E Emerald Insight

Journal of Organizational Ethnography

Interest plurality and institutional work: An ethnography of rural community organizing
Brett Crawford John Branch

Article information:

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald
for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission
guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company
manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as
well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and
services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the
Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for
digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

Interest plurality and institutional work

An ethnography of rural community organizing

Brett Crawford

Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, and

John Branch

Stephen M. Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

Abstract

Purpose – The institutional work literature has paid little attention to cognition and interests in the creation, maintenance, and disruption of institutions. The purpose of this paper is to explore the construct of interests as it relates to institutional work projects. The authors frame interests as recognitions situated within broader institutional meaning systems, with a specific focus on interest plurality.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors conducted an 18-month ethnography exploring institutional work projects within a rural chamber of commerce. The authors aimed to understand how projects contributed to community survival on a micro-level and institutional change on a macro-level. Rural chambers of commerce represent a unique example of emergent public-private partnerships, challenging traditional commercial logics of chambers of commerce. The research design included qualitative data collection, coding, and analysis of field notes, interviews, and archival sources.

Findings – Purposive action was grounded in the community inhabited by the rural chamber of commerce and not the institution itself. Recognized interests enabled nontraditional workers – public employees with newly founded and legitimate roles within the chamber – to pursue community-focussed projects. Change across the institution of chambers of commerce occurred because of the separated and aggregate projects spanning across rural communities.

Originality/value – Recognized interests are a social, plural, and malleable phenomenon supporting situated agency and the co-creation activities embodied in institutional work projects. The authors contribute to the institutional work literature by introducing the idea of interest plurality and illustrating how the work of rural chambers of commerce captures contemporary forms of community organizing.

Keywords Institutional work, Ethnography, Interests, Organizational change, Chamber of commerce, Plurality

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Institutional change is partly cultivated by individuals engaged in institutional work, which is defined as the "purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions" (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p. 215). Studying both the macro-environment and micro-foundations of institutions allows researchers to better understand the complexities of modern actors – organizations

and individuals alike. Agency, as a consequence, has been conceptualized as being embedded within the ongoing cultural and historical changes of society (Smets *et al.*, 2012; Delbridge and Edwards, 2008).

To do so, scholars have largely focussed on discursive histories and rhetoric to better understand examples of institutional work. Less apparent are the roles of recognition and emotional commitment in creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions. One exception includes Voronov and Vince's (2012) call for expanded research within this stream. Therein, they borrow from Bourdieu's sociology to explore recognition as it relates to agency and organizational fields. At the heart of their call exists a conceptualization of interests that links with institutions, where actors' cognitive propensities – their predispositions based on phenomenological experience – are grounded in their recognitions and alignment with culture and history. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to extend Voronov and Vince's call by empirically exploring the construct of interests as it relates to institutional work. To do so, we conducted an 18-month ethnography exploring institutional work within the context of a rural chamber of commerce and community organizing.

We begin by positioning the construct of interests within the institutional work literature with a keen focus on interests as relating to agency and community organizing. We then review the institution of chambers of commerce, including the uniqueness of rural chambers of commerce along with our research design. We continue by presenting our ethnography and conclude by discussing theoretical insights from the study.

Cognition and the construct of interests

The construct of interests is central to the organizational institutionalism perspective as interests represent the underlying meaning systems of institutions (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005; Meyer and Jepperson, 2000; Scott, 1987). Indeed, interests provide a framework for how actors view themselves as embedded within society (Hirschman, 1977). Institutional theory, however, lacks both a definition of the construct and a conceptualization of what it means to have an interest. And while scholars have positioned the construct of interests at the forefront of studies exploring the micro-foundations of institutions (e.g. DiMaggio, 1988), interests remain an empty construct for a number of reasons.

First, scholars have used interests as "explanatory catchalls" for agency and action (Jepperson and Meyer, 1991). Second, interests have been narrowly conceptualized. For example, Scott (1987) suggested that the interests of firms includes the pursuit of profit and universities the pursuit of publications. But we know that universities pursue a variety of interests spanning beyond publications (Kerr, 1963). And third, the shift by institutional theorists to focus on change calls for a more robust understanding of interests and agency (Boxenbaum, 2014).

As an initial step toward construct development and clarity, we extended Voronov and Vince's (2012) adoption of Bourdieu's conceptualization of interests[1]. To have an interest "is to be there, to participate, to admit that the game is worth playing and that the stakes created in and through the fact of playing are worth pursuing; it is to recognize the game and to recognize its stakes" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 77). Therein, the interests associated with agency are situated within institutions – leading to situated agency – where recognitions enable actors to *see* opportunity (Marti and Mair, 2009) relative to their cultural environment (Scott, 2013; Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). To have an interest is to recognize culturally and

historically constructed social norms. Situated agency supports a more robust theory of interests in two distinct ways.

First, situated agency upholds that interests help actors interpret complex institutional meaning systems in distinct ways (Voronov *et al.*, 2013). That is to say, while institutions provide continuity and meaning, situated actors with differing interests will interpret that meaning in different ways. As a result, interests are viewed as recognitions and not possessions. Agency and the subsequent actions that follow a recognized interest are different than agents that act because they possess an interest. The latter reduces interests to tangible matter that can seemingly be held. Interests as recognitions situate the agent in relation to institutional meaning.

Second, the creation, maintenance, and disruption of institutional meaning systems include a process of co-creation (Zietsma and McKnight, 2009). Processes of institutional work embody what Weick (1969/1979) referred to as organizing, where multiple interests converge as actors with varied interpretations come together to create institutional meaning (Hoffman, 1999). As such, institutional work projects embody interest plurality – the state of recognizing, representing, and pursuing multiple interests. Institutional change occurs because multiple actors recognize and interpret opportunity in similar ways. Successful change is the result of the co-creation activities of those actors. For example, Meyer and Bromley (2013) discuss the expansion of novel organizational forms linked to purpose. Their conclusion that organizational expansion occurred on a global level illustrates co-creation activities driven by cultural and economic shifts.

