

Towards the Anglo-Saxonization of Management Education? The Implications of Institutional Isomorphism in Mediterranean Capitalisms

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Abstract

Regulation theorists have suggested that national educational systems might act as institutional drivers that-along with other factors-form various capitalisms and shape organizational practice. In the case of management education, it seems that national educational systems do not prevail against the Anglo-Saxon model of education. Literature findings suggest that there are certain drivers of Anglo-Saxon influence in management education and that there is an isomorphic tendency in European business schools, especially in countries that are not highly developed economically. The aim of this paper is to examine the characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon model of management education and discuss its appropriateness as a benchmark for other non-Anglo-Saxon business schools. In this respect Greece is taken as an example of the Mediterranean Capitalisms. The Greek business environment and its management education system are examined and further questions are posed regarding the level of Anglo-Saxon influence in management education in Greece and the possible implications of such an influence in managerial practice.

Keywords: Management Education, Anglo-Saxonization, Regulation Theory, Mediterranean Capitalisms, Management Practices

JEL classification codes: B52, I23, M10, P51

Introduction

According to Regulation theories various institutional factors - including education- are complementary to each other and shape organizational practices. Education for example is affected by the requirements of the labour market. Having that in mind, and considering that management education seems to have strong Anglo-Saxon influences, it is logical to consider whether Anglo-Saxon management education is in accordance with the labor requirements of other non liberal economies like Mediterranean ones.

In this respect, the aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, to examine whether the Anglo-Saxon model of management education is preferable than the non-Anglo-Saxon countries' own national educational systems. After an extensive literature review, the authors suggest that adopting an Anglo-Saxon model in general business education does not guarantee properly educated professionals ready to compete internationally. Foreign expertise and best practices are welcomed, but they need to be enriched and merged with local particularities.

Furthermore, since most research findings on this issue are involved with the economies of the Continental Europe, there is a need to examine other economies such as Mediterranean European economies. In this respect the paper refers to the Greek business environment. After an examination of its national business system and its management educational system, it concludes that there are some indications of Anglo-Saxon influence in Greek Universities that stem from the need to move towards more professional management styles. Nevertheless, no evidence has been found on what the implications of that influence are in managerial practice and therefore no conclusions can be drawn on the appropriateness of the Anglo-Saxon model of education in a business environment like the Greek one.

Therefore, the issues that remain and require further research are whether we can actually claim that the Greek management education system is indeed in a process of Anglo-Saxonization and what the implications of that process are in managerial practice. In other words, do managers in Greece- due to their educational background- apply managerial models and practices that resemble liberal-style managerial practices? And if yes are they successful? Such an examination will also shed light on the role of Anglo-Saxon style management education as part of the institutional complementarities that trigger experimentation and change in less economically developed economies.

Understanding Education as an Institutional Driver

Education has been identified as one of the drivers that shape various capitalisms. Regulation theorists suggest that along with other institutional variables -product market regulation, labour market policies, the financial sector and welfare systems- educational systems lead to the formation of different capitalisms that are distinct to each other (Amable, 2003) (table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Country Clusters (Amable, 2003)

INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES	CAPITALISMS				
	Market-based	Continental European	Social - Democratic	Asian	Mediterranean
Product Markets	Anglo-Saxon: UK, USA, Australia, Canada	Switzerland, Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, France, Austria	Denmark, Finland, Sweden	Japan, Korea	Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain

Capitalisms are classified by combining all the possible complementarities between the five institutional variables. Education, for example, has complementarities with the labour markets because of the industry-skill requirements and with social protection systems because of the need to protect specific skills. In the table that follows (1.2) the capitalisms formed according to their education systems as Amable (2003) suggested are presented.

Table 1.2 Country Clusters: Education (Amable, 2003)

		CAPITALISMS				
		Market-based	Continental European	Social - Democratic Public	Asian	Mediterranean
EDUCATION	Competitive		Public			Weak
	Non-homogeneous secondary-education system		Emphasis on secondary education	High public expenditures on tertiary education	Private tertiary	Low expenditures for education
	High enrolment rates		High degree of standardization	High aid to students		Low enrolment rates
						Weakness in science and technology

Amable’s (2003) study on education drifted towards country specific systems rather than heterogeneous (i.e., based on the standardization of the curricula, system flexibility, nature of vocational training - work or school based - and the availability of funding - public or private). The two extremes are traced between the “standardized” type of education in Germany and the Netherlands as opposed to the “differentiation” type of education in the USA and Canada. The other countries fall in between those two extremes.

