

The Architecture of Management, Spirituality, and Religion (MSR)  
within the metascience of the Academy of Management (AOM)

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These pages will briefly outline some preliminary thoughts about the architecture of MSR as a future AOM Division within the Academy array of established and emerging research domains and methods. For the MSR / Europe session of September 16, 2020, I will proceed with a range of premises as a basis for discussion.

1.0: From its 1936 founding, the Academy of Management was devoted to two goals of legitimation. First, legitimation of management and business studies as a field of social science. Second, through the first goal, the Academy intended to legitimate representative democratic values as a form of political governance in the world – founding, initial emphasis was on those of the United States of America.

2.0: These legitimizing goals were embodied in editorial policies of the Academy journal editors, as a content review of their published reflective papers indicate. Over the succeeding decades, the journal approach focused on what can be characterized as a preference for quasi-experimental design structure and language. This development was supported by the professional migration of psychology scholars into the field of business studies in the 1950s – 1960s.

3.0: The long-term outcome has been an achievement of the first goal of the Academy, noted above: legitimation of research domain. By the 1960s, the Academy research method was dependent variable – independent variable focused, with the quasi-experimental design format that increasingly favored publication of quantitative analyses, particularly the multiple regression framework, within which the prospect of causal attribution could be statistically asserted.

4.0: However, lost in this decades long process was practitioner-scholar social activism, which characterized many of those involved in critical studies of early industrialization. Their method was not detached from personal and professional engagement with policy initiatives: Beatrice and Sydney Webb in the United Kingdom, John R. Commons in the United States, or Suehiro Izutaro in Japan.

5.0: By the late 1980s, professionals approaching management scholars in the U.S. made clear that something crucial was missing from management scholarship in terms of deeper values and concerns. These queries from professionals resulted in the steps taken by Academy academics to establish the Management, Spirituality, and Religion (MSR) Interest Group in 1990.

Coincident with this founding, these scholars also established the *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion*, along with an International Association of Management, Spirituality, and Religion.

6.0: Content analysis of MSR awarded research papers (1990 – 2015) indicate an early focus on individual spirituality in the workplace, with the slow, steady emergence of broader institutional level studies. Publication of research, which required different methods, all too often went to non-AOM journals.

7.0: Research methods development within MSR have reflected this trend. Reflection on ultimate human values and meanings for management and business studies from a combination of social teachings of religious tradition and spirituality has effectively compelled a return to the role of engaged scholarship for policy outcomes through criterion – predictor qualitative / quantitative forms of inquiry.

8.0: This MSR development finds resonance within other AOM constituencies. Sustainability research is, by its very nature, conservative in the best ecological use of the term. Criterion outcomes for care of the planet in triple-bottom line accounting (social, environmental, financial)

also reflect normative policy judgment assertions and required engaged, criterion – predictor empirical modelling.

9.0: Curiously, the annual AOM Presidential addresses have frequently reached out in visionary embrace of this emerging metascience of such an Academy of Management. Legitimation alone is no longer the main institutional goal. Instead, transformation of modern society itself has become the oft-stated task of the Academy of Management. (Toyoko Sato is conducting a critical discourse analysis of AOM Presidential addresses).

10.0: This developing metascience is characterized in Figure 1. There are two main axes, along with a third dimensional vector of authenticity in research quality.

10.1: The horizontal axis ranges between organizational/firm-specific studies on the left and markets on the right. The former represents the AOM founding and long-standing focus. The market analyses reflect economics studies as these relation to management inquiry. On the left, interest in quasi-experimental, dependent-independent method have some approximation to and legitimacy concerning quasi-experimental design.

10.2: The vertical parameters range from criterion-predictor modelling approaches well-known in educational psychology and degree-granting educational institutions. Given specified parameters (GRE, letters of recommendation, undergraduate grades and GPA), accepted students can be expected to achieve a degree given time and effort. At the macro- or societal level, a similar modelling effort can be conceived for outcomes such as sustainability, diversity, or authenticity in employment relations.

10.3: Yet another dimension of significance, which we might imagine on a third dimensional axis concerns the authenticity of the research endeavors. Given adequate attention, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility in judgement, the peer review process can support validity and reliability assessments of specific research efforts within this metascience.

