

# Business

# History

## Business History Special Issue Historical Research on Institutional Change

Manuscripts should be submitted at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/fbsh> before 31 March 2016.

### Guest editors

Stephanie Decker, Aston University, UK, [s.decker@aston.ac.uk](mailto:s.decker@aston.ac.uk)

Lars Engwall, Uppsala University, Sweden, [lars.engwall@fek.uu.se](mailto:lars.engwall@fek.uu.se)

Michael Rowlinson, Queen Mary University, London, [m.rowlinson@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:m.rowlinson@qmul.ac.uk)

Behlül Üsdiken, Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey, [behlul@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:behlul@sabanciuniv.edu)

### Call for papers

The important role that institutions play for all forms of organizations has been recognized in a wide variety of disciplines. Douglass North's (1990) book on the nature of institutional change in economic history was influential in both economics and history. Likewise has among others the article by DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) been significant in sociology and organization studies. Nevertheless, the nature of institutional change has remained a heavily contested subject that has not seen the same degree of theoretical and empirical development.

Institutional change is by its very definition a process that unfolds over long time periods with fundamentally unpredictable outcomes that can only be properly evaluated with hindsight. Because institutional change is a fundamental feature in historical research, many historians do not necessarily define or reflect on this as a research phenomenon in its own right. On the other hand many research debates in organization studies have remained

curiously a-historical when developing the antecedents, outcomes and mediating factors for processes of institutionalization, institutional maintenance, and deinstitutionalization (Dacin, Munir and Tracey, 2010).

Nevertheless, between these two extremes there are many processes of institutional change in organizations that develop over time periods that are too long to research with the standard methods of qualitative social science such as interviews or participant observations. Here some historical approaches based on archival research may create more interesting research designs (Wright and Zammuto, 2013). Historical theory also has different insights to offer organization studies (Rowlinson, Hassard and Decker, 2014). It is in these areas that management and organizational history could contribute by investigating phenomena from a more long-term perspective. Suddaby, Foster and Mills (2014) have similarly argued for a more historical institutionalism to address unresolved issues in institutional theory, such as the paradox of embedded agency.

Within business and organizational history, there is an increasing interest in questions of theory and methodology. Alternative approaches, not just those drawn from the social sciences, but also from historiography, such as oral history or microhistory, offer new ways of approaching research. Historians interpret institutional theory in different ways from organization scholars (Rowlinson and Hassard, 2013), which offers new avenues for interdisciplinary dialogue.

Submissions may address the following issues and questions, although this list is not exclusive:

- The five C's of historical thinking (change over time, context, contingency, causality and complexity) and the possibilities of institutional theory (Andrews and Burke, 2007).
- New institutional theory in organizational sociology has lost the focus of old institutionalism on issues of politics and power. Would historical institutionalism offer a useful corrective?
- Alternative methodologies for historical institutionalism: oral history, microhistory, ANTi-history.
- Institutional transplants beyond legal and economic history.
- Institutional entrepreneurs and institutional work – the return of historical actors and contingent decision-making.
- Institutional logics or politically-motivated ideologies: old wine in new bottles?
- Routines, practices and process vs. the eventful temporality of history.
- Beyond path dependency in explaining long-term structural change in historical perspective.

We hope to attract papers with a long-term perspective focusing on institutions, organizations as well as on organizational fields. We envisage that papers will be empirically

rich but also they are linked to current institutional theories. In addition we shall also consider theoretically or methodologically oriented contributions provided they address both historical and institutional theory concerns.

### ***About the guest editors***

**Stephanie Decker** is Professor of Organization Studies and History at Aston Business School, UK. As a historian working at a business school, most of her work is concerned with the relation between organization theory and history. She is co-editor of 'Business History' and is the recipient of the prestigious Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship 2014-15, as well as the principal organizer of a seminar series on organizational history funded by the Economic and Social Science Research Council (UK). She co-authored "Research Strategies for Organizational History" (*Academy of Management Review*, 2014) with Michael Rowlinson and John Hassard.

**Lars Engwall** is Professor Emeritus of Business Administration at Uppsala University. His research has been directed towards the development of industries and organizations as well as the creation and diffusion of management knowledge. Among his publications related to the sub-theme can be mentioned *Mercury Meets Minerva* (2009/1992), *Management Consulting* (2002, ed. with Matthias Kipping), *The Expansion of Management Knowledge* (2002, ed. with Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson), and *Reconfiguring Knowledge Production* (2010 with Richard Whitley and Jochen Gläser).

**Michael Rowlinson** is Professor of Management and Organizational History in the School of Business and Management, Queen Mary University of London. He has published widely on the relationship between history and organization theory in journals such as the *Academy of Management Review*, *Business History*, *Human Relations*, *Organization*, and *Organization Studies*. His research on corporate history concerns the representation of history by organizations, especially the dark side of their involvement in war, slavery, and racism. This has been published in journals such as *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, and *Labour History Review*. His current interests include the methodology of interpretive historical research in organization studies. He edited the *Journal Management & Organizational History* from 2008 to 2013 and he is now a Senior Editor for *Organization Studies* and a co-editor for the Special Topic Forum of the *Academy of Management Review* on 'History and Organization Studies: Toward a Creative Synthesis.'

**Behlül Üsdiken** is Professor of Management and Organization at Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey. Previously, he was a professor at Bogazici University. He has contributed to numerous journals as well as a variety of edited collections. He has served as a Co-editor of *Organization Studies* in 1996–2001 and a Section Editor of the *Journal of Management*

*Inquiry* in 2007–2012. His current research focuses upon family business groups, management education and universities.

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