An important outcome of Amable’s (2003) study is that that both general education and vocational training impact on the interactions between labour markets and educational systems and that vocational training is a significant factor that differentiates countries. Differentiation is mostly attributed to the diverse institutional and regulatory environment of training in various countries. Firm size is also a significant actor, as this determines the financial capabilities of firms in investing on training. Finally, regarding education, the absence of competitive pressures in that field is, according to Amable (2003), the major reason for the lack of convergence.

In other words, while other institutional factors act as drivers of isomorphism between countries due to the existence of competitive pressures, this does not apply in the case of education, which is presumed as a field with limited competition. Nevertheless, evidence from the management education field suggests that competitive pressures do exist. This is indicated by the fact that Universities nowadays both in Europe and the US have adopted a “global focus” in their operations (Beech, 2006). In addition, many scholars identify isomorphic tendencies with the Anglo-Saxon prototype in the field of management education. These issues are further explained in the following section.

The Anglo-Saxonization of Management Education

Although traditionally Universities have not been very competitive, this has started to change and certain forces that lead to converging trends with the Anglo-Saxon model of business education have been identified. The main findings from the literature suggest that the transfer of US management ideas to Europe after the Second World War initiated a process of imitation of Anglo-Saxon management courses by European universities, a process that greatly accelerated in the 1990s (Mazza *et al*, 2005; Usdiken, 2004; Bjarnar and Kipping, 1998). Also, certain homogenizing forces such as the dominance of US and UK academics in research results (Altbach, 2004), the recruitment of academics with a US/UK background (Sultana, 2008), the increased number of overseas students (Institute of Higher Education, 2007), the impact of ranking and accreditation procedures (Mazza *et al*, 2005), and the Bologna process (Vlasceanu and Voicu, 2006) have been making European business schools similar and close to the Anglo-Saxon type of education.

On the other hand, there is part of the literature that suggests that business schools in Europe do differ, and that forces such as national educational drivers, different expectations from education, mode and time of adoption and cultural differences hinder the Anglosaxonization of management education. In other words, various national characteristics hinder the homogenization of educational systems in different countries and lead to local variations (Don Antunes and Howard, 2007; Javidan, 2005; Kipping *et al*, 2004).

However, this does not mean that there are no Anglo-Saxon influences. On the contrary, most research results present more similarities than differences with the Anglo-Saxon model and reveal a certain level of Anglo-Saxon influence. A characteristic example is that of the MBA degree that is a very popular Anglo-Saxon type degree offered by the majority of European universities (Pfeffer and Fong, 2004). The underlying conclusion is that there exists a converging trend but this is expressed differently in different business contexts.

Examining the Anglo-Saxon Management Education Model

The Anglo-Saxon educational model in tertiary education is a quite competitive system that focuses on general skills. More specifically, the majority of educational programmes give much priority on the acquisition of general skills while industry-specific skills are quite neglected (Hall and Soskice, 2001).

This generality in educational programmes goes hand in hand with the management system applied in Anglo-Saxon countries as well as the pattern of work organization and employment relations. First of all, the strong academic orientation of the Anglo-Saxon education system hinders the generation of formal intermediate skills and qualifications among the workforce. This necessitates a hierarchical pattern of work organization. Moreover, managers at various levels of organizations are responsible for both leadership and administrative functions, giving more emphasis on leadership (Lam, 2000).

Manual and management functions are divided in the education system and therefore managers with an academic background in engineering cannot stay in the higher levels of hierarchy for long (Bykjeflot, 1998; Amdam, 1996). Rather, individuals with general credentials govern careers at the top of organizational hierarchies (Whitley, 1999). Moreover, the acquisition of a general management credential

as the MBA allows for the high levels of manager mobility across firms as well as across sectors, as this is the post-war Anglo-Saxon pattern (Whitley, 1999). As Bykjeflot (1998) points out: "The archetypal industrial leader in the USA today... is the general manager" (p.73).

The emphasis on general abstract knowledge may be explained by the fact that Anglo-Saxon economies are considered "individualistic"; they are characterized by fluid, short term relationships that impact on employment relationships (Haake, 2002). Corporate governance in Anglo-Saxon countries values the satisfaction of short-term shareholder interests' highly and treats managers as agents of the shareholders (Deakin *et al*, 2006). The implications of such corporate governance on employment relationship are low job security and high job turnover rates. Nevertheless, such characteristics provide no incentives for making education relevant to industry-specific skills (Georgen *et al*, 2007). In other words, short-termism makes non-specific organizational knowledge more valuable (Haake, 2002).

