**Developing critical reflexivity in management learners: Igniting historical consciousness**

**Abstract**

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. One management area where the influence of the historic turn has not been felt as significantly as it might is in management learning and management education. We argue that this lacuna can be addressed by emphasizing the development of historical consciousness to stimulate both first order and second order critical reflexivity of management students with the goal of creating critical management learners. 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.

**Keywords:**

Management learning, history, uses of history, historic consciousness, critical reflexivity

**Introduction**

There is a growing awareness of the importance and impact that the historic turn (e.g., Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Mills, Suddaby, Foster, & Durepos, 2016) has had on management and organizational studies (MOS). Over the past decade there have been significant advances in our understandings of history in organizations and how history can impact and shape organizational and managerial actions. This reflects Clark & Rowlinson’s (2004) call to action, which suggested that a recourse to theoretically informed history with its potentiality for rich narrative could displace economically deterministic understandings of organizational phenomena or instrumentalist uses of history as retrospective sensemaking. This has been pursed in the forms of ANTi-history (Durepos & Mills, 2012), rhetorical history (Anteby & Molnar, 2012; McGaughey, 2013; Oertel & Thommes, 2015; Suddaby, Foster, & Quinn-Trank, 2010), memory studies (Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming, & Spicer, 2015; Ocasio, Mauskapf, & Steele, 2016) and the uses of the past (Illia and Zamparini, 2016; Lubinski, 2018, Maclean et al., 2014) have all been debated, theorized and tested with increased fervour and rigour. This has led to significant contributions to the ways we understand and engage with history in and around organizations.

The historical turn has also shaped how we approach management learning and education. Scholars have identified how or why historical methods and/or historical studies have developed new insights on discussions and topics that were previously taken for granted. Recent research has been at the forefront of stimulating debates on the case method (Bridgman, Cummings, & McLaughlin, 2016), Maslow’s hierarchy (Bridgman, Cummings, & Ballard), the Gordon Howell report (McLaren, 2019) and management textbooks (Carroll, Firth, Ford, & Taylor, 2018; Foster, Helms Mills, & Mills, 2014; McLaren & Mills, 2015). Moreover, through these insightful studies, we have been able to reshape how we understand the past and, subsequently, envision and understand future research on these topics. In particular, we argue that the aforementioned works are crucial examples of how the historic turn has functioned as a springboard to develop and heighten the historical consciousness of our colleagues. This, in turn, has helped call attention to ‘techniques or practices of history’ (Suddaby, 2016: 57).

Despite the increased awareness of the relevance of historical scholarship and research to management learning and education, there is still relatively little scholarship focusing on how we can harvest the gains to stimulate and mobilize historical consciousness within management students. As currently conceived, the discussion of historical consciousness in management learning is a decidedly academic subject in that the primary focus is on stimulating the critical and historical senses in managers and academics. Although admirable, we assert that management learners at all levels (Undergraduate, MBA, Ph.D. & executive) should also be exposed to and encouraged to develop their historical consciousness. The goal of this paper is to discuss ways to encourage management students to embody and embrace the process of historical consciousness to become critical management learners. As such, the question we will address in this paper is: *How can management educators encourage students to become critical management learners through the development of their historical consciousness?*

Our paper makes two main contributions. Firstly, we show how historical consciousness can augment and extend current discussions of management learning and management education. Our discussion will demonstrate how historical consciousness can stimulate the process of critical reflexivity and how this process can help all management students better understand their subject positions as moral agents. Moreover, we explain how historical consciousness helps students understand their role in the production and continuation of different historical narratives. In so doing, students are exposed to their complicity in the co-construction of current management discourses.

Secondly, we identify specific processes that management educators can undertake to help management students become critical management learners. We argue that historical consciousness is a “process of learning” (Rusen, 2004, p. 81) whereby students embody and embrace “a radically reflexive, second-order perspective” (Cunliffe, 2003, p. 989) that encourages not just critiques of managing and organizing but also of one’s self and their role in the production of these discourses. Management students who embrace the process of historical consciousness understand the importance of denaturalizing the discourses of managing and organizing (Fournier & Grey, 2000) by looking to the past and understanding how these discourses are built in the present and impact the future. We demonstrate, in particular, how historical methods and methodologies are co-constructed through relationships with others and how participating in these activities in a specific location, the archive, can stimulate historical consciousness so that all management students are able to engage in a second-order perspective to critique and evaluate managing and organizing.

