

Christian Stutz

History and organizational theorizing blended:

Insights from exploring the corporate social responsibility field

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ABSTRACT

Stutz, Christian

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The “historic turn” in management and organizational studies (MOS) called organizational theorists and historians to engage in discussions on how to best combine organizational theorizing and historical reasoning, methods, and evidence. Arguably, the collective effort of the emergent academic movement has recently resulted in interdisciplinary integration, which foregrounds a new methodological paradigm within MOS. However, history remains a marginal epistemic lens and mode of inquiry in the various research fields of MOS. An example of this trend is the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which focuses on the responsibilities of business to pursue its goals in a socially and environmentally acceptable manner. Despite the recognized importance of the past in shaping the present relationships between business and society, CSR scholars have largely sidestepped serious engagement with history. Motivated by this observation, this dissertation explores the CSR field to advance the interdisciplinary project. The dissertation comprises four individual articles, which engage in methodological, conceptual, and practical boundary-spanning work.

First, Article I contributes through methodological boundary-spanning work to the overarching objectives of the interdisciplinary project. In particular, the article develops a historical research strategy in the context of CSR research. Starting from the epistemological challenge that historical research interprets the past from the present, the article recognizes the problems of theorizing from history (i.e., presentism). Instead of trying to avoid any presentism that precludes organizational theorizing from history, the article draws from historical hermeneutics and recent insights into abductive reasoning to reconsider the epistemological implications for theory-history relations. As a result, the article outlines the philosophical foundations necessary to embrace history as a reflexive space for interacting with organizational theory (i.e., history-as-elaborating).

Second, Article II engages in conceptual boundary-spanning work by integrating history and CSR scholarship conceptually. While previous literature specified the challenge of overcoming discrepant disciplinary traditions, this article argues that another source of mutual misunderstanding arises at the field level where the progress of knowledge occurs. To facilitate a research agenda useful for an interdisciplinary community, the article exemplifies the recognition and reconciliation of conceptual assumptions and research traditions at both the disciplinary and field level.

Third, Articles III and IV contribute to the practical objectives of the interdisciplinary project, that is, conducting archival-based historical research that aims to contribute

to organizational theorizing. Empirically, both articles explore CSR topics at the intersection of business and society in the Swiss context (i.e., immigration, political turmoil). Methodologically, these two articles apply empirical-analytical approaches. Due to the lack of practical knowledge, the introduction of the dissertation includes a section in which I unpack the micro-processes of historical source analysis in the context of a theory-elaboration strategy.

Together, these findings advance the collective goals of academic movement beyond the CSR context. In addition to elaborating on these insights, the critical commentary (i.e., introduction) surveys and assesses the accomplishments and the state of the art of the interdisciplinary project. It concludes by discussing potential pitfalls that could hamper the further prosperity of history within MOS.

Keywords: organizational history, historical organization studies, historical methods, corporate social responsibility

Author's address

Christian Stutz

Department of History and Ethnology
P.O. Box 35 (H)
FIN 40014 University of Jyväskylä
christian.stutz@fh-hwz.ch

Supervisors

(in alphabetic order)

Professor Juha-Antti Lamberg
Department of History and Ethnology
University of Jyväskylä

Professor Sybille Sachs
Institute of Strategic Management: Stakeholder View
HWZ University of Applied Sciences in Business
Administration Zurich

Dr. Heli Valtonen, Senior Researcher and Head of HELA
(Supervisor-in-charge)
Department of History and Ethnology
University of Jyväskylä

Reviewers

Professor Stephanie Decker
Aston Business School
Aston University

Professor Mairi Maclean
School of Management
University of Bath

Opponent

Professor Stephanie Decker
Aston Business School
Aston University

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1 CRITICAL COMMENTARY

1.1 Introduction

Cooperation across disciplinary boundaries is important to cross-fertilize new ideas. This compilation thesis contributes to the academic debate of how history and management and organization studies (MOS) should best work together (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Bucheli & Wadhvani, 2014; Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Decker, 2016; Üsdiken & Kieser, 2004; Kieser, 1994; Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014; McLaren, Mills, & Weatherbee, 2015; Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014; Zald, 1993). Arguably, the collective effort of historians and organization theorists has recently resulted in an interdisciplinary integration, which foregrounds a new methodological paradigm within MOS (Godfrey, Hassard, O'Connor, Rowlinson, & Ruef, 2016; Maclean, Harvey, & Clegg, 2016; 2017). Historical organization studies, or organizational histories, combine and blend history and organizational theorizing in research and writing (Godfrey et al., 2016; Maclean et al., 2016). This scholarship delineates and appreciates a variety of methodological approaches to historical research (Coraiola, Foster, & Suddaby, 2015; Durepos & Mills, 2012; Maclean et al., 2016; Kipping & Lamberg, 2016; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016), on which a growing literature provides practical guidance (Decker, 2013; Gill, Gill, & Roulet, 2018; Lipartito, 2014; Kipping, Wadhvani, & Bucheli, 2014; Taylor, 2015; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018).

Beyond history conceived as a method, organization theorists increasingly start to recognize the past and history as a vital element of organizational life (Hatch & Schultz, 2017; Schultz & Hernes, 2014; Ravasi, Rindova, & Stigliani, 2018; Wadhvani et al.,

2018). As both lines of inquiry are taking shape to an increasing extent, studies of organizational history proliferate within various research fields of MOS (Perchard, MacKenzie, et al., 2017), such as within strategy (Argyres, De Massis, et al., 2016; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016), entrepreneurship (Wadhvani & Jones, 2014; Wadhvani, Kirsch, et al., 2016), and international business (Jones & Khanna, 2006).

Despite that proponents of the movement perceive a “veritable explosion of interest in history-work” (Weatherbee, McLaren, & Mills, 2015, p. 4), history remains a rather marginal epistemic lens and mode of inquiry within MOS (Kieser, 2015). A case in point is the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that focuses on the responsibilities of business to pursue its goals in a socially and environmentally acceptable manner (e.g., Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Carroll, 1979; Post, Preston, & Sachs, 2002). In this literature, it is a received view that businesses adopt very different forms and meanings of responsibility across historical contexts (Campbell, 2007; Matten & Moon, 2008). CSR scholarship, however, has largely sidestepped serious engagement with “history,” i.e., broadly understood, an “empirical and/or theoretical concern with and/or use of the past” (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014, p. 537). In recognizing the importance of the past in shaping the present and the future, CSR scholars have only recently paid closer attention to historiographical (Carroll, Lipartito, et al., 2012), empirical (Husted, 2015), and theoretical (Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Phillips, 2016) opportunities of history.

Given the anticipated potential of history-work in contributing to CSR scholarship and its relative dearth, this dissertation explores the case of integrating history and CSR theorizing to advance the intellectual project of blending history and MOS. This introduction critically evaluates my findings and contributions, adding—as an independent and purposeful whole—to the collection of articles rather than merely summarizing them.

In addition to the specific research questions of the individual articles, this critical commentary thus pursues the following set of overarching research questions in relation to the debate of how history and MOS should best work together:

- 1. What is juxtaposed or integrated, when scholars seek (or have sought) to bring history and MOS together?
(chapter 2.1: views of interdisciplinarity)
- 2. What strategies for interdisciplinary integration have scholars applied and what has been accomplished?
(chapter 2.2: strategies to interdisciplinary integration)
- 3. What are the merits of blending history and MOS research in terms of knowledge production?
(chapter 2.3: interdisciplinary contribution to knowledge interests)

To find a balanced answer to these questions, this critical commentary is based on a literature review of publications that have cumulatively attempted to establish a place for “Clio [i.e., the muse of history] in the business school” (Perchard et al., 2017, p. 1). This literature has nourished and accompanied the dissertation project since its beginning in 2014. In retrospect, this particular year may be conceived as a turning point because the evolvment of organizational history gained traction through the publication of a series of landmark contributions. This series includes Kipping and Üsdiken (online first: April 4, 2014; *AMA*), Rowlinson, Hassard, and Decker (online first: July 1, 2014; *AMR*), Bucheli and Wadhvani (2014; *book volume*), and Vaara and Lamberg (accepted: July 2015; *AMR*). Besides this literature that has thoroughly influenced my scholarly thinking, the literature review covers a set of publications that are commonly recognized for their contribution to the so-called “historic turn” (Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Kieser, 1994; Zald, 1993) in organization studies (see TABLE 5 in Appendix that lists the relevant publications).

My review draws from insights of interdisciplinarity studies (Aboelela, Larson, et al., 2007; Frodeman, 2017; Huutoniemi, Klein, Bruun, & Huukinen, 2010; Klein, 2017). Hence, I conceive the blending of history and MOS as *an evolving form of interdisciplinarity*. By interdisciplinarity, I understand “any study or group of studies undertaken by scholars from two or more distinct scientific disciplines” (Aboelela et al., 2007, p. 341). At its core, interdisciplinary research substantially adapts and blends new sources of knowledge in the course of interaction, whereas multidisciplinary research simply borrows and imports them from other disciplines (Oswick, Fleming, & Hanlon, 2011).¹

Studies of interdisciplinarity suggest that there are *different degrees or types of interdisciplinary perceptions, interaction practices, and rationales or justifications* that explain the rise and demise of an interdisciplinary project over time (Klein, 2017; Huutoniemi et al., 2010). The ephemeral status of interdisciplinarity places limits on the “schooling” of new ways of thinking and acting within and beyond disciplines, that is, the process through which a new school of thought becomes established as distinct and legitimate research paradigm (McKinley, Mone, & Moon, 1999). However, proponents of a new school can engage in boundary-spanning activities, by which I understand the deliberate collective work to influence the process to legitimize new ways of cross-disciplinary cooperations and interactions (cf. Langley, Lindberg, et al., 2019).

My analysis is particularly informed by Huutoniemi et al. (2010) who developed qualitative indicators useful for analyzing the state of interdisciplinarity in research. The

¹ This review makes use of the terms “field” and “discipline” as important conceptual cornerstones in understanding interdisciplinary interaction (see Huutoniemi et al., 2010). While I use both, I recognize significant differences: The term field captures the essence of the process of knowledge production within existing structures of a particular community of researchers (see also Ketokivi, Mantere, & Cornelissen, 2017). The term disciplines, in turn, is broader as it also encompasses complex institutional connotations inherent in the idea of discipline (e.g., structuring of resources and rewards).

first indicator, views of interdisciplinarity, guides me to trace the evolution of the perceived cognitive divides and boundaries between fields that complicate effective communication and interaction. Based on the perceived cognitive boundaries, the second dimension, strategies to interdisciplinary integration, allows the boundary-spanning activities to build bridges and form new communities of practice to be analyzed. The third and final dimension captures the type of goals of individual interdisciplinary undertakings.

