3. Taking the lead on leadership: reimagining the responsible business school of the future

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INTRODUCTION

Considering that the world's oldest university in continuous operation – the University of Bologna – was established in 1088, business schools, historically, are a relatively new institution, as exemplified by the establishment of ESCP Europe (1819), the Wharton School and HEC Paris (1881), Birmingham Business School (1902), HEC Montreal (1907), Harvard Business School (1908), Stockholm School of Economics (1909), and NHH – Norwegian School of Economics (1936). The Oxford Centre for Management Studies was not established until 1965 and was rebranded as Saïd Business School in 1996. The Australian Graduate School of Management was founded in 1977 at the University of New South Wales as the nation's first business school. Cambridge's Judge Institute for Management Studies was established as late as 1990, renamed as Judge Business School in 2005, before being first rebranded as Cambridge Judge Business School and then eventually as University of Cambridge Judge Business School in 2010.

As educational institutions with a focus on enabling successful organization practice (subject to definition, but often meaning maximizing profits and continuous growth) by spanning the bridge between theory and practice, business schools not only support life-long learning for individuals in the private sector but increasingly do so for people in the public and voluntary sectors as well. The amateurism of the past, the privileges of inheritance in running businesses, these were to be replaced by an earned meritocratic professionalism. Hence, they play(ed) a pivotal role in the professionalization of contemporary societies. With this important role comes a great responsibility, and in this chapter, we question the extent to which business schools, in general, have outplayed their role as harbingers of an increasing professionalization and democra-

tization in society. Have they now transformed into barriers to sustainable development for all, democratic leadership, social as well as technological innovation, and social as well as private entrepreneurship, rather than acting as catalysts?

With the latest IPCC report (2022) freshly in mind, increasing numbers of organizations acknowledge the requirement of an immediate shift in focus from short-term profits, continuous efficiency gains, and unsustainable growth to a combination of profit *and* purpose (Freeman et al., 2020), business *and* society (Collins & Porras, 2005). Implicitly, institutions of business as well as the business schools providing their flow of managerial and leadership skills and talent need to consider their own purpose beyond short-term profits and status. Business, being major beneficiaries of the status quo in terms of benefitting from the economic value that businesses create for holders of economic capital (shareholders), need to reconsider their purpose. Responsible business schools need to lead this reconsideration. For business schools to stay relevant, they must reframe their existential foundations, and question the good that they serve. Simply put, business schools' professionalization mission should embrace broad-based societal transformation rather than continuing commitment to a mission shaped by the totems of their recent past. These totems, gaining in influence since the 1980s, are practices such as existing academic and research impact factors, external accreditations, and a potpourri of rankings based on obscure and status-quo affirming methodologies.

While the notion of a balanced scorecard suggests the importance of people and planet as well as profits, it is noticeable that the profits seem to be held in higher regard, and by business school metrics are more oriented to profits than to people or planet. Indeed, while organizations have certainly improved over the long run from their 19th-century practices (Marx, 1976) it is not evident that positive organizational behaviour is a major desideratum in many organizations (Cunha et al., 2020). As for the planet, the future of the Anthropocene does not look good as climate change increases and species are depleted (Heikkurinen et al., 2020).

PURPOSE, INTERNAL GOODS, AND BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Purpose has been defined as 'The organization's essential and enduring tenets – a small set of general guiding principles; not to be confused with specific cultural or operating practices; not to be compromised for financial gain or short-term expediency' (Collins & Porras, 2005, p. 73). Such purpose can

be informed by internal or external goods (MacIntyre, 2004). The former, an internal good, is:

> 'a common good – what is good for a majority in the community, society, nation, and globe – and focuses on areas of, for example, sustainable development, education, health, equality, equity, peace, saving lives etc., [while] the latter is exemplified by seeking to increase power, influence, wealth and status as ends in themselves.' (By, 2021, p. 35)

Kempster et al. (2011) argue that leadership practices in general have 'succumbed to the corrupting influence of money, status and power' (p. 323). They observe that:

> Purposes that are pronounced in dominant leadership discourses reflect objectives, mission and vision. Aligned to the delivery of these forms of purposes are discourses oriented towards performance management in the form of key performance indicators, action plans and a balanced score card. The outcome is the production of external goods and practices oriented to the production of these external goods. (Kempster et al., 2011, p. 322)

To deliver internal goods, and encourage and enable others to do the same, business schools could take heed from Åsmund S. Lærdal, founder of Laerdal Medical, who suggested that 'If we can create value to the society at large, and do our job well, satisfactory economic results will follow – and allow us to build a stronger company with time' (Tjomsland & Morallee, 2020, p. 107). Doing this is not easy; indeed, it is very tricky. How can business schools and their deans achieve these goods when many of them are motivated by playing the game of increasing profits and status themselves? The game is well rehearsed; it is played through impact factors and journal rankings, however flawed their methodologies and consequences may be (Mingers & Willmott, 2013; Tourish & Willmott, 2015; Willmott, 2011). It is affirmed by institutional rankings and external accreditations (e.g., triple-crown) that certainly deliver status in the eyes of the market but do not necessarily nurture internal purposes in their people and graduates. Given the global importance of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), how can business schools harvest their promise if it is not really that important to their community as individuals or institutions? In fact, the UN's SDGs play little or no role when it comes to defining success in or for most business schools.

