The Quest for Professionalism: The Case of Management and Entrepreneurship

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Introduction

When you're booking an airline ticket, you trust the airline company will assign a pilot to your flight who is sufficiently knowledgeable, experienced, and competent to fly the aircraft. In fact, you expect this pilot to be a professional who has gone through many hours of flight training and theoretical study, and as such is fully licensed to fly the aircraft.

Change of scenery. Recall the last job offer that you accepted. Did you check the credentials of your future boss, to assess whether (s)he is the professional "pilot" you can entrust with leading you and your colleagues to the next destination of this organization? Or did you assume such an assessment had been done by those who appointed your boss at the time? If you are an entrepreneur, what about the last venture you started? Have the investors and other stakeholders in this venture thoroughly assessed your ability to get the venture off the ground and fly it to commercial success?

You might answer these questions with a straightforward *no*, recall some form of informal assessment, or refer to your (boss's) track record and possibly educational background (e.g. MBA). In all instances, however, there probably is a striking difference between the level of professionalism naturally expected from an aircraft pilot and the more ambiguous and undefined expectations we have regarding a manager or entrepreneur. This is one of the observations that motivates the search for ways to revitalize *The Quest for Professionalism* in management and entrepreneurship.

Background

Historically, pioneers in management thinking and practice such as Frederick Taylor, Mary Parker Follett, Henri Fayol, and Peter Drucker conceived of management as a *science-based professional activity that serves the greater good* (Taylor 1911; Follett 1927; Fayol 1949; Drucker 1974). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, the nature and level of professionalism of

management is under close public scrutiny. For example, many of the large banks on Wall Street that failed so badly in the fall of 2008 were managed by people demonstrating anything but professionalism, resulting in mismanagement of risks and a one-dimensional focus on short-term profitability. The CEOs of these organizations "strayed from their strategies and took unwise and unsustainable risks, thus ignoring potential long-term consequences," as observed by Beer (2009: 53). Moreover, executives and other managers in these organizations intimidated and silenced employees who sought to challenge these risk-management practices, resulting in an organization-wide focus on short-term gains (Beer 2009; Williams 2010).

Not only do managers of financial institutions demonstrate amateurism in situations where professionals are needed. Enron, ICI, Worldcom, Global Crossing, Adelphia Communications, Tyco International, AOL Time Warner, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Kmart, Xerox, and many other companies have been observed to suffer from mismanagement and lack of direction (Fox 2003; Cooper 2008; Kay 2014; LawBrain 2014). Other recent cases include the mismanagement of megaprojects such as the Berlin Brandenburg airport, San Francisco Transbay Terminal, the 2014 Soccer World Cup in Brazil, and the 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia (Flyvbjerg 2013). Non-professionalism can also be observed in many supervisory boards, or boards of directors. A recent example is the supervisory board of Vestia, the largest public housing association in the Netherlands. When Vestia's CEO mismanaged the organization for many years, its supervisory board failed to effectively monitor the CEO's performance and later also failed to properly manage his exit (The Guardian 2012).

Of course, the level of professionalism shown by managers, directors, and administrators is not the only determinant of organizational performance and viability in these examples. A variety of institutional, cultural, macroeconomic, and other mechanisms and conditions also affects organizational viability and performance. But if we zoom in on those factors and variables that managers and their stakeholders can to a large extent *influence* if not control (Kenworthy and McMullan 2013), then all these examples appear to have a common denominator: the low level of professionalism among managers who struggle, and often fail, to meet the growing demands and expectations of employees, investors, and many other stakeholders. The fact is that the vast majority of assessments and decisions made by executives and other general managers are highly amateurish compared to how, for example, pilots and surgeons make up their minds and take decisions. As a result, about half of the managerial decisions made in organizations fail (Nutt 1999, 2011) and most managers fail to effectively lead and motivate their staff (Haney and Sirbasku 2011). In addition, what they actually do is not consistent with what they say they do (Argyris et al. 1985; Argyris 2004).

