

Dr. Steffen Roth

CFP | The Great Reset of management and organization theory

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Call for papers to a special issue of the *Scandinavian Journal of Management* (<https://www-journals.elsevier.com/scandinavian-journal-of-management/call-for-papers/special-issue-the-great-reset-of-management-and-organization>) [SSCI 1.891, Scopus, CNRS**, CABS**, VHB***] on

The Great Reset of management and organization theory

Proponents

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- Wojciech Czakon, Full Professor of Strategic Management, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland
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This changes everything. Still a wishful thought and claim rather than a certainty, the title of Naomi Klein's (2015) report on the battle between capitalism and the climate blends well into observations of the repeatedly declared 2020 war against the coronavirus and its tremendous impact on what is already being described as our "old-normal" lives. Many agree now that the coronavirus has exposed the weaknesses of neoliberal institutional designs, financial austerity policies, and a global economic system optimized for efficiency rather than sustainability and resilience. Some note with satisfaction that lockdowns and travel restrictions have cleared skies and covered ecological footprints.

It is against this backdrop that the World Economic Forum (WEF) has recently launched its *Great Reset* initiative. Borrowed from an eponymous book (Florida, 2010) written in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, the WEF's reset refers to ambitious institutional redesigns by which governments and corporations should adapt to the situation during and after the coronavirus crisis. The key message here is that prospects are not all bleak if we realize that "there is a golden opportunity to seize something good from this crisis" (HRH the Prince of Wales on the occasion of the initiat-

ive's launch event, 03 June 2020). To take this historic opportunity, however, decision-makers must realize that "our systems need a reset" as there can be neither serious desire nor feasible ways back to the unequitable and unsustainable "old normal" world. Rather, this reset would imply the implementation of new institutional arrangements that steer markets towards fairer outcomes, incentivize investments towards shared goals, build and sustain greener infrastructures, and harness the momentum of the fourth industrial revolution for the resolution of pressing social, health, and environmental challenges, including climate change (Schwab and Malleret, 2020). The paradigmatic core of this reset is a shift from neoliberalism to an interventionist approach, which is complemented, on the theoretical level, by advocacy of a radical and irrevocable shift from shareholder to stakeholder management, and by the development and promotion of alternative environmental, social and governance (ESG) metrics on the methodological level. The belief that prior practices become evidently unsustainable underpins this shift, and its various manifestations.

As with other exercises of its "discreet power" (Garsten and Sörbom, 2018), it is idle to muse as to whether the WEF acts as initiator or aggregator of the agendas set by its new initiative. In fact, many of the theories and tools promoted by the WEF are not precisely new to scholars familiar with fields and concepts such as corporate governance, sustainability accounting, corporate social responsibility, or business ethics, and stakeholder theory is not precisely unpopular in management and organization research either. Many scholars would agree "that leadership needs to be re-framed and based on a sustainability paradigm; and (...) that this 're-framing' is narrated, mobilised and organised by all stakeholders starting with the actors and decision-makers who can influence corporate behaviour. Such actors may included—but are not limited to—organisations such as the World Economic Forum, university business schools, and the Institute for Directors (to name but a few) and indeed all associated with leadership and its development." (Howieson et al., 2019, 690). The Great Reset may therefore appear as an almost self-evident and "alternativeless" attempt at stabilizing a window of opportunity for the overdue pursuit of proven strategies for the achievement of universally shared goals such as the minimization of health risks or the prevention of socioecological catastrophes (Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, 2018). In this case, the actual change management challenge would consist only in the scale, scope, and imminence of the issues at stake.

On the other hand, many of the means and ends suggested by the WEF and similar-minded agenda setters for the coronavirus crisis management may appear as debatable. Joint medical and military operations for pandemic interventions both domestic and abroad; contact-tracing wearables such as smart wristbands that help track who had been near to whom at care homes and elsewhere; coronavirus awareness messages by which governments replace caller tunes on personal smartphones; COVID-19 health passports including mandatory carbon offsetting for flight passengers; the list goes on. It is against this backdrop that, at the 2020 WEF Annual Meeting in Davos, Yuval Harari warned that a "major danger we face is the rise of digital dictatorships, that will monitor everyone all the time". This apprehension might not be far-fetched if approaches similar to corporate social scoring systems are boosted by increasing computer power and applied to the individual level, thus leading not only to social credits systems as debated with reference to China, but probably also to networked health scoring and monitoring systems of which individuals grow existentially dependent. "Eventually, we may reach a point when it will be impossible to discon-

nect from this all-knowing network even for a moment. Disconnection will mean death.” (Harari, 2017, 349). On the global scale, scholars have recently problematized environmental change management programmes as attempts at planetary biopolitics (Cavanagh, 2018).

