

Cummings, S., & Bridgman, T. (2016). The limits and possibilities of history: How a wider, deeper, and more engaged understanding of business history can foster innovative thinking.

Academy of Management Learning and Education, 15(2), 250-267.

<https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2014.0373>

**THE LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF HISTORY: HOW A WIDER, DEEPER AND MORE
ENGAGED UNDERSTANDING OF BUSINESS HISTORY CAN FOSTER INNOVATIVE THINKING**

Stephen Cummings and Todd Bridgman

Calls for greater diversity in management research, education and practice have increased in recent years, driven by a sense of fairness and ethical responsibility, but also because research shows that greater diversity of inputs into management processes can lead to greater innovation. But how can greater diversity of thought be encouraged when educating management students, beyond the advocacy of affirmative action and relating the research on the link between multiplicity and creativity? One way is to think again about how we introduce the subject. Introductory textbooks often begin by relaying the history of management. What is presented is a very limited mono-cultural and linear view of how management emerged. This article highlights the limits this view outlines for initiates in contrast to the histories of other comparable fields (medicine and architecture), and discusses how a wider, deeper and more engaged understanding of history can foster thinking differently.

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, Kirkman and Law's review in *Academy of Management Journal* hailed a "real internationalization of AMJ" (2005: 385). Such diversity, and the insights that this would bring, led them and others to proclaim the start of the 21st century as a "golden age of international management research" (Kirkman and Law, 2005: 379, see also Ellis & Zhan, 2011).

Tempering this optimism, however, has been the observation that while international diversity has grown, mirroring the internationalization of membership of the Academy of Management, there is a homogenizing use of a Western research paradigm, "whereby researchers inadvertently depress the development of novel ideas and theories that may prove to be useful in advancing knowledge in different national and emerging-economy contexts" (Tsui, 2007: 1354). In other words, while knowledge development may appear more diverse, this surface diversity may in fact mask more subtle homogenizing tendencies (e.g., Bruton et al., 2005; Metz & Harzing, 2009; Meyer, 2006; Terjesen et al., 2013).

Similarly, our own research into papers presented at the recently held first Academy of Management conference in Africa (with an aim to "bring Africa's unique capabilities and needs to the attention of the world's organization and management scholars...", AoM, 2013), found that while a large proportion of the presentations focussed on African subject matter, they applied research techniques and theories developed in the West or did comparison studies between modern African thinking and practice and what had been found on similar dimensions in modern Western sites. Not one of the 99 presentations took as its primary focus indigenous African organizational forms or management practices and only one explicitly questioned the appropriateness of conventional theoretical foundations applied in an African setting and sought to advance an innovative perspective out of this (Mangaliso & Lewis, 2013).

While the AoM in Africa was certainly a step in the right direction with regard to increasing the diversity of perspectives applied to management, we, like Tsui (and others e.g., (Decker, 2013; Li, 2012; Sundararajan, 2014; Welch et al, 2011) would encourage management scholars and educators to take different contexts seriously, to develop innovative theory and to ask novel questions inspired by a deeper contextualization.

These calls for greater diversity are now levelled not just in the interests of fairness and redressing the wrongs done to those groups or cultures previously underrepresented, but also because of increasing awareness about the links between greater diversity in groups leading to more innovation idea generation and problem solving. One of the first scholarly books on creativity, Arthur Koestler's (1970) *The Act of Creation* links creativity to the Latin verb 'cogito' (to think), which, he explains, "means to 'shake together' ... the creative act, by connecting previously unrelated dimensions of experience is an act of liberation [and] defeat[er] of habit" (Koestler, 1970: 96). In recent times interest in this idea has grown. A range of popular books have appeared trumpeting everything from the 'Medici Effect', or the Medici's ability to bring together leaders in a range of disciplines (Johansson, 2006); how a diversity of 'visions' contributed to the creation of the American Constitution (Ellis, 2012); Einstein's breadth of life experiences (White & Gribbin, 2005); and the range of personalities that Edison assembled (in addition to his own peculiarities) at Menlo Park (Baldwin, 1996). In addition, more scholarly research has linked diversity of perspective as a means of countering the effects of 'dominant logic' and spurring creativity and innovation in leading management journals (e.g., Bettis & Prahalad, 1986; 1995; Jackson et al., 2003; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Polanyi, 1981; Shin & Zhou, 2007; Williams & O' Reilly, 1998). Others have linked a reducing range of citations, and a focus on recent articles and a faster forgetting of works from earlier ages, to a narrowing of scholarship and a reduction in significant new knowledge development (Evans, 2008; Parolo et al., 2015).

Our article advocates an approach that may seem contrary to conventional thinking, but which could promote deeper and more varied contextualization and, consequently, more innovative thinking: that promoting greater historical engagement could foster greater innovative thinking among management students in the present and management scholars in the future.

This view differs from those reasons put forward by scholars recently as to why we may have seen a decline of substantially new ideas in management studies. They have suggested a range of more obvious limits. For example, a low risk inductive-deductive approach to copying ‘best practice’ rather than aiming abductively for next practice (Martin, 2009; Nattermann, 2000; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004); theorizing in ways that are disconnected from the realities of management practice (Clark & Wright, 2009; Cornelissen & Floyd, 2009; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Smith & Lewis, 2011); a desire to borrow theories from other fields rather than develop unique theories (Oswick, Fleming & Hanlon, 2011; Whetten, Felin & King, 2009); professional norms that privilege research appealing to traditional conventions and highly ranked forums (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011; 2012; Bartunek, Rynes & Ireland, 2006; Grey, 2010; Shepherd & Sutcliffe, 2011); and the limiting institutional conditions of theory development in business schools (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2012; Clark & Wright, 2009; Grey, 2010).

While history has occasionally been noted in debates about the dearth of innovation, the view that looking forward is the source of new ideas is still promoted: “we still look to the ‘founding fathers’ for our fundamental questions and our methods for answering them. We carry the historical baggage of their underlying assumptions. And, like lost colonial outposts, we retain a sentimental attachment to the tools, constructs and limitations of our core disciplines” (Suddaby, Hardy and Huy, 2011: 237). The impression is that if management is able to escape from its history, thinking will be freed to be more in keeping with new times

and to be more innovative.

We believe that engagement with greater historical diversity would help address the concerns that Tsui and others raise. In short, we argue that the limited way in which we have recorded and relay our field's past can limit what we focus on in the present and consequently bounds progression and that new thinking can result from a deeper, broader and more engaged connection with history. Just as our colleagues see greater international diversity in current management publishing as a good thing, we argue that greater diversity in terms of what we take to be important in the past is important for broadening perspectives too.

THE LIMITS OF WHAT IS PASSED ON AS THE HISTORY OF MANAGEMENT

Given most management scholars only encounter the history of the general field (as opposed to their specialization), in introductory courses and texts, management textbooks may provide the best insight into the conventional view of management's origins (Jones & Khanna, 2006; Payne, Satoris, Youngcourt & Watrous, 2006; Smith, 2007; Van Fleet & Wren, 2005).

While management textbooks vary in many respects (Stambaugh & Trank, 2010), the content of their descriptions of their field's history and the process by which it is outlined is strikingly similar. A simple 'potted history' may be found in most introductory texts. These narratives typically identify the key kernel as the assertion of a mechanistic-industrial world view (if cultures prior to the industrial revolution are incorporated it is because modern management's staples: planning, directing, organizing, controlling; are discerned in their achievements, not because they looked at management differently - Tsoukas & Cummings, 1997). Management's origins are almost always outlined in 'chapter 2' after an introductory chapter. This forms a basis upon which management's more recent ideas are presented in the chapters that follow. They are presented as the foundations upon which the subject has built and responded to. Table 1 outlines this unanimity among best-selling management textbooks.

Insert Table 1 here

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The idea that management and business students are introduced to the most cursory, mono-cultural (i.e., Anglo-American) and linear versions of history (e.g., the Industrial Revolution, US railroad companies, F.W. Taylor, Weber, Drucker...) has been noted (Jones & Khanna, 2006; Smith, 2007; Van Fleet & Wren, 2005). That textbooks play an essential role in codifying and disseminating the foundations and limits of what is important in a field has also been outlined (Kuhn, 1970; Stambaugh & Trank, 2010). And that homogeneous historical narratives can limit thinking differently in any field has been written about in detail (particularly by French historian Michel Foucault (1977b: 143ff.), whose studies show how traditional histories legitimate the establishment and close down alternatives: as what is recorded as the “origin [becomes] the site of truth” that “makes possible a field of knowledge” but at once defines its limits). These ideas have been applied to critiques of specific limitations in management thinking with regard to bureaucracy (Cummings & Bridgman, 2011), crisis management (Vanderbroeck, 2012), and project management (Söderlund & Lenfle, 2013). But nobody has really investigated where these foundational limits have emerged from, the extent of this homogeneity relative to other similar fields, or reflected upon how this may impact on innovation and creativity in the field. This is what we seek to do in the remainder of this article.

