

Management – Culture – Interpretation

RESEARCH

Wendelin Küpers · Stephan Sonnenburg  
Martin Zierold *Editors*

# ReThinking Management

Perspectives and Impacts  
of Cultural Turns and Beyond



Springer VS

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# **Management – Culture – Interpretation**

**Edited by**

Andreas Müller

Stephan Sonnenburg

The book series of the Karlsruhochschule International University explores new ideas and approaches to management, organizations and economy from a cultural and interpretive point of view. The series intends to integrate different perspectives towards economy, culture and society. Therefore, management and organizational activities are not seen as being isolated from their context, but rather as context-bound and dependent on their surrounding cultures, societies and economies. Within these contexts, activities make sense through the allocation, the interpretation and the negotiation of meanings. Sense-making can be found in performative processes as well as the way social meaning is constructed through interactions. The series seeks innovative approaches, both in formulating new research questions and in developing adequate methodological research designs. We welcome contributions from different interdisciplinary and collective ways of thinking and seeking knowledge which focus on the integration of “Management – Culture – Interpretation“.

**Edited by**

Prof. Dr. Andreas Müller

Prof. Dr. Stephan Sonnenburg

Karlsruhe, Germany

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Martin Zierold  
(Eds.)

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Wendelin Küpers, Stephan Sonnenburg and Martin Zierold  
Editors

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## *Introduction & Inspiration*

# ReThinking Management

*Wendelin Küpers / Stephan Sonnenburg / Martin Zierold*

## Approaching ‘ReThinking Management’

It is time to re-think and to re-do! Our contemporary world of organizations and management; respectively, leadership as well as its socio-cultural embedment calls for a radical re-thinking (Bolden et al. 2016; Birkinshaw 2012; Ladkin 2012; Mowles 2011). But what does it mean to re-think something in general, and to re-think management in particular? This introduction tries to outline some basic consideration and inspiration about the status and implication of re-thinking in relation to management, thereby to organizations and its embedding contexts. Resonating with a pluralistic cultural orientation (cultural turns in sensu see Bachmann-Medick in this book), we then critically reflect problems of a one-sided ‘culturalism’. Furthermore, we then move from a conceptual re-thinking to a more performative understanding of re-doing.

‘ReThinking Management’ is the guiding principle of Karlshochschule International University and was also the motto or Leitmotif of a corresponding conference organized at this institution, from which the chapters of this book emerged. Accordingly, practices of research and teaching at Karlshochschule – and at an increasing number of other places of education – are trying to move towards a re-thinking of management in terms of theory and practice.

What does the *re-* of this re-thinking mean? Literarily, and as it is commonly conceived, re-thinking refers to think about something again, especially with a view to changing one's opinions, understandings, and doing etc. There are, however, levels of meaning that go beyond the conventional that give depth to *re-*thinking. Next, then, what does and could this programmatic call and agenda to re-think mean specifically? Finally, what does re-thinking *management* imply for theory and practice of organizing, managing and living, individually and collectively?

To delve into these queries, we have deliberately set up this document with attention that follows from macro- to micro-questions although a certain amount of fluidity is maintained. In particular, the approach follows the inverse order of the questions above, so that the loops that make up the network of re-thinking are presented in concrete questions, queries, posits etc. which also incorporates

the nexus to the concept of re-doing. The reason is to build a foundation of understanding. As we have had scientific conversations to create new knowledge, so we offer the readership perspectivity, an unfolding process, that we believe will help them to understand, arguments and evidence. This movement allows access to a more comprehensive understanding by looking at words-concepts in an entirely new way and then integrating in-depth notions with the prefix „re“. As usual in scientific work, the focus of the chapter is presented at the end. We hope that approaching the reader in a spirit of unfolding concepts, such as in a conversation with us, gives insight into why this knowledge and book are important.

