

Strategic management research on emerging economies

Cultural imperialism in universalizing research paradigms

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Abstract

Purpose – Universalizing approaches to knowledge when combined with a dominating cultural discourse is problematic for management research paradigms as “West meets East”. This study aims to examine the case of the rapidly expanding, mainstream strategic management research in and on emerging economies through a critical perspective.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors analyze the strategic management society’s special conferences and workshops on “Emerging India” that aimed to write a fresh chapter of research on India as an emerging economy, using the methodology of critical discourse analysis (CDA). The authors treat this conference as representative of several such conferences and workshops being organized in emerging economies.

Findings – The results detect some troubling undercurrents of privilege and marginalization. The authors find support for a dominating cultural discourse embedded in the rapidly expanding, universalizing strategic management research perspectives in and on emerging economies.

Research limitations/implications – The implications for indigenous knowledge creation is discussed with a concluding call for academic reflexivity through revisiting different philosophies of science in management research and studying the social mechanisms of international knowledge exchange.

Originality/value – The theoretical framework combining the process of universalizing knowledge (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999) with a dominating cultural discourse sustained through a system of pressures and constraints (Said, 1978, 1993) is an original contribution. The choice of an emerging economy site is not very common, and the use of CDA on an event like a conference is valuable to research methodology.

Keywords Strategic management, Emerging economy, Critical discourse analysis, Post-colonialism, Cultural imperialism

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

This study examined how an imperialistic discourse of cultural domination is embedded in the expanding universalistic approach toward knowledge creation in and on emerging economies and seeks to inform scholarship through a critical lens. The rise of the “emerging economies” is of increasing interest and several studies have evaluated the applicability of

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established theoretical paradigms in management research, particularly strategic management, for emerging economies, and argue why scholarship on and in emerging economies is fraught with special difficulties (Hoskisson *et al.*, 2000; Wright *et al.*, 2005). Scholarly thought on the issue also extends beyond publications to numerous conferences, doctoral consortiums, workshops and other fora for academic interaction. The *Strategic Management Society* (SMS) and the *Academy of Management* (AoM) represent two influential bodies for strategic management research (Phelan *et al.*, 2002). The aim of the SMS's special conferences and workshops on "Emerging India" were to write a fresh chapter of research on India as an emerging economy and is representative of several such conferences and workshops being organized in emerging economies. At the inaugural conference conducted in December 2008 at Hyderabad, India, the stated agenda of the India special conference was to "advance both Indian scholarship, as well as scholarship on India". Organized with the best of intentions to help Indian scholarship, using careful efforts and incurring significant costs, yet we found that subtle undercurrents of cultural imperialism were present in the rapidly expanding American research paradigm with universalizing proclivities. We also found that these same tendencies have been sustained over a couple of more workshops and another conference organized in 2013.

We argue that universalizing approaches detracted from their originating context can potentially lead to false theorizations and a distancing from reality when applied into a new context (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999; Joy and Poonamallee, 2013; Stahl and Tung, 2015). At the same time, notions such as "emerging economy" or "East" continue to connote the imperialistic discourse that earlier prevailed in the usage of the term "Orient", with the dominating cultural discourse being sustained through a system of pressures and constraints (Said, 1978; Banerjee and Prasad, 2008). These dominating discourses, if they exist, have the potential to be counterproductive in genuinely engaging with those in the world for whom the research may truly matter. Our study considered these two combining conditions in management research in and on emerging economies universalizing approaches to research and imperialistic undertones sustained by cultural domination in research paradigms which have the potential to lead to false universalizations.

Despite its importance, empirical studies of the impact of universalizing theories in combination with oriental or other critical perspectives have "barely begun to be exploited and is pregnant with possibilities yet to be realized" (Westwood, 2006, p. 92), with calls for more postcolonial studies in international management (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008; Joy and Poonamallee, 2013; Ozkazanc-pan, 2008; Westwood and Jack, 2007). Studying emerging economies is especially relevant in the current world that appears to be in a transition from "West leads East" to "West meets East" with a need to enlighten, balance and transcend differences (Chen and Miller, 2010). Further, scholars believe that the spectacular rise of emerging economies can offer an opportunity to Western scholars for revolutionary thinking based on the promise of "East-West" integrative thinking and practice. This shift in academic thought can have significant implications for reshaping the management profession, redirecting scholarly pursuits and also for existing approaches to knowledge creation in these economies. It is therefore important that scholars examine the micro-processes and discourses involved in the mechanisms of the shift. Through this study, we hope that the thinking on strategic management research in particular, and even management research at large, in and on emerging economies, is motivated toward greater academic reflexivity.

To study the phenomenon, we drew on two theoretical perspectives: Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999, p. 51) who have argued that "de-historicization" results from the "migration of ideas across national boundaries" is one of the factors contributing to "de-realization" and

“false universalization” and the works of Said (1978, 1993) on the notions of orientalism, culture and imperialism. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999, p. 43), research topics, questions and notions are tacitly “de-particularized” by “false rupture effected by conceptualization” and incorrectly transformed into universal common-sense, separating them from their historical roots. Said’s (1978) focused on the dominating discourse of the “Us” and “Them”, arguing that “political ideas of domination and colonization find their strength and justification in the production of cultural knowledge” (Said, 1978). Using these two perspectives, we argue that the danger lies in the combination of universalization with cultural domination.

We attempted to unravel the imperialistic discourses in the expansion of universalistic management research paradigms using the methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Discourse techniques are fairly varied, and there is a growing popularity of the CDA technique with particular relevance to strategic management research (Phillips *et al.*, 2008). We attempt a larger scope of the discursive analysis by examining the combination of text, social context and discourse. Our choice of empirical setting for applying CDA were “India Special” conferences and workshops that are representative of such knowledge transfer. CDA has rarely before been applied on the artefacts of such conferences and workshops, and therefore our approach pioneers the applicability of the method to a greater variety of phenomena.

In summary, our contribution is threefold: Theoretically, our central contribution is to combine the perspectives of problematization of universalistic tendencies for knowledge creation of Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999) with the discourse of cultural imperialism/orientalism (Said, 1978, 1993) to explain how the combination of universalization with dominating cultural discourse can be especially dangerous for knowledge creation. Our choice of emerging economies as the site of the phenomenon is extremely relevant for the present day academic context for management research that is making forays into the emerging economies and extends the Orientalism lens beyond Middle East to consider how West dominates non-West epistemologically and materially in the present (Ozkazanc-pan, 2008) Methodologically, we attempt a CDA of the artifacts of a one-time, vitally representative event such as a special conference; thus, we seek to expand the applicability of discursive methodologies to diverse scenarios. On the whole, we hope that our contribution furthers the cause of reflexivity and increased sensitivity in academia in the production of intellectuals, as well as furthers the scope of usage of discursive techniques.

