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COMPARING THE ADOPTION OF THE HUMAN RELATIONS SCHOOL IN FINLAND AND JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the legacy of the seminal human relations school theorists, their major works in particular, to scientific discussion in international journals, and compares the adoption of these ideas in Finland and Japan. We first examine how often the human relations school's theorists and their books have been cited in academic discussion, by conducting systematic searches on the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). We then look at how these theories have been discussed and adopted in Finland and Japan by carrying out bibliometric analysis and literature research. We find it interesting to compare the adoption of the human relations school in these particular countries, as the developments of Finland and Japan in the 1900s resemble each other in many respects. The findings indicate that both countries adopted the human relations paradigm as a complementary paradigm to scientific management. Bibliometric analysis of the SSCI database indicates that the seminal theorists of the human relations school have not lost their topicality, and that the importance and seminal works of the paradigm seem to be most influential in the field of organizational sciences.

Keywords human relations school, management history, management paradigms, Finland, Japan

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INTRODUCTION

Management fashions and buzzwords change rapidly, and their number has grown exponentially (Koontz, 1961; 1980). There is a growing interest in the dissemination and adoption of management paradigms (Barley and Kunda, 1992; Guillén, 1994; Üsdiken, 2004a), and management fashions and trends (Abrahamson, 1991, 1996; Carson, Lanier, Carson, & Guidry, 2000). Mauro Guillén (1994) defines a paradigm as a system of interconnected ideas and techniques that offer a distinct diagnosis and solution to a set of problems. The *ideas* are based on an ideology that presents a certain view of organizations and their aims as well as of workers, management and the hierarchical system of the organization. Ideology is also used to justify authority structures. The *techniques*, on the other hand, are the actual methods used to manage the workers in order to fulfil the ideological goals of the paradigm (Guillén, 1994).

The most significant management paradigms of the 20th century are considered to be scientific management, the human relations school, structural analysis (sometimes referred to as systems rationalism) and organizational culture (Abrahamson, 1997; Barley and Kunda, 1992; Guillén, 1994). Industrial betterment was the predominant paradigm of the last decades of the 19th century in the United States (Barley and Kunda, 1992, 364). The history of management has also been seen as an alternation between normative and rational ideologies (Barley and Kunda, 1992; Abrahamson, 1997). From this perspective, industrial betterment, the human relations school, and organization culture are seen to present normative control, whereas scientific management and structural analysis are seen to present rational rhetoric (Barley and Kunda, 1992, 364). Guillén (1994) notes that there is no set template for the introduction of paradigms; instead, local conditions tend to generate "tailor-made" solutions.

Management fashions, on the other hand, need to appear as providing "efficient means to important ends and new as well as improved relative to older management

techniques” (Abrahamson, 1996, 255). Fashions need to be perceived as rational and functional, yet innovative (Carson et al., 2000, 1143). They are managerial interventions, whose purpose is to encourage better organizational performance (Carson, Lanier, Carson & Birkenmeier, 1999, 320). Management by objectives, quality of work life programmes, total quality management, and reengineering are examples of management fashions (Carson et al., 2000, 1144). Long-term fashion that shapes the organizational practices more permanently can be called a *trend* (Letscher, 1994, 38) whereas a theory or a framework which becomes commonly approved and dominant for several decades can be considered a *paradigm* (Kuhn, 1962/1970, 23). Thus management paradigms are *one* way of categorizing management ideas, or groups of similarly orientated theories, techniques and models with a shared ideological basis (Guillén, 1994). We regard paradigms as a good way to analyse the history of management as they are long-lasting and, besides having technical features, they also have ideological characteristics. The trends and fashions that prevail during the period of a certain paradigm often reflect its ideology and spirit, even though it may not be expressed explicitly. (Seeck, 2008, 3.)

In the United States, the human relations school was the most important management paradigm among scientific management at the beginning of the 1900s, in particular between the years 1923 and 1955 (Barley and Kunda, 1992, 364). Like scientific management, the human relations paradigm claimed to find objective solutions to management problems (Barley and Kunda, 1992; Guillén, 1994). Nevertheless, the perceived problems and view of workers was very different from those of scientific management. Human relations emphasized the psychological qualities of workers, criticized the excessive mechanization of work processes, and saw it as the reason behind problems such as the monotony of work, absenteeism, unrest and disruptive attitudes, all of which were seen as having a negative effect on productivity (Guillén, 1994). It also stressed that workers were primarily people with group identity and emotional dependencies, and could thus not be managed merely by reason

(Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939/1950; Mayo, 1933/2003). One of its goals was the expansion and enrichment of workers' job descriptions and the rotation of work tasks (Wren, 2005, 332). The human relations paradigm was both an ideology and a set of techniques, and served managers on both counts (Guillén 1994). A significant breakthrough in the human relations school was the Hawthorne experiments (e.g. Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Employees were not to be seen merely as sellers of their labour power, but as people with emotional dependencies and group identities driven by psychosocial norms and needs. Therefore employees were to be selected according to their social characteristics, personalities, attitudes and potential for integration and adaptation, rather than on the basis of their physical aptitudes or dexterity (Guillén, 1994; Barley and Kunda, 1992; Wren 2005).

In this paper, we first examine how often the writings of the human relations school theorists have been cited in academic discussion as indicated in the Social Science Citation Index. We do this in order to get a general impression of the international academic relevance of the seminal theorists of the human relations movement. We then look at how the theories have been adopted in Finland and Japan, by conducting systematic database searches and by reviewing the literature. We find it interesting to compare the adoption of human relations school in these particular countries, as trajectories of Finland and Japan in the 1900s resemble each other in many respects and are often compared to one another, particularly in terms of their economic growth. Japan and Finland both experienced record industrial and economic growth after World War II, and after several decades of fast economic growth they also both descended into recession in the 1990s (Hazama, 1977, 402; Karisto, Takala & Haapola, 1997). In addition, both societies have been socially rather homogenous (Keys, Denton & Miller, 1994; Nurmi, Poole, & Seginer, 1995).