My assessment of the state of the art in light of the qualitative indicators of interdisciplinarity contributes to the interdisciplinary research in its own right. In particular, it advances our knowledge of boundary-spanning activities of emerging interdisciplinary communities within MOS. Previous research has recognized the ongoing need for organizational scholars to seek insights from outside the discipline to tackle the grand challenges of our times (De Bakker, Crane, Henriques, & Husted, 2019), while acknowledging the exceptional challenges for academic scholars to pursue an interdisciplinary agenda (Leahey, Beckman, & Stanko, 2016). This introduction, in turn, breaks new grounds as it empirically and conceptually documents the practices of an interdisciplinary MOS community in a long-term view (cf. Kaplan, Milde, & Schwartz Cowan 2017, in the context of nanotechnology). Hence, this introduction provides learnings for other interdisciplinary communities that seek to legitimize interdisciplinary knowledge creation within MOS.

The primary purpose of this introduction, however, is to allow to contextualize my collection of articles. First, Article I (Stutz & Sachs, 2018) expands the interdisciplinary project through methodological boundary-spanning work, as it extends and refines methodological knowledge of organizational history. Second, Article II (Stutz, 2018) then provides a prescriptive example of conceptual integration at the field level to establish a new

interdisciplinary research program. Then, by responding to the call by Maclean, Harvey, and Clegg (2017, p. 24, *italics in original*), in which they conclude that “*it is time now to practice what has been proposed*,” this dissertation adds practical examples of archival-based research to the academic discourse (Article III and Article IV: Stutz, 2017). As there is a paucity of methodological knowledge on how to put empirical-analytical approaches into practice, this introduction unpacks the micro-processes of my historical source analysis in the context of a theory-elaboration strategy to achieve trustworthy contributions.

The remainder of this introduction first presents the collection of articles of this dissertation. Second, the introduction analyzes the relevant debates by using Huutoniemi et al.’s (2010) framework for forming the frame of reference of the collection of articles. Thereafter, I discuss the significance and originality of the dissertation and acknowledge some limitations that may serve as the basis for future research. Finally, the evaluative and conclusive part of the critical commentary concludes with a general discussion of the outlook of the academic movement that seeks to blend history and organizational theorizing.

1.2 Presentation of the articles

The first article deals with *methodological* issues to develop a historical research strategy appropriate for the CSR context. In this co-authored article published in *Business & Society* (Article I: Stutz & Sachs, 2018), we ask a twofold question: Why should the CSR community consider a historical lens and how should scholars use it? In answering this question, we draw on and combine methodological knowledge of both disciplines (e.g.,

Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Gadamer, 2013; Maclean et al., 2016; Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013; Rowlinson et al., 2014). In particular, we develop a distinct historical research strategy suitable for the normative agenda of the CSR community, i.e., to (re)shape business in ways to build a more human, rational, and just society. This article was the first significant attempt to explicate the value and procedures of empirical historical inquiry to the CSR community (cf. Acquier, Gond, & Pasquero, 2011; Carroll et al., 2012; Husted, 2015), which “has largely suffered from an ahistorical perspective that reinvents the wheel with every new article,” as Crane, Henriques, Husted, and Matten (2015, p. 431) observed.

The second article of my dissertation, which is single-authored and published in *Business History* (Article II: Stutz, 2018), seeks to integrate history and CSR scholarship *conceptually*. The purpose of the article is to create a research agenda that is useful for both scholarly communities. To achieve this goal, I first lay the groundwork by recognizing and reconciling discrepant disciplinary and field-level traditions (cf. Rowlinson et al., 2014). Subsequently, I review a corpus of 75 relevant publications and provide a synthesis of the history of CSR. To fuel the development of an interdisciplinary conversation, I finally cross-fertilize views of history and CSR theorizing and develop a new research agenda.

The last domain, in which I connect history and MOS, is *practical*. Based on my archival work,² I approached the empirical material by asking research questions that inform contemporary challenges that business and society are facing (Eisenhardt, Graebner, & Sonensheim, 2016; George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016). Article III

² See the individual empirical articles for a detailed list and reflections on the archival records.

was sparked by the issue of economic immigration, which has caused political struggles in Switzerland ever since (Lavenex, 2007; Holenstein et al., 2018; Piguet, 2006). Empirically, the article investigates the decline of the so-called Swiss “guest worker” regime, an institutional arrangement that governed the recruitment of immigrant workers after the Second World War until the 1970s. Inasmuch as the organizational practice to recruit immigrants thrived after the Second World War, the public began problematizing the presence of immigrant minorities in Switzerland. In particular, the public increasingly perceived mass immigration as a threat to national identity and built up collective fear: i.e., the fear of over-alienation (“Überfremdungsangst”). The study examines both the public opinion that increasingly turned hostile to the organizational practice and the insider perspectives of the major business interests associations whose pragmatic interests became endangered.

On a theoretical level, the article aims to extend current theorizing on the function of the discrete emotion of fear in institutional politics and work (Gill & Burrow, 2018; Moisander, Hirsto, & Fahy, 2016). Drawing from the structural theory of emotions and an epidemiological analogy, the study develops an epidemic model of fear-driven deinstitutionalization. The model explains important relationships between collective perceptions of structural power shifts, the emergence and contagious characteristics of public fear, and the nature of fear-related institutional work in deinstitutionalization projects. Overall, the article aims to reorient institutional research on fear from a focus on institutional stability, power, and control and considers its rebellious function in institutional disruption instead. —A previous version of Article III has been selected by the OMT Division of the Academy of Management as the *runner up* for the 2019 *Louis Pondy Best*

Dissertation Paper Award. An abridged version has been published in the 2019 *Best Papers Proceedings* of the Academy of Management (top 5-10% of the program).

The second empirical study, Article IV, grapples with a significant historiographical event, the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. This large-scale political incident triggered the first substantial inflow of refugees to Switzerland after the Second World War (Holenstein, Kury, & Schulz, 2018; Tréfás, 2008). This research resulted in a single-authored book chapter (Article IV: Stutz, 2017), in which I explore a rather unusual episode in LG's company history, that is, the termination of customer relations with the communist East after the incident. In the analysis, I applied abductive reasoning to refine an existing theory (issue salience theory).

To provide an overview of the collection of articles, TABLE 1 presents the individual research questions, theoretical backgrounds, methodological approaches, and used empirical materials. While the individual articles claim to contribute to different academic debates, the table also identifies the significance and originality of the work in relation to the interdisciplinary integration of history and MOS. However, the collection of articles will be subject to a more rigorous assessment in the discussion section (chapter 3). Next, I present the findings of my review (chapter 2).

TABLE 1 Presentation of the collection of articles

	Article I (Stutz & Sachs, 2018)	Article II (Stutz, 2018)	Article III	Article IV (Stutz, 2017)
Target Journal	<i>Business & Society</i> (published)	<i>Business History</i> (published)	<i>Academy of Management Journal</i> (1 st RR)	<i>Book chapter</i> (published)
Research question	Why should the ‘business and society’ community consider a historical lens and how should scholars use it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the state of the art of both the CSR research in business history and the historical research in the CSR literature—regarding the central academic discourses and methodological and theoretical approaches? Which weaknesses need attention and which existing strengths serve as a foundation to enhance the dialogue? (<i>RQ are not explicitly stated</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How and why did the construction of fear at the society level lead to the dissolving of the guest worker regime? And how did the Swiss business community deal with the arousing of collective fear over time, which undermined its pragmatic interests? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did LG interpret and respond to emerging and evolving campaigns that advocated for stopping trade with the East throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s? Why was LG susceptible to this public issue while most other firms continued pursuing regular business practices?
Theories used	Methodological literature (historical organization studies, qualitative methods, critical management studies); Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current methodological and philosophical literature of historical organization studies Different strands of CSR theorizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional work literature, especially regarding deinstitutionalization and the role of emotions The structural theory of emotions Emotional contagion models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue salience literature (Bundy et al., 2013)
Methodologies used	Conceptual article (reasoning)	Literature review study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History as conceptualizing; Grounded Theory techniques while acknowledging abductive and analogous reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflexive Historical Case Study Mystery creation/solving
Subset of data or hist. sources	Conceptual sources	Corpus of 75 publications relevant to the research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archival material of major Business Interest Associations (e.g., Vorort) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archival material of Landis & Gyr archive (and other)
Contributions made (as claimed in articles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problematizing qualitative rigor problems that B&S research might face (methodological knowledge) Complementing history to the methodological repertoire of CSR research by introducing the potential of a particular type of history Development of reflexive historical case study to complement historical organization studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laying the foundations for an emerging interdisciplinary inquiry blending history and CSR theorizing (research agenda) Problematizing of the history of the CSR ideal to provide historical depth and a background historical narrative (reflexive space) for the ever-expanding CSR literature Explicating the process of reconciling field-level and disciplinary assumptions to establish an interdisciplinary research agenda at the intersection of history and MOS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reorienting institutional research on fear from a focus on institutional stability, power, and control to consider its rebellious function in institutional disruption Developing an epidemic model of deinstitutionalization driven by a mechanism of fear contagion Developing of the fear-nexus, i.e., a consolidation of a set of constructs related to fear in the context of the institutional work literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadening the issue salience theory’s firm-centric perspective by considering the role of deeper political and cultural structures within society.
Contributions to the debate of how history and MOS should best work together	<p>→ Methodological boundary-spanning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicating the role of abductive reasoning and hermeneutical understanding in theory-history interactions (methodological knowledge) Refining the “history as conceptualizing” approach as a theory-elaboration strategy, and explicating underlying assumptions of nature of theories and empirical material (interdisciplinary research goal) 	<p>→ Conceptual boundary-spanning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicating the importance and process of reconciling field-level assumptions to infuse MOS fields with more history (theoretical interdisciplinarity) 	<p>→ Practical boundary-spanning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unpacking some similarities and differences between historical source analysis and (abductive) qualitative analysis Explicating the micro-processes of historical source analysis (i.e., coding) in the context of a theory-elaboration strategy to achieve trustworthy results 	

2 MAPPING THE INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

This section outlines and structures the academic debates that are relevant to position the findings of this dissertation. The review adopts Huutoniemi et al.'s (2010) three-dimensional framework for analyzing interdisciplinarity. Huutoniemi et al. (2010) developed this framework to assist funding agencies in assessing research proposals. The article's high citation indicates its influence on interdisciplinary practice. For this reason, I suggest that the framework is also useful for analyzing the evolving state of interdisciplinary integration of history and MOS. I first turn my attention to the evolution of views of the nature of interdisciplinarity between history and MOS (see also TABLE 2).