Figure 1: Experimental / Quasi-experimental Design

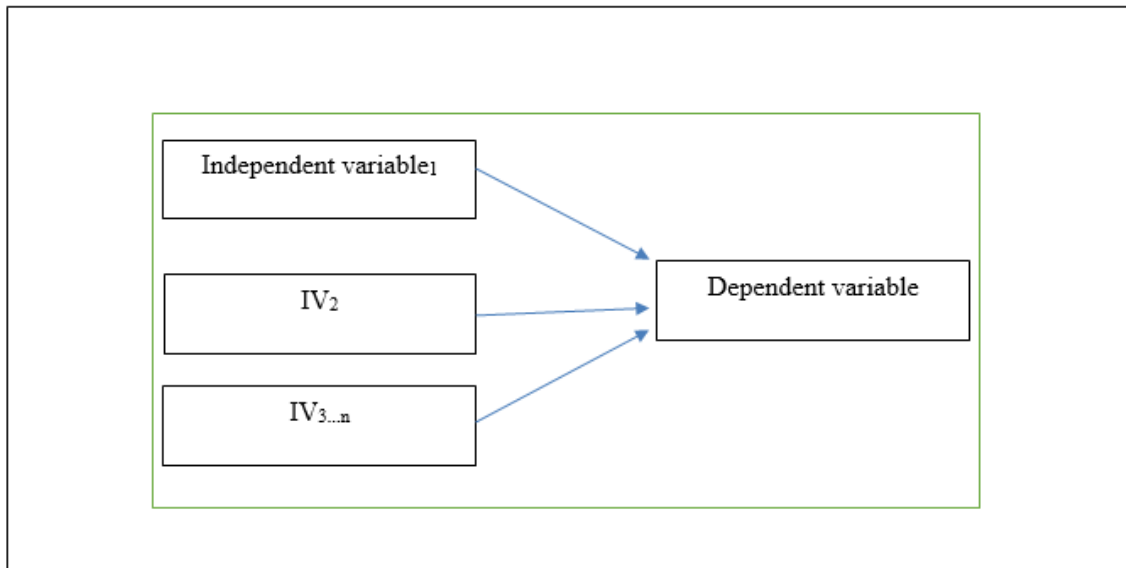
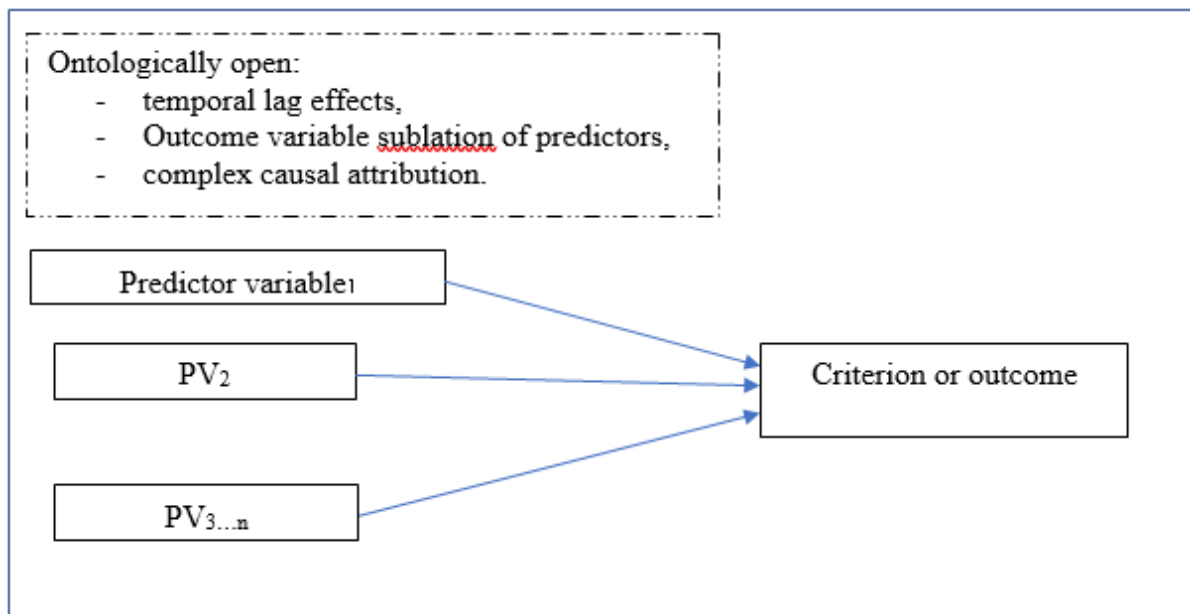
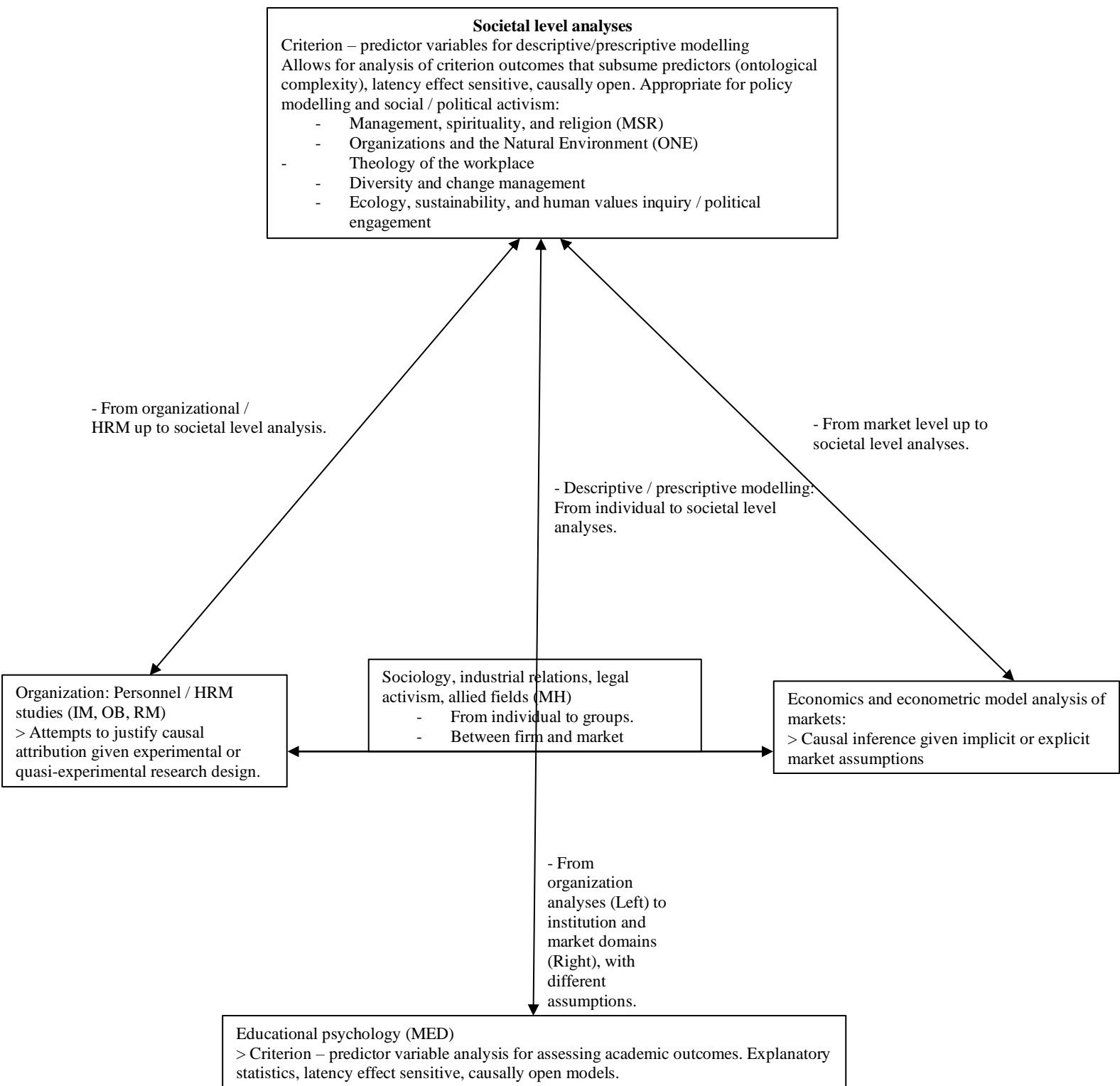


Figure 2: The Criterion – Predictor Explanatory Model Design



**Figure 3: The Academy of Management Meta-science of Domain and Method**



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