Apparently, the discourses on the management of the current crisis as well as on the general need for stakeholder management for healthier individuals, institutions, and ecosystems are highly theory-driven. Yet, the question remains whether management and organization theories themselves are sufficiently up-to-date to be up to the tasks as there is more concern than ever that our fund of theories is at risk of “becoming a compendium of dead ideas” (The Economist, 2016). The ambition of this special issue is, therefore, to discuss and explore how management and organization theories must be designed if they are to not only critically, sceptically, or affirmatively comment on the above grand challenges (George et al. 2016; Czakon, 2019), but also to neutralize, divert, or advance the developments at stake. Theoretical and conceptual contributions are invited from scholars with backgrounds in management, sociology, economics, and further social sciences whose work addresses questions and issues of the following non-exclusive type:

- Great Reset or incremental improvements: Do we need a Great Reset of management and organization theory? Or is our theoretical fund sufficiently robust and adaptable to cope with the major (change) management issues of the 21st century?
- Decision-making without alternative: “We have no alternative” to the Great Reset, HRH the Prince of Wales declared on the occasion of the launch of WEF initiative. German chancellor Angela Merkel, too, has coined the un-word of the year 2010, *alternativlos* (literally “alternative-less”). Yet, can there be decisions without alternatives (Ahrne et al., 2016; Apelt et al., 2017)? Are there alternatives to present ways of decision-making in management and organization? Alternatives to current forms of management theorizing?
- The *healthization* of society: What are the major management- and organization-theoretical implications of the current general mobilization for healthy people, healthy institutional ecosystems, and a health planet?
- Reset, restoration, restratification: Discoveries, drafts, or designs of new hierarchies of persons, values, or functions in organizational and managerial programmes and policies (Roth et al., 2020).
- Neoliberal versus interventionist theories of management and organizations: Choosing sides, developing alternatives.
- *Conspiracy* theories of management and organization: Dividing lines and building bridges between in-/acceptable forms of leadership, control, and power.
- Strategic communication in times of a “*global misinfo-demic*” (UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 14 April 2020): What role for moral frames, fake news, press freedom, and propaganda in the media organization and management theories of the 21st century?
- Diversity and crisis: Female managers and home schooling; race and health care; migrants and infection. What new forms of exclusion, marginalisation, and neglect have emerged at the intersections of the coronavirus crisis? Is there a need for a Great Reset of diversity research in management and organization studies?
- Next organization: What new forms of organization and meta-organization (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2005; Garaudel, 2020) are or might be emerging during the crisis or in its aftermath? How can organizations be designed in a digitally-driven reality of multi-tasking, multi-role, aspatial reality?

- Post-human management and organisation: What prospects for human values and humanistic management in the (masked) face of technocratic interventions and superhuman challenges?

The official CFP will be available on the *Scandinavian Journal of Management's* website by the first weeks of January 2021. Manuscript submission is open from **01 February 2021 to 01 September 2021**. Manuscripts must constitute original research and comply with the journal's **submission guidelines** (<https://www.elsevier.com/journals/scandinavian-journal-of-management/0956-5221/guide-for-authors>). In the online system please ensure you submit your paper within Manuscript Type: '(Virtual) Special Issue: The Great Reset of management and organization theory'. Once accepted, articles submitted to our virtual special issue will appear online in *the Scandinavian Journal of Management*. When the entire review process is done, all accepted papers will appear in the Special Issue and assigned volume and issue numbers. The advantage of this procedure is that it speeds up the publication of individual articles.

