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## MANAGEMENT GEOGRAPHY - MAKING PLACE FOR SPACE IN MANAGEMENT THOUGHT

Suwala L., Pachura P., Schlunze D.R.\*

**Abstract:** The purpose of the paper is to introduce the interdisciplinary research stream called Management geography towards the broadly defined field of management studies. Management geography is targeting the nexus between ‘space and management’ and encompasses the study of spatial factors, spatial dimensions and spatial conditions of management processes in, by and between organizations. Research about space is not well established in management thought. Space is predominantly investigated within the borders of the organization, is imagined only implicitly, and will generally be substituted by strategy, structure, control, hierarchy, or other organizing elements. Management was born as a hands-on discipline, thus avoiding getting entangled in abstract phenomena or concepts like space or just taking them for granted. By providing a focused overview of the understandings of space in classical management theory and recent approaches, we outline shortcomings, unexploited potentials and new avenues necessary to address current spatial challenges in a globalized and hyperconnected world through the lenses of Management geography. Results highlight that understanding spaces, in particular, also between and outside of the organization can contribute to both explaining managerial and organizational success or failure as a spatial differentiating factor and allowing for a more balance approach towards the multifaceted management coordination of spaces in, by, between and around organizations.

**Key words:** Management geography, management, spaces, organizations, business.

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### Introduction

In this paper, we introduce ideas of Management geography (ManGeo) – a subdiscipline that tackles the nexus between ‘management and space’ – towards management scholars. This stream of research has potential for an interdisciplinary basis and, in the simplest terms, combines approaches and views from economic geography and management studies. The general proposition that “geography (...) must become one of the core disciplines in management” (Porter, 2000, p. 272) made by management scholars is probably as old as the disciplines themselves. This idea was also echoed within economic geography: “we should reassert the importance of space and geography in management and organizational studies” (Yeung, 2012, p. XV). However, no systemic accounts were undertaken since then neither in

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economic geography nor management studies. Some notable exceptions are Clegg's and Kornberger's (2006) edited collection on 'Space, Organizations and Management Theory' and Schlunze's et al. (2012) edited collection on 'Launching New Perspectives on Management and Geography'. At the same time, an interesting, albeit fragmented and largely unconnected stream of research has evolved in economic geography centered around the notion of Management geography (Suwala & Schlunze, 2019). Our assumption is that Management geography has the potential to enrich the theoretical, methodological and practical discussions and debates in management, organizational and business studies. The latter is reaffirmed by Yeung who states that „[organizational] space, as a potentially new conceptual lens, matters in management and organization theories” (2005, p. 220). But most importantly, the research perspective of Management geography and adjacent academic traditions allow, in our opinion, to effectively solve most fundamental managerial and organizational challenges in a spatially very diverse world of business beyond the sole organization (Suwala, 2021). From our perspective, the value added is twofold: first, space is capable to explain managerial and organizational success or failure as a differentiating factor with regard to the distribution of management functions, management agency, management practices or management cultures and their interplay within, between and outside of organizations (Abo, 2004, Schlunze, 2004, Jones, Faulconbridge, 2012). Second, the management of space in, by, and between businesses allows for a deliberate examination with and handling of spaces in an appropriate way (Yeung 2005, Suwala & Oinas 2012, Pachura 2021, Suwala 2021). Those two streams can be combined with recent efforts and insights from management and organizational scholars mostly targeting particular corporate settings und functions (e.g. strategy, control, power, human relations etc.) that perpetuate or hinder organizational and managerial life by implicitly considering spaces within the company (Kornberger & Clegg, 2006, Chanlat, 2006 Taylor & Spicer, 2008, Peltonen 2012). The paper is organized as follows. In the second part, we provide a rough (historical) overview of the understanding of space in classical management theory. Part three deals with space in management theory since then by tracing general developments and pinpointing state of the art (examining the above-mentioned recent efforts). In part four, we are sketching contours of Management geography and will outline the value added by the research stream for management studies. Part five summarizes lessons learned and formulates questions for future research avenues.