It is journal rankings that have become the main measure for success in and for business schools, even though the current journal-list fetishism constricts scholarly innovation and even stifles diversity (Willmott, 2011). Importantly, what is written matters far less than where it is published, because the key performance indicators (KPIs) that drive many a dean's behaviour are quanti-

tative and metricized. It is far easier, and less demanding and time-consuming, to rank articles and journals than to read them. Mingers and Willmott (2013) observe how journal 'quality' lists tend to prefer highly Taylorized business school research, conditioning the research activity of academics to rapid publication of quantitative findings fitting key journal genres, in other words, a degree of homogenization and standardization in preferred content and outlets. Tourish and Willmott (2015, p. 37) suggest that journal rankings, amongst other measures, contribute 'to a wider debasement of academic culture whereby business schools and academics are encouraged to over-focus on issues of status and league table positioning for their own sake, rather than address important issues of concern to our wider society'.

The very same 'quality' journals influencing so many business school decisions, including recruitment, promotions, incentives, resource allocation, and successful PhD submissions, are, according to Harley and Fleming (2021), not even trying to change the world. Rather, they suggest that journal rankings have become management tools in the neoliberal business school. Doctoral training now includes inculcating the skills required to play the top-tier journal publishing game because it is increasingly journal publication metrics that decide individual career success, research grants, and institutional status. Writing a thesis used to lead, at its best, to publishing a scholarly book generated from the thesis; having done this in current climes would not be a move that won influence and persuaded people on selection committees of the academic worth of a project as much as would two or three articles that remained unread by them but whose quality was assigned by the branding that packaged the product. Furthermore, with the prevalence for research-based positivism – stemming from what Harley and Fleming (2021) refer to, after Flyvbjerg (2001), as 'physics envy' – results in management and leadership being studied by methods that treat it as if it was a STEM subject area (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), with 'quality' journals tending to emphasize quantitative, generalizable, and 'value-free' research methodologies involving '… identifying numerical relationships between isolated and abstract subconstructs that omit the "big picture"' (Harley & Fleming, 2021, p. 149). The narrative norms of history, ethnography, anthropology, and other interpretive social sciences are scorned. Such research norms exclude the big picture factors of power, politics, and ethics that embed, frame, and shape organizational life and its practices. Hence, identifying and contributing to resolving challenges such as the SDGs become secondary.

To understand what might be a future business schools' role that contributes more meaningfully to the identification and solution of these big questions facing society and organizations today, we revisit the purpose of business schools before sharing By's (2021) newly developed leadership model based on the Telos Leadership Lens (TLL) and PAC (Purpose,

Alignment, Commitment) leadership ontology, with a focus on creating and enabling purpose, alignment, and commitment (based on DAC: Direction, Alignment, Commitment) ontology [see Drath et al., 2008]). We then propose to reframe the business school to ensure they remain relevant in the future.

REVISITING THE PURPOSE OF BUSINESS SCHOOLS: BEYOND PROFITS, IMPACT FACTORS, ACCREDITATIONS, AND RANKINGS

Many, but not all, business schools form part of universities that traditionally have had the purpose of 'pursuing the truth for the truth's sake and turning out well-rounded students versed in the liberal arts' (Burnes et al., 2013; Newman, 1907). Nossal (1997) suggests that there were three crucial purposes guiding universities, and by association, business schools:

> The first is to act as living repositories of accumulated knowledge. Universities must have within them experts who husband and safeguard the knowledge of the past, who interpret it in the present context and who make the fruits of this scholarship available to the society.
> Secondly, universities must pass on humanity's accumulated knowledge to the younger generation. This educational mission is obviously what society mainly sees when considering a university.
> Thirdly, universities add to the sum total of human knowledge through research. (p. 10)

It is a reality that has changed over the years; universities are now expected to emphasize wealth creation and job readiness, and social mobility as well as public engagement (Kok et al., 2010; Watermeyer, 2012). Just as university education in general expanded significantly across the world from the 1950s onwards, so too did business schools, which up to then had been mainly a North American phenomenon (Clarke, 2008). The early American business schools, such as Wharton and Harvard, were often referred to as 'trade schools' and tended to be primarily teaching institutions that provided vocational training. However, from the 1960s, a new American model of the business school emerged that stressed its formation in the behavioural sciences' approach. In tandem, the ubiquitous Master of Business Administration (MBA) came to dominate globally as a ticket of entry to competition for the higher echelons of managerial employment (Antunes & Thomas, 2007).

