

ANTI-History

CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES

The *Critical Management Studies* series covers topics from management style techniques, corporate culture and cross-cultural management to evaluation, organizational structure and management science and operations, drawing on a range of radical traditions that include feminism, critical theory, Marxism, post-modernism/poststructuralism, critical race theory, environmentalism, labour process theory, postcolonial theory, existentialism and applied critical management studies.

Books in this series aim to contribute to socio-political change, from authors who self-identify as critical management scholars, critical scholars of management, or those with practical experience in the field, encouraging us to rethink the fundamental relationships between working/organizing/managing and our sense of humanity.

Previous Books:

Organizing Disaster: The Construction of Humanitarianism

Written by: Adam Rostis

Organization Theory: Critical and Philosophical Engagements

Written by: Tuomo Peltonen

Contesting Institutional Hegemony in Today's Business Schools: Doctoral Students Speak Out

Edited by: Ajnesh Prasad

The Ideological Evolution of Human Resource Management: A Critical Look into HRM Research and Practices

Written by: Sami Itani

Making Critical Sense of Immigrant Experience: A Case Study of Hong Kong Chinese in Canada

Written by: Rosalie K. S. Hilde

STEM-Professional Women's Exclusion in the Canadian Space Industry: Anchor Points and Intersectionality at the Margins of Space

Written by: Stefanie Ruel

Values, Rationality, and Power: Developing Organizational Wisdom: A Case Study of a Canadian Healthcare Authority

Written by: Brad C. Anderson

Historical Female Management Theorists: Frances Perkins, Hallie Flanagan, Madeleine Parent and Viola Desmond

Written by: Kristin S. Williams

An ANTi-History about Transgender Inclusion in the Brazilian Labor Market

Written by: Camilla Pinto Luna and Denise Franca Barros

Critical Management Studies

ANTI-History: Theorization, Application, Critique and Dispersion

BY

NICHOLOUS M. DEAL

Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada

CHRISTOPHER M. HARTT

Dalhousie University, Canada

AND

ALBERT J. MILLS

The University of Eastern Finland, Finland



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2024

Copyright © 2024 Nicholous M. Deal, Christopher M. Hartt, and Albert J. Mills.
Published under exclusive license by Emerald Publishing Limited.

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: www.copyright.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80455-242-1 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80455-241-4 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80455-243-8 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Contents

List of Abbreviations	<i>vii</i>
About the Authors	<i>ix</i>
Foreword	<i>xi</i>
Acknowledgements	<i>xv</i>
Author's Note	<i>xvii</i>
Introduction	<i>1</i>
Orthodoxies, Management and Organizational Knowledge, and Disruption	<i>1</i>
The Age of ANTi-History Disruption	<i>2</i>
Zooming In on the Book and its Chapters	<i>4</i>
Chapter 1 The Development of ANTi-History	<i>7</i>
Introduction	<i>8</i>
ANTi-History's Blast from the Past	<i>8</i>
The Trajectory of ANTi-History	<i>11</i>
Conclusion	<i>17</i>
Chapter 2 Theorizing ANTi-History	<i>19</i>
Introduction	<i>20</i>
Theorizing ANTi-History	<i>20</i>
Sociology of Knowledge	<i>21</i>
Postmodern Historiography	<i>22</i>
Actor–Network Theory (ANT)	<i>23</i>
Advancing the Theorization of ANTi-History	<i>24</i>
Non-corporeal Actants	<i>24</i>
Amodern Historiography	<i>25</i>
Relationalism	<i>26</i>
Ontological Politics Vis-à-Vis Controversies	<i>28</i>

Refining the Theorization of ANTi-History	29
History as Performance	29
Amodern Time	30
Significance of the Individual Actor	32
Conclusion	33
Chapter 3 Applying ANTi-History	35
Introduction	36
Theory of a Method	37
Archival Research	39
Research Contexts and Sites of ANTi-History	42
Conclusion	45
Chapter 4 ANTi-History in International Contexts	47
Introduction	48
Foregrounding ANTi-History In and Beyond the Halifax School	48
ANTi-History Across Geographies and Contexts	49
Brazil	50
Finland	53
Europe (Outside Finland)	54
Asia	55
Australia	56
Africa	57
United States	58
Conclusion	59
Chapter 5 Future Directions for ANTi-History and Conclusions	61
Introduction	62
Facing Challenges of ANTi-History Complexity	63
Dialoguing ANTi-History from Beyond the Network	67
Colonialism and the Post	67
A Theoretical Dialogue with Microhistory	69
A Future with Rhetorical History	70
Feminist ANTi-History Critique	71
Final Thoughts	72
Glossary	73
References	77
Index	87

