Edited by
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Managing for Social Justice

Harnessing Management Theory and Practice for Collective Good

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Editors

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Dedicated to all the unsung heroes who make the world a better place everyday through their actions.

Preface: Notes from the Editors

The three of us met through our common connection in the Department of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University. Our personal journeys were different. Anita brings with her a legacy of the civil rights movement in the USA. Latha and Simy grew up in different states and different decades in India in different circumstances. But all three landed with a shared sensibility and commitment for building a more equitable and just world. This collaboration is a meaningful and joyful one to us personally and brings together a stellar set of authors that represent diverse voices who all share the conviction that it is time for management theory and practice to be shaped for the betterment of all.

New York, USA   Latha Poonamallee
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As a headstrong young girl born into a financially under-resourced if not precarious brahmin family in what was then an ultra-conservative patriarchal India, my early years were forged in the intersection between caste privilege, class disenfranchisement, and deeply ingrained patriarchy. This situation then was not dissimilar to the one now—an ongoing triumph of caste tribalism and superiority over class solidarity. My extended family would have never dreamed of identifying with a non-brahmin family in a similar economic situation, let alone a Dalit one. But a combination of a natural aversion to social hierarchies, influence of a few good people

including my own parents who were decent and unfailingly kind people who raised us in a caste-blind manner, a friend's uncle who was a Marxist activist, and being soaked in Dravidian anti-caste and pro-poor discourse made me sensitive to these dynamics. I brought this intersectional and marginal sensibility which shaped my scholarly inquiry when I embarked on my doctoral education in the USA. These concerns shaped my doctoral dissertation work on radical social change driven by those in the margins.

Education and financial independence were my way out of the prescribed life that was dictated by my demographic markers. As someone who came of age in a fast-liberalizing India, I experienced firsthand the power of capitalism to lift individuals and families out of poverty, liberate women through providing means for financial independence while also continuing to cause irreparable damage to the planet and reinforcing the mythology of individual economic mobility over collective liberation and solidarity. This experience influenced my drive to alleviate poverty, foster social and economic mobility, enhance access to opportunities, and resources and find ways to move people's mental models toward more interdependence-centric ones and re-examine identities as complex, nuanced, and shifting realities that define our relationships with the world around us. My consistent aspiration is to inhabit that liminal space in which one can challenge the fundamental assumptions of the field yet find pragmatic ways to make change happen on the ground. In this journey, I have realized that I am an idealistic pragmatist (or is it a pragmatic idealist?) who is as committed to action and moving the needle even if it is painfully slow as to challenging fundamental norms of how society and organizations are organized.

Over the years, my work has coalesced into the Managing for Social Justice framework that signals the need to redefine the role of organizations and management. This perspective frames organizations as sites of social justice and investigates how management theories and practices can be harnessed to advance a more just, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world. Because all the world's work happens through organizations, most injustices happen in some organizational context—be it a private sector, a public sector, community organizations, co-ops, unions, sports teams, or faith groups. Therefore, justice must also be enacted within organizations. To examine this, I established the Management and Social Justice initiative part of which is the Virtual Management and Social Justice Conversation Series. The conversation series came out of what was then a necessary but fortuitous pivot from a planned in-person

conference on the same topic. The pivot was necessary because of the Covid-19 pandemic but fortuitous because we realized how accessible and affordable the whole program is in this format for people to attend from all over the world. The goal of the series is to bring together contributions from academic and practitioners on cutting edge, critical, and generative approaches to management scholarship, teaching, and practice that is focused on social justice, inclusion, and environmental sustainability—beyond the business school, the for-profit corporation, profit maximization, and managerialist agendas. This book is an offshoot of this initiative. Thank you for joining this community of interest.

Latha Poonamallee

Managing for Social Justice was not an oxymoron for me. I believe management can and should work toward social justice. In fact, this was what made me turn to management as my future pursuit at the age of 15. You are really wondering how on earth anybody would think that. This is my story.

