

FROM THE EDITORS

NEW TIMES, NEW HISTORIES OF THE BUSINESS SCHOOL

The history of management isn't what it used to be. It used to be settled, neatly contained within a box. That box was often called "Chapter 2" in management textbooks and it formed a hermetic pair with Chapter 1, which defined what management was (Cummings & Bridgman, 2016; Jacques & Durepos, 2015). Chapter 1 would define management's aims and purpose. Chapter 2 would outline a unitary history that plotted the "evolution" of this purpose—and it conveyed the idea that the business school taught management as a collection of subjects built upon economics and other sciences like psychology and mathematics. This history was part of any management student's induction (or inculcation). It provided a solid foundation, but a limited palate.

That monochrome palate was crisp, clear, and concise—and also pale, male, and increasingly stale. Management's history confirmed that management's fundamental "good" was economic efficiency, that the subject emerged from the modern industrial and engineering revolutions in the Western world, and that its founders were white men (Cummings, Bridgman, Hassard, & Rowlinson, 2017).

A range of approaches may be grouped into what has been called the "historic turn" in management and business studies (Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014). Two prominent ones have been labeled the "uses of history" literature, which, in a nutshell, examines how the development and promotion of certain historical narratives can be a strategic resource to maintain the status quo or to set a new direction (Cailluet, Gorge, & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2018; Cappelen & Pedersen, 2021; Hatch & Schultz, 2017; Lubinski, 2018; Lubinski & Wadhwani, 2020; Paludi, Helms Mills, & Mills, 2021; Suddaby, Foster, & Quinn Trank, 2010); and "new or anti-histories of management," which seek to broaden the view of what should be included in management's history (Cooke, 1999, 2003; Cummings et al., 2017; Durepos & Mills, 2018; Mills & Novicevic, 2019; Prieto & Phipps, 2019; Rowlinson & Hassard, 1993; Spender, 2016). Both approaches help us to see that history is not merely an objective representation of the facts of

the past, but also a tool that can be used—for better or for worse.

This understanding that history is not inert but malleable and useful is now challenging our field's foundations and encouraging management educators to question the uses that the history of management has served. Maybe Adam Smith's point wasn't that the efficient division of labor within a free-market economy gives rise to management (Cummings & Bridgman, 2020; Tribe, 1999). Maybe Frederick Taylor really was not the founding father of management science: Mary Parker Follett or Henri Fayol may have better claims (Calás & Smircich, 2021; O'Connor, 2012; Parker & Ritson, 2011). That the human relations movement was a lightness after the darkness of Taylorism seems uncertain now (Hassard, 2012; Wrege, 1986). Surely, today, we should consider environmental and social goods as important as economic goods as outputs of the firm and guiding principles for business education (Elkington, 1994)? And what about the "hidden figures" from communities whose contributions didn't fit the little monochrome box (Nkomo, 2011; Prieto & Phipps, 2019)?

As histories of management are being countered, found, and discovered, we turn our gaze in this special issue to business schools—the institutions where many of the subjects of new and conventional histories were formulated and are still used and taught. Conventional histories of business schools lead us to believe that they sprang Zeus-born from the University of Pennsylvania, following a major donation from Joseph Wharton in 1881 (Sass, 1982), and that everything important happened from the 1950s to the 1980s, as U.S. business schools adopted the recommendations of the Ford and Carnegie studies published in the late 1950s. This was a process of consolidation around one agreed-upon form focused on a common core of established subjects like economics and psychology (Gordon & Howell, 1959; McLaren, 2019; Pierson, 1959). Business schools outside of America then sought to replicate or adapt this form in their own settings, bringing with them the associated

trappings of elitism and striving for high status (Engwall, 2004; Kieser, 2004; Kipping, Üsdiken, & Puig, 2004; Üsdiken, 2004). The promotion of this form made Wharton a useful choice as “the first business school”—it was what those promoting business schools as elite institutions focused on economics and finance and wealth creation wanted a business school to be.

The Ford and Carnegie reports, and subsequent studies that built upon them (Calás & Smircich, 1990; Porter & McKibbin, 1988), were well thought out and put together. But that may have been the last time history was seriously delved into as a guide to what the form of business schools should be. This special issue seeks to think again about the history and future of the business school and reflect how our community is changing.