2.1 Views of interdisciplinarity

A recurring topic in the debate of how history and MOS should best work together has been the mapping of disciplinary relations (Decker, 2016; Kipping & Üsdiken, 2015; Leblebici, 2014; Miskell, 2018; Suddaby, 2016). Studies of interdisciplinarity, however, inform us that such a juxtaposition of fields is not a value-neutral and objective exercise (Huutoniemi et al., 2010). Huutoniemi et al. (2010, p. 82) demonstrate that the interdisciplinary character of research cannot be deduced from the simple labels of the participating fields, but must instead be assessed based on how researchers represent the fields and experience the encounter of fields. Indeed, organizational theorists and historians repeatedly referred to a “perceived gulf” (Adorisio & Mutch, 2013) or “rift” (Greenwood & Bernardi, 2013) between history and MOS. To account for such experiences, Huutoniemi et al. (2010) introduce the notion of cultural distance between research com-

munities.³ The perception of distance in terms of research norms, assumptions, and perspectives suggests real consequences as it increases the likelihood of conflict and pitfalls of integration.

Drawing from insights of interdisciplinarity studies, I identify four broad themes of how researchers have juxtaposed history and MOS. My representation is consistent with prior reflections (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2015) and attempts to map research paradigms at the intersection of history and MOS (Decker, 2016). Additionally, I add value to the debate as the four themes clarify “what” exactly (disciplines, fields, paradigmatic assumptions, etc.) scholars have brought together, which explains the unlike perceived opportunities and core challenges. In what follows, I report on the four positions that can be located within a continuum of perceived “cultural distance,” ranging from very distant to similar norms and assumptions of prevailing fields (Huutoniemi et al., 2010).

Distant and incompatible. The position that foregrounds a distant relationship interprets the traditions and research practices of history and MOS in chasmic ways. Researchers subscribing to this position perceive a taken-for-granted or even widening gap between history and MOS. This view has been typical in the 2000s and encompasses two of the three positions that Üsdiken and Kieser (2004) used to characterize the then-contemporary debate, namely the reorientationist and the supplementarist perspective. The former perspective, as evident in Clark and Rowlinson’s (2004) call for a “historic turn,” challenges MOS, as researchers perceive its aspiration to become more scientific as a

³ Interestingly, the idea of “cultural distance” echoes various migration policies to regulate the inflow of immigrants from places of origin. At least in the Swiss case, the Swiss immigration policies from the 1990s explicitly used the notion to distinguish wanted from unwanted immigration. According to this logic, the former (latter) originates from culturally close (distant) countries (Piguet, 2006). However, the notion seems useful to understand the socio-cultural stereotypes and prejudices that groups of people employ to draw boundaries between themselves and the “others.”

form of alienation. Critical to an increasing scientification of MOS, this position advocates a turn towards more humanistic modes of inquiry, such as history (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Clark & Rowlinson, 2004).

The other variant of this category considers what Üsdiken and Kieser (2004) characterized as the *supplementarist* approach. This view implies that a “real” interdisciplinary strategy would simply produce research appreciated by neither camp, due to their discrepant traditions and research practices. The historian would condemn organization theory as *ahistorical*, whereas the social scientist would see the craft of the historian as irrelevantly *atheoretical* (Rowlinson et al., 2014; Suddaby, 2016). Hence, in terms of its potential in contributing to organizational theorizing, the proponents of this view assign to history only a supplementary role as empirical facts to test a theory. Recently, Kipping and Üsdiken (2014) introduced the notion of “history-to-theory” to capture the old idea of the *supplementarist* approach.

Distant yet compatible. While the first category interprets the encounter of fields in qualitatively different, or “incommensurable,” ways, the second considers degrees of compatibility despite a perceived cultural distance. Typically, this position compares stylized antagonists and emphasizes the unique cultures of inquiry of the respective fields (Leblebici, 2014; Kieser, 1994; Zald, 1993). Greenwood and Bernardi (2013), for instance, historicize the relationship between sociology and history as a means of better understanding the apparent divide between history and MOS. In doing so, they stylize the differences into three groups that manifest the tensions between the culture of inquiries. They show how history and MOS differ in terms of methodological transparency, the ideal of objectivity, and priority on practical relevance. As typical for this position, they (2013, p. 908, *italics added*) conclude that “the best kind of mutual understanding is one

that accepts—dare we say *even celebrates*—differences between the fields and actually abandons ideals of interdisciplinary integration.”

Close and almost similar. In contrast, the significant contributions in recent years converged on what Üsdiken & Kieser (2004) called the integrationist position. To establish cultural closeness, researchers portray history as one of the alternative qualitative methodologies, which one could utilize for organizational research (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2015). Indeed, many qualitative MOS scholars share essential intellectual toolkits with historians, such as hermeneutics (Prasad, 2002) and postmodern theory (Boje, 1995). As the literature proposed a variety of typologies of historical research, Decker’s (2016) synthesis and mapping of the recent integrationist position is useful. She makes a primary distinction between those scholars who seek a unitary, cohesive paradigm for organizational history and those who embrace a pluralist integration encompassing different types of inquiry and research traditions. For instance, Kipping and Üsdiken’s (2014) notion of “historical cognizance” serves her as an example of the unitary integration, as their consideration of historical conditionality for organizational theorizing is modeled on a functionalist understanding of the foundations of MOS.

In contrast, Vaara and Lamberg’s (2016) elaboration on realist, interpretive, and poststructuralist historical approaches embodies a pluralist integration (yet not considered by Decker, 2016). Their (2016) representation of history, however, slants towards MOS, as they deliberately emulate the onto-epistemological and methodological discussions in MOS (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hassard & Cox, 2013).⁴ Overall, these integrationist ap-

⁴ Interestingly, Bass and Milosevic (2018) seem to mimic the same cognitive strategy in their attempt to introduce ethnography to the CSR field.

proaches stylize the similarity and complementarity of history and MOS, effective to establish history's potential contribution to MOS in methodological terms (see especially Maclean et al., 2016).

Close yet distinct. The last position shares with the former the view that MOS is more plural, humanistic, and critical than the previous acknowledged chasmic views, but seeks to maintain the distinctiveness of history. While the literature discussed many areas of variance between history and MOS (Greenwood & Bernardi, 2013; Leblebici, 2014; Yates, 2014), this position aspires to separate the conventional differences from the essential ones. With the former, I understand variance in expectations and norms regarding research practices (e.g., methodological transparency, the role of theory), which are mere traditions transmitted down through the generations of researchers within a field. The essential differences, in turn, refer to fundamental dissimilarities in historical interpretation and representation compared to other forms of interpretation and understanding. At its very core, historical research involves interpreting and representing the past from a position in the present, which implies ontological and epistemological challenges (Rowlinson et al., 2014).

Ontologically, a historian needs an assertion of what constitutes the matters of history. For instance, Coraiola et al. (2015) suggest that one can conceive history as objectively given (truth), as socially constructed (interpretive context), or discursively produced (meta-narrative). Epistemologically, a historian has the essential need to position him- or herself against the temporal dimension, whereas this epistemological operation is non-essential for MOS research (Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018; Stutz & Sachs, 2018). Rowlinson et al. (2014) proposed three epistemological dualisms to differentiate history from MOS, i.e., the prioritization of narrative representation over

analysis, documentary sources over self-generated data, and periodization over simple chronology. However, Rowlinson et al. (2014) argue that it is possible to overcome the apparent dichotomies, as they render historical research templates combining different sets of epistemological assumptions.

In sum, this overview argues that the academic movement striving for interdisciplinary integration has narrowed down the perceived divide between history and MOS. The portrayal of similarity and complementarity of history and qualitative research, however, raises the question of history's distinctiveness. Further, the plurality of views on history gave rise to what Durepos (2017) calls "field level fragmentation." She uses this notion to refer to the current condition of the community of practice, whose members draw from different philosophical assumptions to engage in their craft. After all, it is against this fragmented background that this dissertation needs to position itself.

TABLE 2

Views of interdisciplinarity

Views of interdisciplinarity	Representation of the encounter of fields	Core challenges or opportunities	Key References
<i>Distant and incompatible</i>			
	A widening gap between MOS and humanities	Alienated social sciences to be (re)cured by history	Üsdiken & Kieser's (2004) reorientist view Clark & Rowlinson's (2004) variant of the historic turn Durepos & Mills' (2012) ANTi history
	An unbridgeable chasm between MOS and history	History assigned an empirical/methodological role in discovering facts for organization theory	Üsdiken & Kieser's (2004) supplementarist view Kipping & Üsdiken's (2014) „history-to-theory“
<i>Distant yet compatible</i>			
	A stylized distance between MOS and history	Two unique cultures of inquiry, yet accepting the potential contribution of the other	Leblebici's (2014) transdisciplinary view Greenwood & Bernardi's (2013) comparison between sociology and history Yates' (2014) comparison of quantitative, qualitative, and historical methods Kieser (1994) and Zald's (1993) consideration of the <i>enriching</i> possibilities of the humanities or history respectively
<i>Close yet distinct</i>			
	Closeness due to a plurality of disciplinary norms and paradigms, yet fundamental differences in historical reasoning	The distinctiveness of history opens up vast opportunities for contributions. This distinctiveness should be maintained and made accessible to non-historians	Rowlinson et al.'s (2014) epistemological dualism Coraiola et al.'s (2015) ontological views on the relation between past and history Wadhvani & Decker's (2018) reflection on the temporally-situated perspective <i>Stutz & Sachs' (2018) reflection on historical hermeneutics</i>
<i>Close and almost similar</i>			
	A stylized closeness due to similar disciplinary norms and paradigms	Untapped potential awaiting for (functionalist) organizational theorizing	Jones & Khanna's (2006) integration of history into international business research Kipping & Üsdiken's (2014) “historical cognizance”
	A stylized similarity and complementarity	History's plural contribution to organization studies in methodological terms	Vaara & Lamberg's (2016) similarity and complementarity of onto-epistemological assumptions in history and MOS research Maclean et al.'s (2016) similarity and complementarity of epistemic goals and mode of inquiry in integrated historical organization studies

2.2 Strategies for interdisciplinary integration

Depending on the perceived divides between prevailing fields, any interdisciplinary undertaking faces the core challenge to overcome these cognitive boundaries. In the last couple of years, historians and organizational theorists have collectively engaged in boundary-spanning activities to build bridges and effective interactions across the fields. Huutoniemi et al. (2010) provide a terminology of interdisciplinary interactions to account for such activities. Based on Huutoniemi et al.'s (2010) distinction of epistemic components (data, method, concepts, or theory) that can cross fields, this section outlines the methodological and theoretical integration strategies employed so far.⁵

2.2.1 Methodological integration strategies

Studies of interdisciplinarity suggest that a lack of shared languages and methods constitutes cognitive boundaries that lead to incommensurability between fields (Huutoniemi et al., 2010; Kaplan et al., 2017). Such cognitive boundaries have very practical implications. Reflecting on the challenges of publishing history-work in MOS journals, Yates (2014, p. 281) observed:

“[...] historians would benefit from being able to cite canonical sources justifying historical methods to social scientists and spelling out the methods in ways that are understandable to social scientists (just as qualitative researchers cite the canonical sources on qualitative analysis methods). Perhaps some of the chapters of this book will become such citations in the future.”

