

## Editorial

Wim Vandekerckhove<sup>1</sup>

Published online: 31 May 2018

© Springer International Publishing AG, part of Springer Nature 2018

This is the first editorial I am writing since the journal is included in the Thomson Reuters Web of Science database. Metrics are still in the process of development, but no doubt this has further expanded our readership.

The two previous issues were themed special issues<sup>1</sup> and with the expanded page budget since volume 17 (each issue is now thicker), what better moment could there be to introduce our new readers to Philosophy of Management than with this regular issue of the journal. I have tried a number of times to write down a delineation of what the journal is about. But I have given up on trying to word such a ‘vision statement’. The journal’s name says it, really: Philosophy of Management. In all its shapes, forms, sources and destinations.

The articles in this issue are a good start to get a taste of the journal’s breadth. There is a good variety in here, although these articles do not exhaust the full scope of what the journal has to offer.<sup>2</sup> As happens with regular issues, the articles that went to press were simply the ones in queuing order, cut off by the page budget. Hence I have made no interference in selecting them from the pool of ‘online first’ papers; it is a random sample as empirical scholars might say.

When reading the articles again, I noted down some of the philosophers and other thinkers (who might not silo-qualify as philosophers), which the authors of the articles make use of to develop their arguments and analyses. That list includes: Arendt, Aristotle, Bourdieu, Dewey, Freud, Habermas, Husserl, MacIntyre, Mintzberg, Morgan, Pettit, Pico della Mirandola, Pink,

---

<sup>1</sup>Issue 16.3 was a special issue on ‘Pragmatism, Art and Management’, guest-edited by Ruth Bereson and Pierre Guillet de Monthoux (Bereson and de Monthoux 2017);

Issue 17.1 was a special issue on ‘Philosophy of Innovation’, guest-edited by Vincent Blok (Blok 2018)

<sup>2</sup>For example, Issue 15.1 was a special issue entitled ‘Indian Philosophical Issues - Relevance to Contemporary Management’, guest-edited by Anindo Battacharjee, Bernard McKenna and Subhasis Ray (Bhattacharjee et al. 2016); and further cultural scope can be found in Hennig (2017) on applying Laozi’s Dao De Jing in business, or Oppenheim (2017) who makes way to integrate Buddhist and Jewish notions of morality into contemporary management methods.

---

✉ Wim Vandekerckhove  
W.Vandekerckhove@greenwich.ac.uk

<sup>1</sup> University of Greenwich, London, UK

Plato, Popper, Raz, Sartre, Scherer, Smith, and Wittgenstein. Not all of these would get along well, nor would there be much agreement in what are the right questions to ask or the line of inquiry to take. No surprise here for either management or philosophy scholars. Yet the articles in this issue can be seen to comprise two lines of work: philosophical questioning of management scholarship, and philosophical inquiry into management phenomena.

As I see it, four of the papers take the first line of work - philosophical questioning of management scholarship. *Arne Vilks* takes issue with the direction of intention and effect of action generally assumed in the ‘Invisible Hand’ thesis attributed to Adam Smith. The article ‘The inverse invisible hand and heuristics in managerial decision-making’ (Vilks 2018) makes the case that the invisible hand argument can be reversed. Rather than focusing on maximising self-interest and seeing others’ needs as secondary to that, Vilks argues that Smith’s arguments allow for our focus to be on satisfying others’ needs and trust that doing so will make others willing to satisfy our needs. It is a matter of heuristic, but what matters is how the reduction is reversed: the dominant economics and management scholarship argues that the other is reduced to the self, whereas Vilks argues that it makes a lot of sense to read Smith as reducing the self to the other. The article ‘The claims of Generalized Darwinism’ by *Rod Thomas* critiques the use of Generalized Darwinism in scholarship on organisational change and strategy. Thomas (2018) argues that Generalized Darwinism just isn’t Darwinist enough and thus becomes moot. Instead, Popper’s evolutionary epistemology is put forward as a perhaps more suited lens to study social and organisational change. The article by *Robert Albin* - ‘Two forms of responsibility: organizational and societal’ - performs an analytical exercise on the notion of responsibility. In my appreciation of Albin (2018), what we find here is a refreshing retake of the distinction between internal and external business ethics. Albin argues that inward responsibility within the organisation on the one hand, and responsibility outward from the organisation on the other hand, are two different types of responsibility because each is constituted by different conceptual configurations of authority and power. What makes this article a philosophical questioning of management scholarship is that Albin makes the point that there is no literature that compares these two types of responsibility. Within this line of inquiry I would also situate the article by *Michela Betta*: ‘Habits and the social phenomenon of leadership’. Betta (2018) shows how the leadership scholarship splits out into on the one hand leader-focused literature emphasising cognition, and on the other hand leadership-focused literature emphasising process. Betta uses two philosophical lenses to connect these two streams. With Dewey she argues that leadership can be understood as habits embedded in social life. From there it is fascinating how she closes the circle with Husserl, by threading intentionality in habits, which brings studies of leaders together with leadership studies.