### *Seeds and roots of re-thought management*

Re-thinking radically means going to the roots that is retrieving what management is doing on the whole. But even deeper, we need to understand the seeds from which management is growing. Seeds are important for radical re-thinking metaphorically and practically in two ways. On the one hand roots grow from seeds, thus they are the underlying germ cells for them to grow; and on the other hand they mediate and lead to the unfolding and ‘growth’ of the trunks, branches, leaves and fruits of the ‘plant’. Accordingly, ideas developed by re-thinking management and the chapters of this book in particular can be interpreted as seeds. In a way novel ideas and the contributions within this book are the embryo origins from where a re-thinking and a corresponding re-doing of management reach out to extract nourishment (Eikeland 2015: 381). Living seeds and roots nourish the strengths of the instituting unfolding and legitimacy of different directions and institutional forms, work ‘subterraneously’, from below and within. They need to be cultivated for developing more comprehensive and suitable understandings and (applicable) practices of what a re-thought management praxis mean in our times and sustainable futures to come.

A critically reflexive process involves overlapping existential, praxis-related and relational concerns. Correspondingly, reflexivity is a process that is affecting the whole way of lives of reflexive researchers (Cunliffe 2002; 2003; Etherington 2004) and their inter-relationships. Cunliffe (2002: 28) describes reflexivity as “complexifying thinking or experience by exposing contradictions, doubts, dilemmas and im-possibilities (...)”. Such reflexivity is not only an active cognitive process, but includes also embodied and unconscious *re-cursive* processes by which reflection is itself modified. This reflexive orientation leads to re-thinking a related quest and question: What are the conditions for the possibility and impossibility of a radically and effective different management

practice? We posit that the returning to practice and the performative redoing in praxis holds a key to answer this question while at the same time summoning how rethinking is connected to redoing. To begin to answer these questions, we explore the impact of culture and cultural turns.

### *Cultural turns and the problem of culturalism*

Cultural turns have been around for some time. What started with the ‘linguistic turn’ has itself turned into a paradigm of sorts, especially in humanities and social sciences. Accordingly, around 10 years ago, Jacobs and Spillman described the cultural turn as "one of the most influential trends in the humanities and social sciences in the last generation" (2005: 1). Where the linguistic turn was drawing attention on the power of language in creating and making sense of our social worlds, further key ‘cultural’ concepts have emerged which are being employed to analyze texts and practices in various contexts, such as ‘identity’, ‘memory’, ‘space’, ‘performance’ and more. Doris Bachmann-Medick (and others) have subsumed these different-but-related concepts as ‘cultural turns’. Post-structuralist and post-modern critique of knowledge and corresponding orientations showed how much shared discourses and culture influence and permeate perception and enactment of realities. Ever since, attentiveness to and systematic consideration of culture (in its various theoretical and practical conceptions) retains a distinctive feature of research undertaken, especially in the humanities and social sciences, turning to various cultural forms of analysis and interpretation.

### *Existing culturalist approaches to management research*

Various versions of cultural theory tend toward an ‘intellectualization’ of culture by taking as a point of departure very specific entities: either mind or consciousness as in the tradition of Western, post-Cartesian philosophy; or texts and communicative action, i.e. the use of symbols and language (Reckwitz 2002: 249-258). Reckwitz mapped culturalist approaches and theorizing, namely mentalism, textualism, intersubjectivism, and compared them with practice theory. While *mentalism* is more cognitive-oriented and inside-focused, and *textualism* highlights out-side-focus and structure, *intersubjectivism* is oriented towards social processes and socio-cultural relationships as constitutive. Based on the cognitive turn, *culturalist mentalism* follows the (Cartesian) inwardness of intellectualism and hyper-rationalism, mental qualities, and reflexivity, taking

human agency as a highly reflexive and formally rational enterprise of calculating or duty-obeying individuals. Related to the original cultural turn, *culturalist textualism* shows by contrast an anti-mentalist anti-subjectivist and outwardness-orientation towards structure and discourse. Partly connected to the linguistic turn *culturalist intersubjectivism* focuses on language use, symbolic transference of internalized meanings and rule-governed behavior. They all differ in their understanding of the status and role of the body, minds, knowledge, discourse, structure/processes, and the agent.

