

# A NEW HISTORY OF MANAGEMENT

Stephen Cummings, Todd Bridgman,  
John Hassard and Michael Rowlinson





Concepts of 'good management' are generally derived from what is assumed to be a fundamental need to increase efficiency. But this approach is based on a specific and limited view of management's past. *A New History of Management* disputes these foundations and highlights alternative conceptions of good management focussed on ethical aims, sustainability and new views of good practice.

**'This book settles the matter once and for all: sustainability and social responsibility are not fads but the very heart of what management is about. The authors have done a monumental service by restoring this vision to its central place and showing us how to achieve it.'**

**Ellen S. O'Connor**, Institute for Leadership Studies, Dominican University of California, USA

**'This marvellous book, thoughtful and constructively critical, does a great service to the field in seeking to retell management history by exploring the development of management theories afresh. If we want to imagine possibilities for the future, we must review the past.'**

**Haridimos Tsoukas**, University of Warwick, UK

**'This brilliant, ambitious book more than lives up to its promise. By revisiting the history of management theory, it uncovers surprising ideological underpinnings and provides a roadmap to rethink management's origins, traditions and horizons.'**

**Raza Mir**, William Patterson University, USA

**'Michel Foucault argued that curiosity, innovation in thinking and a refusal to accept the self-evident were objectives to which scholars should aspire. *A New History of Management* attains these heights. To read the book as a counter-history to management's woeful attempts to understand itself and its role is an invitation to "think differently". Perhaps, it can also persuade us to act differently too.'**

**Gibson Burrell**, Universities of Leicester and Manchester

Cover illustration: 'Bethlehem Steel Works',  
by Brendon Palmer [www.brendonpalmer.com](http://www.brendonpalmer.com)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS  
[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

ISBN 978-1-316-50290-7



Cummings, Bridgman, Hassard and Rowlinson

# NEW HISTORIES OF MANAGEMENT

CAMBRIDGE

# A New History of Management

STEPHEN CUMMINGS

*Victoria University of Wellington*

TODD BRIDGMAN

*Victoria University of Wellington*

JOHN HASSARD

*University of Manchester*

MICHAEL ROWLINSON

*University of Exeter*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



# CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India  
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107138148](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107138148)

DOI: 10.1017/9781316481202

© Stephen Cummings, Todd Bridgman, John Hassard and Michael Rowlinson 2017

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Cummings, Stephen, author. | Bridgman, Todd, author.

Title: A new history of management / Stephen Cummings, Victoria University of Wellington, Todd Bridgman, Victoria University of Wellington, John Hassard, University of Manchester, Michael Rowlinson, University of Exeter.

Description: New York : Cambridge University Press, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017012133 | ISBN 9781107138148 (hardback) | ISBN 9781316502907 (paperback)

Subjects: LCSH: Management – History. | Organizational behavior. | BISAC: BUSINESS & ECONOMICS / Organizational Behavior.

Classification: LCC HD30.5 .C86 2017 | DDC 658.009–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017012133>

ISBN 978-1-107-13814-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-316-50290-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

---

Every effort has been made to trace the owners of copyright material included in this book. The publishers would be grateful for any omissions brought to their notice for acknowledgement in future editions of the book.

## A New History of Management

Concepts of 'good management' are generally derived from what is assumed to be a fundamental need to increase efficiency. But this approach is based on a specific and limited view of management's past. *A New History of Management* disputes these foundations. By reassessing conventional perspectives on the development of management theories and providing a critical outline of present-day management, it highlights alternative conceptions of good management focussed on ethical aims, sustainability and new views of good practice. This new history provides a platform from which scholars and reflective practitioners can develop alternative approaches for managing and organizing in the twenty-first century.

STEPHEN CUMMINGS is Professor of Management at Victoria University of Wellington. His previous books include *Recreating Strategy* (2002), *Images of Strategy* (2003), *Creative Strategy* (2010), *Handbook of Management and Creativity* (2014) and *Strategy Builder* (2015). Stephen is an Academic Fellow of the International Council of Management Consulting Institutes and Chair Elect of the Academy of Management's Critical Management Studies division.

