

# From Grobal Management to Glocal Management: Latin American Perspectives as a Counter-Dominant Management Epistemology

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## Abstract

Management is known as a global phenomenon. However, its “global” façade tends to mean that management knowledge and practices are usually created and developed in Western countries—mainly the United States—to be transferred supposedly problem-free to other locations. This paper discusses how management has spread globally via Americanization, and is therefore a global phenomenon. From a Latin American perspective, this transfer can be problematic, especially as it tends to suppress locally developed knowledge and experiences. In denaturalizing global management, we propose glocal management as an alternative to the current Anglo-centric view of the field, and believe this new view can take into account hybridism and local realities. Copyright © 2010 ASAC. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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## Résumé

La gestion est, cela va sans dire, un phénomène mondial. Cependant, par «mondial» on sous-entend que le savoir et les pratiques en gestion sont généralement créés et mis au point dans les pays occidentaux, notamment les États-Unis, avant d'être transposés, prétendument sans heurts, dans d'autres pays. Cet article analyse comment la gestion s'est répandue dans le monde via l'américanisation, d'où son caractère mandial (global). D'un point de vue latino-américain, un tel transfert peut être d'autant plus problématique qu'il tend à nier les savoirs et les expériences construits localement. Aussi procédons-nous à la dénaturalisation de la gestion mandiale. Nous proposons que la perspective anglocentrique qui domine dans le domaine actuellement soit remplacée par la gestion glocale. Cette dernière prend en compte l'hybridisme et les réalités locales. Copyright © 2010 ASAC. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

**Mots-clés :** gestion mandiale, gestion glocale, américanisation, colonialisme, savoir en gestion

Studies on globalization have focused on two prevailing approaches. The first is a standard view of globalization as an economic phenomenon—a new stage in capitalist restructuring in which market forces are expanded through a neoliberal policy that tends to weaken nation states and deregulate markets (Gills, 2000). The second approach defines globalization as a multidimensional phenomenon whose dynamics go beyond economics and include political, technological, and cultural dimensions. In this second

approach, globalization can be seen as a process of deterritorialization of social activities, whereby social space is geographically reshaped so that territorial borders are no longer a barrier limiting economic, cultural, and political relations (Scholte, 2008).

This approach raises arguments both for and against globalization (Kellner, 2002). Those in favour of globalization see an end to borders as a positive thing, which will create new economic, political, and cultural opportunities. On the other hand, critics of globalization consider it a form of imperialism that takes advantage of the end of borders to impose market and capital logics throughout the world (Kellner, 2002). These two possibilities can lead us to ask: What is management's role in the global picture?

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As an area of academic knowledge and social practice, management is a globally widespread phenomenon. It is taught at almost all the world's universities, and practiced professionally and nonprofessionally in all corporations, governments, NGOs, and so forth. However, this "global" aspect also implies that management knowledge and practices generated and developed in Western countries, especially in the United States (US), can then be seamlessly transferred to other contexts (i.e., Jack, Calas, Nkomo, & Peltonen, 2008). The assumption is that knowledge in management can be universally applicable and is, supposedly, neutral. The resultant view is that management globalization is positive, and is indeed an opportunity created by globalization. On the other hand, if analyzed from a critical perspective and from the viewpoint of Latin America—a region that is a recipient of management knowledge and practices—the process can pose many problems. This is especially because globalized management tends to impact management knowledge and experiences developed locally.

The logic behind this impact is linked to a wider context in which epistemologies are based on a dividing line that creates a hierarchy of knowledge and that subordinates local thinking (which is considered as particular) to global thinking (which is considered universal). This unequal knowledge-power relationship, which undermines the particular knowledge of many colonized peoples, is called "coloniality of power" by Quijano (2000), and the manner in which this epistemological difference was (re)produced is called "abyssal thinking" by Santos (2007). Both of them define lines that divide experiences, knowledge, and social players into two groups that inhabit each side of the "abyss." On one side is the hegemonic, useful, intelligible, and visible knowledge produced by the North (or "First World"), and on the other is the inferior, useless or dangerous, and unintelligible knowledge produced by the South (or "Third World"), which is meant to be forgotten. In management terms, this means that the colonial meeting between Northern and Southern knowledge has created a naturalized view that useful, intelligible, and visible ways to manage an organization are necessarily found in the knowledge produced in the North. Here *North* refers to the countries in the Northern Hemisphere formed by Europe and the US and *South* refers to countries in the Southern Hemisphere, formed by regions that were colonized by Europe but which have not achieved the same level of "development" as the North (Santos, 1995).

Analyzing the dynamics of globalization, Ritzer (2003) discussed how this phenomenon can be seen to be composed of two conflicting mechanisms, that is, globalization and glocalization. The notion of globalization "focuses on the imperialistic desire—indeed, their [the imperialists] need—to impose themselves on various geographic areas. Their main interest is in seeing their power, influence, and (in some cases) profits *grow* (hence the term *globalization*)

throughout the world" (Ritzer, 2003, p.194). Globalization involves subprocesses such as Americanization, McDonaldization, and capitalism. Opposed to this notion, Ritzer (2003, p. 193–194) proposed the notion of glocalization, which is defined as "the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas. This view tends to emphasize global heterogeneity and tends to reject the idea that forces emanating from the West . . . are leading . . . cultural homogeneity." In this sense, globalization refers to pushes or forces for homogeneity, while glocalization refers to pressures towards hybridization.

To develop his analysis further, Ritzer (2003, p.194–195) also proposed the notion of *nothing* and *something*. He defined *nothing* as "a social form that is generally centrally conceived, controlled, and comparatively devoid of distinctive substantive content" while *something* is defined as "a social form that is generally indigenously conceived, controlled, and comparatively rich in distinctive substantive content." Nothing and something are not contradictory, but can only exist when compared to one another. This means that they are poles of a continuum (see Ritzer, 2003). Moreover, Ritzer (2003) used Max Weber's notion of elective affinity—meaning that there is not a law-like causal relationship between elements—to argue that globalization tends to come with nothing, while glocalization tends to go hand in hand with something. He also indicated that there can be an inversion whereby glocalization comes together with nothing and globalization pairs with something, but this is less common (see Ritzer, 2003).