Compared to these families of culturalist theorizing and practice, the theoretical approach moves in between the inside and the outside modes, offering alternative framings (Reckwitz 2002). The latter one identifies the social in the mind – since individuals are carried by and are carriers of practices –, but also in symbolic structures – since practices form more or less extra-subjective structures and patterns of action.

Practice theorists foreground an understanding of shared knowledge as practical knowledge. They are interested in concrete situations of life in which actors perform a common practice and thus create and maintain social orderliness: Situations become more significant than actors. Accordingly, “practice theory ‘decenters’ mind, texts and conversation. Simultaneously, it shifts bodily movements, things, practical knowledge and routine to the center of its vocabulary” (Reckwitz 2002: 259). For *ReThinking Management* it is important to understand that culture is not just systemic, symbolic or linguistic, with the need for less mentalist approaches thus putting more concentration on those approaches that focus on embodied, socio-material and performative practices.

A cultural turn in management and organization studies helps to highlight the ways in which many phenomena and processes of management and organizational practices and its meanings have a qualified cultural and performative character, rather than merely an economic one. It helps to overcome the reductive understanding that phenomena and objects of economics and management are made up by ignoring or forgetting their cultural or social constitution. This does not imply that management and social life in organization are reducible to a mere culturist reading of texts or text-like objects and contexts, whose signifying qualities are the only aspects that matter. For example, issues of management and its theory cannot be sufficiently studied by 'dumbing down' economic related analysis to the level of token references of a culturalizing discourse, which would make it uncritical of its object. Therefore, the queries are: Does a cultural orientation dissolve or make indistinguishable the difference between culture and economy with their distinct logics and studies, and do we

need new differentials and a more difference-sensitive but integrative understanding between management and culture?

While we need to be critical with regard to hyperbolic claims of increased 'culturalization' in organizations and management, there is a need to consider realities and possibilities for a further hybridization between culture and management as well as other domains. As a response to the sceptic critique that culturalist accounts "claim too much or generalize too broadly" (di Maggio 1994: 27), we need concreteized exemplification and empirical case material to substantiate what a re-thought management and organization culture (turn) mean and imply.

In any case, a turn to culture in management instigates a 'reversal' of perception, by indicating the ways in which phenomena in management and organizations are constituted, performed and enacted through cultural processes. The 'setback forward' refers also to the very discourses used to describe the working of these processes and how to act upon them. The courses and discourses of macro- and micro-economic management and organizations are not simply a matter of culturally embedded beliefs, values and symbols, but rather a form of representational, operational, and technological i.e. cultural practices. These practices constitute the domain within which phenomena, processes and action of managing and organizing are (re-)formatted and (re-)framed as well as giving new orientation and meanings. As management and symbolic processes are more than ever interlaced and 'inter-articulated', managerial practices and processes are increasingly culturally affected and influenced, while culture is more and more economically and managerially inflected (Lash and Urry 1994: 64). Along with a 'corporate cultism' in relation to organizational culture (Neuberger and Kompa, 1987) and to leadership (Tourish and Pinnington 2002), also a 'corporate culturism' (Willmott 1993) needs to be analyzed and discussed critically.

In both approaches, culture is used for controlling employees who have to comply with the values of the corporate culture; thought control through uniform definition of often imposed meanings. By defining 'autonomy' as conformist obedience to the core values of corporate culture, the meaning and imagined possibility of freedom is tightly circumscribed. This rhetorical usage is directly paralleled by the objective of policing newspeak. In Orwell's Oceania, 'freedom is slavery' and 'ignorance is strength'. Accordingly, in the world of corporate culture, 'slavery is freedom' and 'strength is ignorance'.