To make our argument we first review the literatures on critical reflexivity, historical consciousness and historical methods. We then discuss how these research methods, when taught to students, and applied in the setting of the archive, can help highlight and denaturalize (Fournier & Grey, 2000) historical narratives that can ignite the process of historical consciousness. We conclude by discussing how historical consciousness is necessary for the continued interrogation of management learning and education and we speculate on how stimulating student historical consciousness might impact future research on management learning and education.

**Critical Reflexivity and Historical Consciousness**

Critical reflexivity (CR) is a process that involves critically engaging with the world and with one’s self. Cunliffe argues that critical reflexivity is “Questioning what we, and others, might be taking for granted-what is being said and not said-and examining the impact this has or might have” (2016, 741). Cunliffe (2003) further differentiates between two different types of critical reflexivity. The first is evaluating the structures and institutions of the world and how they operate. This is what Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) describe as an interpretation of what has been interpreted. That is, critical reflexivity is ‘another layer of analysis after data have been interpreted’ (Anderson, 2008:184) and is useful for transparency and for assessing the learning process. Witcher (1990; 2006:3), for example, recommends that learners should include ‘a reflexive account of how the research process qualifies conclusions’. This approach to critical reflexivity is best summed up by Cunliffe’s first-order approach. The researcher is asked to deconstruct and identify the unspoken and unseen. First-order critical reflexivity is an application to “see how realities are constituted by other people in local contexts” (2013, p. 898) by examining the language, practices and actions involved in managing and organizing.

Cunliffe (2003; 2004; 2009; 2013) also argues for another form of critical reflexivity. This approach to critical reflexivity asks those who are reflecting to question how they are complicit in the construction and continuation of current practices and actions. Second-order critical reflexivity turns the principle of reflexivity back onto the researcher, seeing it as central to the acquisition of a moral dimension through self-awareness that is attained by questioning past experience and practices, ‘examining and unsettling the assumptions underlying social and organizational practices as a means of building responsible management’ (Cunliffe, 2013). Furthermore, it is through this second-order perspective that people are able ‘to understand how one’s subjectivity shapes the investigation and its findings’ (Merriam and Simpson, 1995:98) and that there is an inseparable relationship between knowledge and the knower (Steedman, 1991).

Although some critiques of management learning and education (e.g., Mintzberg, 2004; Khurana, 2007; McDonald, 2017) point to the lack of a moral dimension. Cunliffe and Hibbert (2015) attempt to mitigate these critiques by elucidating the building blocks of threshold concepts required for moral reflexive practice. In particular, they advocate for actively involving students in the discovery of ‘troublesome’ knowledge that encourages moments of realisation of new or uncomfortable reflection. This practice, they argue, is likely to be fruitful even if there is the risk of causing dislocation or disturbance for the learner. Nevertheless, there is still the danger that students will resist or reject methods that call for the examination of ‘troublesome’ knowledge. For us this chimes with the concerns of Clark and Rowlinson (2004), who use Burrell’s (1997) *Pandemonium* as an example of dislocating historiographical illustration of the occult side of organizational phenomena.

We assert that one way to engage students in ‘troublesome’ knowledge is to present situations where they can engage with decisions and actions that have already occurred. A key contribution of the historic turn is the recognition that history is more than just past events. Although events have occurred previously, the presentation and interpretation of these events is significant. Moreover, there is an understanding that how the past is constructed and presented is the product of different factors such as power, race, class and gender. In other words, history is not the product of merely reporting inert, neutral facts. History is the result of factors that can, and do, influence what is written and reported. This helps students develop critical reflexivity by stimulating the process of questioning their “own assumptions and taken-for-granted actions, thinking about where/who we are and where/who we would like to be, challenging our conceptions of reality and exploring new possibilities” (Cunliffe, 2004: 411).

In management and organization studies historical consciousness (Suddaby, 2016) has been presented as the recognition and deliberate examination of the past as a narrative construction developed by actors with specific aims. Defined in management history as ‘a sensitivity and awareness of the degree to which history is both a product and a source of human reflexivity’ (Suddaby, 2016: 57), historical consciousness is presented as the recognition that history is a narrative construction. Moreover, research into the processes involved in the development of these historical narratives offers insight into the role history plays in organizations and management.