#### ***Space and management theory – classic approaches***

Only with the onset of industrialization in the second half of the 19th century 'the manager and management' has been widely applied to economic organizations and their nature more or less systematically developed within different epochs of business managerial thought (Wren & Bedeian, 2020). We should, therefore, not be surprised, that after partly conflicting 'Managerial ideologies' of 'Industrial betterment' (1870-1900), 'Scientific management' (1900-1923), 'Welfare capitalism /human relations' (1923-1955), 'Systems rationalism' (1955-1980), and

‘Organizational culture’ (1980-present) (according to Barley & Kunda 1992, p. 394), ‘management’ has been defined according to the *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the age). These are the reasons for the manifold, often contradictory delineations of management. Many contributors have early on emphasized a ‘jungle’ of definitions, theories, approaches and schools towards management and managers (Boddewyn, 1967, Koontz, 1980) and even more so with regard to its relation towards space. Space has always played a role during the development of management thought and theory. This role, however, was mostly implicit and space neither separately analyzed as a specific cognitive and interpretative category nor from an idiosyncratic perspective. However, it is possible to follow a certain evolution of the manifestation of space in the history of management thought and theory. This evolution will be highlighted in a stylized way by considering three early epochs of management thought (see e.g. Chanlat, 2006, for an more detailed historical inquiry).

At the beginning of the 20th century, during the birth hour of what became later known as scientific management, space was implicitly threatening as a physical entity around its material and tangible expression within a rationalized production process, i.e. spatially expanding factories or production lines having clearly defined (organizational) boundaries or being perceived as distance (Thompson, 1917). This industrial era was characterized by the interpretation of organizational boundaries, largely in terms of physical boundaries, that is, represented by the dimension of physical space. These boundaries were used to distinguish between space that existed within the organization and external space, called the organization’s environment. Considering the works of Frederick Taylor (Taylor, 1922), space was interpreted as a productive, controlled, divided, and hierarchized space within the organization led by optimization and rationalization efforts based on a division of labor. It was mainly about workshop management. This physical productivity related to the division of labor and organization of production was utilized through the "Fordist" assembly line, the creation and extension of spatially large factories. These factories can be illustrated as the spatial universe where thousands and thousands of workers doing their jobs in fixed, but synchronized locations (Chanlat, 2006).

In a modern interpretation, such an optimizing of spaces within the organization can be accredited to economies of scale, as particular types of internal agglomeration economies (Suwala, 2014). Hereby, space is considered as a *de facto* three-dimensional container or grid open to calculation – both in an abstract way expressed as an economic variable in square meters or feet of a stylized floor area or in an absolute way by inserting specific objects (man, machines) according to a prescribed and subsequent set-up (e.g. assembly line) within a build fabric. This understanding of space in management (science) was probably the most influential one until today, coined the following decades and is the main point of departure when organizing floor space in planned, consolidated or new-established premises. It also was responsible for the fact that despite the general distinction between internal organizational and external spaces, mostly internal spaces were subject to management scholar interest, where external spaces were left out or were just

mentioned as the 'environment'. The most prominent outgrowth of these internal optimization efforts is known today as the 5S-workplace organization method derived from Japanese sort (seiri, 整理), set in order (seiton, 整頓), shine (seisō, 清掃), standardize (seiketsu, 清潔), and sustain (shitsuke, 躰) along with other dynamic techniques like kanban or kaizen along the lines of the lean management paradigm (Suwala, 2022).

Another strand of classical management theory called administrative management is most often associated with the work of French management researcher and practitioner Henri Fayol. Fayol's work shares the understanding of spaces as productive, controlled, divided, and hierarchized in Taylorian way, but extends the focus on the entire organization beyond the workshop and considers it as a predominantly administrative function, which is manifested through the social world of the organization (*le corps social*) (Fayol, 1917). Although materials and machines are subject of inquiry, the administrative function mainly centers on personnel. Therefore, those productive, controlled, divided, hierarchized spaces are also part of an administrative and social sphere or milieu. This social concern and understanding within the organization is, however, treated in a technocratic and delegated way. The social sphere has an internal and external dimension regarding space. The internal dimension is based on a favorable spatial distribution of workers within the factory to with "the obligation (...) to put the right person in the right place" (Chanlat, 2006, p. 22); the external dimension emphasizes the importance of the organization's influence beyond its physical boundaries through the locations of the workers' settlements (e.g. company dwellings near industrial plants). Both dimensions pursue the aim of social harmony as a preventive measure despite obvious power asymmetries between individuals in the organization. In this way, space affects the organization beyond its borders, however, in a merely static and descriptive way. This hierarchical inserting of people with and around the organization reminds us of a relative understanding of space as an economic location (Suwala, 2021). Both the right spots or working stations within the company and spatial proximity to workers' residences are considered as internal and ordinary location factors, albeit with a consideration of social matters.