⁵ Huutoniemi et al. (2010) also consider empirical integration, which describes the combination of different kinds of empirical data to investigate relationships between phenomena observed in different fields. As an example, one could imagine a large, environmental health project, which analyzes the connection between factors of different realms (natural sciences, sociology, etc.), such as air quality, pollution sources, and exposure levels of different social segments. However, related to history and MOS, I contend that this type of interaction refers to what has been discussed under the label of the supplementarist approach.

Five years later, I would suggest that her prediction has come true. Besides the book volume by Bucheli and Wadhvani (2014) to which Yates refers, historians and organizational theorists have published foundational work that outlines new methodological templates to suit the interdisciplinary context (especially, Maclean et al., 2016; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016). For instance, Maclean et al. (2016) suggest a typology of four alternative conceptions of historical research in MOS, that is, *history as evaluating* (i.e., “testing and refining existing theory;” p. 613), as *explicating* (i.e., “applying and developing theory to reveal the operation of transformative social processes;” p. 613), as *conceptualizing* (i.e., “generating new theoretical constructs;” p. 614), and as *narrating* (i.e., “explaining the form and origins of significant contemporary phenomena;” p. 614). Then, scholars have provided methodological knowledge on how to use historical methods and evidence in the interdisciplinary context (Decker, 2013; Gill, Gill, & Roulet, 2018; Lipartito, 2014; Kipping, Wadhvani, & Bucheli, 2014; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Stutz & Sachs, 2018; Taylor, 2015; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018).

Arguably, these blending efforts led to the emergence of a new methodological paradigm, i.e., historical organization studies (Maclean et al., 2016; 2017; Godfrey et al., 2016). To nourish the emergent community of practice, Maclean and colleagues (2016) have proposed five principles or norms useful for promoting closer interactions (i.e., dual integrity, pluralistic understanding, representational truth, context sensitivity, and theoretical fluency; see p. 617). Mainly, these principles recognize the quality standards of both underlying disciplines in terms of originality in knowledge production and methodological quality, but transform them to the interdisciplinary context (Huutoniemi et al., 2010).

2.2.2 Theoretical integration strategies

In addition to the development of methodological approaches and practical knowledge, historians and organization theorists have engaged in theoretical integration. The notion refers to the synthesizing of concepts, models, or theories from more than one field to develop new theoretical tools for interdisciplinary inquiry (Huutoniemi et al., 2010).

Many examples of organizational history have effectively crossed disciplinary boundaries and provided original theorizing drawing from both history and organizational theory. For instance, Suddaby (2016) explores the peripheral paradigms in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) famous paradigm framework to outline "bridging constructs" that can bring history and MOS closer together. Based on his previous co-authored work (Suddaby, Foster, & Quinn Trank, 2010), he particularly regards the idea of "rhetorical history" as promising for rapprochement. Rooted in an approach that takes history as constitutive for actors' sense of self and actions (Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014), this construct captures the powerful role of history as a potentially valuable, rare, inimitable, and malleable resource of an organization. Thus, it considers that the knowing and shaping of the past may be a useful asset to mold the organization's social and symbolic capital, such as authenticity, legitimacy, identity, and culture (Foster, Coraiola, Suddaby, Kroezen, & Chandler, 2017). Indeed, the study of how organizations use the past for purposes in the present, also known as the "uses of the past" approach, has recently received much interest and become a much inhabited new territory of knowledge (Wadhvani, Suddaby, Mordhorst, & Popp, 2018).

In addition to the consideration of history from different theoretical perspectives in MOS,⁶ the intellectual movement has explored and utilized history's potential in contributing to particular research fields, such as to entrepreneurship research (Wadhvani & Jones, 2014), strategic management (Argyres et al., 2016), and international business (Perchard et al., 2017). With my own work in association with diverse co-authors, I have strived to raise awareness of history in the CSR community (Stutz, 2018; Stutz & Sachs, 2018; Stutz & Schrempf-Stirling, 2019; Phillips, Schrempf-Stirling, & Stutz, 2018). In particular, drawing from different CSR strands and (ontological) understandings of history, this work attempted to shape and sketch historical CSR studies, i.e., “an umbrella that brings together diverse approaches to history and CSR theorizing” (Stutz, 2018, p. 1).

In sum, this review highlights successful integration efforts that involved overcoming disciplinary traditions in favor of both methodological and theoretical interdisciplinarity. TABLE 3 summarizes the findings.

⁶ See also, for instance, the reflection of Suddaby, Foster, & Mills (2014) on institutional theory, Lippman & Aldrich (2014) on evolutionary theory, and Rowlinson & Hassard (2014) on interpretive theory.

TABLE 3 Integration strategies

Interdisciplinary integration	Description	Key References
Methodological integration		
	Establishment of historical organization studies as a methodological paradigm	Maclean et al.'s (2016) and Godfrey et al.'s (2016) syntheses
	Development of typologies of historical research strategies to suit the interdisciplinary context Extensions or refinements of historical research strategies	Rowlinson et al., 2014; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016; Coraiola et al., 2015; Maclean et al., 2016; Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014 e.g., <i>Stutz & Sachs, 2018</i>
	Guiding how to put history into practice (methodological knowledge)	Decker, 2013; Gill, Gill, & Roulet, 2018; Lipartito, 2014; Kipping, Wadhvani, & Bucheli, 2014; Rowlinson et al., 2014; <i>Stutz & Sachs, 2018</i> ; Taylor, 2015; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018; <i>Chapter 3.3 of this dissertation</i>
Theoretical integration		
	Development of “bridging constructs” to blend history and major theoretical perspectives (e.g., rhetorical history)	Suddaby, 2016; e.g., Suddaby et al., 2010
	Establishment of new interdisciplinary knowledge domains (e.g., the “uses of the past” approach)	e.g., Wadhvani et al., 2018
	Systematic evaluation and integration of history and particular fields (e.g., blending historical reasoning and CSR theorizing)	Wadhvani & Jones, 2014; Perchard et al., 2017; <i>Stutz, 2018</i> , etc.

2.3 Interdisciplinary contributions to knowledge domains

Despite the question of whether it is appropriate to bring the different worldviews, methods, and assumptions of fields together (i.e., commensurability), each interdisciplinary undertaking faces the challenge anew to justify whether their endeavor is needed and necessary in the context of a particular knowledge domain (Huutoniemi et al., 2010). Indeed, since early on, historians and organizational theorists have attempted to articulate what historical reasoning, methods, and evidence have to contribute to various MOS fields (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Kieser, 1994; Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014; Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014; Zald, 1993, etc.). Booth and Rowlinson (2006), for instance, identified in the inaugural edition of *Management & Organizational History* a 10-item agenda of issues to be addressed by history-work. More recently, Durepos (2017) compiled five motivations that the intellectual movement has expressed for conducting history-work. Despite the fragmentation of the field of organizational history, she argues that the members of the movement share those research goals and ways to contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

In this section, I argue that history-work's potential contribution to knowledge forms relevant for MOS justifies its practice (see TABLE 4). I review the various research goals and make use of Jürgen Habermas' (1972) theory of cognitive interests, which has previously informed similar discussions in MOS (Willmott, 2005; Scherer & Patzer, 2011). This heuristic framework distinguishes technical, practical, and emancipatory

knowledge interests that underpin the production of competing conceptions of scientific knowledge.⁷

2.3.1 Technical research interests (“explaining”)

In its scientific manifestation, the technical research interest impels the production of knowledge that aims to predict and improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness in cause-effect relationships. This kind of knowledge represents the world as a complex set of interdependent variables, and its analysis is rooted in an empirical-analytical, or scientific mode of inquiry (Willmott, 2005; Scherer & Patzer, 2011). By accommodating the scientific foundations of MOS, historical organization scholarship has comprehensively explored the potential of history as a “resource that enables exposition and substantiation of ideas, constructs, and theories” (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 612). In what follows, I distinguish three types of utilization that justify history-work in the realm of technical knowledge production.

The first justification conceives history as an *empirical* means of testing and developing theory. Kipping and Üsdiken (2014) coined this correspondence between history and organizational theory as “history-to-theory.” Implicit to this justification is a view that history could serve as “a rich laboratory” (O’Sullivan & Graham, 2010) to confront theory with objective facts or reality (see also Maclean et al.’s, 2016, history as evaluating). History can be especially useful, since specific issues as slow institutional changes

⁷ Huutoniemi et al. (2010) distinguish between epistemological and instrumental types of goals. The former refers to Habermas’ technical research interests, the latter parallels some insights of Habermas’ emancipatory research interests. However, as Habermas offers a more encompassing typology, I follow his line of reasoning.

are unaddressable by conventional research, except “in the really long (that is, historical) run” (Jones & Khanna, 2006, p. 453; see also Wadhvani & Decker, 2018).

Second, much debate has surrounded the *ontological* nature of organizational theorizations that can serve as another possibility to justify history-work. Mostly, Kipping and Üsdiken (2014) developed the idea of “history-in-theory” that considers history as a part of a theoretical model. For instance, this category includes historical theories of organizations where outcomes are explained by prior events or processes (see also Zald, 1993). Then, I would argue that Kipping and Üsdiken’s (2014) notion of “historical cognizance” displays another consideration of the ontological nature of theory. In particular, they express their discomfort with the scientific aspiration to discover and build “universal,” “context invariant” theories from history. Instead, they prefer to conceive theories as contingent on the ever-changing context. Consistently, they (2014, p. 538) urge scholars to acknowledge “historical conditionality for their theorizing” or “formulate [...] their hypotheses in a context-specific manner.” As such, history-work is justified, as history lends context, contingency, and complexity to theorizations (see also Perchard et al., 2017).

The third item refers to what I call the *methodological* justification, which benefits from both the equivalence to and/or specific advantages of history-work over other qualitative research approaches. First of all, Maclean et al. (2016, p. 614) demonstrate that it is possible to “draw lessons from history” by “generaliz[ing] inductively on the basis of specific cases,” similar as in qualitative case research (e.g., Eisenhardt et al., 2016). However, historians are often inclined to reject “extract[ing] lessons from the past through historical analogy” (Godfrey et al., 2016, p. 600), since “[h]istory does not repeat itself” (Kieser, 1994, p. 619).

Recently, however, scholars developed a theory-driven approach to history that is more conscious of the epistemological challenge of investigating the past from the present (Stutz & Sachs, 2018; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018). This strategy, one may call it a theory-elaboration strategy, foregrounds that historically-situated researchers in the present can never escape their theory-, value-laden, and presentist assumptions and perspectives in approaching the past. Instead of avoiding presentism, this strategy considers abductive reasoning and directs researchers to reflect on, challenge, and revise existing organization theories and explanations in the course of interacting with history (see Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013, for more on abduction). Hence, instead of building theory from history inductively, history may serve as a reflexive space for elaborating theory.

