

## Leveraging Management Innovation to Solve the Problems of Developing Countries

Recent technology advancements have opened everyone to rich, strategic, and instantaneous information while outdated the predictive odds of competitive strategies. Even in continents and regions with limited access to internet, the wind of technology and its game-changing options blows traditional competitive strategies based on mutual exclusion rights. The means for keeping an upper hand and gaining endless competitive advantage remain unequally distributed, but effort to disturb this artificial order and replace it with cooperation order have never been so aggressive than today. Bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations, as fundamentally obsessed with maintaining control, order, and stability, convince their supporters and constituency of their predictability. On the one hand, formulaic administration excessively disowns the people inside organizations their constantly elusive rights of thinking; that is the vital Cartesian and Husserlian “Cogito” and doubting. Order and control, instead of promoting spaces for new and purposeful idea generation and testing, highjack what is central to human-centered organizations: the right of learning from failing. Vertical structures stifle good ideas and audacious initiatives remain unexplored. A study conducted in Burundi highlighted different practices but with same damaging effect on the teams condemned to feign their sense of social order.

### *Comparison of Social Order Methods in the University and in the Industry*

Management Innovation Benchmarks	Actual Management Practices	Social Order in Industry	Social Order in University
Organizational structures are flat and open door working style	Vertically hierarchical bureaucracy	Structures and culture guarantee order, control, and security	Success judged on educated unchallenged managers, authoritative, thus tyrants
Holding frequent hotspots around problem	Toxic discussions between equals aimed at undermining one another	Mutually assured destruction behaviors at best, and open throat cut competition	Education is long, technical, and exclusively expensive MBA as specialized for customer students and industry experts
Consultation as always if insights needed	Only on scheduled meetings	Employees navigating the set boundaries	
Emergent problems constitute the issues of consultation	Static order and stability exclude recognition of genuine problems	Personal safety prevails	University tradition dictates
To share insights for more understanding of the problem at hand	To dictate the course of action either forcefully or willingly	Self-sufficient staff, experts each perceived as omniscient	Transmission of skills, no critical thinking nor research, and MBA graduates as predictors of their industry
To foster younger's problem solving insights	To threaten those who befriend in the workplace	Respectful dealings with hierarchy determine professional growth	In theory, intrinsic motivation as mechanism for meaningful academic career
Constant consultations hold on voluntary and scheduled meetings	Only when scheduled	Only once scheduled	Inactive peer associations
Every time as puzzled on solving a business problem	Only when pressure is excessively high within the group	Everyone plays an expert and can do it alone	Younger dependent on older, and respectful of doing nothing of the precedents
To share the critical setback fearlessly and propose creative options	To be recalled the company's performance target and imperative to succeed	Business problems are due to incompetent people	Research and conferences without clear practical engagement for action
Widely open decision -making with contributions from everyone	Top-down and employees subject to unquestionable implementation	Personal failures are deadly, thus hide them	Relevant research is methodological, usefulness is mere coincidence
Trust is widely shared at all levels	Toxic environment prohibits constructive collaboration	Supportive friendships in workplace prohibited	Professional friendship still possible but effective actions difficult
All ideas are welcomed and testing them cheaply	Strictly working in reference to the manual of procedures to punish failure	Middle managers taking credit of the efforts of the subalterns	Aged career holders are the reference and youth as the tradition preservers
Space for new ideas wide and constructively open	Closed nurturing toxic talks	Mutual denial	Research for universities, and practice for business
Unlimited and expected from all	Expertise before everything else, no need for ideas	No one cares, just feign work satisfaction	Blacklisting those requesting more career prospects Good ideas dying within researchers, no sharing with industry
Good ideas promoted and tested	All is preset, nothing more to propose	Activist and silenced workers	

*Note:* The table provides a comparison of social order mechanisms adopted in the university and industry (Source: Ciza, 2023).

The conclusions of the table help conclude that both university and industry systematically close spaces for mutual learning and problem-solving hotspots, making them to become synonymous to conspiracy of the low staff against the top leaders. Excessive zeal for domination and control chases away critical and creative thinking voice while throning submission to power and tyranny. Hamel (2022) evaluated the tremendous costs of bureaucracy to US\$10 trillion per year in lost output. In such an environment, those with useful knowledge have no right to the decision-making room where selection criteria remain loyalty and cult to one person translated into unfailing submission to the dictation of her final word. Without open space for diverse opinion and constructive idea generation, systemic and monolithic problems affecting developing societies continue to block entire communities from starting the journey to satisfying their natural and human needs.