It is important to acknowledge that co-creation activities leading to institutional change can occur through actors separated from one another. For example, Perkmann and Spicer (2008) illustrated how meaning systems supporting management fashions were co-created through "decentralized partaking" rather than by a single actor. Extended to community organizing, situated agency enables actors to recognize interests specific to the vitality of their community. Such work has been described as the "purposive activity by people to strengthen a community" (Summers, 1986, p. 355). Community organizing within a specific community embodies cooperation between local groups and individuals (Wilkinson, 1970; Alinsky, 1941). Institutional work associated with community organizing includes decentralized activities, spanning multiple communities, where new institutional meaning emerges from the co-creation activities throughout the organizational field.

Institution of chambers of commerce
Chambers of commerce date back to fifteenth century Europe in the form of merchant guilds with mandatory membership (Sturges, 1915). Many contemporary European chambers of commerce remain distinct from American chambers of commerce through mandatory membership practices. American chambers of commerce emerged during the nineteenth century in large cities as associations of business owners to pursue their economic and political interests (Friedman, 1947). Expansion of chambers of commerce occurred following President Taft's (1911, p. 99) State of the Union Address, calling for a "central organization in touch with associations and chambers of commerce throughout the country […] to keep purely American interests in closer touch with different phases of commercial affairs." This expansion included the emergence of the United States Chamber of Commerce, chamber professional associations, and state- and community-level chambers of commerce.

American chambers of commerce have been credited for shaping legislative policy (Barley, 2010; Ray and Mickelson, 1990; Wilson, 1919), driving private-sector economic

development (Brown, 1997), and serving as a liaison between business and government
(Ridings, 2001).

Historically speaking, American chambers of commerce have undergone three
phases of institutional development. During the initial phase, chambers of commerce
were located in the largest American cities and included a membership of regional
business owners. Emphasis was placed on industrial creation and protection in
response to American anti-trust policy as chambers allowed businesses to unify
through a legitimate inter-organizational form. Beginning in the 1940s, the institution
underwent a historical shift as chambers of commerce began to emerge in developing
suburban communities following the expansion of the interstate freeway system.
Memberships expanded to also include small businesses and chamber activities
focussed primarily on the pursuit of economic vitality. Finally, the 1980s brought
a second historical shift as chambers of commerce emerged in rural communities
as neoliberalism and deindustrialization forced rural communities to respond with
inter-community strategies.

A focus on community organizing

Institutional theorists have a history of focussing on the processes by which collective
actors co-create new meaning systems in response to changing external conditions.
Examples include Fligstein and McAdam's (2012) discussion of the transformation of
the US mortgage market, where government agencies and banks co-created the
meaning of home ownership in response to changing economic conditions and Kaplan
and Harrison's (1993) depiction of how organizations collectively managed increased
risk from changes in the legal environment, resulting in reduced liability for directors.
The historical shifts for American chambers of commerce represented similar
strategies, as individual chambers appropriately situated themselves within re-shaping
external conditions and the institution, as a whole, re-shaped its meaning to survive
changes to the American economy.

One such change relating to this paper included deindustrialization throughout the
American economy during the second-half of the twentieth century. Deindustrialization
describes the reduction of blue-collar jobs and community abandonment as the
American economic model shifted toward white-collar and service work (Budros, 1997;
Bluestone and Harrison, 1982). Deindustrialization hit the state of Michigan's economy
particularly hard due to its focus on manufacturing. In 1966, Michigan's gross product
ranked the 11th most productive economy in the world, exceeded by only ten countries.
In 2010, Michigan's gross product declined so much that it ranked 42nd among US
states (Rubenstein and Ziewacz, 2008).

Such decline drove the third phase of institutional development for chambers of
commerce. As many rural communities throughout Michigan lost their primary
employer due to outsourcing, community actors from the private and public sectors
collectively founded local chambers of commerce. Emergent chambers of commerce in
rural communities were unique from their historical counterparts that focussed on
business interests and political activity. First, the composition of the chambers'
leadership included public officials and representatives from academic and faith-based
organizations. The composition of the chambers' membership was equally diversified,
unifying the interests of organizations from a variety of sectors and sizes. Second, rural
chambers were oftentimes, publically funded through the activities of Downtown
Development Authorities. This is in contrast to operating revenue that was traditionally
generated through membership fees and fundraising. And third, relationships with other

chambers of commerce led to the emergence of chamber affiliate organizations. Chamber affiliate organizations unified the interests, activities, and resources of neighboring chambers of commerce, effectively redefining community as a regional phenomenon, instead of one defined by geographical boundaries

Research design

Stemming from shifts in institutional meaning, rural chambers of commerce embodied a strategy of community problem solving, where the unique inter-organizational collaborations of a given chamber created a distinctive identity for the community. Such strategies, however, included many of the challenges associated with representing a plurality of interests that surface in the literature addressing hybrid organizations (Garrow, 2013; Pache and Santos, 2013; Schiller and Almog-Bar, 2013). Our study, in part, explored how actors navigate through interest plurality. We used an ethnographic case study research design to explore the complex social processes of organizational life captured through qualitative exploration (Yin, 2009; Gephart, 2004). Ethnography, in particular, is well suited to explore both our identified theoretical gap – the construct of interests in institutional work – and the context of community organizing. Organizational ethnography is designed to understand how actors, meaning systems, and actions integrate within a given context (Zilber, 2002). Specific to institutional studies, ethnography provides an analytical framework to study both institutional change and maintenance (Lok and De Rond, 2013; Bjerregaard, 2011).

Contextually appropriate to chambers of commerce, ethnography is well positioned to revisit assumptions about a given organizational context (Flinn, 2011), such as the widespread assumption that chambers of commerce remain associations concerned exclusively with commercial interests. Rural chambers of commerce represented a melting pot of stakeholders that was historically unique. Directors and members in leadership positions, for the first time, represented the public and private sectors, as well as community school districts and volunteer groups. Moreover, as the organizational field of chambers of commerce continues to expand, ethnography is appropriate for exploring emergent partnerships in response to complex social problems (Bruns, 2013; Jay, 2013), such as the emergence of chamber affiliate organizations in response to decline throughout rural America.

