PROLOGUE
Stability and change*

JENNIFER BARTLETT
QUT Business School, Brisbane, QLD, Australia

STEPHANE TYWONIAK
Curtin Graduate School of Business, Curtin University, Perth, WA, Australia

PETER CEBON
University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

JACO LOK
Australian School of Business, University of New South Wales, NSW, Australia

CRAIG PRICHARD
Faculty of Business Massey University, Aotearoa, New Zealand

TRACY WILCOX
Australian School of Business, University of New South Wales, NSW, Australia

This special feature section of *Journal of Management & Organization* (Volume 17/4 – July 2011) sets out to widen understanding of the processes of stability and change in today's organizations, with a particular emphasis on the contribution of institutional approaches to organizational studies. Institutional perspectives on organization theory assume that rational, economic calculations, such as the maximization of profits or the optimization of resource allocation, are not sufficient to understand the behavior of organizations and their strategic choices. Institutionalists acknowledge the great uncertainty associated with the conduct of organizations and suggest that taken-for-granted values, beliefs and meanings within and outside organizations also play an important role in the determination of legitimate action.

It became apparent to us as we considered these questions, and in discussion with a range of international scholars interested in similar concerns, that there may be a particular strand of work emerging from scholars in Australia and New Zealand. A number of meetings of those interested in these questions have begun to take place in our region. The first of these meetings was held in 2008 at the University of New South Wales, and again in 2009 at Queensland University of Technology. At the time of the second meeting, our suggestion to the editors of the *Journal of Management & Organization* to put forward a call for papers around these questions of stability and change, using an institutional perspective, was met warmly. Interestingly, the response to that call brought interest from scholars from around the globe, bringing together a range of perspectives. We present to you a select number of those papers in this issue. What also emerged from the meetings and the call for papers is that a core group of scholars from Australia and New Zealand have loosely formed a community around a diverse range of studies. We share those in this introductory piece. However, in order to put these views and the selected papers together, we will first provide an overview of neo-institutional theory and its interest in questions of stability and change.

Institutional theory emerged in the late 1970s alongside a number of other organization theories – resource dependency and population ecology – as perspectives to deal with the limitations of the strategic and rational approach to dealing with

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* Edited by Jennifer Bartlett and Stephane Tywoniak

organizational problems. Meyer and Rowan (1977) laid the foundations for this sociological approach to organizational problems by drawing on notions of bureaucracy, from Weber (1947), and social constructionism, from Berger and Luckmann (1967), to suggest that organizational rationalizations are social constructions rather than technical efficiency. Meyer and Rowan (1977) noticed that the schools in their studies were considered legitimate and held in high regard by authorities for promoting key plans and programs, yet in the schools themselves, these goals and plans were not necessarily in place. This gave rise to their idea that organizations could be successful as long as they indicated their alignment with rational myths or socially constructed and taken-for-granted norms of appropriateness. This meant that as long as ceremonies were in place that indicated the organization was legitimate, and they were available for inspection by outsiders, the organization could be evaluated as legitimate. This suggested a type of conformity across organizations to comply with constructed, or rationalized, myths of what was appropriate at any one time. They did note however, that what is legitimate is vague, ambiguous and in flux (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). There are therefore a variety of possible responses to become legitimate, depending on the organization and their assessment of what creates legitimacy. This highlights the importance of the symbolic in understanding organizations.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) subsequently pondered the existence of much homogeneity amongst organizations in light of the ambiguous and variable nature of legitimacy as proposed by Meyer and Rowan (1977). They drew on Weber's iron cage principles to suggest that organizations are subject to isomorphic pressures to conform. They delineated three such pressures: coercive pressure stemming from social actors with the authority to require compliance to required behavior; mimetic pressures of imitation as a result of organizations and practices that are perceived to be more legitimate, especially as a response to uncertainty; and normative pressures that emerge through professions and their

practices. This perspective focuses on the importance of networks and relationships to understanding organizational structure and practice.