The Origin of the Origins

As Table 1 illustrates, the references provided for the histories passed on to management initiates in textbooks are generally few in number. They tend to be the few management

history books that were written at the time most of these book first editions were developed (the 1970s), particularly those books written by C.S. George and Daniel Wren. Sometimes academic articles are also cited, either from business history journals or in other journals but with a historical theme. Wren's books, in particular, cited academic journal research as a basis. There was a convergence of interests here. The period post World War II witnessed the spread of business schools at universities, the first serious histories of management were written which outlined the fields' noble origins and helped legitimate them being seen as 'university worthy', the Ford and Carnegie reports outlined the legitimate form of a business school and its curricula, and with a further growth spurt in student numbers and advanced in pedagogy and publishing the first textbooks (as we know them) emerged *en masse*.

As a starting point in investigating the idea that management and business history lacks diversity, we sought a preliminary snapshot of what management and business historians saw as worthy of investigation. We surveyed the most highly regarded journals of management and business history to ascertain the geographical locations that they focussed on. We coded the 859 articles from the journal *Business History* published between 1950 and 2010; 894 from the journal *Business History Review* for the same period; and the 234 and 78 respectively published in the more recently established *Journal of Management History* and *Management and Organization History*. About 80% of the articles could be coded for geographic focus, and we sent the results to www.worldmapper.org to create a map that depicted the world in terms of the relativities in the data. The world according to the history of management and business is shown in Figure 1. Two Anglo giants dominate. Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa just about hold their own, while the rest of Africa, Asia and South America shrink to slivers.

Insert Figure 1 here

However, on viewing this picture we did wonder if we were unreasonably harsh on the reporting of management and business history? Would it not be the case that historians writing in English and contributing to leading scholarly journals (given that highly-rated journals tend to be based in places like the US and the UK) would be similarly pre-disposed to focus on ‘their own’? Might it not be self-evident that management and business histories should focus on the regions where the industrial revolution or management consulting began? The Worldmapper result made us curious to investigate further.

We set out to probe the nature of management and business history writing by selecting reasonable comparators to analyse whether or not management history writing was any more limited than other types of history and whether there had been any changes of scope over a substantial period of time. We already knew that business had two highly regarded history journals that been published for over six decades: one based in in the US, one in the UK (*Business History* and *Business History Review*). Having decided it would be useful to use these journals as representative of the field and leave aside the other two management history journals which were established far more recently, we required as comparable sets disciplines with more than one highly rated history journal devoted solely to the study of just its history (i.e., journals with a broader focus on the history of a group of subjects like science or art were not useful for our purposes) and for one of these journals to be based in the US and another in the UK or another country.

Economic history, law, philosophy and many others fell short of our comparable academic journal criterion for selecting comparator fields. However, the history of medicine and the history of architecture did meet our criteria. Like management and business, these are not normal sciences or, indeed, normal arts. They are stochastic professions where, while we

may be guided by theories or principles, we must adjust our thinking and re-calibrate our actions as our subjects or cases or stakeholders respond in individual ways to previous interventions in changing environments. Our initial investigations also revealed that there seemed to be no recent laments in these fields about the lack of new ideas. Consequently, we sought to analyse and contrast what their histories recorded with management and business history.

We constructed three sets of abstracts dating from 1951-2010. The business history set contained all 859 abstracts from articles published across this period in the UK-based *Business History*, and the 894 abstracts published in *Business History Review*. (The *Journal of Management History* and the *Journal of Management and Organizational History*, data from which we shall refer to on occasion later in this article, are based in the US and the UK, respectively). The medical history set was made up of 602 from the UK-based *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* and 1554 from the US-based *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*. The third set, of architectural history abstracts, comprised 1059 abstracts from the US-based *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* and 292 from the UK-based *Construction History*. While neither the medical and architectural set contained the abstracts of all the articles published in this period (as we were reliant on downloading electronic versions of the abstracts there were a couple of years that were not obtainable in both the medical and architectural history journals, often in the years surrounding a change of publisher), in both instances we were able to gather the majority of all abstracts with representative samples across all six decades of our survey.

After discussing and ruling out potential criteria (such as whether the perspective being applied was conventional or unconventional) for being too difficult to determine reliably in our large data sets, we settled on two simple aspects: the geographical location focussed upon in the article, or ‘place’; and the temporal setting or age focussed upon, or

‘time’.¹ Experienced researchers could quickly code for these aspects with extremely high inter-rater reliability, and given that our purpose was not to capture the truth of what happened in the past but to seek comparison that would help to raise questions about how what we focus on in the past illuminates pathways in the present, time and place were effective dimensions with which to begin.

As we explain in the paragraphs to follow, we found that management and business history has a far more limited geographical and temporal perspective than either of its two comparator fields of inquiry. More encouragingly, we found signs that greater diversity in management and business history is certainly possible and that it may now be emerging. And beyond the presentation of our data we argue that the potential relationship between greater diversity of historical perspectives and innovation has important implications for re-energizing current management research and education with new ideas developed from within the field.

Relative limits?

The following three sub-sections report our results for geographic place, time, and time and place together. Appendix 1 provides a table that shows the number and percentage of abstracts from each set that were able to be coded for time, place and both time and place.

Place

Our initial analysis on the places focussed upon indicated a far greater deal of geographical variety in journals of architecture and medical history. While the US and UK, respective home bases for the two journals chosen to represent each of these professions, were also the

¹ When an article focussed on two or more discrete geographical locations we gave each of these locations a fraction of one (e.g., a focus on the US and Japan scored .5 for each location). When an article focussed on a very broad swathe of time we recorded the median point.

two most written about national settings, nearly half of the articles on architectural history that were written about other locations considered worthy of note, as were over a third of the medical history papers. Just over a quarter of all business history papers focussed on territories beyond the US and UK.

Insert Figures 2 and 3 here

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Moreover, there is a significant difference in the total number of countries focussed upon in that ‘other’ category. A total of 84 countries have been afforded at least some consideration by architectural historians; 80 in medicine; and only 50 in business. No other country has over 5% representation in business history journals. In medicine and architecture two other countries achieve this level of significance (Germany and France, and Italy and France, respectively). While we might hope that the more recently published management history journals would demonstrate greater diversity and variability of place, the results here are fairly consistent with their business history cousins as Figure 3 illustrates.

When we grouped the data into six decades, from the 1950s to the 2000s, for Africa, Asia, Continental Europe (i.e., Europe minus the UK), North America and the UK, we observed some interesting changes in the representation of place over time between the three sets.² There are some encouraging signs, with respect to diversity, in management and business history journals. The percentage of articles relating to Asian and African locations that could be coded for place have increased steadily from around 2% in the 1950s to 5% in the 2000s for Asia and from 0.75% to nearly 2% for Africa. Correspondingly interest in the

² We recognize that grouping our data into continents in this regard is problematic. For example, the stories from Morocco will likely be very different from those of South Africa or Uganda. But our aim here is to illustrate in a powerful way a lack of diversity in management and business history, not to replace global homogeneity with a belief that there should be continental homogeneity.

UK has waned.

But what is starker when one compares the data is how the medicine and architecture sets show much more variability in focus over time than business. For example, Architecture history papers go from next to nothing on Asia and Africa in the 1950s to 16% and 4.5% on these regions respectively in the 1980s, a peak which drops away again after this flourish. Medical histories interest in these two locations peaks in the 1990s (at 10%) and 1960s (4.3%) respectively. This would appear to indicate that Medical and Architecture history is more able than business history to shift historical focus so as to move with the problems or interests of the times. This relative lack of variability in business history research is something we will also see with respect to temporality in the next section of the article.

Time

In addition to coding articles for place, we also sought to gain some appreciation of the times or ages focussed upon across our three sets of history journals and arranged these into 20 year blocks. As with place, not all articles were focussed in this way, but, the vast majority (about 70% overall) were, and could be coded. Whenever a broader period of time was focussed upon we recorded the midpoint or median year (so, for example, if an article focussed on events from 1860 to 1890 the date attributed to that article was 1875). While we recognize that this in an imperfect form of measurement, we believe that the numbers of articles coded in this way are high enough to begin to interpret some interesting trends and ask some useful questions.

The bar (or ‘Manhattan’ skyline) charts show the frequency of dates focused on within the journal articles for each of the three discipline sets published during the period 1950-2010 as a percentage of the total. Each has different characteristics. Architecture (Figure 4) is the most broad-ranging, with a very specific homage paid to the period 1900-

1920, but significant populations of articles dating back through many centuries.

Insert Figures 4 & 5 here

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Medical history (shown in Figure 5) lacks a stand-out skyscraper, but has a wide spread of significant focus of over 6% representation right across the period 1800-1940 and at least 1% representation all the way back to 1600.

Business history (Figure 6) is far more piled-up toward the right-hand side of the graph, with 1920-1940 matching the height of Architecture's tallest bar but with a range of similarly tall edifices on either side. The periods from 1900 to 1980, in business history, each have greater representation than any single period in medical history. If we were hoping that the management history journals were broader in their emphasis, again, as with time, the patterns here are more or less the same, but with a greater intensification of bias toward sites dated 1920-1960 (Figure 7).

Insert Figures 6 & 7 here

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Furthermore, when we look at the average time of focus for each of our three subject sets, what falls within one standard deviation of these averages, and how these numbers change through the decades, we can interpret some interesting differences between business and architecture and medical history in terms of diversity of focus (see Figure 8).