In other disciplines, most notably historical education (e.g., Seixas, 2004, Rusen, 2017), historical consciousness is treated as a more than just the recognition that history is a product of narrative construction. Instead, it is presented as a “process of learning” (Rusen, 2004) that involves students not just becoming aware of the significance of history but also understanding their roles in the construction and propagation of historical narratives. More specifically, historical consciousness is how the past can be used as a tool to help students understand and critique their role in history and the role they play in the production of specific historical narratives. As students progress through different types of historical consciousness (simple, exemplary, critical, genetic) they become more aware of their own “historical identity”(Rusen, 2017). By questioning how history impacts their identity, students become more aware of how history is constructed and how historical narratives are situated in a specific time and through deliberate construction.

Ultimately, historical consciousness culminates in students becoming aware of how they can use their interpretations of history “for the practical purpose of orientation in life” or, to use Cunliffe’s terms, to ask “who to be” (2016, p. 742). Students acquire more “narrative competency” (Rusen, 2017) as they progress through the process of developing their historical consciousness. In so doing they develop the tools that allows them to remove the veneer of history thus exposing their own roles and the underlying power relations at the heart of the construction of historical narratives. As students become more competent at building historical narratives, they understand that history is just a narrative construction, thus calling into question the objectivity of the past. In addition, students also recognize that their own past and the stories that they tell about the past are not neutral or devoid of relations based on gender, sex, race and class. As the student acquires historical consciousness they understand that the past is merely another narrative and is subject to the same critique that can be applied to other narratives.

The connection between historical consciousness and management learning, and the difference between historical education and management education, thus comes from management students engaging in historical consciousness to develop their critical understanding of how historical narratives about managing and organizing are constructed. As students become more aware of how they are positioned historically, they can train their critical eye on management practices and ways of organizing that have occurred in the past. For example, they can identify how these practices and actions in the past are consistent with or inconsistent with the present and the future. As such, first-order critical reflexivity is encouraged and necessitated by historical consciousness. It is, however, only a partial engagement with the past. As management students become more aware of their own position in history they are able to question not just the institutions and practices from the past, but also how and why they author and reproduce past conceptions of managing and organizing. This second-order critical reflexivity opens management students to denaturalize managing and organizing and to question the emphasis on performativity (Fournier & Grey, 2004) in management education. Historical consciousness ignites both first and second-order critical reflexivity by learning about the past and this creates the recognition that narrative competence is a path to living a moral life. In other words, historical consciousness encourages management students to embrace and embody critical reflexivity as “a process by which competencies are progressively acquired, [and] as a process of changing the structural forms by which we deal with and utilize the experience and knowledge of past actuality” (p 81). The ability to deconstruct historical knowledge enhances learners’ moral and temporal consciousness in an era characterised by non-scholarly uses and abuses of the past (Phillips, 2017), reflecting and answering Winter’s (2016, p. 169) call for people to develop historic consciousness to escape the present and develop consciousness from a perspective beyond themselves.

In sum, we assert that historical consciousness is a process of encouraging management students to learn about the past so that they ask critical questions that engage them with the moral dimensions of their learning and their actions in life. What is missing from our discussion, however, is an explanation about how management educators can encourage historical consciousness and, subsequently, critical reflexivity. Below we discuss how a specific form of historical narrative, the archive, can be accessed as a path to develop historical consciousness and, ultimately, the development of critical management learners.

**Historical Consciousness and the Archive**

*What is an Archive?*

At this point it is useful to explore what the term ‘archive’ can mean because the polysemy of the construct can make it difficult to clearly interrogate what is the object under examination when discussing the use of archives. Firstly, the word can be used to refer to a place – a physical or digital location where artefacts and documents are stored (or ‘archived’) (i.e., Barros, 2016; Barros et al., 2018; Cook, 2001a; Cook, 2001b; Mills and Helms Mills, 2017; Morris et al, 2014). This is the most common understanding of an archive’s function. Secondly ‘archive’ can refer to a collection of documents or artefacts kept in the archival location (Barros, 2016; Cook, 2001a; Cook, 2001b; Eastwood, 1994; Mills and Helms Mills, 2017; Morris et al. 2014). We may also refer to these as *archival sources*, and their content the *archival data.* Thirdly, the term ‘archive’ can be used more abstractly in relation to a legacy of activities that have already occurred (Barros, 2016), the memories, interpretations, a perceived narrative (Barros et al., 2018) and/or the complex systems and embedded rules that drive them (Mills and Helms Mills, 2017).