These early seminal papers in institutional theory established legitimacy as the central rationale for organizations, over the technical efficiency perspectives. The Stanford Sociology Department produced much of this thinking with key scholars such as John Meyer, Woody Powell, Lynne Zucker and others. Some assert that institutional theory may be at odds with technical efficiency, but efficiencies like the market are also socially constructed and institutionally defined. The emergence of socially constructed institutions that implore organizations to comply with rationalized structures and practices (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) put a focus on isomorphism or similarity.

The tension posed by the sociological perspective of organizations oscillated between the culturally bound institution and strategic options, and has remained as a central tension in institutional theory. The literature has dealt with this in numerous ways. The authors of the *Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin, & Suddaby, 2008) suggest there have been three periods of scholarship investigating these questions. The first of these, from roughly 1983 to 1991, approached neo-institutional problems in terms of organizations as rationalized myths. Drawing on Weberian principles of rationalization and bureaucracy, and principles of social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), legitimacy in a socially constructed and institutionalized world was a central focus in this period. These studies ranged from the challenge of seeking legitimacy by adopting practices (e.g., Tolbert & Zucker, 1983) through to means of transmission. During this period, the notion of translation was introduced by a group of scholars from Scandinavia (e.g., Barbara, Czarniaska & Kerstin Sahlin). Translation suggested that many contemporary organizational phenomena were largely rhetorical and focused on the multiple and contradictory accounts which were translated for local meaning and purpose.

Late in this first wave of institutional scholarship, a second period saw scholars dealing with the role of institutional perspectives as an explanation for organizational and institutional arrangements. Numerous questions were raised about how the institutional perspective explained behavior across a range of sectors, including markets, and the role of strategy in determining organizational behavior. While principles of institutional isomorphism and conforming to rationalized rules were central tenets in this period (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), questions about the variations continued to be asked. A central theme throughout the institutional theory literature is the role of institutions as: culturally bound (e.g., Meyer & Rowan, 1977), a matter of political process (e.g., Fligstein, 1991), and the role of politically or state sanctioned institutions. Agency therefore became a central question of how organizational forms and institutions were legitimated and delegitimized, with an interest in those holding the power and ability to shape institutions (DiMaggio, 1988). Of concern was that this strategic perspective to gain legitimacy did not default to a form of managerial marketing, but kept the attention to a socially constructed perspective involving multiple actors (Neilsen & Rao, 1985). What resulted during this period was the firm positioning of institutional theory perspectives as a recognized area of organizational studies with a specific contribution to organizational behavior.

As institutional theory took hold in the 1990s and into the 21st century, four key themes emerged in the literature during this third period: institutional isomorphism, legitimacy, institutional entrepreneurship and change, and institutional logics (Greenwood et al., 2008). Through a vast variety of studies, the literature has covered a range of perspectives from the intra-organizational through to the societal; from inertia and bureaucracy to change and translation; from the cultural to the political. The sites of study have continued to involve the more institutionally bound domains of state and non-profit sectors, but have also moved into the corporation and the market.

An overview of core research questions in institutional theory reveals a tension between stability and change in organizations. Over the past three decades, the analysis of organizations through the institutional lens has oscillated between these two polar attractors. On the one hand, researchers acknowledge the role of taken-for-granted assumptions in promoting organizational inertia and stability and the influence of external pressures for conformity to societal norms of legitimacy that lead organizations to converge on mimetic practices and structures. However, the reality is that institutions do indeed change. This raises questions about the triggers and machinations of that change to institutions. Attention has been drawn more recently to the role of organizational innovators or institutional entrepreneurs in bringing about new industries, products or organizational forms.

This tension between stability and change has highlighted the need for processual research and has provided the opportunity to import processual concepts and theories such as structuration or sensemaking. Recent theoretical developments highlight the continual building and re-building of organizations through the work of purposeful and knowledgeable agents. However, important research questions pertaining to organizational stability and change remain under-studied, including: processes of institutionalization and de-institutionalization, the role of power and organizational machinations, the contribution of processes of learning and sensemaking, and the role of ethics, identity, meaning and culture.