An important turning point in the interpretation of space in management thought and theory was a development of what later became the behavioral school or the predecessors of the human relations school. A take on this – are studies two of its early representatives – Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger based on the so-called Hawthorne's experiments which investigated upon the relationship between work performance (efficiency) and group dynamics in factories (Mayo, 1933, Roethlisberger, 1941). Both demonstrated that the human factor manifested in (informal) networks of social relationships among workers, its inclusion and understanding in management process (through physical breaks, orchestrating social cohesion and group belonging) enhanced improvements in performance and productivity. In this way, it can be said that both identified novel types of organizational spaces consisting of a genuine human factor. It would be premature,

to talk about curated networks of social relations (Merkel & Suwala, 2021) or relational spaces as social places in those early studies. It must be said, however, that these approaches were the first attempts towards a truly understanding of management and the managed as fully-fledged human beings of what was later developed by management as a social system in a behavioral school (March & Simon, 1958; Anderson & Lemken, 2019). These relationships are not only relationships between employees (including informal ones), but also between employees and managers.

**Table 1. Space in classical management theories.**

Space factor	Scientific management	Administrative management	Human relations / Behavioral school
Interpretation of space	physical	organizational	social
Dimensions of space	productivity, efficiency	power, harmony	relationships, place
Concept of space	(abstract and) relative	relative	points to relational understandings

**Source:** Authors' elaboration.

Despite or perhaps precisely because of its legacy, those approaches of what we call here classical management theories dominated and set the pace for mostly spatially absent perspectives in management science and studies practically to this day. The consequences manifested in the widespread narrative about the internal life of the organization as the main dish to be investigated in management thought and the environment of the organization as a mostly neglected dimension. At first sight, this dichotomy of inside and outside did not contribute to a proper understanding of space. The classical interpretation of space was dominated by an approach that recognized the separateness of the organization from its surroundings. This powerful story or paradigm about “in” or “out” in practice has prevented a productive and innovative study of spaces in management thought (Pachura, 2016). This changed when Michael Porter’s concept of the internal value chain within the organization (Porter & Millar 1985) was developed further towards his cluster theory centering on ‘localized competitive advantages’ beyond the sole organization (Porter 1990). These ideas not only made it acceptable to consider spaces outside the organization with the discipline, but both re-introduced space beyond its shadowy existence as an implicit dimension in management and the corporation and (inter-)corporate networks in economic geography. As elaborated above, space can take the form as an abstract or absolute, relative, and relational metaphor (Suwala, 2021). Abstract as a grid open to calculation and optimization of the workshop, relative by inserting worker into the right locations therein, and relational in the sense of orchestrating a certain set of relations of agents within an organization as such. Simultaneously, the perspective was heavily centered around the inner life and inner spaces of the organization (Chanlat, 2006).



*Space and management theory – general development and state of the art*

We are not intending to provide an extensive literature review targeting the nexus between space and management thought / theory here, but only to pinpoint of what happened since the outlined legacy. In the last two decades or so, we were observing the formation of what we call the school of organizational or management space (Hernes, 2004; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; Clegg & Kornberger, 2006; Taylor & Spicer, 2007, Dale & Burrell, 2008; Tissen & Lekanne Deprez, 2008, Ropo et al. 2015, Pachura, 2016). It is neither a coherent body of work nor a particular paradigm behind this framing here, but rather widespread and fragmented contributions from various field of organisation and management studies.

First of all, what is fundamentally striking is the fact that in most studies in management – space was and is regarded as something unknown and at the same time something taken-for-granted (Chanlat, 2006, p. 21). “Space and time were conceived as a priori categories, as natural fixed entities, that instrumentally should be of core concern to management” (Carr & Hancock, 2006, p. 545). Thus, as a rule, there was no separate engagement with space for a long time, space was simply regarded as a physical container or space was substituted by other concepts, first and foremost, strategy (Kornberger & Clegg 2004, p. 123). In the spirit of Chandler’s ‘Structure follows strategy’ theory, e.g. ‘Unless structure follows strategy, inefficiency rules’ (Chandler 1962, p. 314), the management of space in the organization was thus implicitly considered as an invisible straitjacket orchestrated by strategy. In a literature review, Chanlat notes that there are certainly „some footprints [of space] in the history of management literature“ (2006, p. 17). Hereby, space was mainly conceptualized with regard to management functions as divided, controlled, imposed and hierarchical, productive, personalized, social and symbolic space (Chanlat 2006, pp. 18-21). With divided spaces the separation between the organization (internal) and its environment (external) should be accomplished. This perspective aligns with the traditional understanding outlined above. The division was not only manifested through built forms (buildings, doors, fences, etc.) and their demarcating functions, but at the same time this separation between inside and outside was fundamental to the identity of workers, foremen, employees, and managers. From today's perspective, this attachment is partly no longer given due to technological progress (home office, virtual workplaces). Controlled spaces express that each space within the organization is essentially subject to management control through visual, electronic, or administrative practices. Imposed and hierarchical spaces combine considerations of a hierarchical order of positions with the precise design of workplaces and/or offices (e.g. size, location in the building, etc.). Productive space shows the connection between the organization or management of space and the goals and requirements of a company’s production targets. It is best expressed in Taylor's ideas about the workshop organization. Later the idea, of 'productive space' has been extended beyond the private firm (e.g. hospitals, universities, theatres, public offices or private companies). Personalized space focuses on personalized spatialities in companies, which takes place through an