List of Abbreviations

ANT	Actor–Network Theory
ASB	Atlantic Schools of Business Conference
MOS	Management and Organizational Studies
NCA	Non-corporeal Actant
Pan Am	Pan American World Airways

This page intentionally left blank

About the Authors

Nicholous M. Deal is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Business Administration and Tourism and Hospitality Management at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Canada. He obtained his PhD in Management at Saint Mary's University where he was first introduced to ANTi-History. In the time, since he has developed a research agenda in management and organization studies that problematizes political processes of marginalization through critical historiography vis-à-vis ANTi-Microhistory. His research has been published in *Management Decision*, the *Journal of Management History*, and *Management & Organizational History*. He is an Associate Editor of the journal *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, the social media editor for the *Journal of Management History*, and serves as the Elected Representative for doctoral students and junior faculty in the Management History Division of the Academy of Management.

Christopher M. Hartt is Professor of Management in Dalhousie University's Faculty of Agriculture. Growing up in an economically depressed area of Nova Scotia, he shared sports fields and classrooms with a diverse population. He noted that education seemed more related to family history than capability. 'Smart' kids went to university or prison. Fortunately, his family prized education and he received a BA and MBA by age 25. He worked 22 years managing for others and being an entrepreneur during which he often wondered if his co-workers, colleagues, and employees learned anything in university. In 2008 (age 47) he enrolled in the Sobey PhD and was introduced to critical management studies by Dr Jean Helms Mills and Dr Albert J. Mills. During that time, he developed non-corporeal actant (NCA) theory by applying critical sensemaking theory to micro aspects of actor-network theory. NCA theory looks to discover what is behind what seems to be irrational choices and possibly predict them. Key to further enlightenment was work with Indigenous scholars to connect the symmetry of actors (actor-network theory) with symbiosis of place (an idea consistent with many Indigenous traditions). This work owes much to ANTi-History and the many discussions with others from The Halifax School. He is married and has two adult sons: one farms 'clean' and sells vegetables and flowers at a local market and the other holds a PhD in Statistics and is an expert in sports analytics.

Albert J. Mills is Professor Emeritus of Management at Saint Mary's University (Canada) and Professor of Innovative Management at the University of Eastern

Finland. His main research interests focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion; gender and management; critical management studies; ANTi-History, and critical sensemaking. These interests are reflected in his 50 books, 200 journal articles, and book chapters. His books include *History and Business Storytelling* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2023 – with Nick Deal); *Management and Organizational History: A Research Overview* (London: Routledge, 2020 – with Milorad Novicevic); *Insights and Research on the Study of Gender and Intersectionality in International Airline Cultures*, 2017 (Leeds: Emerald); *The Routledge Companion to Management & Organizational History* (London: Routledge, 2015 – with Trish McLaren and Terry Weatherbee); *The Oxford Handbook of Diversity in Organizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 – with Regina Bendl, Inge Bleijenbergh, and Elina Henttonen); *ANTI-History: Theorizing the Past, History, and Historiography in Management and Organizational Studies* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2012 – with Gabrielle Durepos); and *Gendering Organizational Analysis* (London: Sage, 1992 – with Peta Tancred).

Foreword

In a time when organizations and society have been changing immensely, the understanding of history and its role in shaping contemporary organizational studies has become more critical than ever. As scholars, we are called upon to question the ways in which history is constructed, narrated, and employed to produce knowledge. Recognizing that organizational practices are shaped by their past, historical research enables scholars to challenge hegemonic practices and normative organizational theory. According to Durepos et al. (2020), the growing variety of approaches in writing organizational histories, management thought, and researching management in historically conscious ways has led to the rise of critical organizational histories characterized by reflexivity, questioning of performativity, and a commitment to de-naturalizing hegemonic organizations and historiography. Such scholarship challenges the dominant history of management thought by exposing exclusion and marginalization in various domains. The incorporation of postcolonial, feminist, and queer scholarship into historical approaches highlights the ethnocentricity, gender-neutrality, and fixed identity categories in management education, emphasizing the importance of reflexivity and inclusion of marginalized voices (see Durepos et al., 2020). ANTi-History emerged as an important approach to understanding history in our field (Durepos & Mills, 2012a).

If we want to discuss ANTi-History, it is important first to present what I understand as actor–network theory (ANT). Based on the work of Bruno Latour and John Law, ANT is rooted in the Studies of Science and Technology field, presenting an alternative to approaches that focus solely on either humans or artefacts in analysing technological development and change. ANT emphasizes the importance of heterogeneous networks, arguing that both the social and the technical aspects of technology should not be divided into separate entities. This approach posits that entities are formed and acquire their attributes due to their relationships with others, existing only as continuous relational outcomes of ordering processes.

