The Decolonizing Management Studies Agenda: Advances, Challenges and Prospects

Convenors:

**Jenny K Rodriguez** (Lead convenor)
Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, UK
jenny.rodriguez@manchester.ac.uk

**Marcela Mandiola Cotroneo**
Facultad de Economía y Negocios, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile
mmandiol@uahurtado.cl

**Gregorio Pérez Arrau**
Escuela de Administración, Facultad de Administración y Economía, Universidad de Santiago de Chile, Chile
gregorio.perezarrau@usach.cl

**Alex Faria**
FGV/EBAPE - Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil
alex.faria@fgv.br

**Bill Cooke**
York Management School, University of York, UK
bill.cooke@york.ac.uk

**Sadhi Dar**
School of Business and Management, Queen Mary, University of London, UK
s.dar@qmul.ac.uk

**Nidhi Srinivas**
Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy, The New School, US
srinivan@newschool.edu
The Decolonizing Management Studies Agenda: Advances, Challenges and Prospects

The call for streams of the 10th International Critical Management Studies (CMS) Conference – CMS 2017 invites us to explore conceptual, ideological and practical alternatives to how we articulate what business education is/should be about. In the midst of a palpable rise of right wing, fascist politics across the world, questions emerge about the suitability of the conceptual terms of reference used in critical management studies to explain what happens around us. Our daily experiences are framed by the formation of what can only be understood as a ‘second wave’ civil rights movement, as embodied in the ‘Black Lives Matter’, the ‘Why is my curriculum white?’ and ‘Why isn’t my professor black?’ campaigns. In this context, there appears to be disconnect between CMS and these realities so it would be pertinent to reflect on whether there is a crisis of the critical. We would argue that there is, and that this crisis speaks to the increasing need to reconsider authoritative representations of what is critical, who holds legitimacy as being critical and generally, how ‘critical’ is understood.

Building on the critical tradition of post-colonial studies, we engage with the idea that there is an intellectual imperative to decolonize management knowledge production and consumption. This imperative emerges from scholarship concerned with the Eurocentrism and Anglocentrism of dominant conceptual, theoretical and analytical paradigms in CMS, where the articulation of any alternatives that move beyond those set by a ‘dominant’ CMS tradition is contained and suppressed. Within this decolonizing tradition, both reclaiming and repositioning knowledge is central to the understanding that perspectives should not be dichotomised within a fixed duality of the core/periphery positioning. Instead, new perspectives should be embraced that account for the pluriversality and fluidity of ideas.

Emerging scholarship (e.g., Alcadipani & Reis Rosa, 2011; Alcadipani & Faria, 2014; Gantman, 2016; Ibarra-Colado, 2006; Mir & Mir, 2013; Mignolo, 2011; Misoczky, 2011; Misoczky & Amantino-de-Andrade, 2005; Misoczky & Kruter, 2012; Misoczky et al., 2015; Westwood et al., 2014) has argued for decolonial thinking in management and organization studies. Several perspectives have emerged from these discussions. For instance, Mandiola (2010) has proposed the adoption of a liberation genealogy, arguing that critical management studies provide limited space for the articulation of ideas outside of established colonised contemporary management thinking. Faria (2014) alludes to a similar issue, arguing that a transmodern pluriversal perspective would allow for “many worlds and knowledges to co-exist” (p. 278).

At the core of these discussions is the view that we must challenge global coloniality and hegemonic ethnocentrism. Western views of knowledge are not universal and neutral, and obscure, invisibilise and undermine any other intellectual projects. Setting an agenda for Decolonizing Management Studies aims to develop strategies to legitimise scholarly work considered to be “at the margins” and the intellectual personhood of those who produce it.

Historically, perspectives such as CMS have been established and developed within the boundaries of legitimised versions of the alternative; ones that challenge the status quo of knowledge production only up to a certain point. Dominant CMS discussions engage in forms of domesticated criticism, whereby critique is articulated within acceptable boundaries that still reproduce hierarchies within the critique. For example, whilst seemingly opening space to the presence of alternative perspectives, an intellectual elite that represents dominant ideologies makes political decisions about acceptable forms of critique, which look to
preserve their privileged standing within the field (Misoczky & Amantino-de-Andrade, 2005).

In addition, questions remain about the visibility of different identities and subjectivities within discourses of/about the colonized. Knowledge about management is not just produced by academics; however, the diverse voices situated within geopolitically-diverse contexts remain in margins within the margins. For example, the voices of indigenous communities and the knowledge(s) these voices produce are not visible in critical narratives about management and organization.