The institutional theory landscape has been dominated by a largely North American voice with important contributions particularly with regards to notions of translation and, more recently, the pressures of soft regulation from the Scandinavian schools.

This feature section in the official journal of the Australia and New Zealand Academy of Management raises important questions about our regional voice for organization studies. What contribution can we make in terms of empirics and theory? We are small, so we can't afford to be

specialized/fragmented as is seen in the scholarship from the USA and Europe. However, at the same time, our geography and culture gives us an opportunity to act as go-betweens and to stimulate cross-disciplinary and cross-region dialogue. As many in the region say, we are close enough to take part in the discussion, but far enough away to develop our own thread of the conversation. What we seek to do as scholars is open up conversations between neo-institutional theory, organizational behavior and critical studies in the region.

In order to start that conversation, we asked a selection of organization theory scholars using institutional theory in Australia and New Zealand to share their insights on the dimensions being employed. We therefore bring some overview insights from these scholars to sit alongside the empirical papers selected for this special issue. Firstly, Craig Prichard from Massey University in New Zealand highlights the importance of locale as a constructed space that draws on readily available knowledge and practices in response to local issues, conditions and circumstances. As such, our place is a central imperative for emerging institutional studies. Still focusing on regional issues, Peter Cebon from the University of Melbourne considers the role of the state in developing a regional space for innovation. This continues the institutional focus on the social construction of a reality and the institutions within which organizations operate.

Our invited scholars then move onto the machinations of socially constructing institutions. Firstly Jennifer Bartlett from Queensland University of Technology and Stephane Tywoniak from Curtin Business School discuss the institutional theory contributions to understanding sustainability. Socially constructed legitimacy acts as a fruitful lens for considering social and environmental, as well as economic, pressures on organizations that are infused with ethical and moral claims. Tracy Wilcox from University of New South Wales takes up the important question of power in institutional work. She suggests that critical management

approaches potentially have much to offer questions of power. Jaco Lok, also from the University of New South Wales, steps into the micro-foundations of institutional theory. He presents insights on how organizations and organizational members play an integral role of shaping practices and institutions. In the following section, each of these scholars presents their insights.

DOING ORGANIZATION STUDIES IN THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC – PROGRESS SO FAR

Craig Prichard

Location has always been a powerful mediator of business and organizational practice. Significant economic advantages have flowed to certain locations based on their access to and role in the organization of both natural and, particularly, human resources. Chandler and Hikino's (1994) field-defining analysis highlights, for example, the importance of location derived and developed organizational capabilities in underwriting the dominance of US and more recently, Japanese firms, in world trade.

Among the consequences of dominance has always been, to some degree, the privilege of writing the history of that ascendancy[1] into the forms of knowledge used to understand it. Not surprisingly, the dominant theoretical and conceptual resources that furnish the intellectual frameworks for thinking about, understanding and changing business and management practice are derived, for the most part, from US sources. Analysis of the popular management knowledge industry highlights the centrality and dominance of US consulting and publishing firms (Kipping & Engwall, 2003; Roberts, 2010; Sturdy, Handley, & Clark, 2009) and analysis of academic knowledge highlights the dominance of US-sourced frameworks, methods and institutions in the production and promotion of academic knowledge about management and organization (Paasi, 2005; Uskiken & Passadeos, 1995).

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[1] Or denying it, or promoting the myth of its demise (Strange, 1987).

