneur's constructed, enacted and performed career context**

The leader/pastor of an autonomous Neo-Pentecostal church in most cases is also the founder of the church. Similar to a start-up, he embarks on an entrepreneurial career, like, for example, the graphic designer who left his profession to start his own church, Christ the Word church in Soweto (Frahm-Arp 2018a).

Because his church is an autonomous entity of which he is the leader, he is not bounded by the regulations and formalities of a traditional denomination which require, amongst others, a particular theological training, competence, inclusion in a hierarchical structure, and rules and regulations to adhere to. As such, he is accountable to nobody, only to what is lawfully required of a public benefit organisation, which his church should be registered as. This gives him immense power, authority and autonomy.

The Neo-Pentecostal church leader/pastor takes on the role of (religious) expert that allows him to be perceived as being authoritative, enabling him to dictate and dominate a particular discourse on particular issues or matters, moulding his followers' thinking. He makes use of two 'secret ingredients', namely, the Holy Spirit and his church's scripture-based teaching (Frahm-Arp 2016). The discourse he presents, infused with his own selection and interpretation of certain texts of Scripture on any particular topic related to a way of being and performing in modern culture, constructs a power relationship in which he can take on a dominant role in controlling, regulating and normalising a particular way of being in the lives of the church's members (Frahm-Arp 2016).

From a prosperity theology perspective, as observed by Frahm-Arp (2018a) the Neo-Pentecostal church leader/pastor constructs a discourse with his followers about the following: two kinds of attitudes, namely, an attitude of hope in a positive future and secondly an entrepreneurial attitude of 'winning ways'; the use of life improvement strategies such as an ethic of hard work or how to cope with life through 'strong prayers'; consistent tithing by church members/followers or to employ various means to sow 'seed', meaning giving money to the church; always presenting himself as preacher-prophet gifted with special powers to speak against and fight the 'spirit of poverty'. Prosperity theology implies that there is a 'tight relationship between wickedness and poverty' (Armstrong 2007:216) and that the pastor-prophet has the power to transform this negative relationship to a positive one of goodness and prosperity.

Prosperity theology sanctions the Neo-Pentecostal church and its leader/pastor with immense power over its followers, locking them in by making them believe that the pathway to prosperity/success is through becoming and staying a member/follower of the church, a member who is expected to regularly tithe and support the church financially. Neo-Pentecostal churches also give the church leader/pastor a significant hold on his followers as he elevates himself by assigning himself to be a prophet – someone who is able to announce what he hears from God (Holloway 2016) – with special gifts and powers and extraordinary spirituality.

Frahm-Arp's (2018a) findings suggested that the Neo-Pentecostal pastor preaches any one or a mixture of the following forms of prosperity theology.

### ■ **Abilities prosperity**

The pastor preaching abilities prosperity theology focuses on getting church members to exercise, develop and apply their own abilities. He is convinced that the agent of a person's success is himself or herself and preaches that people will be able to succeed and achieve anything when they are willing to align themselves with God's principles, claim God's blessings, give generously to the church and work hard. The pastor who adheres to abilities prosperity theology believes that the more energy the church invests in developing its members, the more his church will prosper and flourish. The primary focus is on equipping members to realise their abilities. The pastor of a mega Neo-Pentecostal church, embracing abilities prosperity, portrays himself as a business leader and life coach continuously advising his church members on how to become successful as a Christian in the world of work (Frahm-Arp 2018b).

### ■ **Progress prosperity**

The pastor preaching progress prosperity theology focuses on shifting church members' attitudes, pushing the idea that prosperity means progress. He encourages members to view any daily small success such as making a sale or passing an exam as progress and, as such, a sign of prosperity, reminding them that prosperity, including material wealth, is achieved through faith and righteous living. Although 'naming and claiming' wealth is practised in this cluster, it tends to be downplayed. Furthermore, it is emphasised that members should tithe responsibly, meaning to give 10% of their income to the church, but not giving beyond reason or ability. Frahm-Arp (2018a:9) remarked that this stands in stark contrast to the other clusters 'where giving and giving generously is taken to such an extreme that it is sometimes to the detriment of a believer's own well-being'. Frahm-Arp (2018a:10) points out that both ability and progress prosperity pastors promote an entrepreneurial mindset or spirit amongst their members.