Four factors shaped this transformation. The first occurred inside the leading edge of US business schools in the form of the 1959 Ford Foundation and Carnegie Foundation Reports into the education of US managers (Gordon & Howell, 1959; Khurana, 2007; Pierson, 1959). These reports proposed a new business school model based on a strong social science base, academic rigour,

and discipline-led scholarship in which the use of mathematical-based analytical models designed to produce high-quality research was seen as the mark of progress (Antunes & Thomas, 2007; Thomas et al., 2013).

The second factor was the rise of economic neoliberalism as a dominant political credo in the liberal democracies, even percolating into the social democracies, which stressed that businesses should put the pursuit of profit above all else, thus providing the *raison d'être* of business school education (Fotaki, & Prasad, 2015; Friedman, 2007; Ghoshal, 2005; Howieson et al., 2019). Closely associated with the rise of economic neoliberalism was the emergence of an ideologically driven New Public Management (NPM) approach that treated public service as a form of organization in need of reform by business 'principles'. One effect of this was a repositioning of universities, largely seen as the enemies of existing order in the student movements of the 1960s and early 1970s, as a vital but expensive element in the supply chain of expertise for an enterprising economy. If the supply side was to be accelerated, then more rigorous controls that replaced taxpayer state-funding on a selective and highly classist basis with a user pays principle were required, and were adopted in various forms in many places, although some of the northern European social democracies held on to the citizenship model. The focus of higher education establishments saw a shift away from educating students to treating them as paying customers, which in many places they were becoming. In the UK, as an example of one of the most market-oriented societies, the approximate cost of undertaking a first degree rose to £9,250 per year (or £10,000 per year for international students), with most degree courses lasting three years.

The third factor, according to Hinings and Greenwood (2002), was a more specific and local one. The study of organizations largely ceased to be the concern of sociologists and other social scientists in social science faculties and became primarily located in business schools. In part this was related to the previous two factors. Paying to learn to earn in the future channelled an increasing number of students to enrol in business schools rather than in social science faculties. The supply of jobs followed, so that, especially in the 1980s, many sociologists and other social scientists sought employment where the jobs increasingly were, in the business schools. In turn, rather than focusing on the role of organizations and their contribution to society at large, the focus shifted to 'how to understand and thus design efficient and effective organizations' to meet the needs of shareholders and managers (Hinings & Greenwood, 2002, p. 413).

The narrow focus on organizational efficiency and managerial concerns was reinforced by the fourth factor, which was the need for universities to develop new income streams as government funding failed to keep pace with the financial requirements of universities (Craig et al., 1999; Jabbar et al., 2018). As

such, business schools became seen as businesses in themselves – 'cash cows', in the consulting jargon that has permeated these schools, affording their parent universities excess income to distribute elsewhere in the university. For the students in question, where the money goes hardly matters as longs as graduates succeed in attaining employment in organizations as a fast-track to high salaries (Berman & Paradeize, 2016; Clarke, 2008; De Vita & Case, 2016; Dyllick, 2015; Fotaki & Prasad, 2015; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). However, the ability of business schools to attract increased income is very much dependent on their perceived standing in the various accreditation and ranking schemes, such as AACSB, *Financial Times*, and so on, and especially in government rankings, such as the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) ranking, which focusses exclusively on research (Leisyte et al., 2009; Nash, 2019). The branding is the thing; this applies to the schools overall as much as the journals in which their members publish. In countries such as Australia, at least before the COVID-19 pandemic closed the borders, international students became major sources of income, being the nation's third largest export earner, after iron ore and coal. The exports were earned onshore from the 27.1 per cent of all tertiary education students who in 2019, before COVID-19, came from overseas (Ferguson & Spinks, 2021). The Australian patterns were replicated in other English-language countries, if not to the same degree of dependence. Of this percentage, 37.3 per cent came from China and 20.5 per cent from India, with the other source countries being much smaller in numbers.

In the UK and elsewhere, these factors not only weakened the unity of teaching and research as advocated by the Humboldtian view of the university, but also increased the perception that teaching is less valuable and should be less well rewarded than research (Elton, 2000; Nash, 2019). To a large extent, this saw a separation of teaching and research, with the latter being prized over the former, and the former becoming increasingly casualized, thus increasing the cost-effectiveness of the cash cow. On the downside, students ended up paying more and receiving less quality; the upside was that tertiary education became a more inclusive enclave as numbers swelled. Unfortunately, higher numbers did not mean better quality as classes became larger, a tendency recently exacerbated in some countries such as Australia by the loss of international students and thus their income, due to border closure, leading the universities to shed over 40,000 jobs over 2020–2021 (Stanford, 2021).