Archival materials held by organizations typically include literature produced by organizations for communications internally (e.g. strategy documents, meeting minutes, memos) or for external audiences (e.g. published annual financial statements, marketing materials) (Moss, 2017). In addition, professional archivists have their own paradigm they use to manage their archives which often manifests through an active cataloguing process. For example, Logan (2017) argues that all records produced by organizations are potentially archives because according to the International Organization for Standardization’s (2001) records are defined as ‘information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person in pursuance of legal obligations or the transaction of business.’

Furthermore, archives vary in their life-cycle (Jenkinson, 1922). That is, retained organizational records transition to the status of ‘permanent archives’ as they are gradually accessed less frequently. These ‘permanent archives’ then have reusable value in two ways; firstly they have primary value to the originating agency, perhaps for legal, marketing and public relations purposes, but secondly and perhaps most valuable for educators, they have value to other stakeholders (Schellenburg, 1956). Such stakeholders might also include journalists, business biographers, and genealogists interested in a general sense in a business and its employees, but could also include business and management scholars and students interested in understanding the managerial techniques or strategies used by an organization (among many potential research questions). Such archives can potentially shed light on the corporate, financial, management, communicative, legal, regulatory or productive aspects of an organization (Logan, 2017), and as a stable resource can provide a window into the stream of decisions and observations that are recorded within an organization’s existence.

Archives can also be both online and physical. Regardless of form, archives are accessible by multiple people. The archive exists for posterity so multiple people can view it sequentially in original format, even if not at the same time. Digitization provides the potential for unlimited numbers of learners to view archival material, potentially at the same time, providing opportunities for instruction to groups, whether classroom based or online. Therefore, an advantage of using archival sources for teaching is that multiple learners can participate in a research process using the same sources.

*The archive as a site for igniting historical consciousness*

The variation and difference between archives and archival practices suggests that researchers should be *reflexive* when considering archives and archival materials*.* Barros et al. (2018) argue thatreflexivity should occur as a methodological attitude of the researcher in all stages of the research, beginning with the conscious act of searching for documents in the archives, to the historical writing of narratives produced as ‘final’. The process of actively questioning collections of records constituting an archive highlights the existence of multiple narratives each serving a different purpose for a different audience, at a different time and in a different context. Archives are not static; rather they are dynamic. Their value rests in how a reader interacts and interprets the documents based on the way that the documents are presented and how sources were retained, discarded, and made available, as well as the consequences of the theoretical choices made.

The appearance of multiple narratives within the archive, the recognition that the archives are a product of the power-relations within society and the understanding that archives should be approached with critical reflexivity makes archives a fertile site for the development of historical consciousness in management students. The ostensibly infinite archival resources waiting to be exploited by the researcher is a powerful window into past realities (Farge, 2013) and how these have been constructed.

Management students can initially be encouraged to ignite their historical consciousness by becoming immersed in the physical archive and its archival materials as a means of unearthing different, potentially contradictory or conflicting, sources, locations and reasons why one historical narrative has been composed and reinforced. Their first-order critical reflexivity is developed through the recognition that the archive is the result of a deliberate choice as to whether or not certain documents should be retained. In so doing, management students identify the archivist as a narrator (Cook, 2001b: 26), with documents becoming a potential instrument of power (Foucault, 1972; de Certeau, 1988; Derrida, 1996). Because the archive can be understood as a space where social memory is constructed, management students can ask how the archivist was influenced by ‘the meta-narratives of the powerful, and especially of the state’ (Cook, 2001b: 27). This type of question can uncover how the archive and its contents can be used to reinforce and propagate the power of social elites while supressing the ‘other’. As such, management students, when asked to critically engage with the archive, can critique the power relationships behind the documents, their structure and conventions (Cook, 2001a). As such, historical consciousness in management students can be encouraged through archival use by asking them to reflexively question how and why documents are produced and presented in the way they are.