Similarly, management and entrepreneurship scholars have increasingly abandoned the quest for professionalism in their discipline. They therefore tend to operate in "tribes that form around rigor and relevance, sequestering themselves into closed loops of scholarship" (Gulati 2007: 775) primarily talking and writing to members of their own tribe and dismissing work done outside their tribe (Bedeian 1989; Bradbury Huang 2010; Gulati 2007). Moreover, the publish-or-perish system prevailing in most business and management schools encourages scholars to emphasize productivity at the expense of innovation and prioritize the theoretical relevance of their research at the expense of its relevance for professional practice (Bouchikhi and Kimberly 2001; Starkey and Madan 2001; De Rond and Miller 2005). One perverse implication of the publish-or-perish system is that some scholars are under so much pressure to produce and publish papers that they are tempted to engage in plagiarism and to mischaracterize and manipulate data (Honig and Bedi 2012; Matlack 2013).

Key Thesis and Audience

Despite the high expectations and ambitions of the early pioneers, the level of professionalism within management today is rather low. My key thesis is that the search for professionalism in management and entrepreneurship needs to be revitalized, because the societal costs and damage caused by managerial amateurism are huge. This quest for professionalism is, in fact, a grand societal challenge that requires a collective and sustained response, for which I will map and explore several paths. These paths open up ways to develop and align the professional purpose, knowledge, conduct, and expectation of management. Whereas most previous work in this area is about management education, I adopt an *inside-out* approach, by focusing on management scholarship as the driving force behind any intrinsic transformation of the profession at large. Without an active role of management scholarship in promoting science-based professionalism, similar initiatives and changes in management education are doomed to fail.

The target audience of *The Quest for Professionalism* includes management scholars as well as practitioners interested in revitalizing this quest. In addressing management scholars, I hope *The Quest*'s arguments and findings will appeal to both senior scholars and their junior counterparts (e.g. graduate students). On the practitioner side, I am particularly addressing "reflective practitioners" (Schön 1983), that is, managers and entrepreneurs who want to explore ways to further professionalize their practice.

Whereas most ideas developed in this monograph also apply to specialized areas such as marketing, financial, and supply chain management, the main

interest here is in *general* management, entrepreneurship, strategic management, change management, and related areas. These managerial efforts are at the heart of how any organization creates value by coordinating people and resources, and are therefore central to management as a (nascent) profession.

Professionalism

The quest for professionalism has four dimensions or levels: purpose, knowledge, behavior, and expectation. At the heart of any profession is a shared sense of *purpose*, a "commitment to a good broader than self-interest" (Despotidou and Prastacos 2012: 437) that facilitates conversations between highly different voices in the profession and communicates what the profession is essentially about.

Another dimension of professionalization is the *knowledge* the profession can claim and draw on (Abbott 1988). This body of knowledge involves expertise, that is the insights and tools required to perform professional work; these insights and tools are constituted by a "vocabulary" that serves to define and describe problems and challenges as well as a "language" in the form of conceptual frameworks, models, and theories (March and Smith 1995). This body of knowledge is inherently ethical in nature. Therefore, the values guiding professional conduct and performance are, or should be, explicit elements of this body of knowledge.

The *behavioral* dimension, broadly defined, refers to how professionals divide and coordinate work, organize the work flow, monitor the quality of their work and that of others, perform on key outcome measures, account for their performance, and so forth. Finally, the *expectation* dimension primarily refers to what a variety of stakeholders expects of the profession. True professions raise high expectations among internal as well as external stakeholders (e.g. employees and investors), and in turn, these expectations inspire and guide professionals to perform and deliver their best.

Professionalization is often also equated with the conditions and regulations for entry to the profession as well as sanctions and penalties regarding non-professional conduct. However, these regulations and sanctions tend to have perverse effects on professional conduct. Mechanisms to control and regulate entry to a profession as well as the behavior of its members are therefore not fundamental to "professionalism"; rather, these regulatory mechanisms are outcomes that may arise from professionalization efforts.

