Reading list on 'Historical Approaches in Organizational Studies'

Management Learning resources

Alcadipani, R. (2017). [Reclaiming sociological reduction: Analysing the circulation of management education in the periphery](#). Management Learning, 48(5), 535-551.

Management knowledge and practices have been circulating worldwide for a long time, and business and management schools are central locations where management knowledge and practices have been produced. Few studies discuss how this circulation occurs in the periphery in general and how management education from the United States has circulated in the periphery in particular. Using historical research, this article aims to reclaim the notion of sociological reduction, a notion developed by Brazilian scholar in the 1950s, to make sense of how US management education was implemented in a Brazilian management school. By doing so, this article contributes to the analysis of the spread of US management education grounded in a postcolonial approach and addresses calls for analysing epistemologies from the periphery.

Wanderley, S., & Barros, A. (2020). [The Alliance for Progress, modernization theory, and the history of management education: The case of CEPAL in Brazil](#). Management Learning, 51(1), 55–72.

We investigate the case of the Economic Commission for Latin America in Brazil to discuss how modernization theory was mobilized to influence management education. The theories formulated by the Economic Commission for Latin America formed the basis of the courses it offered on development administration and management and the public administration schools it helped create. The theories from the Economic Commission for Latin America were contrary to US interests and to the modernization theory tenets developed by US scholars. The Alliance for Progress, launched in 1961 by US President J.F. Kennedy, was a project informed by modernization theory aimed to foster development in Latin America, and to contain the spread of Communism after the Cuban Revolution. The Alliance for Progress mobilized a network of US-controlled institutions that invested in management education and in an interpretation of development administration and management based on modernization theory that confronted the Economic Commission for Latin America. We make use of Burke's Pentad to articulate the interactions among (asymmetrical) players at different levels of analysis and along the historical period investigated. We treat science as literature, and we present our analysis in a dramatistic narrative to promote reflexive management learning. We show that US-led investment in management education increased considerably after the launch of the Alliance for Progress, and that it lasted throughout the 1960s.

Fournier, V. (2006). [Breaking from the weight of the eternal present: Teaching organizational difference](#). Management Learning, 37(3), 295-311.

This article reflects on an attempt to encourage students to imagine alternative forms of organizing, and on the ultimate failure of this pedagogical experiment. It explores students' reluctance to take organizational difference seriously in terms symptomatic of a broader inertia in social sciences that severs 'difference' from the realm of possibility, reducing difference to degrees of capitalist practices and the future to an extension of the present. Drawing on the work of Gibson-Graham, it argues that making alternative organizing conceivable requires challenging the capitalocentric reading of the economy, and developing a vocabulary of economic differences. It suggests that to address the common charge that alternatives will not be able to withstand the 'tide of history', we also need to work on conceptions of time and history that open the future to the possibility of difference. It draws on Foucault's genealogy to 'break history' and insert points of rupture at which 'new beginnings' can be imagined.

Laurell, C., Sandström, C., Eriksson, K., & Nykvist, R. (2020). [Digitalization and the future of Management Learning: New technology as an enabler of historical, practice-oriented, and critical perspectives in management research and learning](#). Management Learning, 51(1), 9–108.

How are historical, practice-oriented, and critical research perspectives in management affected by digitalization? In this article, we describe and discuss how two digital research approaches can be applied and how they may influence the future directions of management scholarship and education: Social Media Analytics and digital archives. Our empirical illustrations suggest that digitalization generates productivity improvements for scholars, making it possible to undertake research that was previously too laborious. It also enables researchers to pay closer attention to detail while still being able to abstract and generalize. We therefore argue that digitalization contributes to a historical turn in management, that practice-oriented research can be conducted with less effort and improved quality and that micro-level data in the form of digital archives and online contents make it easier to adopt critical perspectives.

Pio, E., & Syed, J. (2020). [Stelae from ancient India: Pondering anew through historical empathy for diversity](#). Management Learning, 51(1), 109-129.

Diversity management is generally considered to be rooted in activism, legislation and scholarship in Europe and North America. In this article, we draw on the notion of historical empathy to analyse and highlight an Eastern legacy, specifically Aśokan (273–232 BC) stelae, for management learning on diversity. Thus, we encourage pondering anew on history based on Aśokan teachings in ancient India, via dhamma (affective connection) and governance (perspective taking). We contribute to an emerging scholarship which uses history for

management learning, and we do this through elaborating on the concept of historical empathy. Moreover, we reveal how an Eastern legacy may enable the (re)construction of the present in contemporary organisations which exist in the interstices of history, politics, gender and diversity. Through our analysis, we develop a matrix, which integrates historical empathy with dhamma, governance and historical contextualisation to provide implications for learning in the field of diversity.

Gearty, M. R., Bradbury-Huang, H., & Reason, P. (2015). [Learning history in an open system: Creating histories for sustainable futures](#). Management Learning, 46(1), 44-66.
What kind of learning is required to bring us towards a more sustainable future? We argue that when behaviourally and technically complex issues intertwine, a collaborative social learning process that engages diverse actors in deep systems change is necessary. The learning required includes but overtakes debate, bringing organisations, individuals and communities into cycles of experiential, cumulative, ad hoc and opportunistic, yet systematic, learning. Current conceptualisations and approaches to learning have not been framed with the requisite level of integrated complexity given our sustainability challenges. This article introduces the action research approach of 'learning history in an open system' in the service of such learning. Updating the heretofore single-project focussed learning history, we present recent methodological developments for its use in open systems that support a joining up of projects and sites of endeavour to support deeper and accumulating systems' learning. We explore the links to learning literature drawing on developments in aesthetics and arts-based action research to suggest our approach is one useful way of responding to the more general challenge of scale that concerns action researchers.