Our decision to study a rural chamber of commerce was guided by limited empirical studies exploring institutions within rural community organizing. Much of the work linking institutions and communities has explored urban contexts and mega events (e. g. Tilcsik and Marquis, 2013; Glynn, 2008). One recent exception includes Mair and colleagues' (2012) analysis of institutional voids in rural Bangladesh. Rural chambers of commerce are particularly interesting because, as Mair and Martí (2009) pointed out, interests and agency are linked to meaning systems over power. That is to say, the individuals that form rural chambers of commerce and their recognized interests are linked, first and foremost, to an ideology of community.

We identified Unify, a chamber of commerce in a rural Midwestern American town as a particularly interesting case. Unify is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the study's informants. We obtained signed documentation from Unify detailing the organization's consent in being studied and that informants were viewed as "collaborators" in actively sharing relevant information about the chamber of commerce (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 21). The community that Unify represented was a bedroom community, existing on the periphery of more heavily populated areas. As such, there were roughly 175,000 regional residents, of which 4,500 resided in

Unify's community. The community boasted the region's fastest growing population in 2000. However, as was the case with many rural communities, that growth all but stalled between 2000 and 2010. The community was located within 20 miles of a major research university and five other institutions of higher education.

During our time in the field, Unify represented 94 regional organizations. Unify's Board of Directors included representatives from ten regional businesses and two municipalities. The directors were structured through a shared leadership schema (Carson *et al.*, 2007), as described by the interim-President. "[…] We have a very open dialogue if anybody needs to get anything on the agenda […] I leave those really open ended in case there is something that somebody needs to bring up" (I.3). Many of the directors also served as directors for other community organizations including the village and township boards, the school board, and the downtown development authority.

Data collection
We used multiple data collection methods including direct observations, document reviews, and unstructured interviews. To maintain consistency, the first author completed all data collection. Direct observations (Van Maanen, 1979) allowed us to observe Unify's directors, interactions with outside organizations, and the process of constructing new meaning within the natural setting of the case. Permission to observe various interactions was obtained by each informant. Our time in the field lasted 18 months from February 2009 to July 2010. We directly observed Unify's monthly meetings (16), committee meetings (26), executive meetings (six), village and township meetings (eight), downtown development authority meetings (three), events (ten), and informal dialogues between directors (47), for a total of 116 days. Detailed field notes were taken during each observation (Emerson *et al.*, 1995).

Document reviews of "physical artifacts" (Yin, 2009, p. 113) included Unify's monthly meeting minutes (26), budget reports (16), by-laws (two versions), village and township meeting minutes (50), planning commission meeting minutes (13), school board meeting minutes (two), and community welcome books (four), for a total of 113 physical artifacts.

In total, 15 unstructured interviews were completed with Unify's directors, lasting between 45 and 60 minutes each. Interview informants were selected through theoretical sampling (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). We obtained consent from each interviewee and guaranteed their anonymity. The unstructured interviews were designed to allow directors to discuss and reflect upon their actions and interactions within the context of his or her own life world, enabling us to develop thick detailed narratives describing their roles within the community (Gephart, 2004; Corbin and Morse, 2003).

Data analysis
Our analysis was performed in three stages. The first stage of our analysis included constructing a chronology of events (Maguire *et al.*, 2004), serving as a backdrop to contextualize local community organizing in relation to broader institutional norms of contemporary chambers of commerce. We sketched the evolution of events, beginning with the founding of Unify, the organizational changes that Unify underwent, and the community projects that Unify participated in during our time in the field.

The second stage of our analysis aimed to systematically identify the recognized interests of the directors within the broader institutional landscape of chambers of

commerce. Consequently, it was necessary for us to adopt a conceptualization of what it meant to have an interest within the context of an organizational field. Organizational fields emerge and are re-shaped because of the interests of organizations and individuals that participate in the field (Hoffman, 1999). We used Bourdieu's (1998) conceptualization of having an interest to code the directors' interests, where interests are situated as recognitions within meaning systems. The term organizational is used throughout this paper and carries two meanings. First, organizational field refers to what Scott (1995, p. 56) referred to as "a community of organizations that partakes of a common meaning system […]." Throughout this paper, organizational field represented the institution of chambers of commerce, including all American chambers of commerce on the community level. The term organizational is also used to describe Unify's alignment with the institution. For example, Unify's organizational form describes Unify specifically, as one organization within the broader organizational field.

All field notes, physical artifacts, and interview transcripts were analyzed to identify directors' recognized interests. We followed a two-phase analytic coding process using NVivo. We began with open coding, "developing interpretations or analytic themes rather than causal explanations" (Emerson *et al.*, 1995, p. 147). We then continued with a focussed coding technique aimed at further exploring the identified themes relative to the process of institutional work done in response to community decline. By coding the interests of each director, we were also able to identify which recognized directors shared overlapping interests. Interests were captured through six sub-codes including business interests, church interests, community interests, family interests, local government interests, and status interests. Table I details the coded interests for each director, along with brief biographical information.

The third stage of our analysis aimed at understanding the roles of interests within institutional work projects. More specifically, we carefully pieced together narratives addressing how directors leveraged Unify and other community organizations to purposively strengthen the community. We coupled these narratives with specific community-focussed projects to better understand the roles institutional workers play in producing legitimacy for Unify.

Results
Organizational purpose
Unify was founded in 2004 from contributions from the Downtown Development Authority with the following purpose, "The mission of the chamber is to promote the economic, commercial, and industrial interests of the region" (BL1). By the end of 2004, Unify's membership had grown to 36 organizations and included local insurance agents, realtors, manufacturers, and automotive suppliers. Unify disseminated information about the chamber through monthly newsletters. The newsletters highlighted chamber activities including content from professional development seminars. Additional content focussed on strategies for developing value for member organizations, such as customer relationship management practices.

Between 2004 and 2007, Unify's resources were primarily allocated toward member events focussed on networking, such as After Hour Evenings and events to attract regional customers, such as the community's summer festival. After Hour Evenings encouraged collaborative relationships throughout the community. For example, in 2005, Alpha Manufacturing, an aerospace parts manufacturer, partnered with the local General Fitness and Midwest Insurance, resulting in company-sponsored employee fitness club memberships and decreased insurance premiums.