Another consequence of dominance is the choices that those who find themselves on the fringes of the management knowledge industry (such as in the South Western Pacific) have over their relations with the epistemological metropolis. In recent times some 'fringe dwelling' management and organization studies researchers have begun to unpack these relations (Augier, March, & Sullivan, 2005; Clegg, Linstead, & Sewell, 2000; Leung, 2007; Prichard, Sayers, & Bathurst, 2007; Tsui, 2009). Prichard et al (2007) argue that there are at least three ways to constitute such relations. Firstly, they identify a 'franchise' relation. Here the research questions, methods and frameworks developed by metropolitan research communities are imported, applied in the peripheral location, and reported back to the metropolis. The second, more oppositional response, involves a 'move to the marginal'. Here, researchers develop unorthodox resources in response to what some might regard as trivial problems. Such a response can be considered in part as a reaction to marginality. Prichard et al.'s (2007) third response involves *turning location into a locale*. A 'locale' is understood as a constructed space that draws on readily available knowledge and practices in response to local issues, conditions and circumstances. A 'locale' response to knowledge production involves building research communities with and through the embodied practices, things and particular histories and identities found in particular locations. This does not necessarily involve ignoring or dismissing the metropolitan centres' theoretical machinery, but rather appropriating and altering such resources in response to local concerns. Developing a 'locale' involves creating a kind of a subordinate knowledge that overtime develops distinctive inflexions and trajectories that come to speak 'back' to the dominant theoretical and conceptual machineries of the metropolitan centres.

In this introduction, we identify those areas where 'locale' responses are evident and offer early examples of work that suggests that a distinctive antipodal research community in management and organization studies is being established.

AN AGENDA IN INNOVATION AND GOVERNANCE

Peter Cebon

Australia provides a particularly interesting venue to study innovation-related activities. The idea that innovation is central to economic development has held sway in economics for over 50 years (Solow, 1957). Most businesses and governments, particularly in the developed and newly industrialised world, have made innovation central to industrial policy. Yet, Australian businesses and governments have consistently avoided aggressive and sensible innovation-related policies. For example, the Howard government essentially ignored innovation in its first four years of office. In its fifth year (2001), it created an innovation strategy which was not only heavily premised on the notion that innovation was best understood as the commercialization of science to create new industries (rather than the development and improvement of existing products and services by existing companies), but which also omitted to mention the CSIRO, the government's own industrial research laboratory (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2001). During that government's life, government expenditure on research and development (R&D) dropped from 0.75% of GDP to 0.58% (Review of the National Innovation System, 2008). By 2006, Australia was 19 out of 21 in the OECD on this measure. The Rudd government, elected in 2007, promised to change this precedent, and bring Australian innovation policy into line with the rest of the G20. However, it pre-empted its comprehensive review of the Australian innovation system (cf. Review of the National Innovation System, 2008) by abolishing the Commercial-ready grant scheme, a scheme that had been particularly successful at commercialising university and scientific research, mid way through the review.

Meanwhile, business investment in R&D, a measure of corporate attention to innovation, is not particularly impressive. Australia's total expenditure on R&D (business and government) is 2.01% of GDP, compared to an OECD average of 2.26%.

Furthermore, Australian companies are much less collaborative with each other or Universities than their overseas counterparts (Department for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, 2009). While some of this may be attributable to the fact that mineral exploration does not count as R&D, the empirical reality is that Australia is a laggard in the face of strong normative evidence that it should be emphasising innovation. The policy debate about this problem has been constructed almost entirely in rational choice terms, or through simplistic comparisons with high innovation zones, such as Silicon Valley. However, these data suggest a much more pervasive problem in the way that Australian society constructs innovation socially (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), and then enacts it in both government policy and business practice. The way in which innovation is understood in Australian corporate and government circles, and the way that understanding gets enacted, deserve careful study.

If we start to look to Australian businesses operating in specialist and high technology markets, we find that they confront problems that are not faced by businesses in other countries, and therefore, potentially provide an interesting start to an explanation of these problems. For instance, they tend to be either physically distant from their markets, if they are trying to market into Europe or North America, or culturally distant from their markets, if they are trying to market into Asia. Furthermore, if we examine the treatment of innovation by the capital markets, we find a distinct paucity of experienced and successful investors. For instance, Australian venture capitalists rarely have extensive experience as entrepreneurs. Similarly, Australian superannuation funds rarely have people with innovation experience on their boards (Backhouse, 2010). Consequently, a further area for research would be to understand the nature of these barriers and their impact upon the manner in which Australian businesses are constructed and managed, as well as the way in which that construction shapes how those businesses interact with their markets.