The thinking about what a business school should be that emerged in the middle of the 20th century reflected “the Academy” community at the time. In 1961, there were 330 members in the Academy of Management, and, while there is no gender or geographical breakdown of this number, it was likely not far removed from the sample of authors that published in the first volume of *Academy of Management Journal* in 1958. All the authors of the articles in that first year were male and based at U.S. universities. By 1981, total membership was 5,059; and, by 1990, the first time that residence data were recorded, the total was 8,216, with 7,141 U.S. based and 1,075 non-U.S. At the time of writing (June 11, 2021), there are 17,366 members, and more are based outside the United States (9,092) than within (8,274). A total of 111 countries are represented.¹

Perhaps the most notable thing about the authors in this special issue, as a collective, is their diversity. We have contributions from almost all the continents, female and male authors, and a balance of senior and early career scholars. The table of contents is literally an A–Z: from Amdam to Zoogah. While it was not a criterion that we applied when selecting the contributions for this special issue, we are delighted that the diversity of the authors reflects the diversity in the Academy of Management in 2021.

INTRODUCING THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

The authors of this special issue engage in historical thinking in two different ways. They reflect on history as a subject of business education (history in business education) and they critically review and expand on the historiography of business education (history of business education). Some of the articles see an inherent connection between both, and show how excluding history and the humanities more broadly from business education severely impacted the history of business education and marked an end of a “historical consciousness” in business schools.

Rolv Petter Amdam and Allison Elias lead off with their article “Business Schools and the Role of the Executives’ Wives” (Amdam & Elias, 2021). They skillfully depict the contrast between the status of men—the elites—in their U.S. executive business education programs, and their wives—the non-elites—who were invited to attend the final week of programs to learn how to best support their husbands in being successful executives. This may seem like ancient history to our younger readers, but older ones will recall the trope, its symbolism and effects—and perhaps even its vestiges.

Addressing race and societal welfare, while showing us a short-lived but successful form of business education outside of the dominant capitalist paradigm, Leon Prieto, Simone Phipps, Neil Stott, and Lilia Guigni provide a fascinating account of the history of experiments with cooperative economics and experiential business teaching at Bluefield Colored Institute. Their thought-provoking article is titled “Teaching (Cooperative) Business: The ‘Bluefield Experiment’ and the Future of Black Business Schools” (Prieto, Phipps, Guigni, & Stott, 2021).

Like the cooperative forms of business highlighted by Prieto et al. (2021), entrepreneurship education has been sidelined from mainstream business education, particularly when entrepreneurship is seen as a way to help the collective, rather than the individual. R. Daniel Wadhvani and Christoph Viebig explore the social imaginaries of entrepreneurship education in Germany and the United States over multiple periods in their article “Social Imaginaries of Entrepreneurship Education: The United States and Germany, 1800–2020.” These authors explore history to help see a different future for entrepreneurship education and business schools.

Heading to the Global South, Sergio Wanderley, Rafael Alcadipani, and Amon Barros bring us to

¹ Thanks to the team at AOM Headquarters for accessing these statistics. Their directory can now provide a current representation of AOM’s total membership as well as division/interest group and country breakdowns: <https://account.aom.org/members/>.

Brazil, with their article “Re-Centering the Global South in the Making of Business School Histories: Dependency Ambiguity in Action.” The United States is still involved, but in a peripheral way, as we learn how Brazil used U.S. resources to develop business education that subverted American expectations and supported Brazil in overcoming dependency on the Global North.

Baniyelme Zoogah provides an invaluable introduction to African autochthonous knowledge and ways of learning in his article “Historicizing Management and Organization Education in Africa.” He provides a compelling argument for a reconfiguration of management education based on greater societal embeddedness and a circular learning structure that integrates formal, non-formal, and informal education.

The high status of research in business schools has led to history ignoring those institutions that focus on the learner. In his essay, “Business Education in the U.K. Polytechnic Tradition: Uncovering Alternative Approaches through Historical Investigation,” Alistair Mutch explores the history of the UK polytechnics—business schools that were traditionally “research informed” instead of striving and straining to be “research led.” He makes a convincing case for looking to British polytechnics as alternative models of business education today.