Nevertheless, such neo-liberal policies are not welcomed by all economies as some place greater emphasis on issues other than short-term profitability, such as social stability. Although evidence from employment relationships suggests that the expansion of the neo-liberal policy and its corresponding organizational practices have affected working life considerably (James and Wood, 2006) local variations do exist as evidenced by VOC theories. For instance, countries in other capitalisms have different patterns of employment relationships and hence educational needs.

Moreover, and despite their dominance, there is no actual evidence that the liberal type economies perform better than the economies of continental Europe (James and Wood, 2006). The observation of various performance indicators like GDP levels, science and technology in US, UK and the rest European countries does not reveal a "crushing" superiority of the liberal economies. The fact that the US presents a successful economic performance, does not guarantee that the liberal market economies are the most successful. And even if they are, this does not suggest that if their institutional peculiarities are incorporated in other types of capitalisms this will make these economies perform like the US (Amable, 2004).

Moreover, there is the view that the requirements of modern management involve the cooperation and teamwork between different specialist managers which contradicts the individualistic Anglo-Saxon managerial approach (Bjarnar and Gammelsoeter, 1996) and that the administrative practices developed in the US may not be appropriate for international management practices (Bigelow, 1994).

In addition, there are considerations on whether homogenization pressures with the Anglo-Saxon prototype will alter the distinct identity and image of various educational institutions located in different societies (Kumar and Usunier, 2001). Despite the useful sharing of various cultural and societal perceptions about management by foreign students in an internationalized educational institution (Yang and Rosa, 2001) there are concerns that the global focus of Universities might distance business education from nationalism (Sharma and Judy, 1996) and lead to an "outdated one-best-wayism" in management transferred mostly from Western Universities (Howe and Martin, 1998).

As Bjarnar and Gammelsoeter (1996) comment:

"...Management education at present is based on a paradigm combining individualism and generalism, as well as the belief that universal management techniques exist and can be conveyed to the individual through a business school education" (p.242).

As long as there is the belief that universal management techniques do exist and they can be transmitted through business schools, curricula in management education will continue to be broad, and knowledge will be generalist and individualistic (Bjarnar and Gammelsoeter, 1996). Nevertheless, the existence of an Anglo-Saxon based "one-best-wayism" in managerial practices and management education can be seriously questioned.

It is argued that differentiation rather than isomorphism in business school curricula can prove to be more beneficial and provide knowledge more relevant to management practice in different national contexts (Pfeffer and Fong, 2004). There is the view that regional development should be a main concern of the Universities and therefore teaching and research should concentrate more on regional needs.

As Chatterton and Goddard (2000) comment: "...a strong and supportive regional economy will create a competitive University, and a strong University has more to offer a region" (p.481). The main argument is that Universities need to respond to the needs of a complex market place that includes several types of businesses, which in turn require several types of skills (Chatterton and Goddard, 2000). For instance, if University education in a country that consists of SMEs does not respond to the particular educational and training needs of SMEs, then regional development will be undermined.

Furthermore, it is shown that business performance is strongly affected by the way different countries are able to combine foreign expertise and their own national systems in management education. Countries that have managed an effective combination rather than adopting the American system of management education have been the most successful (Amdam, 1996). After all, as Sorge (2004) comments full convergence with any model cannot occur, no matter how influential that model might be.

In this respect, we can hardly argue that general business education will contribute greatly in the development of managerial skills, especially in business contexts that do not share the same institutional features with the Anglo-Saxon ones; nor can we argue that national traditions in management education should prevail. Rather, agreeing with Svetlicic and Cibron (1996) "a productive combination of local and foreign expertise is probably the best" (p.116).

Although the literature so far suggests a homogenization tendency with the Anglo-Saxon educational system, the research for non-Anglo-Saxon business systems (especially those in Southern Europe) is rather limited, and there is no strong evidence of convergence in such systems. For this reason it is important to investigate management education in non-Anglo-Saxon capitalisms, such as Mediterranean or Southern European capitalisms. Greece can be considered a prime example and the main characteristics of its business system are analyzed in the discussion that follows.

The Greek Case

The Greek Business Environment

The literature on comparative capitalism argues that distinct varieties of capitalism or business systems, characterized by systemically specific institutional frameworks persist despite the globalization pressures. These institutional factors – and associated sets of practices are complementary to each other and affect the way managerial practices are applied in various capitalisms. In this respect the aim of this section is twofold. Firstly, to identify the general characteristics of the Greek national business system (NBS) as these can provide the framework for understanding the organizational behavior of Greek firms and secondly, to examine education and training in Greece as part of its institutional complementarities.