An example of this sort of research is a set of cases investigating high technology, Australian ventures

by Cebon (2008). One of the study's more interesting findings is that when innovative companies fail, the source of the failure is often the board of directors. However, in a subsequent unpublished study, Cebon (2011) found that directors of large Australian companies perceive innovation as not being their responsibility. Rather, innovation is seen as something that happens lower down in the corporation. This response is consistent with the prescriptions of agency theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). While this raises many interesting questions about the nature of corporate governance in general (Cebon, 2011), it also raises the question of whether or not Australians, almost embodying the total institution of their convict origins, take on institutions particularly literally, and so Australian boards adhere excessively to the prescriptions of the theory.

LEGITIMATION OF THE SUSTAINABILITY PHENOMENA

Jennifer Bartlett and Stephane Tywoniak

Sustainability and the future of the planet have become hot topics not just in Australia and New Zealand, but around the world. Institutional theory's emphasis on the socially constructed rational myth, rather than economic imperatives, potentially provides fruitful insights into the theoretical and practical struggles of the alignment, or at least the co-existence, of the economic with the social and environmental agendas (Greenwood et al., 2008). For instance, Boiral (2007) showed that adopting environmental standards was largely ceremonial.

Such studies highlight the construction of new social expectations and the legitimation of organizational practices. Suchman (1995) sought to articulate the notion of legitimacy and highlighted the generalised perceptions of appropriateness. The institutional theory perspective is particularly apt for considering the legitimacy of sustainability matters as the subject is highly infused with tensions related to moral and ethical imperatives. Taking an institutional theory lens places a significant emphasis on the process of

social construction, the roles of the actors within this process, the agency and power they exert, and the devices they use to construct meaning within the field. Of particular interest in considering sustainability and environmental ceremonies is the role of media in this process. Deephouse and Suchman (2008) suggest that there has been a greater emphasis on creating empirical measures of legitimacy through media. They also posit that media plays a specific role as an authoritative actor within the social construction process, specifically, as legitimating agents (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008) supporting or critiquing various attempts at articulating sustainable practice.

However, media also provides a site for understanding the public construction and deconstruction of institutions and of what is legitimate (Bartlett, 2007). Media provides a public forum (Metzler, 2001) for the rhetorical attempts at articulating claims and positions around sustainability by a variety of social actors within a field. Within this site, a multiplicity of activity takes place including institutional work of constructing, maintaining and delegitimating (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006).

POLITICS, CRITICAL MANAGEMENT AND POWER IN THE STRUCTURE–AGENCY PROBLEM

Tracy Wilcox

Situated at the crossroads of North American and European theoretical and methodological approaches, Australasian/Asia-Pacific researchers are well placed to adapt and enhance current understandings of institutional theory. We are comfortable with a range of ontological stances and theories of knowledge, and this plurality of sociological perspectives allows for a rich and practice-based interrogation of important questions in institutional theory.

In particular, there is much scope for more nuanced accounts of 'intelligent, situated institutional action' (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 219) which acknowledge the agency of organizational actors, as well as the ways in which institutional contexts enable and constrain such agency. If we accept

that 'individual persons … are inseparable from the transactional contexts in which they are embedded', at least in the analytical sense (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 287), then a 'relational sociology' informed by institutional theory provides a gateway to the resolution of a range of matters (Delbridge & Edwards, 2007; Mutch, Delbridge, & Ventresca, 2006). A relational approach to research enables a study of the ongoing interaction between institutional elements such as logics, norms and systems of meaning, and the ways in which organizational agents respond to and shape those structural elements, in terms of strategic and political behavior.