Tennent, K. D., Gillett, A. G., & Foster, W. M. (2020). [Developing historical consciousness in management learners](#). Management Learning, 51(1), 73–88.
This article argues and advocates strategies for the development of historical consciousness to stimulate both first- and second-order critical reflexivity in management students with the goal of creating critical management learners. The historic turn in management and organizational studies has demonstrated that history is not the same as the past. This understanding has had implications for many areas of investigation but has not been felt as significantly as it might be in management learning and education. To make our argument, we discuss how archives can be used to stimulate the process of historical consciousness in management learners and we provide an illustrative example of how this can be done, together with a checklist to aid instructors in facilitating student use of archival material.

Talking About Organizations Podcast resources

Episode 56: Cooperative Advantage – Charles Clinton Spaulding

In this episode, we acknowledge the extraordinary contributions of Charles Clinton Spaulding, an important management thought leader who, like many African-Americans prior to the U.S. civil rights movement, has been sadly overlooked in the management canon. From 1923 until 1952, Spaulding served as the President of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, the largest company in the U.S. owned exclusively by African-Americans, with over $40 million in assets at the time of his death. His ideas are also distinctive as they reflect some form of 'African management' principles, the most salient being the emphasis on cooperation, echoing the African idea on cooperation (Ubuntu) and doing business also for the good of communities. The latter was important as African-Americans were/are a particularly vulnerable and discriminated minority. Spaulding also evoked a religious or spiritual dimension in his work, and some of his practices mirrored those exercised in African-American churches. Thus, one can attribute to him the practice of workplace spirituality before this concept was adopted in contemporary works. Spaulding's work also displayed social entrepreneurship, which echoes the work of contemporary researchers like Dr. Nevena Radoynovska on how entrepreneurship can play a vital role in vulnerable populations.

Episode 43: Centralization/Decentralization Debate – The Federalist Papers

For this episode, we decided to do something very different! A debate about centralization vs. decentralization in organizations using a very important historical document as our lens. The theme for the debate, and the debate questions are kindly provided by Todd Bridgman and Stephen Cummings, authors of The New History of Management. The Federalist Papers was a series of writings from American history leading up to its current Constitution, completed in 1787. Formed as thirteen separate colonies, this newly independent nation tried to form a central government that granted maximum autonomy to the States to prevent the emergence of an American monarchy. It quickly failed as the central government was left too weak to perform its basic duties and the nation risked falling apart. Prominent writers like Alexander Hamilton and James Madison developed a series of papers arguing for a new Constitution with a much stronger central government. Two of them – Federalist #9 by Hamilton and Federalist #10 by Madison – present cogent arguments in favor of centralization. Meanwhile, the so-called Anti-Federalists continued to press for States' rights and individual liberties.

Episode [37: Socrates on Management](#) – Oeconomicus by Xenophon

In a complete departure from the previous episode, where we tackled a contemporary work, Episode 37 takes us to ancient Greece and one of the great practical philosophers, Xenophon (pronounced ZEN-uh-phun). His Oeconomicus may have been one of his "minor" works in the world of philosophy, but it is a fascinating work for those interested in management and organizational studies. We welcome special guest Prof. Peter Adamson from the LMU in Munich and host and founder of the great podcast series History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps. Peter begins this episode with a discussion about where this work fits in the historical context of Greek philosophy. In the discussion, the podcasters found many parallels to modern organizational behavior despite the obvious differences in context and artifacts of ancient Greek culture. We discuss several topics: What does it mean to be a leader or manager then and now? What did the Greeks value in organization, and how does that compare to today? What can we learn from better understanding how this important ancient society functioned?

Episode [53: Taylorism in Motion](#) — Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times

Routinely ranked as one of the greatest movies of all time, Charlie Chaplin's 1936 film "Modern Times" balances great physical comedy with powerful social commentary. Playing his famed "Tramp" role for the final time, Chaplin portrayed a hapless Worker on an assembly line who is tormented both by supervisors and the work itself. After being subjected to a humiliating experiment intended to improve the line's efficiency, the Worker runs through a series of rotating jobs, stints in jail, and other misadventures as he tries to find his purpose in life. As we viewed the film, our initial thoughts were about how Taylorism is portrayed and critiqued through the scenes at the factory and the social turmoil going on outside. But the film actually touches on many of the themes of this podcast. Referenced throughout the episode were Taylor (Episode 1), Maslow (Episode 3), Max Weber's Bureaucracy (Episode 6), The Hawthorne Studies (Episode 9), Banana Time (Episode 13), Suchman's Human-Computer Interactions (Episode 22), the Gig Economy (Episodes 18, 36 & 40), Socialization a la Van Maanen (Episode 38), the Garbage Can Model of Decisionmaking (Episode 39), and Kunda's Study of Tech Culture (Episode 49).

Episode [10: Twelve Angry Men](#) (1957) – Directed by Sidney Lumet

12 Angry Men, directed by Sidney Lumet, is one of the major milestones of film history. It dates back to 1957 and tells the story of a jury, the twelve angry men of the title, and how they decide on the innocence or guilt of a young boy accused of murder. The entire film takes place in the jury room, with the exception of a few scenes, namely those in the courthouse and in the bathroom. *12 Angry Men* is interesting for organizational theory for the many themes which are

intertwined with each other within the story and the unfolding of the discussion. Among these, first of all, there is a general topic of decision making and consensus building with regard to the ways in which the jury's final verdict is reached. During the discussion, there are different opportunities in which aspects related to leadership emerge within the group. Interestingly, when referring to the jurors' and the witnesses' sense of responsibility, we can relate to topics of motivation. Finally, there are occasions for reflections on the validity of evidence, on the construction of knowledge and on the notion of reasonable doubt.