Moreover, any professionalization effort that aims at regulating entry and conduct, while professional purpose and knowledge are not yet well developed and widely shared, is doomed to fail. Accordingly, *professionalism* is defined as the alignment between:

(i) the shared purpose (*P*) of the (nascent) profession
(ii) the body of knowledge (*K*) these professionals have access to
(iii) their actual behavior (*B*) in terms of actions and decisions, and
(iv) the expectations (*E*) of a variety of internal and external stakeholders.

In a simple equation: *professionalism* = $P \times K \times B \times E$ with *P*, *K*, *B*, and *E* measured on a scale from 0 to 1. Accordingly, each of these four dimensions directly affects the level of professionalism. Moreover, this equation is multiplicative rather than additive in nature. Even when most dimensions are relatively high, a low score on one dimension will thus dramatically affect the overall level of professionalism.

This equation serves to assess the professionalism of the management discipline in a concise manner. First, *P* is low because there is hardly any shared sense of purpose (e.g. Khurana and Nohria 2008; Rolin 2010). Moreover, *K* is low as the academic body of knowledge is highly fragmented (e.g. Walsh et al. 2006) and only loosely connected to practical knowledge (e.g. Hughes et al. 2011). Both *B* and *E* are also rather low, because our ignorance about organizations and managing them "is so great that forms of malfunctioning and the suffering which results from it are ubiquitous and are widely accepted as normal and unavoidable" (Elias and Scotson 1994: 181). The *overall* level of professionalism of management is therefore rather low. Given that the quest for professionalism in management has been largely abandoned, any attempt to revitalize it will need to aim at raising all four dimensions.

Small Pockets of Excellence

This assessment of the overall level of professionalism in management might raise the counter-argument that it is extrapolating from a few bad apples. Indeed, there are many examples of highly professional managers and management practices, the most prominent ones being celebrated as global role models (e.g. Kelly 2009; Willis 2013). However, these examples represent small pockets of professional excellence that are exceptions to the rule, rather than reflecting the standard case. The highly skewed distribution of professionalism in management—with many very badly managed organizations and relatively few ones with professional management practices—will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.

The broader systemic issue here is that management scholars, consultants, and practitioners have largely abandoned the development of integral management approaches and technologies (cf. the aircraft in the pilot example earlier), to focus on partial aspects of management that propagate economic

thinking at the cost of moral responsibility (Ghoshal 2005). As a result, the idea of professionalism has become closely linked, if not almost entirely defined by, the following two key constructs.

First, the idea of management as a (nascent) profession has become confined to a *few people* at the top of the organization. For most people, therefore, words like "management" and "managing" immediately evoke the image of someone in a leadership position. This image appears to be incomplete. Professional management is as much about the knowledge and evidence informing professionalism as it is about the people using this knowledge. Moreover, in a new category of management systems currently emerging, leadership is not confined to a few people at the top but distributed throughout the organization. I will discuss this type of management approach in the the quest for professionalism in this book.

Second, professionalism and related (e.g. capability) notions have become tightly coupled to *financial performance and other outcomes*. That is, the ability to accomplish something has become equated with performance and results. This of course raises a tautology problem: if the organization performs at a superior level in terms of, for example, profitability, then the leadership of the organization apparently possesses a large professional capability; if this performance is not superior, its leadership apparently scores lower on professionalism (cf. Zahra et al. 2006; Teece 2007). This tautology problem is pervasive in management scholarship and practice, which explains why many people misunderstand and underestimate the generative role of management capabilities and technologies. *The Quest for Professionalism* will serve to explore ways to decouple capability and performance—similar to how the capabilities of an aircraft are assessed and tested while on the ground, between the flights during which it actually performs.

Discovering New Paths

Whereas the $P \times K \times B \times E$ definition of professionalism serves to characterize the current state of the management discipline, in itself this definition does not provide any directions toward future solutions. The quest for professionalism therefore also needs to draw on creative discovery and design. Herbert Simon argued "design" is at the heart of the business and management discipline. That is, engineers are not the only professional designers because,

> everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones. The intellectual activity that produces material artifacts is no different fundamentally from the one that prescribes remedies for a sick

> patient or the one that devises a new sales plan for a company or a social welfare policy for a state. (Simon 1969/1996: 111)

Discovery and design thus provide metaphors that open up ways to think about the future of management and its scholarship. As such, *The Quest for Professionalism* is about discovering and designing paths out of the "intellectual stasis" (Khurana and Spender 2012) that currently characterizes the field of management.