### **Accountable governance and rule of law as the cost of hierarchy culture**

Nowadays, everyone concedes that corruption breaks down every effort of entire civilization to embark on the journey of development. As Transparency International puts it, corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, and the means for challenging corrupt practices are promotion of transparency, accountability, and integrity. Many countries are struggling on those items, whether in developed and developing countries. In 2023, the Organization described its general Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) in the terms of ill-mastery of corruption by weaker judicial systems. The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories around the globe by their perceived level of public sector corruption, scoring on a scale of 0 (as highly corrupt) to 100 (as very clean). The comments of the report considers that Western Europe and the EU remained the top-scoring region. However, with weakened checks and balances and with eroded political integrity, regional average score dropped to 65 in 2023. But Sub-Saharan Africa has maintained the lowest average at 33, with democracy and the rule of law under pressure. Burundi got a score of 20/100, and ranked at 162/180. As in TI indicates, high corruption is an indication of weak judicial systems and wide systemic lack of accountability among the public servants at all levels. This background of defective accountability and rule of law highlights the damaging role of hierarchy culture as characteristic of patriarchy systems, mainly widespread in almost every public service of most developing countries.

The say going as “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely” applies here. There is a constant in developing countries consisting of government structures being powerful with a militaristic worldview. Strong of their overconfidence, they adamantly, and without of irrefutable evidence, influence the opinion to belittle education as filled with economically unproductive individuals because they hardly make investments. On the other hand, the blurred boundaries between private and public duties facilitate exclusive missions to become normal practice, thus public servants becoming the dominant figures in private sector. Rather than incentivizing competitive environment, unequal access to market information at same time by all market actors as an indication of competitive markets culminate into oligopolistic market systems infested by awful corruption. These practices guided by abuse of power to influence social structures of the society remain common culture in many economic spheres, including universities and private businesses. Bureaucratic and administrative practices contradict fundamental values of organizations as living systems that naturally seek to reach better and higher position within the prevailing environment. Management innovation sparks creative forces inside organizations, societies and nations. In many ways, bureaucracy is costly to organizational entrepreneurial spirit and to national economy. For instance, the cost of bureaucratic processes in Burundi remains the highest in the EAC, but mainly its trailing place in the East African Community is revealing. This has undermined the strategic benefits that

had prompted support for Burundi to join the community. Among the major factors playing dramatically against the interest of Burundi are the highest visa cost for foreigners visiting. As one of the poorest country, foreigners still pay US\$ 90.00 for 30 days. Furthermore, Burundi still fails to provide sufficient information on the attractiveness of its market as a means for convincing on its worth. Since government structures are in charge of facilitation of business environment, one understands that bureaucratic hierarchy culture and its corruptive practices make it impossible for other sectors to perform.

As an advice by a university dean was that MI perspective ought to extend on the challenges of management in public services in Burundi and propose actionable management recommendations to end the bureaucratic situation which is one of the challenges in the culture” (27/06/2022). Even other countries have their own bureaucracy, even more rigid than the ones in developing countries. What makes the difference is the underlying culture of favoring excellence and innovation practices. Navigating bureaucracy inside an environment that favors excellence and innovation generates a market culture and holistic and shared prosperity. There is no point fighting bureaucracy. Only by raising dissatisfaction makes it irrelevant. This is the work of raising awareness of its damage on individuals, on organizations, and nations. In a technology-supported and globalized era, regional integration has broadened the economic horizons through facilitation of consolidated markets beyond national boundaries. Through regional blocs such as EAC, Burundi seeks to access to market of 283.7 million people (in 2021), 4.8 million sq. km, and GDP equivalent to \$ 305.3 billion (2021) as the right move toward strengthening the national competitiveness. In these terms, the worldwide highest taxation schemes not only inhibit the efforts of Burundi to attain the competitive advantage of nations, but also weigh heavily on regional PIB causing the whole region to dwindle on the economic ladder. In the globalized era, nations that compete on prohibitive costs constitute absurd administrative policies and only achieve the opposite. Encouraging academicians, business professionals and government authorities to actively engage in the Burundi Management Innovation Lab (BMIL) bridges misunderstandings, incentivizes self-discovery, and creates mutual awareness and empowering cooperation.