The growing primacy of research over teaching had been noted with concern in America in the 1980s and led to the influential Carnegie Foundation Report 'Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate' (Boyer, 1990). In this report, Boyer recommended a four-fold classification of scholarship that he hoped would combine and reinforce research, teaching, and service to the community as essential and interdependent aspects of the academic's job (Hill,

2010). Boyer (1990, p. 16) proposed 'four separate, yet overlapping' forms of scholarship, which are:

1. *The scholarship of discovery:* This basically covers what we understand as research. As Boyer (1990, p. 17) observes, '… at its best, [this] contributes not only to the stock of human knowledge but also to the intellectual climate of a college or university'.
2. *The scholarship of integration:* 'By integration, we mean making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non specialists, too' (Boyer, 1990, p. 18).
3. *The scholarship of application.* Boyer (1990, p. 21) notes that:
   The first two kinds of scholarship – discovery and integration of knowledge – reflect the investigative and synthesizing traditions of academic life. The third element, the application of knowledge, moves toward engagement as the scholar asks, 'How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems? How can it be helpful to individuals as well as institutions?' And further, 'Can social problems themselves define an agenda for scholarly investigation?'
4. *The scholarship of teaching:* In proposing teaching as a form of scholarship, Boyer is concerned that its importance has become devalued and seen as something to be minimized or avoided by scholars (Hill, 2010). To redress what he sees as a dangerous misconception, Boyer (1990, p. 24) argues that:

… good teaching means that faculty, as scholars, are also learners. … teaching, at its best, means not only transmitting knowledge, but transforming and extending it as well. Through reading, through classroom discussion, and surely through comments and questions posed by students, professors themselves will be pushed in creative new directions. In the end, inspired teaching keeps the flame of scholarship alive.

Though Boyer's (1990) description of these four forms of scholarship is only sketchy, his notion of a four-fold classification of scholarship, one that could embrace all academic staff, was quickly taken up in America and elsewhere (Braxton et al., 2002; Crow et al., 2018; Huber, 2016). Based on a comprehensive study of the impact of Boyer's work on American higher education, Braxton et al. (2002, pp. IV–V) concluded that although:

… all four domains of Scholarship have attained structural level institutionalisation … the scholarship of Discovery persists as the most legitimate and preferred objective of faculty scholarly engagement across the spectrum of institutions of higher education …

In essence, what Braxton et al. (2002) show is that, rather than giving applied research/consultancy and teaching the same rewards and esteem as research, Boyer's work institutionalized and legitimized a reward and esteem hierarchy, with research at the top and teaching very much at the bottom.

Whilst Humboldt had sought to highlight the synergy between teaching and research, Boyer's (1990) report had the quite opposite effect; it highlighted the difference between them. Perhaps one of the main reasons for this is that Boyer

does not really 'reconsider' scholarship per se but limits himself to a brief examination of the growth and development of American universities. Indeed, the basis of his four categories of scholarship relies less on an investigation of the historical development of scholarship and more on a survey of the duties and opinions of senior American academics conducted in 1989, hence the subtitle of Boyer's report: 'Priorities of the Professoriate'.

Boyer (1990) legitimized the division of academic labour, allowing university managers to identify and reward well the relatively few star researchers whilst the mass of staff could be rewarded and treated less favourably, something that Adam Smith and Frederick Taylor would surely have applauded (Smith, 1776; Taylor, 1911). It also meant that staff performance could be evaluated relatively easily based on the number and quality of their publications (Parker, 2014). The result is that, even more so than other university disciplines, business schools appear to have abandoned collegiality, that is, collective decision making, and replaced it with a more managerialist and performative regime stressing KPIs that can direct staff in both their teaching and research (De Vita & Case, 2016; Parker, 2014).

There are some countervailing tendencies, however. One of these which has gained a fair degree of traction with various professional academies is the Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management, which has published a White Paper outlining a vision for a more socially responsible business (2017). There are some flaws, as we will discuss next; it takes us beyond neo-liberalism, perhaps, yet it does so in a way that still ducks some aspects of the question, *cui bono*?

A VISION OF RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS SCHOOLS: STRIVING FOR CREDIBLE AND USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

As the tendency to see business schools as businesses in themselves has grown since the start of the 21st century over the last 20 years or so, grave doubts have also grown about the purpose and management of business schools, not least by some of their own staff (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015; Ivory et al., 2006; Jabbar et al., 2018; Mitroff et al., 2015). These doubts raise serious questions about whether the dominant business school model is fit even for a neoliberal era. Enter the Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management's White Paper, 'A Vision of Responsible Research in Business and Management: Striving for credible and useful knowledge' (2017). With this document, the business and management community discovered its debt to society, a sure sign, perhaps, that the neoliberal order with its economic fetishism, was in retreat? Well, not exactly.