Donald Schön (1979) provides an example of how purpose, knowledge, and discovery interact to create a fresh perspective. He observed a group of designers trying to improve the performance of a paintbrush made of synthetic bristles. This paintbrush failed to give the same smooth finish as its established counterpart, a natural-bristle paintbrush. These designers knew the paint had to attach itself to the bristles and then be spread on a surface. In contrast to the natural-bristle paintbrush, the synthetic paintbrush delivered paint rather unevenly, in a "gloppy" way. The design group experimented with different synthetic materials and diameters for the bristles; when observing that natural bristles had split ends, members of the group also split the ends of the synthetic bristles—all without significant improvements. One day, after many attempts in these various directions, someone suggested "You know, a paintbrush is a kind of pump!" (Schön 1979: 257) based on the observation that, when a paintbrush is pressed against a surface, paint is forced through the spaces *between* the bristles onto the surface. As a result, the designers started noticing that the paint flows through channels, whose size is controlled by the painter's bending of the brush. To facilitate the flow of paint, a painter would even vibrate the brush.

Talking about a brush in terms of a pump radically changed the designers' conception of the problem. Instead of focusing on the bristles, they started observing what happens in the capillary spaces in-between, and soon found out that synthetic bristles bend differently than natural ones. Inspired by the novel perspective of paintbrush-as-pump, these designers transformed their initial conception of the assignment (i.e. making synthetic bristles better) to one of controlling the system of capillary spaces that soak up the paint and enable the painter to apply it to a surface by manipulating and curving the bristles. This new metaphor brought a new vocabulary into the conversation that radically transformed the perception of the assignment, and led to several patents and better synthetic paintbrushes (Schön 1979).

Similarly, in *The Quest for Professionalism: The Case of Management and Entrepreneurship*, I intend to (re)discover the "professionalism" metaphor, by developing a vocabulary that might re-ignite and transform the discourse on the purpose, knowledge, behavior, and expectation dimensions of management as a professional activity.

Professional Engagement

The quest for professionalism in management is highly contested. Critical observers have argued that established professions, such as law and medicine, draw on a formal body of knowledge shared by all members of the profession, monitor behavior and performance of these members, regulate entry to the profession, and so forth (e.g. Barker 2010). Accordingly, in the absence of a formal body of knowledge and elaborate regulatory mechanisms, it would make no sense to pursue the professionalization of management.

However, this critique draws on a rather naïve image of established professions, as Adler et al. (2008), Barends et al. (2012), and others have demonstrated. The fact is that professional work in, for example, accounting, law, medicine, and health care continues to be highly contested (e.g. Sullivan 2000; Suddaby et al. 2009; Flood 2011). The nature and context of work in these established professions is still evolving in often unpredictable ways. Moreover, professionals in these areas are increasingly employed in corporate or other organizational settings (Evetts 2011). Consequently, many accountants, legal experts, and medical doctors increasingly find themselves torn between their professional commitment and their loyalty and commitment to the organization paying their salary (Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011). This is no different to the role of general managers in the same organizational settings. These tensions are fundamental to all professional work in organizational settings, and we cannot make them go away by simply abandoning the journey toward professionalization. By revitalizing the quest for professionalism in managerial and entrepreneurial work, these issues and challenges again take central stage.

The experiences in other disciplines therefore suggest that the essence of professionalization is not only in its (intermediary) outcome or destiny, but also in the journey itself. This is not merely a philosophical matter. External bodies use "professional" values and standards to assess whether business and management schools accomplish "an appropriate balance and integration of academic and professional engagement" (AACSB 2015). Therefore, management scholarship and education are to a large extent justified by what we espouse about *professional engagement* to research funding agencies and accreditation bodies such as AACSB and EQUIS. If management scholars and educators truly believe that managerial work and systems cannot be effectively studied, shaped, and improved, this would raise an enormous misalignment with what is actually said to funding agencies and accreditation bodies. If it really makes no sense to invest in professionalizing management, the logical consequence would be to eliminate all business and management schools. In other words, without the quest for professionalism, the external legitimacy of management scholarship and education is likely to break down entirely.