2.3.2 Practical research interests (“understanding”)

Whereas the technical research interest systematically accounts for cause and effect, the practical research interest turns towards the historical-hermeneutic tradition of understanding, or “*verstehen*” (Willmott, 2005; Scherer & Patzer, 2011). Hermeneutic understanding refers to both the valorization of and the process of interpreting the actions and cognitions of individuals through the understanding of their subjective meanings (Kipping et al., 2014; Stutz & Sachs, 2018; Taylor, 2015). When knowledge production is driven by this interest, the concern is to facilitate and improve mutual understanding between people (Willmott, 2005).

The practical research interest resonates with the (traditional) epistemic emphasis of historical research that seeks to understand and explain historical evidence and cognition of historical actors by placing them in a historical context (Rowlinson et al., 2014; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018). Historical understanding that is relevant for MOS comes in

at least two variants. First, historical research has the potential to explain “the form and origins of significant contemporary phenomena” (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 614). As such, historical research may deepen the understanding of organizational phenomena by contextualizing them in the past. The epistemic result, historiography, i.e., “the previous historical writing and explanation on a subject” (Wadhvani & Decker, 2018), may then serve as a source of context-sensitive knowledge, interpretations, and arguments.

Second, history-work seems to be needed to raise “historical consciousness,” i.e., “a sensitivity and awareness of the degree to which history is both a product and a source of human reflexivity” (Suddaby, 2016, p. 57). This kind of historical understanding stems from both the objective and the interpretive function of history. That means that the objective elements of history as truth constrains what actors can and cannot do in the social-symbolic realm (Suddaby, 2016). As an example, Schrempf-Stirling et al. (2016) discuss the role of historical awareness for the social responsibilities of businesses:

“Companies for whom the past is vivid in the present are less likely to repeatedly make similar mistakes. And the corporation that has done the hard work of reconciliation is likely to be the most aware of the broader implications of current activities, including implications for the distant future.” (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016, p. 714)

This example indicates that the idea of historical consciousness has largely untapped potential for MOS research.

2.3.3 Emancipatory research interests (“critiquing”)

In contrast, emancipatory research interest engenders critical reflection of the social structures, processes, and power relations, in which patterns of social behavior and meanings are embedded (Willmott, 2005; Scherer & Patzer, 2011). Its focus is to reveal the (seemingly) unreasoned and political basis of the taken-for-granted, which should bring the suffering, dependency, and domination of social lives to the surface (Willmott, 2005).

The production of this kind of knowledge serves a normative agenda (Stutz & Sachs, 2018), as researchers wish to facilitate social change and transformation in investigating institutions and practices that are conceived to suppress a more human, rational, and just society (Scherer & Patzer, 2011).

Early on, the protagonists of the “historic turn” pointed out the potential of history as a “vehicle for critique” (Durepos, 2017). While much of this early work was directed to the discipline itself to free space for more history (Zald, 1993; Kieser, 1994; Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Booth & Rowlinson, 2006), history-work in at least two variants opens the opportunity to “uncover and problematize conventionally held assumptions of knowledge and their power effects” (Vaara & Lamberg, 2016, p. 635).

First of all, historical writing, at its core, seeks to revise the taken-for-granted when contributing to historiography. As the relevance and meaning of the past continually change from the perspective of the evolving present, historical understanding *per se* is subject to “revisionism,” i.e., “a constant re-seeing or re-interpretation of the past” (Wadhvani & Decker, 2018). With a more explicit transformative aspiration, organizational historians may go back to key (or marginalized) historical events and thoughts of protagonists to revise our understanding. When scholars contextualize the past anew, they may de-naturalize hegemonic organizations, institutions, and practices by paying attention to an alternative and problematic past (Durepos, 2017; Greenwood & Bernardi, 2013).

In line with the initial calls for a historic turn, but much more modestly, history may serve as a reflexive space to renew management research (Cummings, Bridgman, Hassard, & Rowlinson, 2018). New approaches to the “history of management thought” seek to assess a field historically and reflect upon its identity, purpose, and research goals. Such

research may unravel lessons learned and help think about scholarship differently in the present (as a practical example: Kipping, Kurosawa, & Wahdwani, 2017).

In sum, this review provides an overview of ten potential ways to contribute to the three competing conceptions of scientific knowledge relevant for MOS that can help researchers to justify their interdisciplinary history-work. However, there is no boilerplate to convince a field to accept interdisciplinary contributions. As Locke and Golden-Biddle (1997) demonstrated, each piece of research must engage in the skillful rhetorical practice anew to establish and legitimize its contribution in the context of existing knowledge of a field.

TABLE 4 Interdisciplinary contributions to competing knowledge interests

Cognitive interests	Description of potential	Key References
<i>Technical research interest</i> (“ <i>explaining</i> ”)		
	<i>Empirical usefulness:</i> history as an empirical means to inform theorization (e.g., deductive theory-testing)	Kipping & Üsdiken’s (2014) history-to-theory Maclean et al.’s (2016) evaluating history
	<i>Ontological usefulness:</i> - History as a part of theorization (e.g., variable) - History lending context, contingency, and complexity to theorizing	Kipping & Üsdiken’s (2014) history-in-theory Kipping & Üsdiken’s (2014) historical cognizance
	<i>Methodological usefulness:</i> - History informing inductive theory building - History as a reflexive space to challenge and refine existing ideas, concepts, or theory	Maclean et al.’s (2016) conceptualizing history <i>Stutz & Sachs, 2018; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018</i>
<i>Practical research interest</i> (“ <i>understanding</i> ”)	- History as a means to deepen understanding of situations or conditions in the present - History as a reflexive space for historical consciousness	Maclean et al., 2016; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018; etc. Suddaby, 2016; Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014; Wadhvani et al., 2018; <i>Stutz, 2018</i>
<i>Emancipatory research interest</i> (“ <i>critiquing</i> ”)	- History as a vehicle of critiquing the source of power and control in the present - History as a reflexive space to renew management research - History as a vehicle of questioning the scientific orientation of MOS	Booth et al., 2007; Clark & Rowlinson, 2006; etc. Cummings et al., 2018 Zald, 1993; Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; etc. Wadhvani & Decker, 2017

3 SIGNIFICANCE AND ORIGINALITY OF THE PRESENTED WORK

In what follows, I more clearly position my own work within the relevant debates outlined above and critically evaluate its significance and originality. Mostly, my dissertation expands the project of bringing history and MOS together through methodological, conceptual, and practical boundary-spanning work. My discussion highlights the three most important contributions. This chapter concludes by discussing the limitations of my work and the implications for future research.

3.1 Contributions to conceptual boundary-spanning

As organizational history spread to various fields of inquiry (see chapter 2.2.2: theoretical integration strategies), my work has “infused” the CSR community with more history. In particular, based on the observation of a remarkable emerging cross-disciplinary interest in integrating history and CSR thinking (e.g., Carroll et al., 2012; Husted, 2015; Jones, 2017; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016), Article II’s (Stutz, 2018) purpose was to shape and sketch a research agenda that brings together diverse approaches to history and CSR theorizing.

Such cross-disciplinary endeavors are challenging, as an editor’s insight in *Business & Society*, one of the leading CSR specialist journals, notes:

“Too many papers attempt or claim to be interdisciplinary but do not very effectively cross disciplines and stay largely rooted to their core discipline. That is, the literature they cite, the conversation they join, and the contribution they make are primarily those of their core discipline, rather than effectively crossing disciplines and integrating their disciplinary perspective with that of management” (De Bakker, Crane, Henriques, & Husted, 2019, p. 448)

While the previous literature of blending history and MOS provided guidance on how to overcome the discrepant disciplinary traditions (especially Godfrey et al., 2016; Maclean et al., 2016; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Suddaby, 2016), this article argues that another source of mutual misunderstanding arises at the field level where the progress of knowledge actually occurs (Ketokivi et al., 2017). By deliberately extending the relevant levels of analysis to the field level, the article thus assessed both the foundations of existing academic discourses of the respective communities and their prior engagement patterns.

As I investigated prior cross-disciplinary research, the article uncovers and synthesizes three knowledge clusters from existing literature, i.e., the historical origins of CSR, its diffusion and globalization, and the practicing of social responsibility by business firms. Building on my understanding of the CSR field and historical organization studies, I then problematized this kind of integration of history into CSR and reflected on the conditions that would enable interdisciplinary inquiry producing insight beyond either field:

"On the one hand, I have emphasized the lack of conceptual coherence in CSR scholarship, which causes ongoing confusion and inhibited prior attempts by business historians to engage with the source literature. To offer some guidance for entering into the dialogue, I have provided a framework that distinguishes the different premises of conceptual terrains (i.e., economic, critical and politico-ethical lenses) and the objects of studies (i.e., firm-centric or integrated studies, in either the narrow or broad variant). On the other hand, I have proposed moving on from a basic conceptualization, in which history is mostly treated as objective truth that authors may uncover to either inform historiography or use it to test a theory." (Stutz, 2018, p. 21)

To offer unique intellectual starting points for novel contributions, the article finally cross-fertilizes different assumptions about historical reasoning and CSR thinking. In particular, I sketched out three fruitful interdisciplinary conversations: First, I argue that an

interpretive understanding of history is useful to further the debate arising from the concept of historical CSR, which considers how organizations take responsibility for their past (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016). Then, discursive orientations to history may help to rethink the historiography of CSR thought (Crane et al., 2015; see, especially, Cummings et al., 2018). Last but not least, by considering the objective elements of history as truth, historical methods, and evidence can contribute to emerging critical issues of the CSR agenda, which calls, for instance, to investigate the role of business in times of growing inequality (Marens, 2018) and environmental exploitation (Wright & Nyberg, 2017).

In sum, this article recognizes the needs and perspectives of the CSR community and makes sure that the underlying assumptions between CSR and history become compatible. Therefore, it may be read as a prescriptive example of how to infuse other sub-communities within MOS with more history.

3.2 Contributions to methodological boundary spanning

Given the emergence of historical organization studies as a new methodological paradigm (see chapter 2.2.1: methodological integration strategies), I argue that Article I (Stutz & Sachs, 2018) has contributed to the refinement of methodological knowledge. Whereas its original purpose was to develop a methodological approach for CSR research, the article contributes to historical organization studies on a more general level. In particular, building on the essential epistemological challenge that historians interpret the past from the present (Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014), the article combines the interpretive operations

of hermeneutical understanding and abductive reasoning to explicate the potential of theorizing “through” history (i.e., historical distance).⁸

In earlier literature, there was much concern about what was called “interpretive anachronism” (Decker, 2016) or “presentism” (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006) that may bias historical interpretation. Godfrey et al. (2016, p. 596) reproduce the felt problems as follows:

“Presentism represents an attempt to recast the past in terms of the knowledge, concepts, and schema of the present period. Presentism distorts history and historiography by reifying what is current and justifying its truth by filtering the past (Zald, 2002).”