The mean date for the 1434 Business History articles for which dates could be determined was 1879. For Architecture History (n = 731) it was 1763; for Medical History (n

= 1308), 1791. When we removed the dates that were ascribed to articles that focused on a broad sweep of history (for example, “the 18th century”), the averages understandably moved forward in time: Business (n = 480), 1908; Architecture (n = 326), 1806; Medicine (n = 417), 1843.³ Architecture and Medicine show more variability of movement of the average time of focus over the decades, with a distinct shift of focus in Architecture in the 1970s and Medicine in the 2000s, perhaps with an emphasis shaped more by the particular concerns of the times rather than reinforcing traditional origins/sites of truth. Business has followed a steady path at a consistent distance from the past (about one hundred years – or about 70 years if we adjust so as to not include those articles with rather vague dates e.g., the 17th century). However, the levelling off in recent times around a mean date of 1910 would be worrying if it suggested a sedimentation and growing stagnation.

Insert Figure 8 here

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More interesting, however, may be the standard deviation results which may illustrate the normal breadth of focus. Here, the standard deviations around the mean measures were two and a half times larger for medicine and architecture than for business. For Business History it was 115 years; Architecture 247; Medicine 261. When we removed the dates that were ascribed to articles that focused on a broad sweep (e.g., 19th century Trade Associations), the standard deviations differences were even starker: Business, 47 years; Architecture, 209 years; Medicine 157 years. The circle in Figure 8 around the smallest standard deviation relating to business history writing in the 1980s falls on the same period

³ An interesting sidebar is just how much greater the percentage of business history journal articles relate to specific times and places (c. 80%), relative to a much lower percentage in architecture and medicine (40-50%) where the concerns are more often general or time/place neutral (see appendix 1).

that most of today's major textbooks in management and business subjects were developed of consolidating into the current modern forms in the 2nd and 3rd editions. While these texts were generally informed by books (e.g., George, 1972; Chandler, 1977; Wren 1972), these books and the textbook writers themselves could have been influenced by the narrow view of the field in general in creating the narrow histories that they pass on to students. These books are often now into their 12th, 13th or 14th editions, but while nuances may shift to move with the times the key characters and events in these histories have not changed.

Time and Place

Having looked at the data with respect to time and place, we then combined these dimensions, taking those articles that could be coded for both (since 1800, to enable more readily comparable graphs) and plotting the percentages for each of the three sets in bubble area graphs.

As Figures 6, 8 and 9 demonstrate, Business is highly concentrated around North America between 1840-60 and the UK and North America in the first 60 years of the 20th Century, although it does have representative 'dots' of interest on almost all areas of the grid.

Insert Figures 9 & 10 here

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Architecture (shown in Figure 10) has a wider range of significant interest, geographically and temporally, with more continental European focus and significant pockets of interest outside of the North-Western world (e.g., Africa 1820-1840; South America 1840-1860; Asia 1820-1840).

Medicine (Figure 11) has a much broader time span of concentrated interest and a

greater focus on Continental Europe than management and business history; but it demonstrates a smaller degree of interest beyond those three geographies across time than Architecture. However, like business it does cover more of the ‘bases’ even if only to miniscule degrees in many cases.

Insert Figure 11 here

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DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Early in this article we outlined the premise that greater diversity of perspective can encourage greater innovation, and we linked it to current discussions about why management is not currently generating significant new theories and perspectives. We suggest that a limited view of the past may constrain perspectives of what we take management to be about in the present and subsequently could be limiting future development. We then sought to investigate the limits of the practice of management and business history writing relative to history scholarship in architecture and medicine.

So, how does management and business history compare when looked at in this light? First, the bad news: it has a far more limited geographical and temporal perspective than either of its two comparator fields of inquiry. Based on what we have outlined above, we could surmise that when the history of management and business was first taken seriously, as part of a process to legitimate the then fledgling field in the mid-20th century (at the same time as other institutionalizing measures such as the sponsorship of the Ford and Carnegie reports on defining the standard business school curriculum), it embraced origins that helped legitimate and make sense of the present constitution (Gordon & Howell, 1959; Pierson, 1959; Cummings, 2002; Khurana, 2007). These origins were found in the US and Britain in

the 19th and early 20th centuries. Since that point, management and business history's temporal focus (unlike architecture or architecture) does not appear to have changed focus to reflect particular problems or new concerns. And, it seems now that it may be anchored on a median spot – 1900-1920, as conventional histories are prone to do, unless they are challenged. There is a danger that the “amputated reality” of management history may now be acting as a limiting “map for modern travellers” in our field (Salvemini, 1939: 60; Glassie, 1999: 6). The past may become an archive stuck in time, rather than a vibrant dynamic reflection of a vibrant dynamic field with multiple possibilities.

In reflecting on this, it may be worth considering that there has not been widespread lament in the leading medical and architecture journals asking where their fields' new ideas are. It may be that their wider, more diverse and dynamic histories, and related broader view of what their boundaries could embrace, helps to spur creative hybrids and other forms of innovation. However, in defence, readers may already be thinking that architectural historians, for example, would have it easier than business historians in being able to study a wider range of physical remains and plans. This is certainly true, but just as difficulty is the excuse history never accepts (Murrow, 1961), difficulty should not be an excuse for historians or management scholars. If the intent exists to study difficult or non-obvious objects or look in novel ways and adopt other perspectives, then such histories will emerge.

And this brings us to the good news. Figure 9 indicates that business history may come from any age and location, if we choose to focus there. Specs of interest are widespread and even more so in business than architecture. Furthermore, while the management history ‘Manhattan’ shown in Figure 7 is similar in most respects to its business history counterpart, it does demonstrate pockets of interest prior to 1680. In addition, while the percentages are small, there are increases in articles focusing on Asia, South America and Africa.

While management and business history's collective memory, or perspective of the

past, does appear limited when compared to other fields, what we found also points to the possible role that this history can play in broadening thinking in the future. Rather than merely teaching or implying that what is worthy of attention in management and business history happened in the UK and the US between 1800-1920, we should actively seek out, and encourage young scholars to seek out, alternative perspectives from other times and places that could be rejuvenated, or combined with thinking from other times and places to create interesting hybrids, or broaden our understanding of what the field could be about, or help us to look differently at old and new management issues. New knowledge about history that we hope will be incorporated into textbook histories that can provide new vehicles to the future (Stambaugh & Trank, 2010).

To help promote this development, we provide three vignettes to illustrate the sort of historical research that would add to this broadening and deepening of perspective and the potential for innovative thinking in management. They relate to going wider than the small set of standard characters outlined in those ‘chapter 2s’ and looking into worlds that are not influenced by modern Western industrial perspectives; and going deeper by encouraging an appreciation of other languages and getting more engaged with archives.

1. Going wider: Looking at other worlds of management

While we do not wish to criticize the AoM African initiative we mentioned earlier in this article (unlike the regular AoM the African version did not have a particular Management History track, so it may not be surprising that few took the perspective that we are advocating here), it would be valuable, we believe, to combine this initiative with a real effort to find interesting underappreciated alternative approaches to management from that continent’s, and indeed other under-represented continents’, past. A study that is exemplary in this regard is Avner Greif’s work on the coalitions formed by 11th century Maghribi traders from North

Africa to enable them to work efficiently across borders without the legal institutions that would regulate what we today would consider a conventional market. As Greif (1993: 526) explains:

Expectations, implicit contractual relations, and a specific information-transmission mechanism constituted the constraints that affected an individual trader's choice of action. In particular, these constraints supported the operation of a reputation mechanism that enabled the Maghribis to overcome the commitment problem [and] reinforced the expectations on which the coalition was based, motivated traders to adhere to the implicit contracts, and led to entry and exit barriers which ensured the sustainability of the coalition.

At the time that Greif wrote this, it was customary, following the thinking of Ronald Coase, to distinguish between market and non-market institutions (like those which governed the Maghribi's practices). The new forms of markets enabled by recent developments in information technology, forms that are difficult to regulate with conventional legal systems, were not known. Revisiting premodern non-market cases like that of the Maghribi may be a useful way to think innovatively about how the current rise of what we call secondary — or after — markets (Bayón, 2013), such as those operated by derivative traders, eBay, Craigslist, Amazon and Taobao, might self-regulate, evolve and be enhanced or detracted from through the imposition of conventional market constraints (see Baumol, 1990 for a similarly insightful cross-cultural study of diverse types of entrepreneurship from different ages).⁴

Further examples, of how a change in historical perspective could change future practice and scholarship could be the application of medieval, scholastic and monastic

⁴ An inspirational project that goes wider than conventional norms in this regard is the emerging open-source African Economic History project being developed by Ewout Frankema from Wageningen University and Ellen Hillbom from the University of Lund (see www.aehnetwork.org/textbook/)

traditions to think differently about business ethics or modern knowledge-intensive firms (McGrath 2005; 2007; Wren, 2000). It had been the case that the history books used in New Zealand schools continued to promote the views of those who had first reported on the wars between the British colonial forces and the indigenous Maori, right up until the 1980s (see, for example, Oliver, 1981: 58ff). These views were that the Maori had “shewn no strategical knowledge” (Carey 1863: 66) and that they had displayed the “weaknesses generally associated with savage races [fighting] under no definite strategical plan and without unity of command” (Shrimpton & Mulgan, 1930). It was not until this history was questioned by others that it was discovered that the Maori had actually achieved many victories against difficult odds as a result of their ‘unusual’ practices, that Maori approaches (loosely planned but mostly emergent), were acknowledged as worthy of further consideration (Cummings, 2002). A new generation of curious historians were then able to see that “It is true that Maori organization was informal and unstructured. But the absence of European forms of organization does not mean that organization per se was absent” (Belich, 1986: 130). The pride and creative dynamic that these historical re-appreciations helped promote, are still being felt today. Moreover, this insight would have offered an interesting alternative view on the debates that beset strategic management in the 1990s, as to whether strategy was more truly about planning from the top or bottom-up emergence (Ansoff, 1991; Mintzberg, 1991), and which is still of interest to those who view strategy as practice or focus on the importance of micro-foundations today (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). If other civilizations had seen strategy as both planning and emergence, both big-picture and micro-foundations, could not modern strategy thinkers view it this way too?

