Introduction

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1 Introduction: European management extends beyond its European confines

There is general agreement that European management is exceedingly difficult to define and characterise for notional purposes as much as for practical understandings. In 1995, a survey of 2,500 European managers concluded that although there was evidence of “the potential emergence of a European management style”, it was “not yet the case in the national context” (Myers et al., 1995). Writing at around the same time, Tixier (1994) claimed that “management styles differ greatly across Europe, although Europeans may not always be aware of it”. We, the co-editors of this inaugural issue of the *European Journal of International Management*, contend that both these points of view are now out of date, but for reasons which may not be immediately obvious. Equally, the representation of European management as lying notionally and in practical terms mid-way between Japanese management systems, on the one hand, and American ones, on the other (Calori and de Woot, 1994) is no longer tenable. If we anchor European management like that, we simply divert attention from it by setting up comparisons which may be neither very illuminating nor valid, or by consciously or unconsciously invoking unhelpful stereotypes.

In the 1980s there was a strong tendency to view European management as something connected with the practice of management in various *West* European countries forming the then called European Economic Community (EEC), as nobody was prepared to see defunct socialist management systems in Central and East Europe as remotely relevant for a wider representation of European management. Thus, prevailing concepts of management at that time strongly identified European management in terms of general European traditions and in the light of West European linguistic and cultural diversity. There was indeed a penchant for clustering European management into awkward – essentially non-water-tight sub-groups such as 'Latin', 'Southern European' (embracing Greece, but excluding the then socialist Bulgaria) and 'Anglo' (see, for example: Koen, 2005, pp.74–78; Hickson and Pugh, 1995).

Since the 1980s some eight former socialist countries have joined the European Union and two more are due to join in 2007. They are (or will be) the new EU 'insiders' who are not merely learning how to operate in this "New Europe that complex and multifaceted setting" (Puffer and McCarthy, 2005), but – and this is easily overlooked – are actually reshaping it. For example, their addition does not merely extend the EU's linguistic and cultural diversity, but it does so in an unusual way. All the countries concerned are not just bringing yet another national language into the European melting-pot, but a transitional meta-language which is shedding the Marxist-Leninist view of the world and attendant discourse whilst laboriously acquiring the terminology of modern Western management. There is much evidence to suggest that this process of linguistic change is far from complete (Doleschal et al., 2005; Hoffmann and Doleschal, 2002; Holden and Fink, 2006–2007; Pshenichnikova, 2003).

Just as people in CEE countries have not shed the now useless language of socialism, so they have not completely thrown off the old socialist way of managing organisations and the people within them (Fink et al., 2007; Gurkov and Maital, 2001; Hurt and Hurt, 2005; Puffer and McCarthy, 2005). So, when we attempt to embrace CEE countries into a general scheme of European management, we must recognise that its present state is not only influenced by what we might call the general European capitalistic tradition, but also by the pronouncedly European anti-capitalist phenomenon called socialism.

From this very brief sketch one could conclude that any attempt to define European management is bound to be become ensnared in historical, linguistic, cultural and ideological matters, which have a huge bearing on economic performance at the corporate, national and EU levels of analysis. There is, fortunately, a way out of this conundrum. Let us accept that it is counterproductive to define European management purely in terms of what it is, as if it were something concrete and fixed. The true point of European management is that, however we define it, it is evolving. One might say the same about management in any country. Management, by nature, is never static; it is in flux. But in the case of Europe there is a major factor which allows us to define European management as an evolutionary phenomenon. We are able to define European management in the unique context of the emerging single market as envisaged by the European Union.

But there is another dimension to European management. Like American management or Japanese management, its influence extends well beyond its home area. In other words, we must understand European management not just in its European confines, but also as an international phenomenon in its own right. The recognition that European management is as much European as international in practical significance has important consequences for the understanding of European management in general. Indeed this conviction is a guiding impulse behind the creation of this journal.

