

CALL FOR PAPERS – SPECIAL TOPIC FORUM

COMMUNICATION, COGNITION, AND INSTITUTIONS

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BACKGROUND

Recent arguments by institutional theorists suggest that one of the most promising planks for the development of institutional theory is combining an analysis of the structural and practical aspects of organizations and institutions with a theorization of the microprocesses of cognition (e.g., framing, categorization, or sensemaking) and communication (e.g., interaction or rhetoric) through which those structural and practical aspects are maintained, challenged, or changed.

For some time institutional researchers have recognized the importance of language, discourse, and communication in the very processes that constitute institutions. Yet while communication is clearly central to the construction of institutions and their logics, we are still lacking theories about the microprocesses through which categories, logics, practices, genres, or identities come into being in everyday interaction. In turn, in communication research, broadly defined, researchers have developed a number of theories and methods with the potential to elucidate precisely such processes and the interactions between the micro and macro levels. Yet, to date, institutional theory has not been infused with these insights.

The purpose of this special topic forum is to bring together these two strains of research—cognition and communication—to advance our understanding of the crucial role of communication in institutionalization. This involves bringing insights from various theories of social cognition, sensemaking, discourse analysis, and other cognitive and communication-related perspectives to institutional theory. In particular, we believe it is necessary to focus attention on the microlinkages among communication, cognition, and institutions in and around organizations. Such analysis should not merely focus on management, professions, and organizations per se but should link those to wider national and global institutional structures and processes, such as markets and emerging or declining economies.

With this call for papers we therefore seek to expand communication and cognitive perspectives on institutions and institutionalization by encouraging scholars to

- examine the cognitive, communicative, and social bases of institutions and institutional change;
- seek or develop models that incorporate or make use of cognitive and communication theories and concepts, such as voice, frames, rhetoric, dialogue, discourse, interaction, speech acts, and institutional messages, events, orders, or memory;
- theorize how communication affects the dualities of institutional maintenance and change, conformity, and deviance; and
- explore the connection between the micro worlds of organizational communication and sense making, cognition, and the taken-for-grantedness of institutions.

A key focus of papers submitted should be recognition of the interpersonal and interorganizational acts of communication that maintain and transform local, national, and

global institutions. The concepts employed may include but are not limited to audience analysis, studies of cognitive categories, discourse analysis, frame analysis, genres, message construction, narratives, prototypes, and sense making, among others.

Accordingly, we invite contributions that include the following potential approaches:

- A focus on communication processes that sustain or transform institutions—For example, communication and institutions may be viewed as conformity regimes such that institutional conformity or deviance is seen as a speech act. Alternatively, researchers could theorize the role of the media in institutionalization and change, specifying the link between micro-interactions and microstructure.
- Similarly, a formulation of the ways in which institutional messages have consequences for organizations or a model of the ways that legitimacy and legitimization are communicative processes.
- A focus on the contributions of category, frame, genre, and other cognitive constructs and processes to the study of institutions—For example, a potential paper could tie communication and cognition to institutions through specifying the role of social media in transmitting institutional logics and frames.
- A focus on the roles of governments, markets, and NGOs as national and international carriers of institutions and institutional logics—For example, researchers could demonstrate the role of professional and trade associations or consultants as communication media in structuring industries internationally or they could theorize the role(s) of international institutions in the acceptability of institutional logics.

TIMELINE and SUBMISSION

All submissions should be uploaded to the Manuscript Central/Scholar One website: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/amr> between July 1, 2013 – August 3, 2013. Please do not submit your article prior to July 1, 2013 or after August 3, 2013. Contributions should follow the directions for manuscript submission described in the Information for Contributors at the back of each issue of *AMR* and on the *AMR* web page: <http://aom.org/Publications/AMR/Submitting-a-Manuscript.aspx>

For queries about submissions, contact *AMR*'s managing editor, Susan Zaid, at szaid@pace.edu. For questions regarding the content of this special topic forum, contact one of the guest editors: John Lammers (jclammer@illinois.edu), Joep Cornelissen (j.p.cornelissen@vu.nl); Eero Vaara (eero.vaara@hanken.fi), Rodolphe Durand (durand@hec.fr), or Peer Fiss (fiss@marshall.usc.edu).

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