As in any quest, the target is not well-defined. Established professions such as medicine and law do not provide a target, because any professionalization process in the twenty-first century is entirely different to one in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. Moreover, in view of the ongoing evolution of these professions (e.g. Evetts 2011), it would amount to a moving target. A traditional conception of professional work as being heavily regulated is also not very appealing (Timmons 2011). We do not want managers and entrepreneurs to follow detailed protocols, and write reports and logs on every single action and decision they take. No one would want to work for such a boss. Here, *The Quest for Professionalism* serves to explore and define alternative conceptions of, and routes for, professionalizing management and entrepreneurship.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Quest for Professionalism serves to create *paths* for professionalizing management (cf. Garud and Karnøe 2001; Pandza and Thorpe 2010). Overall, the following paths arise.

Developing a Shared Sense of Purpose and Responsibility

At the heart of each (emerging) profession is a shared sense of purpose and responsibility toward society. For example, civil engineers share a sense of purpose regarding the reliability, robustness, and user convenience of the roads, bridges, tunnels, docks, and other artifacts they design and create (Muller and Gewirtzman 2004). The respect for human life and the commitment to heal people, expressed in the Hippocratic oath, reflects the sense of purpose and responsibility among medical professionals (Miles 2004).

The Quest for Professionalism serves to develop a prototype statement of the purpose and responsibility of management and its scholarship. In sum, this prototype says:

> Management should be(come) a profession that serves the greater good by bringing people and resources together to create value that no single individual can create alone. In this profession:
>
> - practicing and knowing co-constitute each other;
> - professionals share an interest in outcomes and implications, and are committed to learning to see things from different perspectives;
> - professional development is fueled by a pluralism of voices as well as dialogical encounters between different voices.

The shared interest in outcomes and implications arises from the pragmatist nature of management as a nascent profession, and invites conversations about how financial, social, or moral implications are defined and interpreted. This shared interest might serve to facilitate conversations between highly different voices in the profession.

The dialogical encounters proposed here are meant to expose professionals to fundamentally different views, to provide opportunities for reconsidering and reflecting on their central beliefs and assumptions. In these encounters, management practitioners and scholars learn to see themselves, their personal background, their organizational settings, and their own beliefs from a range of different perspectives, thus enabling them to engage reflexively with their profession and work.

While a shared sense of purpose and responsibility will enhance the identity of management as an emerging profession, only a sustained collective effort can bring it about. Given the embryonic stage of the discourse on the purpose and nature of management, any attempt toward closure is not likely to be successful at this stage. In this respect, the statement of professional purpose and responsibility outlined earlier is a prototype, intended to revitalize and re-open the debate.

Toward a Professional Body of Knowledge

In their quest for academic respectability, most management scholars have retreated from creative and action-oriented work. Management practitioners largely focus on the latter, but tend to avoid or minimize efforts to validate and reflect on their work. Central to any attempt to revitalize the transformation toward science-based professionalism is a body of knowledge informed by both creative discovery and scientific validation.

The framework for a science-based professional body of knowledge, arising from *The Quest for Professionalism*, provides a map of the research inputs and outputs (i.e. values, constructs, models, principles, and instantiations) and the research activities and methods in the area of discovery and validation required to develop and sustain professional knowledge. This body of knowledge goes beyond the academia–practice divide as well as conventional demarcations such as constructivism-positivism. While many elements of a professional body of knowledge on management and entrepreneurship are already available, many opportunities to connect them have thus far remained untapped.

A key insight arising from the case of circular organizing is that the intellectual and professional stasis in management, evident in for example shareholder value maximization, can only be resolved by raising fundamental questions about values and power. Moreover, management scholars should

engage more in discovering and validating constructs and models that help practitioners respond to challenges such as empowerment and organizational resilience. Key theoretical constructs such as Hayek's dispersed knowledge and Simon's bounded rationality appear to offer promising opportunities for addressing these challenges.