appropriation of space by employees, etc. For management, it is a matter of balancing the tension between organizational identity (corporate design) and the individuality of the workplace (personalized design) mediating in the numerous sometimes competing claims and defense strategies of employees against a variety of organizational objects, offices, roles and relationships. Symbolic spaces reflect the corporate and management culture, the name of the company, a certain way of behavior, they are often a company's business card to the outside world and can be designed as landmarks, partly in the form of architecture, aesthetics and materials of the buildings (Billsberry & Birnik, 2010, Peltonen 2012). Finally, social spaces embody the social milieu within the organisation (Dale & Burrell, 2008) that are manifested through a certain type of division of labor and explicitly includes social and hierarchical or heterarchical rules (Chanlat, 2006, pp. 18-21). In most contemporary understandings the relationship between management / the organization and space is recursive where the organization is shaped by space, while at the same time space shapes the organization. The peculiarity of these spaces is that they were primarily intended to display the inner world of the firm (Hernes et al., 2006). The modern interpretation of this school understands the relationship between management and space, therefore, as a relational construct, which can be conceptualized as a 'metaphor-for-future-use' (Tissen & Lekanne Deprez, 2008) which is able to build bridges between concepts that have not been thought together so far.

Yeung – an economic geographer also publishing in management and business journals – extends these ideas and proposes the concept of 'organisational space', which depicts the spatial relationships between different organizational units within and between companies (2005, 226). Hereby, “ ‘space’ is not restricted to an organization's internal ‘built’ physical environment, but it is just about how organizations relate to each other and to the world they are part of” (Tissen & Lekanne Deprez, 2008, p. 25). Currently, even multidimensional concepts of space for the management or organization of companies are being discussed (Ford & Harding, 2004, Hernes 2004, Taylor & Spicer, 2007). Based on Lefebvre's (1991) or Soja's (1996) thinking, Taylor & Spicer, for example, also present a tripartite framework for the study of organizational or management-oriented spaces: therein, space is defined as a relative position (location) or distance (space as distance), as the materialization of power relations and as a lived experience. „Studies of space as distance tend to emphasize the physicality of organizational spaces, with a focus on the most obvious empirically observable aspects of space such as where people sit, where businesses are located, and how resources are distributed around a building. Studies of space as the materialization of power relations draw our attention to the structural conditions which shape certain spatial dynamics. At the center of such analyses are systems of planning and domination which underlie and co-ordinate any given space. Studies of space as lived experience emphasize the symbolic and imaginary dimensions. Underlying this work is a clear focus on how people imagine and experience the spaces in which they dwell (Taylor & Spicer, 2007, p. 334).



In post-industrial reality, in contrast to the industrial era of the first decades of the development of management science, the situation and the nexus between 'management and space' became very complex, as physical boundaries are blurred and space is no longer divided into organization's environment and efficiency of internal enterprises' systems. While the Fordist system was based on spatial homogeneity of production and consumption, today we are dealing with different understandings and interpretation of spaces in many respects. Firms are far from being technocratic hierarchies and/or large dinosaurs with tremendous production units under one roof – albeit they still exist – but are entangled with in-, out-, and resourcing and -shoring activities and embedded in manifold networks each with a distinct spatial dimension when looking for abroad markets, new spaces for a sale of products and services, or locating their investments on novel grounds. And these activities are the basis and breeding grounds for 'localized competitive advantages' as suggested by Porter's cluster theory. On top of that, the dynamic development of technology has caused the compression of space and time. All these phenomena are gaining momentum in management theories and are propelled by promising inter-organizational concepts like e.g. global production networks (Yeung, 2009) and/or global service networks (Jones & Faulconbridge, 2012) stemming also from economic geography / management geography that are capable to describe, explain and find solutions for these developments through new management configurations of spaces (Pachura, 2016, 2021).