To consider management from a Southern point of view means to reclaim the principle that the world is epistemologically diverse and that this diversity could enrich human capacity to manage and organize social life. It also means denouncing coloniality and reclaiming other types of knowledge that have resisted the colonial encounter and that today are deprived of a horizontal dialogue with Northern knowledge. It is to defend glocal perspective for management. In this sense, this article aims at denaturalizing management by exploring its diversity in the world, particularly regarding the way in which management is conceived and carried out in Latin American contexts and by exploring how this can help change current global management.

This article will show how management has spread around the world as a North American phenomenon, becoming characterized as an agent of Americanization. We argue that this Americanization of management led to the emergence of the global management perspective and, as a result, took on the aspect of "epistemic coloniality," as problems might emerge during its encounter with local realities. For this reason, based on ideas conceived by Latin American social scientists and on the experiences of local organizations, this article defends a glocal management approach that takes into consideration local realities and challenges knowledge produced in the North.

### Americanization as Grobal Management

Management, in whatever form, has a crucial role when it comes to handling organizational issues in complex societies, dating back to ancient civilizations. In fact, the exercise of any type of management has always been necessary for organized human life. At the end of the 19th century, business schools in France and Germany began teaching management, which subsequently had a strong influence on business schools in other European countries (see Kast, 1965; Üsdiken, 2004). For example, French management education was influential in Italy, Spain, and Turkey (Kipping, Üsdiken, & Puig, 2004), whilst the Germans had a distinct influence on the Nordic countries (Engwall, 2004).

Like management, organizations have played a crucial role since the dawn of humans' systematized life. The different forms taken by the state since its inception as well as coordinated forms of religious worship are types of organization that have shaped society. However, use of the term *organization* to designate entities with similar characteristics is relatively recent. According to Starbuck (2004, pp.1247–1248), *organization* changed from its original medical designation to the broader meaning of “equipped with a coordinated structure” in ancient Rome. After changing slightly during history, only in the 1930s did the term organization start to refer to a single category covering distinct elements such as factories and churches. Based on the historic events that occurred in the West, Starbuck (2003) argued that conditions for generalizing organizations stem from the significant technological and social changes that took place in society during the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Concomitantly, the legal concepts developed in that period attributed corporations with a “personality” of their own, granting organizations rights that went beyond their stakeholders.

What we call industrialization developed in the Anglo-Saxon world, and the corporate role model was also thought of as largely Anglo-Saxon. The Ford Motor Company, and later IBM, were considered organizational examples to be followed by many firms elsewhere in the world. The typical organization has been represented by rational bureaucracy grounded in standardized production and vertical integration (Clegg, Ibarra-Colado, & Rodriguez, 1999).

The above view of organization resembles an “entity-based perspective” (see Uhl-Bien, 2006), which is an approach in leadership perspectives that focuses on individuals as singular entities and is rather consistent to an epistemology of objective truth and a Cartesian clear separation between mind and nature. This view also purports that the individual has a conscience and a mind that is able to gather knowledge and therefore able to know, and that people have access to the content of their minds, because knowledge is the property of rational subjects (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 665). The interesting parallel here is that the US held that a manager has always been conceived as a rational

agent who seeks to maximize outputs. It seems that US management takes on Frederick Taylor's *homo-economicus* assumption about human nature (i.e., the individual is rational and acts to maximize his/her own benefits) as reality. Not only are managers thought to be rational in Anglo-Saxon management textbooks, but they are also portrayed as mainly white and male (see Mills & Hatfield, 1999), which by definition excludes other ethnicities and women from the management “ideal.” US organizations (such as Apple) and Anglo-Saxon management leaders are still considered paradigmatic examples of success despite recent turmoil in the Western economy and significant problems faced by corporations such as GM, British Petroleum, and Goldman Sachs and their senior management teams.

Based on this, it is possible to argue that the emergence of the term organization to designate something with singular characteristics deserving of study was a consequence of the Western industrialization process and of the growth of corporations into their modern form. As a result, other forms of organization have been excluded from management studies, which tend to prioritize corporations as a focus of analysis (Ibarra-Colado, 2006). While it is possible to argue that both management (in any form) and organization have been present since the outset of civilization, most didactic books about management consider US born engineer Frederick Taylor to be the father of the topic. Notwithstanding all evidence to the contrary, this field of study tends to consider management as a US invention. Management is even considered a US institution (Khurana, 2007). Therefore, management as a field of inquiry tends to reduce organization to one of its forms (corporations), which is paradigmatically a US notion. In so doing, it is no coincidence that Frederick Taylor is considered the father of the subject. In limiting itself to being a US phenomenon, modern management can be seen as a consequence of Americanization (Alcadipani, 2010).

Americanization is the propagation of US ideas, social patterns, customs, language, capital, and industries around the world (Williams, 1962). It refers to a deliberate process by which basic US values are disseminated worldwide (Gerstle, 1989). Broadly speaking, it consists of the implementation of an “Americanist ideology.” This ideology can be understood as a pragmatic mindset and an intentional powerful weapon used with a clear intent to overcome other mindsets, be they native or not. (Tota, 2000, p. 19). Following Tota (2000), Alcadipani (2010) argued that the Americanist ideology became clearly consolidated at the beginning of the 20th century and is comprised of five basic elements: (a) the liberal state, which is the social structure necessary for the Americanization of a nation; (b) democracy, another obvious element of the American ideology and one of those in which the rhetoric of Americanization is most strongly founded; (c) progressionism, which is clearly associated with rationalism and the idea of a world of plenty which, according to Alcadipani, can be understood in terms of a

mythical significance, such as progress, science, technology, efficiency, scientific administration, and the North-American standard of living; (d) utilitarianism, which is the notion of utility as a parameter for the value of things, and tends to manifest itself through two aspects: pragmatism in dealing with life, and a philosophy of industriousness (compulsive labour to the detriment of leisure and idleness) in making a living; and (e) market economy and mass society. The corollary of Americanization and the fertile ground of progressivism on which it is based is obviously an economic territory marked by free-market rules and whose development logic lies in mass and consumer production. This is consistent with the start of Americanization in 1920, which was a period of great economic expansion marked by the influence of John Calvin Coolidge, Frederick Taylor, and Henry Ford on intensive mechanization and market growth (Alcadipani, 2010).