There is little, in a general sense, which one could or would want to argue with in the White Paper. Who would not support 'research that produces credible and reliable knowledge with either direct or indirect usefulness for addressing problems important to both business and society'? It is, however, the generality of the White Paper that is problematic, despite its laudable sentiments. An implicit organicism imbues the paper. Singular entities, such as 'business' and 'society' are scattered through its pages: 'society' occurs 31 times; 'business' occurs 138 times, without any specification of the structures and processes of the social relations implied.

Now, it wasn't only Mrs Thatcher who claimed that there was no such thing as society: Latour (2005) did so as well, although he meant it in a somewhat different way. The point that Latour was making is that there is no essence to which the abstract noun of either 'society' or 'business' can be attached. These are terms that, similarly to the role that 'the people' plays in populist politicians' speeches, signify nothing in particular: they are what semioticians call 'floating signifiers', words that don't point to any actual object and that have no universal, agreed-upon meaning. They are extraordinarily useful as such, because they allow us to conduct exchanges with inbuilt 'etc. clauses': a tacit understanding that we each know what others and ourselves are on about, that when one talks about business one means the same thing as the next person, be that person the Director of the Confederation of British Industry or the neighbourhood anarchist.

In the White Paper we are told that, as a matter of belief, 'business is a means for a better world'. As a matter of belief, as devotees of shows such as *Father Ted* or listeners to *Thought of the Day* will attest, even where there is faith about matters of belief, some quite unbelievable things are possible. That's the nature of ideology, even quite specialized aspects of it such as religious discourse. How sure should one be that belief is a sound basis for a 'responsible science'? On the contrary, one might think these two antithetical.

The White Paper is an exercise in what one might call 'future perfect thinking', an integral part of scenario thinking. It projects to 2030 – why 2030 is chosen is nowhere explained but it could of course be linked to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a possible world, termed Vision 2030, constructed in the future perfect tense: one that will have come to pass as projected by that time.

> In 2030, business and management schools worldwide are the envy of other social science disciplines in the universities. Research is timely and cutting edge, producing well-grounded knowledge on pressing problems. Both schools and scholars are committed to the principles of responsible research, which are embedded in the core curriculum of doctoral education. Research has helped organizations and communities of all kinds to develop effective systems leading to high economic performance, great innovations, positive employee and customer wellbeing, a clean

environment, and strong communities. Policymakers routinely seek the guidance of business academics in developing policies that promote vibrant socio-economic systems for their constituents. Many schools have a focused area of research where they excel and are centres of excellence around their chosen areas of focus. Many schools have contributed valuable knowledge to support humanity's highest aspirations, e.g., poverty alleviation; access to food, clean water, and education; a green environment, gender and social equality; economic growth and fair wealth distribution. Business leaders and government officials are frequent guests in business and management schools, seeking advice on policies and offering support for research on issues that need understanding. Business and management research is a model of 'responsible research' after a major transformation that began in 2017. (Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management, 2016, p. 2)

What are the obstacles to this Nirvana?

1. The fetishization of novelty necessary for publication in elite journals that produces discontinuity in, rather than an accumulation of, what Lakatos (1970) called 'hard core' knowledge.
2. A widening gap between research and practice: in essence, the worlds of research and the worlds of practice exhibit different and largely non-communicative institutional logics. Performativity in the one does not amount to 'a hill of beans' in the other.[1] In addition, cut-price teaching which does not trade on research can massively undercut in the market that which does so trade.

What is to be done?

The answer, it is suggested, is 'building a sound body of knowledge that serves society' through seven guiding principles of responsible research – what one might think of as the seven pillars of wisdom.[2] These are:

1. Service to society
2. Stakeholder involvement
3. Impact on stakeholders
4. Valuing both basic and applied contributions
5. Value of plurality and multidisciplinary collaboration
6. Reliable knowledge
7. Broad dissemination.

Service to society sounds good but what does it mean? Given that there is no such thing as a unitary society, an essence to serve, that what we are wont to call 'society' is an assemblage of heterodox and unstable interests, contradictions, and connections, how does one serve something that has no meaning? Is 'society' some sort of secularized devil or God in which we all have to serve somebody?[3] One might serve society by delivering a reliable electricity supply that makes everyone's everyday life more comfortable, except for those scien-

tists who point out the adverse effects of climate change attendant on burning fossil fuels. Who is serving society here: the businessmen who run the major global mining companies or the scientists and green activists who fear for the long-term sustainability of the planet? Well, both could claim to be serving society: the one here-and-now, the other for the probable future. So not only is society not a unitary phenomenon but it is also an index of a temporal process that is dynamic and contested, in which a key part of the contestation will be the ideological appropriation of key terms such as 'business', 'science', and 'society'. These terms are not in themselves meaningful but are only meaningful in use, in context, in specific language games, language games in which, in Wittgenstein's memorable phrase, there are sometimes only faint family resemblances.