2. Going deeper: engaging with original rather than secondary sources

While digitization has enabled great advances in management research, it stands to reason

that more recent works are more likely to be digitized, and that those who learn to research in a digital age may be predisposed to look at what is available in this form at their desks rather than travelling further afield into original archives. Other writers in different fields have already published work theorising that a reducing year range of citations may lead to a narrowing of scholarship and reduction in substantive innovation (Evans, 2008).

Looking beyond the ubiquity of the Internet may take researchers and educators to interesting places, and offer new insights (Decker, 2013; Schwarzkopf, 2012). For example, tracking down hard copies of data created by long-established industry associations, data that does not exist online or in electronic form, has enabled some authors to think differently about the reasons why manufacturing clusters emerge and continue to evolve even after the economic reasons have declined (Sorenson & Audia, 2000).

Similarly, looking at actual copies of *Moody's Investment Magazine* from 1911 (unavailable electronically) or the archive of the Stevens Institute in New Jersey (much of which is now available electronically) provides a very different view of the birth of management from modern management textbooks. F.W. Taylor's work, so very prominent in the minds of management and business historians and other scholars as the point of origin (George, 1972; Wren, 1972; Wren & Bedeian, 1994; Wren & Hay, 1977), is something of an afterthought in these *Moody's* pages. *Moody's*, typical of newspapers of the time, focused far more on the legal and political setting for the 'birth' of management as we know it. Indeed, while we did not code for subject perspective in our sample of history articles anecdotally we can say that most management and business historians appear to look from a conventional modernist management and business perspective.⁵ Hence, they focus on professions like engineering and economics and see management science emerging due to organizations

⁵ It proved impossible to code for perspective quickly and reliably in any meaningful way. While we recognize that we do not, therefore, cover off the likes of Tsui's (2007) concerns, our aim, as stated earlier, was to do what we could to raise doubts about current conventions in management and business history so as to add to the debates about the dearth of new ideas as this relates to management education.

seeking to become more efficient or needing to quickly increase production to meet demand. However, legal and political histories see developments much closer to the picture painted in the pages of Moody's, seeing the management movement coat-tailing upon Roosevelt and Pinchot's short-lived 'Conservation Movement' and gaining popularity only through Louis Brandeis repackaging of the ideas of F.W. Taylor and others into something that he branded 'Scientific Management' in order to win a high profile legal case in 1910-11. The correspondence between Taylor and Brandeis is very insightful in this regard.

Looking from this unconventional perspective revealed to us that the first two books in management (if one chooses to believe that Scientific Management is where management studies proper began), the first published by Brandeis (*Scientific Management and the Railroads*, 1911) the second by Taylor (1911) both begin by linking their theses to the *idee du jour*: conservation. Seeing conservation or sustainability as the origin of management might lead to interesting recalibrations around what it is that good management seeks to achieve.

Fruitful rethinking can also occur by considering what might be lost in translation. Recent work has begun to highlight how original work can be mis- or only partially-translated when recast in English by Anglo writers. For example, what management students are shown to be Max Weber's contribution to their field, is a snippet seized upon by modern thinkers who saw bureaucracy as a wholly negative term and subsequently painted Weber as an outmoded bureaucracy booster. An interpretation partly enabled by the way that Talcott Parsons and others chose to translate some elements of Weber's work and not others and emphasize certain interpretations above alternatives (Clegg, 2005; Mills et al., 2013); or to translate words in ways that created different meanings (e.g., Parsons' translated Weber use of *herrschaft*, which generally means 'domination', as 'leadership' - Cummings & Bridgman, 2011). German speakers or German-based students might be able to reveal more about the

times, life and views of Weber, see how bureaucracy was both positively and negatively valued by Weber, and think about how his views might have provided safeguards against, and solutions for, the recent global financial crisis.

If innovation through diversity and cross-pollination is our goal, then it is important in our research to recognize that the language of an idea's origin may not necessarily translate universally and that we must therefore, be dexterous to look in different ways and involve collaborators who can see from other linguistic perspectives. For example, we were involved in a discussion at a recent AoM conference with a senior management history professor and a young Chinese scholar. The professor described how in researching a new edition of a history of management he had sought contributions from a broader range of sites, but this had not borne fruit. Nobody in China, for example, offered anything new on the history of management in that country. His young counterpart suggested that if he had asked his Chinese sources for more on the history of 'leadership', an easier translation for Chinese people to respond to positively he claimed, the professor would have got a lot more from his inquiries. Slevin and Terjesen (2011) provide a related analysis on how the word entrepreneurship has different meanings in different cultures.

We acknowledge that the study that spurs on our argument is limited. For reasons that we have explained, we have focused on simple dimensions that could be easily coded reliably across large samples: place and time. It might be argued that diversity could be analysed by looking at disciplinary perspectives of the location that authors are based in, and we would encourage further studies that looked at these aspects. While we have not directly linked greater historical diversity to greater innovation in management thought, we believe that the arguments linking homogeneity of perspective may lead to a lack of innovation in the present, should cause us to ponder how history may play a role in limiting perspectives of

what is relevant and possible in our field. In defence of these limitations, we have, investigated history not to prove current interpretations wrong, to develop causal theories of what leads to innovation, or promote new truths, but to raise doubts about current norms so as to encouraging thinking otherwise or innovatively.

In response to our study, we have provided a set of examples of different possibilities for greater and more creative engagement with management and business history. However, these possibilities require specific intent from others now, because while there are some promising signs with respect to more interest in a range of new locations and periods, on current trends it will take a long time for percentages to grow to significant levels. We will need to make an effort to think differently (to ‘fill in the gaps’ in Figure 9 and beyond) and create a more diverse archive that may inspire cross-pollination and creative thinking. This effort would, we argue, be well-rewarded. It could lead us to ask significant questions of what we consider worthy of attention in our field. Instead of unthinkingly seeing history as a legitimization of what we take management and business to be about now, we may rethink historical assumptions in order to: “free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently” (Foucault, 1985: 11).

There are promising signs at the Academy with regard to rethinking and broadening our views of management history and its contribution to thinking differently for the future (see for example Hassard, 2012; Cooke, 2014; Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014; Usdiken and Kipping, 2014; Wadhvani and Bucheli, 2014). But in addition to this research agenda, we should think seriously about how we may inspire greater horizons for the next generation of management scholars when we look for alternative historical precedents and perspectives that they can reflect upon when considering the limits of the field that they are entering into and whose future horizons they will determine.

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Appendix 1

The table below shows the numbers and percentages of the articles surveyed from the six business management, medical, and architectural history journals published between 1950 and 2010, that could be coded for time of focus, for place focus, and for both time and place.

	Coded for time – Raw.	Coded for time- %.	Coded for place- Raw.	Coded for place- %.	Coded for both- Raw.	Coded for both- %.
BH	724/859	84.28%	772	90%	694	80.79%
BHR	710/894	79.42%	757	84.34%	710	79.42%
Total Coded Business	1434	81.80%	1529	87.22%	1404	80.09%
JHMAS	580/602	96.34%	480	79.73%	463	76.91%
BHM	728/1554	46.85%	763	49.09%	500	32.17%
Total Coded Medicine	1308	60.67%	1243	57.65%	963	44.66%
JSAH	443/1059	41.83%	894	84.42%	402	37.96%
CH	288/292	98.63%	259	88.70%	257	88.01%
Total Coded Architecture	731	54.10%	1153	85.34%	659	48.77%

The table below shows the numbers and percentages of the articles surveyed from the two additional management history journals that are referred to in this paper that could be coded for time of focus, for place focus, and for both time and place.