In the Old Continent, Americanization was boosted after the Second World War, when the Marshall Plan—the economic aid given to the US in order to rebuild Europe after the war—played a prominent role in making business in the continent emulate US models. The first step in the direction of the Americanization of management education in Europe was via “training inside industries,” which was supervised by the US, and came with the package for industrial reconstruction at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s (Leavitt, 1957). Although the Marshall Plan did not reach Latin America, similar efforts towards Americanization occurred in the region. For instance, the Brazilian-American Committee on Industrial Education (CBAI) was set up through an agreement between the governments of both countries. The agreement lasted from 1946 to 1963 and aimed at developing a US style of technical training for Brazilian industrial workers (Amorim, 2007).

The Marshall Plan also encouraged European higher education management studies to adopt curricula based on the US (Kieser, 2004), while academics and industrialists in the continent were being wowed by US industrialization. A significant wave of Europeans went to the US to study management and grasp the prominence of US companies. Institutions such as the Ford Foundation and the Harvard Business School played important roles in this process (Leavitt, 1957). Moreover, in this same period companies from Europe were able to obtain loans from the US as long as they adopted US management principles and methods (Kieser, 2004). Thus, the process of reconstructing Europe after the Second World War had important consequences in relation to the dissemination of US management ideas and practices in the continent. A similar process continued during the Cold War, and was strongly affected by management teaching and research in the US and abroad (e.g., Mills & Hatfield, 1999). For example, management teaching organizations had already been created in Germany at the end of the 1800s and beginning of the 1900s, yet US management thought barely influenced these institutions before the

Second World War (Kieser, 2004). After the war, however, US management and free-market principles had a strong influence on German managers and academics.

US management and education models did not only spread throughout the countries directly involved in the war. These models also had an impact on the Americanization of management in India, where the Ford Foundation acted aggressively, undermining local management practices and producing academic knowledge that sought to advocate multinational rather than local priorities (Mir, Mir, & Srinivas, 2004; Srinivas, 2009). US education in management has also worked as a hegemonic discourse in the East (see Neal & Finlay, 2008), where the term *American* appears in universities such as the Lebanese American University and where its models have been applied in countries such as Israel (Frenkel & Shenhav, 2003).

As noted before, this kind of influence was also felt in Latin America, where, for example, US management models and thought started to influence Brazil before the Second World War (see Caldas & Alcadipani, 2006). It is important to mention that all of Latin America was submitted to an intentional Americanization process during the war era. This was because fascist influence had grown in the region to such an extent that it began to be considered a potential threat to US security and interests (Tota, 2000). It has been stressed that among the many instruments used by the US to Americanize Latin America was economic aid—providing that US productivity models (e.g., Taylorism) were adopted by local companies and public organizations—and the establishment of exchange programs between academics of various areas (Alcadipani, 2010; Caldas & Alcadipani, 2006). Additionally, the US government financed its multinational companies in order to promote the American lifestyle as a model for Latin-American families through product advertisements (Tota, 2000). At the same time, the number of US multinational companies in Brazil significantly increased (McMillan, Gonzalez, & Erickson, 1964).

The Americanization of Latin America became deeper after the end of the Second World War. In accordance with US management knowledge and practices, graduate courses on the subject were implemented in the region. Argentina's first management degree course was created in 1958 at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, and its professors and a few students travelled to the US to attend some modules at top US universities in order to learn the latest developments in the field. This knowledge was considered crucial for the “modernization” of Argentina (Gantman & Rodrigues, 2008; Rodrigues & Gantman, 2010). Brazil's first management school, the Escola Superior de Negócios (ESAN), was created at the end of the 1940s by a Jesuit priest who had direct contact with the Harvard Business School. ESAN's central theme was that education should be an instrument of development (Bertero, 2006). However, ESAN's importance was overshadowed by the foundation of the Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública de Rio de Janeiro

(FGV-EBAP) in 1951 and the Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo (FGV-EAESP) in 1954. Both schools were created by the Fundação Getúlio Vargas, a foundation set up in 1944 to help modernize Brazil's public services. FGV-EAESP was designed to be a business school, and in an agreement between the Brazilian and US governments, the Fundação Getúlio Vargas and Michigan State University played a crucial role in its creation. It was agreed that Michigan State University would send a delegation to Brazil for a period of just over ten years to implement the business school in São Paulo (Alcadipani, 2010).

In the 1960s, Fundação Getúlio Vargas received funding from the Ford Foundation to develop didactic material (especially textbooks, see Alcadipani & Cooke, 2010) and send students to study in US business schools, mainly Cornell and Stanford Universities. All newly-developed FGV-EAESP curricula heavily used US management theories and practices. They were later used as a model for other business schools that appeared in southern and northern Brazil (Bertero, 2006). FGV-EAESP also began to receive innumerable visits from representatives of other Latin American universities who wished to open business schools in their own countries. Later the school also began to receive academics for training from different Brazilian states as well as from other Latin American countries (Taylor, 1968). North American management was considered synonymous with modern management thought and practices, and diametrically opposed to traditional Brazilian forms of management leaning towards patrimonialism, formalism, patriarchy, and so forth, which were deeply-rooted in rural Brazil (Vizeu, 2008). While European productivity models were very influential in the origin of business and commerce in Brazil, the US model rose as a solution to modernize and support the country's industrial development.

Broadly speaking, the Ford Foundation and US government agencies (e.g., United States Agency for International Development or USAID) had a significant influence on the adoption of US management practices worldwide (cf. Leavitt, 1957; Mir et al., 2004). Specifically, foundations like Ford and Rockefeller have played an important part in disseminating US values, even to the extent of being considered an exercise in cultural imperialism (Arnové, 1980; Parmar & Cox, 2010).