Stakeholder involvement: The problems here should be evident from the preceding principle. Different stakeholders play different games even when they are using the same signs. Serving tomorrow's potential stakeholders by arguing against today's is not an unusual situation to be in for scholars of sustainability, for instance. The benefit of research might be measured in terms of the discomfiture of today's stakeholders rather than their benefit; if the evidence basis of contemporary ecology and climate science cannot persuade major economic interests that burning fossil fuels is a bad thing for the future, what hope have responsible social scientists with less public platforms? Business and management scholars might co-create knowledge with business and others such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, and social enterprises, but the grounds for doing so with agencies from each sector simultaneously are, one suspects, slight. More likely that there will be possibilities where interests align, but that brings power relations into knowledge – something that is omitted from the White Paper.

Impact on stakeholders: Having a positive impact on stakeholders is only possible where the stakes are aligned. It is the nature of vibrant democracies for that rarely to be the case: think of critical conjunctures such as Brexit in the UK and the role that our disciplines have played in its debates. Then think of the stakeholders: reason does not characterize the debates that have ensued. In the best of all possible worlds, it would be the case that it did, but as social scientists in business schools we do not live and work in such a world; rather, we live in a world traversed by diverse and occasionally irreconcilable interests that are hard fought. There are always agents in the real world of politics, organizations, and even business schools that define themselves in terms of being winners and losers, and where there are winners and losers different frames, assumptions, and interpretations will always attend research processes and findings.

Valuing both basic and applied contributions: In principle, this is unproblematic. In practice, it may be a little less so. Both 'basic' and 'applied'

orientations have what Francis Bacon referred to as their idols: in the *Novum Organum* (the new instrumentality for the acquisition of knowledge) Francis Bacon classified the intellectual fallacies of his time under four headings which he called idols. He distinguished them as idols of the Tribe, idols of the Cave, idols of the Marketplace, and idols of the Theatre. For 'basic' orientations, the idols of the Tribe and the Cave are particularly dangerous; for the 'applied' orientation, the idols of the Marketplace and of the Theatre are never far away.

Values of plurality and multidisciplinary collaboration: In principle, this is also unproblematic. Who cannot be for pluralism and paradigmatic promiscuity? Well, plenty of professors, that's for sure: having made intellectual investments they are reluctant to relinquish them or admit the value of others that might question the currency of these. One would think that no one that has worked in a business school would deny this if they have even the slightest relation with people from other disciplines – especially economics.

Reliable knowledge: With this canon there can be little questioning. Of course, what are glossed as sound scientific practices are essential. The reliability of the ethnographer depends on deep embedded knowledge gained from being in the field for many months or years. The average management case study rarely if ever meets those temporal targets and often consists of little more than a few interviews with the higher echelons of a business organization or responses to a survey instrument.

Broad dissemination: Again, with this canon there can be little argument. Books, blogs, articles: all media aid researchers in communicating findings.

The remainder of the White Paper makes several recommendations for different constituencies of interest and practice for implementing Vision 2030 before providing an analysis of the current situation in business school research. Of note is that, distinctively amongst professional schools, the business school does not produce or police a license to practice. Architects, clinicians, nurses, lawyers, engineers cannot legitimately practice bereft of professional qualifications. Lacking boundary-setting powers, the discipline of management's reach into the constitution of knowledge is disciplinarily weak – it can classify but it cannot easily frame – while its reach into practice is weaker still.

Towards the end of the White Paper the current problems are diagnosed as: a lack of relevance for business practice; an A-ranked journal fetishization of incentives; a privileging of theory, bias against refutation and problem-orientation, and an inadequacy of textbooks (although we might protest proposing some exceptions to this rule that modesty inhibits us from naming).

Who benefits? Not business and the broader society, it is suggested, but us and our careers. One would not have thought this unusual professional practice. What topics should be studied? Those proposed are the following:

value beyond shareholder value; the changing nature of work and the work-force; social sustainability; environmental sustainability; and the diminution of distributional differences of poverty, prosperity and inequality. Changes in the mode of production are envisaged to make a difference but it is recognized that in a complex system such changes are difficult, as even small changes, pursued for the best of intentions, can produce the worst results in terms of unanticipated and counter-productive effects.

A change is overdue, the White Paper concludes. Absent that change, the future looks increasingly one of decline and decay, it is proposed. New problems generated by social and technological innovation require new responses from business schools if they are to remain relevant. The business schools have a key role to play in being social science midwives to the birth of better prospects for a better future world.