	Coded for time – Raw.	Coded for time- %.	Coded for place- Raw.	Coded for place- %.	Coded for both- Raw.	Coded for both- %.
JMH	134 / 234	57.02%	149 / 234	63.40%	113 / 234	48.29%
JM&OH	56 / 78	71.79%	50 / 78	64.10%	45 / 78	57.69%

Table 1: Key points of management’s origin narrative in textbooks

Textbook	Placement	Primary individual	Precedents/continuation of	References
Rue & Byars (2009)	Chapter 2	Taylor	Rapid industrialization but production methods crude needed to be improved	Chandler (1959); Gantt, (1919); Farnham, 1997; Greco, 1999; Mee (1963); Taylor (1895, 1903, 1911); Towne (1886); Wren (1972, 1979); Wrege & Hodgetts, 2000)
Kinicki & Williams (2009)	Chapter 2	Taylor	Industrial expansion, labour in short supply, need to improve labour productivity	None
Schermerhorn (2010)	Chapter 2	Taylor	Workers produced less than they were capable of because of inefficient work methods	Gilbreth (1911); Kanigel (1997); Locke (1982); Taylor (1911), Wrege & Perroni (1974); Wren (1994),
Robbins, Bergman, Stagg, Coulter (2012)	Chapter 2	Taylor	Popularity of division of labour, industrial revolution, need to maximize efficiency	Banta (1993); George (1972); Gilbreth (1911), Gilbreth & Gilbreth (1916); Kanigel (1997); Taylor (1911); Wagner-Tsukamoto (2007).
Schermerhorn et al (2014)	Chapter 2	Taylor	Workers produced less than they were capable of because of inefficient work methods	Gilbreth (1911); Kanigel (1997); Locke (1982); Taylor (1911), Wrege & Perroni (1974); Wren (2005),
Bateman & Snell (2009)	Appendix (following Chapter 1)	Taylor	Poor production efficiency, management decisions unsystematic	Chandler (1990); George (1972); Kroos & Gilbert (1911)

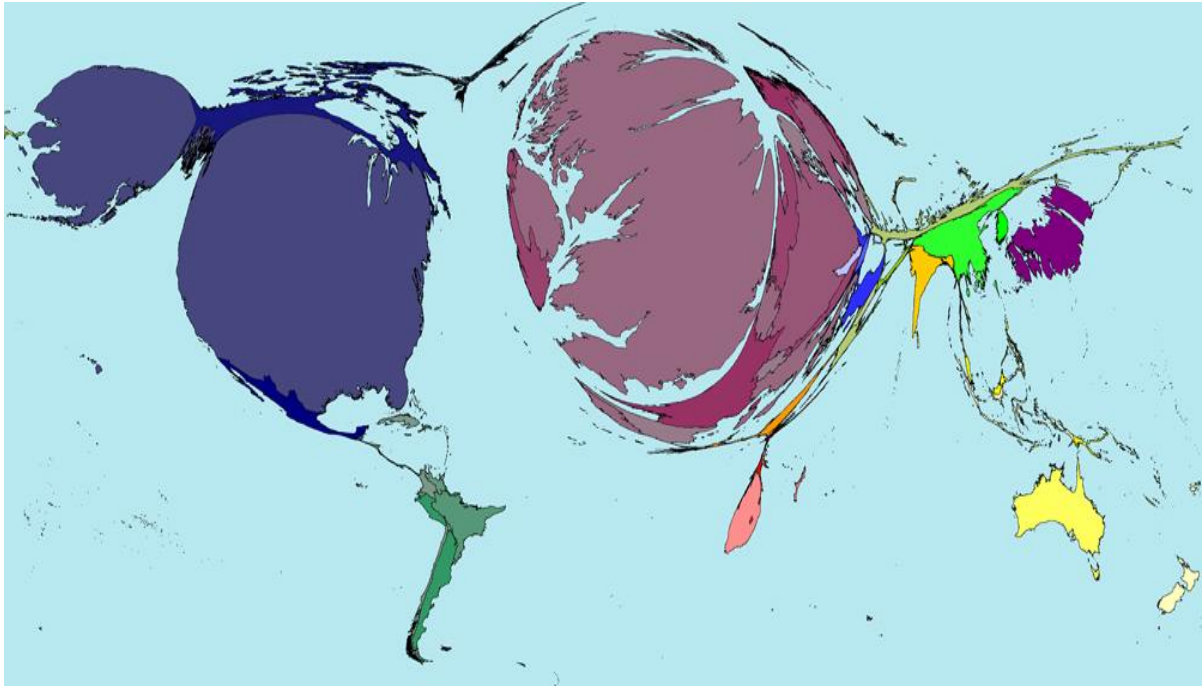


Figure 1. The World According to Management and Business History Journals⁶

⁶ The authors wish to thank Benjamin D Hennig and Danny Dorling at the University of Sheffield and www.worldmapper.org for kindly developing this map based on our data.

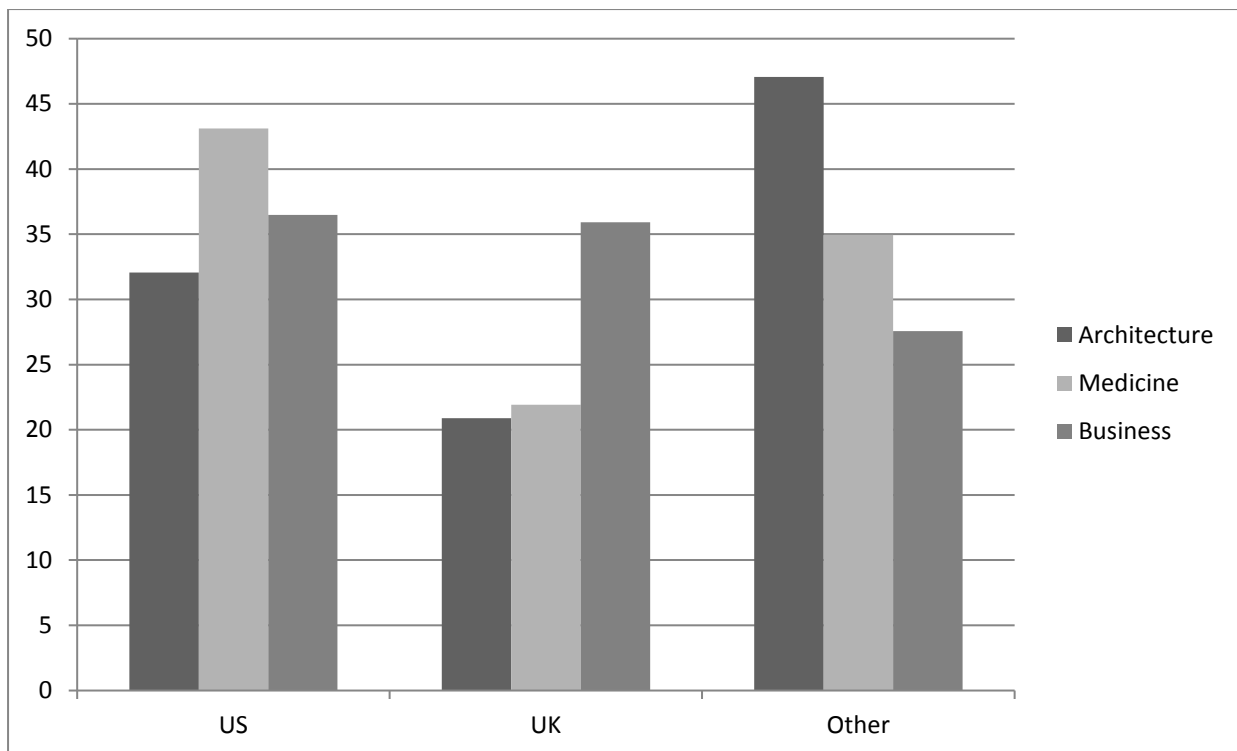


Figure 2. Percentages of Geographical Focus in Architectural, Medical and Business History Papers

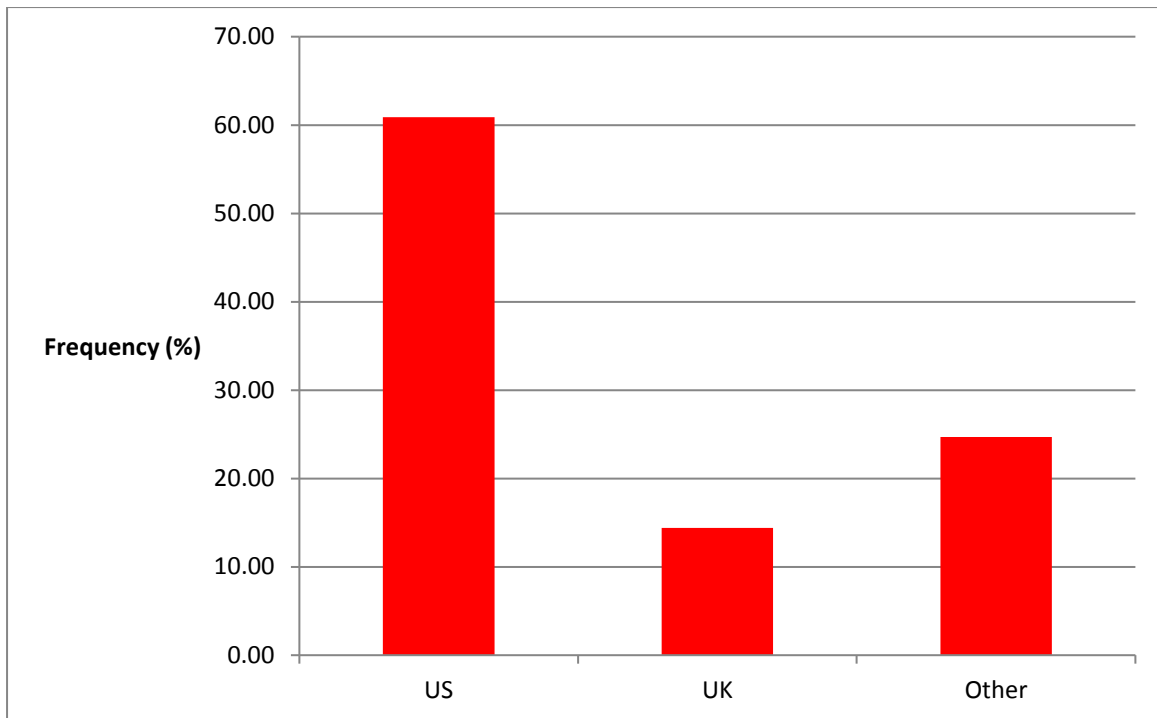


Figure 3. Total Percentages of Articles Coded for Place in the History of Management Journal and the Journal of Management and Organizational History