Reductive understandings and usages are in danger of an appropriation of culture as exploitable resource and medium for vested interests and views about culture in mainstream management theory and practice, manifesting an instrumentalization and 'ideologization' of culture as well as leading to problematic 'cultural engineering'. All show a cultural imperialism of management

(Deutschmann 1989). Accordingly, “when we question whether or not ‘a cultural framework’ is a useful one, we need to ask more precisely, useful for whom and for what purpose?” (Smircich 1983: 354). This in turn leads to the need for re-thinking capitalism and its new absorbing spirit (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005) with its ‘enrichment economy’ (Boltanski and Esquerre 2015) and neoliberal normalization (Newheiser 2016) that are appropriating and blunting critical voices, while establishing new ways of legitimating.

### *The dark side of ‘cultural turns’ in management*

As we have shown, cultural perspectives have already proven that they can open up new perspectives both for researchers as well as practitioners of management. However, somehow the term ‘culture’ and its many positive associations might also imply the risk to become uncritical or even naïve regarding the limits and downsides of the concept. Reckwitz starts his seminal book ‘The Invention of Creativity’ with a staggering observation: If there is one wish, he says, which transcends the boundaries of what contemporary culture can imagine, it would be the wish *not* to be creative (Reckwitz 2012: 9, our translation). This is striking as some forty years ago, ‘creativity’ was a concept that belonged firmly to the margins of society and economy important for artists certainly or craftsmen (women), and perhaps for researchers. But the idea that anybody working in an office can and should be creative on a daily base and even more that we are expected to be creative in choosing our clothing or holiday destination is a relatively recent development.

Reckwitz argues that, in this respect, Western societies as a whole have undertaken a ‘cultural turn’. The artists are no longer marginal figures of society, but they are a role model for many social fields, not only but probably most obviously for the so called *digital bohème*. In this context, it is important to mention that especially the digital bohème is not based on the concept of the creative ‘lone ranger’ but on creative collaboration (Kurtzberg and Amabile 2001; Sawyer 2003; Sonnenburg 2004). The creative imperative is that ‘liberating it’ allows for a freedom of individual and collaborative expression which was unheard of in the grey, narrow-minded fifties of the 20th century. But it is not only the ideal of creativity that has been imported from the artistic and cultural realm to broader areas of society. With it, we have imported artistic ways of working as well: short-term, project based, insecure, precarious and often poorly paid. Are we better off with this ‘creative’ cultural turn of the economy? Probably yes and no. Nigel Thrift would argue that this has not been the only cultural turn in the economy. In his article ‘Capitalism’s Cultural Turn’

he argues that “the cultural turn in the social sciences and humanities now has a direct line into, and indeed is a part of, the cultural turn in capitalism” (Thrift 1999: 157).

Thrift shows how a new managerial discourse has developed, which draws from academic knowledge of the humanities and social sciences for processing questions like, how to find appealing metaphors for your business, how to use stories to attract consumers, how to be socially responsible and ecologically sustainable, how to manage your ‘human resources’ in order to make the most out of their ‘cultural diversity’ etc. This is a managerial discourse that is aware not only of the linguistic turn, but also of the interpretative turn and of the seminal importance of knowledge and meaning for economic success in capitalism.

All this confirms that we are witnessing the impact of cultural turns for management. And the implications and consequences have not only positive sides as Thrift shows: “The near-hegemony of this new managerialist discourse has three main consequences, each of them uncomfortable. The first is that it has what used to be called ‘material consequences’, effects that can be measured out in terms of pain, heartbreak, and shattered lives. (...) This new form of the exercise of corporate power is not necessarily any ‘nicer’ than what has gone before; for all the caring rhetoric, lean can just as easily be mean, and learning can mean stomach-churning.” (Thrift 1999: 156) Thus, when we think of ways to ReThink Management by employing the cultural turns, we should not be naïve in thinking a ‘cultural turn’ can always bring changes for only the better. We need also to be aware of how capitalism and managerialism have already shown and are continuing to show their capacity to embrace and appropriate cultural turns in a way which actually might have made the lives of many people and communities worse.