The present study tests the theories of Guillén (1994) on the adoption of human relations paradigms and of Barley and Kunda (1992) on the alteration of the rational and normative ideologies in two different countries. The research provides a point of comparison

in the study of the arrival and adoption of the human relations paradigm. We also deliberate upon some of the national institutional conditions and cultural features that may have advanced or prevented the adoption of the human relations school in these two countries.

Birkinshaw, Hamel and Mol (2008, 825) explore management paradigms, fashions, and trends from the viewpoint of management innovation. According to them, management innovation literature encompasses four key perspectives: an institutional, fashion, cultural and rational perspective. They argue that the rational perspective is an agency-perspective within the realm of management innovation literature, as it focuses on how both the management innovations and the individuals who drive them deliver improvements in organizational effectiveness. They posit that the agency-perspective is absent from the more dominant institutional and fashion perspectives, and call for more research in this field (ibid. 825). Though we examine the human relations paradigm from what Birkinshaw et al. (2008) term as an institutional perspective, we also answer partly to their call for research on the agency perspective, by illustrating how the contribution of individuals, namely the seminal theorists of the human relations school, have contributed to the adoption and dissemination of the paradigm.

According to Harold Koontz (1961, 1980), many management fashions recycle old ideas by using them in a new guise. David Lemak (2004, 1309) posits that one way of examining the management discourse jungle is by following the path of the seminal theorists and their writings in the field. The basis of this study is to connect the theories of the human relations paradigm to their initial developers. This is not the most typical approach in the field of management, as the management fashion cycle needs to spin and continuously develop at least seemingly new theories and techniques, because different fashions-setters - consulting firms, management gurus, business mass-media publications and business schools - live of this process (Abrahamson, 1996). In a similar vein, Engwall and Kipping (2006, 97; Engwall, 2007, 18) illustrate how a number of knowledge professionals contribute to the production and

dissemination of management techniques and discourses, and emphasize the role of practice, management consultants, business schools and the media. We do not argue that the seminal theorists of human relations would have been the only ones to disseminate their ideas, and recognize that consultants, for example, such as the Associated Industrial Consultants and Urwick, Orr and Associates, had an important role in the dissemination of human relations techniques and ideas (Guillén, 1994, 250; Seeck, 2008, 312). One should also not underrate the relevance of the Tavistock Institute, Yale's Institute of Human Relations, or the Harvard Business School in the dissemination and adoption of the human relations school (Morawski, 1986; O'Connor, 1999). However, in this article we concentrate, deliberately, on examining the role of the seminal theorists and their writings in the adoption and dissemination of the paradigm.

The adoptions of management paradigms and fashions have been studied on the national level (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Merkle 1980, Tsutsui, 1998) and the institutional level (Guillén, 1994). Guillén (1994) provides an analysis of the adoption patterns of scientific management, human relations and structural analysis paradigms in the United States, Great Britain, Germany and Spain. Kipping (1997) has examined the adoption of Taylorism in Great Britain, Germany and France, and Seeck (2008) the adoption of scientific management, human relations, structural analysis and organizational culture theories in Finland. Studies have also analysed the arrival and adoption of a single paradigm or fashion in the context of a particular country, for example the adoption of scientific management in Japan (Warner, 1994, Tsutsui, 1998) and human relations in Turkey (Üsdiken, 2004a). The use of management practices and techniques in different business branches has also received some attention (Kuokkanen, Laakso & Seeck 2009). The different fashion-setters on the other hand, have been examined both jointly (Engwall & Kipping 2006, Engwall, 2007; Abrahamson, 1996) and individually (Kieser, 2004; Spell, 1999; Ainamo & Tienari, 2002). The role of

consulting in the diffusion of management fashions has in recent years gained a growing interest (Engwall & Kipping, 2004).

The paper is structured in the following way: we first briefly introduce the seminal theorists of the human relations school. We then describe the method of citation analysis and depict the results of the analysis of the SSCI. We then examine the Finnish databases and introduce the Finnish human relations pioneers. After this, we compare the Finnish adoption of human relations to that of Japan. At the end we contrast these two to the general development of human relations as indicated by the citation analysis.

SEMINAL THEORISTS OF THE HUMAN RELATIONS SCHOOL

Table 1 presents the seminal theorists of the human relations school. Despite its name, the human relations school is not a single school, but rather a group of researchers and theorists united by a common viewpoint on management, focusing above all on interaction and human relations in the workplace. The human relations school was not named until 1948, when Fritz Roethlisberger stated in his article, published in the *Harvard Business Review*, that it was time to give a name to this area of research. There have been several stages in the development of the human relations school, with different focuses at different times. Despite the difference within the paradigm, the theorists listed in Table 1 can nevertheless be seen as representatives *on the ideological level* of one, fairly coherent paradigm. With reference to the human relations school, Guillén (1994, 20) talks of two different generations, the first of which included Elton Mayo, Chester Barnard, Kurt Lewin and Fritz Jules Roethlisberger and the second Georges Friedmann, Rensis Likert, Douglas McGregor, George Homans, William Foote Whyte, Eric Trist and Chris Argyris.

Table 1. The seminal theorists of the human relations school, their major works in the field of organization and management, and translations into other languages. Source: Guillén, 1994, 17–18 except for data concerning translation into Finnish that have been acquired from Finnish databases.