Creating Trading Zones where Different Voices and Interests Meet

A key barrier for professionalizing management arises from the tribal nature of the behavior of management practitioners and scholars alike. Most management scholars hardly or never engage with practice, and only talk to and write for their own tribes. So-called trading zones offer opportunities for (professionals with) different voices and interests to meet and trade. Successful trading zones offer a durable and psychologically safe platform for participants to meet and collaborate.

Potential trading zones are new business incubators, management labs, and professional degree programs, some of which already appear to enable more meaningful dialogues between highly different communities and voices in management scholarship and practice. A key finding is that trading zones are most likely to come alive in areas where there is a minimum of regulatory and institutional constraints, such as in the case of incubators.

This is not to say that managers in highly regulated organizational settings—for example publicly traded corporations or government agencies—will benefit less from the quest for professionalism. The point is that profound management innovations are not likely to be created and pioneered in these highly constrained settings. Therefore, new business creation is not only relevant to the management profession because all organizations (in order to be managed) first have to be created, but also because these entrepreneurial settings provide the flexibility to discover and try out new values, constructs, and models for managing any organization.

Raising Expectations of Management as Professional Discipline

If investors, shareholders, employees, union representatives, and others raise their expectations, management professionals will tend to internalize these expectations, which in turn will inspire and guide them to perform and deliver their best. How do we trigger such a virtuous circle? Established professions such as medicine and law are often equated with conditions and regulations for entry to the profession as well as sanctions and penalties regarding unprofessional conduct. These regulations and sanctions tend to have counterproductive effects on professional conduct—especially by transforming the intrinsic commitment to professionalism into an extrinsic one.

There are several ways to initiate the self-reinforcing effect of increased expectations, without the force of regulatory mechanisms. First, the transformation of silenced employees into assertive ones serves to raise the expectation and accountability level, especially toward those employees whom managers work with on a daily basis.

Second, prevailing accounting and control systems can be broadened to include a variety of non-financial performance measures—which serves to redirect the attention of many managers who would otherwise focus on financial performance.

Third, management professors, supervisory board members, management consultants, and other nascent professonionals need to pay much more attention to tensions and gaps between their own actual and espoused behavior as well as those of others. The ultimate test of professionalism is whether our actual behavior is consistent with what we say we are doing.

Leveraging These Paths

These four pathways, or levers, for professionalization are complementary in nature. Notably, management scholars do not need a commitment from an amorphous population of practitioners to start using any of these four levers. The strategies outlined for each path can be leveraged with active contributions from a select group of practitioners who are already actively seeking to professionalize their work in collaboration with management scholars.

At the core of management as a future profession is the alignment between professional purpose, knowledge, behavior, and expectation. The key challenge is to create a shared vision on what professionalism entails, which in turn will enable a viable and productive discourse on professionalizing management and entrepreneurship.

Contribution

Most literature on the professionalization of management focuses on business and management education and its problematic relationship with management practice (e.g. Khurana and Nohria 2008; Spender 2007; Barker 2010; Dierdorff et al. 2013). Moreover, Spender (2007) argues that, following the publication of the 1959 Ford and Carnegie reports, business schools in North America and later Europe successfully transformed management *education* into a profession, with accreditation systems and a specialized body of knowledge, even as management itself has yet to become one. Education in the area of management and entrepreneurship has therefore become heavily regulated

by accreditation bodies such as AACSB and EQUIS, without a visible impact on professionalizing management and entrepreneurship practice (Spender 2007).

While the educational side is also relevant to the quest for professionalism, my main focus in this monograph is on management and entrepreneurship *scholarship*—as the driving force behind any intrinsic transformation of the profession at large. In focusing on how scholarship can contribute to professionalizing management practice, I will not so much attempt to scope the entire landscape of relevant literatures (Khurana 2007), but instead engage in an attempt to create a set of paths for renewing the quest for professionalizing management practice and scholarship. Chapter 1 explores the key parameters of this project in more detail.