TODD BRIDGMAN is Senior Lecturer in Management at Victoria University of Wellington, having previously held research fellowships at Judge Business School and Wolfson College, University of Cambridge. He co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies* (2009) and is currently co-editor-in-chief of *Management Learning*.

JOHN HASSARD (MBS) is Professor of Organizational Analysis at the University of Manchester. He has written several books, including *Sociology and Organization Theory* (2003) and *Managing in the*

*Modern Corporation* (2009) (both Cambridge University Press), as well as journal articles for leading business research journals such as *Academy of Management Review* and *Industrial Relations*.

MICHAEL ROWLINSON is Professor of Management and Organizational History at the University of Exeter. He co-founded the journal *Management & Organizational History* in 2006 and was an editor until 2013. He is currently an associate editor of *Organization Studies* and a member of the editorial board of *Academy of Management Review*. With John Hassard and Stephanie Decker, he authored the landmark article 'Research Strategies for Organizational History: A Dialogue between Historical Theory and Organization Theory' in *Academy of Management Review*.

# Preface and Acknowledgements

*And isn't the past inevitable,  
now that we call the little  
we remember of it 'the past'?*

William Matthews, from the poem *Cows Grazing at Sunrise*

*The object is to learn to what extent the effort to think one's  
own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and  
so enable it to think differently.*

Michel Foucault, from *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 2

Charles (Chuck) Wrege passed away on 19 August 2014 as we were writing this book. Just before he died, he gave a presentation at an Academy of Management that we attended. In answer to a question from the floor about what advice he would offer to young management historians, Chuck said, 'You just have to work hard! Read and read the stuff again. It takes a long time. It's hard work.' We would like to dedicate *A New History of Management* to him.

Chuck was critical. Some would say an iconoclast. But he wasn't against management history, he was for it. He just thought management history should be done with more curiosity and more rigour than was often the case, and is especially the case with the way history is presented in management textbooks. And it is these textbook histories, the only place that most managers and management scholars encounter a history of our field, which we take as our target in this book.

*A New History of Management* is inspired by Chuck's spirit, but also by other pioneering management historians. We are critical of the little pieces of the past (to paraphrase William Flood) that have been distilled into a set of unquestioned and inevitable certainties that now



bound the way management is presented to young scholars, and by association, limit their horizons for the future. But we are not necessarily critical of management historians like, for example, Lyndall Urwick and Daniel Wren. They were pioneers who wrote good management histories that were essential to moving the field forward in their times. Their insights have been reduced by later interpreters, but we have learned a lot from the coverage of the field in their original works.

What we present in this book is a new history of management written for our times. Throughout the chapters that follow, we develop an alternative history that counters those limited historical assumptions conveyed in management textbooks as foundations to management scholars and practitioners. We aim to show that these foundations are not as hard and fast as we might assume, and show that recognizing this can, in the words of Michel Foucault, 'free thought from what it silently thinks and enable thinking differently'.

We have chosen the title of the book and the cover image to illustrate this counter-intuitive idea: that rather than seeking innovation or thinking differently by running away from the past, we can, instead, seek innovation by looking more deeply at our interpretations of the past and how these limit our horizons.

The title *A New History of Management* indicates that what we are presenting is not intended to be a new orthodoxy or 'one best way'. It is 'a' history rather than 'the' history. In advocating that history is subjective and that any view of the past must be less than all that happened and based, at least partly, on the context of the present, we encourage the creation of other alternative management histories in addition to ours. Our history is not as comprehensive as Wren's histories, not even close: but our aim was not to be comprehensive. Rather, our aim was to investigate how looking again and more deeply at those elements that are conventionally seen as management's key foundations might highlight new insights and change the boundaries that our historical assumptions have, often unconsciously, placed

around the development of our field. It is, in this sense, a 'counter-history'.

The book's cover is a re-imagining of a classic image of the Bethlehem Steel works in Pennsylvania, where Frederick W. Taylor honed his management ideas. This image has often been used by management historians, perhaps drawn by the association with this new Bethlehem and the birth of a new subject for which Taylor was considered by many to be a messiah. Of course, the image that is traditionally used is an industrial working grey. The image on our cover, drawn by Brendon Palmer, is a colourful but decaying cartoon.