	English	German	Spanish	Finnish
Mayo, Elton				
Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization	1933	1950	1959	-
Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization	1945	1949	...	-
Barnard, Chester Irving				
Functions of the Executive	1938	1970	1959	-
Lewin, Kurt				
Die psychologische Situation bei Lohn und Strafe	...	1931	-	-
Resolving Social Conflicts	1948	1953	-	-
Roethlisberger, Fritz Jules				
Management and the Worker	1939	-	...	-
Management and Morale	1941	1954	-	-
Training for Human Relations	1954	-	-	-
Motivation, Productivity, and Satisfaction of Workers	1958	-	-	-
Counselling in an Organization	1966	-	-	-
Friedmann, Georges				
Problèmes humains du machinisme industriel	1955	1952	1956	-
Où va le travail humain?	...	1953	1961	-
Le travail en miettes	1961	1959	1958	-
Traité de sociologie du travail	-
Likert, Rensis				
New Patterns of Management	1961	1972	1965	-
Human Organization	1967	-	-	-
New Way of Managing Conflict	1976	-	1986	-
McGregor, Douglas				
The Human Side of Enterprise	1960	1970	1975	-
Homans, George Caspar				
The Human Group	1950	1960	1964	-
Social Behavior	1961	-	-	-
Whyte, William Foote				
Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry	1948	-	-	-
Pattern for Industrial Peace	1951	1956	-	-
Money and Motivation	1955	1958	1961	-
Man and Organization	1959	-	-	-
Men at Work	1961	-	-	-
Organizational Behavior	1969	-	-	-
Trist, Eric Landsowne				
Organizational Choice	1963	-	-	-
Argyris, Chris				
Personality and Organization	1957	-	1964	-
Interpersonal Competence	1962	-	-	-

... missing data

Elton Mayo is often referred to as the founding father of the human relations school, as he made a significant contribution to the Hawthorne studies which have been considered crucial for the emergence of the paradigm. (Wren, 2005, 286). Mayo (1933/2003, 69–74)

argued that increased productivity among the test group was caused by strong social cohesion between the members of the examined work group and the positive attention they received from the supervisors of the study. Fritz Roethlisberger and Willian Dicksonin collected the results of the Hawthorne studies in their classic work *Management and the Worker* (1939). In this book they argue that the psychological factors, as well as physical factors of workers, are important in the organization of work. Moreover, the physical work environment also has social implications for relationships between workers and the atmosphere of the workplace, which must be taken into account. (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939/1950, 556–558.) Chester Barnard (1938/1968) examined the role of managers in creating co-operation in a work organization, and also emphasized the importance of communication (Barnard, 1938/1968, 175-181). Kurt Lewin, for his part, developed a means for evaluating group behaviour (Lewin, 1948), and is regarded as the inventor of group dynamics (Marrow, 1969, 166–172).

Douglas McGregor researched industrial relations at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and made the famous classification between theory X and theory Y, which reflected two possible different orientations that managers could have towards their employees, in his book *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1960/2006). George Homans was a student of Elton Mayon and aimed at understanding the tension between formal and informal systems within organizations (Homans, 1951), as did William Foote Whyte by examining hierarchies and command orders in organizations (Whyte, 1948). His student Chris Argyris was interested in workers' opportunities to evolve, grow and express themselves as a member of a work group in different institutional situations and settings (Argyris, 1957). Mary Parker Follet can also be seen as an early contributor to the paradigm although her writings on management were not published in her life time (Child, 1995). Among other things, Follett (1942/2003) examined conflicts and integration in organizational framework.

The proponents of scientific management usually worked on the shop floor or in factory management but they generally did not have academic degrees in social or

behavioural sciences, while the central theorists of the human relations school, almost without exception, had academic careers. (Guillén, 1994, 15, 19–20.) Another key difference in the formation of these two paradigms was that most of the theorists of scientific management were engineers, whereas the development of the human relations school was to a large extent in the hands of behavioural scientists (Wren, 2005, 329). Many of the key theorists of the human relations school, such as Kurt Lewin, are in fact known as pioneers of social psychology.

METHODOLOGY

The analysis part of the article examines the legacy of the key authors of the human relations school and their most important works in international scientific journal discourse, and a comparison is made with the cases of Finland and Japan. The purpose of the article database searches was to collect quantitative information on how much the human relations school has been dealt with in scientific journals, and to see how frequently the seminal works of the school have been cited in the journals. The seminal works were chosen according to the classification of Guillén (1994, 17–18) (Table 1).

The research methods used in this paper are bibliometric analysis and systematic literature search. Bibliometric analysis provides a partial answer to the question of how influential a particular work has been. The basic assumption of the citation analysis is that the number of citations reflects the importance of a certain text. Citation analysis is also useful for extrapolation of trends and patterns, as changes in citation patterns can be traced over time fairly easily. (Üsdiken & Pasadeos, 1995, 508.) The SSCI database provides information on the frequency of citations to books and scientific articles and includes data from over 1950 of social science journals across 50 disciplines since 1956, and we used it to define how often the classical works of the seminall human relations school theorists have been cited.

The review period comprised the years 1956–2005. At the beginning of the analysis, material searches were made for the whole period using search words referring to the human relations school, such as "human relations *" and "human relations *" AND (manage* OR organi* OR work*). The aim was to find out how many articles discussing the human relations school had been published over the last 50 years. After this, the analysis focused on how many times the works of the key theorists of the human relations school have been referred to in the scientific articles included in the database. The material was reviewed one work at a time, and the combined number of references was used as a basis for estimating the importance of each writer in the scientific discourse. Next, we examined the same thing in relation to time. The authors were reviewed one at a time on the basis of the combined number of references to their central works, in ten year periods beginning from 1956, in order to form a picture of how the influence of the main human relations theorists has changed over the years. The review in ten year periods does not, of course, give accurate results on the year in which the changes in numbers of references took place, but it enables us to see the direction of the changes. Searches were also made with more detailed search words, such as McGregor AND "theory x" and "Hawthorne experiments", but such searches produced only a few relevant results.