## ■ Miracle prosperity

The pastor preaching miracle theology believes that spiritual growth determines material wealth and that church members achieve this kind of wealth through victory in spiritual battles of prayer, driving out demons, and making personal sacrifices. While preachers in the abilities and progress prosperity clusters place a great deal on the individual development of their followers and less so on deliverance or miracles, the latter is central to miracle prosperity. Miracle prosperity claims that without sufficient faith, miracles will not happen. It is only through their faith and the *power of the prophet* that evil is exorcised from their lives (Frahm-Arp 2018a; [*author's added emphasis*]).

Whatever prosperity theology pathway the pastor chooses, he reminds his followers that Christians have an edge over non-believers 'because, through the Holy Spirit, Christians can vanquish the bad spirits of poverty, depression, hopelessness, and joblessness' (Frahm-Arp 2018b:260). It is important to note that because the Neo-Pentecostal churches are rooted in a patriarchal paradigm (Frahm-Arp 2016:152), embedded in fundamentalism (Armstrong 2004), women will find it most difficult to start an autonomous church of their own. According to Frahm-Arp (2015) in the Neo-Pentecostal churches a woman can be a pastor, but not the head pastor, because of patriarchal church culture, based on a fundamental reading of the Bible.

The Neo-Pentecostal church leader/pastor thus takes on a range of roles through which he constructs/enacts/performs his Neo-Pentecostal career: apart from being a leader (most probably charismatic) he is a preacher, pastor, life coach, businessman/leader, expert, consultant, educator, prophet, healer, miracle worker and ... pastorpreneur.

## ■ The pastorpreneur's constructed, enacted and performed organisational context

In theory, the founder-leader of an autonomous Neo-Pentecostal church has the power and authority to dictate how his church should be structured and organised. Nevertheless, in order to be successful, whatever is presented by his church, be it a sermon, which includes praise and worship, a workshop, a conference or a revivalist gathering, it has to be managed and performed as an *event*. As such, the church leader/pastor and his organisers have to be skilled in project management, having to know who to target (is it mothers, men, teenagers, students?), and how to plan, design, arrange, budget, brand, market, communicate and execute the event (enhanced by audio-visual technology).

This becomes apparent from the cases of two Neo-Pentecostal churches who were able to scale up to becoming megachurches (see Frahm-Arp 2018b).

Following his training at Rhema Bible College, a young man, Mosa Sono, founded the Grace Bible Church (GBC) in Soweto in 1983. Under his leadership, it has become the largest megachurch in South Africa, consisting of a family of 23 churches. Sono is now referred to as the bishop of the GBC family of churches and has almost 30 000 followers on Twitter.

In 2002, on a piece of land in Pimville, Soweto, he built what looks like a large office-park style complex. This complex includes a church building with seats for over 4000 people (more than 14 000 people from all over Gauteng attend the various Sunday Services) a chapel, community and counseling rooms, computer labs, church offices, a book store and a kitchen. This charismatic preacher can fill a sports' stadium for larger church occasions. The GBC family of churches present themselves, under the leadership of their bishop, 'as a body of churches succeeding in the modern urban world' (Frahm-Arp 2018b:260).

In 1992 Pastor André Olivier, his wife, Wilma, and 70 followers established the Rivers of Joy Church in Sandton, an affluent area in Johannesburg. According to Frahm-Arp (2018b), this church has grown at a remarkable rate, with branches in most of the major cities of Johannesburg. The church building in Sandton resembles a high-end shopping mall, making a deliberate statement about the church's financial success. She (Frahm-Arp 2018b) describes the building as follows:

[A] large spiral staircase leading to seating in the galleries. Throughout the complex, there are coffee shops and large lounge areas where people can chat. There is also a food court, and according to Olivier, the church helps people to become healthier by selling only fresh, organic, or otherwise healthy foods (arguably, cultivating fit physiques is part of the church's overall ethos of fostering successful, polished lives). The décor of the church invokes the current fashion for 'industrial' interiors, featuring old copper pipes and factory appliances shipped to South Africa from the United States. (p. 263)

She continues to describe how TV screens are placed throughout the auditorium, bathrooms, lobbies and shops. The pastor's sermons, including musical, dramatic or comic performances that precede or follow the sermons, are filmed (Frahm-Arp 2018b):

Watching the TV screens during a service imparts the feel of participating in a live TV show that combines the talk show and talent performance genres [...] The Facebook page for this church is lively. (p. 264)

In the Neo-Pentecostal churches where a miracle prosperity theology is a focus, performances take on a different nature in the form of services dedicated to 'deliverance' practices such as prayer services, often several times a day, dedicated to driving out evil and becoming blessed (Frahm-Arp 2018a). Also, it is in the miracle prosperity churches that some prophet-pastors stage performances, sometimes at mega-gatherings, of miracles like healing the sick, even raising people from the dead. Pastor Alph Lukau, from Alleluia

Ministries, is one of these. He staged the resurrection of a man from the dead in a theatrical manner; the man in a coffin playing his part (Sekhotho 2019), leading to widespread condemnation and ridicule on social media.