As an obvious solution to the concerns with presentism, historians easily buy into the importance of “context sensitivity,” i.e., to be attentive to the historical specificities in historical research (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 618). However, others have pointed out that it is epistemologically impossible to escape the historically presentist position (Wadhvani & Decker, 2018). Greenwood and Bernardi (2013, p. 912, *italics in original*) get to the heart of it: “In short, both *with* knowing it, and *without* knowing it, historians reflect the preoccupations of their age, gender, nationality, and contemporaneous context.” Hence, they argue that the “avoidance of presentism, although admirable, is nevertheless an unreasonable task” (p. 924). Instead, in line with Kieser’s (1994) original insights, they conclude that engagement with history may help us to gain an awareness of the inevitable influences of our own contexts.

⁸ A reviewer suggested considering Hans-Georg Gadamer’s work on historical hermeneutics during the review process. Also, Juha-Antti Lamberg and Jarmo Seppälä commented on an earlier draft of the article and suggested engaging with Mikko Ketokivi and Saku Mantere’s work on reasoning styles. It is greatly appreciated! Indeed, I would say that this article is an example of academic co-production of knowledge. This truly helped me to understand and appreciate that true knowledge progress occurs only in dialogue between authors, reviewers, editors, and an audience.

While this kind of historical consciousness is helpful to avoid fads and fashions of current theorizing (Kieser, 1994), Article I (Stutz & Sachs, 2018) formulates another productive solution to the epistemological dilemma. Instead of trying to stop being presentist, researchers should consciously adopt theoretical lenses and perspectives and engage in a constant dialogue with the historical material to seek novel explanations of the historical material in light of the preexisting theory (Stutz & Sachs, 2018). This strategy suggests that it is possible to elaborate theory from history (but *not* to build theory from history).

The argument of the article evolves from a (somewhat stylized) comparison between inductive qualitative case study approaches and what we conceived as a reflexive historical case study. Inductive approaches suggest that scholars infer generalizations (theory) from particularities (cases). In abductive reasoning, scholars begin with a preexisting yet flexible theoretical framework to explore cases in search of “surprising” empirical phenomena in the light of existing knowledge. If researchers experience such “breakdowns” in understanding (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007), in which the prior theoretical lens fails to explain an observed instance, abductive reasoning guides researchers to infer new explanations that account for the observations in light of the former theory (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). In other words, as “surprising facts” are turned into matters, of course (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013), researchers engage in theory-elaboration.

Drawing from the insights on abductive reasoning in interpretive qualitative research (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010; Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013), we then contended that the main historiographical operation, i.e., hermeneutical understanding of the past (Gadamer, 2013), essentially embodies a form of abductive reasoning useful for theory-elaboration. To establish this analogy (Ketokivi, Mantere, & Cornelissen, 2017), we relaxed assumptions about the nature of theory and historical

sources. In particular, instead of viewing theories as universal, invariant laws to be discovered, the article brings forward an understanding of theories as “a line of reasoning, a metaphor, or other tools that give us a sense of what to expect” (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007, p. 1278). Then, we argue in the article that the basic historical methods (i.e., source criticism, contextualization) transform historical sources of the past into empirical materials, which can be used to understand the “hermeneutical horizons” (Gadamer, 2013) of historical actors. The result is similar to the primary goal of interpretive scholars who strive to understand the “actors’ own interpretation of their context and their situation” (Heracleous & Fernandes, 2019, p. 5).

While the analogy emphasizes the similarities between reflexive historical research and interpretive qualitative research, we then suggest that history-work has a critical comparative advantage over qualitative research, i.e., the temporal distance between the investigated past and the present perspective of the researcher. Instead of viewing temporal distance as an obstacle to engage with and elaborate on contemporary theories (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014), we suggest that it is a productive condition enabling the elaboration of our conceptual lenses and theories. While qualitative scholars are exceptionally challenged to make use of the empirical context to go beyond the taken-for-granted in current theorizations, we argue that the unfamiliar empirical context in the past might additionally provoke and stimulate researchers to move towards new ideas and conceptual understandings.

In sum, this article challenges the relevant literature with their concerns of presentism and universalism and their views of theory-history interactions. Instead, the article relaxes assumptions of the ontological nature of theory and empirical material to embrace the possibilities of theory elaboration from history.

3.3 Contributions to practical boundary-spanning

With this thesis, I also engaged in interdisciplinary practice; i.e., putting historical methods in action to contribute to knowledge domains (see chapter 2.3: interdisciplinary contributions to competing knowledge interests). As this introduction positions the findings and contributions of the dissertation in relation to the debate of how history and MOS should best work together, I decided not to discuss here the objectives, theoretical backgrounds, and results of my empirical research (Article III and IV). Instead, I elaborate on the potential novelty of how I put history into practice. In particular, drawing from the assumptions and methodological principles of the reflexive historical case study (Stutz & Sachs, 2018), I argue that my approach to analyzing historical sources possesses innovative value that merits some reflection. In what follows, I build on insights of coding practices in interpretive research to elaborate on the micro-processes of source analysis (i.e., coding) in the context of a theory-elaboration historical research strategy.

Trustworthiness of historical analysis. Any qualitative inquiry faces the challenge of defending the rigor of its applied methods, and the novelty of its findings (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Sandberg, 2005). As interpretive worldviews reject the general idea of the possibility to establish something like a “truth” relationship between theoretical statements and “the” reality of the outside world, interpretive scholars have transformed and accommodated the classical assessment criteria of the scientific realm of knowledge production (i.e., validity and reliability) to their conception of science (Sandberg, 2005). Instead of establishing truth relations, qualitative research often seeks to achieve “trustworthiness” through communicative action, i.e., “making [...] research practices visible, and therefore auditable, enabling others to gain a richer insight into how

their findings were produced” (Gill, Gill, & Roulet, 2018, p. 194). Recently, Gill et al. (2018) converted the traditional trustworthiness criteria of qualitative research (i.e., credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability) into a set of guiding principles to generate more transparent historical narratives. While these principles are especially relevant for historians who wish to craft trustworthy historical narratives (e.g., as in “history as narrating” by Maclean et al., 2016), they offer limited guidance for historical-analytical approaches (e.g., as in “history as conceptualizing” by Maclean et al., 2016). Analytical approaches subordinate narratives to analysis (Rowlinson et al., 2014), which is, at least in qualitative research, mostly associated with one or more ways of “coding” the data material (Gioia et al., 2013).

Arguably, coding is a relevant but under-appreciated and under-developed research practice of historical inquiry within MOS. Yates (2014, p. 274), for instance, contends that historians have “no tradition of explicitly coding historical data.” Some influential protagonists of the historic turn seem to reject the use of coding straightforwardly, since it “objectifies sources as data,” with epistemological implications (Rowlinson et al., 2014, p. 257). Yates (2014, p. 274-5, *italics added*), however, argues that “historians do, of course, *implicitly* ‘code’ their data, sifting through it and re-coding it as new themes emerge” (see, similarly, Lipartito, 2014, p. 287-8). Also, Decker (2016, p. 9) notes that it is not sufficiently clear “how historical source analysis differs from documentary analysis techniques and qualitative coding, or popular but frequently misunderstood approaches such as grounded theory (Suddaby, 2006).” Given this paucity of knowledge, I unpack in what follows my coding practice of Article III to discern some similarities and differences between historical source analysis and qualitative coding.

The data structure as a means of demonstrating trustworthiness in analysis. In particular, I draw from Gioia et al. (2013) who collectively developed over the last 25+ years what is called the “data structure.” This heuristic device reconciles the often very messy and imaginative practice of qualitative inquiry with the conflicting demands of demonstrating rigorousness in data-driven theory-building (Gioia et al., 2013). Essentially, the data structure embodies a visual representation of how researchers progressed from raw data to more abstract themes and conceptual dimensions through analysis. For that purpose, the data structure guides researchers to categorize the intermediate results in a hierarchical order: from informant-centric themes (first-order codes) over more abstract themes to overarching aggregate dimensions (second-order codes).

According to Gioia et al. (2013), researchers who wish to build a data structure first engage in open coding of text material to identify the first-level codes where they faithfully capture the informants’ own views and words. Then, the practice of axial coding helps to cluster first-order codes to emergent second-order themes, which are more abstract in nature. Finally, once there is a workable set of first-order and second-order codes at hand, researchers distill the second-order codes even further into “aggregate dimensions,” which become aligned with conceptual ideas informed by relevant literature. After all, while Gioia et al. (2013, p. 7) recognize some abductive “leaps” in their own qualitative work, the data structure primarily follows the logic of inductive reasoning. Also, they acknowledge that the hierarchical categories are an imposed “stepping up” in abstractness of phenomenological experiences, albeit one that:

“lay the foundation for balancing the deep embeddedness of the informant’s view in living the phenomenon with the necessary ‘30,000-ft.’ view often required to draw forth the theoretical insights necessary for journal publication.”

As the data structure has become such a powerful explanatory device to achieve trustworthiness, researchers also use it to represent their abductive reasoning. In abductive research strategies, researchers identify a theory or set of lenses that could shed light on a phenomenon beforehand (as in Stutz & Sachs, 2018). According to Heracleous and Fernandes (2019), the major challenge of this kind of nonlinear inquiry is posed by the tension between emergent analysis and the more directive relevance with existing literature. They unpack the challenge by referring to Giddens' "double hermeneutic" of social sciences.

According to Heracleous and Fernandes (2019), the first hermeneutic refers to the researchers' goal to interpret the informants' interpretations in a way faithful to those interpretations (first-order codes). The second hermeneutic unfolds when researchers interpret the first-order interpretations (second order themes and categories). This latter interpretation process is guided by the researchers' own contextual knowledge and ultimately influenced by the theory-elaboration effort grounded in existing literature. Hence, researchers may fall prey to "bypassing the first hermeneutic completely based on the established second hermeneutic of social sciences" (Heracleous & Fernandes, 2019, p. 6). However, Heracleous argues in his conversation with his doctoral student Fernandes (2019) that it is possible to manage this tension by steering a middle path, i.e., "by attempting to remain 'true' to the validity of bottom-up inductive reasoning from the data, while informing this by the more directive influence imposed by concepts from existing literature."