Central to ANT is the understanding that entities exist within networks of relationships, making it impossible to separate actors from networks. The primary focus of ANT is to investigate how networks are formed and maintained, with an emphasis on understanding the strategies that generate and sustain large actors. As a process-oriented perspective, ANT aims to analyse how order is achieved through the complex interactions of multiple materials, focussing on empirical settings and actions without imposing a priori definitions on the actors involved.

The application of ANT to organizational studies offers valuable insights by addressing how organizations are composed of and maintained through the networking of heterogeneous elements. This perspective views organizations as temporary stable products resulting from minute, contingent processes of ordering. ANT contributes to organizational studies by emphasizing reflexivity and focussing on how specific organizational aspects are sustained and maintained by networks.

ANT is ontologically relativist, acknowledging that the world can be organized in different ways, and empirically realist, offering no difficulty in producing descriptions of organizational processes. This combination renders ANT a relevant and useful approach to organizational studies. By refusing to accept dualisms and taking anomalies as its starting point, ANT provides a way of understanding how institutions work without relying solely on human agency or structural imperatives as explanatory tools. ANT offers a unique approach to understanding complex systems, developing its own notions and vocabulary in the process. By analysing the networking of heterogeneous elements, ANT contributes to the broader field of organizational studies by providing a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the processes, relationships, and interactions that shape and sustain organizations.

ANT is focussed on politics. ANT is presented as an approach that transcends ontology, enacting versions of reality that encompass the good, the epistemological, and the ontological, as well as their counterparts. Consequently, accounts emerging from ANT are inherently political. Ontological politics, as a concept, highlights the mutable nature of realities, which are shaped and contested through everyday practices. In this context, realities are intertwined with the political, challenging the presupposition of singularity and revealing the potential for alternative realities.

The implications of ontological politics in social science suggest that researchers contribute to the enactment of various realities, raising questions about which realities are being prioritized and which are being marginalized. Representations are understood as performative acts that generate divisions, distributions, and narratives, ultimately rendering some possibilities imaginable while leaving others unattainable. Furthermore, Mol (2002) posits that various aspects of life, such as sex differences, age, and cultural identity, are enacted alongside disease processes, resulting in complex, intertwined realities. Ontological politics, in this sense, challenges the notion of rational choice, emphasizing the importance of problem framing and the localized nature of solutions. ANT encourages a deeper understanding of the complex interconnections between realities and the role of researchers in enacting and contesting realities. ANT challenges the conventional understanding of organizations, provides critical performativity, and concurrently presents a reflexive approach to management and organizational knowledge, particularly by promoting a 'political ontology' of organizing (Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010, p. 419).

ANTi-History represents an adaptation of ANT to examine history within the disciplines of management and organizational studies. This innovative

approach seeks to incorporate the principles and methodologies of ANT in the analysis of past events, fostering a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the development and dynamics of organizations and their management throughout history.

Within this context, this book emerges as a timely and significant contribution to this intellectual endeavour. ANTi-History, an innovative approach conceptualized by Durepos and Mills (2012), challenges the conventional understanding of history as a singular and objective account of the past. Instead, it acknowledges the complex interplay between storytelling, social values, and the limitations of factual truth-telling. This book serves as a comprehensive guide to ANTi-History, presenting not only its theoretical foundations but also its potential applications and future directions within the realm of management and organizational studies.

ANTi-History emphasizes the imperative of examining prevailing perspectives and elevating the voices of disenfranchised groups. As a result, this methodology advocates for integrating diverse viewpoints into historical narratives, thus enabling a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of past epochs. By scrutinizing the biases and assumptions embedded in traditional historiography, ANTi-History generates a more refined interpretation of historical events and their elucidation. By challenging established historical accounts and methodologies, this approach nurtures critical thinking skills and motivates individuals to reevaluate commonly accepted concepts and beliefs. Moreover, ANTi-History highlights the significance of sociocultural and political contexts in shaping historical events and their subsequent analyses, ultimately producing a more intricate and profound comprehension of history. By offering a platform for marginalized communities to convey their experiences, ANTi-History can facilitate empowerment within these groups and foster a more equitable society.

The authors undertake an exploration of ANTi-History, delineating its development from its genesis to its present standing as an expanding area of investigation. The book is organized into five coherent chapters, each addressing a distinct facet of ANTi-History. Commencing with an introduction and the evolution of the approach, the authors supply a lexicon of essential terms, evaluate influential publications, and engage with ongoing discussions pertaining to ANTi-History. The following chapters probe the theoretical foundations, empirical implementations, and global contexts in which ANTi-History has been employed. The book culminates with a contemplative examination of the future potential of ANTi-History and its prospective contributions to the wider domain of organization studies.