A critical approach to archival work can also push management students to further ignite their historical consciousness leading to second-order critical reflexivity. That is, archival research can, and arguably should, push management students to ask how they as individuals are implicated in the archive and how it is used. The archive is an excellent tool that can be used to identify inconsistencies in taken-for-granted narratives. Researchers can uncover new narratives or identify the key “silences” (Decker, 2013) that appear in their research. Nevertheless, archival use can also help management students further develop the moral dimension of their thinking. As troublesome knowledge is encountered in the archive (i.e., the practice of slavery or the exploitation of child labour) the tendency is that many students will merely dismiss this as an anomaly of the period. This allows the student to separate their “historical identity” from the story being told. However, to become a critical management learner, students will need to become more aware of the implications of their narrative competence. Here opportunities exist for learners of diverse backgrounds to engage reflexively with the past on their own terms challenging Barad’s (2007; 2013) claims that critical reflexivity suppresses uniqueness of discovery, and breaking down Woolgar’s (1986, p. 314) and Ashmore’s (1989) perception that groups constitute the nature of their reality.

Management students are confronted with the awareness that the way they engage with the archive is not objective or inert. These students are made aware that all their choices about the use of the archive are political and inherently tied to issues of power and identity. The result is that the management student realizes that their choices about how they use the archives, what documents and data they present, how the past is remembered and the stories they tell are all tied to the question of who they want to be. Historical consciousness ignites second-order critical reflexivity by linking their moral choices to the creation and deliberate propagation of certain historical narratives. In so doing, the artifice of managing and organizing is laid bare and made subject to critique and evaluation.

With the aforementioned discussion in mind, we acknowledge that immersing students in archives is not a simple task. Perhaps most obvious challenge is the danger that students fail to critically evaluate their own biases or experience archival survival bias. For example, data produced by and for an organization could contain bias towards the organization’s narrative (i.e., the Chair’s statement’s in company reports), while the archives of successful organizations may be more likely to survive for posterity. This provides an opportunity for learners to question whom choses what goes into an archive and why, and also what is not present and remains ‘silent’ (Decker, 2013).

We also assert that archives can be ‘noisy’ and this can present management students with overwhelming array of material, which may seem infinite in character (Farge, 2013, pp. 16-17. This forces learners to engage in a qualitative learning process and reflect on the choices and tradeoffs to be made in the narrative construction process. In some cases the presence of a large organizational archive may distract researchers from opportunities to triangulate their findings elsewhere because the bulk of material available may force scholars to concentrate on what they can feasibly extract in the time available to them in the reading room. Farge (2013: 75-77) warns against researcher-induced bias, which may stem from rushing in to record what seems to be the most substantial or important document. Rather, history is not just a simple repetition of archival content – but a pulling away from it and a rethinking of it on one’s own terms, providing fertile ground for the development of self-awareness.

Clearly, there are risks as well as opportunities associated with the idea of imbedding archival research into management learning. To address this matter the next section of our paper will present an illustrative example of how to ignite historical consciousness and, thus, develop both first and second-order critical reflexivity in management learners. These suggestions have been designed to enhance the opportunities of archival research for developing historical consciousness to stimulate critical reflexive thinking about learners’ own interpretations of archives as a source. As previously discussed, we have demonstrated that archival research presents considerable opportunities for management students and their learning, although there has been little discussion about how this might be done. Our aim is to provide a framework for integrating the use of archives into management learning and education.

**Stimulating critical reflexivity through historical consciousness-An illustrative example**

In light of our discussion above, it is somewhat surprising that business school classes tend to overlook archival research with the primary focus being placed on social research methods such as surveys and questionnaire-based interviews. History, if taught at all in business and management programs, is typically limited to a discussion of ‘classic’ case studies or the simple ‘potted history’ found in chapter two of textbooks (Cummings, Bridgman, Hassard & Rowlinson, 2017, p. 8). This is even more surprising given that research methods textbooks (i.e., Yin, 2003) have long pointed to the availability of archival sources.

We focus on a form of instruction called archival workshops or ‘practicals’ (Tosh, 2015; Jordanova, 2000) whereby learners engage directly with primary sources, to teach processes of archival research. The discussion here differs in that our focus in not on archival research but on how archival research can further develop both critical and moral thought through the process of historical consciousness. We present an example of a ‘typical’ exercise that management leaners might undertake to research the corporate history and business strategy of companies and we comment on how these exercises can be used to ignite historical consciousness thus leading to both first order and second order critical reflexivity in management students.