I grew up in the Southern Indian state of Kerala in the 1980s and did my primary school education in a Catholic Convent school. Of all the things that Sister Isaac—my grade four class teacher—exposed us to, what stayed with me was the grave inequalities among people. More importantly, she had somehow managed to instill in us a belief that it was our responsibility to do something about it. It wasn't to be left to someone else. That personal call for action at the age of 9 became my life calling. Around that time, I came across Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (a grassroots science and literary organization that worked among school students), which although with left leanings, was welcome in our Catholic school in those days where ideologies had not polarized people to such an extent that they could not talk to each other. Their work was rooted in an ecosystem approach that laid bare the intertwinement of people and environment, which simultaneously revealed the complexity and magnitude of the problems facing humanity, and reiterated that we can survive only together, not separately. Parishad also was action-oriented and sought to arrive at solutions that focused on people and the planet (in the 1980s, much before such conversations became fashionable). As a result, I grew up as a child who was deeply convinced that I have to be agentic if we wanted a better world or even to merely survive. At the same time, the magnitude of what needs to be done seemed really daunting. The personal question for me was how am I going to do this?

Then I heard of 'management' from my uncle, who was relatively more traveled than the rest in the family and was a bit eclectic in his pursuits. In his layperson interpretation, management was the art of getting things done by a group of people. Though it could be Machiavellian in its purpose and enactment, in my mind it could equally be emancipatory. To the naïve 15 year old that I was, it looked like a body of knowledge or even a tool kit that can help organize collective action—not just mobilize action, but really facilitate conversation among multiple stakeholders, and device solutions acceptable to all, for the wellbeing of all. I wanted to 'learn' management and decided to do an M.B.A. because I heard they taught management in MBA. You must be laughing now! See, I had never met an M.B.A. in my life; this was not a line of study that anyone from my village pursued in those times. I hardly knew that 'management' as a discipline was completely appropriated by business organizations and for the solitary purpose of profit making.

Though pretty much all my business school teachers and classmates subscribed to the functionalist, capitalistic notions of management, I wanted to believe that it could still do social good. However, as embarked on a corporate career, the challenges of steering management to social good began to be more apparent. Not only had profit making (at the expense of everything else) and inequalities in power come to be accepted as legitimate, even introduction of alternate knowledge and perspectives was power ridden. Certain groups seemed to claim expertise and control the rights to determine the direction of theory, teaching, and practice. I decided to do a Ph.D., and serendipitously ended up in the Organizational Behavior department at Case Western Reserve University (where I also met Latha and Anita, the co-editors of this book).

Case OB department, with its unique pedigree of unwavering social orientation and practice relevance, made it possible to dream of management once again as emancipatory. I got involved with diversity and inclusion work in the USA, and also went on to explore management practices in the global South that are ignored by the western body of management knowledge. Latha, at that time, was examining alternate organizational forms, their foundational principles of managing and organizing, the actors in those settings and how they co-create change. Anita was deeply engaged not only in the theory but also practice of coaching actors to become change agents for themselves and their contexts. All three of us were conscious that what we encountered at the individual and

organizational levels were reflections of societal level inequalities, exclusion, and injustice. If we ignored the societal level dynamics, we would not be able to understand the individual and organizational level issues or devise solutions that can stick. We came to this awareness individually, but it did take some years for us to decide to do this book.

Things were evolving at the societal level too. As the effects of societal inequalities and climate change became no longer escapable, public outcry against businesses and exploitative nature of capitalist mode of production began to spread more widely. In response, business corporations began to reinvent themselves as change agents—by promoting philanthropies, committing to environmental goals, and supporting the World Economic Forum and other similar efforts. This reflected at the disciplinary level conversations. Social Innovation became the buzzword, and the scholars are now expected to demonstrate the social impact of their work. Interestingly, all this while the top 1% were getting richer and the poor were becoming poorer.

Then came COVID—driving home the intertwinement of nature, society, and businesses more forcefully than ever. Nobody could remain insular, everybody was affected. However, the effects of inequalities were starker. The twisted fate was that—for the relatively well-off to conduct their lives, the poor had to risk their lives. It has become undeniable that there is something fundamentally nasty about how we have organized our economies, societies, and businesses. And worse, at this time of collective danger where we must come together, ideologies have polarized us so much that any meaningful dialogue seems impossible. It is at this point that we began to relook at the potential of management as an area of theory and practice that can address some of these issues. It appeared that though there is much talk about (and even claims of) social impact, real social justice is nowhere in sight. We wanted to push boundaries by placing justice as an ideal. We knew there were others who thought of these things and wanted to reach out to them. That is how we decided to do this edited volume. This is not our individual pursuit, but a collective one of all authors who have contributed to this book.