This book serves as an attestation to the abundant and diverse scholarly engagement with ANTi-History, rendering it a valuable resource for researchers, practitioners, and students interested in examining the past from unconventional standpoints, contesting dominant historical accounts, and promoting critical thinking in management and organizational studies. Furthermore, it incites readers to participate in reflective and transformative dialogues regarding the nature of history, knowledge production, and its implications for organizational practices.

As you immerse yourself in the contents of this book, you will be engrossed in a captivating and intellectually stimulating endeavour that aspires to redefine your perception of history and its function in contemporary organizational studies. I encourage you to join the authors in investigating the potential of ANTi-History and embark on a quest towards a more discerning and multifaceted comprehension of the past.

– Rafael Alcadipani, Professor of Organizational
Studies, FGV EAESP.

Acknowledgements

No book comes together without the efforts of many people working behind the scenes. We find it fitting that a book about ANTi-History – an approach that commits to revealing the processes that take place in producing knowledge – begins with acknowledging those who might not feature prominently in our research but have nonetheless contributed to our success in moving this project forward. First, we would like to thank the team at Emerald for agreeing to work with us. We especially thank Fiona Allison, Lydia Cutmore, and Sathiya Bama S. S. for your patience and guidance at each step of this project. Your support of us to write as much as we needed and in whatever way we felt comfortable provided us the creative licence to just be ourselves. We are grateful.

This work was similarly impacted by the selflessness of two scholars in particular: Gabrielle (Gabie) Durepos and Milorad M. Novicevic. Gabie played an integral role in first having the book commissioned as a research overview of ANTi-History. Then, she committed herself to providing feedback on what we wrote as we wrote it. This resulted in countless hours of discussion – a true testament of her ethic as a supportive scholar and friend. As will soon become clear, Gabie’s work developing ANTi-History with Albert J. Mills over the last 15 years plays a leading role not only in shaping the content of this book but also encouraging dialogue about the usefulness of historical analyses in management and organization studies. Her commitment to advancing ANTi-History as an ‘open system’ approach to ‘doing history’ in business, management, and organizational research is a gift that we do not take for granted.

We are similarly indebted to Milorad M. Novicevic who is deserving of an enormous deal of respect for challenging us to think beyond the literature and towards ANTi-History’s potential. At an early stage of this project, Milorad had admonished us to consider how the debates about method in management history, especially those focussed on critiquing ANTi-History, are as much about scholarly elitism as they are about research philosophies. What we took from his comments was an opportunity to present ANTi-History using more straightforward, inclusive language than in the past. Our tone and writing style throughout reflect this sentiment; one that oscillates between an analytical and conversational tone. Milorad likewise provided editorial comments that have immensely improved our writing.

The foreword written by Rafael Alcadipani is incredibly generous of our work. We have long admired Rafael’s scholarship in actor–network theory, the politics of organizing, and surfacing marginalized voices from the Global South. For us,

our shared research interests but especially Rafael's role in mobilizing ANTi-History in Brazil presented a rare opportunity to collaborate in this way. A special thanks is owed to him for agreeing to take on this task in short order. We could not be more pleased to have his endorsement as well as an assessment of ANTi-History in the context of the field's current intellectual terrain.

A special recognition is also worth noting to our vignette contributors. Each chapter begins with a short reflection from an international and diverse group of leading scholars in the field that are familiar with, contributed to, and have authority in ANTi-History: Milorad M. Novicevic (University of Mississippi), Wim Van Lent (IÉSEG School of Management), Renata Guimarães Quelha de Sá and Alessandra de Sá Mello da Costa (Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro), Christian Stutz (University of Jyväskylä), and William M. Foster (University of Alberta). They provide thoughtful insights that no doubt instigate future ANTi-History research.

Our families have given their unwavering support over the past two years. The choice to take on this project was not theirs yet our spouses, children, and extended family each played an invaluable role in inspiring our motivation to finish writing. As is practice when working with Christopher M. Hartt, we had the benefit of his wife, Gretchen Pohlkamp's editorial prowess in reading, suggesting improvements, and making our content much more comprehensible. We also benefitted from two of his research assistants, Linqi Cai and Ashley MacDonald, in the Faculty of Agriculture at Dalhousie University who performed a systematic literature review of ANTi-History work. Truly this book is better because of their support.