*Stimulating historical consciousness using the archive*

History can be studied by using secondary and primary sources including the study of the work of historians, the collection of memories in the form of oral history, and the consultation of documentary sources and ephemera generated by actors in the past. It is critical to be aware of the distinction made by historians between primary sources, which were created and used in the past by the objects of study, and secondary sources, which comprise the published articles and books created by scholars drawing upon primary sources (Marwick, 2001: 26). We also make a distinction between ‘the past’ and ‘history’, and realise that in using these terms we make a deliberately self-conscious and reflexive distinction. The past, which is intangible, is the sum of previous human activity and experience, an essentially infinite realm of possibility. History, on the other hand, consists of the attempts of historians to create knowledge of that past through interpreting evidential traces of it (Marwick, 2001: 29). While we would not conceptualise history as an atheoretically ‘empirical’ endeavour as historians such as Elton (1987), Evans (1997) and Marwick (2001) do, the methodological heart of the discipline remains concerned with the reflexive process of ‘recovering’ historical knowledge. The cognitive uncertainty implicit in the process of uncovering historical knowledge provides an appropriate, yet safe and bounded, setting for the discovery of ‘troublesome’ knowledge within the archive.

We use as our example two global companies from early 20th century York, UK, Rowntree’s and Terry’s, which are now part of the fast moving consumer goods conglomerates, Nestle and Kraft. Using organizations that management students are likely familiar with and that play a part in the formation of organizations that are contemporary ensures a direct link to the present and enhances the likelihood that archival research will be perceived as relevant by learners. The archives of the two businesses (both of which are held at the Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York) include correspondence, minute books, and ephemera. Another archive, belonging to the City of York, also maintains local authority holdings, which include maps and council minute books.

We suggest an activity could involve tutors selecting sources from these collections, using digital cameras so that learners can explore the strategic and philanthropic activities of Rowntree’s and Terry’s and to critically examine the donation of land and the role of the firms in the development of park space in the city. The use of digital sources and perhaps a Virtual Learning Environment (Boyle and Jackson, 2009) structure could enable even very large classes of up to 300-500 learners to participate in this archival exercise. The activity is both triangulative and contained. The goal is to provide management students with material that deals with “troublesome” knowledge (Hibbert & Cunliffe, 2015).

The commonly negotiated historical narrative is that Rowntree’s purchased undeveloped land near one of the city’s rivers and converted it into parkland dedicated to employees who were casualties of the First World War. This act is usually viewed in the context of the firm’s philanthropic and progressive management activities (which included the foundation of the four Joseph Rowntree Trusts, internationally active charitable trusts, still active today), often attributed to the Quaker capitalism of the founding family. Prior to researching archival sources, learners could be provided with literature supporting the existence of Quaker capitalism (Walvin, 1997), as well as counter-arguments which suggest that the philanthropic motives have been over-stated and that such gestures are usually attached to a less publicised commercial motive.

Management students could also be provided with selected archival materials that provide evidence that Rowntree purchased the land and established the park. However, this foregone conclusion can be questioned. Management learners can be provided with a series of maps, which show that the location of the park was adjacent to Terry’s original factory (now demolished) and thus blocked Terry’s expansion and required them to relocate to another site. Furthermore, the location of a park named after *Rowntree’s* on its rival *Terry’s* ‘patch’ was perhaps a competitive statement.

Additionally, management students learn to triangulate their data (Kipping et al., 2014) with council documents; this will lead learners to realise the role of the owners of these chocolate businesses as ‘place shapers’ (Lyons, 2007) in the public sector/civic hierarchy of the city. Students could also examine possibilities of collaboration as well as competition between the two businesses in the different spheres – for example were they competitive in business but more collaborative in public life? Again, management students could be led to other relevant academic literature that explicates the complexity and multiplicity of relationship types organizations can have, particularly in the public sphere (e.g. Gillett, 2016). Through source triangulation, Hibbert and Cunliffe’s integrative effects (2015: 182-183) can be attained as learners are forced to confront their preconceptions around the role of philanthropic organizations in society. This attempt to conscientize (Freire, 1972) students to difficult issues can have the implication that it may cause emotional pain that instructors may have to manage carefully.