The political element of institutionalization has not been fully investigated in organizational research (Seo & Creed, 2002). We know that the legitimacy of an institution or institutional practice stems from 'discursively regulated identities, normative assertions about what should be done, who significant others are, what they should stand for or represent' (Bloomfield & Danieli, 1995, p. 29), and that these assertions become taken-for-granted and unquestioned. The associated 'taken-for-grantedness' can mask conflicts and reinforce unreflective scripted responses to particular situations. Thus, political advantage 'lies not in winning the game but in setting the rules of the game such that it is played out consistently to your benefit' (Mangham, 1986, p. 167; see also Deetz, 1992; Lukes, 1974). However, what happens when organizational actors attempt to reinforce, or reshape, institutional norms and logics in pursuit of their own interests, interests which can be more or less advantaged when tied to prevailing logics, meanings and values? Such practices lie at the heart of what Stryker (2000, p. 190) has termed 'institutional politics', which she defines as 'the strategic mobilization and counter-mobilization of diverse institutional logics as resources for interpretive understanding-based, instrumental interest-based and internalized value-based conflict'.

Another area where Australasian researchers have much to offer is the burgeoning field of critical management studies (e.g., Alvesson, Bridgman, & Willmott, 2009). Institutional theory, with its

ability to explain the workings of structures of domination such as capitalist markets, can provide crucial insights into this diverse and under-researched field (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). The need to increase our understanding of the interconnections between structures of power and institutional processes has been recognized by Greenwood et al. (2008).

What we need are critical accounts of organizations and management that reconcile the structural-institutional antecedents and products of individual and organizational agency, with their practical enactment (essentially processes of 'institutional work'). Australasian researchers are comfortable with a plurality of methodological approaches and with the empirically grounded, *in situ* explorations of embedded agency that are needed for this type of critical account. Such research would go a long way towards resolving the tensions seen in Europe and the UK between structure-privileging 'labor process theorists' and the more fluid ontological stances of post-structuralist critical management scholars (e.g., Parker, 1999). The application of institutional theory and its attendant ontological assumptions has much to offer critical management studies, and here in the Asia Pacific, we are well placed to progress this important theoretical and empirical project.

New research directions for institutional theory in australia: Developing institutional theory's micro-foundations

Jaco Lok

For almost two decades, a number of institutional scholars have stressed the need to make the micro-foundations of institutional theory more explicit (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; George, Chattopadhyay, Sitkin, & Barden, 2006; Selznick, 1996), yet there has been modest progress in this effort (Powell & Colyvas, 2008). The overwhelming majority of institutional studies take for granted that the organizational field or environment is the level of analysis, neglecting to examine how the organization might be treated as an institutional

context for understanding *intra*-organizational behavior (Elsbach, 2002; Greenwood et al., 2008).

Two studies of hospitals by Goodrick and Salancik (1996) and Kellog (2009) form interesting exceptions. Both studies show how particular organizational characteristics can significantly influence institutionalization processes. The Scandinavian 'translation' perspective of institutionalization (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008) has also paid attention to the micro-level of analysis, theorizing institutionalization as a *performative* process that both shapes and is shaped by individual and organizational identity (Sevon, 1996). Close studies of individual organizational reforms and imitation carried out in this tradition suggest that identification, as opposed to uncertainty (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) or an interest-based logic of consequence (DiMaggio, 1988; Oliver, 1991), is the key explanatory concept for explaining why and how organizations translate institutional ideas and practices (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008). Recent studies by Creed, DeJordy, and Lok (2010) and Lok (2010) show that when these intra-organizational identifications contradict prevailing institutional and/or organizational norms, actors engage in 'identity work', which can affect the ways in which they relate to and engage with institutional structures.