### *The ‘re-’ of re-thinking*

Let us now continue our quest by offering some critical perspectives on and possible interpretations with regard to the ‘re-’ of rethinking especially in relation to management and a re-doing. Basically, the ‘re-’ is *re-lating* to management and its concepts, issues and practices differently, rendering relationships that are different and make a difference. In other words, the question will be: How to relate in a different way to the path we are on? It all commences, once gain, by *re-visiting* and *re-peating* the question of what management could be, *re-iterating* discourses on and courses of management. This implies not only *re-cognising* management as what it currently is (or seems



to be), but also how it might be per- and conceived differently. Durand speaks about ‘*re-ensensing*’ that starts with a reprise that is both *repandre*, (to take again or to repeat), and a *reprise*, (to mend and to repair). Specifically, it entails a new posture, a fresh way to engage differently with organizations we are linked or affiliated to, as well as to resist organizational orders and injunctions and to re-arrange scattered fragments of meanings into a more sensible universe (Durand 2014: 131). Accordingly, re-thinking entails both an embodied perception and ‘embrained’ conception of differences, sensing and making sense in other ways by re-+-turning forward. Thus, primarily, re-thinking is a *re-turning* move. Re-thinking twitches with turning, that is paradoxically ‘re-turning forward’ to the Other(s), and the world and, thereby, differently to ourselves and practices.

With regard to the topic of the mentioned conference, these ‘re-turn(s)’ move towards fundamental questions like: What kinds of management do we need; for which purposes and why? How does it work (or seriously play) and towards what purposes does managing function or serve, and to which not? What makes management ‘value-able’, yielding so called ‘added value’ and what is considered of ‘value’ in this context? What would cultural and other turns of management mean, if taken seriously and integrally in this manner and in conjunction with the questions and posits of this book?

*‘Re-’ as re-membering, re-vealing and re-integrating*

Critically, the re-turn is also a *re-membering, re-claiming and re-viving* currents and flows of what has been and is neglected, excluded, repressed or forgotten in conventional main-+-male-streams of management thinking and practice. This primary re-collecting concerns also who managers and we are as well as what and how they and we do things. In this sense, the turning to what is lost or not present is an endeavor of *re-vealing* and providing re-statements and explications of something that can already be found in what managing and organizing was in its historical origin or is actually or potentially inherent in its practices. Re-thinking mediates a disclosure of forgotten or ignored truth but without regressively or retrogressively going back to vitalistic and organicist naiveties of pre-modern spheres of unity and non-differentiation. Re-vealing means taking away the ‘veal’, which in turn allows *re-discovering* what is concealed, thus laying open to view what is needed today for rendering timely sustainable actions. With these forms of *re-considering*, the re- is also about *re-connecting, re-integrating, re-habilitating, and re-valuing* in particular plus the senses, affects, bodies, feelings, and further dimensions that are only reductively and

narrowly seen in instrumentalized modes. Accordingly, this kind of re-turning is one that is oriented toward the *re-legged*, which nevertheless, is present even in its absence in re-lation to life-worldly realities of management, thus *re-viving* qualities that are not accounted or accountable, but count!