As a final observation, in order to succeed, an autonomous Neo-Pentecostal church under the leadership of its pastorprenuer is compelled to perform and enact an image of success that is aligned with its prosperity theology.

## ■ The pastorprenuer's constructed, enacted and performed consumer market context

Globalisation/neoliberalism has had a detrimental effect on the South African economy with an unacceptably high unemployment rate; nevertheless, a significant number of black South Africans have become middle-class (Leatt 2017). It is this group of people, as well as some white middle-class professionals, aspirational working and unemployed classes, who find the Neo-Pentecostal churches appealing. In all of the Neo-Pentecostal churches some form of prosperity gospel is preached, equating spiritual blessing with material wealth, but also with health, having a life purpose and being blessed with a happy family (Frahm-Arp 2016).

The Neo-Pentecostal churches that follow an ability or progress prosperity theology emphasise the importance of helping their members to succeed. To this end they offer prayer support, running conferences, workshops and teachings during sermons that provide members with the social and cultural skills to succeed in life (Frahm-Arp 2016).

For example, in support groups such as for mothers, it is emphasised that motherhood is a performative act, and that it is through the act of doing that the mother can define her identity as a fulfilled Christian mother. What comforts these mothers is that the church provides them with clear guidelines on how to perform optimally in their role as a Christian mother. These churches thus provide a space for helping to deal with life's challenges, providing them with appealing and powerful messages of hope (Frahm-Arp 2016).

Unlike their predecessors in America (Armstrong 2000) the Neo-Pentecostal churches do not oppose popular culture or try to form a religious counter-culture, but rather merge their particular theology with popular culture, embracing some of contemporary culture's dominant trends and ideals (Frahm-Arp2016):

These are then re-coded to become the religious ideal that believers should try to attain with the power of prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit giving them an advantage over unbelievers in doing so. (p. 146)

It is important to take note of Frahm-Arp (2016) pointing to Foucault (1996) who argued that discourses enable ideologies to form and take root when

these discourses are regarded by consumers of the message as having authority.

Neo-Pentecostal leaders are aware of the challenges their members are struggling with and the pressure to live up to ideal notions of success, presented by popular, contemporary culture and media. Church members believe that the church's scripture-based interpretation of life's issues, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, provides them with a buffer against the inconsistent and contradicting messages they are bombarded with from the secular world, providing them with a clear religious worldview and symbolic system (Frahm-Arp 2016).

The pastor operating from a miracle prosperity kind of theological perspective, however, believes that interventions such as helping church members to find jobs, improve skills or learn new ones are not effective in the current context of high unemployment amongst especially young South Africans. Rather, what is required is a miracle. It is explained to church members that joblessness is the work of the devil, holding back what God wants to give to his people, namely, blessings and miracles. Frahm-Arp (2018a) pointed out that praying against the devil is something that church members can actively do, giving them a sense of agency. Many of the church leaders in the miracle prosperity cluster refer to themselves as prophets, claiming to have extraordinary spiritual powers to heal people and make them wealthy, largely through their ability to drive out demons (Frahm-Arp 2018a).

The value proposition offered to their members/followers by the Neo-Pentecostal churches and their leaders adhering to an ability and progress prosperity theology can be summarised as a promise to a pathway of hope towards success and prosperity, offering members/followers a product consisting of two ingredients: the Holy Spirit and scripture-based expert teaching (see Frahm-Arp 2016). Prophet-pastors adhering to miracle prosperity theology propose that wealth is within the grasp of every person (with a caveat: the person with the greatest spiritual power to bring about healing and wealth is the prophet-pastor himself).

## ■ Discussion

The inquiry by means of the contextual theory of entrepreneurship (Crous 2000; Crous & Roodt 2004) suggests that pastorpreneurs, with prosperity theology central to their preaching and teaching, and performing in the Neo-Pentecostal movement, are able to construct strong and solid micro-, meso-, and macro-entrepreneurial contexts, giving way to an integrated, well-balanced, high-intensity triangulation of entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial performances in each of the career, organisational and consumer market contexts can be readily duplicated by aspiring pastorpreneurs, providing a

possible explanation or rationale for the extraordinary growth and expansion of Neo-Pentecostal churches. True to neoliberalism, the Neo-Pentecostal church movement, embedded in prosperity theology, entrenches and perpetuates a belief system that internalises an entrepreneurial attitude, mindset and orientation within its leaders/pastors. The inquiry, therefore, supports Frahm-Arp's view that globalisation and its neoliberal ideology, instead of giving way to secularism, brought about the religionisation of South Africa.