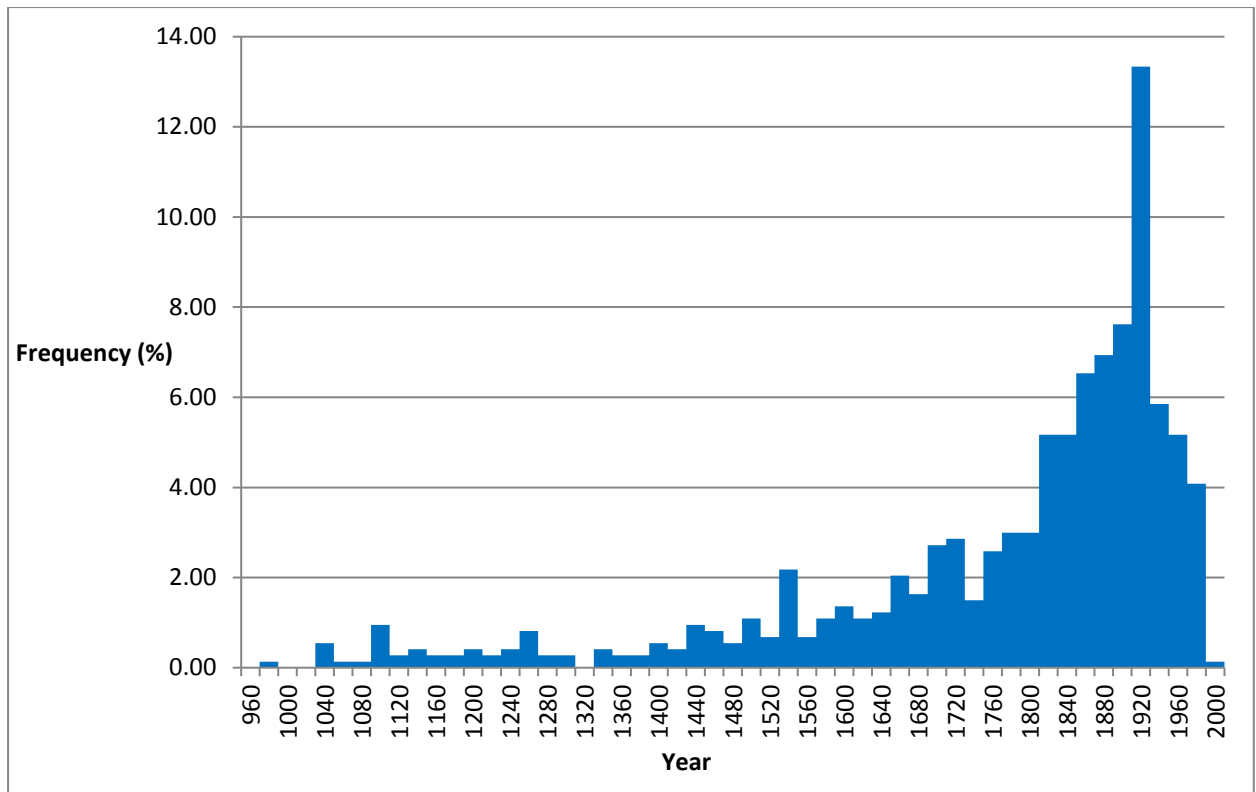


Figure 4. Architectural History ‘Manhattan’

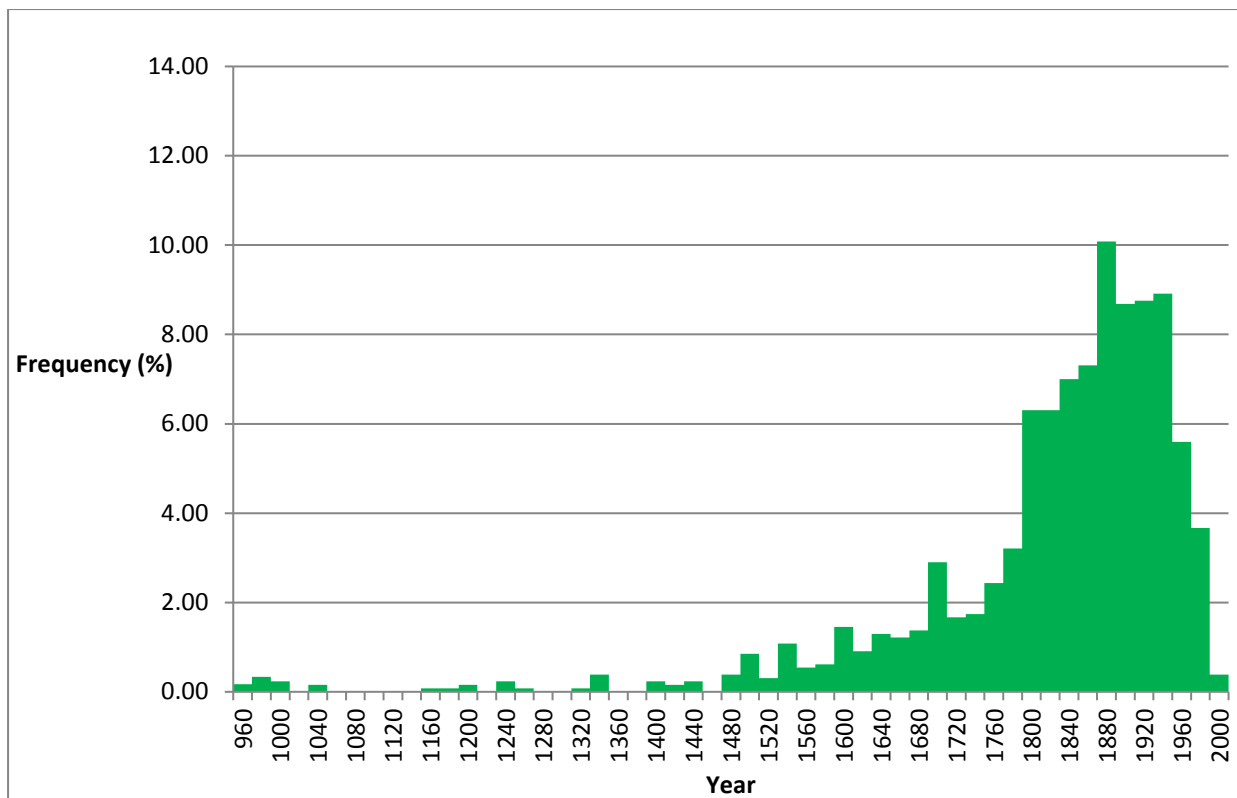


Figure 5. Medical History ‘Manhattan’

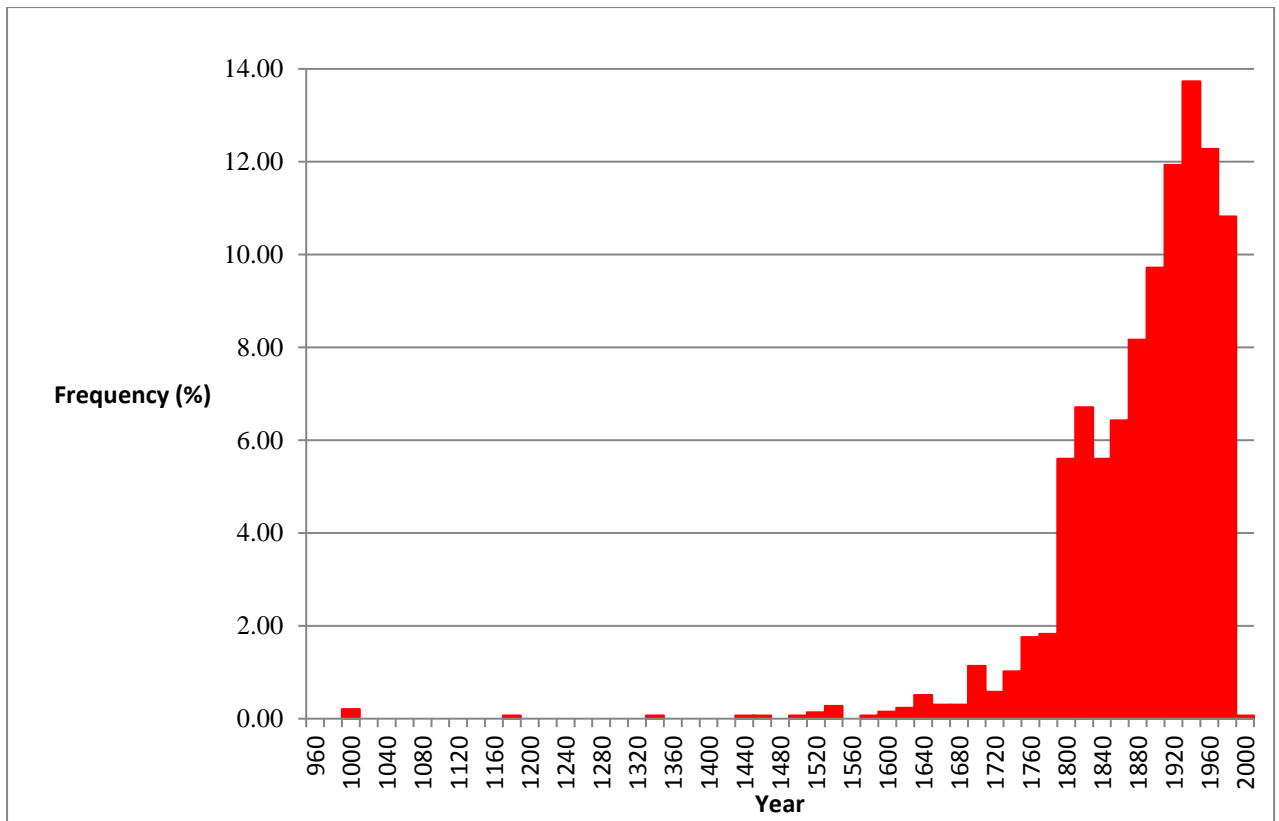


Figure 6. Business History 'Manhattan'

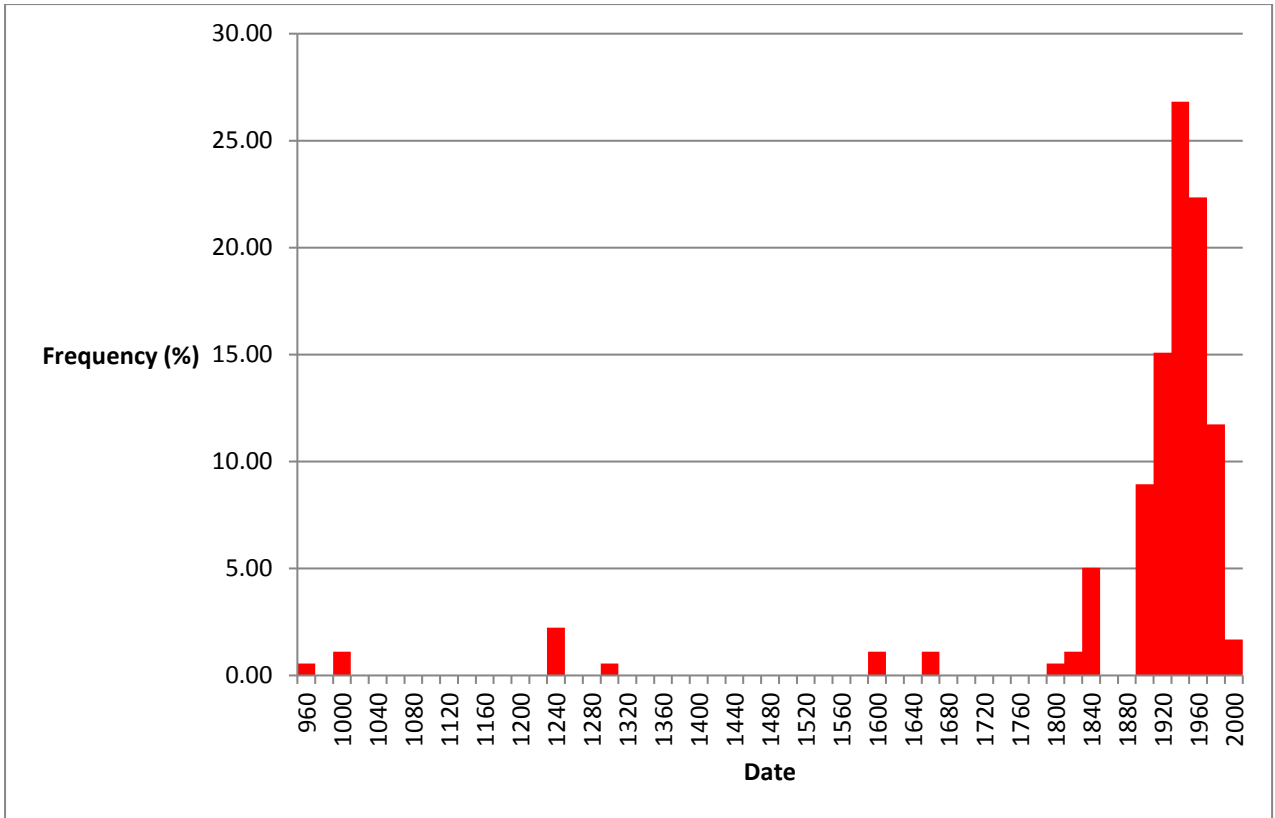


Figure 7. Management History 'Manhattan'

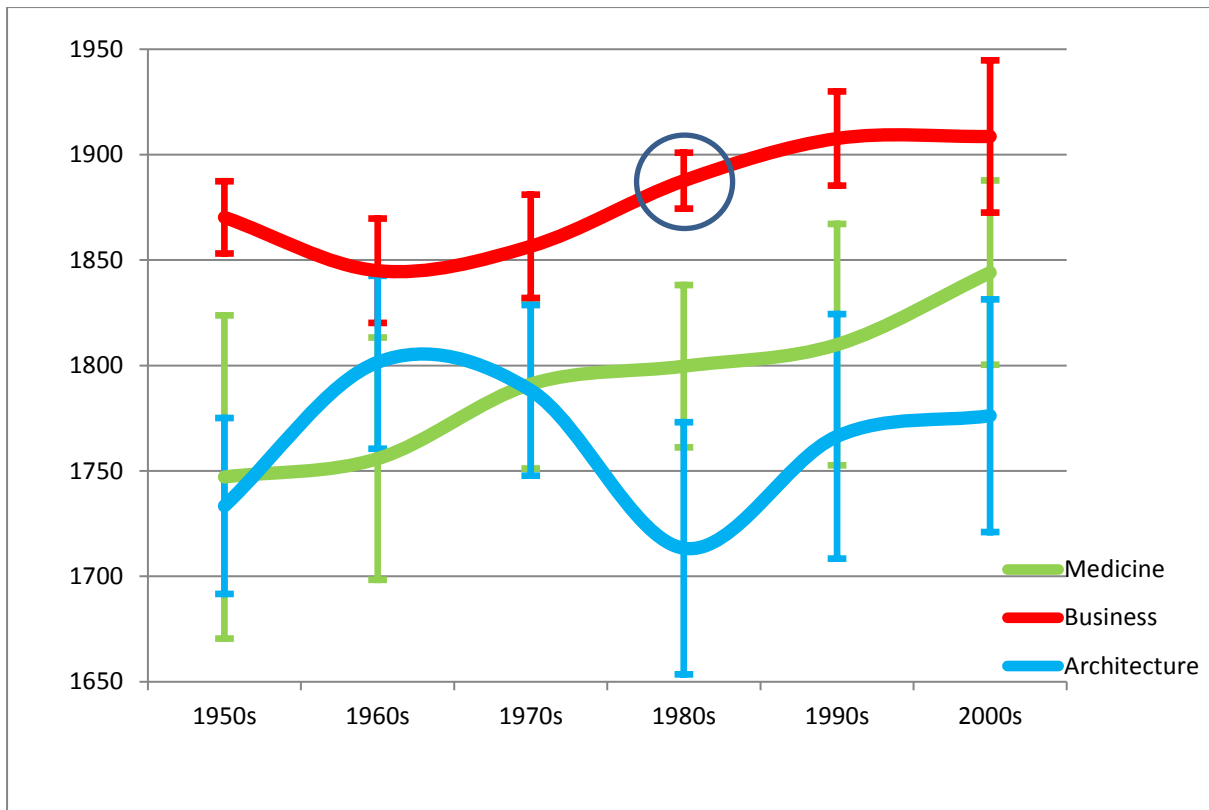


Figure 8. Average Date Focused on Within Journals Over the Decades (1950-2010) in Each of the Three Disciplines With Bars Representing Single Standard Deviations.

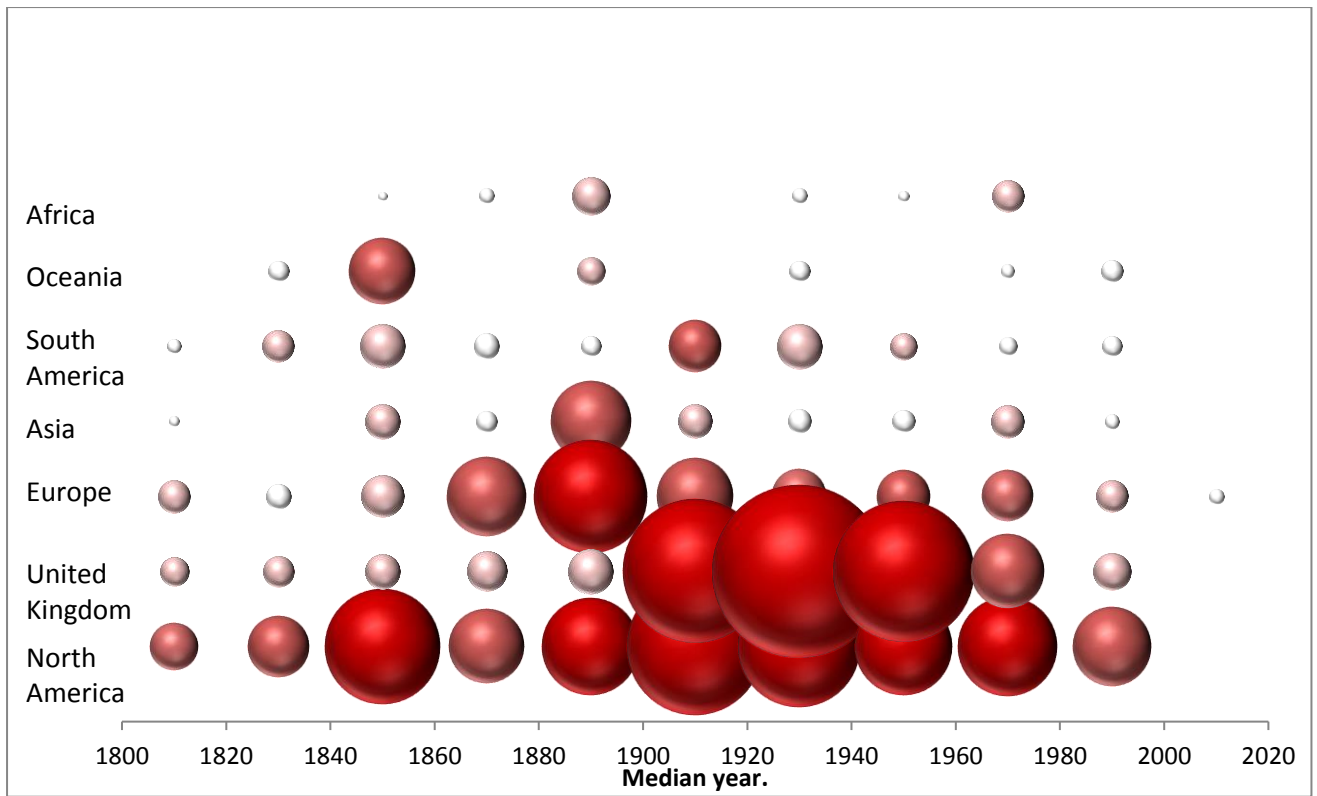


Figure 9. Business History Bubble Chart

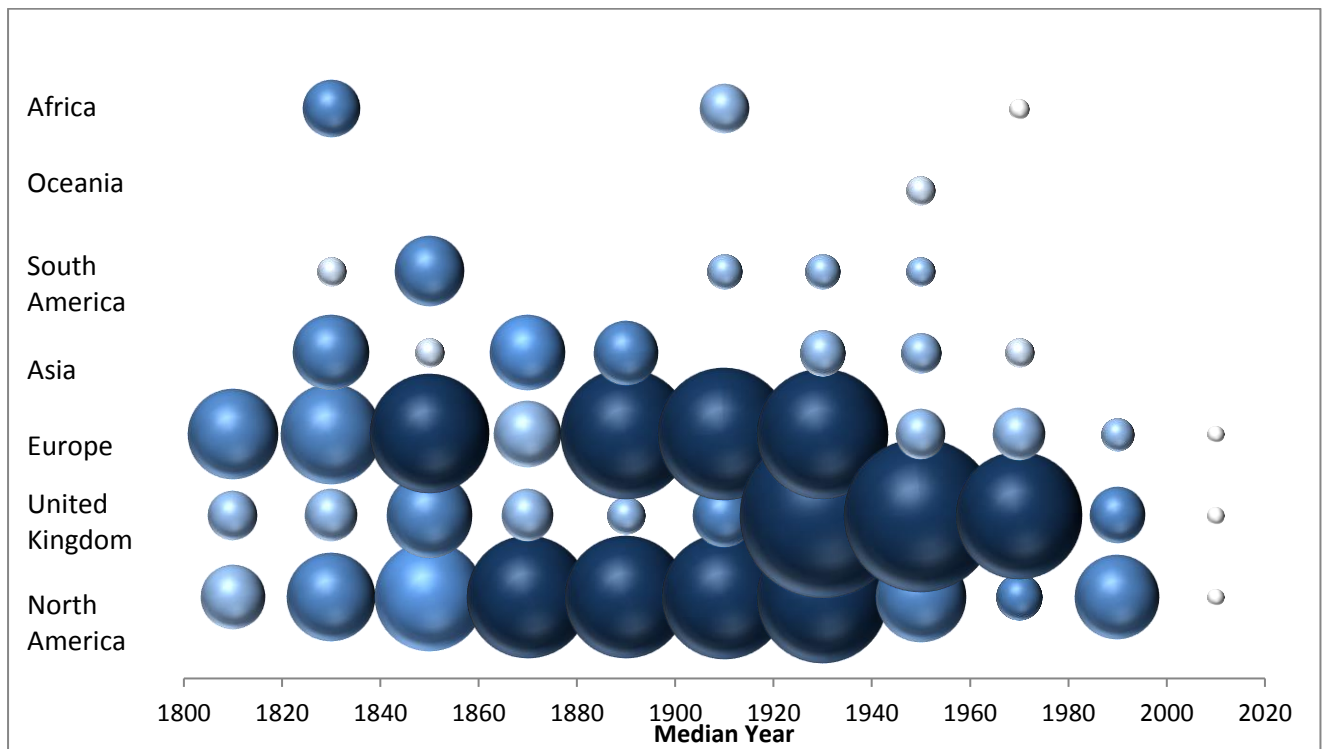


Figure 10. Architecture History Bubble Chart

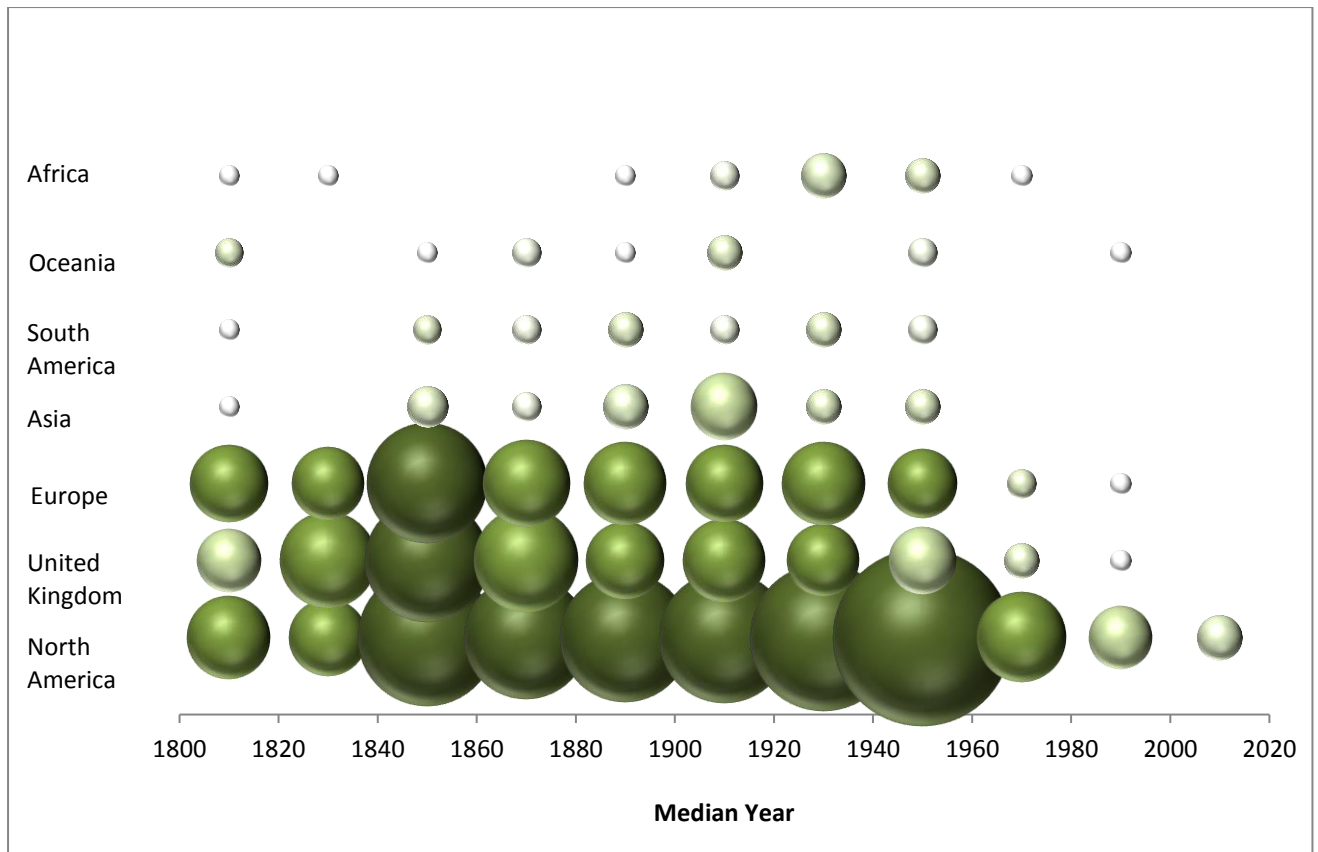


Figure 11. Medicine History Bubble Chart