*'Re-' as radical re-flection and critical re-flexivity*

Re-thinking is about problematizing existing assumptions, motives and rational values, rules, routines (practices) that guide not only knowledge production and usages but also all activities in practice. In particular, it is problematizing activities and (standing) practices as embedded in modernist institutions operating in unsustainable modes (treadmill of unsustainable growth). It calls for questioning the given conditions and conditionings of management. For this to happen, re-thinking requires hermeneutically de- and re-constructing, and critically re-flecting management as well as employing a radical *re-flexivity* (Cunliffe 2004). While to *re-flect* suggests a mirror image that affords the opportunity to engage in an observation or examination of our (or that of other) ways of doing, *re-flexivity* suggests a complexification of thinking and experience, or thinking about experience. The latter one implies not only to observe, but also more comprehensively exposing or questioning our very ways of thinking, feeling, relating and doing, including pattern of personal norms and taken-for-granted assumptions. What is implied is that, through questioning the bases of our interpretations, reflexivity necessarily brings about change in the process of reflection. It is thereby recursive as *re-cursion* is re-turning ways of being and becoming. A radically re-flexive orientation to examining the research process can yield resources for self-examination, in ways which provide potential for a critical retrospective assessment of choices and/or as a guide to future action. Accordingly, 'radical' means going to the root by questioning, problematizing, unsettling, disclosing and opening, rather than categorization, complacency and closure (Cunliffe 2003). Politically, this entails re-flecting about power relations and its ideological and institutional conditions (Alvesson and Spicer 2012: 373) and one's own and others' involvement in the same.

*The 're-' as re-viewing, re-fraction and re-rejection*

The re-thinking invites also exploring or *re-viewing* and re-visiting the margins and the boundaries of canonical knowledge which is the doxa of the other in the orthodoxy of conventional forms of thinking and doing management. Following

a deconstructive analysis, re-thinking becomes attentive to what deviates from the norm and from the custom of traditional managing. It makes expressively explicit what is left out or unsaid. In addition to reflecting and reflexivity, a mode of *re-refraction* is needed in order to subvert with a „marginal critique“ (Waldenfels 1985: 175), which moves at the margins and on the edges of everyday worlds, as poly-dimensional field (without an ideal or central reference point). Edges are places of thought of the un-thought and margins are those of the un-said, un-sayable in what is said, the non-done and non-doable in what is done, the un-ruled and un-familiar in the ruled and familiar. Both refer to qualities of the non-very-day in the every-day-life plus the extra-ordinary in the midst of ordinary. Such subversion is not about overriding boundaries or to gloss over or paper over cracks, but to tinker and toy with them „as the violently excluded takes revenge in its own ways, even be it by trivializing of the remaining“ (Waldenfels 1985: 176).

In this way and resonating with aesthetic and anti-aesthetical practices, the turning of cultural turns is about *re-jection* of conventions which is an openness for the ‘Other’ and foreign cultures attention to alternative experiences (Perniola 2007). Such a turn goes along with *re-fusing* and *re-sisting* managerialist and unsustainable positions; paradigmatically with regard to epistemology, methodology, and ontology. For instance, it is *re-fraining* from *re-ification* or *re-essentializing* and particularly with regard to a dominant one-sided and unreflected practicalism. Such practicalism would, for example, merely adjust and re-tool forms of unsustainable organizing or managing uncritically, while it ignores being theoretically informed.

Therefore, re-thinking is not turning our backs on theory, falling into an ‘actionalism’ that is merely interested in ‘doing something’ or just ‘changing things’ as some action-theory tend to prescribe. Rather, it is turning our theoretical and critical gaze more intensively – more close up and for longer periods at a time – towards phenomena and practices of management and organizations. This implies also looking at different things in different ways, turning our scope, and theoretical micro- or telescopes in different directions at different objects. Such re-thinking may lead to forms of re-interpreting hermeneutically, which allows developing novel modes of understanding and doing. Re-thinking is thus turning *away*; breaking away and, thereby, turning *towards* opening up a way! Consequently, the corresponding guiding question for our time is: Where and when or how are management and its effects irrational and unwise that lead to injustice or human suffering, individually and socially, or are unproductive, unsustainable or destructive, ecologically and culturally?

