

# JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

## Call for Papers for a Special Issue

### OCCUPATIONS AND MEMORY IN ORGANIZATION STUDIES

**Submission Deadline: 30 November 2022**

#### Guest Editors

Diego M. Coraiola, University of Victoria  
Sébastien Mena, Hertie School  
Mairi Maclean, University of Bath  
Roy Suddaby, University of Victoria & Washington State University

#### JMS Editor

Daniel Muzio, University of York

#### Background

There is an intrinsic and enduring connection between occupations and memory. In the age before printing, mnemotechnics, or the “art of memory”, was a critical criterion of elite occupations in ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman societies (Yates, 1966). The medieval guilds and craft apprenticeships, similarly, adapted techniques of memory handed down from the ancients as a discipline for training experts in religion, art, literature, and architecture (Kieser, 1989). Modernity and the expansion of bureaucracy have changed our relationship to the past (Koselleck, 1985). The development of a bureaucratic culture grounded on written records and the rise of historical memory has led to the development of new occupations and the reconfiguration of social remembering into ‘culturally institutionalized heritage’ (Assmann, 1995). As a result, the role of experts and institutions in preserving, organizing, and curating the past has changed profoundly in the modern era (Levine, 1986). The change is perhaps most pronounced for those experts charged with managing social and organizational memories in support of national policies (Anderson, 1983). More recently, the advent of analog and digital technologies for recording the past and the mediatization of society has introduced yet more changes to our relationship to the past and a new host of experts and practices of remembering and forgetting (Garde-Hansen, 2011). As this brief exploration suggests, expert work is both the outcome of and the source of collective memory work. In spite of the relevance of this recursive relationship, the intersection between occupations and memory is still under-studied and not well understood within management and organization studies.

Research on *Occupations and Professions in Organizations (OPO)* is a vivid area of scholarly activity that encompasses the study of professions, occupations, careers, and expert work (Anteby, Chan, & DiBenigno, 2016). In addition to more traditional functionalist and conflict-based approaches, organization scholars have recently developed an institutional approach that focuses on the parallel processes of professionalization and institutionalization (Muzio, Brock, & Suddaby, 2013; Suddaby & Viale, 2011). One of the advantages of studying occupations in connection to institutions is that it allows us to understand how they coevolve over time. This is relevant because “professional institutions are often unintelligible without reference to their historical development” (Burrage, 1990, p.18). However, the literature on OPO has not yet

seriously grappled with the mnemonic component implicit in that formulation. In particular, OPO research has been little affected by the increasing attention to history and memory in organization studies (Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Foroughi, Coraiola, Rintamäki, Mena, & Foster, 2020). Although historical research on professions and occupations has been on the rise (Burrage & Torstendahl, 1990), the focus has been on using historical methods to produce 'history to theory' (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014). OPO scholars have generally ignored incorporation of memory, time, and history *in* theory. A better understanding of the role of the past and the place of memory in the development of expert work may contribute to the development of OPO theorizing.

The rise of *Organizational Memory Studies (OMS)* is associated with a renewed interest in memory in management and organization studies fostered by a realization that the past is not a given but is instead a social construction (Rowlinson, Booth, Clark, Delahaye, & Procter, 2010; Suddaby, Foster, & Trank, 2010). The past can be used to achieve organizational goals and generate competitive advantage (Foster, Coraiola, Suddaby, Kroezen, & Chandler, 2017; Maclean, Harvey, Sillince, & Golant, 2014; Suddaby, Coraiola, Harvey, & Foster, 2020). Indeed, empirical research has been largely based on single case studies and focused on the way top managers strategically use the past (e.g., Anteby & Molnár, 2012; Maclean, Harvey, Sillince, & Golant, 2018; Schultz & Hernes, 2013; Sinha, Jaskiewicz, Gibb, & Combs, 2020). This has limited the focus of studies to an organizational level of analysis, obscuring the connection between organizational memory and social institutions (Coraiola, Suddaby, & Foster, 2018; Ocasio, Mauskopf, & Steele, 2016). It has also attributed much agency to managers in shaping understandings of the past, with limited attention to other communities and occupations engaged in memory work (e.g., Cailluet, Gorge, & Özçağlar-Toulouse, 2018; Foroughi, 2020; Foster, Wiebe, Coraiola, Bastien, & Suddaby, 2021; Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming, & Spicer, 2016). There has been little work on how state institutions may seek to prevent remembering by marginalized communities (Maclean, Harvey, & Stringfellow, 2017). In other words, the micro and macro aspects of collective memory work are still poorly understood. More research is then needed to uncover how social institutions of memory impact organization and how the remembering and forgetting take place through the efforts of experts in organizational roles and outside of organizational boundaries.