The emergence of US management as global phenomenon was sparked by some specific conditions post WWII. Based on Westwood and Jack (2008), Alcadipani (2010) argued that the first of these conditions was growth in US business personified by transnational companies. Within this process the multinationals began to face management challenges in foreign countries, such as having to deal with different cultures and economic and social conditions. This fostered the need for "new" management knowledge. Another important element in the emergence of management as a global phenomenon was the Cold War. The fear of the global spread of communism led the US government

to act directly and rigorously against this threat. This was particularly apparent in US universities, where the government played an assertive role in controlling what could be read by and taught to students (see Mills & Hatfield, 1999). In other words, action against the "communist threat" also had an impact on what could be thought, read, and discussed in American universities (cf. Westwood & Jack). This is particularly relevant because, as mentioned before, various management courses emulated those of US universities. Outside of the US, economic development initiatives with US aid funds were important in containing the aforementioned communist threat. These initiatives tended to impose the adoption of US management models as "desirable" for the nation that got the aid fund. In so doing, management was not only of particular relevance for facing the threat of Soviet expansionism, but also for promoting US values and management worldwide. Finally, the independence process of some African and Asian countries affected the emergence of global management. This was because the US feared these countries could turn to communism in their attempt at nation building and organization, especially as most of the new independent states had been under European control and, after decolonialization, wished to avoid the influence of former rulers.

The US state thus tried to influence societies all over the world, offering Americanist ideology as an alternative. As such, it was presented as a modernization discourse for the South. This was sponsored by the action of international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In general terms, Americanization has tended to be made synonymous with modernization (Alcadipani, 2010). It is therefore not surprising that management initiatives have come before the South's development (see Westwood & Jack, 2008). Indeed, it could be said that management was created to work for US interests (Alcadipani, 2010). In fact management can be understood as an outcome of US foreign and domestic policy as well as an inherent part of the Cold War's grand narrative (Westwood & Jack, 2008, p. 383) in being an instrument of Americanization (Alcadipani, 2010).

All of this suggests that the pervasiveness of the US in the field of management is not coincidental, but the result of a long process in which government agencies and non-government organizations had major involvement (Dunning, 1989; Vernon, 1994). Under the heading of Americanization, it is thus possible to include the proliferation of the US industrial model, US management methods, and the later proliferation of the US consumption model (cf. Ritzer & Ryan, 2004). The wide spread of new means of consumption (e.g., WalMart, McDonald's, Hard Rock Café, Starbucks, super-stores, theme parks, etc.) is for Ritzer and Ryan (2004) a strong sign that Americanization is very prevalent in the contemporary world, suggesting that management is a channel by which US business models and ideas can reach worldwide significance.

US management models and ideas are centrally conceived and distributed worldwide while seeming to lack a distinctive substance, which resembles the definition of *nothing* (Ritzer, 2003), as presented earlier. Thus, based on what has been argued so far in this section, and taking into account the spread of US management from Europe to India and from Brazil to Lebanon, it is possible to argue that US management became globalized as a form of nothing mainly after the Second World War. This is because, as discussed here, there was an attempt to impose US management in various geographical areas, which is the main element of globalization. As Americanization is one of the key modes by which nothing is globalized (Ritzer, 2003; Ritzer & Ryan, 2004), US management can be thought of as *grobal management*.

A possible consequence is that grobal management could be contributing to the establishment of an epistemological coloniality (Ibarra-Colado, 2006), as is argued below.

### Grobal Management and Epistemic Coloniality

One of the ways that grobal management knowledge has been generated is under the banner of “Third World Modernization,” and this has influenced concrete attempts to develop the nations of the South. Development Management and Administration refers to a body of knowledge articulated under the dominion of institutions such as the World Bank and agencies such as the International Monetary Fund. The promise of modernization and the fight against poverty and inequality bring with them the inconvenient aspects of imposing a particular development vision and a neoliberal agenda of action that undermines native management models (Cooke, 2004). More importantly, the view is that the South supplicates for managerialism implemented by the North’s institutions (see Cooke, 2010). This suggests that grobal management tends to work in a unilateral manner, from the centre to the margins, and at the same time leans towards ethnocentrism (Boddeyn, 1999), parochialism (Jack et al., 2008), and above all, bases itself on the US model (Shenkar, 2004). The consequences of this can be rather problematic, especially when grobal management associates itself with dirty governmental practices (see Imas, 2010) and given that it can also influence public management (cf. Imasato et al., 2010).

In fact, the logic embedded in US management is related to that of colonialism (cf. Frenkel & Shenav, 2003), and colonialism creates severe consequences for the colonized. The logic becomes clear when applied to specific interactions based on political and cultural struggles that materially overlap, implying that it always depends on the specificities that turn it into a complex concept (Moraña, Dussel, & Jáuregu, 2008). Despite this apparent complexity, colonialism tends to refer to a process of subordination and

suppression of native characteristics (Lloyd, 2000), which is mainly achieved by the imposition of Western, and therefore “modern,” ways and social structures (Schwarz, 2000), as well as the construction of depreciative images of the other (see Aparicio & Chávez-Silverman, 1997). The focus in this paper is on a particular manifestation of colonialism, that is, epistemic coloniality (Ibarra-Colado, 2006), which is a form of colonization related to the process whereby scientific knowledge enables integration of native elites within the dominant Anglo-Eurocentric ideology model (see Ibarra-Colado, 2006). As such, this is a process that helps build the notion of Northern knowledge as superior to that of the South (cf. Alcadipani, 2010).

Latin America is a privileged location for observing the translation of grobal management knowledge in the South (cf. Ibarra-Colado, 2006). For instance, presently, management education, academic research, and practices in Latin America are strongly linked to management knowledge produced in the US, whose content is used as a source of internal legitimization—that is, if the content is from the US, then it must be good (Alvarez, Erione, & Mazza, 1997). This process is deeply rooted in the way academic management institutions were created and developed in the region as noted above. Broadly speaking, the transfer of US institutions to the Southern countries is related to an ethnocentric vision of local realities, as it aims at influencing local agents to develop a foreign mentality that defends modernization (Americanization via Globalization) and depreciates its own accomplishments and local characteristics (Alcadipani, 2010).