Such an activity as we have outlined could therefore ignite management students’ historical consciousness and lead to the development of first-order critical reflexivity. This would be done by encouraging the research and analytic skills of management students, as well as teaching them about business strategy, philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. Historical consciousness is thus fostered as students are encouraged to consider the ways that the contemporary organizations implicated in the study appropriate the cache of their history in the present – whether in the form of the Joseph Rowntree Trusts, Nestle’s cocoa plan (Nestle, 2019), or the City of York’s promotion of its ‘chocolate trail’ (VisitYork, 2019). Historical consciousness is thus difficult for the learner to reverse and potentially transformative as the complexity of organisational action is more fully grasped.

To further ignite historical consciousness and promote second-order critical reflexivity in management students more complex studies could also be implemented. Management learners could be asked to identify what other data they would need to develop a more thorough understanding, as well as to identify limitations of the sources that they have access to, in relation to the points raised earlier in this paper about strengths and weaknesses of archival research. For example, to demonstrate links between such an historic case and the present day, and to demonstrate the potentially expansive boundaries of historic consciousness, management students could consider the ways in which York’s contemporary tourist efforts draw upon and reconstructs the city’s chocolate, philanthropic and religious heritage. These students would be given opportunities to analyse not just the historic data, but also the implication it has to them as they develop their own narratives about these organizations and these organization’s actions in the past. In other words, management students can be asked to situate their historical identity within the narratives they are constructing about Rowntree and Nestle and how this impacts their moral sense. Management students’ recognition that their “narrative competence” is developing brings to light their complicity in the stories they are telling about these companies and the impacts, both good and bad, they had on the world.

Similarly, management students could also be asked to more critically consider the extent to which networks of actors negotiate a unified view of the past of these organizations and the cities where they operated. Through class discussions of the different historical narratives each student has developed they are hopefully able to reflexively negotiate their own history to reflect more consciously on the processes inherent in actor-network driven interpretations of historical analysis (Durepos and Mills, 2012a; 2012b). There are also opportunities to engage management students by asking for deeper dives into the broader archival holdings from where the instructors selected the materials in question. In so doing, management students are asked to deepen their understanding of the socio-political context of a local industrial cluster. This could lead to a new consideration of how elites in the past had tried to use geographical position to memorialise themselves for future generations. Further, there is potential to understand how local elites drive the construction of networks within a particular city oriented around paternalism and patronage, perhaps with linkages into other spheres such as sport, transport, education and local hierarchies. Students could therefore engage in and understand how they help maintain and reproduce heritage and history(ies), thus pushing them beyond a superficial understanding of the past that is otherwise told through more conventional business histories (Fitzgerald, 2007; da Silva Lopes and Casson, 2007; White, 2014).

**Impacts on Management Learning and Education**

We have presented a discussion of how the use of archival research can ignite historical consciousness in management students. Of primary importance to our discussion is that we have explained how management educators can encourage their students to become critical management learners by engaging and embodying the process of historical consciousness. In particular, we argue that all students of management, from undergraduate to executives, can become more critically reflexive by evaluating and examining how and why archives are constituted and managed in the ways they are.

We also argue that embracing the process of historical consciousness through the use of archives is useful for students to more fully develop their first-order and second-order critical reflexivity. First order critical reflexivity is developed through historical consciousness when students examine how organizing and managing are historically understood and taken-for-granted. The critical examination and comparison of historical narratives allows students to ask questions that denaturalize how and why they view management practices and the processes of organizing in the ways that they do. Moreover, understanding that archives are more than just places where documents are stored helps demonstrate that archives, and the histories to which they contribute, are based upon deliberate choices. It is also important to note that these choices are the product of factors such as asymmetrical power relations, racial tensions and gender inequity. Inserting management students into archives, even in a minor and limited way, can be a practical opportunity to investigate their taken for granted experiences, to question their relationship with the social world and to account for their experiences (Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). These activities could ultimately impact learners right across society with the potential for a broader understanding of public history with an emphasis on marginalised topics such as postcolonial history.