Finally, we are indebted to all those who have laboured to advance ANTi-History both locally vis-à-vis the Halifax School and abroad in a dozen or so countries. Your contributions spread across numerous international conference presentations and proceedings, journal articles, book chapters, and commentaries are what inspired us to write. Put simply, this book would not exist if it were not for your interests in 'doing critical historiography'. We hope that the book adds yet another mark on the future of our field, practice as scholars, and shared community abroad.

Author's Note

This book provides a research overview of ANTi-History in historical research of business, management, and organization. It is structured around a systematic, close reading of ANTi-History through its introduction to the field nearly two decades ago; the literatures that theorize it as an approach for 'doing history' and how others have contributed to its usefulness to scholars, practitioners, and students; an exploration of the empirical research areas, settings, and contexts – especially its position within an archival zeitgeist in critical management and organizational studies – that scholars have engaged in; revisiting the debates that concern ANTi-History and its theorization of the past; the international character that it has taken across numerous countries in six continents; and potential future research that present unique opportunities to further advance and refine ANTi-History and critical historiography scholarship.

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

Orthodoxies, Management and Organizational Knowledge, and Disruption

Every so often an idea comes along and disrupts an orthodoxy. Take management and organization studies as an example. A simple read on the surface would convince even a casual reader that management theory stands on its own two feet and owes nothing of its intellectual heritage to any other field. This was indeed the dominant, ‘origin story’ of the field until – among other critiques – Burrell and Morgan’s (1979, p. 119) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis* challenged normative management theory by demonstrating how ‘all theories of organisation are founded upon a philosophy of science and a theory of society’. Disruption is not just at the field level. The nascent research agenda inspired by Cummings, Bridgman, Hassard, and Rowlinson’s (2017) critical reinterpretation of management history has opened new ways of (re)thinking the theoretical basis for which our profession rests. No idea is off limits. Theories such as groupthink, for instance, that were once considered impractical with very little basis for ‘modern management’ practice (Sims, 1992) are now celebrated as a plausible alternative to other managerial decision-making knowledges (e.g. attribution theory, probability, and choice modelling) (McShane, Tasa, & Steen, 2021) and simultaneously critiqued for its assumed theoretical homogeneity with early social psychology (Pol, Bridgman, & Cummings, 2022). From just about any perspective, it is as though new ground has been broken in management and organizational theory to invite an exploration of research traditions from multiple levels, angles, and contexts. That is, disruption and ideas that disrupt help us to think (and rethink) about what we have yet to know about business, management, and organizing.

At the same time as this age of disruption, there is also a renewed interest among management scholars to surface and understand the historicity of theories and the utility of history in theorizing management. Certainly, the work to historicize management and organization studies (Clark & Rowlinson, 2004) has presented what were previously considered untenable opportunities to unravel myths, recover alternate pasts, and infuse historical consciousness in management thought. What was once overlooked, not taken seriously, or even simply ignored, is now – ironically – considered an important piece in the theory building process (Maclean, Clegg, Suddaby, & Harvey, 2021). It is from this context of disruption and the increasing use of history that new turns and developments like ANTi-History have

flourished. In our opinion, one of these disruptive theoretical developments¹ influenced by Booth and Rowlinson's (2006) treatise for a critical interrogation of ahistorical management and organization studies is ANTi-History.

The Age of ANTi-History Disruption

At the time of this writing, some 15 years have passed since ANTi-History was first developed as a thought experiment within a doctoral programme in Eastern Canada to illustrate how management and organizational knowledge is highly contested with issues of power, politics, and performance featuring prominently in analysis. We'd like to think of ANTi-History as representing a dilogy of sorts where the first part is committed to flourishing its theoretical development and use while the second is concerned with debating what it means for the future of management history. We have taken both these 'parts' and teased them out across the chapters of this book to answer a mashup of: 'What is ANTi-History, how can it be used, and why is it relevant today?' Iterations of this question have popped up in various settings. Be it in conference presentations, answering peer review queries, eager graduate students exploring alternative methods in their coursework, and even management practitioners, we have encountered both well intention scholars curious about ANTi-History and have sparred with its detractors. While the setting of these questions has changed, questions of what, how, and why remain. In each of our own experiences working with (and at times, defending) ANTi-History, we have noticed that these questions have only intensified in historical research on business, management, and organizations (Bruce, 2020; Decker, Foster, & Giovannoni, 2023; Wilson et al., 2022). This problem led us to ponder the timing and value of ANTi-History's 'construct clarity'.

