

Foreword

Among researchers in the business and management disciplines, there is some kind of a common understanding that research should provide models, concepts and solutions for practical problems. In other words: research is practice-oriented and, personally, I subscribe to this maxim. Still, sometimes, it is important to pause for a moment and reflect upon one's own activities.

The present thesis is one of those comparatively few pieces of research that do so by dealing with the scientific side of research and by asking a number of questions that target at the identification of the nature of a very recent subfield within business and management, namely Supply Chain Management. In particular, the author seeks to understand the processes that characterize the evolution of Supply Chain Management research throughout the past sixteen years and reflects upon avenues for future research - feeling that SCM research seems to have come to a crossroads.

The systematic reprocessing of Supply Chain Management literature and the methodologically sound approach are impressive and enable Julia Wolf to contribute a valuable component to scientific practice and debate in this area. Her work also illustrates that, in terms of philosophical underpinnings, research in Supply Chain Management is still at the very beginning and I hope that this thesis gives rise to more work of similar kind.

Today, I can look back with proud upon three years of inspiring work and discussions with Julia Wolf. I hope that she will demonstrate the same ambition and dedication in the future as she did throughout the time and in the scope of various different projects at the Supply Management Institute in order to further pursue and realize her personal objectives.

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