This virtual special issue is supported by members and convenors of dedicated tracks at the **EURAM 2021 Conference in Montréal** (<https://derroth.com/2020/09/24/cfp-euram-2021-track-14-02-management-history-theory-and-philosophy/>), the **International Social Theory Consortium** (<http://www.socialtheory.org>), the **Humanistic Management Network** (<http://humanisticmanagement.network>) conference, the **Next Society Institute** (<http://nextsocietyinstitute.com>), and the **Niklas Luhmann Conference** (<http://luhmannconference.com>) series at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik. Membership or participation in these networks or events is not a prerequisite for contributions to this virtual special issue.

Please do not hesitate to **email us** (<mailto:steffen.roth@utu.fi>, strot@me.com) for informal enquiries on the virtual special issue.

References and suggested reading:

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Suggested reading:

- Roth S. (2021), **The Great Reset. Restratification for lives, livelihoods, and the planet** (<https://derroth.com/2020/12/04/preview-the-great-reset-restratification-for-lives-livelihoods-and-the-planet/>), *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Vol. 166, □□□□□120636.

Proponent biographies:

Steffen Roth is full professor of management at the La Rochelle Business School, France, and adjunct professor of economic sociology at the University of Turku, Finland. He holds a habilitation in economic and environmental sociology awarded by the Italian Ministry of Education, University, and Research; a PhD in sociology from the University of Geneva; and a PhD in management from the Chemnitz University of Technology. He is the field editor for social systems theory of *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*. The journals his research has been published in include *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Ecological Economics*, *Administration and Society*, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *European Management Journal*, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, and *Futures*. His ORCID profile is available at orcid.org/0000-0002-8502-601X (<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8502-601X>).

Wojciech Czakon is chair in strategic management at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. He holds a Ph.D. in management (University of Economics in Katowice, 2002), and a habilitation degree in economics and management (2007). He teaches in several universities in Poland, and is visiting professor at the Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Italy. His research revolves around interorganizational phenomena, strategies and structures. Recent publications develop a behavioural perspective on strategic decisions, related to trust towards partners in cooperative settings (*Tourism*

Management, 2016; *Industrial Marketing Management*, 2016), and related to the (mis)perceptions preceding strategic action (*Industrial Marketing Management*, 2018). His long standing involvement in developing the coopetition research community translated into the organization of several workshops and conference tracks (EIASM, EURAM), guest-editing several journal special issues (*Long range Planning*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *International Studies in Management & Organization*, *International Journal of Business Environment*), and a recently published handbook (*The Routledge Companion on Coopetition Strategies*). Former Vice-president for Strategic Interest Groups of the European Academy of Management (2014-2017), member of the Management and Organization Committee at the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Wolfgang Amann has been designing and delivering executive education seminars for more than 16 years. He currently serves as professor of strategy as well as the academic director of degree and custom programs of HEC Paris in Qatar. He is a graduate of key faculty development programs worldwide, such as Harvard University's MLE, IMD's ITP, IESE's IFP, and EFMD's International Deans' Program. He published 15 books for executives and compiled more than 100 case studies for his executive education seminars. He received several research and teaching awards. Most notably, he was repeatedly honoured for delivering the best CEMS course amongst all courses offered in 17 European countries.

Léo-Paul Dana is a graduate of McGill University and HEC-Montreal. He began lecturing at Concordia University in 1984, taught at McGill from 1992 to 1997 and subsequently at INSEAD. He served as Expert Witness for the Government of Canada House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport and later as Senior Advisor to the World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises with United Nations advisory status. Formerly tenured at the University of Canterbury, he is full professor of entrepreneurship at Montpellier Business School. He has an extensive research background studying entrepreneurship in different cultures and has produced 45 books and 295 articles appearing in a variety of journals including: *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice*; *International Business Review*, *International Small Business Journal*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Journal of World Business*, *Small Business Economics*, and *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*. His biography appears annually in the *Canadian Who's Who* (published by the University of Toronto Press). Current research interests: cultural capital; methodology, wine.

Categories: Capitalism, Differentiation, Environment, Health, Management, Morality, Multifunctional, NGO, Organization, Politics, Post-Growth, Public Health, Scenario, Sociology, Stratification, System, Theory, Therapy, Value, Virus

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