#### ***Sketching contours of Management geography***

In the last 25 years the discipline of economic geography slowly discovered the nexus between 'management and space' after a long and stony path (Suwala & Schlunze, 2019). The history of the discipline originated both in economics and *Länderkunde* (regional studies, country specific descriptions of economic activities) and had therefore both a macro perspective that subsumed aggregated behavior of anonymous actors (managers) and a stylized conception of man (*homo oeconomicus*) that exactly behaved according to perfect markets in the sense of the invisible hand that effectively ruled out any kind of personalized management (visible hand). Only by opening the black boxes of region and the firm, the discipline was able to directly approach the manager (Schlunze et al. 2012, Suwala & Oinas, 2012, Suwala, 2022). For this undertaking, manifold labels and have been used like Management Geography (Abo, 2002, Schlunze 2004, Schlunze & Plattner, 2007, Schlunze et al. 2012, Suwala & Oinas, 2012), Managerial Geography (Laulajainen, 1998) or Economic Geographies of Management (Jones, 2018) basically pointing to the fact that "growing number of contributions have sought to frame themselves (albeit loosely) as part of a 'new management geography' developing firmly at the overlap of debates between economic geography and management studies" (Jones 2018, p. 277).

We are using the label Management geography here and have all three provided definitions (table 2). Lech Suwala's und Päivi Oinas' approach outlines three spatial configurations for analyzing managerial decision making, Rolf D. Schlunze's

analysis emphasizes managerial performance by preferences, interactions and perceptions and Piotr Pachura's applies various perspectives on the dimensions of organizational spaces, also by adding virtual spaces.

**Table 2. Proposed definitional framework.**

Definitions of Management Geography	Authors
Management geography is a subfield of corporate / business / enterprise geography which focuses on the nexus of decision making in the corporate world – the manager and the managerial team – in a geographical perspective. The objective is the analysis of the management of economic, social and cognitive spatial realms in multi-scalar configurations influencing the corporate performance through concentration, interaction and/or perception.	Suwala and Oinas, 2012
Management geography is a new avenue of economic geography which focuses on the nexus of managerial practices in a globalizing world from a geographical perspective. The research objective is the analysis of the socioeconomic and cognitive spatial behavior of managerial subjects influencing organizational performance through preferences, interactions and perceptions.	Schlunze 2018
Management geography is an [emerging] area of crossdisciplinary research involving studies on ontologically various and interpenetrating spaces: physical, social and virtual – in a frame of reference to organizations, business management and human [corporate] multicontextual perceptions and interactions.	Pachura, 2022

**Source:** Authors' elaboration.

Thus, the question arises: how can Management geography enrich management thought? What is the value-added for management scholars? Why should management scholars deal with Management geography? Which novel avenues and perspectives are useful for management scholars and to what does management geography contributes to? From our perspective, the value added is twofold: first space (also understood between, around and outside of the organization) is capable to explain managerial and organizational success or failure as a differentiating factor with regard to the distribution of management functions, management action, management practices or management cultures and their interplay (Abo, 2004, Schlunze, 2004, Glückler, 2006, Jones & Faulconbridge, 2012). Second, the management of space in, by and between businesses allows for actively creating, (trans-)forming, and abandoning spaces in an appropriate way (Yeung, 2005, Suwala & Oinas, 2012, Pachura, 2021, Suwala, 2021). Within both accounts, Management geography is capable to provide a fine-grained and detailed look on spaces outside of the organization. Let us elaborate on both points and outside spaces, and formulate some guiding research questions for management scholars. Most studies in economic geography treat space as a differentiating factor that substantially decides between success and/or failure of economic entities or entire regions. Abo commented on this as follows: "Therefore, to incorporate the distinct ways of organizational and