Finally, the we examined the influence of the seminal authors of the human relations school in different scientific fields. We did this by adding together the references to the main works of each theorist and examining, for every ten year period, which scientific journals had published the 20 most cited articles of each theorist. In this analysis, every individual person was given the same weighting (20 articles/ten year period), regardless of how many works he or she had published and how many times the works had been cited. The research setting emphasizes the importance of the individual authors. When reading the results it is worth remembering that they are not proportional to changes in the number of scientific articles published. It is therefore possible that increases in the absolute numbers of articles dealing

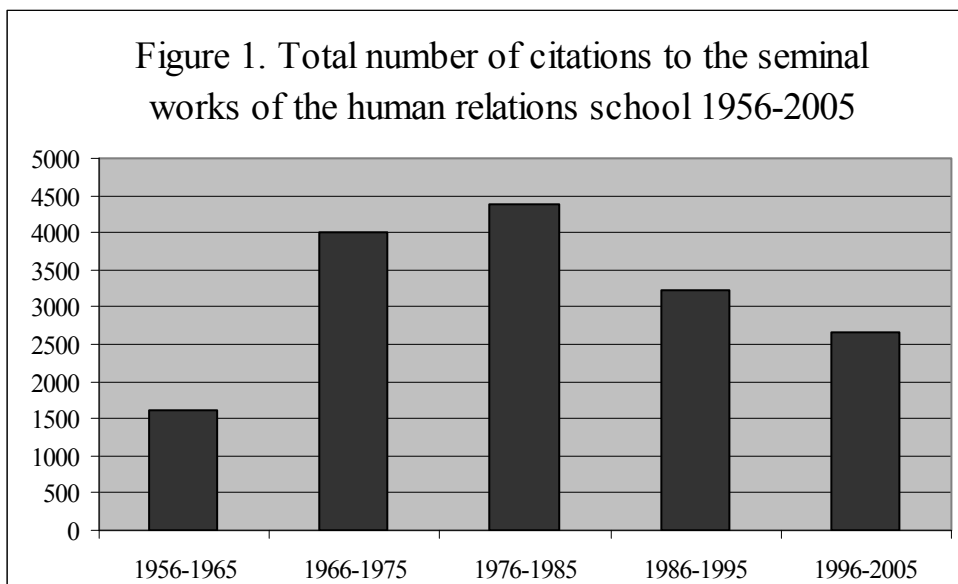
with the human relations school in different fields of science over 50 years are partly explained by the substantial growth that has taken place in the number of journals on organizational research and other scientific journals published.

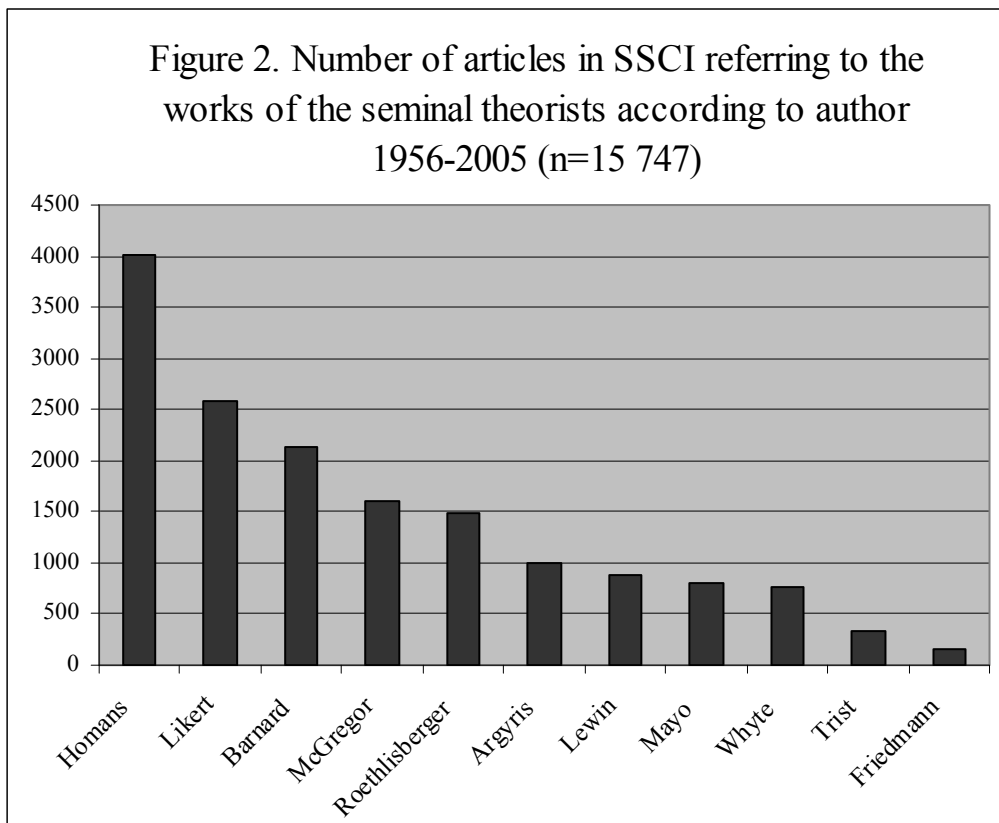
The databases used as material for examining Finnish discourse on the human relations school were the Arto and Fennica databases. Arto is a reference database of new Finnish articles, which has comprehensive data on a total of some 700 general journals and periodicals, and contains a large number of references to older articles. Fennica is Finland's national bibliography, which contains data on books, journals and series published in Finland since the year 1488. Unlike the SSCI, the Finnish databases do not contain data on numbers of references to publications, so they do not offer information on how popular a certain work has been as a source. The searches were carried out using search words referring to the human relations school and the names of authors. As the Finnish databases yielded only a few references, no timeframe was set. The search words used included the terms "human relations movement" and human relat? AND (työ? OR organisaatio?) and the names of key authors of the human relations school. In the case of Japan, we used the Business Source Premier database by EBSCO to find out the number of articles written on the human relations school and Japan. The obvious limitation of the study is the fact that we were not able to make citation searches in Japanese databases due to the language barrier. Hence, comprehensive bibliometric analysis was not possible in the case of Japan.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The legacy of the seminal human relations school theorists for scientific discussion in international scientific journals