However, hybridism is a common occurrence when US management mixes with local reality (see Zeitlin & Herrigel, 2000), which spreads globally under the auspices of US government and nongovernment organizations. Grobal management has been disseminated throughout the world as something that will bring modernity to “underdeveloped regions,” as mentioned before, and which is based on a stereotypical view of the other, as seen in intercultural analyses about management (Alcadipani & Crubellate, 2003). In fact, there are simple examples of management (US) as epistemic coloniality (cf. Ibarra-Colado, 2006). Although we hear the terms Indian management and Chinese management, we never hear the term US management, as specification is not necessary when talking about the US (Alcadipani, 2010). Additionally, undoubtedly one of the most influential tools in grobal management education is didactic books produced in the US, whose narratives revolve around a masculine, white, and liberal view of reality (Mills & Hatfield, 1999). These textbooks tend to have a hegemonic discourse and can be seen as a rather efficient form of colonization (Goodstein, 1981; Mir, 2003).

While we continue to argue that management is not an essentially US phenomenon, the fact that management has spread from Brazil to the Arab world suggests otherwise. This reinforces the argument that the Americanization of

management refers to a type of epistemic colonialism (Ibarra-Colado, 2006). However, just as colonial practices are often confronted by resistance in local settings and are therefore always being translated into something different (Young, 2003), grobal forms are transformed when they meet local realities, producing unique outcomes (Ritzer, 2003). This can be seen in the case of grobal management. During the initial stages of the Americanization of management in Europe, there were concerns that US management knowledge and practices were not appropriate for the reality in which they were being implemented (see Leavitt, 1957). Caldas and Wood (1997) analyzed the implementation of a “global standard” of management practices in Brazil in order to argue that when these techniques are adopted by local companies, three reactions are common: (a) they are approved for purposes of appearances only, which is in keeping with the idea of practices adopted as myth and ceremony; (b) they have to be adapted to local conditions, which means they do not work as modelled; or (c) they frustrate local managers who are unable to make them work as they should. Soria (1999) addressed the failure of a project sponsored by the World Bank aimed at combating poverty in Mexico, whose universal values adopted for social programs such as universal coverage, impartiality, efficiency, and community participation were inappropriate for the Mexican reality. Generally speaking, empirical research and comparative studies have shown that international recipes have never been entirely applicable to local realities (see Clegg, Ibarra-Colado, & Rodriguez, 1999).

In an attempt to justify the inefficiency and inefficacy of global management practices in local contexts, stereotyping the “Third World” as less developed, less modern, and less rational than the traditional Western economies is a common occurrence (Alcadipani, 2010; Clegg et al., 1999). In other words, that grobal management practices do not work correctly in the South is attributed to its “backwardness” and nothing else. This is implicit in the terms historically used by the West to designate these geographical areas, placing them in a hierarchy of “First World and Third World” or “developed countries” and “developing countries” (Alcadipani, 2010). Studies into intercultural management have been doing this for a long time. Although in theory this discipline is organized around understanding similarities and differences in management practices in different cultural contexts, in practice it tends to be a cultural product of a Western-central mindset (cf. Kwew, 2003). Generally speaking,

theories of cross-cultural difference (and the frequent attempts by such theories to typologize cultures into universalistic dimensions), may be seen as implicitly claiming privileged access to the metalanguage of cultural definitions, and in so doing to collude, wittingly or unwittingly, in the ongoing reproduction of (neo-)colonial domination. (Kwew, 2003, p. 122)

In reality, the study of culture has enduring ties to colonialist practice. Ethnographic reports from the “New World” were quite significant for colonial powers such as Great Britain, France, and Holland (see Prasad, 2003).

Divergences grow when grobal management practices meet local realities and also appear when grobal concepts are used for analyzing specific contexts. This seems to be particularly problematical when empty—as a form of nothing (Ritzer, 2003)—grobal management notions developed in countries of the North are used to explain realities in the South. For example, as noted above, for Ibarra-Colado (2006), the notion of organization is very problematic as there is a tendency to homogenize different realities. This notion tends to be annexed to a particular form of organization (private companies), and rarely represents any reality other than instrumental rationality and market logic. In this manner the term *organization* is very often thought of as neutral, granting a technical character to any organizational reality. All the while, the substantial differences between churches, armies, factories, governments, corporations, and political parties are eliminated under this term. In this sense, the term also tends to neglect the distinctness and problems of local contexts, such as places in Latin America where modernization as Western thought, as is usually implied, is an occurrence without significance. More importantly, the manner in which organization is represented and conceived in the literature of the Anglo-Saxon world tends to consider the organizations of the South as imperfect expressions of organizations from the North (Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

Therefore, in general terms the relationship between North and South has been established according to a logic that produces (grobal) management theories and practices that aim, in an emblematic manner, to submit the so-called peripheral countries to a modernization process that greatly resembles the logic of colonization and grobalization. Thus, grobal management has a tendency to ignore other geographical, cultural, and economic realities, and has difficulty in dealing with contexts beyond its place of origin. In a nutshell, grobal management seems inadequate for the reality of different parts of the world. This suggests there is a discrepancy between (grobal) management theories and their different uses and applications throughout the world, meaning in fact that management can assume a glocal (Ritzer, 2003) character. A crucial step towards overcoming the discrepancy usually imposed by grobal management is to try not to produce knowledge that is imposed from a specific place (North) onto another (South), or which tends to silence and exclude subordinate voices (Mignolo, 2000). In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to develop a management body of knowledge that takes into consideration all pluralities, diversities, and localities, using Ritzer (2003) terminology to attempt development of a glocal management perspective. In the next item, we try to glean what this approach to management might be by analyzing some

experiences in Latin America that could be seen as examples of glocal management.