As Misoczky & Amantino-de-Andrade (2005) have noted, it is important for critical theories to engage with the structures and obstacles that limit emancipation, as well of identifying potential trends that transform and overcome them. We see a decolonizing perspective as having the strongest theoretical, conceptual and practical potential to accomplish this aim. In that spirit, we invite papers that address the following themes:

- Epistemological spaces to decolonize management studies
- Epistemological denials
- Decolonizing strategies to challenge ‘domesticated criticism’
- Decolonizing academia
- Decolonizing resistance(s) and subversion
- Contradictions and paradoxes in decolonial management thinking
- Non-Occidentalist management theory
- Heterogeneity, hybridity and pluriversalism in critical management
- Voices and silences in decolonizing perspectives
- Decolonizing signifiers in management and organization
- Transborder critiques
- Dialogical encounters between post-colonial and decolonial discussions
- Sterility in hybrid management production (Garcia Canclini)
- Transculturation and mixturation in management knowledge production (Rama)
- Decolonizing globalization (Mignolo)
- Decolonizing postcolonial thinking/Post-postcolonial thinking

References


**Short biographies of convenors:**

**Jenny K Rodriguez**
PhD in Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester, UK. Jenny is Lecturer in Employment Studies at Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, UK. She is a feminist scholar researching intersectional inequality in work, organizations and employment. Her recent work focuses on intersectional inequality from a transnational feminist perspective; and the interplay between identity, work and regulation, specifically looking at the experiences of transnational skilled migrants. She was part of the International Scientific Committee of the 2016 LAEMOS Conference in Chile, and is founding member of the Red de Estudios Organizacionales Latinoamérica (REOL), a Latin American academic network in Organisation Studies.

**Marcela Mandiola**
PhD in Management Learning and Leadership, Lancaster University, UK. Marcela is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Alberto Hurtado University (UAH) in Chile. Her work mainly informed by the broad insights of Critical Management Education currently leading the very first course in CMS in Chile for business postgraduates. She was part of the Organizing Committee of the 2016 LAEMOS Conference in Chile, and is member of the permanent committee EGOS-LAEMOS. She is leading founding member of the Red de Estudios Organizacionales Latinoamérica (REOL), a Latin American academic network in Organisation Studies. She is also part of the group developing a Chilean network in Organization Studies called Minga and member of the Arbitration Committee of Educational Innovation Journal of Instituto Politécnico Nacional de México.
Gregorio Perez Arrau
PhD in Knowledge Management and HRM, Liverpool University, UK. Gregorio is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Administration and Economics, University of Santiago de Chile (USACH) in Chile. His work focuses on the interplay of knowledge management and HRM. He is interested in the critical understanding of knowledge work and knowledge workers. He was part of the Organizing Committee of the 2016 LAEMOS Conference in Chile, and is founding member of the Red de Estudios Organizacionales Latinoamérica (REOL), a Latin American academic network in Organisation Studies.

Alex Faria
PhD in Business Administration, University of Warwick, UK. Alex is Associate Professor at the Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration, Getulio Vargas Foundation (EBAPE/FGV) and Researcher of the National Research Council in Brazil (CNPq). He is Chair of the Strategy & Marketing Research Group at EBAPE/FGV and has published many contributions in the fields of Strategy, Marketing, International Management and Critical Studies in Management in Brazil and abroad. He is founding member of the Red de Estudios Organizacionales Latinoamérica (REOL), a Latin American academic network in Organisation Studies.

Bill Cooke
Bill is Professor of Strategic Management in The York Management School, University of York, UK. His research focuses on the spatial and temporal spread of managerialism – that is, the spread of management ideas and ideologies through time, and around the globe. Bill is a foundational scholar in CMS in the UK and has played a central role in the development of the CMS community in the US and Latin America. He is a supporter of LAEMOS, the Latin-American-European Management and Organizational Studies Group, and has been a keynote at their conference.

Sadhvi Dar
PhD in Management Studies, Cambridge University, UK. Sadhvi is Lecturer in Corporate Social Responsibility/Business Ethics at the School of Business and Management, Queen Mary, University of London. Her research investigates the juncture between measurement and culture, and contributes to current understandings in organization studies about accountability, reporting and processes of knowledge production. Theoretically, she finds inspiration in postcolonial studies, social philosophy and psychoanalytic approaches, however, she also has an interest in post-structural theory more broadly.

Nidhi Srinivas
PhD in Management, Strategy and Organization, McGill University, Canada. Nidhi is Associate Professor of Nonprofit Management at the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy, The New School, New York, USA. His research interests center on global civil society and post-colonial management knowledge. Specifically, he studies the Management of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the Transfer and Transformation of Management knowledge to, and within, organizations in formerly colonized countries. He is interested in vernacular forms of managing that are elided or endangered by professional discourses of management and the manager. He is committed to the subaltern and explores the ways class and professional power grow naturalized, and the ways to unearth such power and challenge it.