In this book, researchers, teachers, students, and practitioners of management from various contexts, share their perspectives, experience, observations on placing justice as the teleological ideal for management. Based on their own understanding and on their experience of 'management', they highlight aspects that we should look/relook at, reconceptualize, reorient, and act on so that we can move closer to that

ideal. We hope that here you will find perspectives that align with, comple-
ment, or even question your own perspectives. We hope that it opens a
space for all of us to engage in conversations that explore if and how
management can truly pursue the ideal of social justice.

Simy Joy

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Management and Social Justice: An Oxymoron, a Pipedream, or an Inevitability?

Latha Poonamallee, Anita D. Howard, and Simy Joy

The title is a bit tongue in cheek, but the question is a serious one. Can management theorists, managers, and organizations even afford to ignore pertaining to social justice, inclusion, and equity today? At a very minimum, all organizations are concerned about managing risks around public image and stakeholder relations including how we manage or steward the natural resources. These challenges are not restricted to only

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private sector organizations. Nonprofits and public sector organizations must also contend with similar dilemmas regarding how to be more just and inclusive. All organizations and managers must therefore reflect upon how to engage with those who they are purported to serve in thoughtful, inclusive, and empowering ways preserving and advancing basic human dignity regardless of race, gender, class, sexual preference, or any other form of difference that gets weaponized to create a hierarchy and reified structures of oppression that restrict equitable access to power, resources and opportunities.

Social justice means paying attention "to ideas and actions concerning fairness, equity, equality, democratic processes, status, and hierarchy, and individual and collective rights and obligations" (Charmaz, 2005). A worldview that engages human dignity (Mahalingham, 2019), expansive and interdependence-centric mindsets toward others, and the natural environment is an essential underpinning to building a more just, inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and prosperous society (Poonamallee, 2021; Poonamallee & Goltz, 2014). Re-imagining organizations and managers as sites and vehicles of collective well-being and not only of unending economic growth and ecological destruction (Banerjee et al., 2020; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006) is a good first step and not a far-fetched one. Even mainstream business school professors are writing about alternatives to the 1% economy (Adler, 2019) and emancipatory management (Barros, 2010). Through millennia of evolution, we as human beings have always come together to solve collective problems and advance collective well-being. Be it ancient social organizations such as families, tribes, and faith groups or contemporary forms such as community organizations, governments, and even private sector organizations, we come together to enhance each other's strengths and meet each other's needs. Even a most maligned private sector organization cannot last in business if it does not serve at least one of its stakeholders reasonably well. Unfortunately, capitalism and colonialism have conspired to move us away from notions of collective well-being toward serving the top 1% and/or a narrow-minded pursuit of profit maximization. If it was not already evident, the Covid-19 pandemic has made it clear that the welfare of Wall Street and Main Street have no bearing with each other—unless history repeats itself and the world faces another Great Depression again. The losses of both lives and livelihoods due to the Covid-19 pandemic has also made clear that the most economically and socially vulnerable among us carry a disproportionate burden for the rest of us. Further, most nineteenth-

and twentieth-century management theories and practice were developed as if the world was/is always white, male, and heteronormative. We need new models of inclusion (Smith & Lindsay, 2014). Is it even possible for management theory and practice to imagine and facilitate in which humanity can disengage from unending economic growth and ecological destruction (Banerjee et al., 2020)? In its original days, scientific management was always meant to be focused on enlightenment, relationships between industry and society, stakeholders beyond the owners, worker's well-being, inspiring leadership, highest ethical standards in a full social context (Brooks & Miles, 2006; Taylor Society). In the fullness of time and in today's context, these issues also include attention to contemporary issues such as climate change, globalization, migration, diversity and inclusion, identity and salience, issues of equity, access and how organizations, managers, and those who study management can work together advancing collective well-being.

The journey for social justice is a processual, complex, dynamic, situated, contextualized, nuanced, international, and intersectoral phenomenon. For example, while racial justice plays a key role now in the US, in the post-George Floyd era, other parts of the world may have other forms of justice and injustice to contend with. It is not solely related to any specific identity group but identifying and addressing persistent structural sources of inequalities and differential access to resources. Organizations need to contend with and advance not just racial justice, but also other forms of justice such as economic or class-based justice, gender, and patriarchy inherent in many organizations, environmental justice and how these intersect with each other. The book does not take the route of the one path solution, not one size fits all, not a specific endpoint. The book allows for an examination of social justice approaches and solutions that are both global and extremely locally grounded in the local conditions and involving local stakeholders.