Contextual background

Theories of strategic management research on emerging economies

The “Special” research forum on “Strategy Research in Emerging Economies” (Hoskisson *et al.*, 2000) classified emerging economies as “low-income, rapid-growth countries using economic liberalization as their primary engine of growth” (Hoskisson *et al.*, 2000, p. 249). These economies were characterized as possessing missing or weak institutional elements such as skilled labor, infrastructure, legal framework and property rights enforcements, as well as political and economic instability (Hoskisson *et al.*, 2000). The special forum examined strategy formulation and execution by several enterprises in these economies and examined the insights from three theoretical lenses: institutional theory (IT), transaction cost economics and the resource-based view of the firm. Specifically, they discussed unique methodological challenges associated with doing research in these economies, such as low reliability of archival data, timing issues and considerable heterogeneity among the emerging economies.

Further [Wright et al. \(2005\)](#) categorized the “other” through four strategic options depending upon the direction of internationalization:

- (1) firms from *developed* economies entering *emerging* economies;
- (2) domestic firms competing within *emerging* economies;
- (3) firms from *emerging* economies entering other *emerging* economies; and
- (4) firms from *emerging* economies entering *developed* economies ([Wright et al., 2005](#), p. 1).

Among the four perspectives examined (IT, transaction cost theory (TCE), resource-based theory (RBT) and agency theory (AT)), TCE was found to be most dominant in studies in the first category, IT in the second category, AT in the third category and learning-based RBT in the last category although the patterns were not very uniform. [Hoskisson et al. \(2000, p. 263\)](#) speculated that “as markets emerge, IT may first become most relevant, followed by TCT and AT, and then RBT”. [Wright et al. \(2005\)](#) confirm the ascendance of IT while they also acknowledge that “strategy research with a focus on emerging economies is challenging conventional wisdom in academic thinking and theories in significant ways” ([Wright et al., 2005, p. 27](#)).

Research paradigms for strategic management in emerging economies

That these theories and paradigms of research are rapidly expanding globally is one more aspect to consider in our phenomenon. In a study of the “First Twenty Years of the Strategic Management Journal”, [Phelan et al. \(2002\)](#) discovered that the membership of the two leading academic bodies promoting management research, SMS and AoM has become increasingly global over the past 20 years. While SMS membership consists of more than 2,000 members from 50 countries, the proportion of North American authors in *Strategic Management Journal (SMJ)*, an affiliated journal, has remained fairly constant at around 80 per cent ([Phelan et al., 2002](#)). The AoM reported a rapid growth from a total membership base in 1999 of about 10,000 people mostly from North America and Europe to a membership base of over 19,000 members from over 70 countries in 2009 ([Denisi, 2010](#)). In the AoM’s presidential address [Denisi \(2010\)](#) identified globalization as the greatest challenge facing management scholarship:

But in many ways our annual meetings, and the Academy itself, really haven’t changed very much in those ten years. The Academy has always been run by and for members in North America. Yet, today, over one-third of our members are from outside North America, and this is the portion of the membership that is growing the fastest ([Denisi, 2010, p. 191](#)).

[Greenwood \(2016, p. 28\)](#) raised the issue that internationalization of academic bodies “holds great promise, but the benefits are not automatic”. It is interesting to observe the patterns on how international collaboration between authors from different countries had progressed meanwhile. These patterns throw light on the mechanism of how the development of theory happens in an incremental fashion and how country-specific influences are concomitantly transmitted. As [Phelan et al. \(2002\)](#) suggest:

In 1980, only one article in the SMJ featured collaboration between at least one American and one non-American author. By 1999, the figure had grown to 10 articles reflecting a trend towards greater international collaboration. The number of American-only authored papers increased dramatically over the same period while papers with no American authors stayed at a similar level to 1980 ([Phelan et al., \(2002, p. 1,164\)](#)).

They argued that *SMJ* publications continue to be dominated by North American authors with little trend toward more overseas participation. Arguably, according to [Phelan et al. \(2002, p. 1,164\)](#):

[...] the North American promotion system has encouraged researchers to focus more on quality journal publications than may be the case in other continents but there are signs of increasing international collaboration between America and the rest of the world.

Within the context of such membership and collaborations, there are also surrounding research paradigms or broad approaches to research and knowledge creation, which include the [de-particularized] notions of “rigour”, “theoretical contribution” and “interesting phenomenon” as typified by Western top-tier journals. [Denisi \(2010, p. 192\)](#) explains that:

Our [Academy] journals are dominated by North American-trained scholars, who share a specific model of how research should be conducted and reported. For all others we have insisted on assimilation: we will accept you if you adopt our models of how to do research.

[Denisi \(2010\)](#) refers to the differences in the “others” in terms of the philosophy of science and preferences for inductive versus deductive approaches rather than a qualitative/quantitative distinction. In a similar vein, [Rosalie Tung](#), past president of the AoM, highlighted criticism of the Academy publications suggesting that:

Although our journals appear to be receptive to different topics, they publish only those articles that conform to “North American research templates”. To put it differently, it appears that while authors from around the world can meet with success in getting their research published, this is only as long as they have been socialized into the North American “way of thinking and methodology” ([Tung, 2005, p. 240](#)).

These research paradigms are also strongly subject to universalistic tendencies perhaps far more unconsciously than the theories themselves. The mechanisms for these paradigms to be widely diffused and tacitly propagated include not only the journals and textbooks but also the range of academic fora such as conferences, doctoral consortiums, workshops, presentations by faculty from Western universities and the like held at or for the benefit of scholars from emerging economies. [Joy and Poonamallee \(2013\)](#) have highlighted that in context of cross-cultural management, research has become so West centric that those on the periphery have little role in creating knowledge about themselves:

The meanings created are the meanings attributed by the center, and not necessarily the lived meanings of those in the periphery. The peripheral members are not “allowed to construct themselves in terms of their own codes and categories” [...]. Western thought and knowledge creation practices are accepted and endorsed as the norm to “adopt, emulate, be measured against or assimilated to” [...] As a result, culture studies from the periphery become mere repetitions of the studies initiated at the center [...] or attempts to supplement models from the center with contextual justifications (2013, p. 403).