Moreover, neoliberalism, as it plays out in prosperity theology and the way it is enacted/performed in the Neo-Pentecostal churches (mostly those with an ability and progress orientation), promotes entrepreneurship amongst its members. In these churches, the prosperity doctrine is merged with business education. This development has the potential to contribute significantly towards bringing South Africa and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa into the modern age economically (see Daniels [2015] and Martin [2002], cited in Frahm-Arp [2018a]).

True to its entrepreneurial nature, the autonomous Neo-Pentecostal church development has brought about creative destruction (Schumpeter 1942) in Christianity. Not only do its leaders attract members from traditional churches, making traditional denomination numbers dwindle (Leatt 2017), but ministers from traditional denominations also follow their example and leave to start up their own autonomous churches. Being autonomous makes it much easier to operate in an agile and disruptive manner.

The Neo-Pentecostal churches not only have a disruptive effect on the Christian religion. They also have an impact on regulated professions such as clinical, counseling and industrial/organisational psychology, by offering similar services, but infused, recoded and packaged with Neo-Pentecostal doctrine. They also tread on the health/medical professionals' terrain by offering alternative options such as deliverance and miracle practices for healings of illnesses.

Furthermore, the autonomous, unregulated Neo-Pentecostal church movement raises serious ethics-related questions about some of its practices. Freed from the gatekeeping function that membership of a traditional denomination would bring, many of the leaders/pastors of New-Pentecostal churches can be observed to be abusing their positions of power for their own benefit.

At the time of writing this manuscript, founder of the Enlightened Christian Gathering church, Shepherd Bushiri (mentioned above) and his wife, Mary, had fled South Africa after they were charged with fraud and money laundering involving R120 million (Mabena 2020). Bhengu (2020a) reported that two women have accused Bushiri of rape on two separate occasions.

Another case that attracted media attention while this paper was being written up, was the allegations of abuse at KwaSizabantu, the mission station referred to above, following a News24 (2020) exposé of alleged sexual assault, physical and psychological abuse as well as financial crimes/money laundering apparently spanning four decades. The livelihood of the workers and farm employees dependent on this mission's enterprises came under threat following the allegations and investigation.

Frahm-Arp's (2015) findings showed how the patriarchal discourse in some of the Neo-Pentecostal churches gives way to the silencing of women members experiencing violent abuse by their husbands. Women attending these churches are made to believe, particularly by other church women, that it is part of their roles as women to be submissive to their husbands, even if these men abuse them. Tim Omotoso, senior pastor of Jesus Dominion International, was arrested by the South African crimes unit, the Hawks, on 20 April 2017. He is currently imprisoned and on trial for rape and human trafficking. He allegedly groomed his victims and molested them from age 14. He continues to preach from his cell, which is filled with expensive suits he wears for court appearances (Manona & Peter 2019).

Pastor Lethebo Rabalago, who runs the Mount Zion General Assembly, in 2016 sprayed his followers on their faces with the insect repellent, Doom, which he claimed could heal cancer and HIV. He was subsequently found guilty of assault (Ramothwala 2018).

Following a fatal shooting at the International Pentecostal Holiness Church outside Johannesburg where five people died, Carien Du Plessis (2020), a journalist for the Financial Mail, painted a disturbing picture. Themes emerging from her investigation into the practices of this particular denomination are the blurring of lines between church and personal property of church leaders (pastors/self-proclaimed prophets) because of the lack of regulation of these churches, vast amounts of money flowing into church bank accounts (including those of pastors), embezzlement of church funds, infighting and disputes between church leaders/family members, factional violence (mostly money related). These disquieting occurrences stand in stark contrast to a spokesperson's words that the church preaches that blessings come from giving rather than receiving.

These are not isolated cases. Questionable practices in Neo-Pentecostal autonomous churches prompted an investigation by the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (the CRL Rights Commission) into church abuses. In his newspaper report, Mabena (2020) referred to the 2017 report on the commercialisation of churches, released by the CRL Rights Commission which states that religion is big business in South Africa. Their pastors are referred to as entrepreneurs operating as pastors, evading tax (of the 32 399 registered



churches on the government's database 20 884 have not submitted their annual financial statements by June 2020 [Du Plessis 2020:7]). Earlier this year, the Finance Minister Tito Mboweni bemoaned the fact that many so-called charismatic churches (Neo-Pentecostal churches) do not comply with the particular tax treatment for public benefit organisations, which includes churches. Mabena quotes a concerned pastor who said that religion has been infiltrated by businesspeople masquerading as pastors.