While one would endorse the call for dialogue and debate, the basic terms require clarification. The obfuscation of a discourse premised on imaginaries such as 'business' and 'society', irrespective of considerations of context and which side one is on, in what are irremediably contested terrains, does not help us gain clarity. It is not enough to be for 'society' or 'business', but to be specific about what kinds of society and what kinds of business one is for and against and why, for what reasons and, most importantly, how we might arrive at this destination.

REFRAMING LEADERSHIP TO REIMAGINE THE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Now that neoliberalism is giving way to sustainability as the prime goal for organizations and society, it is increasingly clear that an approach to research and teaching that gives primacy to profit alone is no longer tenable (Burnes, 2017b; Freeman et al., 2020; Stiglitz, 2012). As the 2015 UN climate change conference confirmed, we now live in an era where profit must be balanced against the wider needs of people and planet (Burnes, 2017a; Hasina, 2016; Howieson et al., 2019; United Nations, 2015a, 2015b) and we must embrace a new reality of purpose *and* profits (Freeman et al., 2020), and purpose *beyond* profit (Collins & Porras, 2005).

Not only will business schools, like other organizations, be required to change their business model but they also have a crucial role to play in developing new approaches to managing and leading organizations, advising organizations, and educating future managers, administrators, and leaders. If organizations – including businesses – are to pursue a consistent and effective approach to sustainability, the teaching, research, and advisory roles carried out by business school academics will need to be themselves consistent and based on a common scholarship base. It will also require teaching and advisory

work being valued to the same degree as research, as Humboldt advocated. To an extent, the increased stress in the UK REF exercise on research impact and the advent of TEF (the Teaching Excellence Framework) is already pushing business schools in this direction.

In addition, rather than providing managers, administrators, and formal leaders with a narrow business training, they will require a broader, more liberal education; one which allows them to see how their roles contribute to the emerging agendas of sustainability, democratic 'levelling up', and meeting Grand Challenges (George et al., 2016; Gümüsay et al., 2020). In effect, business schools must return to the concept of *Bildung* as advocated by Humboldt and Newman.

With that in mind, Bennis (2007, p. 2) suggests that '… the 4 major threats to world stability are a nuclear/biological catastrophe, a world-wide pandemic, tribalism, and the leadership of human institutions. Without exemplary leadership, solving the problems stemming from the first 3 threats will be impossible.' However, Mouton (2017) and By (2021) argue that nothing much has really changed in leadership theory and practice since the establishment of the Great Man theory. We just label it differently these days. Once disentangled, leadership orthodoxy still consists of the same three elements, making up the Tripod ontology (Bennis, 2007), those being leader(s), followers, and shared goals. Leadership and leaders are still overwhelmingly perceived as being one and the same. Hence, we are ill equipped to educate leadership to meet these challenges, and it is time to move on; business schools have a responsibility to take the initiative in rethinking a more global, less gendered, less individualistic conception of leadership.

Some of this much-needed development is now taking place. See, for example, Clegg et al. (2021) outlining the need for changing leadership in changing times, Kempster and Jackson's (2021) work on the responsibility perspective, and Maak et al. (2021) on the fault lines of leadership. Further important work includes that of Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) and Clarke (2013) exploring leadership as a relational process; Avolio et al. (2009) and Sweeney et al. (2018) on shared and distributed leadership; Maak and Pless's (2006) inclusion of societal considerations; Drath et al.'s (2008) introduction of the DAC leadership ontology; Kempster et al.'s (2011) work on good dividends, and Raelin's (2016) leadership-as-practice movement.

Although rarely talked about in business schools or in organizations in general (things are changing though), Burns (1978) and Rost (1993) both argued that leadership can't be separated from purpose. Standing on the shoulders of Burns (1978), Rost (1993), Drath et al. (2008), and Kempster et al. (2011), By (2021, p. 34) defines such purpose as 'the pursuit of a worthy idea and activity, the outcome of which goes beyond the individual and the individual organisation'. Enshrining this pivotal role of purpose, he defines leadership
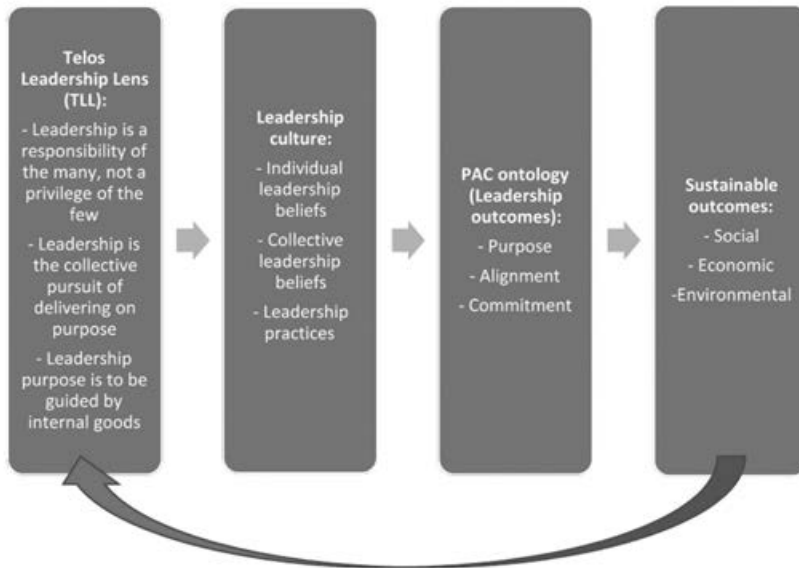
Figure 3.1   *An emerging leadership model*