Greece is not close either to the continental European or the Liberal market model. Along with other Mediterranean countries, it has obvious differences with liberal economies (McMenamin, 2003) and has been characterized as one of the “latecomers” compared to other continental countries (Ferrera, 1996). Various surveys have indicated commonalities between countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Either called Mediterranean or South European Capitalisms (Georgen et al, 2007; Amable, 2003), or Mixed Market Economies (Molina and Rhodes, 2006), or State Capitalist Economies (Schmidt, 2002) these countries share commonalities that arise from their shared political history and are expressed in terms of economic structures, managerial practices, and other institutional features such as education and training.

Nevertheless, apart from Greece’s commonalities with Mediterranean countries, it is not certain whether the Greek case is a characteristic example of the Mediterranean capitalism as its economic performance lags behind countries like Italy and Spain and numerous differences between Greece and other Mediterranean countries have been identified, especially in terms of economic structure.

The Greek business environment consists of various characteristics that are found in different NBSs (Psychogios and Wilkinson, 2007) and has been affected by various political and environmental factors (Holman, 2001). The Greek state scores low according to international measures of government effectiveness, and is not highly capable in delivering public goods. The costly government administration, the large size of the black economy, and the high levels of corruption and tax evasion are some of the reasons that hinder Greece’s international competitiveness (Featherstone, 2009).

The Greek business environment is characterized by dualism. The dualism of the Greek economy refers to the fact that it consists of few large businesses and many family owned SMEs (Mihail and Elefterie, 2006). This has the following implication: although subsidiaries of multinationals use managerial tools and techniques similar to their rivals abroad, the knowledge and usage of these techniques by family owned SMEs that are the majority in the Greek business system, are quite limited (Makridakis et al, 1997). Greece also faces an “entrepreneurial deficit”. During the last fifteen years the number of new firms created annually remained stable while the number of firms that interrupted their operations increased dramatically (Papayannakis et al, 2008).

All the above characteristics shape Greece's managerial practices. Overall, managerial culture in Greece is traditionally based on paternalism with low levels of decentralization and high levels of formalization (Joiner, 2000). Formalization is more evident in SMEs compared to large firms (Spanos et al, 2001). Specialization is another important feature of the work culture in Greece since management techniques, tools and systems are highly dependent to the expert knowledge of the people involved (Psychogios and Wilkinson, 2007).

Nevertheless, the forces of competition have urged Greek SMEs to start shaping formal managerial layers staffed with professional managers and move towards more professional rather than paternalistic management styles which are more close to the Western type management style (Mihail and Elefterie, 2006; Spanos et al, 2001). SMEs realize that they need to move away from the authoritarian and paternalistic management style by including well-educated professionals in their management teams (Spanos et al, 2001).

Despite the recognition of management education's importance in the organization of work, research on this area is rather limited. More specifically the structure and the content of management education in Greece have not been extensively examined. Therefore it is important to examine how managerial theories and concepts are taught in Greek universities in order to further examine how these affect managerial practice.

Management Education in Greece

Despite their inherent structural differences in higher education, Mediterranean countries seem to follow similar Western models of education (Sultana, 2008). In particular, Mediterranean universities' trends towards privatization, entrepreneurship and massification reflect the situation in the northern and more economically developed economies. Universities in that region aim at establishing worldwide networks in various ways: they promote publications and attendance at conferences in order to strengthen the relationships with similar institutions world-wide (Sultana, 2008; Calleja, 2005). Overall, Mediterranean countries are found to be the main importers of transnational education in Europe (Van der Wende, 2001).

Managerial education has been affected by the general trend that exists in the higher educational sector of the Mediterranean towards modernization. Research has shown that although Universities in different countries of the Mediterranean are at different stages of development, they all seem to follow similar paths towards western structures and particularly Anglo-Saxon structures. Kipping et al (2004) have identified multiple "Americanizations of Management Education" in Mediterranean countries. They examined the interaction of American models of management education with France, Italy, Spain, and Turkey and found that -at least in terms of the content- American models influenced the educational systems of all four countries.

In Greece the demand for management education has increased considerably (Mihail and Elefterie, 2006). Managerial education in Greece started to gain popularity in the 1950's with the operation of Multinationals. At that time, the top managers selected for executive positions were either from abroad or had studied for an MBA abroad. Since these executives were paid high salaries compared to executives in traditional Greek companies, managers and students started to

study abroad for an MBA or took executive courses to improve their managerial skills (Makridakis et al, 1997).

Overall it seems that Greek Universities responded quite slowly to the increased demand for business studies. Until the early 1990s only one accredited MBA programme was offered by a public University despite management education's growing popularity (Mihail and Elefterie, 2006). Similarly, the first Master degree in the field of HRM offered by a Greek University was launched in 2002 (Galanaki and Papalexandris, 2005). This was probably the reason why there has been a considerable development in the number of external management development seminars offered to managers in the 1980's (Papalexandris, 1988).