### **Leveraging Management Innovation Ecosystems to Solve the Problems of Developing Countries**

The above reflection produced negative effects on the capacity of generating useful and purposeful ideas through research. Talking about Burundi, the first remark concerns the inhibition of innovation by defective and unintentional research infrastructure and policy. For the last 20 years (2000-2019), Burundi failed at different research spheres. Comparing Rwanda and Burundi on research outputs, Lagarde (2021) pointed to the differences in wealth to understand why Rwanda expanded to a hundred-page bibliography while Burundi had 40 pages in 2019 with zero research title in both management and organization. The budget allocated to education grew from less than \$5 million to only \$ 162 million in 2019, with declining allocation to tertiary education from 21.5 % in 2015 to 15% in 2019. The last indicator of poor research infrastructure and policy relates to that 80% and 87% of the annual budget serve in direct payment of the professors respectively for the University of Burundi the Ecole Normale Supérieure against 3% and 1% for research. More than 15 years after the adoption of the Bologna Process reform, Burundi still suffers in both research quality and quantity (Hajayandi, 2020) with total dependence of education sector and research infrastructure on the government budget. Consequently, commendable socioeconomic analyses on Burundi come from multilateral organizations, such the World Bank, International Fund for Agriculture Development, and the African Development Bank. Curtis (2019) questioned the role of producing research while encouraging Western researchers to balance between responsibility and humility in the production

of knowledge about Burundi. There are interesting initiatives that attempt to reverse the dangerous trend, that Burundi can leverage on.

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual conference organized by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) explicitly denounced the dominance of global North authors producing research on Burundi. The critique of knowledge on Burundi that extensively relies on colonial enterprise predominantly written by Western scholars raises systemic questions of researchers' capacity and public policy. The conference conceded the point of Burundi Research Network (BRN) recognizing an important gap between participants' interests and actual research programs, escalated by limited funding opportunities, and imposed research topics by funding bodies. The BRN, as an outcome of research in peace, conflict, and development studies from anthropological, feminist and decolonial perspectives by Jamar et al. (2019), constitutes an approach for strengthening Burundian researchers in political and development policies but hardly addresses fundamental problems of collaboration as source of mutually strengthening capacity between research institutions and private businesses. Finally, this framework provides no chance for the nascent management field to produce relevant research for private organizations to creatively adapt to the fragile environment and thrive. The Management Innovation Lab aims at offering a space for university and industry to generate new and purposeful ideas with the power of advancing on solving the challenges affecting Burundi as case of developing countries.

Behind the BMIL project, there is a conviction that ideas play an incomparable role. Every developed nation seeks constant support in generation more and better purposeful ideas though unreserved support to research institutions such as universities. Recent evidence has shown stiff competition in supporting groundbreaking research in many countries. Economic Insight (2014) highlighted that producing relevant and excellent research follows consistent commitments in raising the education standard with considerable expenditure in R&D. In management field, Basken (2023) explained that research and practice ought to rally all the stakeholders into a constructivist closed system view relevant to the real-world challenges given the importance of business in economic and corporate decision making to improve overall societal well-being. Jonkers and Sachwald (2018) demonstrated the economic impact of excellent research through innovation and the development of new high growth sectors as well as the effects of R&D activities by foreign multinationals on local innovation rates (Crescenzi et al., 2020).

### **Cooperation Drives Unique Solutions to Monolithic Problems**

BMIL fits into a wide range of administrative shifts that include new public administration, management innovation policy, management education curriculum review, etc. The interaction in the BMIL ecosystem fosters invaluable transnational partnerships between industries and universities allowing diverse actor groups reinvent productive systems for idea testing and validation of their usefulness. By widening the MI ecosystems, participants appreciate the contributions of public technical departments especially those related to education (Ministry, other universities, etc.) and economic planning (with the Burundi's Development Authority, the Burundi's Chamber of Commerce, and Industry) to converse on both technical and advocacy issues that systemically inhibit development. MI happens at the intersection of multidisciplinary research and practice.