managerial functions of firms in different locations into business and management models, organization theory needs to be complemented by culture-oriented management theories, which take into account knowledge and methodology of geography. This is the foundation of our preliminary concept of management geography” (Abo, 2012, p. 179). The important issue here is a contextual management appraisal as the core of the ambition to establish a Management Geography research agenda. The contextual management encompasses both internal and external determinates of managerial behavior including practices and decision making. Moreover, organizational and management-oriented needs of international businesses are usually considered together with local concerns. In particular, a combination of relative, i.e. location-based, positional links of managers with their cultural characteristics and relationships to spaces was conducted (topical features), later also relational relationships to employees (relational properties). To this end, Abo and his Japanese Multinational Enterprise Study Group (JMNESG) developed a catalogue of criteria, which his working group examined on over 400 Japanese manufacturing companies abroad (Abo, 1989). The catalogue of criteria combines different dimensions of management agency with particular spatial characteristics of company locations (e.g. work organization and management, production control, procurement (e.g. local reference...), team building, working relationships, head office-branch office relationships (relationships and position of expatriates to local managers) and aims to explain the spatial embeddedness of Japanese multinational firms abroad, their managerial practices and their transfer to a different cultural contexts (Abo, 1994). Schlunze & Plattner (2007) even went one step further and attempted to map both cultural adaptation intentions and location preferences of managers and management in foreign work environments. The relatively complex analysis not only captures a possible acculturation where „executives can be divided into managers who stick with the foreign community and/or do not connect to the local business community (disembodied) and those who undertake an effort to discover the local culture within their free time (embedded)“, but breaks down the location preferences of expatriate managers according to a business environment, market environment and living environment, see Tab. 3, (Schlunze & Plattner, 2007, pp. 74-76). Ideally, these “hybrid managers are socially embedded and evince more sensitivity towards local norms and values” (Schlunze, 2012, p. 36). Inspired by Management geography studies, William Baber revealed through mapping of topical space how the participants of a dual ecosystem in the video game industry interact indirectly through topic hubs that include cultural values and practical problems (Baber, 2022, p.172).

**Table 3. Criteria for investigating managers' location preferences.**

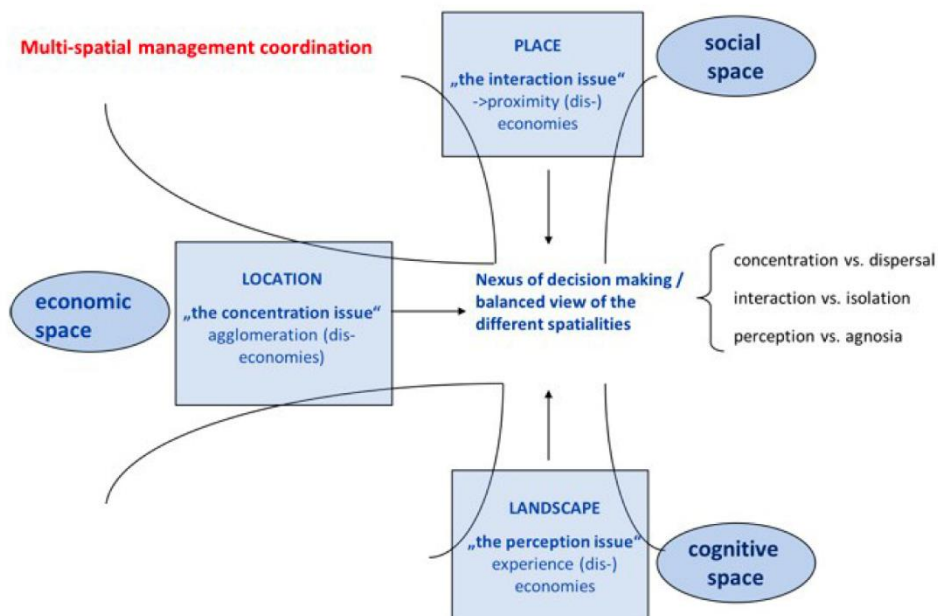
Corporate environment	Cooperation within the own company	Access to human resources	Working atmosphere
Market environment	Cooperation with suppliers and customers in the value chain	Sales opportunities	State-supportive framework conditions
Living environment	Liveable local surroundings	Local Friendship network	Multifaceted urban life

**Source:** slightly modified after Schlunze & Plattner 2007, 76.

This approach addresses problems that stand at the crossroads of management studies and economic geography and that would otherwise remain unnoticed, such as globalizing managerial practices (Schlunze, 2004, 2012). The „emergence of both ‘global managers’ and ‘global managerial practices’ corresponds to a crucial transformation in contemporary global economy with much of the management literature has been relatively slow engage with” (Jones, 2012, p. 227). These emerging new problems at the boundaries of disciplines should be investigated because they most often represent important missing link towards a proper understanding of the management of global corporations and/or networks of these. These issues include spatial insularization, virtualization, translocalization, multicontextualization of management, global (inter-)corporate practices or the changing roles (Pachura, 2019, Suwala, 2021), spatial circumstances of managerial work and project teams (Faulconbridge & Jones, 2012).