[Greenwood \(2016, p. 30\)](#) added that the imperialistic tendencies impact the underlying implicit values of researchers:

USA journals tend to publish articles that are conservative and uncritical. In turn, this encourages academics to submit safe articles that support prevailing USA values.

Our endeavor is to demonstrate the universalizing discourses within these fora in the context of strategic management research in and on emerging economies.

Theoretical background

Problematizing universalization

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999) explain that a large variety of topics directly arising from the intellectual engagements relating to the particularity of American society have been imposed, in a de-historicized form, upon the rest of the world. Knowledge created within a particular cultural context (American) undergoes a rupture from its context in the process of abstraction and conceptualization. These abstractions have their roots in the “complex and controversial realities of a particular historical society”, but this is neutralized, and, hence, the rupture is characterized as false (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, p. 42). Such neutralization of the historical context has resulted from the international circulation of texts and correlated forgetting of their originating historical conditions. This has led to the production of apparent universalizations further “abetted by the work of ‘theorization’” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, p. 41). These globalized theories have been de-particularized, and transformed into universal common sense, and then tacitly constituted as a model for every other context and as “a yardstick for all things” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, p. 42).

They explain that the theorizing process in the social sciences derives its power and authority from the neo-marginalist economic theory from which it is borrowed. The theory building process in economics is criticized for its false notion of rigorous deduction:

[...] which allows one to string in formal fashion unfalsifiable consequences without ever being exposed to the slightest empirical test; ritual and derisory alternatives between the atomistic individualists and the holistic collectivists.

They also criticize the language of the theorizing process as heavily laden with jargon and acknowledge the tight linkage between language and history when they state:

[...] a terrible (and terrifying) international lingua franca, which allows one to drag along all of the particularities and the particularisms associated with national traditions of philosophy and politics without ever taking them consciously into account the American tradition superimposes on an infinitely more complex social reality a rigid dichotomy of categorizations (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, p. 43).

All these mechanisms according to them, have the effect of:

[...] facilitating the actual ‘globalization’ of American problems, thereby verifying the Americano-centric belief in ‘globalization’ understood, quite simply, as the Americanization of the Western world and, through outward expansion, of the entire universe. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, p. 46).

They include the internationalization of academic publishing in the English language among the factors that have contributed to the diffusion of “USA thought” in the social sciences by putting terminology, themes and rhetorical devices with high market appeal into wide diffusion. More recently, Boussebaa and Brown (2016) have also examined the power implications of increasing Englishization on regulating and remaking the identity of non-Anglophone locals, within the larger discourse of a US-dominated era of globalization. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999) also explain the role of members, both from mainstream and marginalized groups, involved in the intellectual import-export and argue that the USA has the capacity to impose as universal that which is most particular to itself. They conclude with the recommendation that only a:

[...] genuine history of the genesis of ideas about the social world, combined with an analysis of the social mechanisms of the international circulation of those ideas, could lead intellectuals, in this domain as elsewhere, to a better mastery of those instruments with which they argue without taking the trouble to argue beforehand about them. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, p. 52).

On cultural imperialism

In his influential book *Orientalism*, Edward Said has argued that political ideas of domination and colonization can find their strength and justification in the production of cultural knowledge (Said, 1978).

Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, West, "Us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "Them").

At a time when most American literary scholarship was engaged in highly specialized, esoteric textual practices to discover universal truths, *Orientalism* forced academics of all kinds to reevaluate the political nature and consequences of their work.

Said (2004) argues that:

[...] reflection, debate, rational argument, moral principle based on a secular notion that human beings must create their own history have been replaced by abstract ideas that celebrate American or Western exceptionalism, denigrate the relevance of context, and regard other cultures with derisive contempt (Said, 2004, p. 877).

He explains further that our globalized world is extraordinarily complex in its interdependence and unity that it is meaningless to study other cultures in isolation.

Said (2004, p. 871) illustrates through the example of the Middle East, wherein Washington officials discuss changing the map of the Middle East with alarming ease, as if ancient societies and multitude of peoples can be shaken up like "peanuts in a jar". He acknowledged that this has been done often with the "Orient", that semi-mythical construct created since Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in the late eighteenth century. The concept of the Orient has been created and recreated repeatedly by "power acting through an expedient form of knowledge to assert that this is the Orient's nature, and we must deal with it accordingly". In the process, the rich history of the place with intricate life stories of a countless variety of peoples, languages, experiences and cultures are simply swept aside or ignored and treated as mere interesting artefacts of culture that become meaningless fragments similar to the treasures that were taken out of Baghdad's libraries and museums.

Said (2004, p. 871) displays great respect for the powers and gifts of the peoples of the "Orient" region to struggle on for their own vision of what they are and want to be. He argues the case for the contemporary societies of the Arab and Muslim communities, where there has been an enormous and purposefully aggressive attack by the media for their "backwardness, lack of democracy, and abrogation of women's rights that we simply forget that such notions as modernity, enlightenment, and democracy are by no means simple and agreed-upon concepts".

He therefore questions whether modern imperialism has ever ended. Said's intellectual approach has been to use humanistic critique to open up the fields of struggle to introduce:

[...] longer sequence of thought and analysis to replace the short bursts of polemical, thought-stopping fury that so imprison us in labels and antagonistic debate whose goal is a belligerent collective identity rather than understanding and intellectual exchange (Said 2004, p. 874).

Said (2004, p. 872) makes it clear that true knowledge of other peoples and other times results from "understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis" for its own sake, with "the will to understand for purposes of co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons". Any so-called knowledge created as part of "an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency and outright war" is created with the will to dominate for the purpose of control and external authority. In Said's (1993) views in *Culture and Imperialism*, he insists on the insidious persistence of empire, where imperialism did not suddenly become "past" but that

a legacy of connections still binds countries like India and we can still look forward to its ending.

Combining universalization with cultural domination

While the arguments in Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999) rest primarily on the problematization of the universalization of theories, they have also explained its context of cultural domination. They refer to Bender in that the products of American research have acquired “an international stature and a power of attraction comparable with those of American cinema, pop music, computer software and basketball” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, p. 46). The US hegemony operates through a larger system of pressures that acts through the conscious or unconscious collaboration of numerous “carriers” and actors such as publishers, directors of cultural institutions and journals directly or indirectly:

[...] who, in the country itself or in target countries, propound and propagate, often in good faith, American cultural products, and all the American cultural authorities which, without being explicitly concerted, accompany, orchestrate and sometimes even organize the process of collective conversion to the new symbolic Mecca.