### **Aims and Scope**

The goal of this proposal is to foster the mutual development of the research on OPO (Anteby et al., 2016; Muzio et al., 2013) and OMS (Foroughi et al., 2020; Rowlinson et al., 2010). OMS is concerned with processes of remembering, forgetting, and representing the past in and around organizations (Coraiola, Barros, Maclean, & Foster, 2021). OPO studies the creation and legitimation of expert knowledge, the emergence of occupational communities, and the formation of boundaries and jurisdictions around professions (Abbott, 1988). So far, there has been limited cross-fertilization between these two research areas. Given the relevance of memory to the work of experts and the fundamental role experts play developing collective memory work, we call for more research on the intersection of the literature on OPO and OMS.

OMS scholars have focused on how the past can be reinterpreted and leveraged to achieve corporate goals (Suddaby et al., 2010; Wadhwani, Suddaby, Mordhorst, & Popp, 2018). They have paid less attention to the people doing memory work. Empirical research has focused on leaders and top managers, leaving other actors such as rank-and-file employees (e.g., Aeon & Lamertz, 2021; Foroughi & Al-Amoudi, 2020), the media (e.g., Cailluet et al., 2018), partner professional organizations (e.g., Coraiola & Derry, 2020) and other stakeholders such as NGOs (e.g., Mena et al., 2016) under-researched. Yet, many organizations hire professionals of memory such as archivists to manage their pasts (Foster et al., 2021; Lasewicz, 2015), often in

dedicated archives and museums to preserve the memory of the company (Maclean et al., 2014; Nissley & Casey, 2002; Ravasi, Rindova, & Stigliani, 2019). Indeed, many organizations have realized that the past constitute social memory assets (Foster, Suddaby, Minkus, & Wiebe, 2011) that can be explored for marketing, advertising, and public relations (Illia & Zamparini, 2016; Misiura, 2006; Urde, Greysen, & Balmer, 2007). Apart from the memory work organizations do themselves, there are several professional organizations that provide mnemonic services for a multiplicity of organizations such as The History Factory in the US (e.g., Weindruch, 2016), Grifo in Brazil, and the Centre for Business History in Sweden. The field of cultural memory and heritage has touched on content writers, tour guides, historical reenactors, museum curators, journalists, photographers, filmmakers, and influencers, but they still remain under-studied. With its focus on expert knowledge, the research on OPO can enrich our understanding of processes of remembering, forgetting, and representing the past taking place in and around organizations, and in particular the role of institutions and occupations therein.

Similarly, memory and history are assumed in OPO theories but hardly unpacked (Suddaby, Foster, & Mills, 2014). Although there has been growing historical research on occupations and professions (Burrage & Torstendahl, 1990), the past has been used as a field for testing OPO theories instead of a construct within OPO theorizing. Prior studies have focused on the emergence and diffusion of occupational categories (Baron, Dobbin, & Jennings, 1986; Dobbin, 1994), the transmission of professional norms and culture (Becker, Geer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961; Orr, 1996), the historical gendering of professions (Arndt & Bigelow, 2005; Davies, 1996), and how professionals change and maintain institutions (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002; Wright, Zammuto, & Liesch, 2017). These studies use constructs such as professionalization and institutionalization that assume that a community with claims about a body of knowledge becomes progressively accepted and endures over time (Abbott, 1988; Suddaby & Viale, 2011). In addition, institutional approaches to OPO use a variety of historical metaphors such as 'sedimentation' (Cooper, Hinings, Greenwood, & Brown, 1996), 'layering' (Thelen, 2004), and 'legacies' (Schneiberg, 2007) to capture the cumulation of remnants from the past and their translation across time and space (Daudigeos, 2013; Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013). OPO research also focuses on processes of categorization, socialization, and legitimation (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Douglas, 1986), which presume the transmission of institutional contents and practices across generations of occupational members and the influence of past actions and decisions upon the present. OMS research can make explicit these assumptions about the past and help conceptualize the role of history and memory in OPO research (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014).

This special issue builds on some disparate initial efforts connecting the two literatures. For example, Quattrone (2009) shows how the success of accounting was attached to the ancient practice of the art of memory. Suddaby & Greenwood (2005) report how history was used as a symbolic resource to gather legitimacy by a big accounting firm. Foster et al (2021) develop a model of memory work of corporate historians and archivists in Fortune 500 companies. Coraiola and Derry (2020) describe the central role played by lawyers and law firms in sustaining the strategy of social forgetting undertaken by US Big Tobacco. Blagojev, Felten, Kahn (2018) analyze how curators and catalogers constructed new affordances for technologies of memory within the British Museum. Nilsson & Blume (2021) reflect on the historical influence of gendering in the professionalization of textile conservators in Sweden. Crawford, Coraiola, & Dacin (In press) theorize how the memory work of boat guides contributed to preserve the Grand Canyon. Schultz & Hernes (2013) and Hatch and Schultz (2017) study the changes induced by external consultants' revisiting of the organizational collective memory in Lego and Carlsberg. And Mena and Rintamäki (2020) together with Stutz and Schrempf-Stirling (2020)

discuss the responsibility of managers and corporate archivists in reconstructing the past of the organization in relation to corporate social responsibility.