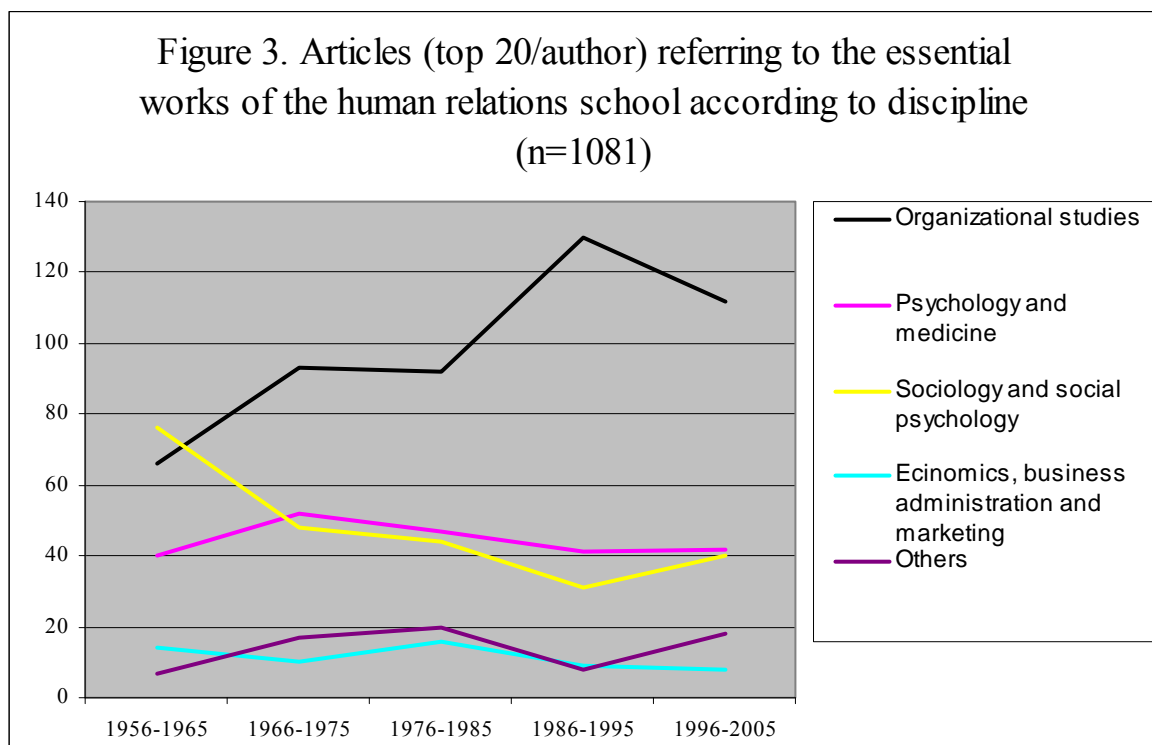
Bibliometric analysis of the SSCI shows that the seminal human relations school theorists have not lost their topicality in international scientific discussion, as many of the classic works are still frequently cited (figure 1). Mauro Guillén (1994, 15) considers 1930–1970 the period of human relations, whereas Barley and Kunda (1992, 364) suggest 1923–1955. However, according to our results it seems that discussion on the themes of human relations remained lively until the 1980s at least, and that some works such as Chester Barnard's *Functions of the Executive* have been referred to more often in the 2000s than ever before. Figure 2 shows the numbers of articles referring to the seminal works of human relations school theorists according to author. The works of George Homans have been most referred to, and the works of Renesis Likert, Chester Barnard, Douglas McGregor and Fritz Roethlisberger have also been influential.





As Figure 3 shows, the works of the human relations school theorists reviewed were cited most often in publications dealing with research on organizations, administration and work life, with the exception of Kurt Lewin and George Homans, whose works were cited most often in sociology and social psychology journals. In the case of Lewin this is not surprising, as his work *Resolving Social Conflicts* (1948) deals only partly with organizations and focuses mainly on examining group behaviour. Almost half, i.e. 46% of the articles dealing with the main works of the human relations school reviewed had appeared in journals dealing with research on organizations, administration or work life. Of the articles referring to the most often cited works on human relations, 22% were published in sociology and social psychology journals. An almost equal percentage of articles had appeared in psychology and medical journals, i.e. 21%. Only 5% of the articles had appeared in economics and commerce journals. The remaining 6% of the articles reviewed had been published in other journals, often in the fields of law and education.

When the types of journal are analysed in relation to time (Figure 3), we can see a considerable increase in the importance of journals on organizational research as a publication forum for human relations school articles, when compared with other scientific journals. On the other hand, the importance of sociology and social psychology journals in particular as a channel for articles on works of the human relations school, has diminished. As regards other scientific fields, the changes are not noticeable. The importance and tradition of the human relations school in international scientific discourse seems to be the most pronounced in the field of the organizational sciences.