Approaches to Managing for Social Justice

We adopt the definition, "Social justice means paying attention to ideas and actions concerning fairness, equity, equality, democratic processes, status, and hierarchy, and individual and collective rights and obligations (Charmaz, 2005)" to guide us in this examination. We examine a few key ideas pertaining to social justice and management.

Knowledge production and hierarchies: Given that we are focused on management as field of theory and practice, we need to consider the production and organization of knowledge itself. How knowledge is organized and categorized needs to be understood in the context of broader social conditions for it to be just (Adler & Harper, 2018). This is because certain ethical dilemmas are inherent in the classification itself and therefore any critique must consider local, cultural, and subject-specific requirements (Mai, 2010). For example, how physicians think about the cultures of the patients they treat can affect and reflect the cultural connect or disconnect between physicians and their patients (Benjamin, 2017). This cultural competence orientation is a long enduring thread in this discourse (Byrd, 2021; Watts et al., 2011). Cultural competence, i.e., the ability to understand social identity groups, critical consciousness—the ability to analyze structural inequality, the motivation and interest in developing skills to take action that addresses inequality, and one's actual involvement in social change efforts are all equally important to cultivate (Watts et al., 2011). Like in leadership development area, there is a shift from away from personality or identity to a competency and critical consciousness development orientation in social justice education (Byrd, 2021).

Another important question that has serious implications for the field of organizations and management is the difference between equality and equity (Bronfenbrenner, 1973), especially in the context of distribution of resources. Is justice considered to be fairness? Is equity the same as equality? Very simply put, commutative justice and indicates the equal treatment of equals and is about the relationships between individuals who are equal under the eye of the law or within a community. Distributive justice is the relationship of the community as a whole with the individuals. Distributive equity then is the appropriate treatment of unequals in view of the differences between them. Equity is defined as the equivalence of the outcome/input ratios of all parties involved in an exchange (Adams, 1963; Walster et al., 1978). These ratios are not equal in an inequitable situation. This is not unique to the twenty-first century or even only applicable or relevant to the industrial and postindustrial era. Similarly, throughout history, various ideologies have used cries of injustice to motivate collective actions to build solidarity and change the rules of the game (Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983).

Scholars have addressed the nature and dynamics of such inequities grounded in racial, ethnic, and gender inequalities. Daum and Ishiwata

(2010) write that public policy and opinion grounded in institutional blindness to racial and historical distinctions further institutionalize the marginalization of the already marginalized populations in America. For example, 80% of the public-school teachers are white (NCES, 2020) and it is unlikely that white preservice teachers have had much inter-action with people of color before being assigned to schools that serve students of color (Duncan, 2021). In this book, Adams (forthcoming) writes about this specifically in the context of black workers in the STEM fields. This reality is also very stark in the public and community health fields. Community health field has made impressive strides in addressing social determinants of health inequities (Dean et al., 2013; Marmot & Allen, 2014; Schulz & Northridge, 2004). In many cases, it is still bounded justice Creary (2021) because justice efforts are still bounded by the cumulative effects of marginalization and the greater socio-historical constraints. She writes that it is challenging and misguided to think that changes can be brought in the space of fairness, entitlement, and equity without addressing the eroded basic social and physical infrastructures in these communities. Scholars (Epstein et al., 2021; Sonke et al., 2019) argue for engaging communities to expose inequities, counter stereo-types, mobilize action, and improve community health. Entrepreneurs also address this space (Joy et al., 2021; Poonamallee et al., 2020; Scillitoe et al., 2018). For example, HICO Health is a New York-based venture that utilizes technology for diabetes education among black communities. Similarly, Radical Health is another New York-based Healthtech venture that is focused on using technology to close some of the gaps in under-served communities. These differences are also prevalent across gender divides. For example, most of the tasks of caring continue to be dispropor-tionately shouldered by women, working class, and in most of the west, by people of color (Grogan, 1999; Noddings, 2012; Tronto, 1998).

Understanding how to handle these issues is further complicated by how we deal with international and intergenerational justice. Most justice issues are addressed within a territorial state and its citizens (Fraser, 2010). However, today, and historically, resources within and power structures between nation states cause justice/injustice. Colonialism has shaped these dynamics for several centuries. In the modern-day version of colonialism, actors include multinational corporations, international agencies, large institutional investors including global philanthropies. In this book, Sinha et al. (forthcoming) address the need for social justice in philanthropic activities to mitigate the danger of philanthrocapitalism

refeudalizing the public sphere (Hites, 2019). Global philanthropies shape national agendas of less powerful and less economically endowed nation states sometimes to the detriments of their own citizenry. Nancy Fraser (2010) advances a three-pronged theory of justice to address this dilemma. As a political philosopher, she argues that the political dimension of representation should encompass the three levels of economic (redistribution) and cultural (recognition) dimensions. This raises the question of human rights and not just citizen rights within national borders. In our globalized economic world, this has particular significance for business organizations that source materials from all over the world, outsource production all over the world, and develop markets all over the world. How does a local culture shape organization's norms and actions? How much can and should a foreign company influence local cultures?

Allowing immigrants to enter is not merely an act of generosity to opportunity seekers. In a skill-based world economy, immigration lies at the heart of a nation's capacity to compete in a global economy. How do then these immigrants get treated by both the citizenry and the organizations? Another area where this is visible is in academic campuses of the western world. More than a million international people study in US institutions. The first author's employer, The New School in fact tops the list in the US at 30%. When it comes to representation among top academic leadership, should the international students be treated as a salient but underrepresented minority? Or should the New School consider itself a US institution with a commitment only to domestic underrepresented minorities? Will the former make it less attentive to its commitments to domestic students? Will the latter make it a colonizer who is performative in their commitment to social justice and representation? To whom do we owe our primary commitment? And what is our commitment to representation, redistribution, and recognition? And how do we live those values and ensure we don't fall prey to the temptation and danger of empty performative rhetoric?

Intergenerational justice is concerned with long-term consequences that stem from intergenerational considerations. Most used in environmental justice and sustainable development this pertains to the rights and duties regarding future and past generations (Meyer, 2012). Rawls (1971) asserted that while future generations will be moral agents in their own rights but also that there is a need to define the obligations of the current generations to future ones. Thompson (2021) grounds the argument for reparations in the intergenerational justice definition.

Intergenerational justice advocates for the nurturing of just institutions, public health, a functioning ecosystem as essential for a prosperous society over generations. This framing is also useful for preservation of heritage, cultural capital such as knowledge and skills and even democracy itself (Meyer & Roser, 2009; Rawls, 1971). Taylor (2013) utilizes intergenerational justice as a useful perspective for heritage conservation and raises interesting and important questions such as "what is substitutable? What will be handed on to future generations if nothing is considered substitutable? What will inevitably be lost? What should be chosen for conservation? (Taylor, 2013: 7)." As Norton (1999: 422) rightly puts it, "the problem of what we owe the future is not a monolithic, single problem, but rather an inter-related cluster of problems." Gosseries (2008) suggests that reciprocity between generations form a "chain of obligation" beyond the lifetime. Where do the boundaries of such reciprocity exist? Does it rest within my own clan or any such identity markers? If it is narrowly bound to a set of tribal identity—be it ethnicity, race, nationality, shared history, shared geography kinship, etc., does that facilitate true global and intergenerational justice?

It is imperative to look at intersectionality then with the full understanding that the quest for social justice is a constantly evolving and co-evolving journey and not a utopian final destination. Poor People's Campaign is an example of an intersectional initiative that cuts across different identity systems including partisanship to build a moral movement toward universal human rights and well-being. Defining salience of justice issues in different contexts especially in a transnational setting is an even more complex challenge. For example, let us consider global environmental law. Low-income countries are more focused on income generation and health outcomes than address climate change even though they are tied together; ecosystem people become ecological refugees through colonization by omnivores (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). Equal right to pollute or emit is also a question of equity because improvement in quality of life, job growth, poverty reduction, and infrastructure development goes hand in hand with environmental damage in late capitalist societies like ours. The need to then innovate and come up with solutions that balance both or use green infrastructure and investments to advance material quality of life becomes an important lever for such change. The uneven contributions to the climate change crisis by different countries and the uneven trajectories of economic growth for different countries mean that coming together as a planet without any differences of