Director	Biography	Coded interests[a]
Adam (Executive Director)	Owner of Party Time Rentals, focussed on community growth, but is challenged to commit enough time	Business, family, local government, community, status, church
Bev	Owner of Horse Farms, focussed on chamber growth, resides outside the community	Business, family, community
Bob	School Superintendent, focussed on building academic partnerships	Community, business, status, local government
Bruce	Owner of Hardware, serves as DDA President	Business, local government, community, family
Carol	Vice President of Beta Laboratories, focussed on community history	Community, family, business
Don	Owner of Lifetime Investments, focussed on networking and developing community parks	Business, community, family
Janice (2010 President)	Owner of Family Funeral Home, focussed on nonprofit involvement and event planning	Family, community, business
John (Vice President)	Owner of Music Productions, focussed on recruiting new businesses	Family, community, business, status
Josh, (2009 President)	Vice President of Community Bank, serves on the DDA and Community Education boards	Business, community, church, status, local government
Lisa (Secretary)	Owner of Outdoors Campground, focussed on her business, but is known as a "gossip queen"	Status, business, family, community
Ray	Owner of Ray's Barbering, focussed on church leadership, not chamber activities	Church, family, business, community
Steve	Owner of Simon Excavating, focussed on business, rarely seen as chamber events	Business, family
Terry (Treasurer)	Township treasurer, serves on the DDA and Historical Society boards	Community, local government, status

Note: [a]Order of interests determined by frequency of coding to each informant

Table I.
Unify's directors

Beginning in 2008, Unify's purpose, membership composition, and activities underwent a transformation. The mission of Unify was rewritten to better represent the diversity of its expanding membership. The revised mission read, "Dedicated to the Success of Our Community" (BL2). The chamber's membership grew to 94 organizations in 2010, including the community school district, local churches, and not-for-profit organizations. Unify tabled its professional development programs, instead emphasizing a growing number of community events, the development of education centers, community parks and medical centers, and partnerships with neighboring chambers of commerce. The chamber's board mirrored the growing diversity by appointing the community school district's superintendent and village treasurer, and envisioned their work as a means to position the community as "a great place to live, work, and raise a family" (BL2).

Chronology of events
Beginning in 2004 and continuing through 2007, Unify embodied a traditional logic of chambers of commerce – to unify the interests of member businesses. Unify focussed on membership expansion, professional development for members, and leveraging event revenue as a growth strategy. Beginning in 2008, Unify re-shaped its focus

toward community issues, which eventually led to a changed governance structure. The new matrix structure emphasized volunteerism and member participation as a means to mobilize the resources and personnel necessary to enact community growth. This growth included investments in infrastructure, including new parks and renovations to historical buildings, and a commitment to the ideology of community citizenship. Table II illustrates the chronology of events.

Case 1: Heritage Winery takeover
In September 1982, the community's Heritage Winery burnt down to its rock shell. Following 14 years of aesthetic dismay in the heart of downtown, demolition of the winery became a top priority for the Village Council. The council cited the winery's inability to create revenue, safety concerns, and "eyesore" appearance as justifications for demolition.

Terry, a member of the Village Council, President of the Downtown Development Authority, Township Treasurer, and Unify Director, had an alternative vision for the winery. Terry, however, grew frustrated with his inability to sway the Village Council's intentions. Without adequate financial resources or identified investors, Terry, at the June 2006 Village Council meeting presented the council with a proposal to purchase the Heritage Winery. During our interview with Terry, he smilingly recollected the event:

> They [Village Council] didn't even read the proposal. Once they said "ok" I thought whoa, wait, now I need to find a buyer. But the building is the center of the community and needed to be saved.

Over the next three months, Terry recalled stalling at the Village Council meetings, while organizing local historians to form the Winery Preservation Association.

Date	Event
2004	Founding mission: "The mission of the chamber is to promote the economic, commercial, and industrial interests of the region"
	Chamber membership includes 36 organizations
2004-2007	Chamber's primary focus includes professional development workshops and member newsletters including "better business" anecdotes
2005	Chamber hosts its first monthly After Hours Evenings aimed at networking and developing partnership opportunities for member businesses
2006	Heritage Winery saved from demolition
	Winery Preservation Association purchases Heritage Winery and raises $250,000 for renovations
2007	Chamber hosts first annual Community Heritage, a festival to create revenue opportunities for member businesses downtown
2009	Qualified school construction bond proposed. The community later approves the bond
	Chamber partners with local entrepreneurs to create the Center for Photographic Arts both as a learning center and community center
	Chamber is central to the construction of new medical centers, community parks and sportsman's clubs
2010	Chamber partners with school district to attract new residents and businesses
	Chamber moves into the Depot Station, agreeing to oversee leasing responsibilities
	Mission is rewritten: "Dedicated to the success of our community"
	Chamber membership includes 94 organizations
	Chamber develops partnerships with regional chambers of commerce

Table II.
Unify's chronology
of events

The association was comprised of local historians committed to the preservation of the winery and surrounding grounds:

> I was able to attract these people to form the association because they are local history junkies and I presented them with an opportunity to preserve a piece of their community's story.

The newly founded association successfully raised almost $250,000 to renovate the building, later having it dedicated as a state historical site.

Stemming from the work of the association, the winery was revived as the central community landmark. Since the winery's revival, multiple books have been written about the building's history, artists have captured its appearance through paintings and photographs, and community organizations have displayed the face of the Heritage Winery as the community's central landmark. The Winery Preservation Association regularly leased the winery for community events.

In January 2009, the Unify Board of Directors, including Terry began negotiations with the Winery Preservation Association to lease Heritage Winery as Unify's primary office space. Terry believed that leasing the winery "would give us [Unify] more visibility in the community and position us to be more influential within the community." However, Matt, Unify's President at the time, viewed an agreement as a revenue opportunity for the chamber. Following Matt's submission of an amended contract to the Winery Preservation Association, without approval from Unify's Board of Directors, Terry and Matt disputed over the project at the February board meeting. As a result of the dispute, Terry walked out of the meeting. Terry recalled the incident in an interview:

> From my standpoint it was the fact that the President stepped out and was offering the association another contract without the board's approval and not with the community's best interest in mind […] That thoroughly ticked me off! (IN3).