What is notable about so many of these pastorpreneurs, is not just that they are well off, but that they are flagrantly wealthy, and happy to flaunt it – embodying prosperity theology/gospel – possibly as a way to make their followers believe that if their faith were strong enough, they too could live a life of financial prosperity.

## ■ Conclusion

Forthcoming from the discussion above, there are a couple of questions that remain unanswered: Do the autonomous Neo-Pentecostal churches buffer their members against the excessive demands of neoliberalism or do they play into the neoliberal discourse with their prosperity gospel and religio-entrepreneurial practices? Are these churches abusing/exploiting/corrupting religion in general and Christianity in particular? Or are they abusing/exploiting/corrupting entrepreneurship? Or are these churches merely commodifying/commercialising religion?

This work was borne out of a deep concern prompted by a disturbing image of the fast-growing autonomous/independent churches in South Africa. Corroborating reports in the South African news media over the past few years exposed perverse, immoral, and corrupt practices prevalent in many churches, performed by its leaders/pastors, in the mushrooming Neo-Pentecostal religious movement. These disturbing occurrences prompted me to approach this phenomenon from a critical stance. Critical management studies provided me with an approach to study these church leaders as 'pastorpreneurs', linking entrepreneurship, a dominant business management subdiscipline, to neoliberalism and its religious equivalent of Neo-Pentecostalism embedded in the ideology of prosperity theology. Moreover, it permitted me to make sense of it contextually (Goldman, in ch. 1 of this book). I was, therefore, able to construct and provide evidence of a pastorpreneurial pattern of exploitation (Van der Linde 2016) of a 'religious market' for financial and other benefits, the abuse of career and organisational power – a pattern of behaviour devoid of morality, undermining the caring, emancipatory and liberating character, expected of a religious community such as a church.

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## Introduction

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## Chapter 1

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This book shows how Critical Management Studies (CMS) scholarship is starting to develop a character of its own in South Africa. It attests to CMS slowly gaining momentum and acquiring a identity of its own amongst South African scholars. However, management studies in South Africa is dominated by capitalist ideology and positivist methodology. Although Interpretive scholarship has gained some momentum, it still falls within the parameters of 'mainstream', capitalist thinking. Scholarship outside the domain of capitalist thinking, such as critical scholarship, remains sorely underexplored. Being entrenched in the positivist tradition is arguably a major Achilles' Heel for the progression of management as a field of inquiry. CMS presents a vehicle for alternative epistemologies to be heard in the management discourse. With its focus on power imbalances, struggles for emancipation from oppression, and distrust of capitalism, CMS provides the peripheral point of view with a voice. CMS presents a space where scholars can engage with South African realities surrounding political, cultural, social, and historic contexts and issues in management. This book is promoting CMS to the scholarly community, to show that there are exciting possibilities being offered by a different approach to management scholarship. This book also forms part of a larger project of growing CMS in South Africa, and is a collection of original works by academics actively working in CMS, following various methodological approaches, which can be categorised into two broad methodological categories, namely conceptual work, and empirical work following an Interpretive approach.

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This book presents a cohesive perspective on most recent developments and actual research trends within CMS. CMS adopts a critical approach to traditional organization and management theories and concepts. The framework of this critique is precisely defined within the Critical Theory perspective, which makes it a full-fledged research approach and stands in opposition to some of the critics, who point at an allegedly loose scientific background of CMS. By challenging the common approaches of the Management Science, CMS has strongly developed since its initial assumptions by Alvesson & Willmott, and this edited collection proves it directly. The novelty of this publication can be found in following facts: (i) although CMS is a relatively new research field (a sub-discipline of Management Science), it has been constantly gaining growing attention from the scientific community; (ii) covered research topics provide a broad perspective on the direction of development of CMS discourse; (iii) the book is rooted in the South African Management research and education reality, which makes it African-specific; and (iv) it allows the reader to reach some distance from the traditional Western-biased discussion on Management theory. For the past 30 years, the work of independent researchers and research teams provided a number of important insights into what Management Science could become in the upcoming era of resource shortages, climatic change and the global need for a more balanced, sustainable, socio-economically aware and environmentally responsible development. This book constitutes another contribution to this joint effort of the scientific community gathered around the research field of CMS.

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