A recent issue of *The Economist* noted:

> "the single market is not meant to be a competitive, deregulated one, but one that is united by regulatory standards and common levels of social protection. Under the rubric of the single market continental politicians have pushed for a single currency, harmonised tax bases and more fiscal co-ordination. None of these is strictly necessary for the single market to work. But they do make sense if the single market is a route towards deeper integration – as France, Italy, Germany (frequently) and many beaurocrats in Brussels believe it to be."
> (The Economist, 2006)

So far Europe has never achieved the right balance between these approaches. So, where does all this leave management and managers? To answer that, we must go back in time.

2 The EU: good for managers, less good for the economy

In the 1980s the then called EEC was lambasted for its inertia and lack of dynamism in comparison with the USA and Japan. Europe was said to be suffering from 'Euro-sclerosis'. By the early 1990s Europe had seemingly thrown off its besetting lethargy. Many factors accounted for this. One was the Maastricht treaty of 1992, that milestone which created conditions of closer monetary union, increased mobility and greater general political and economic unity among the member states. Another factor was the collapse of the communist system which ushered in several rounds of enlargement (1996, 2004, 2007), whilst the Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice reshaped the integration framework.

The introduction in 1999 of the euro in 11 of 15 member states (Greece joined two years later) was more than a financial and economic measure; it drew more Europeans together psychologically than any other event in the history of the European Union and its forebears going back half a century. Yet, the 2004 enlargement did not bring more members to the euro area. Nor will Bulgaria and Romania join it in 2007. A third factor is that business enterprises across Europe have been working with the same general criteria influencing corporate governance, competition, financial disclosure and concern for the environment. In the light of these factors *and* the ascendancy of China, and to a lesser extent India, there have been clear signs that European management has pushed forward in similar ways: large corporations have re-organised production within Europe and closed down numerous subsidiaries, notably in smaller European countries, whilst pursuing regional or Europe-wide approaches in the organisation of production and distribution systems, including out-sourcing. Financial markets have become more flexible, and even US-like governance rules have come into operation. All this looks good from the competitive view of things.

But, there is dark side to it all. The predicted benefits of these measures have failed to materialise: economic growth has not accelerated; rather, it has slowed down. Accordingly, promises of a better life have remained unfulfilled for large sections of the general EU population. Over the last ten years, in some European Union member states wage incomes grew very slowly; notably so in Austria and Germany, where real wages have stagnated (Sueddeutsche, 2005; Guger and Marterbauer, 2005). The share of wage incomes in GDP has continued to fall and remarkable inequalities have become significant (Martens, 2005; UN, 2005; UNDP, 2005). Unemployment has reached new heights in absolute numbers; no massaging of statistics can mask this. Furthermore, with the Nordic countries being notable exceptions, relative child poverty has increased in most EU member states and even doubled in Austria and Germany (UNICEF, 2005). In the meantime large-scale outsourcing by European corporations has boosted the economies of countries such as Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, not to mention China and India. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been created in the new EU countries and beyond, increasing unemployment in many 'old' EU countries.

This state of affairs poses a very specific challenge to European corporations: on the one hand, they face increased international competition; on the other, they need to ensure that large groups of the population participate in the efficiency gains stemming from European enlargement and the internationalisation of production. This is a very different situation from ten years ago and it is facilitating the emergence of a new kind of European manager.

A striking feature of this manager is that he, and occasionally she, is earning a salary up to ten times more than what in the early 1990s was considered a decent income for a manager, annual growth by 30% or more of individual managers' incomes is reported (Hetzer and Papendick, 2004; Kalliauer and Peischer, 2005; Tagesspiegel, 2006). Not surprisingly perhaps, managers justify this rise in wealth by claiming that they increase shareholder value.

But is it really such a big surprise that very highly paid managers play prominent roles – not only running companies, but sometimes acting political advisors – in a period of extremely disappointing economic growth? Managers like to see themselves as major problem solvers (to justify their large salaries), but they seem to be major causes of problems, too.