### Towards Glocal Management

Latin America is very complex in economic terms. It has countries and regions that rely mainly on agriculture and on highly industrialized places like Brazil and Mexico. In some locations workers live in slave-like conditions, while skyscrapers in cities such as São Paulo house the regional headquarters of companies like Unilever and McKinsey. The ethnic origins of Latin America are very diverse, ranging from African to indigenous and European, not to mention the posterior migratory waves that brought other people to the region. This suggests that Latin America is a truly complex, hybrid, and multifaceted continent. In view of these complexities, to say that there is a Latin-American management style (cf. Behrens, 2007) or a Latin-American approach to management is a simplistic stereotype that certainly ends up creating a tropicalized version of the continent (cf. Aparicio & Chávez-Silverman, 1997). In fact, the notion of Latin America is quite problematic (see Mignolo, 2005), as it ends up as the negative personification of the US' own image, which has practical consequences for both (see Feres, 2010).

We do not deny the existence of management initiatives that have been emerging in the region and that have characteristics that tend to be neglected by North-based management. Our purpose is to explore the ways in which Latin America can contribute to making management less grobal and more glocal. In the search for something typically Latin American that can contribute to a view of glocal management, one possibility could be to use locally produced academic knowledge about the field. However, the vast majority of management knowledge produced in the region lacks authenticity and originality, tending to be a poorly made copy of management theories developed in the North (Alcadipani, 2010; Ibarra-Colado, 2006). In Argentina the production of management knowledge has significant shortcomings in terms of originality and innovation, and tends to imitate patterns, jargon, and schemas from the North (see Gantman & Parker, 2006). The situation is similar in Brazil, which is the country with the largest number of management schools in the region (see Rodrigues & Carrieri, 2001). It is common to see management work from Latin America published in its original language, but with references almost entirely made up of English-language articles from the main periodicals of the US (cf. Vergara, 2001) and Europe (cf. Rodrigues & Carrieri, 2001). It is no exaggeration to say that most management and organizational knowledge in the region has tended to function as a mechanism of epistemic colonization (cf. Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

This tendency is tied to the image that has been constructed about knowledge produced in the North and the

South. As shown earlier, the strong presence of the US in Latin America has contributed significantly towards widening the gulf that separates knowledge produced in the South (seen as subordinate, useless, invisible, and unintelligible) from that produced in the North (seen as hegemonic, useful, visible, and intelligible). An initiative to deconstruct this image has been developed by a group of Latin American thinkers (see Moraña et al., 2008), who argue there is a need to go beyond the First World/Third World duality so that subordinated voices can be heard (Escobar, 2004).

To this end, recognition that the West's capacity to offer solutions is subject to serious doubt and that its crises can be seen as a crisis in its ways of thinking is needed (cf. Escobar, 2004). Recognition that the West's development has been significantly based on coloniality and on the imposition of Western ways of thinking and living in the world is also needed (Mignolo, 2003). In fact, even after the official end to the colonial system, a new empire (cf. Hardt & Negri, 2000) has imposed norms such as free markets and cultural notions of consumption on a global level and as the only form of globalization. It is possible to establish a direct parallel with grobal management, but few authors from the Northern countries have produced "grobal" knowledge in this field.

In this sense, the triumph of Western modernity lies in the imposition of a particular local history and design (Western) on a global scale, which has rendered other histories and ways of life as inferior (cf. Escobar, 2004). Analogically speaking, the imposition and acceptance of "grobal" knowledge in Latin American management could be seen as subordinating local management practices. This is an attempt to see modernity through the lenses of coloniality. It allows us to question the character of modernity and its subproduct "globalization" in order to unblock the potential for thinking of alternatives (Alcadipani, 2010). Thus the basic assumption is that there is no modernity without coloniality and that the latter is an element constituting the former (cf. Mignolo, 2003). What is more, the other side of globalization and modernity/coloniality is touched by modernity, but with an exterior constructed as different in a hegemonic discourse (cf. Escobar, 2004). The task is to collaborate with the epistemologies of the North based on perspectives of thought that have been developed in the South (Mignolo, 2000). This means there is a need to create local histories and narratives that seek a different logic and that describe local histories instead of "grobal" designs (cf. Mignolo, 2000).

Mignolo's (2000) view refers to the need to take into account local hybridism, which tends to assume a unique form. The grobal should neither be considered total nor absolute. As noted above, colonial practices are often confronted by resistance in local settings and are always translated into something different (Young, 2003). In what seems to be a similar argument, Ritzer (2007) used the glocal notion to refer to the interpenetration of the global and the



local, resulting in unique outcomes in different parts of the world. This view tends to emphasize heterogeneity and reject that the forces emanating from the West are leading to homogeneity. It takes into account that local realities produce unique and meaningful artifacts, practices, and knowledge (Ritzer, 2003, 2007). If we want to challenge grobal management, we need to think of glocal alternatives.

Thinking of alternatives to the “grocal” implies overcoming two obstacles—one methodological and the other ideological (cf. Ortiz, 1996). In the first case, there is a tendency in literature to construct two separate poles of analysis. One pole embraces globalization as a process of cultural homogenization whereby a single system (e.g., consumer culture) prompts a levelling of the playing field on a planetary scale that could eliminate differences between peoples (cf. Levitt, 1983; see also Ritzer, 2003). The second pole of analysis denies the first and contests any attempts at unification by claiming that in a fragmented world, diversification of tastes and the decentralization of management (e.g., the passage from Fordist production to flexible production) will create a big mosaic comprised of small segments (cf. Harvey, 1990). Attempting to go beyond this dichotomy, Ortiz (1996) used the term *muldialization*. We need to accept that we are not talking about two distinct processes—one leaning towards a totality and another towards the particular. What we have is a diversity of forms in which both processes are part of a dynamic that prioritizes individualization, autonomy, and the assertion of particular aspects without ignoring that these apparently disconnected elements are part of a wider network of relations in which the whole is expressed through the individuality of its parts. For Ritzer (2007), they are constituent elements of globalization. Therefore, muldialization enables us to think beyond the traditional dichotomies that homogenize or particularize overlapping realities (Alcadipani, 2010; Ortiz, 1996).