Another director commented in a separate interview, "Terry had started to deal with the association and then all of a sudden, Matt gets involved. Matt decides he is going to write another contract" (IN.5). One month later, Matt resigned as Unify's President.

Following 17 months of continued negotiations led by Terry, including three presidential changes, Unify moved into the Heritage Winery in July 2010. The contract with the Winery Preservation Association provided Unify with office space and the responsibility of leasing the winery for various events. David, Director of Unify and founder of DB Investments, spoke on behalf of the chamber at the winery's dedication as a state historical site. "This move should bring more people downtown and attract more people into town from neighboring communities. The chamber is now front and center in this community" (DO.97).

Case 2: School and community growth
Most rural school districts in Michigan faced significant budget cuts between 2005 and 2010 due to state-level economic decline. Bob, Unify Director and the Superintendent of Community Schools, faced such cuts, ranging from $650,000 to $1,250,000 annually. In spite of this, Bob led the development of a new strategic plan focussed on growth, emphasizing four critical areas:

(1) expanding academic and community uses;

(2) emphasizing a global philosophy in cooperation with regional universities and businesses;

(3) integrating technology to enhance learning, instruction, and communication; and

(4) building new facilities to maintain the reputation of the schools and community.

Bob implemented the new strategy by submitting the state's first application for a qualified school construction bond to build a new community center and additional science classrooms. Following approval, Bob sought out support from Josh, Unify's Interim-President and John, "a respected alumnus with children in the district." Josh also served as the President for the Community Educational Foundation. Eight directors on the board at Unify had children enrolled at Community Schools, as well as ties to a number of other community organizations. Bob sought out John, a respected alumnus and parent regarding the possibility of becoming an ambassador for the project. Bob commented:

> John is a well known member of the community, has kids in our schools, and works as the Head of Surgery at Research Hospital. John represents a strong connection between the community and an important regional stakeholder (IN.13).

At the October 2009 Unify board meeting, Bob presented a proposal to build the community center and additional science classrooms to Unify's Board of Directors. Bob began his informal presentation to the board by commenting on the "unique chance to utilize the opportunity as the first district in the state to be approved for a qualified school construction bond" (FN22). Bob continued by justifying the costs through deferred millage rates and low interest rates to taxpayers, as well as the benefits the project would provide to the community:

> I am not saying this is something that we need to do, but instead, am interested to see if you think this is something that we should do […] We [Community Schools] feel everyone benefits from the partnership between the schools and the chamber. We recognize a need to provide a community center and services that everyone can use (FN22).

The board unanimously expressed enthusiasm for the project and suggested that Bob present his proposal at Unify's Annual Dinner.

Subsequently, Bob and John presented the construction proposal at Unify's 2010 Annual Dinner. They began with a similar tone, suggesting that it was up to the community to determine whether or not the project was the right thing to do. Bob's narrative spotlighted the benefits of the community center and "cutting edge sciences classrooms to provide students with the proper background to contribute to high-tech industries" (FN68). John spoke about the significance of classroom technology, using his role at Research University as an example.

Bob's efforts to educate the community regarding the construction proposal continued through mailers highlighting the benefits of the project, as well as an artist's rendition of the facilities, including uses for both the school district and the community. Bob's final efforts included forming a committee that led two town hall meetings.

The January and February meetings for the Village Council and Downtown Development Authority included dialogues echoing Bob's presentations. Many of Unify's directors also served as directors on the Village Council and Downtown Development Authority. We observed the propagation of these dialogues throughout various community organizations, from church services to high school sporting events. Worth noting, after speaking with local church leaders, barbers, bar keepers, and government officials, we were unable to find any specific groups that demonstrated any opposition to

the proposal. A community vote held in February approved the $1.75 million construction proposal.

Following the vote, Bob presented a second proposal to Unify's board, this time centered on marketing the community. Bob's new proposal included partnering Community Schools and Unify to create an integrated marketing plan to "attract new residents" to the community:

> We [Community Schools] will fund the project, but feel that a partnership between the schools and the chamber would communicate a vibrant, unified, and collaborative community. We want to put together multi-media marketing pieces to attract new residents, new businesses, and continue to increase our school's enrollment.

Unify's directors voted to partner with Community Schools, leading to a number of outreach efforts. For example, in June 2010, a group of 800 bike riders traveling across state camped on the high school campus for the night. Unify welcomed the event as an opportunity to market the community, handing out free water bottles advertising community events scheduled throughout the summer. In total, 14 member businesses distributed coupons encouraging riders to visit their businesses and experience what the community had to offer for the evening.

Propagating community organizing
In 2009, Unify hosted its first Annual Boat Festival, paralleling the community's hosting for the National Boat Races. The Boat Festival was a collaboration between Unify and 17 local nonprofit organizations. The event showcased local bands, food from local vendors, an antique car show, and children's entertainment. Unify declared the event the most successful weekend in community history, attracting more than 300 percent of the local region's population. The National Boat Races added thousands of spectators, filling local campgrounds and restaurants. The Village Council followed up the event with a successful bid to host the races every three years, while hosting qualifying races annually.

Since the inception of After Hour Evenings, the events have been exclusive to member organizations. Each month, attendance ranged between 45 and 60 people, representing a significant portion of the chamber's membership. However, in May 2010, Unify's board discussed the idea of opening the event to the public:

> The first hour would remain exclusive for the membership, however, opening the event up to the public after that would allow Unify to be more visible to the community, providing further services (FN92).

The August 2010 After Hours Evening, hosted by Digital Media Source, was attended by 57 chamber members, followed by more than 75 local residents. Janice, Unify's President at the time, commented, "We underestimated the food we would need (laughter), but that is a good problem to have!" (IN14).