If we think of one major business activity in Europe, namely cross-border mergers and acquisitions, the gains are all too rarely delivered. Very often firms enter into acquisitions and promise synergies to their shareholders through cost cutting and 'reducing complexity', whilst assuring staff that there will be no job losses. But the motivation of the staff is rapidly destroyed once many with tacit knowledge of the acquired firm are fired or leave of their own accord. The promised effects are not forthcoming, and productivity declines. To hide the failure, managers initiate yet more take-overs

Several 'unthinkably sinkable' corporations have actually disappeared. Consider the case of Hoechst Chemie, which was merged with Rhône-Poulenc to become Aventis. But Aventis was not a big success, so it was taken over by Sanofi-Sythelabo to become Sanofi-Aventis. Nor should we forget that so-called "best prepared merger among equals": namely Daimler and Chrysler. It is likely that the newly created German-US behemoth may end up in 2007 about the same firm size as Daimler was before the merger in 1998. Thus the 'unthinkably sinkable' Daimler failed to pull it off in the USA, whilst incidentally, America's Wal-mart, once 'highly admired' and 'highly innovative', experienced disaster in Germany, disconcerting its employees, underestimating competition and mocked in the German media. There is more to such cases of corporate dysfunction than 'mere' mismanagement. Such cases focus attention on a little perceived aspect of management in the European context: that management in Europe must also be about the management of inequalities.

We argue then that a new culture has emerged as of the 1990s in the EU. It is a culture conducive to creating inequalities. It is probable that European corporations do not see their economic zone in these terms. It is not their responsibility, they will say, to manage inequalities; that is the job of national governments and their myriad social welfare agencies. European corporations are far happier seeing themselves as better than Americans, making productive use of diversity as a collaborative resource. It is not yet grasped that inequality is an aspect of diversity and that European inequality has causes and manifestations, which are distinctive to particular national cultures. Think of the behaviour of neo-Nazi groups in Germany, the unmodified behaviour of English football fans in other countries or the race riots in Paris in 2006.

This leads us to suggest that it is no longer enough in the European context for corporations to 'manage diversity', as popularly understood, but to learn how to exploit the EU as a resource of know-how for managing inequalities (see Magala in this issue). This know-how, in the form of sets of values, conventions, rules and norms must be harnessed to productively regulate the interactions among people, not only in business contexts but also outside them. Firms that design themselves to combat Europe-wide inequalities will eventually create new corporate cultures. Those that do not may retain or develop symptoms that shed light on the pathology of organisations (see Yolles in this issue). These are issues which may affect the very health of managers (see Worall and Cooper in this issue). The point about raising issues to do with the management of inequalities and the pathology of organisations in the EU context is that these are themes that have not arisen from any theory-driven research. Rather they are themes that are waiting for investigation on the basis of phenomenon-driven research (see Cheng in this issue).

3 Emerging new contours in European management research

In the world of practice, international business is a self-evident thing; it has existed in one form or another for thousands of years. It might even be argued that the international management as a more specialised activity, involving as we would it today 'cross-border management', is a much newer phenomenon. Newer it might be, but as scholars Moore and Lewis (1999) point out, it has been a recognisable function for some 4,000 years. They suggest that the world's first business empire arose in Ancient Assyria in 2000 BC and that around 1900 BC the world's first multi-cultural workforce was to be found in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey). Yet, for all these centuries of evolution that the current academic literature is buzzing with articles by scholars who are pondering how best to define international business, on the one hand, and international management on the other, as objects of scholarly research (see Cheng and Oesterle in this issue). This state of affairs makes even more precarious – but also more necessary – a fresh debate about the nature of European management.

There is little doubt that a debate of paradigmatic significance is unfolding and it is involving, in the main, European and US scholars. The central feature of this debate is that it is, in effect, an attempt to construct a new research agenda, which is evolving under the rubric, “new directions in international business research”. This journal is now engaged in this process in its attempt to reposition European management as a form of international management and not just one practised within the border of the EU.