Adoption of the human relations school in Finland

According to our study of the two largest Finnish databases, seminal theorists of the human relations school are rather poorly known in Finland; very little has been written on the whole about the human relations school in Finnish scientific journals. Bibliometric research into the Finnish databases of Arto and Fennica only generates a few matches. For instance, "human relations movement" as a search word did not yield any articles or books in either Finnish or

English. Searches for the names of the pioneers of the human relations school found only a few matches. For instance, the search for "Kurt AND Lewin" found seven matches in Arto and four matches in Fennica, but most names of the pioneers did not result in any matches. Furthermore, of the principal works of the human relations school, not a single book has been translated into Finnish. This sets the human relations school apart from all the other management paradigms, since at least some of the principal works relating to each of the others have been translated into Finnish. (Seeck & Kuokkanen, 2008; Seeck, 2008.) Search words relating to personnel administration, personnel management and human resource management however, generated hundreds of hits. Work ethic, work motivation and well-being at work were also popular and much discussed subjects in Finnish databases.

It seems that the human relations school established itself in Finland very slowly and was seen more as a subsidiary model of scientific management after World War II. Scientific management was a very influential paradigm in Finland (Teräs, 2001; Kettunen, 1994, Michelsen, 1999). It had a strong presence in business journals in the first half of the century and many of the major works of scientific management theorists were translated into Finnish with only a couple of years' delay (Seeck and Kuokkanen, 2008). The application of scientific management techniques grew in Finland after World War II (Kettunen, 1997). Compared to scientific management, the human relations school had few promoters in Finland and it seems that their influence remained rather weak (Kuokkanen & Seeck, 2008).

The Finnish pioneers of the human relations school were Aksel Rafael Kurki, V. A. Niininen and Ohto Oksala, who wrote about the human factor in the 1930s and 1940s. The differences in the backgrounds of the Finnish pioneers resemble the division between the seminal theorists of scientific management and the human relations school. The Finnish pioneers of scientific management were engineers, natural scientists or economists, whereas human relations pioneers were educationalists and psychologists. (Kuokkanen & Seeck, 2008.) However, it is worth noting that, with the exception of Oksala's *Työn psykologia*

(henceforth *Psychology of work*), no mention is made of the original human relations school theorist in the works of Finnish human relations pioneers. *Psychology of work* has a page-long presentation of the Hawthorne experiments which led to the foundation of the human relations school, but even here the names of the research group members are not mentioned. The Finnish pioneers therefore seem, at least on the basis of their texts, to have had little knowledge of the international theorists of the human relations school. The early scientific management theorists, on the other hand, were very well known in Finland and were cited frequently in the literature, also in all the works of the Finnish human relations pioneers.

The human relations school theorists remained unfamiliar in Finland in the early years of the century, and the theory only arrived through influences from other countries such as Germany, the United States and Sweden (Kettunen, 1994, 1997; Michelsen, 2001, 24). This finding is in agreement with the observation that not a single one of the seminal works on human relations has been translated into Finnish (see table 1), even though a great deal of the literature relating to all the other important management paradigms has been translated. Thus the central themes of the human relations school in Finland remained relatively little known during the period when these works were written; from the 1930s to the 1960s. The first theories and practical applications concerning the social dimension of work life and human relations came to Finland in the form of psychotechnology and early work psychology (Väänänen, 2006).

The reason for the very instrumental view of workers and the poor recognition of the seminal theorists of the human relations school in Finland may partly be explained by the fact that engineers had a great deal of power in the early 20th century. In the hands of the engineers, work life developed in a very rational direction in Finland and the metaphors followed in the same direction, from technology to work management (Kettunen, 1997, 97–98; Michelsen, 1999, 230–238, 297–301). In Britain, on the other hand, where the human relations school was very influential both as an ideology and on the level of management

techniques, the humanistic school of thought was dominant in the early 20th century, creating a fertile ground for the theories of the human relations school (Guillén, 1994, 230–236). Chester Spell (1999), who has studied the spread of fashions in management, noted that these management trends began to influence certain fields of business earlier than others. Thus it can be presumed that the assimilation of management paradigms could also happen in certain areas of business at different times and with different degrees of intensity. The rational approach of the Finnish management discourse has probably been influenced by the fact that Finnish industry centred on technical branches, such as the forest and extractive industries. Most of Finland's largest workplaces were led by engineers, whose technical education probably did not equip them to apply the management methods favoured by the human relations school (Heikkinen & Hoffman, 1982, 60).

Furthermore, in the early 20th century, psychology was still a young science in Finland (Aho, 1993, 10), and the lack of an established tradition in psychology was one factor that contributed to the rather poor visibility of the human relations school in Finland at that period. Another was the fact that the paradigm did not have the same strong institutional and state support as the rationalization movement, which in the first half of the 20th century advocated more efficient production and other scientific management principles in Finland (Vartiainen, 1994, 22–24; Michelsen, 2001, 118–128). Thus the spread of the new management theory, emphasizing a psychological approach, depended on the activity of a few individual pioneers at the beginning of the century until work psychology gained a stronger position in the mid-20th century. This was seen, for example, by the founding of psychology departments at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (established in 1951) and the Helsinki University of Technology (established in 1946), and the with the introduction of teaching by institutions giving management training, such as Rastor, Lifim, and the School of Management (Johtamistaidon opisto).

The poor visibility of the human relations school in management discourse at the beginning of the 20th century was probably also influenced by Finland's relatively late industrialization, which explains why the methods of scientific management were adopted so late. As a stage in management development, the human relations school was missed out, and was only taken up as supplementary to the theory of scientific management. Finnish management discourse progressed directly from scientific management to another rational paradigm, structural analysis, which appeared in Finnish management discourse and in business enterprises in the 1960s. (Seeck & Kuokkanen, 2008; Huhtala & Laakso, 2006.) The powerful position of engineers as mentioned above has perhaps contributed to the fact that rational paradigms have succeeded here at the expense of management theories, resting on a more psychological and humanistic tradition. In the early 20th century in particular, the arguments for scientific management in management journals were often based on ideological claims. Rationalization was seen as essential for Finland's success, and scientific management practices were often justified by appealing to public and national interest. (Seeck & Kuokkanen, 2008.)