Unify's other events effectively created tangible value for the community. Unify's annual golf outing, a collaboration with Community Parks and Recreation, generated enough revenue in 2008 and 2009 to build four new soccer fields and 25 miles of walking trails. Unify partnered with local businesses to build the Midwest Center for the Arts, three new medical centers, and two sportsman's clubs. Unify also partnered with the Downtown Development Authority to develop a stronger web presence and showcase Unify's projects. In 2012, Unify's directors voted to restructure to more effectively align the roles of the directors, member organizations, and volunteers with

specific community development projects. The restructuring enabled Unify to assign specific directors with projects that they were passionate in pursuing.

Discussion
The story of Unify is not unique - a rural chamber of commerce that formed from the funds of a downtown development authority to save a declining community. The story of Unify echoed co-creation activities captured in the community organizing (e.g. Alinsky, 1941) and institutional work (e.g. Zietsma and McKnight, 2009) literatures by setting aside a market logic for a community logic to address community challenges. What makes Unify interesting, however, is that while the phenomenon of institutional work suggests purposive action toward an institution (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), Unify's directors' purpose was grounded in the community they inhabited. Change occurred because of the work of nontraditional actors – the public employees with a newly founded and legitimate role in chambers of commerce – and not the traditional leaders from the private sector. For Unify, organizational change occurred because of the work of the school superintendent and township treasurer. Institutional change occurred because of the co-creation activities of decentralized institutional work spanning across rural American communities.

Implications to theory
We aimed to explore the construct of interests as it relates to institutional work. Interests are especially significant to the phenomenon of institutional work because recognized interests cognitively link the micro-foundations of institutions with field-level meaning. By viewing interests through recognitions, in contrast to possessions, we aimed to extend how scholars explain situated agency within institutional spaces. Thus, we echo Jepperson and Meyer's (1991) critique of extant literature using interests as "explanatory catchalls." To support our discussion of interests relating to institutional work, we draw from Jepperson and Meyer's (2011) model[2], integrating the relationships between institutional, social-organization, and individual levels of society. Figure 1 illustrates these relationships, emphasizing how institutional work projects are situated within institutional meaning and ideologies.

Figure 1 illustrates how an ideology of community led to both the development of rural chambers of commerce and their roles as public-private partnerships. On the individual level, the institutional change literature largely argues that change manifests from the activities of actors with unfulfilled interests (Munir and Phillips, 2005;
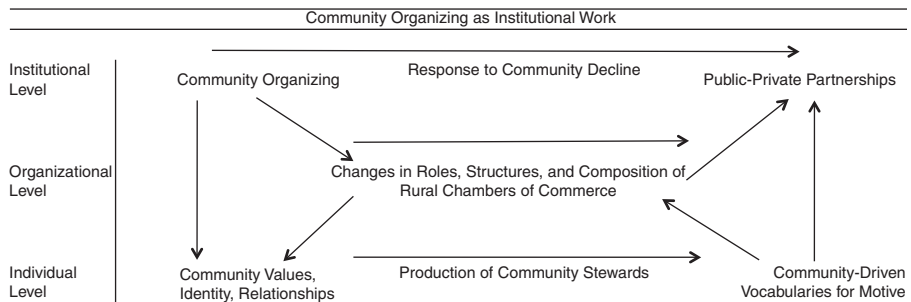

Figure 1.
Community organizing as institutional work

Source: Adapted from Jepperson and Meyer (2011)

Maguire *et al.*, 2004). Calls for exploring individual action, or the micro-foundations of institutions (Boxenbaum, 2014), present a paradox where institutions shape individual interests, which is in contrast to individuals pursuing change because of their self-interests. This paradox, labeled the "paradox of embedded agency" (Seo and Creed, 2002) reiterated Fligstein's (2001) issue asking whether institutional meaning evolves from interests or vice versa.

We suggest that by conceptualizing interests as recognitions, interests become plural and fluid. Institutions can be re-shaped as multiple actors and their recognized interests converge and are situated within external conditions. Specific to community organizing, the production of institutional work occurred because of the recognized interests of individuals that inhabited and had an emotional investment in a threated community. The directors of Unify used the legitimate organizational form of chambers of commerce to create a space to pursue the vitality of the community moving forward. Alinsky (1941) found similar results as competing organizations co-created socio-economic solutions to challenges in Chicago. In Alinsky's study, co-creation activities addressed challenges facing Chicago industry and contributed to broader institutional meaning relating to organized religion and organized labor. Both the emergent council and Unify represented organizational forms that welcomed and pursued multiple recognized interests.

On the social-organizational level, institutional theory suggests that organizations embody a prescribed purpose to maintain legitimacy. Case in point, Meyer and Bromley (2013) suggest that contemporary organizations have emerged to pursue a culturally defined and legitimate purpose. Unify, however, did not align with the business logic of traditional chambers of commerce. As illustrated in Figure 1, the roles, organizational structure and composition of both the directors and membership aligned with an ideology of community and the recognized interests of the individual actors. That is not to say that Unify set aside issues of economic development. Instead, Unify, as an organization, embodied a plurality of interests that linked to multiple origins of institutional meaning (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012; Kraatz and Block, 2008) and pursued multiple recognized interests of the directors. Multiple origins of institutional meaning suggests that Unify was situated within diverse organizational fields, upholding ideologies of community, commerce, and partnership. Interest plurality represented through the directors resulted in multiple and varied institutional work projects.

Finally, on the institutional level, field theory has developed to embody the complexities of multiple and overlapping fields (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). Therein, the notion that institutions embody a singular interest, such as firms pursuing profit and research universities pursuing publications (Scott, 1987) is set aside to understand meaning that becomes rationalized and institutionalized for myriad actors. An early example included Kerr's (1963) depiction of universities as institutions. More recently, institutions aligned with cultural rationalizations, such as environmental protection, recognize both interests relating to environmental issues, and interests relating to their structural rationality (Meyer and Bromley, 2013). Thus, the construct of interests is a plural phenomenon on the field level as well. Organizations are situated across overlapping fields, recognize distinct interests in each field and structure their actions to maintain legitimacy relative to each field.

Our primary theoretical insight is that while ideologies and institutional logics provide a framework for legitimate organizational actions, interests represent the phenomenological recognitions of such meaning. To empirically explore the construct

of interests, consideration must be given to the plurality of organizational fields that institutional workers recognize an interest in. Otherwise, scholars succumb to previous traps of treating interests as explanations for action that are disconnected from the contexts inhabited by the institutional workers themselves. This is, in part, why ethnography represents a strong methodology for exploring the complexity of institutional work projects (Bjerregaard, 2011).