At this juncture it is well worth citing the words of one of the best regarded scholars of international business, John Dunning. In a keynote address to the International Federation of Scholarly Associations of Management (IFSAM) conference in Berlin in 2006, Dunning highlighted five factors which were major forces behind the evolution of this new agenda:

> “The advent and impact of globalisation; the widening of the economic and social objectives of both, individuals and organisations; an increase in various kinds of endemic or intrinsic market failure; growing participation of several new economies, notably China and India, on the world economic stage; and the demands of a changing and uncertain human environment.”

Dunning was at great pains to emphasise the human dimension in international business. International business, he was surely saying, cannot exist just to serve corporations; rather it must take account of

> “the human environment and its ecological content as it affects the motivation, learning processes and conduct of firms in the wealth creation process.”

He further suggested that international business scholarship had an important role to play “in helping to reconcile the economic benefits of globalisation with the social and cultural demands of local communities”, noting that

> “cross-border production and transactions need to be considered not only from a resource and capability viewpoint, but from an institutional, international and interface perspective.”

We see a notional link here between Dunning’s propositions and the convictions expressed above about the specific challenge facing European corporations concerning the management of inequality. At the same time, Dunning is, in effect, supporting Cheng’s demand for phenomenon-driven research rather than theory-driven research.

In the light of everything that we have discussed, we venture to suggest a number of areas where research into European-as-international corporations could contribute very productive to this phenomenon-driven research agenda:

- pathologies in organisations: causes and consequences of cultural shock, deteriorating performance and deteriorating health
- comparative studies on the influences and interrelations between culture, personality and wealth (income and wealth) and their effect on behaviour in European firms and organisations
- impact of different corporate cultures, of their changes during relocations and attempts of ‘reducing complexity’, on competitiveness and economic success in terms of sales and cash flows of firms
- hybrid forms in intra-European internationalisation of corporations
- managing inequalities in the context of globalisation, Americanisation and Europeanisation of firms.

4 Overview of contributions in the inaugural issue of EJIM

For the inaugural issue of EJIM we have aimed to bring together a compendium of contributions that aim, from the beginning, to set the tone of the journal and give it a distinctive voice among other leading journals in the field of international management. We are delighted to be able to publish this selection of invited papers from leading scholars, all of whom have, to quote our original call for papers, delivered contributions that

> "see the practice of international management from a European vantage point, adopt an interdisciplinary perspective, and have significant implications for practitioners and scholars."

We thank them all most warmly for sharing their immense knowledge and experience in our inaugural issue. Beyond that we are truly privileged to be able to be publish interviews with two of the world's most influential management scholars: Geert Hofstede, doyen of culture and management studies for more a quarter of a century, and Ikujiro Nonaka, who is renowned for his pioneering contributions to the study of knowledge and management.

In his interview with Fink, Hofstede reflects, among other things, on the relationship between national culture and corporate culture. For those who always felt that one is not a mirror of the other, Hofstede makes clear how he sees the distinction. His observation that national culture is the province of anthropology and that corporate culture is a pursuit of sociology is not only memorable in its own right, but may help to clarify for management scholars the problematical grey area between the two manifestations of culture in international management. In his interview with Holden, Nonaka reveals how, as a young man, he was accepted by Berkeley for a MBA programme 'by accident' and how this accident gave him the intellectual resources to realise his life's ambition, which was to develop a made-in-Japan theory of management of universal relevance.

In addition to the two interviews, we are publishing a selection of five conceptual papers and three technical papers. In the conceptual group, Cheng (UIUC Illinois) and Oesterle and Laudien (both of Bremen) discuss the way ahead for international management/business research. The two papers make an interesting contrast. Between them they refer to 80 publications, but only four authors are cited in both (Buckley and Casson, 1976; Buckley, 2002; Buckley and Lessard, 2005; Dunning, 1989, 2004, 2006; Kuhn, 1962, 1996; Shenkar, 2000, 2004). Yet they come to the same conclusion: international management research needs a strong focus on problem identification and problem solution rather than on theory confirmation. Cheng presses for more interdisciplinary studies and greater use of qualitative data, an appeal that finds resonance's in the Hofstede interview.