As we state emphatically throughout the book, we do not believe ANTi-History is perfect nor should it be immune from criticism – what theory, method, or approach is? There comes a time in any field of study when ideas be given a second look and their trajectory mapped out. The reassessment of an idea provides a chance to see how knowledge is disseminated over time and where it might be headed. Similarly, the point of this book is to take stock of ANTi-History's past, present, and future. Each of these temporal brackets serves an important purpose. Identifying ANTi-History's past is needed because understanding the origin of an idea helps to clarify its development. Analysing the present situation is helpful in contextualizing how ANTi-History is applied in theorizing historical knowledge in management and organization studies. Prospecting the future guides scholars to consider the placement of their contributions to the ANTi-History agenda. By stating our purpose upfront and clearly, we hope that our accounting of ANTi-History herein might help resolve some questions and maybe add fodder for others to debate.

¹At last count, we noted some 500 search results from Google Scholar featuring 'ANTi-History' as a keyword.

Therefore, this book sets out to achieve three outcomes: (1) it (re)introduces ANTi-History; (2) provides an outline of the potential of ANTi-History for understanding the past in management and organizational studies; and (3) traces the trajectory of actors, including publications focussed on ANTi-History to date.

Reflexively, we also wish to state upfront somewhat of an obvious fact: each of us has a stake in ANTi-History. Our interest in advancing ANTi-History knowledge is what motivated us to write in the first place; this sentiment certainly informs our writing which we sought to strike an analytical narrative tone. Rather than make a feeble attempt at denying our proximity to ANTi-History and to those who participate in its development, we embrace it. For instance, other than Gabrielle Durepos, Albert J. Mills probably has the longest history working with ANTi-History. His many collaborations with Gabrielle Durepos set the early theoretical borders around the idea. Over time, his work with doctoral students at home and abroad has taken ANTi-History beyond the geographies of the Global North. Using this logic, Mills is just as part of ANTi-History story as the literatures that inform it. We also write how Christopher M. Hartt's work developing non-corporeal actant theory and Nicholous M. Deal's insertion of microhistorical analysis stems from gaps in the ANTi-History literature. Clearly, we are 'biased', but we choose to look at our partiality as a benefit to our readership and not a liability. Our 'close reading' of ANTi-History is on full display through an intimate narrative across each chapter.

The work contained throughout is as much a labour of love as it is the fulfilment of an obligation we took upon ourselves to thoroughly flesh out the innerworkings of ANTi-History across time. Our hope here is to demystify ANTi-History and present it as an opened-ended, loosely bounded assemblage that, like all other theoretical approaches, remains a work-in-progress. We do not purport to have all the answers, and neither do we write this as a response to a debate. Perhaps, then, our work should be interpreted as the first attempt of conducting an overview of ANTi-History research since the initial publication of Gabrielle Durepos and Albert J. Mills' (2012a) *ANTi-History: Theorizing the Past, History, and Historiography in Management and Organization Studies*. So much has changed since then. In her comments shared with us, Durepos (personal communication, April 17, 2023) remarked about the early days that 'there wasn't really a home for research that blended business history with organization studies, and specifically critical management studies. So ANTi-History didn't fit anywhere'. The situation has improved immensely. This book is evidence of the field's warming to ANTi-History, but it doesn't stop here. The volume of ANTi-History scholarship spread out across books, chapters, articles, conference presentations, symposia, and invited talks leaves us with the impression that there might yet be interest in traversing organizational phenomena using ANTi-History critical historiography. We'll highlight as many as we can in the space we have. Suffice it to say, as we brought this book together, we were pleasantly surprised by the breadth of ANTi-History work in the field.²

²At last count, we noted some 650 search results from Google Scholar featuring 'ANTi-History' as a keyword.

Zooming In on the Book and its Chapters

In this book, we are attempting to capture a story of ANTi-History as it emerges in management and organization studies. We share the various works of those who have contributed to its intellectual foundation and application before we move towards observing the big picture of its international contexts and potential future. Specifically, we use five chapters to unravel its origins, discuss where and how it is currently configured, and then ponder what direction it might go next. We think of this book as being organized as a story about the past, present, and future.

Because ANTi-History research practice emphasizes following people, things, and ideas in the production of knowledge, we believe it was best to allow others to share in the storytelling process. We privilege the voice of others in two ways. First, a lot of the content we present relies on the interpretation of ANTi-History scholarship performed by others. At every point, we were keen to properly attribute their work and take time in describing its significance to the field. Second, not only do we rely on the work of others to illuminate the various dimensions of the story, but we also lean in on the international ANTi-History network to capture sentiments from key theorists who share their thoughts on this key critical historiography. They each play in the same scholarly sandbox as we do and, importantly, where ANTi-History is produced. What this looks like is a brief feature at the start of each chapter that captures our subject matter experts' sentiments. By including their voice in our work, we continue in ANTi-History to form the tradition of inviting others to construct research.