This increasing interest in the micro-foundations of institutions opens the door to other research literatures informing our understanding of the relations between institutions and intra-organizational behavior. Successful examples of this include Elsbach's (1994) use of impression management theory and George et al.'s (2006) use of prospect theory. Weber and Glynn (2006) and Powell and Colyvas (2008) point to the potential of the sensemaking perspective to inform institutional theory and vice versa, whilst Glynn (2008) focuses on the potential of organizational identity research. A focus on the central role of identity and identity work in the adoption and translation of institutional imperatives also opens up a possible bridge to more critical perspectives, which have pointed to close links between identity and

the operation of power (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Knights & Willmott, 1989). Hence the increasing interest in organizational institutionalism's micro-foundations offers a vast fertile space for developing new connections and perspectives.

Empirically, micro-institutional studies are usually multi-level and qualitative because they need to account for recursive influences between multiple levels of analysis, and aim to capture some of the richness of the many ways in which individuals and organizations can interpret and engage with institutional structures. It can also be sensible to choose extreme situations in which the process or phenomena of interest is transparently observable (Eisenhardt, 1989). Thus, Creed et al. (2010) for example focus on the case of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender church ministers in the USA to explore how these people deal with the contradiction of feeling called to a church that wants to exclude them based on their sexual identity. De Rond and Lok (2010) chose the extremely institutionalized setting of the Cambridge University Boat Club to explore sources of endogenous agency.

Whilst potentially *any* organizational setting can offer insights into the intra-organizational foundations of institutions, our specific institutional context in Australia offers some particularly interesting possibilities for micro-institutional research. Firstly, organizational settings in which tensions between different institutional logics come to a head and need to be resolved by members inside the organization can be fruitful settings for future research. Thus, for example, in Australia aboriginal businesses, social entrepreneurship initiatives and the commercialization of public services, can all be studied 'on the ground' from the perspective of contradictory institutional logics. Such studies can offer new, rich insights into the links between institutional contradictions and agency (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Seo & Creed, 2002), as well as insights into the conditions under which the hybridization of different institutional logics can be organizationally sustainable (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). Secondly, it would be interesting to explore if

and how global institutional forces, such as those identified by Sahlin and Wedlin (2008), are translated in ways that are informed by local identities embedded in a specific local history. How do the global rise of science discourse and the market logic, the increasing reliance on formal ranking and accountability structure to order social relations, and the urge towards what Sahlin and Wedlin (2008) call 'reinvented democracy', play themselves out in our local context? How do they shape, and how are they shaped, by local identifications and what room is there for local, organizational translation of these global forces? A micro-institutional approach to these types of questions has the potential to significantly advance not only our understanding of the relations between institutions and organizations, it can also inform a better understanding of how 'who we are' as Australian organizational citizens is embedded in local and global institutional contexts.

As these insights from Australian and New Zealand scholars suggest, the emerging regional tradition relies on locale, the role of institutions in the localized field, and on the machinations within organizations around sensemaking, power and agency, and identity. Certainly agency in institutional processes is emphasized with features of the local field informing the theoretical developments.

In this section, we feature two papers dealing with the central issue of stability and change that provide insights around this organizational dilemma. Firstly, Fiona Sutherland and Aaron Smith (2011) tackle the central theme of stability and change by considering the paradox that these two dimensions may very well sit side by side in their piece on Duality. They draw on Giddens' structuration to reflect on the duality of the concepts and the fact that considering them together may provide insights to organizational problems.

We then move to the micro-level processes of agency and the role of dialogue in supplementing the models of institutional diffusion by drawing attention to the situated interactions between the 'champions' and the 'recipients' of institutional

innovations, to the frictions that accompany institutional transmission, and to the deviations that emerge from those interactions. Andrea Whittle and her colleagues (2011) use these concepts to analyze the micro-discursive processes during a crucial event in the institutionalization of a new organizational template in a UK public–private partnership.

We trust you enjoy these discussions around the issues of stability and change, and of the role of institutional theory as a fruitful lens for understanding organizations. Greenwood et al. (2008) indicate that institutional theory is now the most commonly used theoretical perspective in organization studies. As such, institutional theory is likely to become a more frequent perspective in Australian and New Zealand management studies in the coming years.

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