We find another overlap in thought between Magala (Erasmus Rotterdam) and Yolles (Liverpool John Moores). Both examine the nature of culture, which they see not as a constraint, but as a resource that is to be negotiated. For Magala not only is culture something to be negotiated, it is also the means of negotiation. In its latter mode culture in the globalised economy it has to take account of inequalities and defuse them. This calls for nothing less than "re-landscaping theories of cultures and organisations". Yolles, for his part, is concerned with the effects of how imposing culture on organisations makes them more complex, damaging their coherence and exposing their pathologies. For him, 're-landscaping' lies in the application of what he calls 'knowledge cybernetics schema'.

The fifth contributor to the conceptual section is Salvatore (Fordham, New York), who argues that

> "business and society are today in the midst of a revolution comparable to the Industrial Revolution in both scale and consequence."

He compares US, Japanese and European corporations in their ability to cope with the demands of this revolution and suggests that American firms seem to have a superior architecture and to be more creative and innovative than European and Japanese firms. EJIM would of course be interested in receiving contributions that contest this finding.

In our selection of technical papers we publish contributions by scholars from Turkey, the UK and USA. The subject matter is diverse: managerial subcultures in Turkey; managers' work-life balance in the UK; and emerging capitalism in Russia and China. The paper by Aycan (Koc, Istanbul) and Kirmanoğlu (Bilgi, Istanbul) investigates whether or not managerial subcultures exist in Turkey. The authors come to the – for them unexpected – conclusion that the affiliation of managers with Islamic business organisations, on one hand, and secular ones, on the other, did not significantly affect their basic values of corporate cultures and assumptions about employees. Seeing that it compares and contrasts Turkish management with several other business cultures, the paper is of special interest given

- Turkey's quest to be become a member of the EU
- the urgent need in Europe (and elsewhere) for more knowledge about management in Islamic societies.

The paper by Worrall (Wolverhampton) and Cooper (Lancaster) has a certain affinity with the contribution of Yolles. Here we see pathology in action. These authors show how, on the basis of extensive studies, the British pre-occupation with cost reduction through delayering, redundancy, downsizing and off-shoring has not brought about the hoped for productivity gains, but has taken its toll on managers' psychological and physical well-being. As many as 92% of UK managers work over their contract hours, but "productivity in the UK remains below that of other main European competitors". This is sobering reading for managers everywhere and for all those who espouse change led by cost reduction as either a necessary evil or beneficial for the organisation, or even beneficial for society as a whole.

No journal with our title could avoid including discussion of those two giants, Russia and China, with their contrasting approaches to the market economy. Authors Puffer, McCarthy (both Northeastern, Massachusetts) and Wilson (Wheaton College, Massachusetts) analyse and compare the evolution of capitalism in Russia and China, and the implications of these transitions for Europe. Both countries have embraced

> "economic dualism where the government continues to play a pivotal role in the direction of the economy while simultaneously allowing, or even fostering, a vibrant market sector."

But, for all the outward show of capitalism, given that both countries have

> "long traditions of autocratic leadership and heavy state involvement in the economy, the eventual adoption of a Western-style capitalism by Russia and China is highly uncertain and will remain so for the foreseeable future."

This contribution also contains a cautionary theme. It reminds us that universal convergence towards Western market systems is not a logical necessity, let alone an inevitable consequence, of globalisation.

We, the joint editors, commend EJIM to its first readers, hoping that it will quickly establish itself as a major new title in international management studies. Our last pleasant duty is to express gratitude to Dr. Vlad Vaimann, EJIM Executive Editor, and other editorial colleagues, for their advice and guidance as well to Elisabeth Beer for her expert administrative support.

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