

Call for papers

Managerial utopias

**21st Conference on the History of Management and Organisations (21st JHMO)
16th to 18th March 2016. UTBM Sevenans (Territoire de Belfort, France)**

Organised by the “*Association pour l’histoire du management et des organisations*” (Association for the History of Management and Organisations), the Université de Technologie of Belfort-Montbéliard, the Research Centre LSH (Laboratoire des Sciences Historiques, EA 2273) of the Université de Franche-Comté in Besançon



To be interested in managerial and organisational utopias is to investigate the imagination and the ideals pursued by the managers. Utopia is an imagined perfect world, and, on the face of it, beyond reality. It seems to us that business managers are more likely than many others to seek utopias, because they invent and operate models of organisation and control, and because they search for perfect operational methods.

It seems important to verify such a hypothesis by establishing a survey of these utopias. The term appeared during the Renaissance, and it would be interesting to better understand its various versions in organisations, whether it is in the world of production, commerce or finance.

It would also be interesting to relate managerial utopias with other utopias, beginning with those of the engineers, who, from the beginning of the industrial revolution, tried to establish labour systems appropriate to the mechanisation of production. The impact of technological change could be fundamental. We should also not neglect links with political and literary utopias. What should we say about the evolution of utopias, particularly the political ones? Are they all relevant to the world of organisations (corporate citizenship, democracy in the workplace...)?

So, through written and verbal discourses, it is important to investigate the creation of management projects inspired by utopias. The reverse is also interesting: how can the existing organisations inspire the notion of utopias?

Who produces managerial utopias? The theories and the practices are not necessarily the ideas of the managers themselves. Other players contribute to the design of utopias: certainly engineers, workers whether qualified or not, consumers (workers' self-management, cooperatives). Managerial utopias are not just the preserve of the world of industrial production: offices, research laboratories, government agencies are all involved. More

recently, the appearance of new modes of communication and of the knowledge society have surely modified the methods of embracing utopias.

Finally, it seems necessary to investigate the reception, the geographical spread, and the future of these utopias. In what ways have they contributed to the evolution of management practices? Did they influence discussions, practices and thinking beyond the world of business management?

Some themes to consider

- Utopias: originally an idealistic and faultless country. How can this be translated into the language of business?
- The historical dimension of production organisations. From the manufacture to the Taylorist factory. How can we best organise work and production?
- Engineers and managers: links between the two roles, examples of key figures.
- How are organisations influenced by political ideologies (e.g. Lip in Besançon during the seventies, workers' self-management)?
- Similar ideas regarding ideal property patterns: for example the controversies surrounding 'commons'...
- And so on!

Organising Committee

Sophie Chauveau, UTBM (Université de Technologie Belfort-Montbéliard)

Jean-Luc Rossignol, Université de Franche-Comté

Catherine Vuillermot, Université de Franche-Comté

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Philippe Trouvé, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications

Catherine Vuillermot, Université de Franche-Comté

Henri Zimnovitch, CNAM

A Point of Clarification

As during previous conferences, submitted papers that do not fit in this thematic area but that examine management and organisation issues in historical perspective are also welcome. The novelty and originality of the contributions will be given preference in this instance.

Doctoral Seminar

The conference will begin with a doctoral seminar on March 18th, including thesis-tutoring sessions in management history and methodological sessions.

This workshop will involve Ph.D. students in history and management but it may also be of interest to students in sociology, law and economics. Doctoral students wishing to present their research during this workshop should present a document of a maximum of ten pages specifying the research field (theme, research questions), the theoretical framework or the theoretical articulation of the thesis, methodological approach, initial results (if applicable), their main bibliographic references.

Doctoral students at early stages of their thesis are also encouraged to take part.

Key dates

Last date for submission of full papers: December 2^d, 2015.

The papers can be sent in French or English, to include an abstract in both French and English, to the following address.

jhmo2016@gmail.com

Decision of the Scientific Committee: January 15th, 2016

Final text: February 19th, 2016

Papers may be presented in French or English, **simultaneous translation** from French to English will be provided for the plenary sessions.

Contacts :

sophie.chauveau@utbm.fr

catherine.vuillermot@univ-fcomte.fr