Our discussion also emphasizes that historical consciousness can help management student address moral questions that are tied to “who they want to be”. Through second-order critical reflexivity, management students move beyond just questioning the outside world. Historical consciousness asks students to think about their position in constructing and reproducing historical narratives about management and organizing. As such, students ignite their moral sense by not just critiquing the different historical narratives they observe and question, but by understanding that different historical narratives only come into being and continue through their own practices and actions. Understanding the role that they play in reproducing and reinforcing historical narratives links their historical identity to current ways of being. The student’s recognition of their complicity in producing historical narratives that are laced with imbalances in power, race, gender and class push students to ask whether they are willing to accept these practices and, if not, how they can make moral choices to promote change. In so doing, the management student becomes a critical management learner.

**Conclusion**

To recap, we have provided an illustrative example of how archives might be used to ignite the historical consciousness of management student to stimulate both first and second-order critical reflexivity. In presenting this approach we hope to demonstrate the critical potential that rests in historical archives. Our work outlines the potential that archival research has for further developing historical consciousness of all management students regardless of rank. Archives are an underutilized resource for management education and learning. Our intent has been to identify how this potential can be identified and, ultimately, ignited.

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**Archival Research Checklist - Things to Do**

*Before your visit*

* Determine membership requirements or apply for visitor permissions. Corporate archives often require outside visitors to seek permission.
* Also investigate:
  + The location of the archive – and where archives are multi-site check that you are travelling to the correct site
  + Hours of operation. Smaller archives are often not open daily, and opening hours are usually shorter than for libraries.
  + What information or documentation you need to provide
  + Fees and methods of payment
  + Duration of application process
  + Whether any part of the process can be done in advance
  + Duration of membership/visitor permissions
  + Use the archive’s online catalogue if it has one to identify relevant holdings and note the numbers. You can then order these as soon as you arrive.
  + Check the holdings that you are interested in are publically accessible
  + Check the capacity of the archive if bringing large groups. Most corporate and many local authority archives are small.

- If you have questions about holdings you wish to access then email the archive directly but beforehand always do as much as you can independently. Many have detailed information and catalogue search facilities on their webpages, as well as comprehensive FAQs sheets.

*During your visit*

* Each archive will have its own protocol, but some typical rules and expected behaviours are:
  + Have your pass/membership card or ID ready to show upon arrival.
  + Use pencils only
  + Have dry clean hands
  + Switch phones and other electronic devices to ‘silent’ mode or leave outside.
  + Do not bring coats or bags into the reading room.
  + No sharp implements (scissors, knives, etc).
  + No food or drink.
  + Always ask if cameras are permitted and be prepared to pay extra for the privilege of taking photos. Photo passes are often charged for per hour or day, and you may be expected to write down the details of each item that you photograph.

*After your visit*

* You will need to engage in a sensemaking process to think reflexively about how you construct meaning from the data you have gathered.
  + Consider who originally created these sources and the context within which they were created.
  + Consider the types of documents you have collected or viewed – are they letters, minutes, reports, legal records, financial accounts, or something else?
  + Nature of discourse - why were the different types of documents created and who were the intended readers? Remember also that they were not created with the intention that you would eventually read them.
  + Consider who the important actors are in your documents – and the nature of the relationships between them. How did these actors construct their own identity within historical context?
  + Construct and de-construct – what is there empirically, but also think about what is not there empirically. This will help you consider whether triangulation with other types of record is required – or if what is not there empirically is perhaps unknowable or an artefact of your own perception.
  + Pay attention to the way that the archive has been constructed. Does the potential for knowledge construction emerge only because it has been embodied in an archive and/or made accessible to you?
  + Consider the historical distance between yourself, the creators of the documents, and the people and phenomena within them
  + Consider your original motives for pursuing this research and your perceptions of what you might find in the archive. Were your expectations fulfilled?
  + Consider historical narratives in two ways – in terms of chronology, and in terms of theoretical or functional themes. Can these things be easily adduced? Think about what difficult knowledge emerged as you attempt to tease meaning out of historical reality. What was your role in creating these narratives?
  + Consider how the history that emerges is different to your sense of the world today. Avoid the temptation to see a linear relationship between the episode your have studied in the past and today.
  + Consider critically what is different between past and present and what is similar, and how this challenges your notions of the present as well as other constructions of the past you have studied.