A second, more recent research strand within economic geography is more concerned with the management of space in and by companies (Berndt, 2001, Yeung, 2005, Suwala & Oinas, 2012, Suwala, 2014, Pachura, 2016, 2017, 2019, Basco & Suwala, 2020, 2021, Suwala, 2021). Basically, all approaches are about „exploiting spatial economies through spatial strategies (...) manifested in the tensions between spatial division and spatial integration, between spatial fixity and spatial mobility, and between spatial inclusion and spatial exclusion” (Yeung, 2005, p. 232). The above-mentioned concept of 'organisational space' set the stage for the consideration of 'intra- and inter-organisational spaces' as a research object for economic geography (Berndt, 2001, Yeung, 2005). In this context, the usual understanding of space in management science as a physical container in organisations is supplemented by a relational conception, e.g. in the context of power asymmetries. This gives 'organisational space' a certain flexibility and elasticity – but also control, which is related to the dynamic interrelated relationships of a personal and corporate nature (Berndt, 2001). Yeung proposes four spatial strategies that link both physical and relational spaces in this 'organisational space'. Firstly, the utilisation and use of physical space. This refers to the effective use of space and locations of businesses, facilities and workplaces through a clever choice of location as a result of internal or external agglomeration advantages. Secondly, the increase in the accessibility of different operating units through technological innovations in transport and communication despite a spatial distance (spatial distancing). This is about

managing the inter-organisational relationships that have been created through spatial division of labour. Third, managing organisational space through price leadership or diversification in spatial competition for markets and resources at different geographical scales. Fourthly, a renewal or revitalisation of the physical space in the case of agglomeration disadvantages or spatial lock-ins. As a result, the spatial tensions between spatial separation and spatial integration, between spatial stability and spatial mobility, and between spatial inclusion and spatial exclusion shall be managed (Yeung, 2005, pp. 232-233). In the sense of this fundamental idea of the management of spatial tensions, Suwala & Oinas, (2012) and Suwala, (2022) propose a systemic model of the management of space in and by companies that not only presents a differentiated understanding of space (of locations, places and landscapes) in and outside of companies, but also assigns functions to managers and the management in addition to spatially-genuine roles with the aim of enabling effective spatial management of companies. This model is a multi-spatial management challenge through balancing agglomeration, proximity, and experiences (dis-)economies (see Figure 1, also Suwala, 2021).



**Figure 1: Multi-spatial management framework**  
Source: Suwala & Oinas, 2012, 7; Suwala, 2021, 28

In a similar vein of thinking, Pachura develops a Space Organisation Model (SOM) at the meta-level, to which he then assigns precise spatial management functions.

The SOM uses a multi-layered concept of space, which is based on an internal and external „space of the organization“, a scale-flexible „glocal space“ (according to the idea of glocalisation), a socio-cultural „contextual space“ and a virtual „cyberspace“, which are also intertwined (Pachura, 2017, 2019, p. 41). In these spaces, two explicit spatial roles are assigned by the management as ‘space producer’ and ‘context interpreter’. The ‘space producer’ creates and controls spaces by making decisions in physical and virtual spaces or opening sales opportunities in them ‘(virtual) market spaces’. The ‘context interpreter’ performs translation services by anticipating, interpreting and valorising knowledge fragments, signals, moods and associations in multicultural spaces (Pachura, 2016, 2021).

Scholarly activists around the idea of Management geography, like us, are trying to consolidate previously dispersed efforts mainly in geography, but partly also from management, organizational and international business studies. The immediate goal of the Management geography movement is an attempt at some institutionalization, consisting of the development of assumptions of a specific research program (Lakatos, 1977) related to the study of space in organizations and in relation to management processes, especially in a multicontextual, between and outside of the organization spatial und scalar settings (with abstract, relative, relational, real, virtual, cultural, global, local, etc. concepts).

In terms of methodological issues, Management geography uses many approaches and research traditions related to spatial sciences, economics, cultural and social sciences, psychology and management sciences. The methodological fundament is – as wide as the origins of this stream – broad and interdisciplinary. It seems that qualitative and quantitative research have equal methodological status. Theorizing, including defining problems and making scientific hypotheses may result from both deductive and inductive reasoning. Research tools are those used in social sciences, economic sciences or classic research methods of geography, where the geographical or spatial lenses are a distinct feature of the approach.