Now that we have outlined the book in general terms, let's 'zoom in' on how the chapters unfold.

In Chapter 1, we begin by detailing an account of ANTi-History's development. Just like how most of the constituent facets of ANTi-History are spread out across a variety of publications, so too is its origin story. In this opening chapter, we bring together the story of its metamorphosis by taking ANTi-History on a trip down memory lane. We describe how ANTi-History was, at first, a bundle of disjointed ideas becoming more refined as it matured to tackle several issues facing the field of management and organization studies during the early 2000s, including a growing discontentment with positivism in social theory and renewed interest in history featuring critical perspectives in management and organizational scholarship. Our story of ANTi-History evolves; capturing how an idea of a historiography concerned with highlighting politics went from being dismissed to now the subject of critique. To understand how ANTi-History was formed, we unfurl the main components of the approach by offering our take on the most impactful knowledges that carved out a clear and distinct approach to ANTi-History. We illustrate the theme of the development of ANTi-History through an analysis of selected exemplary publications.

Chapter 2 picks up on the task of elucidating ANTi-History but from the perspective of its theorization over time. We begin by looking at ANTi-History from 'above the clouds' – that is to say, a high-level review of the three literatures that gives it shape: the sociology of knowledge, postmodern historiography, and

actor–network theory. Then we explore the efforts of those who have clearly (and formally) advanced the theorization of ANTi-History. By theorizing, we mean contributions like non-corporeal actant theory that develop ANTi-History an alternative approach to ‘doing history’. In the process, we surface a distinction within the literature that distinguishes between advancing and refining ANTi-History. The key difference that we explain in greater detail is the way in which scholars target their scholarship; the former tends to break new ground and make explicit their contributions to ANTi-History as an approach whereas the latter focusses on ways to build on extant ideas about ANTi-History. Both are incredibly valuable to furthering our understanding of ANTi-History.

In Chapter 3, we tease out the many ways ANTi-History can be applied to empirical phenomena. The chapter begins with questioning ANTi-History as a theory of a method. Here we discuss the operationalization of ANTi-History as an empirical approach in historical research and not a thought experiment per se. What we are attempting to convey therein is how ANTi-History goes beyond a theory and method to demonstrate a critical historiography that is sensitive to the highly political relations within actor–networks. Next, we characterize the archival research zeitgeist within management and organizational history that ANTi-History latches itself to. There we share how most – if not all – the extant work to date has involved some engagement with archival material. In the final section, we describe the research contexts and sites conducive for practising ANTi-History. Admittedly, a significant corpus of empirical ANTi-History focusses on international airlines. We explain the connections among those who do ANTi-History this way, the PhD programme at Saint Mary’s University, and the broad airline project led by Mills and Jean Helms Mills. To tease: a lot of work using ANTi-History to study organizational histories have been co-authored by either (or both) Mills and Helms Mills as part of their mentorship of doctoral students at home and abroad. More than anything else, ANTi-History in this chapter is discussed as being in the same grey areas of management and organization studies as rhetorical history and intersectional logic, for example.

Chapter 4 takes ANTi-History beyond the doctoral programme in Halifax and its alumni network across Canada (and beyond) and places it into a much broader, international context. We first share a story of the first international audience ANTi-History received outside of the management studies conference circuit in North America. In March 2010, a team of ANTi-Historians including Hartt and Mills travelled to Argentina to attend the Latin American and European Organization Studies conference. There they not only received developmental feedback on their work but also enrolled the interest of a future Saint Mary’s University doctoral student. Next, we follow how ANTi-History has proliferated across multiple geographies and by key scholars including in Brazil, Finland, Germany, Sri Lanka, Australia, Sudan, and the United States. What excites us about the internationalization of ANTi-History is how far and wide the approach reaches and the potential for more decolonialized historical research in management studies.

In Chapter 5, we focus on future directions for ANTi-History and offer a conclusion. We describe the continued need for critical historiography and how

ANTI-History might be able to fulfil its agenda. We muse on the potential influence of ANTi-History on historical research in business, management, and organizations while considering how the application of ANTi-History can continue to contribute to theory development more broadly. Finally, we suggest how ANTi-History can assist (and be the subject) in improving the construct of other salient theories such as microhistory, rhetorical history, and feminist critique.