As Chuck put it in the words we quoted from him above, this approach to re-digging through the archive and rethinking management history is hard work. But while researching and writing this book has been difficult, we didn't do it all at once. It was a long time in the making.

Steve can recall going with a group from the University of Warwick to see John talk at a seminar at Keele University in 1992, when both of their research was beginning to engage with critical thinking and management history. Steve had just begun a PhD at Warwick focussed on how management's historical understanding of itself may limit present understandings and future endeavours in the subject. This led to a book called *Recreating Strategy*.

John's doctoral research at Aston was based on a multiple paradigm study of work behaviour in the UK Fire Service. One of the paradigm case accounts involved constructing a historical account of the labour process in fire-fighting based on archival materials held in Birmingham and London. John was completing his PhD research at Aston at the time Mick was starting his in the same department. After they completed their doctoral studies, they worked together on a study of the UK computer corporation, ICL, and then on a number of projects up to their recent papers on history in the *Academy of Management Review*.

Todd started his PhD at Cambridge in 2001. Exploring the possibility of academic freedom in an increasingly commodified higher education sector lead him to examine the history of business schools in the US and UK. Upon joining Steve at Victoria University of Wellington in 2006, they became aware of the common interest they shared in applying critical theory to question the institutions of management education and in the provenance of a number of the ideas and frameworks that they were teaching, such as Lewin's 'change as three steps', Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs', and Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy.

A number of meetings at various conferences eventually enabled the four of us to figure out that we were working in different ways with a similar purpose, and that we should join forces to create this book. So what we present here is the sum of many parts. But not only do we believe that the whole is greater than the sum of these parts, we are sure that it would not stand without all of the parts combined. In this respect, and because we all believe that it is a book that really did need to be written, it is a collaboration that we are all truly grateful for.

Given the length of time taken and the multiplicity of projects involved in the lead up, there is a large number of people to thank for helping us to get to this point: Gibson Burrell, Haridimos Tsoukas, Roger Dunbar, Gabrielle Durepos, Richard Dunford, Torkild Thanem, Scott Taylor, Donncha Kavanagh, Ellen O'Connor, Robert Cooper, Robert Chia, Elena Antonocopolou, Urs Daellenbach, David Wilson, Robin Wensley, Tom Cooper, Kenneth Brown, Duncan Angwin, Alex Faria, Rosemary Nixon, Kiren Shoman, Hugh Willmott, Chris Grey, Ann Cunliffe, Colm McLaughlin, Janet Tyson, John Ballard, John Alford, Albert Mills and Johnathan Brock.

We have drawn on the resources of many good archives and would also like to thank the librarians that have assisted us in our endeavours in various parts of the world: Leah Loscutoff at The Stevens Institute in New Jersey, Juliet Scott from the Tavistock Institute in London, Anne Woodrum from Brandeis University,

C. Vaughan-Stanley at Washington and Lee University, Katherine Fox from the Baker Library Historical Collection at Harvard Business School, and the archival team and Harvard University library. And thanks as well to our administrative and research support in our various institutions: Sophia Lum, Misa Ito, Luisa Acheson, Janet Keiler, Sheila Frost, Eve Stacey, Katherine Given, Phoebe Smith, Ben Walker, Clare Taylor and Victoria Bone.

We would also like to thank our team at Cambridge University Press: Paula Parish, Valerie Appleby, Bethany Johnson, Ellena Moriarty, Adam Hooper, Srilakshmi Gobidass, Sarah Drifill and James Gregory, and additionally the four reviewers of our original proposal. They provided very useful critical feedback, particularly with regard to how the book would benefit from a deeper investigation of Adam Smith's work and the development of theories with regard to corporate culture in the 1980s.

All of these people have contributed to the hard work of putting together a book with a simple message: if we want to think differently about management for the future, a good place to start would be to rethink what we assume to be its history.