## Topics of Interest

We encourage contributions focused on, but not limited to, the following four themes:

- 1. *Institutions of memory and the institutionalization of mnemonic practices:*** Institutions 'direct and control' (Douglas, 1986) the memory of a community. At the same time, social institutions are influenced by collective memory (Ocasio et al., 2016). Modernity fostered the emergence of new areas of expertise about the past encapsulated in 'institutions of memory', i.e. schools, archives, libraries, museums (Anderson, 1983). Recently, several other organizations have been influencing the way we define, engage with, and understand the past (e.g., Ancestry, Facebook, me too, Black Lives Matter). These developments raise several questions such as: How expertise about the past has changed with the rise of new technologies? How do new forms of expertise and organization shape the way we see the past? How do they impact on the memory work of organizations and their narratives about the past? How do experts inside and outside organizations contribute to the remembering, forgetting, and representing the past? What is the role of the media and social media in shaping our understanding of the past? How do social movements change the texture of the past?
- 2. *Professional projects, collective identities and institutional work:*** Experts engage in collective projects to achieve legitimacy and establish jurisdictions. The past can be a source of symbolic resources for the development of professional projects and institutional work. The past can also be an arena in which different occupations compete to legitimate their knowledge. Within an organizational field, professional organizations and experts alike may find in the past a source for constructing a distinctive identity and innovate in the creation of new categories. Some related questions include: What role does memory play in collective action? How is memory work and institutional work related? What is the role of tradition in expert practice? How do professions and organizations rework the past for institutional change and maintenance? How are past rituals, ceremonies and attire used for the construction professional identities? How our changing relationship with the past contributes to the emergence of new occupations (e.g., fact checker, genealogist, living historian) and the revitalization of old crafts (e.g., brewmaster, tailor, leatherworker)?
- 3. *Professionals in organizations and professional organizations:*** Memory work can be internalized or outsourced. The challenges memory experts face, the way they behave and use their expert judgement, and the practices they engage into may vary depending on the autonomy given to expert workers and the form of governance in which they are organized. The state has been the traditional home for memory experts. However, the recognition of the past as a source of competitive advantage has led many business organizations to create corporate archives and history departments, and to develop other projects based on the past. In addition, growing demand has fostered the emergence of a heritage industry with several professional organizations dedicated to managing the past. Some possible questions in this theme include: What role do archivists and historians play in organizations? How do they use their expert judgement? How have these new organizational occupations developed? How does internal and external memory work differ? How do professional organizations develop memory work? How do

heritage experts and organizations rework and represent the past? How has the cultural heritage industry coevolved with heritage experts?

4. **Politics of remembering, professional responsibility and ethics:** Memory is power-laden. Social groups and organizations often compete in their interpretations of the past. In addition, every act of remembering, forgetting, and representing the past involves a powerful moral and normative component. The way we remember the past sets the tone for what we do in the present and how it should be remembered for the future. The past can be either a source of pride or shame. Expert knowledge is used to remember and forget the good and the bad in different communities of memory. In this sense, there are important implications connecting the work of experts with issues of social and historical responsibility and ethics. Questions related to this theme would include: What are the ethical standards binding the work of memory experts? How do they manage the ethical dilemmas of managing the past? How are memory and professional misconduct related? How do experts deal with the dark past of organizations? What is the role of experts in processes of historical (in)justice?

### Submission Process and Deadlines

- Submission deadline: **30 November 2022**
- Submissions should be prepared using the JMS Manuscript Preparation Guidelines (<http://www.socadms.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/JMS-ManuscriptPreparation-Guidelines.pdf>)
- Manuscripts should be submitted using the JMS ScholarOne system (<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jmstudies>)
- Papers will be reviewed according to the JMS double-blind review process.
- We welcome informal enquiries relating to the Special Issue, proposed topics and potential fit with the Special Issue objectives. Enquiries should be directed to: Diego M. Coraiola, University of Victoria, [dcoraiola@uvic.ca](mailto:dcoraiola@uvic.ca)

### Manuscript Development Workshop

The authors asked to revise and resubmit (R&R) their papers will also be invited to a manuscript development workshop (to be held in the first half of 2023; location and other details to be announced at a later date). During the workshop they will have the opportunity to present and discuss their papers with other attendees and the guest editors. Please note that participation in the workshop does not guarantee acceptance of the paper in the Special Issue. Likewise, attendance is also not a prerequisite for paper acceptance.

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