The data structure in theory-elaboration from history. Given that the data structure is an imperfect yet vital tool to achieve trustworthiness in interpretative research, it is worthwhile to investigate whether historians could make use of it. To date, I am only

aware of one historical study published in a top management journal that follows the Gioia methodology deliberately, i.e., Hampel and Tracey's (2016) study on Thomas Cook's travel agency in Victorian Britain. As they are both organizational theorists not intimately familiar with history, a historian-reviewer could easily criticize the work as historical scholarship forced into the straitjacket of a qualitative research template. However, inspired by their study, I set out with Article III to explore the necessary ground assumptions to demonstrate the appropriateness of the data structure for history-work.

Essentially, I argue that the application of the data structure and the associated coding practice is very compatible with the relaxed assumptions on the nature of theories and empirical material, and the process of historical hermeneutics, as outlined in Stutz and Sachs (2018). First, based on Gadamer's thinking, the reflexive case study circumvents presentist and universalist concerns. Then, it assumes that basic historical methods convert historical sources into empirical material, similar to those of qualitative scholars (which also acknowledge the constructed nature of their data; see Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). By source criticism, a historian usually seeks to establish the validity and credibility of the source (Gill et al., 2018). Ideally, a researcher identifies sources that authentically speak for the perspective of the relevant actors one is studying, close in time and space to the empirical instance (i.e., forms of credibility and validity). By contextualizing the material, a historian then interrogates the explicit and implicit meanings and assumptions of the sources to establish the "hermeneutic horizon" (Gadamer) or the "first hermeneutic" (Giddens) of the historical actors. As soon as the historical sources are substantiated as "truthful" accounts of relevant actors, I would argue that a historian can code the text material similar to qualitative scholars, starting with first-order codes (first hermeneutic) and later using theory-directed codes (second hermeneutic). Of course, this is

not a straightforward but an iterative process, involving multiple rounds of re-contextualizing and selective re-coding (i.e., going back to the text informed by prior coding and/or theoretical readings with an openness to finding anything else that may be relevant; see Heracleous & Fernandes, 2019).

As a result, this kind of abductive coding can lead to the exposition and elaboration of conceptual ideas and their theoretical relationships. In Article III, for instance, my abductive exploration of an in-depth historical case informed new conceptual ideas in what I called the fear nexus, i.e., a consolidation of a set of constructs related to fear within the institutional work literature (Creed, Hudson, Okhuysen, & Smith-Crowe, 2014). Then, I established a new best explanation to understand the dynamic relationships among the second-order concepts of the data structure. Finally, I provided in the findings section a historical narrative to *illustrate* the new concepts and the theory elaboration (whereas, for narrative historians, the historical narrative *represents* the results of their historical inquiry; see Wadhvani & Decker, 2018).

In sum, this reflection has unpacked the micro-processes of historical source analysis in the context of a theory-elaboration strategy to achieve trustworthiness. As there is a paucity of methodological knowledge that exposes the (mis-)alignment between basic historical methods and the varieties of historical research methodologies, this chapter substantiates some methodological knowledge for empirical-analytical approaches (e.g., history as conceptualizing).

3.4 Limitations and future research

Unavoidably, the articles of this thesis have limitations, which I wish to acknowledge, as the shortcomings might serve as a basis for future research. First of all, Article IV (Stutz, 2017) does not exploit its full potential in terms of theoretical framing and contribution (though I am convinced that it represents a solid archival-based study). As I intended to apply a theory-elaboration strategy, the project started with a focus on a particular stream of literature that arguably channeled and constrained my analytical directions taken (issue salience theory). This literature suggests that a firm's engagement with an issue is determined by the firm's cognitive schemes to receive and process stakeholder issues (Bundy, Shropshire, & Buchholtz, 2013). My theory-elaboration, then, considers, quite obvious for a historian, the role of the social and political surroundings in constituting firm-specific responses. In retrospect, however, the project would have been better served if I had been driven by the phenomenon itself more, i.e., a major political disruption that affected business on a large scale.

A more phenomenon-driven approach would have been more flexible in the set of theories and literature that inform the problem to build a more substantial theoretical contribution (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). In particular, I suggest that the investigated empirical instance would speak to many other relevant contemporary problems. For instance, in a recent editorial of the *Academy of Management Perspectives*, Phan (2019, p. 1) notes a "surprising dearth of management theory backed by empirical research related to the question of business and international politics." Then, he goes on to say "that we don't have very good frameworks for understanding firm and managerial behaviors in the context of political discontinuities that affect business on a grand scale." Given the strong

empirical bedrock of the article, I suggest that it would be worthwhile to further explore the collected “data set” in this direction.

The second limitation pertains to Article III. While Article IV was very much theory-driven, this empirical article evolved in a more phenomenon-driven manner. My archival work and analytical inquiry motivated me to interrogate multiple streams of research until a “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer) between historical material and theoretical perspectives emerged in my mind’s eyes. As this Article is/will be under review, for the limitations, I wish to direct the reader to the paragraphs of the article itself. However, I sense that my framing of the empirical story (emotions, fear) touches on emerging issues of many streams of research. For instance, business history research has only recently expanded its reach and discovered the opportunities to tackle emotions as a subject for their investigations (Cailluet, Bernhard, & Labaki, 2018; Popp & Holt, 2013). Also, the “uses of the past” literature still awaits contributions that help to enhance our understanding of the role of emotions in managerial uses of the past (Wadhvani et al., 2018, p. 1674). Given this emerging interest (Zietsma, Toubiana, Voronov, & Roberts, 2019), I believe that this line of inquiry that Article III pushed me towards might become a quite vivid territory of scholarship.

Third and finally, my published methodological and conceptual articles that sought to bring history and CSR closer together have some shortcomings, too. For instance, in retrospect, I consider the research agenda outlined in Stutz and Sachs (2018, pp. 117-120) to be somewhat generic. It merely recognizes potential methodological advantages of historical inquiry over conventional qualitative research (e.g., context sensitivity). However, I believe that my follow-up article (Stutz, 2018) provides a more comprehensive research

agenda to give guidance for the interdisciplinary collaborations between historians and CSR scholars already underway (Phillips et al., 2018).

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this introduction, I set out to position the collection of articles in relation to the debate of how history and MOS should best work together. Drawing from Huutoniemi et al.'s (2010) three-dimensional framework of interdisciplinarity, I first assessed the current state and knowledge of the emerging intellectual movement.

Assessment of collective accomplishments. The first dimension, views of interdisciplinarity, guided me to trace the evolution of the mapping of the disciplinary relations and boundaries between history and MOS. My review argues that the collective efforts narrowed down the perceived divide between history and MOS. While earlier literature recognized distant unique cultures of inquiry at the disciplinary level, recent contributions emphasize their cultural closeness, as both disciplines embrace a plurality of norms and research paradigms. This portrayal of similar and complementary philosophical assumptions has opened up vast opportunities for interdisciplinary contributions. At the same time, the perceived proximity raises the question of whether history is distinct to other qualitative forms of inquiry. Also, the plurality of historical research that proliferates within MOS gave rise to what Durepos (2017) called the issue of “field level fragmentation.” It describes the current condition of the community of practice whose members draw from different philosophical assumptions to conduct history-work. After all, it is against this complex background I have to defend my dissertation.

Based on this understanding of the cognitive boundaries that are drawn both within and between the fields, I then turned my attention to the boundary-spanning activities and collective efforts of the emerging intellectual movement. Drawing from Huutoniemi et al.'s (2010) distinction of methodological and theoretical interdisciplinarity, my review

highlights successful integration efforts that involved overcoming disciplinary barriers in favor of both forms of interdisciplinarity. On the one hand, to serve the goal of methodological integration, historians and organizational theorists developed a variety of historical research approaches to suit the interdisciplinary context. As this line of inquiry matured sufficiently, leading scholars of the academic movement proclaimed the establishment of a new methodological paradigm, i.e., historical organization studies.

On the other hand, the movement has engaged in a boundary-spanning effort to integrate history and MOS research conceptually. In particular, researchers have explored “bridging constructs” to provide space for original theorizing drawing from both history and theoretical paradigms of MOS. Some of these bridging constructs are successful in garnering sufficient collective interest to flourish. For instance, the emerging “uses of the past” approach arguably represents a new interdisciplinary knowledge domain, i.e., a field of research in its own right. Then, history has spilled into many research fields associated with MOS. Historians and organizational theorists have arranged working relations to tackle new interdisciplinary agendas. One example amongst many is the recent interdisciplinary interest in historical CSR (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2018), the prosperity of which my work has contributed its piece (Stutz, 2018; Stutz & Sachs, 2018).

The third dimension, finally, discerns the variety of ways interdisciplinary projects can contribute to knowledge production of research communities. Drawing from Habermas’ (1972) theory of cognitive interests, my review has distinguished between technical, practical, and emancipatory interests that underpin the production of different forms of knowledge. First, in its technical manifestation, history enables the substantiation of theoretical ideas, constructs, and theories (Maclean et al., 2016). For instance, researchers

can use history as a reflexive space to elaborate on theoretical ideas and explanations (Stutz & Sachs, 2018). Second, practical research interests consider the historical-hermeneutic tradition of understanding. Maclean et al. (2016), for instance, argue that history-work can deepen the understanding of significant organizational phenomena by contextualizing them in the past. Emancipatory research, in turn, uses history as a vessel for critique, producing historical knowledge that reveals the political basis of the taken-for-granted in contemporary times. After all, I agree with Durepos (2017) that, although the emerging academic movement diverges in views on central concepts like the past, history, and theory, scholars settle the disagreement when it comes to the variety of potential contributions of history to MOS.

Significance and originality of the dissertation. My review has interpreted the history of the historic turn in light of insights of interdisciplinarity studies. While my conceptualization of the accomplishments and state of the art of the academic movement is of innovatory value in its own right, the review's purpose has been to allow the contextualization of the contributions of my dissertation. In the discussion section, I have highlighted and elaborated on three contributions to the existing knowledge.

First, in relation to methodological integration, Article I develops a historical research strategy that embraces history as a reflexive space for interacting with organizational theory (Stutz & Sachs, 2018). Starting from the epistemological challenge that historical research interprets the past from the present (Rowlinson et al., 2014; Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014), the article draws from historical hermeneutics and recent insights into abductive reasoning to reconsider the implications for theory-history relations. Instead of trying to avoid any presentism that precludes somewhat organizational theorizing from

history (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014), the article sketches the philosophical foundations necessary to allow for theory-elaboration from history.

Second, in relation to theoretical integration, Article II seeks to integrate history and CSR scholarship conceptually (Stutz, 2018). While previous literature specified the problems to overcome discrepant disciplinary traditions (Rowlinson et al., 2014), this article argues that another source of mutual misunderstanding arises at the field level where knowledge production and accumulation occur. To create a research agenda meaningful for both scholarly communities, the article exemplifies the recognition and reconciliation of conceptual assumptions and research traditions at both the disciplinary and the field level.