# Contents

List of Figures	page viii
List of Tables	ix
Preface and Acknowledgements	xi
1 Rethinking the Map of Management History	1
The Target: The Textbook View of Management History	7
Conventional Management History's Relative Limits	16
The Implications of Current Historical Conventions for Management's Future	24
A Methodology for a New, Deeper History of Management	33
What <i>A New History of Management</i> Does	42
2 Management's Formation: The Importance of the Liberal Context	46
Who Is the Real Adam Smith? Discontinuities and False Foundations	50
The Diagram That Sustains the Conventional View of Adam Smith	62
The Problem That Inspired Smith's System of Thought	71
What if Management History Took the Whole Smith as Founder?	78
3 To What End? The Nature of Management's Classical Approach	81
The Name of the Game Is Efficiency: The Conventional View of Taylor's Place in the History of Management	84
A Counter-History of the Origin of Management Studies	89

	Why Conventional Management History Doesn't Regard Conservation	110
	Alternative Foundations and Different Theoretical Aims for Management Studies	114
4	The Birth of Organization Science: Or What We Could Learn from Max Weber	118
	How Management Studies Distorts Weber's Insights	122
	How Different Periods Promote Particular Truths about Weber	126
	How the Weber We Think We Know Is Shaped by a Developing Network	130
	What We Could Learn from a Deeper Understanding of Max Weber	142
5	The Institution of the Business School	148
	The Conventional History of the Harvard Case Method: Clarity of Purpose, Refinement, Evolution	153
	A Counter-History of the Harvard Case Method: Breadth of Perspective, Contestation, Revolution	157
	How Post-WWII Developments Glossed over the Innovations of the 1930s	167
	Reconstructing the History of Management Pedagogy to Inspire Future Innovation	170
	Re-stating the Case	176
6	The Discovery of the Human Worker	181
	Looking Again at the Formation of the Hawthorne Stories	186
	Deconstructing Habitual Narratives and Developing Contextual Accounts	189
	Two Contextual Cases	195
	Reanalysing Hawthorne	210
	Hawthorne: A Step Forward in Management Studies, or the Start of a Slippery Slope?	224

7	Textbook Distortions: How Management Textbooks	
	Process History and Limit Future Thinking	227
	The Development of a Theory Moulder	230
	Formation 1: Change as Three Steps	237
	Formation 2: Building Maslow's Pyramid	253
	Formation 3: McGregor's Binary Theory – Theory X or Theory Y?	260
	Recovering New Frontiers for Management Theory	262
8	The Invention of Corporate Culture	269
	Marketing Culture: To Grow a Business, You Need Something to Sell	273
	Academic Elements That Support Prevailing Views of Corporate Culture	275
	Consequences of an Ahistorical Approach to Corporate Culture	281
	The Creation of Corporate Histories: A Counter-History of Cadbury's Culture	284
	Seeing beyond the Limits of Corporate Culture	304
9	Remaking Management History: New Foundations for the Future	309
	Recapping <i>A New History of Management</i>	313
	Presenting an Alternative History for the Future of Management	320
	Conclusion	331
	References	334
	Index	377



# Figures

1	The Map of Management History	page 3
2	Edison's Ideas Book	6
3	Management History 'Road Map'	9
4	Percentages of Geographical Focus in Architectural, Medical and Business History Articles	16
5	Total Percentages of Articles Coded for Place in the <i>History of Management Journal</i> and the <i>Journal of Management and Organizational History</i>	17
6	Architectural History 'Manhattan'	19
7	Medical History 'Manhattan'	20
8	Business History 'Manhattan'	20
9	Management History 'Manhattan'	21
10	Average Date Focus within Medicine, Business and Architecture History Journals by Decade (1950–2010) with Vertical Bars Representing Single Standard Deviations	22
11	Business History Journal Time and Place	24
12	Architecture History Journal Time and Place Bubble Chart	24
13	Medicine History Journal Time and Place Bubble Chart	25
14	Six Counter-Historical Strategies Borrowed from Michel Foucault	41
15	Banner Advertising Harvard Business School at Harvard Business School c. 2014	179
16	Change as Three Steps	228
17	The Accretion of Theories of Change Management	244
18	An Early Rendition of Maslow's Hierarchy/Pyramid	254