In her moving essay, Renee Rottner calls on us to bring our lived experiences into our business school teaching and research. “Feeling Left Out: Editing Business School History and Extending Lyrical Sociology” outlines the underutilized power of our “lyrical” mode, “an immediate, interior, intense description of a lived experience” that we can all use to pull our audience close enough to experience the phenomenon observed. Lyrics offer us a new way to tap into our history, imaginations, and experiences, which can engage our audiences and inspire new insights for our future.

As editors of this special issue, we invited contributions from leaders in our field and/or writers that can help broaden the impact of the issue through their reach to wider communities and representatives of voices that might often be under-represented in a forum such as this. The four Exemplary Contributions to the issue, which are described below, cover many bases.

In their quest for legitimacy within the academy and industry, business schools have claimed management is a “profession” and business schools as “professional schools” at many levels. In

“Professional School Obsession: An Enduring Yet Shifting Rhetoric by Business Schools,” Behlul Üsdiken, Matthias Kipping, and Lars Engwall urge an end to developing this idealized model of a professional business school and instead move forward by exploring *why* such ideals exist and *whose* interests they serve.

Andre Spicer, Zahria Jaser, and Caroline Wiertz give us hope for the future by digging into the past and surfacing a plurality of business schools beyond the dominant neo-liberal institution in “The Future of the Business School: Finding Hope in Alternative Pasts.” They explore five early models of British business education and encourage us to use them as sources of institutional innovation to meet today’s new challenges.

In “Reckoning with Slavery: How Revisiting Management’s Uncomfortable Past Can Help Us Create Better Futures,” Caitlin Rosenthal shows us the critical importance of including failures, shortcomings, and cautionary tales in business history, particularly in business classrooms. The influence of slavery in management studies is only now starting to be acknowledged, and it is rarely brought into our class discussions. Rosenthal shows us how slave owners used highly detailed and meticulous spreadsheets/dashboards for tracking their slaves while ignoring wellbeing, and she draws insightful parallels to today’s intense focus on big data.

Mary Beth Doucette, Joe Gladstone, and Teddy Carter complete the special issue’s cycle by bringing us back to a more connected past. They blend personal narrative and conversational writing methods in a discussion about the absence of Indigenous Ways of Knowing from management theory and business education. In *Indigenous Conversational Approaches to History and Business Education*, Gladstone reflects on 20 years of bringing Indigenous peoples and perspectives into the business school, while Carter and Doucette share a conversation showing what centering Indigenous perspectives at the heart of history and business education could mean for our futures.

Rounding out the special issue are our Resource Reviews. These are always a popular and useful feature of AMLE and this issue is no exception. François Bastien and Damian O’Doherty review new books by Steve Conn and by Leon Prieto and Simone Phipps, while Chinmay Tumbhe takes a deep dive into the extremely valuable resources of the Indian Institute of Management archives at Ahmedabad.

TURN AND FACE THE STRANGE: FROM NEW HISTORIES TO FUTURE CHANGES

If [the business school] continues to be associated with a privileged group holding itself apart from the social body that gives it life, and if society continues to associate these words with wealth accumulation for the few, then other names and places must be found [for business education]. (O'Connor, 2016: 46)

At the core of historical approaches is an acceptance of, or even surrender to, the “strangeness” of the past(s) explored. As Richard White (1998: 13) put it, “Any good history begins in strangeness. The past should not be comfortable. The past should not be a familiar echo of the present”; rather, it helps us see the present in a new light. Like Frankenstein’s monster, history challenges our identity narrative, our image of ourselves.

While we would not want to compare our contributors to Dr. Frankenstein (!), we do hope that readers find their views of what a business school can and should be unsettling and that they cast light on new possibilities. That our history may be changing can be unnerving, as established norms and foundations that we rely upon start to shift. But, while many of us have done well and have become settled with our institutions just as they are, many others have not. The threat posed by questioning and undoing history is also an opportunity for change, and we believe that change is needed if business schools are going to play a significant role in fixing the complex problems that the world is now dealing with. As Rakesh Khurana and J.-C. Spender tell us, “[w]e might do well to re-examine what we are doing and show the executive judgment and courage necessary to implement radical change” (2012: 636).

One comfort and resource that history can provide in this regard is that it often reveals that the strange has been faced before and substantive change has been considered and promoted in earlier times. Stories of the past along these lines can inspire us to be brave and bold. For example, back before the history of management was settled, and large corporations and laissez faire economics were running rampant, serious people faced the future of what management as a profession and business schools should be and came up with strange and exciting ideas.