The focus on envisioning and designing pathways for revitalizing the professional connection between management research and management practice also differentiates *The Quest for Professionalism* from related work. For example, Khurana's (2007) historical analysis of the rise and potential fall of American business schools, Starbuck's (2006) monograph on reforming the production of knowledge in the social sciences, Van de Ven's (2007) research guide on participative forms of engaged scholarship, and Rousseau's (2012a) edited volume on evidence-based management are highly congruent with some of the key ideas developed in this book. *The Quest for Professionalism* goes beyond this earlier work by explicitly envisioning and creating paths for renewing the professionalization quest.

Terminology

The Glossary of Terms at the end of the book provides definitions of the key terms used. Several key notions are used throughout *The Quest for Professionalism*.

First, *management* is defined here as inclusive of *entrepreneurship*. That is, managing involves the act of creating value that no single individual can create alone, by connecting and coordinating people and resources (Drucker 1974, 1985; Khurana and Nohria 2008; Anderson and Escher 2010). Accordingly, throughout this book the term "management" will refer to the broad domain of organization, innovation management, entrepreneurship, and management (studies). The shortcut "management" is often used to prevent longer phrases and sentences and make the text more readable.

Second, *The Quest for Professionalism* in this broadly defined domain is consistent with a similar discourse about firms in the professional services sector (e.g. Maister 2000), but also goes beyond that. The argument in *The Quest* applies to all managerial work, whether it is in professional service firms or in any other company and organization. Moreover, the discourse on professionalism in accounting, consulting, and other services focuses on

professionals conducting work for clients (e.g. Maister 2000), whereas my argument in *The Quest* addresses all management "professionals" who connect and coordinate people and resources to create value, regardless of whether they conduct any direct work for external clients.

Third, the professionalization idea implies that practitioners as well as scholars in management should be considered as members of their nascent profession. Scholars cannot exempt themselves from the code the broader profession needs to commit to. Interestingly, most management scholars and educators are formally appointed as assistant, associate, or full "professors." Of course, scholars and practitioners have different roles in building and sustaining a professional community, but this division of labor does not imply that scholars can place themselves outside the quest for a professional identity. The quest for professionalism pertains to all work in the area of management and entrepreneurship that aspires to be "professional" in nature, and therefore also about scholarship.

Overview of Chapters

The first four chapters define the quest for professionalization and explore several ways to revitalize it. Chapter 1 seeks to understand professionalism in terms of purpose, knowledge, behavior, and expectation. Chapters 2 to 4 then assess each of these dimensions in more detail, and also provide a map of the territory that might give directions for those travelling and exploring this territory. This part of *The Quest* thus invites readers, as Kessler and Bartunek (2014: 241) advocate, to "think like cartographers" in order to understand the management landscape more comprehensively.

Chapter 1 develops the professionalization framework that structures the argument in the first four chapters of *The Quest for Professionalism*. First, the historical context of this quest is explored, and then several examples serve to point out that management currently is anything but a profession. The unresolved dispute on shareholder value maximization and multi-stakeholder management illustrates the lack of shared sense of purpose and understanding. Subsequently, a set of definitions and a multi-level framework of science-based professionalization is developed that identifies and connects four generative mechanisms of professionalization: purpose, knowledge, behavior, and expectations. This framework implies professionalization involves the development and alignment of purpose, knowledge, behavior, and expectations. If one or more of these four dimensions remain underdeveloped, so will the nature and level of professionalism of management and its scholarship.

Chapter 2 addresses the most fundamental challenge in professionalizing management: its purpose. In this chapter, I first discuss the pluralistic and fragmented nature of the management research landscape, and how this affects the discourse about the purpose and responsibility of management (scholarship) in society. Subsequently, a thought experiment designed by political philosophers provides a set of heuristics for evaluating any proposals regarding the purpose and responsibility of management as a profession. Moreover, several notions of purpose and responsibility developed by scholars and practitioners are outlined. Subsequently, the contours of a shared sense of purpose are inferred from the literature on pragmatism. Moreover, a collaborative attempt by seven scholars/practitioners results in a prototype of a shared sense of purpose and responsibility. Finally, I speculatively assess the level of support among management practitioners and scholars for this proposed statement of professional purpose.