*'Re-' as re-orientation, re-translation, re-negotiation and re-imagination*

The outlined re-turns and moves towards radical re-reflections, and subversive re-fractions need to lead to an enacted *re-orientation* and this-worldly *re-incarnation*! Thus, they are not just reactions, but prudently preparing and proactive ways of re-organising and re-en-acting differently. For not getting stuck in intellectualist or even retrogressive moves, the re- also calls for *re-configuring* and *re-translating* or what can be called *trans-re-lating*, transformatively,<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, we need to refine Lewin's famous statement that "there is nothing more practical than a good theory" (Lewin 1952: 169) by adding that even the best theory and reflected re-thinking of management needs to be skilfully and reflexively trans-re-lated into practice. In this way the 're-' can contribute not only to *re-frame* and *re-form*, but is also about poetic *re-imaginings* as part of the art of *re-inventing*, *re-designing*, *re-crafting* or *re-building* tools and practices, and *re-gaining* values, especially towards more responsive and responsible ways of managing and possibilities for practical wisdom (Küpers 2014).

*'Re-' as re-turning to practice and performative re-doing in praxis*

How can re-thinking be connected to re-doing? A one-sided re-thinking is in danger to be merely remaining thinking that is confined to a form of discursive-propositional knowledge and understanding, confined to a semantic space realized in the medium of language. How can forms of re-thinking and saying one thinks differently become re-shaping relationships and material practices? How does one ground and connect a re-thought understanding with a different standing in reality, and a socio-ethico-political stand that re-configures and transforms life-worlds practically?

One way is to entwine ReThinking Management with the emerging *re-turn to practice* in relation to organization and leadership (Küpers 2013; Nicolini et al. 2003; Nicolini and Monteiro 2017; Schatzki et al. 2001) and a corresponding performative turn (see extending the section 'applications and activities'). Turning practically is not only broadening the horizon (Eikeland and Nicolini 2011), but also altering concrete hori-zones, in which we and people embody, feel and live their everyday-life. In other words, re-thinking needs to enter and move in the field of embodied, materially and socially interwoven practices and nexus of related activities. Importantly, the social and material nature of

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1 As discussed in the written conversation in form of letters on the webpage for this conference, see <http://rethinkingmanagement.org/re-rethinking-management-as-translation/>

practices also makes them and its *re-thinking* inherently situated in a particular moment in time, space, and history.

For Schatzki (1996: 89), practice is a “temporary unfolded and spatially dispersed nexus of doing and saying” where the body and artifacts are sites of understanding. Accordingly, sense-based and *re-thought* practices of organizing are made up of a collection of embodied orientations, feelings, thoughts, intentions, and activities related to equipment and tools as well as shared socio-cultural milieus. A *re-doing* approach is taking practices as source and media of re-thought meanings (and also of reflection, language, and normativity) and as concretely meaning-making, order-producing, and reality-shaping activities. Re-doing and practice-based studies and orientation do not investigate re-thinking management practices as abstract entities but rather ‘*praxeologises*’ them towards materially and bodily mediated re-doings in praxis. Accordingly, the practicing of leader- and followership refers to actual (micro-)activities within a situated sphere of embodied praxis as the interconnection and embeddings of coordinated intentions, responses, actions, actors and institutions, forming a Gestalt-like ‘held-togetherness’ and conduct of life (Küpers 2017). As these practices are performed or are enacted by an embodied agency of performing, moving from or integrating re-thinking with re-doing requires the realization of a performative turn and other turns (Küpers 2017).

## Contributions to ReThinking Management

In the spirit of Bachmann-Medick (2009; 2015), we take it that ‘cultural turns’ – here related to management – are to be conceived in plural. Following the general orientation of humanities and social sciences towards culturally relevant issues, the plural ‘cultural turns’ represent current moves or new orientations that cut across and go beyond cultural sciences. Topics and concepts, such as, materiality, embodiment, space, performance, mediality, narration, and sense-making as well as translation or inter- and transculturality, have moved more and more into the forefront in the last few decades. Our book on ReThinking Management pursues the main idea that management theory is not to be understood as a sub-discipline of economic sciences, but rather as a cross-disciplinary and critical field (of research and practice) with a decidedly cultural perspective.