Conclusion
This paper represents a starting point regarding two issues. First, we introduced the idea of interest plurality as it relates to the phenomenon of institutional work. Second, we presented an ethnography that captures contemporary forms of community organizing, which challenged traditional viewpoints on chambers of commerce. The generalizability of these insights remains an empirical question. Calls for clarity regarding interests and institutions supports the need for continued work addressing interest plurality (e.g. Boxenbaum, 2014; Swedberg, 2005). And the growing prevalence of novel organizational forms addressing community organizing suggests a number of opportunities for future research (Meyer and Bromley, 2013; Galaskiewicz *et al.*, 2006). We believe that chambers of commerce represent one institution that has demonstrated a chameleon-like ability to reshape in response to changing external conditions. Future research should continue to explore chambers of commerce and their roles in community organizing and citizenship. Research comparing chambers of commerce across global economies remains an additional opportunity.

Above and beyond all else, one core observation emerged from this study. The construct of interests is a social, plural, and malleable phenomenon that requires care and rigor in organization studies. By conceptualizing interests as recognitions, instead of possessions (Bourdieu, 1998), we were able to explore a rural chamber of commerce, including the actors and their actions at greater depth. We challenged the literature depicting chambers of commerce exclusively as organizations that represent business interests, while shaping public policy. Instead, we illustrated how rural chambers of commerce engage in community organizing, are structured as public-private partnerships and represent the recognized interests of the actors that form and shape the organizations themselves.

Notes
1. We are aware that there is no widely accepted definition of interests in either sociology or organization studies (Swedberg, 2005). Bourdieu's conceptualization links well to institutional theory and the study culture and organizational fields (Lounsbury and Ventresca, 2003).

2. Jepperson and Meyer's (2011, p. 66) model was developed to discuss varied interpretations that arise because of differences in methodological approaches. This model is constructive for our discussion because it links meaning with interests at multiple levels of analysis.

References
Alinsky, S. (1941), "Community analysis and organization", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 46 No. 6, pp. 797-808.

Barley, S. (2010), "Building an institutional field to corral a government: a case to set an agenda for organization studies", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 31 No. 6, pp. 777-805.

Bjerregaard, T. (2011), "Studying institutional work in organizations: uses and implications of ethnographic methodologies", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 51-64.

Bluestone, B. and Harrison, B. (1982), *The Deindustrialization of America: Plan Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry*, Basic, New York, NY.

Bourdieu, P. (1998), *Practical Reason*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

Boxenbaum, E. (2014), "Toward a situated stance in organizational institutionalism: contributions from French Pragmatist sociology theory", *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 319-323.

Brown, D. (1997), "Sustainability is not about money!: the case of the belize chamber of commerce and industry", *Development in Practice*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 185-189.

Bruns, H. (2013), "Working alone together: coordination in collaboration across domains of expertise", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 56 No. 1, pp. 62-83.

Budros, A. (1997), "The new capitalism and organizational rationality: the adoption of downsizing programs, 1979-1994", *Social Forces*, Vol. 76 No. 1, pp. 229-250.

Carson, J., Tesluk, P. and Marrone, J. (2007), "Shared leadership in teams: an investigation of antecedent conditions and performance", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 50 No. 5, pp. 1217-1234.

Corbin, J. and Morse, J. (2003), "The unstructured interactive interview: issues of reciprocity and risks", *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 335-354.

Delbridge, R. and Edwards, T.J. (2008), "Challenging conventions: roles and processes during non-isomorphic institutional change", *Human Relations*, Vol. 61 No. 3, pp. 299-325.

DiMaggio, P. (1988), "Interest and agency in institutional theory", in Zucker, L. (Ed.), *Institutional Patterns and Organizations: Culture and Environment*, Ballinger, Cambridge, pp. 3-21.

Eisenhardt, K.M. and Graebner, M.E. (2007), "Theory building from cases: opportunities and challenges", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 25-32.

Emerson, R., Fretz, R. and Shaw, L. (1995), *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Fligstein, N. (2001), "Social skill and the theory of fields", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 105-125.

Fligstein, N. and McAdam, D. (2012), *A Theory of Fields*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.

Flinn, J. (2011), "Ethnographic methods in nonprofit management", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 420-434.

Friedman, L. (1947), "The first chamber of commerce in the United States", *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 137-143.

Galaskiewicz, J., Bielefeld, W. and Dowell, M. (2006), "Networks and organizational growth: a study of community based nonprofits", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 51 No. 3, pp. 337-380.

Garrow, E. (2013), "Competing social service and market-driven logics in nonprofit work integration social enterprises: a comparative study", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, doi:10.1177/0899764013476923.

Gephart, R. (2004), "From the editors: qualitative research and the *Academy of Management Journal*", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 47 No. 4, pp. 454-462.

Glynn, M. (2008), "Configuring the field of play: how hosting the olympic games impacts civic community", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 45 No. 6, pp. 1117-1146.

Hirschman, A. (1977), *The Passions and the Interests*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Hoffman, A. (1999), "Institutional evolution and change: environmentalism and the US chemical industry", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 351-371.

Jay, J. (2013), "Navigating paradox as a mechanism of change and innovation in hyrbid organizations", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 56 No. 1, pp. 137-159.

Jepperson, R. and Meyer, J. (1991), "The public order and the construction of formal organizations", in DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W. (Eds), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, pp. 204-231.

Jepperson, R. and Meyer, J. (2011), "Multiple levels of analysis and the limitations of methodological individualisms", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 54-73.

Kaplan, M. and Harrison, J. (1993), "Defusing the director liability crisis: the strategic management of legal threats", *Organization Science*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 412-432.

Kerr, C. (1963), *The Uses of the University*, Harvard University Press, Boston, MA.

Kraatz, M. and Block, E. (2008), "Organizational implications of institutional pluralism", in Greenwood, R., Oliver, C., Sahlin, K. and Suddaby, R. (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 243-275.