The ideas of the human relations school served as a legitimate basis with which employers could explain management techniques and hence use the ideas of human relations against labour union activity and labour unrest (Guillén, 1994, 24–25). The rhetoric of human relations also softened boundaries between employees and workers and between their interests (Barley & Kunda, 1992). Hence, human relations have been seen as a remedy to labour unrest (Guillén, 1994, 25). Finland has been one of the leading European countries in the number of industrial disputes and there were many industrial disputes in Finland in the 1920s (Vattula, 1983). Some of them were extensive, aiming at collective agreements (Kettunen, 1994). In the 1930s, the depression and the resulting fall in employment made industrial disputes scarce. After World War II, as inflation picked up speed and salaries declined in real terms, Finland began to reach the top of the international league in its number of industrial disputes

(Mertanen, 2004). Despite this, however, attention towards the human relations school was not very high in Finland, compared to the success of scientific management in the mid-1900s. However, the ideas of the human relations school are still topical. It seems that the doctrines have established themselves as an essential part of the rhetoric of the Finnish discussion on work life in general, and the ideas of the human relations school are nowadays more relevant than ever in Finland. (See also Seeck & Kuokkanen, 2008.)

In part, personnel management can be seen as forming a continuum with the human relations school; its background assumptions are partly based on theories of the human relations school, even though in discussions of personnel management, the connections with the human relations school are often not mentioned explicitly. For example, George Strauss, who wrote about personnel management, embraced the views of Douglas McGregor (Wren, 2005, 435). Guillén on the other hand, in his study of the spread of the management practices associated with the human relations school in the United States, finds that their adoption was often linked with the foundation of separate personnel management departments in companies (Guillén, 1994, 73).

Personnel management and the soft version of HRM have been widely discussed in Finnish management literature and journals. Searches in the Finnish databases of Arto and Fennica produced several hundred hits with terms related to human resource management. In Finland, at a stage when personnel management was taking shape, from the late 1950s to the end of the 1960s, the concept of personnel as a resource that can and should be invested in came to the fore. This idea also received support in management training and in the press. At the same time the idea that personnel matters should be centrally planned and co-ordinated became established. The techniques of personnel management and human resource management became common in Finland in the 1960s and 1970s. (Lilja, 1987, 186–187.) According to Lilja (1987, 188) the 1970s can justifiably be described as the decade of personnel management in Finland, as belief in its importance was very strong at this time.

Personnel management was presented in Finnish teaching materials and professional development seminars on management, and employees involved in personnel management began to co-operate actively on a professional level (Lilja 1987, 188).

Comparing the Finnish and Japanese adoption of the human relations school

The whole of Japanese management theory is so multidimensional that it has been referred to as the "management theory jungle" (Keys & Miller, 1984; Keys, Denton & Miller, 1994). The Japanese have also been successful in adopting and putting imported management into practice (Fukuda, 1988, 74). However, there are not many studies on the adoption of the human relations paradigm in Japan compared, for instance, to the large body of research on the adoption of scientific management (see e.g. Warner, 1994; Tsutsui, 1998; Sasaki, 1992). We only made a few hits on the Ebsco database with search terms such as "Japan AND "human relations school" AND management" and many of them were not even relevant to our topic.

Cultural features of Japan, such as harmony, strong social cohesion and spiritualism have been used to explain the adoption of management theories in Japan. William Ouchi (1981), for instance, has explained Japanese success through its cultural characteristics which include lifetime employment, collective decision-making, collective responsibility and a holistic view of employees. Nevertheless, culturalist thesis has often been a topic of critical discussion among researchers of Japanese management (Koike, 1988, 4–13; Mouer & Kawanishi, 2005, 46–50). It has been argued that institutional structures may be as important as culture in explaining the Japanese management style and work mentality (Mouer & Kawanishi, 2005, 10–11).

At the beginning of the 20th century, a paternalistic management style was common in many Japanese workplaces. This management style was called managerial familism or familistic management and aimed partially towards the same goals as the human relations

school, i.e. more commitment and better understanding between worker and manager (Hazama, 1997, 33–35). Hence, it utilizes the rhetoric of normative management and also resembles the ideology of industrial betterment (see Barley and Kunda, 1992, 384). Familistic management meant a transition in Japanese management from a mere master–servant relationship to a more organized and comprehensive style (Hazama, 1997, 41). As well as aiming for family-like relationships in organizations, personal relationships were also common in Japanese workplaces for another reason. For instance, in the 1920s, recruitment was often made through personal connections and thus usually based on the personal characteristics of an employee, even on their mode of thinking, as managers wanted to choose employees who were likely to accept the ideology of the enterprise and were not keen on attending the labour movement. This was seen as an efficient way of preventing labour unrest. (Hazama, 1997, 76–82; see also Kinzley, 2006.)

However, the first influences of scientific management came to Japan simultaneously in the 1910s, when Hoshino Yukinori became acquainted with Taylor's ideas and published the Japanese translation of Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management* in 1913. Ikeda Tōshiro and Ueno Yōchi were also among the first Japanese promoters of the ideas of scientific management (Tsutsui, 1998, 18–20). According to Kinzley (1991), scientific management was adopted with enthusiasm in Japan, but as a softened, local version (see also Suzuki, 2005). In this way, Japanese promoters of scientific management hoped to avoid its most harmful consequences (Warner, 1994, 523). Tsutsui (1998, 56–57; see also Warner, 1994, 522) sees Japanese paternalism as an important reason behind the Japanese version of scientific management, which was more concerned about the "human element" in the 1910s and 1920s than the American version. According to Tsutsui (1998), new American influence was smoothly adopted as a part of Japanese management. However, systematic movement for scientific management did not grow in Japan until the 1930s, and many of its techniques were adopted in Japanese industry after World War II as a consequence of American management

training schemes and industrial and economic growth (Sasaki, 1992, 21–22; Tsutsui, 1998, 159–167).