The second obstacle is ideological. There is a narrow view on globalization (here seen as grobalization) as something irremediable and irreversible that affects all of us in the same way (see Bauman, 1998). This point of view is present in (a) consumption, where product globalization corresponds to a type of “humanization” in which various peoples have access to the goods they “wish” to have; (b) technology, which classifies places as “backwards” or “advanced,” according to their technological base; and (c) politics, which makes the Nation State obsolete and incapable of regulating market forces and turns the free-market into an ideal model for economic achievement (Ortiz, 1994). Hence, grobalization becomes a synonym for modernity and everything that is not in accordance with it is seen as suspicious, archaic, and as a mere taste for the past stretching back to the remotest times of humanity. The ideology behind these views values the status quo by hiding the interests of the groups that preach it (cf. Ortiz, 1994). One way to overcome

this narrow view is to consider globalization as an expression of muldialization and only as one among many possibilities for grasping the multiple realities that comprise the world. From this perspective, muldialization does not imply colonizing the other; it accepts the possibility of coexistence between different realities and localities (Ortiz, 2006).

Although the muldial perspective is considered from a Southern point of view, it is not exclusive to it. It can also be applied to the North, in the sense of incorporating critical thought into a new geo-cultural and epistemological place (Mignolo, 2000). Therefore, thinking about muldialization enables us to consider Latin America not only as a passive recipient of Western knowledge, but as producer of knowledge for the West. Ritzer’s (2003, 2007) glocalization term encompasses the idea of mundialization as long as both highlight the importance of heterogeneity in local and specific settings, and the uniqueness of local contexts. At the same time, glocal positions itself as opposite to grobalization. This offers a strong platform from which we can focus on the relational nature of management, a key point discussed in this paper.

In terms of management, this means there is the need to go beyond grobal management in order to produce a glocal management field where the plurality of different regions and histories are respected. In this manner the South does not act as a mere recipient of Northern management, but as a producer of management knowledge that can be incorporated into the local conditions and cultures. As such, it is necessary to construct a new way of learning and discussing management in Latin America (and in the South), as well as a modality that takes into consideration local practices without trying to impose international models and theories.

In the scope of global business, especially when it comes to the actions of multinational corporations in other countries, the glocal perspective comes across a very interesting parallel between the concepts of “ethnocentric predisposition” and “polycentric predisposition” developed by Chakravarthy and Permulter (1985). Ethnocentric predisposition refers to traditional management practices that are guided by the values and interests of the country where the organization is based. Meanwhile, polycentric predisposition breaks away from the traditional view and seeks to adapt its management to the local practices of the countries in which it operates. Thus, polycentric multinational companies are mostly concerned with their legitimacy in the countries where they operate, even if it means losing some profit (Chakravarthy & Permulter). In this sense, if talking about a glocal management that is concerned with diversity, the polycentric approach can be favourably used for the incorporation of local realities.

Another crucial factor that helps us think of management from a Southern point of view is the existence of multiple forms of organization. In grobal management, organization does not simply boil down to the traditional

corporation model (Ibarra-Colado, 2006), while in glocal management, organization takes on a wider dimension as a phenomenon that exceeds the sphere of the state, of civil society, and of the economy (Böhm, 2006). It is not restricted to corporations linked to the economic sphere. Thus, glocal management can be considered based on different places and different ways of organization that can arise in the South. Based on some of the Brazilian management/organization experiences that have occurred outside the global scope, we can think of glocal management as a perspective present in the management of social organizations, the state, and corporations.

In civil society, there are different organization models that have been developed by Latin-American social movements (e.g., Spence & Shenkin, 2008). Escobar (2004) argued that these movements are based on complex forms of decentralization, self-organization, and empowerment that interact with transnational action networks. This is clearly contrary to the way society in general is traditionally organized: around order, centralism, and hierarchy. Many of these social movements (e.g., feminism, pacifism, and environmentalism) have been strongly influenced by Liberation Theology, an epistemology developed in Latin America based on civil society's capacity for self-organization, and based on pastoral work, adapting theological thinking to social reality and a dialectic relationship between these three levels (Scherer-Warren, 1990). An example of organization based on this approach is the Landless Workers Movement (MST), which in addition to adopting self-organization models and the empowerment of its militants, uses the mystique (something that is not rational) as an emotional element to build a collective identity and to preserve rural cultural roots against globalization's homogenizing process and urban way of life (see Issa, 2007).

In the case of the state, an innovative experiment in public management that developed in Latin America was Brazil's Participative Budget Program (OP). This program stemmed from public activists and municipal government, and its main objective was to create a public budget process that could count on direct action by citizens in the management of public policy (Avritzer, 2002). With the administrative decentralization of the 1980s, state and municipal levels gained greater autonomy, which allowed more flexibility in trying out new models of public management. It was in this context that the OP was implemented for the first time in 1989 at Porto Alegre City Hall (this was the same city that hosted the World Social Forum in 2001). The Porto Alegre OP experiment was considered a success and has been adopted by several other local authorities (Wampler, 2008). In practice, the OP works through meetings organized by the local authority, where citizens and public managers discuss the allocation of resources according to the community's interests and priorities (Wampler & Avritzer, 2005). This management model is an innovative break from the traditional model in representative democ-

racy (see Dahl, 1998), where decisions for public budgets, for example, are made exclusively by the bureaucracy and elected politicians. This means that as well as the OP being an alternative, it is a powerful public management control instrument that prevents fraud and misappropriation (Wampler, 2008).

In the economic sphere, the organizational format is the traditional "Corporation," seen as the main instrument for economic growth, the circulation of merchandise, and even the competitive advantage of countries (cf. Porter, 1990). In this regard, Latin America has experience in participative management that challenges the main preconceptions of traditional management. A case in point is Semco, a Brazilian company led by Ricardo Semler, a former student of the traditional Harvard Business School MBA. On taking control at Semco, Semler oversaw several changes that made it into an entirely atypical company: no secretaries, no uniforms, no executive perks, and the hours and even salaries decided by the employees themselves (Semler, 1993). In this atypical environment, a model of industrial democracy developed through factory committees can have a major influence on business. Through the participation of committees, workers began to take responsibility for their activities and set their own production targets. This led Semler (1989) to question in earnest the role of and need for managers at several levels in the company; he even went so far as to eliminate managers he considered redundant and who did not add value to the business. The central point of the Semco case is that the effort to make the company more democratic, with a system of horizontal relationships, began from the bottom up and not the other way around as is usual in traditional management. The factory committees had a fundamental role in the changes at Semco, turning it into an example of alternative management.