Boussebaa and Brown (2016) have examined the quasi-voluntary process of imperialism within the context of a US-dominated era of globalization, legitimized by the imperative of international competitiveness. Such collaboration that often destroys indigenous knowledge has also been a point made by scholars lamenting the Western hegemony in management education and research in India (Khatri *et al.*, 2012; Thakur and Babu, 2017; Varman and Saha, 2009).

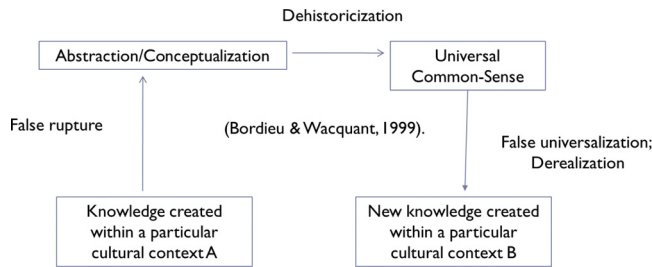
Similarly, while the works of Said (1978, 1993) are predominantly about culture and imperialism, it is again within the context of the universalization issue. The dominating cultural discourse of the USA is discussed by Said (1993) in *Freedom from Domination in the Future* as:

[...] a system of pressures and constraints by which the whole cultural corpus retains its essentially imperial identity and its direction, which is why a mainstream culture has a certain regularity, integrity or predictability over time.

Said (1982) in fact addresses universalizations directly in “Traveling Theory” wherein he explains the processes of cultural domination. Here, Said investigates how ideas or theories “travel” from one place to another and what happens in the process. He argues that theories initially develop to explain/predict in the context of specific historical or set of social conditions, but, when they travel from these original locations to other locations, the power in these theories dissipates, as it becomes de-historicized and assimilated into the new location. A new political situation could also potentially help to reinvent or revise an existing theory.

We believe that while both the theoretical perspectives of Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999) and Said (1978, 1993) broadly address the dual aspects of universalization issue, as well as the processes of cultural domination, their relative emphasis is different. Our argument is that a strong combination of the two conditions is more dangerous, especially for academic research as compared to one where either aspect may be relatively underplayed. Our theoretical model combining Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999) with Said’s works is represented in Figure 1.

The context of the emerging economies, particularly India with its colonial past, in combination with the newly expanding field of strategic management research with its “center of gravity” in the Americas, opportunely lend themselves to a test of our arguments. Going by the experiences with the “Orient”, there is no reason why “power acting through an



Notes: When combined with a dominating cultural discourse in relation to the new context, sustained through a system of pressures and constraints (Said, 1978,1993), there is a potential danger in genuinely engaging with those for whom the knowledge may truly matter

Figure 1.
Proposed theoretical
model

expedient form of knowledge to assert that this is the Orient's [or emerging economy's] nature" cannot potentially destroy the fabric of alternate or near-alternate paradigms of scholarship that may exist in emerging economies. Within the well-intentioned ideas of "advancing Indian scholarship" by agencies that have primarily been dominated by American and European cultures, we examine if similar apprehensions hold.

Smircich *et al.* (1992) in a move away from the traditional biases of extant research and include an interesting comment by Alvesson and Willmott in their call for papers on "New Intellectual Currents in Organization and Management Theory": "An anti-emancipatory potential runs through all projects, even those with the best intentions and preceded by careful reflection". Smircich *et al.* (1992) aver that it is only "fitting that authors, reviewers, and editors also represent diverse first languages, nationalities, geographical locations, genders, races, ethnicities [...] Sometimes there were problems with writing styles [...]". "Can't you write in normal English? What if the "problem" is not "writing style" but something so "new" that it is unrecognizable by "the experts"? Is it a "writing problem"? Or a "reading problem"? The "foreign" is often strange and unintelligible. What about the silences of all those who fell prey to the "standard reviewing process"? ask Smircich *et al.* (1992) and also cite Knights on how the reviewing institutions exercise power through the "normalizing procedures of exclusion and surveillance whereby "deviants" are physically segregated and the "incompetent" are marginalized through hierarchical distinction". Joy and Poonamallee (2013, p. 401) refer to the "peripheral actors seeking the center's approval for their own legitimacy (e.g. affiliation with the Academy of Management sought by the newly established Asian, Iberoamerican, and Indian Academies of Management)" and "adoption of American style tenure-track system and publication requirements". So when opinions are expressed in several fora on the poor state of intellectual research in India and other Asian countries, the poor quality of manuscripts, the lack of rigor and so on (as we shall also see in later portions of the paper), we perceive similar undercurrents.

These thoughts lead us to consider the question as to whether strategic management research on emerging economies is a case of travelling theory or is it a genuine attempt to discover new theories and ways of theorizing suited to the historical, political and social context of different economies? Is there a finer discourse of imperialism in strategic management research on and in emerging economies? Our problem is certainly not with the (noble) intentions of the scholars who may be unwary agents or "carriers" of the macro-level discourse but that of the larger system of pressures and constraints by which the whole

academic corpus, consciously or unconsciously, retains its essentially imperial identity and direction.

Our key research question therefore is:

RQ1. Is there a dominating cultural discourse embedded within the expansion of universalistic research paradigms in strategic management research in and on emerging economies?

Critical discourse analysis

Our choice of methodology is driven by our critical stance; critical perspectives broadly include all work that takes “a critical or radical stance on contemporary society with an orientation towards investigating exploitation, repression and unfairness that pervades modern capitalist society” (Alvesson and Deetz, 2006). CDA was developed by Norman Fairclough and his colleagues to enhance older analytical techniques that were too focused only on the text component of the discourse while ignoring the macro-social context (Thomas, 2003). CDA extends conventional discourse analysis by including interviews, conversations, observations, written materials, even music, visuals and other media (Blythe *et al.*, 2006). van Dijk (2001) explains that CDA focuses on how control over influential discourse is abused to control people’s minds and actions in the interest of dominant groups and possibly against the welfare or the will of the others.