Chapter 3 turns to the challenge of developing a body of knowledge the management profession can claim. First, the notion of "knowledge" is explored, by drawing on Aristotle's categorization of knowledge as well as the distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge. I then turn to defining and framing a professional body of knowledge in the area of management. A core idea here is that this body of knowledge arises from creative discovery as well as scientific validation. Both discovery and validation activity inform the discourse on management, organizational, and entrepreneurial practices—in terms of their constituent values, constructs, models, and principles. A key observation here is that most elements of such a body of knowledge are already present in the broader literature, albeit in a scattered and fragmented manner. The framework for a professional body of knowledge presented in this chapter might help to integrate the landscape and as such facilitate dialogue between professionals with widely different backgrounds and perspectives.

Chapter 4 focuses on the actual behavior and external expectations of management as a nascent profession. In this respect, the global population of management scholars is highly fragmented and the level of interaction between management scholars and management practitioners is generally poor. These behavioral patterns in management scholarship and practice appear to arise from the evolution of the human brain over many thousands of years, which has made it hard-wired toward tribalism. The notion of trading zones is therefore adopted to explore how common ground between different tribes in the management discipline can be developed and sustained. Management labs, new business incubators, and professional degree programs offer promising (albeit currently imperfect) trading zones that enable meaningful dialogues between tribes with highly different voices and interests. Moreover, I argue that scholar-consultants are more productive contributors to this type of trading zone than management consulting firms.

Chapters 5 to *7* draw on the case of circular organizing to extend the professionalization quest to issues of power and leadership. Thus, the maps of the territory developed in the previous chapters are used to understand the territory itself in a more in-depth manner.

Chapter 5 and *6* are both about circular organizing, a management technology that fundamentally redistributes power and authority throughout the organization. The case of circular organizing is of interest because the abuse and rationalization of power in organizational and administrative settings may be one of the most pressing problems of our time. A deeper understanding of how power can be shaped and controlled in organizational settings serves to redefine the (ab)use of power in managerial settings and firmly connect it to the professionalization agenda. *Chapter 5* explores the emergence of circular organizing, pioneered by the Dutch engineer and entrepreneur Gerard Endenburg as well as the American software engineer and entrepreneur Brian Robertson. The principles informing the circular approach as well as the various instantiations created with these principles are discussed. As circular organizing initially developed outside mainstream management theory and practice, *Chapter 6* seeks to connect it to key constructs and models in the management literature. In this respect, circular organizing systematically adresses fundamental issues of authority, ownership, and power, which tend to be marginalized and rationalized in mainstream management theorizing and practices.

Chapter 7 assesses the learnings that arise from the circular approach to management. At a more fundamental level, this approach implies a shift from established notions of leadership toward systems of distributed leadership. Subsequently, the discourse on shareholder value maximization and multi-stakeholder management is compared with circular organizing as an emerging management approach. This comparison serves to demonstrate in more detail how both the shareholder value and the multi-stakeholder literatures have been marginalizing fundamental issues and challenges in the area of ownership, authority, and power. Moreover, it suggests key issues in the area of power and authority need to be explicated and addressed, to advance the professionalization quest. The overview of three management approaches resulting from this chapter, may also constitute a first step toward a professional body of knowledge on management.

Finally, *Chapter 8* outlines the key implications and conclusions arising from *The Quest for Professionalism*. Four complementary paths for professionalizing management practice and scholarship are defined and outlined. The first path allows the development of a shared sense of professional purpose and responsibility. The second path explores the idea of a professional body of knowledge informed by both discovery and validation. A third path involves growing the number of trading zones in which professionals with different

voices and interests can effectively meet and collaborate. The fourth path suggests how the expectations of professionalism in management can be raised. Finally, I discuss several implications for management education. For example, both undergraduate and graduate programs in management should provide opportunities for developing professional skills that align actual and espoused behavior.