"as the collective pursuit of delivering on purpose" (By, 2021, p. 30) when introducing an emerging leadership model (Figure 3.1).

The model's existence is based on the newly developed Telos Leadership Lens (TLL), the PAC leadership ontology (further development of Drath et al.'s original DAC ontology, 2008), and the UN's SDGs. In itself, the TLL provides an opportunity to instigate further development of leadership approaches – new and old – through stipulating that leadership is a responsibility of the many, not a privilege of the few, and that it is a collective pursuit of delivering on purpose. Furthermore, the lens proposes leadership purpose to be guided by internal goods such as the UN's SDGs. Adding these elements to existing leadership orthodoxy (theory and practice) encourages a reframing of who are involved in leadership, what it is, and what should be the outcome. Consequently, the TLL supports an enhanced focus on what Rost (1993) defines as the essentials of leadership rather than a continued focus on peripheral elements such as skills, traits, characteristics, sector, and size of organization.

Establishing the launch point for By's (2021) emerging leadership model, the TLL lays down the foundations for the leadership culture (Drath et al., 2008) required when setting out to nurture the facilitation of purpose, align-

ment, and commitment (PAC). In turn, the facilitation of PAC should support sustainable outcomes which again reinforce the TLL. As such, the emerging model offers a leadership-centric (as opposed to leader-centric) approach to both theory and practice, supporting a business focus on profit *and* purpose, as well as business *and* society in the broadest sense (Collins & Porras, 2005; Freeman et al., 2020). It enables discussion of leadership without having to talk about leaders and followers (Drath et al., 2008), and in doing so reframes leadership as a collective and inclusive process and responsibility, rather than an exclusive, elite privilege. Whereas the traditional Tripod ontology is both limited and limiting (By, 2021; Drath et al., 2008), the PAC ontology – with its focus on facilitation of purpose, alignment, and commitment – at the heart of this emerging model is limitless, suggesting greater leadership capacities and capabilities in organizations, actively encouraging and promoting equality, equity, and diversity. These are specific organization practices that collectively define the type of society that emerges: whether it is highly gendered, highly racist, highly classist, highly exploitative of natural and human resources or one that strives for sustainability, equity, and inclusivity of diverse species, including human beings.

CONCLUSIONS

If the lofty goals of the emerging contemporary post-neoliberal consensus are to be achieved, then business schools can play a central role in inculcating the purpose, mindset, skills, capabilities, and orientations necessary to reform and rebuild business and other organizations no longer dedicated to one-dimensional values such as profit without purpose, production and distribution without sustainability, and managing without regard for all human rights, identities, and opportunities. Major institutional changes will be necessary to achieve these outcomes, starting with the limitation of carbon emissions. Net zero is not in itself the only point of achieving the outcome; it is how net zero is attained, how the men and women (and other animals) that can help achieve it are treated with respect and dignity, and encouraged to lead sustainable and enjoyable lives, in every respect, that is important. These lives will be lived in and through organizations of all kinds, and all kinds of organizations will need to change in many ways to achieve these better outcomes. They will not be able to do so without purpose-based and distributed leadership, for which our argument is a modest contribution.

It will join many other scenarios for a better future. Neoliberalism took over 30 years to move out of Hayek's classes at the London School of Economics (LSE) and into the political and business mainstream, and the contributions shaping post-neoliberalism, in all its dimensions, are only in their infancy. For the former, the think tanks of the business and wealthy elites were central to its

dissemination; for the latter, there is no reason why the business schools cannot be equally as important in leadership dissemination that produces a new kind of subjectivity, a better subjectivity than that which produced the mantra that 'there is no alternative' to neoliberalism. However, in order to stay relevant business schools should take the lead on leadership. There are alternatives to the limited and limiting status quo, and some, only some, of its contours are sketched here. Together, with the leadership of the multitude of business school academics who can glimpse better futures, we can all make a difference.

NOTES

1. Due acknowledgement to *Casablanca*, Humphrey Bogart and scriptwriters Julius J. Epstein, Phillip G. Epstein, and Howard Koch.
2. Due acknowledgment to T.E Lawrence.
3. Due acknowledgment to Bob Dylan and 'You Gotta Serve Somebody'.

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