In 1912, at a commencement speech at Brown University, future Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis (1914) urged students to see business management as a profession rather than a technical subject, and an excellent career choice because of this. Brandeis (1911: 4), who invented and published the first book

on scientific management (which he defined as a “new philosophy that conceives of conservation as the central motive in the conduct of industry”) and was considered the inventor of management as a subject before he was subbed out for Frederick Taylor (Cummings & Bridgman, 2021), explained himself to the Brown students thus:

The peculiar characteristics of a profession as distinguished from other occupations, I take to be these: *First*. A profession is an occupation for which the necessary preliminary training is intellectual in character, involving knowledge and to some extent learning, as distinguished from mere skill. *Second*. It is an occupation which is pursued largely for others and not merely for one’s self. *Third*. It is an occupation in which the amount of financial return is not the accepted measure of success. Is not each of these characteristics found today in business worthily pursued? (Brandeis, 1914: 1)²

Is this what students at business schools think today? Could it be? Should it be? We believe that these questions, and indeed the kind of questions that the new histories in this special issue provoke, encourage us to think about the “why” of the business school rather than just what business schools should be doing. Indeed, whereas the formation of business schools in the 20th century was generally focused on *what* business schools should be teaching and *how* to enable them to be seen as high-status institutions, we argue that we should now seek to drive changes to the form of the business school by asking “why,” “who,” and “which” questions.

For example, what is the *why*—or the purpose—of a business school? If it is not the amount of financial return that is the accepted measure of success, as Brandeis suggested, what else could it be? *Who* does the business school serve: a particular elite, or a wider group, or society and the environment more broadly? *Who* are the students who will graduate from these institutions? We inherited a 19th-century theory of the firm as an efficiency-seeking administrative apparatus, in the 20th century adapted by human relations ideas. But *which* theories of the firm should we teach now that entrepreneurship, disruption, and innovation dominate our economy?

These are not new questions, as Brandeis’s words illustrate. Moreover, while the main “take-away” from the Ford and Carnegie reports and what came to be called the “new look” of business schools as

² Brandeis’ speech is available to read here: <https://louisville.edu/law/library/special-collections/the-louis-d.-brandeis-collection/business-a-profession-chapter-1>

they took shape in the last half of the 20th century (Schlossman, Sedlak, & Weschler, 1998) became how to organize the business school curriculum and increase its status in the wider world of academia, these reports did express broader aims. The Ford Foundation's postwar agenda was to "support scientific activities designed to increase knowledge of factors which influence or determine human conduct, and to extend such knowledge for the maximum benefit of individuals and of society." The aim was not knowledge about advancing economic efficiency per se but "knowledge which promises at some point to serve human needs" (Augier, March, & Ni Sullivan, 2005: 90).

In an article entitled "Notes on the Evolution of a Research Community," Augier et al. (2005: 265) questioned the established form of the business school as an institution increasingly driven by great wealth accumulation and an overriding value of self-interest, even greed: "As management became more professional by virtue of its links with a research community it simultaneously became less professional by virtue of being not well embedded in an ethical standards community enforcing a set of ethical rules other than the pursuit of self-interest." They went on to state that "discussion of the role of management ... in the creating of a better world has been made largely irrelevant, as has the role of the business school in improving society" (275). The "market bases" of business school education and research are contradictory with "the social good" and "the public interest" (Augier et al., 2005: 309).

So, there is plenty of inspiration for historically informed questioning and change in the annals of management and business school history as to the "why" of what we do: Louis Brandeis, Mary Parker Follett, and Augier, March, and Sullivan all saw a "why" for the business school and management as a profession that was different from economic goods and individual wealth accumulation. As we know, their questioning did not result in major change. But what is historically different now, in 2021, which may mean that embracing the strange really does drive change, is that the make-up of our present community is more diverse than ever: the amount of strange and the mass for change is more widely distributed.

Augier et al. (2005: 93), in their discussion of how a new type of management research community and business school could take hold, concluded that "the development of almost any scholarly community will involve both creating a history and finding a home." The contributions in this special issue go a long way toward creating a new history. It is up to all of us to

determine what kind of home a business school that reflects our new community, and is inspired by a changing history, could and should look like.

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