Research design, site selection and data collection

The SMS founded in 1981 is a representative body of 3,000 members across 80 countries composed of academics, business practitioners, and consultants focused on the development and dissemination of insights on the strategic management process. The SMS is well known for publishing top-tier journals such as the *SMJ* and conducts annual international conferences alternating between North America and Europe and a series of special conferences. According to the SMS website, these special conferences are smaller, more-focused meetings addressing specific industry or subject themes, co-organized between the SMS, an Interest Group and a group of local individuals and/or local institutions and numbering 2-3 events per year. We conducted a study of the SMS’s special conferences around the world, and particularly in India under the banner of “India Research Initiative” (<http://india.strategicmanagement.net/>), the aim of which was to advance scholarship from within India and on India. The 2008 conference was the first of the series of conferences in the “India Research Initiative” and set the tone for multiple follow-up workshops and conferences. The theme of the conference was “*Emerging India: Strategic Innovation in a Flat World*” hosted by the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, India. The conference was stated to be the outcome of a shared dream to advance both Indian scholarship, as well as scholarship on India. Such a design also permits us to explore some of the meso-level processes in how and why theories travel through carriers such as special conferences and what is the role of global and local actors who collaborate to organize the same.

Discourse explores power structures along with lexical style and rhetorical devices (Phillips *et al.*, 2008). We analyzed the text contained in the welcome/opening message address, program chair’s address, call for papers and other links in the conference website, such as schedules of various sessions and abstracts of the papers presented at the conference and any linked websites. The hypertexts from all these were then assembled for the CDA analysis. In addition, we also examined notes on comments and conversations from one of the authors who attended the 2008 special conference.

Data analysis

Across levels, and from several critical studies, van Dijk (2001) concludes the pervasiveness of the strategy of “positive self-presentation of the dominant in-group” and “negative other-presentation of the dominated out-groups”. Oktar (2001) explains how all levels of text and talk is used to reaffirm the social groups of “Us” and “Them” and ideological discourse is constructed socio-politically to confirm dominance and implicit power relations between the groups and how representational processes play a significant role through *positive self-presentation* of “us” and *negative other-presentation* of “them”. In the texts that follow, we have emphasized in italics those parts of the text that resonated with us as authors in highlighting the dominating nature of the discourse.

Restricting the definition

The very notion of requiring to have a separate and special stream of strategic management research on “emerging economy” itself brings in a notion of a priori restricting the definition and is an act of classification. A well-known way is to simply make a definition in such a way that it does not apply to yourself (van Dijk, 2001). The notion of “emerging” is with respect to a notion of what “emerged” or “developed” is, and it appears that the “developed” economies have fully arrived by measures and criteria of their own construction. While the notion of development itself is complex and multidimensional and no economy can claim to have achieved the fullest potential of its people and resources, through the use (and repeated use) of language, it is socially reinforced that certain economies are emerging and they have no way but to move toward attaining the goal of the “emerged” condition of the developed economies. The restriction and unfair application of a definition is the typical means of the intellectual elites to deny that the defined category simply does not apply to their own group. This is part of a series of moves intended to mitigate or deny possibly negative characteristics of the own group.

Evidence

Table I lists the special conferences across the world, with their venues and themes. We classified the venues as developed/emerging and observed that the themes in emerging venues are always to do with special or challenging contexts, with institutional voids and questionable feasibility of business, requiring special theoretical explanations, whereas themes in developed economy venues are about generalized theory building for strategic management. In an examination of the abstracts of the papers presented during the conference, the authors found that all excepting one acknowledged that “different” research methodologies from the “mainstream” were required to explain the emerging economy phenomenon.

Implicit in the theme of the conference is also the notion that doctoral students and academics from India are on the periphery of the domain of strategic management which is largely situated in the West, particularly the USA. The Indians need to become an integral part of the dialogue about India, but they need to use the “codes and categories” (Westwood, 2006, p. 97) developed by the West/USA to even have discussions on the issues that they might understand but in different ways, “thereby constructing a fictive, distorted and deformed representation of themselves and their life-worlds” (Westwood, 2006, p. 101). The imperialist discourse is evident in the following text from the conference website:

We are experiencing what may be the defining phenomenon of this century, namely a shift in the center of gravity to emerging economies. Businesses in India, both domestic and foreign, are redefining global industries through innovations in product, process and business models.

Date	Venue	Developed/emerging economy	Conference theme
March 2003	Buenos Aires	Emerging	Entrepreneurship and New Technologies in <i>Latin America: Striking a Balance between the Desirable and the Feasible</i>
May 2007	Shanghai, China	Emerging	Successful Strategies in <i>Chinese Markets (Chinese Firms and Foreign MNCs)</i> and International Markets (<i>Chinese Firms</i>)
May 2007	Catania, Italy	Developed	New Frontiers in Entrepreneurship: Strategy, Governance, and Evolution
Dec 2008	Hyderabad, India	Emerging	<i>Emerging India: Strategic Innovation a Flat World</i>
March 2010	Lapland, Finland	Developed	Intersections of Strategy Processes and Strategy Practices
March 2011	Rio De Janeiro, Brazil	Emerging	<i>Latin America's</i> Burgeoning Strategic Role in Global Development
June 2011	San Diego, CA	Developed	CK Prahalad: Reaching Over Boundaries and Expanding Possibilities
Dec 2012	China	Emerging	Competing and Cooperating in and for <i>China</i>
June 2012	Singapore	Developed	Globalization of Innovation Strategies: Novel moves for a global game
March 2013	Lake Geneva	Developed	Strategizing Practices from the Outliers: Enabling "Big Bang" Innovations
June 2013	Glasgow, Scotland	Developed	Strategy in Complex Settings
December 2013	Mohali, India	Emerging	Strategic Leadership: An <i>Emerging Market</i> Perspective
March 2014	Tel Aviv, Israel	Developed	Startup and Restart Strategies
June 2014	Copenhagen, Denmark	Developed	Micro-Foundations for Strategic Management Research: Embracing Individuals
December 2014	Sydney, Australia	Developed	Strategic Management in the <i>Asian Century</i> —Dealing with Dynamism, Diversity and Development
March 2015	Santiago de Chile, Chile	Emerging	From <i>Local Voids</i> to Local Goods: Can <i>Institutions</i> Promote Competitive Advantage?
May 2015	St. Gallen, Switzerland	Developed	Rethinking Corporate Headquarters: Approaches for Managing the Multi-Divisional Firm
June 2016	Rome, Italy	Developed	Strategy Challenges in the 21st Century: Innovation
December 2016	Hong Kong, China	Emerging	Entrepreneurship and Coopetition <i>Contextualizing Strategic Management in Asia: Institutions, Innovation and Internationalization</i>

Table I.
SMS special
conference venues and
themes

However, much of this is anecdotal, and outside the scope of mainstream discussions and research in business schools in the West.