Nowadays, management education in Greece is offered by Universities, Technical Universities, and other private educational institutions (Colleges). More specifically, there are eighteen (18) Universities and seventeen (17) Technical Universities that offer degrees in the general fields of Economics and Management. Business Administration in particular is offered both at the undergraduate and the postgraduate level. Undergraduate degrees in Business Administration are offered by eight (8) Universities and eight (8) Technical Universities, while postgraduate degrees are offered by six (6) Universities and three (3) Technical Universities that cooperate with Anglo-Saxon Universities (the University of Staffordshire in the UK and the University of Kentucky in the U.S). Private colleges that offer business studies collaborating with foreign (mainly UK and US) Universities are numerous. Nevertheless, only nine of them are members of the Hellenic Colleges' Association (HCA, 2009).

The management educational system in Greece is following a more general rather than specific orientation, at least in Public Universities (Papalexandris, 1992) and has been heavily influenced by western business school models (Savvas et al, 2001). Most managers' educational background is on general sciences rather than on specific management practices such as HRM (Papalexandris, 1992). According to 2006 data, 25 % of managers in Greece had an engineering background (Hellenic Centre for Investment, 2006). This has an impact on the way managers apply certain practices in organizations. For instance, Psychogios and Szamozi (2007) have suggested that HRM in Greece lacks sophistication and that one of the main reasons for that is the existence of an educational gap and limited training on HR issues.

The Greek government has probably realized that Greece's entrepreneurial deficit and its overall poor performance is partly attributed to the fact that the Greek productive system is considered inefficient in exploiting scientific and research outcomes (Papayannakis et al, 2008) and that "Greece has fallen behind in modernizing its educational institutions" (Makridakis et al, 1997p.382), thus indicating a knowledge gap.

For that reason, the Ministry of Education is promoting entrepreneurship education in Universities through the Operational Programme for Educational and Vocational Training "Entrepreneurship Programs in Higher Education". Their actions mainly involve the adoption of best practices of other European Universities (Papayannakis et al, 2008).

Despite some indications of foreign influence such as this programme, there is no strong evidence that the Greek management education system is following the Anglo-Saxon prototype. What needs to be

explored is whether management education in Greece is indeed acting as a driver of Anglo-Saxon management isomorphism. This can be evidenced by examining the structure and the content of management education programmes as well as the extent to which Anglo-Saxon educated managers apply Anglo-Saxon "best" practices.

The question is whether this adoption of best practices in management education is a trend in the Greek higher educational system and what are the implications of this. Considerations might be raised on whether management education should be structured as such due to the particularities of the Greek economy and especially that of dualism. In other words, there is the view that apart from conventional wisdom in business studies, the particularities of management practice in Greece necessitate the development of knowledge material that will be more suitable for the Greek reality.

Conclusions and Further Research

Despite differences in various national educational systems, there is an isomorphic tendency with the Anglo-Saxon type of management education due to various homogenising forces. Nevertheless, this paper argues that there is no strong evidence that this type of general and competitive education leads to the application of successful managerial practices in non-Anglo-Saxon business contexts. Rather, it seems that a successful combination of Anglo-Saxon expertise and local particularities can provide prospective managers with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the modern competitive environment.

Nevertheless, since the Anglo-Saxonization of management education seems to be more intense in countries that are not so highly developed economically, and since research on those economies in that field is limited, this paper is examining the Greek case as an example of Mediterranean capitalism. We conclude that the Greek despite Greece's poor economic performance, recent pressures mainly stemming from globalization, have emphasized the need of Greek organizations to move away from the traditional paternalistic management practices and this need has initiated a change towards a more strategic focus of managerial practices.

Despite the slow response of the Greek educational system to environmental pressures and reforms, the "knowledge gap" of managers has been identified and the role of managerial education in boosting Greek organizations has been emphasized. In this respect, there have been some efforts in modernizing management education by adopting best practices from other European Universities. Thus, there are indications of foreign influence in Greek management education.

Nevertheless, no research has been conducted regarding the actual level of Anglo-Saxon influence in Greek management education in order for us to conclude whether management education in Greece is indeed acting as a driver of Anglo-Saxon management isomorphism. Nor there is evidence on whether a shift towards liberal style management education will directly influence managerial practice and eventually successfully modernize the Greek business environment. For that reason, we need to remove the blinkers and put research forward by attempting to understand not only the extent to which management education in Greece is mainly affected by Anglo-Saxon prototypes, but also whether Anglo-Saxon educated managers in Greece are applying liberal style management practices and to what extent these can be considered effective in the Greek context.

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