As a final comment, in pulling together this book we were reminded of the debates that ANTi-History has caused. For a period, the tone of the debate (in management history) became quite sharp, and it seemed the criticisms were plentiful. If there is validity to some of its criticisms, it is that ANTi-History assumes a widely read readership in multiple complex literatures involving the philosophy of science, historiography, and organizational analysis. We do not assume nor anticipate our readers to have expertise in any one of the theoretical perspectives and literatures that produce ANTi-History. In fact, we define the success of this book in its ability to speak to three audiences: (1) scholars, (2) students, and (3) practitioners. So, in our attempt to provide greater clarity to ANTi-History, its story of disruption, and how it can be operationalized beyond those who theorize it, towards the end of this book we offer a glossary of the most common terms used by scholars working with ANTi-History. To this point, there has not been a one-stop place to reference its terminology. Our list of keywords is not exhaustive nor should be taken as an authority but simply our understanding of how they have been used in the literature. We hope it is received in the same helpful spirit that it is offered.

Chapter 1

The Development of ANTi-History

More than a decade ago, I got to know ANTi-History as an approach to examining the process of producing knowledge of the past. I have viewed ANTi-History as a unique way of engaging the past by tracing the practices of the actors networked in this production process. I subscribed to ANTi-History as a ‘practice turn’ in history recognizing that ‘it is not the object, “the past”, that “generates” a knowledge adequate to it but rather the knowledge that constitutes its object’ (Seth, 2023, p. 108). In other words, I believe that ANTi-History does not consider the past as something that has passed away but as something that may have an afterlife that could be captured in alternative (mnemo)histories (Deal et al., 2021). The ANTi-History literature has had an eye-opening effect on me, as other approaches (e.g. reconstructionist, constructionist, and deconstructionist), in my view, focus more on the ‘inputs’ to and ‘outputs’ of the historical research, while ANTi-History focusses on its ‘process’ aspects.

A major initial barrier to my adoption of ANTi-History approach was its infra-Latourian language that clouded my meaning-making process because its vocabulary appears to me as cognitively taxing to both the writer and the readers of ANTi-History articles. Fortunately, my collaboration with Albert Mills and Nicholous Deal has helped me to develop my own mnemonics in an effort to write meaningfully my co-authored ANTi-History-related articles. Another major barrier to my adoption of ANTi-History approach was its seemingly hermeneutic and tightly coupled assumptions. These rigid assumptions (in my view) constrain the applicability of ANTi-History to theory elaboration and construction in management and organization studies (MOS) because of the related strong ontological and epistemological tensions. Therefore, I find it valuable that space is being made in ANTi-History to succinctly parse out its underlying assumptions. Why is this of value? Because the motive here is one that serves as a valuable reference for researchers who want to relax these assumptions and shift

ANTI-History from being wholly ANT-grounded towards an ANT-informed perspective. In this regard, I am particularly intrigued by the potential of ANTi-Microhistory (Deal, 2022; Mills, 2017) to be used for construct extension and reconstruction in the domain of MOS. I have worked with others recently to contribute to this effort; developing a heuristic to sense crises through an ANTi-History-inspired case study (Horner, Holland, & Novicevic, 2023).

– Milroad M. Novicevic, Associate Professor, University of Mississippi.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to begin our book with an overview of ANTi-History's past. A lot of ANTi-History work assumes that readers are fully versed in the literatures it draws from (e.g. actor–network theory, ANT) and concepts that are employed that make it operable. Joining a conversation while its happening is difficult – we view this experience akin to the way ANTi-History is received in MOS. We feel there is no better way to dive into a thorough discussion of ANTi-History than to revisit the conditions of its development. Therefore, in this chapter, we bring our readers back in time to the story of ANTi-History, its development as a thought experiment, and identify its key tenets.

ANTI-History's Blast from the Past

ANTI-History is a multifaceted approach to the study of history and the past-as-history that was initially developed by Gabrielle Durepos and Albert J. Mills almost two decades ago. It engages three literatures: the sociology of knowledge, postmodern historiography, and ANT to make sense of history and the past. The decision to call this an approach rather than a method or methodology 'stems from the difficulty of avoiding a thorough description of its epistemological position' whose very oscillation of ontological and epistemological assumptions suggest an unwarranted fixedness (Durepos & Mills, 2012b, p. 718, see also Law, 2004) or black-box (i.e. 'rendering items of knowledge distinct from the circumstances of their creation' Latour & Woolgar, 1979, p. 259). The black-boxing of historical accounts is one of the central foci of ANTi-History whereby the researcher sets out to make sense of the processes involved (e.g. how a particular history becomes a dominant account). The following insights inform what shapes and directs how an ANTi-History is produced.

ANTI-History was initially developed as a response to the call by Booth and Rowlinson (2006) for a historic turn in MOS. It was particularly aimed at encouraging a range of historical approaches in the field of business studies and allied areas of interest (Mills & Novicevic, 2020), including MOS. One particular