With the call for chapters for this book, we as the editors intended to invite researchers and practitioners from various disciplines and fields, who share the outlined understanding and perspectives. They were called to present their ideas, models, theories or empirical findings or insights of different phenomena and

practices with regard to the topic of ReThinking Management. In particular, we were looking for contributions that

- understand the cultural perspective and cultural turns as a bridge between management theory and practice,
- outline possibilities and experiences or cases of an entwined re-thinking and 're-doing' of management, also understood itself as a 'cultural technique',
- open up boundaries between different (sub-)disciplines with the goal of genuine cross-disciplinary contribution, (beyond culturalist and managerialist orientations),
- pursue the goal of overcoming traditional ways of thinking with their classical subject/object and other dichotomies for developing an understanding of management practice that is radically contextual and reflected through a critical perspective.

Furthermore, we wanted to receive contributions that respond to the following non-exhaustible questions:

- What are the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions or underpinnings that are needed to ground, integrate and use ReThinking Management?
- What are limitations, problems and challenges in further cultural turnings of management?
- How do aesthetic perceptions and appreciations or dis-appreciations impact practices in management and organizations?
- Which artistic categories (e.g. beauty, ugliness, sublime, distaste) and genres are used most compellingly to describe and express the relationship between phenomena of art, aesthetics, and organizational and managerial phenomena?
- How can management be artful and aesthetically designed and, thereby, contribute to culturally informed well-being and flourishing of culture as well as practical wisdom, individually and collectively?

### *Introduction to cultural turns*

*Doris Bachmann-Medick's* work on Cultural Turns has been an inspiration both for Karlsruhochschule International University as an institution as well as for this publication. As one of the protagonists of the endeavour to establish an interdisciplinary 'Study of Culture', she is the author of the seminal monograph

*Cultural Turns* (2011; 2016). While it was primarily directed at scholars in literary studies, history and other fields of humanities and social sciences, it also caught the attention in more distant fields such as (critical) management studies. Focusing on approaches such as the linguistic, performative, spatial as well as postcolonial turn, Bachmann-Medick offers a systematic overview. Importantly, she demonstrates how each *turn* – rather than replacing older approaches – supplements these and opens up new perspectives. Bachmann-Medick provides a framework which has informed the design and enactment of the Master Program in Management at Karlsruhochschule International University, as well as the concept for the ReThinking Management conference, where Doris Bachmann-Medick offered a keynote and this subsequent publication as a result.

In her contribution to this book, '*Cultural Turns: A Matter of Management?*' she reflects on the different possible pathways how the study of culture and the *cultural turns* can contribute to a more complex and richer understanding of management as a social and cultural practice. By doing so, she also proves that studying culture itself is called upon to address issues of management and economics more frequently than it has in the past. Furthermore, her article can be seen as an attempt to provide one possible mapping of different paths which can lead to a stronger integration of management studies into the study of culture – and vice versa. While some of the following chapters explicitly position themselves in relation to the cultural turns, we also included contributions which add further pathways and perspectives on this initial map.

### *Culture & creativity*

The following section of this book follows up on the notion of 'management as culture' and takes this idea into different possible directions. A number of contributors develop their perspectives by analysing management in the realm of 'culture' in a more focussed, artistic understanding. Some tackle one of the fundamental questions of arts management, analysing whether management concepts change when they are appropriated in contexts which do not primarily adhere to economic logic. Others ask whether the traditional process of translation might even work the other way around, i.e. through management concepts originating in the arts world which travel to the business realm. But management as culture is not to be restricted to management in the arts world. Following Reckwitz (2012; 2014), one might argue that the field of management itself has undergone a 'creative turn' and is now subject to a 'creativity dispositif'. Thus, culture and creativity can be viewed as core concepts for