The first ideas of the human relations school also came to Japan after World War II, although many American consultants thought that Japan had a greater need for production skills than for human relations theories (Wren, 2005, 461). Industrial sociology diffused from the United States to Japan after World War II, paving the way for human relations ideas. According to Mouer and Kawanishi (2005, 26-27), Matsushima Shizuo, Mannari Hiroshi and Okamoto Hideaki are the main Japanese writers associated with this tradition of understanding the organization of work. Japanese students in the United States also brought back to Japan ideas adopted from the American human relations movement. American books on human relation traditions were translated into Japanese (Whyte, 1991, 106). Human relations received a rather warm reception among Japanese managers, who saw it as a new, scientific basis for the betterment of worker morale and productivity. Ideas of human relations were also discussed in general journals like *Reader's Digest* in the 1950s (Tsutsui, 1998, 156–157). Two associations, the Japanese Association of Suggestion Systems and the Japan Human Relations Association, were developed to promote this process. The Japan Human Relations Association (JRHA) was founded in the 1950s, and among its publications are for instance *Kaizen Teian 1* and *Kaizen Teian 2*, books that introduce a system for "continuous improvement through employee suggestions" (Japan Human Relations Association, 1992).

Human relations school techniques such as suggestion systems, attitude surveys and job-rotation came into common use in Japanese workplaces in the 1950s (Tsutsui, 1998, 156; Warner, 1994, 525). Contrary to Finland, Japan has received a great deal of human relations influence directly from the United States (Tsutsui, 1998, 155–159, 161–162). This may be one reason for the fact that in Japan, human relations school techniques seem to have been taken into use much faster than in Finland. However, in Japan, human relations was not a considered a strict antithesis of scientific management, as in the United States. As in the case

of Finland, human relations were adopted in Japan as a complementary paradigm to scientific management (Tsutsui, 1998, 158). The most important reason for this was probably their industrial and managerial backwardness after the war. Managers in both countries felt that rationalization and scientific management techniques were needed to develop industrial production. According to Tsutsui (1998, 158), the Japanese version of human relations "accorded more with the American reality than the American theory" on human relations. The way in which human relations were adopted in Japan reflected its compatibility with scientific management. That is to say that both paradigms pursued better productivity and control over employees even though the proponents of the paradigms may not have wanted to acknowledge it. (Tsutsui, 1998, 158–159.)

Some influence of the human relations school techniques can be seen in the quality control circles system that is widely used in Japan (Whyte, 1991, 106). Quality control circles provide a means for workers to participate in company affairs and for management to benefit from worker suggestions. From a critical perspective however, concepts originally formulated by the human relations school, such as participation and motivation, were only used as a garnish to make this new model more appealing to the workers, as fundamentally, quality control circles were adding standardization and accountability to management. (Tsutsui, 1998, 231–232.)

CONCLUSION

It seems that mentality towards the adoption of early management paradigms was rather similar in Finland and Japan. These societies have major cultural differences, but both seem to have adopted a "softer version" of scientific management, perhaps because the ideas of human relations were also under discussion at the time, whereas in the United States, for instance, human relations emerged as a response to the downsides of Taylorism (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Guillén, 1994; Tsutsui, 1998, 155). Japan also had strong paternalistic traditions that

prevented scientific management techniques being taken to their extreme forms. However, a significant difference between Finland and Japan is that Japan has received a great deal of human relations influence directly from the United States, while in Finland the ideas of the human relations school were adopted from Sweden and Germany. In Finland, the original proponents of the human relations school were poorly known. Japan has also been more successful in developing human relations school ideas such as quality control cycles into Japanese management models. One reason for this may be that Japan had two associations promoting human relations ideas, whereas in Finland the human relations school did not have such institutional support.

It seems that both in Finland and Japan the ideas of the human relations school have been adopted in parallel with the techniques of scientific management, instead of adopting human relations as a normative challenger to the rational discourse of scientific management, as would be expected according to the theory of Barley and Kunda (1992). They claim that normative and rational paradigms alternate and follow economic long-waves, and their study shows that in the United States, rational rhetoric has increased during upswings and normative rhetoric during downswings (Barley and Kunda, 1992, see also Abrahamson, 1997). It seems that in Finland and Japan, however, adoption of both scientific management and human relations have coincided with a period of economic growth. Hence, thesis of Barley and Kunda may not hold true for the development of management in small countries that absorb a lot of influence from abroad. In these countries, the adoption of paradigms debate may reflect more economic, institutional and social changes.

Abrahamson and Fairchild (1999, 708; see also Abrahamson, 1991) posit that management discourses enable the dissemination of management techniques across *dissimilar* organizations, in spite of their context. This is based on a belief that organizations and their situations are similar, hence they can *all* benefit from the usage of the techniques (Abrahamson & Fairchild 1999, 708.) This seems to be the case of the ideas of the human

relations school, which is applied in both the private and public sector, and across nations. The ideas of the human relations school were also adopted in Finland and Japan, although in a different way than some other countries (see Guillén, 1994). From the point of view of Americanization, management consulting (Kipping, 1997; Ainamo & Tienari, 2002), and management education (Kieser, 2004; Kipping, Üsdiken & Puig, 2004; Tiratsoo, 2004; Üsdiken, 2004b) in particular, have been examined critically. In Finland, American management models are closely followed and adopted, although with some delay. Moreover, no remarkable management innovations have been invented in Finland. (Seeck & Kuokkanen, 2008.) In Japan, on the other hand, imported management ideas have been developed and transformed into new management fashions (Keys, Denton & Miller, 1994). The reason why Japan has been so much more successful in inventing management models than Finland remains a subject for further research.

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