The other four papers in this issue take the second line of inquiry - philosophical inquiry into management phenomena. Quite different phenomena are tackled here in quite different ways. The article ‘Cultural capital in the economic field: A study of relationships in an art market’ by *Lars Vigerland and Erik Borg* will no doubt stir some debate whether the sociological methodology of their empirical analysis warrants a place in a philosophy journal. It is my view that it does because of the theoretical lens they use. Bourdieu is not a thinker one can fit into a silo, not even if one tries hard: taking poststructural notions of capital to study the realism of a field. Vigerland and Borg (2018) use this to sketch the social ontology of autonomy, prestige, and honor emerging from interactions between artists, art galleries, art buyers and art museums. The article by *John Foster* inquires the faith-based management posture of family businesses in the article ‘Socially responsible management as a basis for sound business in the family firm’. Foster (2018) argues that a philanthropic management

posture is a possible basis for long-term sustainability of business. The article further posits that very often such a policy is rooted in faith: Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim or other, even a humanist ‘non-faith’ faith. *José María Ariso* provides an epistemological inquiry into error attribution in the article ‘On the role of the attributor in the blurred confines of modern error theory’. Ariso (2018) focuses on car manufacturing, positing that whether an unusual event will be cast either as an error or as an anomaly by an attributor, a person. The Wittgensteinian analysis here follows an inquiry into what roles these people play in organisations. Finally, *Loek Schönbeck* provides an existentialist imagination of what is going on in organisations in the article ‘Logic, morals and organizational states of affairs’. Schönbeck (2018) leads us through paradoxes and stage-turns as he tries to find out what *the* state of affairs *is* in an organization. It seems hierarchy leaves us no choice but to perpetually (re)imagine what that state might be.

Besides the two lines of inquiry I see in this issue, one could imagine a third line of work: inquiry into the philosophy of management scholarship. Perhaps our specific field of practical philosophy is somewhat still too young for that. But when it emerges, this journal will welcome that too.

## References

- Albin, R. (2018). Two forms of responsibility - organizational and societal. *Philosophy of Management* 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-017-0071-0>.
- Ariso, J.M. (2018). On the role of the attributor in the blurred confines of modern error theory. *Philosophy of Management* 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-017-0075-9>.
- Bereson, R., and P.G. de Monthoux. 2017. Poetic pragmatism and artful management. *Philosophy of Management* 16 (3): 191–196.
- Betta, M. (2018). Habits and the social phenomenon of leadership. *Philosophy of Management* 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-017-0076-8>.
- Bhattacharjee, A., B. McKenna, and S. Ray. 2016. Preface. *Philosophy of Management* 15 (1): 1–5.
- Blok, V. 2018. Philosophy of innovation: A research agenda. *Philosophy of Management* 17 (1): 1–5.
- Foster, M.J. 2018. Socially responsible management as a basis for sound business in the family firm. *Philosophy of Management* 17 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-017-0070-1>.
- Hennig, A. 2017. Applying Laozi’s Dao De Jing in business. *Philosophy of Management* 16 (1): 19–33.
- Oppenheim, L.H. 2017. Enduring values for contemporary issues: Integrating Buddhist and Jewish morality into contemporary management methods. *Philosophy of Management* 16 (1): 55–68.
- Schönbeck, L. (2018). Logic, morals and organizational states of affairs. *Philosophy of Management* 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-017-0073-y>.
- Thomas, R. (2018). The claims of Generalized Darwinism. *Philosophy of Management* 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-017-0060-3>.
- Vigerland, L. & Borg, E.A. (2018). Cultural capital in the economic field: A study of relationships in an art market. *Philosophy of Management* 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-017-0061-2>.
- Vilks, A. (2018). The inverse invisible hand and heuristics in managerial decision-making. *Philosophy of Management* 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-017-0058-x>.

**Wim Vandekerckhove** is Reader in Business Ethics at the University of Greenwich, and editor-in-chief of this journal.