How can actors gain by leveraging MI? Mutual exclusion between research and practice traditions inhibits MI culture from its foundations of safety in problem-solving spheres. Universities as centers for theory production through research, offer little or no space for the industry to participate in the endeavor. Ciza (2023) highlighted that, scholars in their methodological patterns, seek to understand, qualify, and

quantify the practice and the culture of MI. This remains a technical language of universities that most of the time industry and society consider as mere thinking products which scientific community regards with reverence and rewards greatly. For organizational managers however, a management innovator knows more about what work to do to make the partnership around MI hold sustainably. Who gains from this and who should the opinion address the blame? The cultural duality stems from research tradition claiming exclusive right to theory production as a reserved sphere. Even among research communities, other considerations have appeared recently between qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Inside the research community, there is a consensus that each approach contributes to the advancement of knowledge, whether in the form of numbers or in the form of narratives. This is a positive development as world problems are complex and multifaceted in nature. On the other hand, differences between traditional sciences and social sciences are there to last due to the objects of their inquiry. While universities have an independent choice between qualitative approach and social sciences and quantitative research and natural sciences, they face a social responsibility of being a force for good in solving problems of poverty, unemployment, economic competitiveness, wellbeing, etc. Those problems appear in various forms and hardly fit into one scientific area. Looked at closely, such problems, generally acute in developing countries, make mutual ignorance between university research and industry practice an inconsistent and dangerous path leading down to failure. University and industry are social and living systems and have inner properties for reinventing themselves while simultaneously reaping into the rich and untapped opportunities of collaboration in solving the most stubborn problems of our society. Universities possess greater options for triggering this systemic change, but sustaining it depends on the actors. But this privileged position gradually dwindles as emerging innovation consulting groups portray qualities of new and institutionalized type of innovation that consists in the process of helping clients develop novel capabilities, products, or services against performance-based compensation. Consulting groups like McKinsey & Company and Boston Consulting Group hold the potential of disrupting the university industry due to the diverse quality of their research that respond to the core and real-world challenges. Therefore, on the long-term, neither the industry nor the university benefits from continuing on sole runner path.

MI-centered cooperation between university and industry holds the incentives for building honest but curious intellectuals faced by the magnitude of transforming the university into relevant institutions through raising confident yet humble corporate managers capable of appreciating relevant research for their long-term performance. To bridge this difference of approach, the first imperative consists in shifting from mutually exclusive tradition between research and practice to unifying horizons. Advising business schools to partner with thoughtful leaders in industry, government, and consulting firms comes out strongly in different conversations. The BMIL bases this focus on an approach grounded in systems thinking, dynamic capability-driven, stakeholder-focused, and multi-disciplinary research approaches. Each of them provides the ecosystem with invaluable opportunities hidden in unlocking the power of management innovation to solve monolithic problems of developing countries.

Systems thinking approach helps articulate the combination of synthesizing, integrating, and design thinking theories. Systems thinking stresses that most problems in sciences, whether physical or social, including tyrannical hierarchy culture that jeopardized innovative solutions to damaging societal and corporate competitiveness, are fundamentally systemic in nature (Meadows, 2008; Wheatley, 2006); thus, require wide angle lens to see phenomena (Bridgen, 2017) instead of a microscope as in scientific inquiry. Secondly, most successful business models are temporary and only knowledge and knowledgeable people constitute a powerful engine for gaining a strategic edge in their specific context. Only the people working

together can foresee new threats and opportunities (sensing), assess the required capability to embrace them effectively (seizing), and urgently recommend bold resolve to transform them into active sources of competitiveness. The aspects of stakeholder and multidisciplinary research approaches offers significant leverage to systems thinking applied to dynamic systems including social structures like organizations and nations. The magnitude of MI problems attracts policymakers and education specialists acting either as operators of validation or testing body. This stakeholder inclusive approach recognizes that paced changes has reconfigured the drivers of successful businesses making the role of universities and business schools hardly able to resist the trends. As Siegel and Wessner (2012) mentioned, business schools fulfill the premium role of strengthening the innovation ecosystem beyond anything else by organizing stakeholder ecosystem. The promoters of management innovation, including Hamel (2022), recognized that management was the most important gift to human kind. From this perspective, the problems management tries to resolve are not restricted to any sector or field. Instead, MI lies at the intersection of multidisciplinary research. This point of view supports the review of management programs as new contexts in the business environments require management innovators, instead of technocratic managers obsessed by fear of uncertain and unpredictable business' course of action. Management curricula used to train managers ought to teach about management rather than teaching for management (Parker, 18) as a call for university systems and business schools to educate critical and creative thinking managers who challenge stability and control underpinnings. In the BMIL, active contributors learn to trust one another while experiencing the value of humility for research and transparency for management profession.

Even corruption as a damaging societal problem becomes a source of inspiration for challenging the structures of poverty, lack of competitiveness, and ill-equipped structures for innovation culture.

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