The rise of India poses opportunities as well as fundamental challenges both to academics and strategists. While access to potentially one billion customers poses large untapped opportunities, the very unique milieu in India is requiring a re-thinking of strategic tenets.

The generalization and naturalization of defects

Intellectual elites also try to generalize and naturalize one's defects and thus make them sound harmless (van Dijk, 2001). Generalization (and naturalization) can be subsumed under the label of "universalism" according to van Dijk (2001), and this case of "globalization of research" may be another way of legitimizing the model. Thus, generalization becomes an explanation, and this is one of the most common moves of ideological legitimation. It is also a well-known fact that the academic culture of Western research is not perfect; a "publish or perish" world, publication incentives linked to tenure goals leading to a profusion of incremental research, closed old-boys' networks that are key for getting published and several others (Joy and Poonamallee, 2013; Tung, 2005); all of which may not necessarily further the development of new knowledge and strengthening of the field (Suddaby et al., 2011). There is little reflexivity on these in terms of an honest comparison with alternate approaches to knowledge that may exist (if not as coherently) in other locales.

Evidence. A statement from a highly influential and leading US-based scholar, recognized by the AoM for his outstanding contributions to research and teaching made during the closing remarks of a paper presentation session in the 2008 India Special conference is illuminating:

The USA model of research is being adopted worldwide, in China and other countries. This is the model we think you will also follow.

Denial

Elite discourse makes use of the denial strategy in that the prevailing positive self-image of the elites is projected as "broad-minded, rational and tolerant, prejudices are typically attributed to the less educated, and to the bigot" (van Dijk, 2001). Denial may be shown either as ignorance or in attempts to maintain political correctness. While it may be difficult to discern what is politically correct and really correct, one may look out for those patterns, especially where there are seeming contradictions in the text.

Evidence The India research initiative is described as follows:

A major take away from the conference, though, was the sense that despite the incredible opportunity, progress is constrained by lack of research capacity in emerging markets such as India. As a result, in spite the large number of researchers and their interest in advancing scholarship, the participation of Indian institutions in the global exchange of ideas and therefore India's role as a knowledge hub, remains underdeveloped. For the field of strategic management research too, India presents a fertile but untapped ground for experimentation and development.

Essentially, Indian scholars need to learn the tools and techniques of the research agenda that has been established by scholars in the West. Indian scholars are probably expected to provide data and be happy to be co-authors or even be mentioned in the footnotes.

Self-glorification

Self-glorification is a standard form of positive self-presentation (van Dijk, 2001). Three aspects stand out in the program chair's address: that greater progress on the learning

curve has already been achieved in mainstream research in the business schools of the West, that the scholarly process is essentially happening elsewhere and that there is a kind and special efforts to “integrate” emerging economies into the “mainstream” process are all instances of self-glorification. Interestingly, all the leading “global” business schools mentioned in the conference were from the USA. Fairclough (1992) also draws on the notion of hegemony where he argues for the need to integrate rather than simply dominate subordinates; to involve them in coalitions or alliances and offer concessions to obtain their consent.

Evidence.

A very special panel included the Deans of leading global business schools. They joined together to discuss how to integrate the emerging economies in the scholarly process.

The conference is thus designed to bring together leadership from USA/Europe/Indian B-Schools in a Deans’ Conclave to explore ways in which emerging markets can become an integral part of the dialog. Come. Participate. Experience. Build with us a new era of strategy scholarship in and on India!

van Dijk (2001) argues that the exercise of group power is contingent on the control over the structures of text and talk. Powerful groups decide on the possible discourse genre(s) or speeches. The most important aspect of discourse and communication is who has control over the topics and topic change, as topics represent semantic macro-structures (van Dijk, 2001).

Evidence. While Day 1 and Day 2 had standard conference fare, Day 3, for instance, took on a more power laden agenda focused on “Advancing Strategy Research in India – What can SMS do?”. Despite promises of collaboration, the real agenda is to develop research fellows who can supplement the US-based efforts to understand the business context of India, probably to help the cause of US-based corporations (Westwood and Jack, 2008).

More specifically, our immediate goal is to enable the aspirations of some of the brightest minds in Indian academia to find a voice in the international marketplace of ideas by enhancing their research capabilities, and thus the likelihood of publishing their work in reputed international journals. The capability to pursue interesting research questions, design and execute it well, and meet the quality requirements of the top journals is a tough journey but one that has begun. Our dream is that over the decade, the India Research Initiative will build a community of 100 accomplished scholars based in India, who in turn would transform the academic landscape in India.

The future of business education and scholarship in India depends upon these students and the India Research Initiative will provide the needed impetus to advance this capacity.

The notion of “advancing” another group, whose research does not meet the rigorous standards, is illuminating of this perspective. Joy and Poonamallee (2013, p. 407) provide a post-colonial explanation of these notions: “The center views the periphery as a primitive version of itself and hopes that by transferring its own values and practices, it will be able to transform them into its current version” and that it considers the members at the periphery as “inferior in knowledge and values and strives to train them to reach the levels of their counterparts in the center”.

Evidence. The follow-up paper development workshops in 2010 had its stated agenda as:

While the specific idea is to help scholars improve the quality of their research, our hope is broader - to build research capacity in India and neighboring countries which will enable scholars here to publish in top-tier journals and thus participate in the global exchange of ideas.

We would also like to take this opportunity create a collaborative platform between Western scholars interested in research on emerging markets, and aspiring scholars in Indian business schools.

Derogating the other

Members of more powerful social groups and institutions, and especially their leaders, have more or less exclusive access and control over the relevant public discourse (van Dijk, 2001). Those who have more control over the “discourse properties” are by that definition also more powerful (van Dijk, 2001). Using well-established methods to run down the scholarship of the “Other” using *positive self-representation*, the work by scholars in India is described as anecdotal, and it is suggested that it is probably not “good enough” because it has not impacted research or discussions in the business schools in the West.

Evidence. The distinction between “us” and “them” is further reinforced through feedback with the best of developmental intentions, such as the following comment from a highly influential and leading US-based scholar to an Indian scholar from an Indian university who had made a presentation on diversification strategies of Indian firms. The Indian scholar following the Western model of research is going to be disadvantaged naturally due to lack of access to the latest research. As one prominent scholar commented on a paper presented by an Indian researcher:

Your research is good but you must be a part of the conversation happening there. You are accessing published papers, naturally those are about 5 years old from the time they are converted from idea to paper. Diversification theory has advanced very much, and we would like to share the current conversation, some of which are still working papers.

Legitimizing differences

Providing data points can be one of the ways of legitimizing the differences. The rhetorical argumentative way to do this is by *number games* of descriptive statistics.

Evidence. A comment made by an editor of a leading journal may broadly be said to fall into this category.

Papers from Asian countries usually lack in rigour and are anecdotal. This is the trend we are seeing.

Attributing selfish interests

This is typically about “blaming” or attributing some kind of vested interest that the Other has to make a case for the difference and furthering a *negative-other-representation*.

Evidence. The 2013 special conference call for papers at Mohali, India stated:

The institutional environment in India is conspicuously different from the West, as the government constantly experiments new ways of ushering in economic growth, while containing social inequality. The ongoing competition between varied stakeholders within the polity makes policy direction volatile and unpredictable. The resource constraints within which firms operate often pushes strategy towards sustainable growth paths and steers firms away from high risk maneuvers that may deplete scarce resources. Ironically, these constraints come amidst a demand for rapid growth in the domestic market. Today, emerging economies are the world’s growth engines. Within this context, India is playing an increasingly significant role as a large market, as a provider of increasingly higher end services and products, and as a source of novel and innovative business models aimed at addressing some of the world’s most pressing problems. All this, while facing resource constraints and a fractured institutional environment that are both very different from that in the West.

Resistance

Scholars have examined various discursive tactics, including irony, cynicism, dis-identification, humor and joking, “bitching” and gossip, mimicry, parody, modes of dress, “hidden transcripts”, “office graffiti” and discursive distancing (Mumby, 2005).

Evidence

Some of these elements are visible in participant narratives below, gleaned from informal conversations in Q&As or between sessions at the 2008 conference. Some of the statements are reaffirmations of the positive-self and negative-other representations discussed earlier.

“Publication is much easier from the USA than from India”

Research in the USA is always a better option; only outliers do research in India

For a USA or European student to join an Indian institute would be a step backward

Access to the “network” of ideas is better if you are in the USA

Access to working papers is much easier in the USA, so you know the state of the art

You can end up as a data collector in the emerging economy, beware of collaboration-exploitation

Why do you think these people are suddenly so interested in us?

Why is emerging economy hot for publication these days?

“We are not interested in India currently” was what they said earlier. Now India is hot.

“The world is not really flat; location matters”

Are there “liabilities of origin” for research publication?

Paper size, for a start (A4 rather than Letter), will get you a negative point

Manuscripts from Asian countries are typically of poor quality.

Herein, we also see some limited evidence of how the targets of domination themselves contribute to the process through acknowledgment and conformism while, simultaneously, also contesting and complaining about it, as was observed by Boussebaa and Brown (2016) in how locals might redefine their own identities in the context of a global dominating discourse. In addition, scholars have also questioned the relevance of Western paradigms of research and education in the field of management in terms of its relevance for local practice in India although they do acknowledge its contribution of rigor. The very philosophical foundations of management research are put to question (Khatri *et al.*, 2012) and issues of silencing of local subaltern stakeholders are clearly acknowledged in disciplines such as marketing (Varman and Saha, 2009). As part of a series of multiple-author essays collated by Thakur and Babu (2017), Jammulamadaka (2017) traces the developments in the notions of management education in India and calls for decolonization of management knowledge, whereas Ojha (2017) urges the need to avoid a simulacra effect in management education in India.

Findings and discussion

We sought out to examine the research question on whether there was a dominating cultural discourse embedded within the expansion of universalistic research paradigms in strategic management research in the context of emerging economies. We summarize the findings from the critical discourse analyses of the artifacts of the SMS Emerging India Special conference and discuss the implications.

Universalistic research paradigms

Our analysis began with the backdrop of extant strategic management research on emerging economies that attempted to evaluate the applicability of existing theories such as transaction cost, resource-based, institutional or agency theories onto the special contexts of emerging economies. There were findings pertaining to the relative superiority among the theories and recommendations of using combinations of these theories. There was also acknowledgement of their limitations, and these papers also provided a characterization of the infrastructural challenges of doing research in these economies. There were some recommendations to do more case studies and use qualitative studies to inform quantitative approaches; however, there was no call for a different philosophy of science in understanding these contexts.

Evidence of the expansion of these paradigms

The bodies that represent strategic management research have been growing at a rapid pace (Phelan *et al.*, 2002) almost assuming the aggression of an expanding multinational corporation. In the words of Denisi (2010, p. 200):

Despite the challenges we face, I am optimistic that the Academy will find a way to turn them [challenges] into opportunities for further growth as an organization. I'm afraid that if we can't do that, we run the risk of truly becoming irrelevant, and other groups or institutions will replace us.

The vehicles through which such growth is accomplished are carriers of the universalistic paradigms and given the increasing emphasis on international competitiveness and world-class research (Boussebaa and Brown, 2016; Kodeih and Greenwood, 2014); these carriers have also been sites of the dominating discourse.

Dominating discourses

In our study, we examined how theories travel through carriers such as special conferences and what are some of the meso-level processes of power through which such pivotal bodies play a role in universalizing American research paradigms. Some of the themes that arose in the discourse are summarized in italics. We use the lingua of discourse studies (van Dijk, 2001) with corresponding brief explanations when the terms are non-obvious.

- *The emerging and the developed are different entities:* The discourse uses the *metaphor* of “emerging” vs the developed or mature economy. There is an emphasis of contrast between “Us” (mainstream) and “Them” (non-mainstream) with a strong positive-self-representation and negative-other-representation. *Over-generalization* is found, as this distinction is stated without references to any specific Indian educational institution’s research and without substantiation. The phenomenon of a *hyperbole* (exaggeration of the poles using strong adjectives) is not very evident.
- *The state of research is weak in emerging economies and rigorous in developed economies:* A *rhetoric of repetition* across the text, especially in the use of the construct “emerging”, *presuppositions* about the construct “emerging” and unsubstantiated statements about research in emerging economies being primarily anecdotal have caused a *stereotyping* of emerging economy research.
- *Emerging economies need help on how to conduct good research:* *Apparent concessions* also seem to be made to improve the lot of Indian research.
- *Glass ceilings for research originating from emerging economies:* This appears primarily as implicit knowledge that was hinted at during live sessions or as part of participant narrative. This could possibly be termed as a *euphemism* in discourse analysis. We, therefore, find an overall affirmative answer for our research question.

Westwood and Jack (2007) have provided us the manifesto on applying post-colonial perspectives to question and disrupt the hegemony and false universalization in the field. By interrogating the status quo, we also attempt to sensitize scholars on the exclusivity of intellectual practices of knowledge located within the institutional apparatus in the USA. There are finer questions that we can ask ourselves while interpreting the results. Two implications mentioned by van Dijk (2001) are relevant to our study:

Unless inconsistent with their personal beliefs and experiences, recipients tend to accept beliefs, knowledge and even opinions through discourse from what they perceive as authoritative, trustworthy or credible sources, such as scholars, experts, professionals or reliable media. Again, in many situations there are no other public discourses or media that may provide information to help derive alternative beliefs.

An Indian approach to strategic management research, or even management research at large, may not be readily available in a coherent, universalized form that can be quickly explained in a “rocket-pitch” presentation of alternative knowledge systems to Western scholars deeply ingrained in a certain way of thought. And that inability does not immediately mean that Indian scholarship has no indigenous approach to knowledge creation. Joy and Poonamalle (2013, p. 404) support this view:

The claim that “management” does not exist in the peripheral cultures is perhaps an easy one to make since management is not a word that exists in or can be translated into many languages. Does that mean that they do not know how to manage? It just means that management exists in praxis in those cultures, but not as a body of knowledge. They may have their own ways of knowing and transferring the praxis. Instead of uncovering that, the American-style programs are quick to ignore praxis, and introduce a clean looking body of knowledge.

The current day model of Western research may even turn out to be irrelevant to managers and scholars in emerging economies, and they may leapfrog and innovate newer ways of seeking knowledge without fully depending on the Western models or by innovative synthesis, but only when there can be a blossoming free of dominating discourses. We avail of Said’s explanation of such a mechanism:

A need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together in far more interesting ways than any abridged or inauthentic mode of understanding can allow. But for that kind of wider perception we need time, patient and sceptical inquiry, supported by faith in communities of interpretation that are difficult to sustain in a world demanding instant action and reaction (Said, 2004, p. 878).

If the ultimate aim of research is to understand the truths of the reality around us, ancient India has had a rich tradition of seeking the truth, the imprinting of which cannot be denied in current day scholars, however diffuse, lacking in Western notions of “rigour” and scattered they may appear to be. In a more immediate way, the philosophical foundations of research have a bearing on the research paradigms that we adopt, and, hence, it is important to examine philosophical ramifications here. King (1999, p. 14) explains that “one of the obstacles confronting a proper consideration of classical Indian thought as a legitimate form of philosophizing is the widely held belief that Indian thought is culturally specific (in contrast to European universalism), and fundamentally bound to a particular religious worldview” and “the representation of Indian thought in the West has generally functioned as an example of the ‘exotic other’ that helps to define the modernity and normativity of euro-American culture” (King, 1999, p. 22). Further, King (1999, p. 14) states that the major factor in the successful de-particularization of the culturally specific and contextually limited Western thought has been the “violently enforced universalism imposed as a result of European colonial conquest”. The power of dominating discourse is more obvious from the

political, economic and ideological supremacy of the western world since the seventeenth century than from any claims by western philosophers to have found universal truths, as it has often been said that a language is merely a dialect backed by an army (King, 1999). These statements lend support to our central argument on the importance of both universalistic tendencies and dominating discourse for a negative impact on scholarly thought. A tolerance for differing discourses is required if we have to open up some spaces for strategic management theorizing in the future that creates authentic knowledge for its consumers (Srinivas, 2012). Studies “beyond the field” are the sources of creativity and innovation (Smircich *et al.*, 1992).

Conclusions

In attempting to connect several levels of analysis:

CDA draws on social theory to a greater extent than do other forms of discourse analysis, the aim being to present middle range theoretical accounts of phenomena which may be richer than the grand theory of some social science disciplines (Thomas, 2003, p. 782).

A full analysis of the discourse would necessitate far more extensive exploration of the social context and the historical angle needs further elaboration to appreciate the full context of this study.

There is the danger in critical studies of being too strongly biased toward power, domination and social imperfections leading to negativity and hyper-critique, a one-sided and intolerant approach must be guarded against. A broader view that seeks to inform society and organizations is expected to make a more valuable contribution. In this paper, we have ignored many of the positive contributions, intended and unintended, that the SMS India conference has made, primarily to highlight the critical perspective, and this lacuna is acknowledged as an issue with the technique itself; an alternative could be to take a dialectical approach (Mumby, 2005). It could also be useful to further study the processes of resistance beyond just reporting its existence. How does the identity of the local target undergo a change? Are there processes of contestation and appropriation of the dominating discourse? Such processes have been observed by scholars (Boussebaa and Brown, 2016; Kodeih and Greenwood, 2014) in studying the identity changes that individuals and organizations undergo within the discourse of international competitiveness. We have studied the process of how the domination is enforced, but it could also inform us to understand how it is enacted locally into the remaking of individual and organizational identities.

What we have attempted in this paper is a preliminary endeavor, and much more is possible to be done beyond a case of SMS special conferences in one emerging economy to study those sites closer to where the debates are possibly raging from different fora at different sites. Further research may consider more sophisticated postcolonial perspectives such as Bhabha’s notion of hybridity (Ozkazanc-pan, 2008, p. 968), wherein the West-East dichotomy is viewed in a more nuanced manner rather than as homogenized, uni-directional interaction and “third-spaces” are considered (Westwood, 2006).

We agree with Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999) on the need for an analysis of the social mechanisms of the international circulation of ideas and methods in management research. Denisi (2010) explains the progressive stages of ghettoization, assimilation and integration, whereas Said (2004) takes it to the level of “hospitality” to connote a profound humanistic spirit deployed with generosity, which a new research mindset would require to creatively makes a space in it for a foreign Other.

We concur with Said (2004) when he calls for freedom from manipulative identities such as “emerging” and “developed” or narrow hierarchies and classifications. Rather new

transformations of the traditionally defined ideas of the writer, the intellectual and the critic call for deeper thought. Hining's call for "quality pluralism" where quality of research is viewed from a broad lens of international scope and O'Higgins call for "parity of esteem", the need for "mutual respect and recognition of each other's traditions, viewpoints, contributions and dignity" is now a need of the hour (Tung, 2005, pp. 240-241). To conclude, we borrow Said's (1993, p. 804) words – what we require is a "contrapuntal" approach to create the music of research.

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