#### ***Summary of lessons learnt for management thought***

How does Management geography adds value towards contemporary management thinking? New spaces and spatial configurations (e.g. globalization, virtualization, translocalization) are prevalent and emerging mostly between and outside of organizations to both theory and practice with the management of organizations. These challenges go beyond existing interpretations, requiring conceptualization and the development of novel research agendas. And it is to these needs and research gaps that Management geography can attempt to respond effectively. We follow the position of S. Clegg and M. Kornberger, who note that the issue of space has been largely ignored in management sciences with the exception of the evident recent references to space in the context of the determinants of globalization (2006). However, interest in space is not only fragmented in management sciences, but likewise are management issues in economic geography. Establishing interdisciplinary links and fruitful discussion is even more so a Herculean task (Sydow, 2002). Nevertheless, it is the hope of the authors that this paper may serve



as a starting point and may re-introduce the scientific discussion between the community of scholars involved in management, business, or organizational studies as well as economic geography and regional studies through the lenses of Management geography. We are convinced that Management geography has the potential to open black box of space in management studies and the black box of management in spatial sciences.

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## GEOGRAFIA ZARZĄDZANIA - POSZUKIWANIE MIEJSCA DLA PRZESTRZENI W KONCEPCJACH ZARZĄDZANIA

**Streszczenie:** Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie interdyscyplinarnego nurtu badawczego określonego jako geografia zarządzania w odniesieniu do szeroko rozumianej dziedziny nauk o zarządzaniu. Geografia zarządzania jest ukierunkowana na badanie wieloaspektowych powiązań między "przestrzenią a zarządzaniem". Nurt obejmuje badania czynników przestrzennych, wymiarów przestrzennych i uwarunkowań przestrzennych procesów zarządzania w organizacjach oraz przestrzennych powiązań międzyorganizacyjnych. Badania nad przestrzenią nie są silnie ugruntowane w teorii zarządzania. Przestrzeń w zarządzaniu bada się głównie jako przestrzeń wewnętrzną, w granicach organizacji, rozumiana jest najczęściej kontekstowo i zazwyczaj utożsamiana ze strategią, strukturą, kontrolą, hierarchią lub innymi elementami struktur organizacji. Warto zaznaczyć, iż zarządzanie narodziło się jako dyscyplina praktyczna, odrzucając tym samym analizę abstrakcyjnych zjawisk i pojęć, takich jak przestrzeń. Przedstawiając w niniejszym artykule przegląd interpretacji przestrzeni w klasycznej oraz współczesnej teorii zarządzania, autorzy prezentują luki badawcze oraz niewykorzystany potencjał badań nad przestrzeniami, które to badania wydają się uzasadnione z punktu widzenia obecnych wyzwań w zglobalizowanym i hiper-połączonym świecie. Badania w ramach nurtu geografia zarządzania pozwalają na interpretacje przestrzeni jako czynnika różnicującego i wyjaśniającego sukces lub porażkę menedżerską czy organizacyjną oraz umożliwiają wypracowanie zrównoważonych podejść do koordynacji wielowymiarowych przestrzeni organizacyjnych i poza organizacyjnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** geografia zarządzania, zarządzanie, przestrzenie, organizacje, business

## 管理地理- 在管理思想中腾出空间

**摘要：**本文的目的是向广泛定义的管理研究领域介绍称为管理地理学的跨学科研究流。管理地理学的目标是“空间与管理”之间的联系，包括对组织内部、组织内部和组织之间管理过程的空间因素、空间维度和空间条件的研究。关于空间的研究在管理思想中还没有得到很好的确立。空间主要在组织的边界内进行调查，只是隐含地想象，通常会被战略、结构、控制、层次结构或其他组织元素所取代。管理作为一门实践学科诞生，因此避免纠缠于抽象现象或空间等概念，或者只是认为它们是理所当然的。通过对经典管理理论和最近方法中对空间的理解进行重点概述，我们概述了通过管理地理学的视角在全球化和超连接的世界中应对当前空间挑战所必需的缺点、未开发的潜力和新途径。结果强调，理解空间，特别是组织之间和外部的空间，有助于将管理和组织的成功或失败解释为空间差异化因素，并允许采用更平衡的方法来实现空间内的多方面管理协调，通过，组织之间和组织周围

**关键词：**管理地理学，管理，空间，组织，商业