Lawrence, T. and Suddaby, R. (2006), "Institutions and institutional work", in Clegg, S., Hardy, C., Nord, W. and Lawrence, T. (Eds), *Handbook of Organization Studies*, Sage, London, pp. 215-254.

Lok, J. and DeRond, M. (2013), "On the plasticity of institutions: containing and restoring practice breakdowns at the Cambridge University Boat Club", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 56 No. 1, pp. 185-207.

Lounsbury, M. and Ventresca, M. (2003), "The new structuralism in organizational theory", *Organization*, Vol. 10 No. 3, pp. 457-480.

Mair, J. and Marti, I. (2009), "Entrepreneurship in and around institutional voids: a case study from Bangladesh", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Cambridge, Vol. 5 No. 24, pp. 419-435.

Mair, J., Marti, I. and Ventresca, M. (2012), "Building inclusive markets in rural Bangladesh: how intermediaries work institutional voids", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 819-850.

Maguire, S., Hardy, C. and Lawrence, T. (2004), "Institutional entrepreneurship in emerging fields: HIV/AIDS treatment advocacy in Canada", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 47 No. 5, pp. 657-679.

Martí, I. and Mair, J. (2009), "Bringing change into the lives of the poor: entrepreneurship outside traditional boundaries", in Lawrence, T., Suddaby, R. and Leca, B. (Eds), *Institutional Work: Actors and Agency in Institutional Studies of Organizations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 143-177.

Meyer, J. and Bromley, P. (2013), "The worldwide expansion of 'organization'", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 366-389.

Meyer, J. and Jepperson, R. (2000), "The 'actors' of modern society: the cultural construction of social agency", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 100-120.

Munir, K. and Phillips, N. (2005), "The birth of the 'Kodak moment': institutional entrepreneurship and the adoption of new technologies", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 11, pp. 1665-1687.

Pache, A.C. and Santos, F. (2013), "Inside the hybrid organization: selective coupling as a response to competing institutional logics", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 56 No. 4, pp. 972-1001.

Perkmann, M. and Spicer, A. (2008), "How are management fashions institutionalized? The role of institutional work", *Human Relations*, Vol. 61 No. 6, pp. 811-844.

Ray, C. and Mickelson, R. (1990), "Corporate leaders, resistant youth, and school reform in Sunbelt city: the political economy of education", *Social Problems*, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 178-190.

Ridings, E. (2001), "Chambers of commerce and business elites in Great Britain and Brazil in the nineteenth century: some comparisons", *The Business History Review*, Vol. 75 No. 4, pp. 739-773.

Rubenstein, B. and Ziewacz, L. (2008), *Michigan: A History of the Great Lakes State*, Harlan Davidson, Wheeling, IL.

Schiller, R. and Almog-Bar, M. (2013), "Revisiting collaborations between nonprofits and businesses: an NPO-centric view and typology", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. 42 No. 5, pp. 1-21.

Scott, W.R. (1987), "The adolescence of institutional theory", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 493-511.

Scott, W.R. (1995), *Institutions and Organizations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Scott, W.R. (2013), *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Seo, M. and Creed, D. (2002), "Institutional contradictions, praxis, and institutional change", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 222-247.

Smets, M., Morris, T. and Greenwood, R. (2012), "From practice to field: a multi-level model of practice-driven institutional change", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 877-904.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990), *Basic of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.

Sturges, K. (1915), *American Chambers of Commerce (Williams College ed.)*, Moffatt, Yard, and Co., New York,NY, available at: https://books.google.com/books?id=EdI2AAAAMAAJ& pg=PA126&dq=Sturges+%2B+American+Chambers+of+Commerce&hl=en&sa=X&ei=py DVVK2QEYmJsQTug4CoBA&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Sturges%20%2B% 20American%20Chambers%20of%20Commerce&f=false

Suddaby, R. and Greenwood, R. (2005), "Rhetorical strategies of legitimacy", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 35-67.

Summers, G. (1986), "Rural community development", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 347-371.

Swedberg, R. (2005), "Can there be a sociological concept of interest?", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 359-390.

Taft, W. (1911), 1911 State of the Union Address, December 5.

Tilcsik, A. and Marquis, C. (2013), "Punctuated generosity: how mega-events and natural disasters affect corporate philanthropy in US communities", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 58 No. 1, pp. 111-148.

Van Maanen, J. (1979), "Reclaiming qualitative methods for organizational research", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp. 520-529.

Voronov, M. and Vince, R. (2012), "Integrating emotions into the analysis of institutional work", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 58-81.

Voronov, M., De Clercq, D. and Hinings, C.R. (2013), "Institutional complexity and logic engagement: an investigation of Ontario fine wine", *Human Relations*, Vol. 66 No. 12, pp. 1563-1596.

Weick, K. (1969/1979), *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, 2nd ed., Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA.

Wilkinson, K.P. (1970), "The community as a social field", *Social Forces*, Vol. 48 No. 3, pp. 311-322.

Wilson, L. (1919), *Community Leadership: The New Profession*, The American City Bureau, New York, NY.

Yin, R. (2009), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Zietsma, C. and McKnight, B. (2009), "Building the iron case: institutional creation work in the context of competing proto-institutions", in Lawrence, T., Suddaby, R. and Leca, B. (Eds), *Institutional Work: Actors and Agency in Institutional Studies of Organizations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 143-177.

Zilber, T.B. (2002), "Institutionalization as an interplay between actions, meanings and actors: the case of a rape crisis center in Israel", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 234-254.

About the authors

Dr Brett Crawford is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh. He received his PhD from the Department of Business and Politics at the Copenhagen Business School. His research focusses on how interests become legitimate and propagate throughout organizational fields. Dr Brett Crawford is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: bacrawford@katz.pitt.edu

Dr John Branch is a Lecturer at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. He earned his PhD from the University of Cambridge. He has also served as an Adjunct or Visiting Professor at more than 40 business schools throughout the world.

This article has been cited by:

1. Zrinka Ana Mendas Lord Ashcroft International Business School, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK . 2016. Exploring resistance in rural and remote island communities. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography* **5**:1, 2-12. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF]