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Rationale for the Book and Presentation of the Contributions

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It seems trivial to note that the coronavirus epidemic has revealed the many deep cracks and dysfunctions running through the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. It is almost frightening to see how the shockwave generated by COVID-19 affects all areas of life in society.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that our societies are in search of benchmarks, that we ask questions of people whose thinking is likely to enlighten us and help us analyze the present situation and the avenues to explore in the future.

It is extremely interesting to observe how some of the most enlightened analysts do not hesitate to take strong positions on how the COVID-19 crisis is a turning point, after which the world will never be the same again. A recent editorial by Tom Friedman (2020) in the *New York Times* is symptomatic of these radical positions. The title of the article is representative of its content: “After the Pandemic, a Revolution in Education and Work Awaits.”

In this article, Friedman draws from many fields to argue for the depth of the revolution underway. His positions on the question of higher education, the question that unites the contributors to this work, are particularly clear-cut and unequivocal. For example, on the issue of continuing education, he says: “In the future, lifelong learning will be done by what I call ‘complex adaptive coalitions.’ An Infosys, Microsoft or IBM will partner with different universities and even high schools. . . . The universities’ students will be able to take just-in-time learning courses – or do internships – at the corporations’ in-house universities, and company employees will be able to take just-in-case humanities courses at the outside universities” (Friedman, 2020, para. 27).

Just as our society turns to analysts like Friedman for guidance on major issues, our approach in this book consisted of consulting some of the best specialists in our field, management education – namely,

some of the most recognized deans on seven continents – to understand how they analyzed this crisis, the possibility of exiting from it, and the conditions for doing so.

Reading these contributions leads one to observe, first of all, that although they do not deny the importance of the challenges and difficulties to be overcome, these deans do refrain from attaching themselves to the doxa that a change in the system of management education is on the doorstep of our societies. In other words, if the word *revolution* is widely overused in the times of COVID-19, the authors who contributed to this work have themselves refrained from participating in its overuse.

The authors of the present volume support deep analyses structured around two elements. First, the observation that the COVID-19 crisis, which was initially a health crisis, being imported into the sphere of management education is an acceleration of underlying trends that were already present but are now unfolding with a rapidity that no one would have suspected before the crisis. Second, a shared concern unites almost all the authors – namely, the need to come out “on top” of this crisis.

Nor is the present work free from lines of division between the contributors – of oppositions, of different understandings of the situation. These contrasts are particularly significant on the issue of school leadership.

Some authors highlight the enormous responsibility of leadership, and also the importance of its role, to find a way out of the crisis and to introduce innovation within their establishments, as well as more broadly within the framework of management education. The fundamental hypothesis of these approaches harkens back to personalist approaches, as the former comes down to recognizing that a leader, and therefore a person, can change the course of things. Far from being deterministic, their stance here is firmly in favor of freedom.

It should also be emphasized that the refusal to recognize a hypothetical revolution or a change of system does not lead to a bland observation that refuses to see the importance of the upheavals in progress. This in no way prevents the recognition that management education institutions are embedded in the social system in which they orbit and are influenced by social changes. For example, a major paradigm shift comes from the progress of the “societal/stakeholder” paradigm within companies, to the detriment of the paradigm of the

absolute priority of shareholder value. This new paradigm is incurred by broader societal changes, the new centrality of sustainable development, and the importance of ecology and the long term. It entails essential changes in approach for management education institutions.

Likewise, numerous analyses have pointed out that COVID-19 implies a shift to virtual education, a decline in the increase in foreign students, a change in admission criteria, and so forth. Emphasizing the importance of the role of leadership when faced with these upheavals seems almost obvious. But this approach asks us to go further and consider the social changes that are taking root in societies at the same time as the epidemic in the areas of disruption of family relationships, redefinition of living and working spaces, real estate and town planning, ergonomics, social solidarity, and so forth. These social changes are already affecting business schools and management faculties, both in their missions and in the implementation of their activities. A personalist approach emphasizes the decisive role of the leader in developing and implementing a vision and a strategic approach.

Other authors insist less on the importance of leadership in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, preferring to adopt a deterministic approach. They consider that management education institutions are predetermined, both in their constitutions and in their structures and activities, to meet the need for managerial training and education in a given state of society. Therefore, it is fundamental for management education institutions to develop thinking that establishes the extent to which the COVID-19 crisis is inducing a profound social change. Faced with this question, deterministic contributors themselves split into two camps.

For some, the COVID-19 crisis is first and foremost a health crisis whose effects are felt in companies and in the sphere of management education in a transient manner. As such, the constants and major trends in the economy and society should make it possible to exit this crisis quickly, restoring to business schools and management faculties their entire social role, even though the situation on the health front does not improve in the medium or even the long term. Therefore, the objective is to provide tools to exit the crisis and especially to improve teaching techniques, adapting them to the new ambient context created by COVID-19. Put another way, the current issue for business schools is to improve their teaching techniques so that they can integrate into and continue to find their place in this new context.

Other authors in this volume consider, to the contrary, that the coronavirus has only accelerated developments that were present before the epidemic. Thus, in their view, social changes correspond to long-term trends that made social functioning tend toward an unstable state that COVID-19 established. Business schools must therefore develop thinking on the state of society in order to redefine their place within it and maintain their social utility.

The contributions in this book have been organized into four parts:

- The first group of contributions, Part I, is organized around the theme “Striving for Higher Purpose.” These contributions have in common that they are not limited to analyzing the function of business schools and their possible development but present, in parallel, an analysis of the social changes underway and an analysis of the way out of the crisis and the changes that this will imply for business schools.

In Chapter 2, “Crises and Collective Purpose: Distraction or Liberation?,” Peter Tufano starts from the observation that the contexts in which business schools operate are becoming more complex because they must now take into account a plurality of stakeholders whose interests are sometimes contradictory and not always unified: this parallels the fact that companies must move from an approach focused on shareholders to a logic of stakeholders. The author poses the question of defining the objectives and the duties to be assumed in order to reconcile these sometimes-contradictory interests. Obviously, this question takes on a particular resonance with respect to the COVID-19 crisis, which often destroys consensus and forces business schools to redefine their duties. The shift from a logic of shareholders to a logic of stakeholders, as underlined by Tufano, is to be compared with the underlying long-term trend mentioned by Santiago Iñiguez in Chapter 3, “From Techne to Paideia: Upgrading Business Education.” Because of the increasing complexity of society, this trend requires the education provided in business schools to evolve from training as a company technician (in finance, marketing, etc.) to training allowing for a leadership role at the level of the whole society.

Fernando J. Fragueiro, in Chapter 4, “Educating Business Leaders, but for What Kind of World?,” demonstrates a broadly converging perspective. Indeed, in this period of unprecedentedly rapid change in all spheres of society, which is further accelerated by COVID-19, he

insists (in resonance with Peter Tufano) on the need to develop the adaptability of schools and, especially in harmony with Santiago Iñiguez, to put students – future leaders – in a position to develop a desirable vision or representation of the world and give them the capacity to contribute to bringing it about.

Chapter 5 by Gerald F. Davis, Peter McKiernan, and Anne S. Tsui, “Multi- and Interdisciplinary Research in a World of Crisis: A Responsible Research Solution,” takes a similar perspective to that of Santiago Iñiguez but focuses on the field of research. It insists on the need to develop research that is relevant to the major challenges of the world (in the way business school graduates should, according to Iñiguez, be able to have an impact on the major problems of the world) and, to that end, on the importance of developing research that is both multi- and interdisciplinary but also meets rigorous criteria.

In all of these works, the renewed importance of these approaches in the context of crisis is highlighted.

- Part II, “Going Beyond Business,” is more focused on the way in which the changes experienced by companies in their strategies, their structures, their decision-making methods, and their relationships to their environment must influence the approaches and modes of reasoning in force in business schools as much as they influence the teaching provided. Although the points of convergence with the contributions presented in Part I are strong, those contributions stand out because they question the way in which social changes should affect management education, whereas the texts in Part II include companies as a central element of their analyses. They focus both on the way in which social developments affect companies and on the way in which these transformations should influence management education establishments.

Peter Little, in Chapter 6, “The Reshaping of Corporations and Their Governance by Climate Change and Other Global Forces – Implications for Leaders and Management Education,” analyzes how the new principles of global governance affect the way companies are managed. He further emphasizes that these principles, which already influence the way companies approach the coronavirus crisis but whose sustainability will go far beyond that, will bring about contextual and regulatory changes and force business schools to rethink the

elements of their programs of study in each of the disciplines in which they teach or do research.

Daniel Traça takes the same perspective in Chapter 7, “Transforming Business Schools into Lighthouses of Hope for a Sustainable Future,” and elaborates thinking on the changes to come for management education institutions so that they can fulfill their role as agents of transformation in a liberal world facing existential challenges.

Likewise, in Chapter 8, “Rethinking Management Education in Dynamic and Uncertain Markets: Educating Future Leaders for Resilience and Agility,” Rajendra Srivastava starts from the observation that our time is experiencing profound changes in all areas of life in society (social, cultural, economic, work, education, health) that are further accelerated by the coronavirus epidemic. Srivastava therefore wonders how business schools can bring new added value to the education of business leaders at this unprecedented moment in human history.

Barbara Sporn, in Chapter 9, “Strategic Continuity or Disruption? Adaptive Structures of Business Schools in Times of Crisis,” starts from the observation that the university system, business schools, and all the actors who make up their ecosystem have been confronted with a sudden, unexpected, and deep crisis triggered by the coronavirus – one that has forced schools to rethink their approaches and practices in many areas. Sporn tends to think that business schools, whose great adaptability is proven by their history, will be able to respond to these new challenges but believes that the changes provoked, which are analyzed in this chapter, will be irreversible.

- In general, and regardless of the sector studied, an examination of the course of events since the start of the COVID-19 crisis highlights a particularly salient element – namely, that internationalization has occupied a central place in all developments and has undergone a total reversal in the way it is viewed. Very quickly, it became clear that international travel was driving the epidemic, and borders, which had been undergoing a process of opening up and even disappearance, were locked down all over the world. In addition, whereas internationalization had been perceived as a phenomenon parallel to development and progress and was generally seen positively, with the coronavirus, it became the object of

powerful distrust, illustrated in particular by the fact that foreigners are felt to be a threat, and a strong sense of the need to limit internationalization for the common good has arisen. All of this has obviously had a major impact on management education, which had made internationalization a central facet of its development, as much to find new students and support the international development of companies by training their managers as to enrich the quality of exchange in classes, among other benefits.

It is logical, then, that this book includes the chapters in Part III, “Internationalization of Business Schools.” Thus, Yuan Ding, in Chapter 10, “Reinventing the Internationalization of Business Schools in the Post–COVID-19 Era,” positions himself in the exact perspective brought about by this context. He argues that business schools will have a crucial role to play in rebuilding the post–COVID-19 world. Thus, they need to better understand how to effectively train business leaders in the art of resilience, recovery, adaptation, and innovation and provide them with the skills to pull countries and global businesses out of the storm of COVID-19.

Despite the temporary limitations of international travel and the return of economic sovereignty, business schools should make the training of international leaders one of their priorities, and to that end, they should promote greater pluralism in companies with respect to both communities and countries.

Enase Okonedo, in Chapter 11, “The Face of Business Education in Africa Post–COVID-19: Gain or Loss?,” explores the impact of COVID-19 in Africa, knowing that the rapid growth of African economies over the past few decades has highlighted the need for competent, well-trained managers and has contributed to the emergence of business schools on the continent, either as stand-alone schools or within universities. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, which was accompanied by containment measures, upset this nascent market by causing the emergence, in parallel with those measures, of a plethora of providers of management education services, often backed by technology companies, financial institutions, and independent trainers. Okonedo discusses the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on business schools in Africa, including the risks and opportunities as well as the ways in which business schools can adapt in this changed environment

by examining their curricula, embracing innovative pedagogy, and evaluating the relevance of their methods.

Finally, in Chapter 12, “Creating a New Major Business School in the Times of COVID-19: The HSE-Moscow Way,” Valery S. Katkalo asks how it is possible to create a new business school within a large university, both in the context of COVID-19 and when the competition for a new school that will become a major actor is not only national but also international. He describes a particularly interesting case: the organizational restructuring of the Higher School of Economics at the National Research University to create its Graduate School of Business began in 2019, and with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, it faced critical dilemmas. This has required nontrivial strategic and operational action in putting together the management program portfolio, shifting to e-learning modes, designing new policies for the development of the teaching staff, and training a support ecosystem, as well as a number of other examples of creative leadership – all focused on progressing toward the school’s ambitious goal despite the challenges of COVID-19.

- The last part of the book, Part IV, is entitled “Crisis Management with a Special Focus on COVID-19.” Its rationale stems from the understanding that although the coronavirus epidemic relates, above all, to the field of public health, where it has its origins, its consequences have opened up a crisis in the field of management education. However, many of our institutions have developed recognized competence in crisis management and constitute the social places to which other social actors come to develop their own skills. In this context, it is worthwhile to pursue an understanding of how management education institutions have faced this imported crisis, how they have adapted their organizational behavior, and what lessons they have drawn from it. In addition, an underlying question forms the central line of thought in the chapters in this part, and it relates to the specificity of crises. That is, the term *crisis management* covers very different realities in relation to crises. It is clear, then, that the specificities of each crisis determine the modes of response that can be brought to bear on it. Furthermore, it is wrong to assume that there is a toolkit for dealing with any and all crises; each one requires that the work of adapting to it be performed. What is more, these contributions also focused on the specificity of the COVID-19 crisis.

In my Chapter 13, “Going Beyond ‘Always Look on the Bright Side of Life’ in Management Education Crisis Strategy,” I underline the specificities of the way in which management education institutions have faced the COVID-19 crisis in relation to the way which they confronted previous economic and social crises, in particular the crisis of 2008–2009. During this latter period, business schools demonstrated an impressive capacity (and one that has been confirmed during the COVID-19 crisis) to continue to operate under modalities as close as possible to those from before the crisis, yet without questioning the fundamental assumptions of their functioning. Contrarily, a movement based on the recognition by management education institutions that they are, in fact, social actors is now asserting itself. As such, these schools have mobilized the skills of their stakeholders to help other organizations find the means to emerge safely from the COVID-19 crisis.

In addition, I maintain that the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated procedures, behaviors, and approaches that were already emerging in the world of management education. The observation that “the world after” will be different is supported by several contributions. Thus, Frank Bournois, in Chapter 14, “Developing Future Leaders with New Partners: Trends from a Business School Perspective,” notes that the current COVID-19 crisis has triggered an unprecedented upheaval on a global scale, even if, from a strictly health point of view, humanity has shown itself capable of joining forces and transcending political borders. Above all, he underscores that this crisis is transforming the management sciences.

Jean-François Manzoni, in Chapter 15, “Leading an (Unusual) Academic Institution through a Crisis: A Personal Reflection,” develops a line of thinking that perfectly fits the present work: a reflection on the challenges and opportunities for deans to lead in and through a crisis.

Grzegorz Mazurek also believes in the potential that the COVID-19 crisis has for the progress of management education. In an original contribution titled “‘Real Change Comes from Outside’: COVID-19 as a Great Opportunity for the Revival of Business Schools and Management Education” (Chapter 16), he analyzes how the recognized shortcomings and dysfunctions of management education (teaching selfishness to the detriment of the general interest, ethereal research that has no impact on the real world, the cost of overpriced studies

limiting access to underprivileged social strata, an inability to make and implement decisions, etc.) could be improved thanks to the external shock that COVID-19 represents.

Finally, Pierre Kletz, in Chapter 17, “The Extreme Situation, a Challenge for Management Education,” offers an analysis of the situation of schools caused by the coronavirus epidemic, characterizing it as an extreme situation. He shows that the response of educational institutions oscillates between an attitude of coping faced with the new situation that entails a deterioration in the quality of management education and a work of mourning that leads to the recognition that some of the foundations of its development (a virtual absence of competing institutions for education in leadership and management, the continuous increase in international demand for management studies, etc.) are obsolete.

In total, reading the entirety of these contributions devoted to the response of management education institutions to the crisis caused by COVID-19 appears to be extraordinarily invigorating insofar as they oppose the many opinions on the subject that are presented as a panegyric of “making a virtue out of necessity.” In such opinions, the way in which business schools have succeeded in reacting to sudden external shocks that have called into question the possibility of carrying out entrance exams, recruiting foreign students, conducting international seminars, teaching within the walls of the institution, and so on, is set up as a paragon of leadership in management education. Obviously, the response of management education institutions has in many cases been remarkable, but according to this new dominant ideology, reactive behavior that responds piecemeal to successive external shocks would constitute the ideal of school management.

Although the chapters in this book do not deny the importance of day-to-day management, they stress the need to focus on the essentials. They point out that even in the face of a shock as powerful as COVID-19, leaders must find the means to take a step back, to continue to define a strategy to be planned in the short and medium terms. Above all, the authors maintain that deans cannot be satisfied with focusing on their schools – or even on the unique field of management education. They insist on the importance of an analytical window onto society that leads to social commitment that determines the projects of their institutions.

We have underscored how the contributors to this book adopt one of two approaches. One comes from a personalist current in which the person can change the course of things, and thus it highlights the importance of leaders, and the other comes from a determinist current, which, on the contrary, insists on the need to analyze the social forces that affect the way of doing business and therefore management education.

It is no less important to highlight that all these contributions have in common that they emphasize the notion of vision as a reference concept and underline, explicitly or allusively, how important it is for leaders of management education institutions to develop and implement a vision.

References

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