

Obituary: Alberto Mayor Mora (1945-2021) the father of management history in Colombia

Alberto Mayor Mora was a sociologist who opened the research in Colombia's management history and created the basis to understand industrialism through managerial practices and ideas.

Colombia has a rich history in industrial development in the first half of the XX century, promoted by several managers, entrepreneurs and thinkers able to perform against several constraints and limitations. The integration of education, corporative development, industrial organization, trade unions and public policies created the conditions that made Colombia the country with the most increase in industry growth – 8.5% between 1920 and 1950 in Latin America (Kalmanovitz, 2010).

Alberto Mayor Mora was born in Cali in 1945 and was a sociologist at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia (UNAL). In 1975, he became a professor and served for more than 30 years at the School of Sociology at UNAL. In the first edition of the *Colombian Sociology Journal* in 1979, Mora published a seminal work about the education of the elite industrialist in Medellín and started the creation of the masterpiece of the social history of industrialism in Colombia. The book *Ética, trabajo y productividad en Antioquia. una interpretación sociológica sobre la influencia de la Escuela Nacional de Minas en la vida, costumbres e industrialización regionales*, published in 1984, contains a deep and detailed description of managerial practices in the framework of relationships between entrepreneurs, workers, managers and catholic church.

This work is the basis of his reflections about the professionalization of business administration in Colombia (Mayor, 1990), which was part of the book: *In search of an administration for Latin America: experiences and challenges* published in 1990. One year later, he published the analysis of the conflicts between managers, supervisors and workers around Taylorism in the biggest companies in Colombia (Mayor, 1992). His works emphasize the need to develop conceptually, theoretically and methodologically perspectives of the administration according to the conditions of our contexts. As part of this interest in the development of administrative thinking in the country, he published in 2007 the chapter: *Towards a national identity in administration: among the “best sellers” and own intellectual production* (Mayor, 2007). This work presents the reflections that lead the analysis of the influx and proliferation of foreign managerial paradigms that are not sympathetic to our problems.

Mayor began in 1994 the research of the most prominent figure in Colombian industrialization – Alejandro López Restrepo – because of his contributions as a professor, manager, entrepreneur, politician and, as we proposed extending the work of Mayor, a classic management thinker from Latin America to the world (Orozco and Anzola-Morales, 2019). *Técnica y Utopía. Biografía intelectual y política de Alejandro López 1876-1940* was published in 2001 and became essential to understanding the diffusion and development of administrative thinking in Colombia. In addition, Mayor performed historiographic research, including a stance at the University of Oxford as a visiting professor (1985–1986) to follow the trail of Alejandro López Restrepo, who lived in England for 15 years and was consul there for five years.



The work of Mayor, including several books about the industrialization in Colombia (Mayor, 1989), is one of the most representative efforts to create knowledge for management history in Colombia and deserves to be acknowledged and recognized as the beginning of the scholarship in this field.

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Further reading

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