In all the experiences discussed previously, there is one point of convergence: the focus on participation. It is important to emphasize that this same point was identified by Spink (1997) in focus group research at the end of the 1980s, with two groups of managers at companies based in Brazil. The objective of the research was to evaluate how these managers perceived management "as it is" and "how it should be." In both groups of managers the common perception was that management is vertical, hierarchical, authoritarian, and self-serving. In terms of what management should be, the group of young managers (23 to 28) openly said that management should be democratic, participative, and open. Experienced managers (35 to 45) hoped for a more open and participative management, but inserted into a structure of objectives, results, leadership, and professionalism. Considering that young managers will be the experienced managers of tomorrow, we can note a marked trend towards participative management. Furthermore, glocal is usually related to the diffusion of *something*, using Ritzer's (2003) terminology. As can be seen from the discus-

sion here, glocal management refers to practices that have substantive essence.

Based on the discussion presented so far, some significant differences can be pointed out between grobal management and the proposed glocal management (Table 1). On one hand, grobal management can be linked to the epistemologies of the North with an approach influenced by globalization and its emphasis on the homogenization of business information and practices that occur based on global designs that follow a predisposition that is ethnocentric, principally focused on the US, whose view of organization boils down to the economic sphere, which is inhabited by corporations, which are run according to a management that is autocratic of a bureaucratic stripe; on the other hand, the perspective of glocal management is linked to epistemologies of the South with a predominance of muldialization and its emphasis on the diversity of knowledge and practices based on local histories that follow a predisposition that is polycentric, influenced by multiple countries whose vision of organization passes through state, social, and economic spheres and is managed on lines that are democratic and participative. Thus we have glocal management as an alternative thought in the South, which can contribute towards renewing management based in the North without the need to impose models but instead adjust to local problems and interests.

In this sense, although the alternative models of organization and production mentioned above have emerged in Latin America and represent a possibility of truly contributing to the world field of management, the region is characterized by the hybridism of its organizations (cf. Calás & Arias, 1997). These organizations have witnessed the growing presence of traditional companies throughout the world, while firms from the region itself have also spread beyond borders and gained global operating space. Alcadipani (2010) gave the example of Brazilian commodities producer Votorantim, which is present in over 40 countries.

Brazil's largest company Petrobras, which is also one of the largest in the world's oil exploration and production sector, has operations in the Americas, Europe, and Asia, totalling 22 units spread across the world. Brazilian jet maker Embraer has factories in the US and Asia. The Gerdau steelmaking group has factories and offices in different countries and has just gone onto the list of the 500 largest firms in the world, alongside Petrobras, the banks Bradesco, Itaú, and Banco do Brasil, and the mining company Vale. In this context of global management, Latin American companies face a challenge in that they have to seek internationalization models that are insufficient for their reality (cf. Fleury & Fleury, 2007). What is more, alternative models of organization are emerging that bear in mind the characteristics of the Latin American reality (see Spence & Shekin, 2008).

## Discussion

### Summary

This work has sought to explore how practices and knowledge in Latin America can contribute to changing the current state of management, a field traditionally linked to the epistemologies of the North. To this end, we have initially presented how management has been disseminated throughout the world as a US phenomenon, despite its origin and importance in other contexts. After this, using the example of Latin America, we argued that this Americanization has the potential to become a façade for epistemological coloniality. In the final section we argued in defence of glocal management as an alternative to grobal management that in the different epistemologies of the South makes a true contribution to the knowledge and practice of glocal management.

**Table 1**  
*Characteristics of Grobal Management and Glocal Management*

Characteristics	Grobal management	Glocal management
<b>1. Epistemology</b>	North	South
<b>2. Approach</b>	Grobalization	Glocalization
<b>3. Colonial difference</b>	Global design	Local history
<b>4. Strategic predisposition</b>	Ethnocentric	Polycentric
<b>5. Main source of knowledge and practice</b>	United States	Other countries, from the periphery
<b>6. Organizational vision</b>	Economy (e.g., corporations)	State, civil society, and economy (e.g., government, social movements, and corporations)
<b>7. Style of management</b>	Autocratic, management, bureaucratic	Democratic, management, participative

## Contributions to Scholarship

The main contributions in this article reside in the proposal of glocal management as an alternative to the global view. Based on this new perspective, management research will be able to appropriate management knowledge and practices from the South as possible sources, which will be necessary to understand local realities and, above all, necessary for researchers to understand their own reality via the other.

## Applied Implications

In practical terms, this paper can offer an alternative to the dominant discourses of Western management and can legitimize management practices that are currently being carried out in the periphery. It may also help widen the agenda of possible management practices and actions.

## Limitations and Future Research Directions

As this is a theoretical work, it has not empirically investigated the purposes of glocal management presented herein. Some examples already consolidated in other research that could help construct this argument have been omitted. Moreover, this paper does not discuss the Americanization process in the knowledge economy, which might also be a relevant path for discussing glocal management. In addition, as it is grounded in examples from Latin America, the paper has not addressed examples of other forms of indigenous management, such as the Maori practices in New Zealand. This therefore provides an opening for future research, which could help widen the proposed concept and complement what has already been presented. One path could be to investigate companies in the South that have internationalized and are now part of global competition. How do these corporations behave on the global stage? What is their relationship to the local contexts in which they are installed? Are they able to preserve their local characteristics or are they forced to adopt models linked to the North? In addition, it might be interesting to discuss management practices and knowledge from places other than Latin America in the South. This might entail conceiving glocal management in a hybrid way. These are some important paths that could branch out from the argument being developed here.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the field of management has proved a rich and stimulating stage for discussion. There has been a growing amount of work in the South in this context. This means we can comfortably say that management is increasingly within the scope of the "international." As a result, it is necessary to develop a form of management knowledge that takes into account all pluralities associated with the dynamism and worldwide prac-

tices of this discipline. In this manner, to think of management in Glocal terms may be a starting point for producing a type of academic knowledge that does not act as a colonizing discourse, but which takes all pluralities and diversities into account.

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