The third and last domain, in which this dissertation connects history and MOS, is practical (Article III and IV). As there is a paucity of methodological knowledge on how to put empirical-analytical approaches into practice (cf. Gill et al., 2019; Wadhvani & Decker, 2018), I unpacked the micro-processes of my historical source analysis in the context of a theory-elaboration strategy to achieve trustworthy contributions.

Pitfalls and prospects. While I hope that my dissertation has advanced the collective goals of the academic movement, I also recognize potential pitfalls in the project of blending history and MOS that can hamper its prosperity. Mostly, there might be a danger of “disciplining the interdisciplinarity” (Frodeman, 2017). Whereas my impression is that the academic movement consists of researchers that favor very diverse sets of philosophical assumptions and approaches to history, recent contributions emphasize the accomplishment of methodological integration within MOS, i.e., historical organization studies (Clegg, Maclean, & Suddaby, 2018). As insights of interdisciplinarity studies suggest that some movements toward disciplinary capture are appropriate, there is also a downside.

The movement risks that “the community becomes insular, and recreates the accoutrements of disciplinary culture—a recondite vocabulary, a canon, a closed group” (Froedman, 2017, p. 4). Aware of this problem, Maclean et al. (2016) emphasize in their methodological synthesis the idea of “plural understanding.” Durepos (2017, p. 11) captures its core as follows:

“At its basis is an authentic willingness to become multi-lingual and to work toward heightened theoretical fluency. An ethic of pluralistic understanding will prevent boundaries and gatekeepers but encourage different ways of doing historical organization studies.”

In addition to this ethics of plural understanding, I would argue that the community of scholars must also find some consensus. In particular, I consider it essential to develop sets of evaluation criteria to assess the products of divergent kinds of historical research. Kipping and Üsdiken (2015, p. 372) also maintain that “the multiplicity—and sometimes vagueness—of aims and approaches also hampers debate and a possible movement towards broader consensus.”

To date, leading scholars have introduced “basic” historical methods to advance the methodological knowledge of the community (Kipping et al., 2014; Lipartito, 2014, Yates, 2014, Wadhvani & Decker, 2018, etc.). However, methods transport sets of (implicit) philosophical assumptions, which may or may not be compatible with the particular historical research strategies scholars wish to employ. What I have in mind is more consistent with Gill et al.’s (2019) recent contribution, in which they develop a set of principles to assess the trustworthiness in the construction of historical narratives. I would argue that there is a need to develop similar kinds of principles for other historical research strategies. For instance, even though Maclean et al. (2016) assign both “history as narrating” and “history as conceptualizing” to the narrative modes of inquiry, I would say that these

methodological choices guide scholars to interpret and approach historical sources very differently (see Rowlinson et al., 2014). Hence, reviewers must apply other assessment criteria to evaluate the research, yet it remains unclear what the difference entails.

In sum, I would argue that we, as a community, need to steer a “middle path.” While we should appreciate the plurality of history in MOS, we should “discipline” ourselves to a certain extent to clear up the remaining vagueness.

5 SUMMARY IN FINNISH

Historia yhdistyy organisaatioteoriaan: näkemyksiä yritysten yhteiskuntavastuun tutkimuksen alalta

”Historiallinen käänne” organisaatioiden tutkimuksessa (*management and organizational studies*, MOS) kutsuu organisaatioteoreetikot ja historioitsijat keskustelemaan yhtäältä siitä, miten historia auttaa ymmärtämään organisaatioiden kehitystä ja valtarakenteita ja toisaalta, miten organisaatiotutkimuksen käsitteet ja viitekehykset auttavat tutkittaessa erityisesti liiketoimintahistoria. Historia on kuitenkin edelleen tietoteoreettisesti marginaalinen näkökulma ja tutkimustapa organisaatiotutkimuksen monien tutkimusalojen keskuudessa. Väitöstutkimuksessa on esimerkiksi on otettu yritysten yhteiskuntavastuu -tutkimus (*corporate social responsibility*, CSR), joka analysoi ja teoretisoi yritysten yhteiskunnallista toimintaa ja sen hyväksyttävyyttä. Huolimatta siitä, että menneisyydellä on suuri vaikutus yritysten ja yhteiskunnan välisiin nykysuhteisiin, yritysvastuun tutkijat eivät juurikaan ole tehneet historiantutkimusta tai olleet edes kiinnostuneita historioitsijoiden tekemästä yhteiskuntavastuututkimuksesta. Tämä motivoi tutkimaan yritysten yhteiskuntavastuun kenttää sekä historiallisena ilmiönä että tieteellisenä diskurssina omine oppihistorioineen ja metodisine käytäntöineen. Väitöskirja koostuu neljästä erillisestä artikkelista, joissa esitellään tieteellisten raja-aitojen ylittämistä metodologian, käsitteiden ja käytännön osalta.

Ensimmäisessä artikkelissa (*Article I*) kehitetään historiallista tutkimusstrategiaa yritysvastuun tutkimuksen kontekstiin. Lähtökohtana on tietoteoreettinen haaste, jonka mukaan historiantutkimus tulkitsee menneisyyttä nykyisyyden pohjalta, jolloin ajaututaan presentismin ansaan. Artikkelissa viitataan historialliseen hermeneutiikkaan ja viimeaikaisiin näkemyksiin abduktiivisesta päättelystä käsiteltäessä teoreettis-historiallisten suhteiden tietoteoreettisia johtopäätöksiä. Tältä pohjalta artikkelissa esitetään filosofiset perusteet, joita tarvitaan, jotta historiaa voidaan käsitellä organisaatioteorialle mielekkäänä yksityiskohtaisena tarkastelumenetelmänä.

Toinen artikkeli (*Article II*) yhdistää historiaa ja yritysvastuun tutkimusta käsitteellisellä tasolla. Aiemmassa kirjallisuudessa on kerrottu haasteesta päästä yli tieteenalojen ristiriitaisista perinteistä. Tässä artikkelissa esitetään, että tietämyksen edistyessä väärinymmärrystä esiintyy kentätasolla joka tapauksessa. Jotta tutkimuksesta olisi hyötyä poikkitieteelliselle yhteisölle, artikkelissa luodaan malleja käsitteellisten oletusten ja tutkimustraditioiden tunnistamiseen ja yhteensovittamiseen sekä tieteenalan että arkistotutkimuksen tasolla.

Kolmannessa ja neljännessä artikkelissa (*Article III* ja *Article IV*) käsitellään arkistopohjaista, organisaatioteoriaan tähtäävää historiantutkimusta. Artikkeleissa

tutkitaan yritysvastuuta liiketoiminnan ja yhteiskunnan kohtauspisteissä (esimerkiksi maahanmuuton ja poliittisen kuohunnan yhteydessä) Sveitsissä. Kumpikin artikkeli soveltaa ensimmäisen ja toisen artikkelin empiiris-analyttisiä malleja historian tutkimukseen. Lopulta väitöskirjatutkimuksen johdanto-osassa ja yhteenvedossa pohditaan mahdollisia sudenkuoppia, jotka voivat jatkossa häitätä historian hyödyntämistä hallinnon ja organisaatioiden tutkimuksessa ja keinoja näiden ongelmien ratkaisemiseen.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 5 List of relevant publications

Publications	# of Citations ⁹
Adorisio, A. L. M., & Mutch, A. (2013). In search of historical methods. <i>Management and Organizational History</i> , 8(2), 105–110.	13
Bell, E., & Taylor, S. (2013). Writing history into management research. <i>Management & Organizational History</i> , 8(2), 127–136.	8
Booth, C., & Rowlinson, M. (2006). Management and organizational history: Prospects. <i>Management & Organizational History</i> , 1(1), 5–30.	316
Bowden, B. (2016). Editorial and note on the writing of management history. <i>Journal of Management History</i> , 22(2), 118–129.	8
Bucheli, M., & Wadhvani, R. D. (Eds.). (2014). <i>Organizations in time: History, theory, methods</i> . Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.	127
Clark, P., & Rowlinson, M. (2004). The treatment of history in organisation studies: Towards an ‘historic turn’? <i>Business History</i> , 46(3), 331–352.	345
Coraiola, D. M., Foster, W. M., & Suddaby, R. (2015). Varieties of history in organization studies. In <i>The Routledge Companion to Management and Organizational History</i> (pp. 206–221). Oxon, UK: Routledge.	22
Decker, S. (2013). The silence of the archives: Business history, post-colonialism and archival ethnography. <i>Management and Organizational History</i> , 8(2), 155–173.	101
Decker, S. (2016). Paradigms lost: Integrating history and organization studies. <i>Management & Organizational History</i> , 11(4), 364–379.	8
Decker, S., Kipping, M., & Wadhvani, R. D. (2015). New business histories! Plurality in business history research methods. <i>Business History</i> , 57(1), 30–40.	62
Durepos, G., & Mills, A. J. (2017). Editors’ picks: History research in management and organization studies. <i>Organization</i> .	0
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6 ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Article I:

Facing the normative challenges: The potential of reflexive historical research

Article II:

History in Corporate Social Responsibility: Reviewing and setting an agenda

Article III:

Fear and deinstitutionalization: The case of identity threat by mass immigration

Article IV:

The strategic cognition view of issue salience and the evolution of a political issue: Landis & Gyr, the Hungarian Uprising, and East-West trade, 1953-1967

I

Facing the normative challenges: The potential of reflexive historical research

by

Stutz, Christian & Sachs, Sybille, 2018

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Clarifying issues of contributions to the article: The initial ideas arose from a collaborative team effort between Sybille Sachs, one of my supervisors, and me. However, I wrote up the manuscript and took the responsibility to manage the two-stage review process, which fundamentally changed the structure and argument of the article.

Facing the Normative Challenges: The Potential of Reflexive Historical Research

This article explores methodological problems of qualitative research templates, i.e., the Eisenhardt and the Gioia case(s) study approaches, which are relevant for the business and society (B&S) scholarship and outlines a reflexive historical research methodology that has the potential to face these challenges. Building on Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, we draw critical attention to qualitative B&S research and frame the methodological problems identified as the normative challenges of qualitative research: i.e., to productively deal with both the researchers' norms and the research subjects' norms. We then introduce the reflexive historical case study (RHCS), a distinct research strategy to face normative challenges based on philosophical hermeneutics and the interpretive tradition of studying organizations. This research approach aims at theory elaboration while its mode of enquiry is reflexive. By explicating three of its key characteristics and using a case example to illustrate our approach, we demonstrate how B&S scholars can benefit from the "temporal filter" of the historical lens and from reflexive concerns about the nature of theory and empirical material. To tap the potential of historical research, we finally envision a research program for studying issues and debates associated with B&S scholarship.

Keywords: Historical Research; Qualitative Research Methodologies; Theory Elaborating; Stakeholder Theory; Corporate Social Responsibility

Since the very inception of business and society (B&S) research, scholars have been encouraged to make use of multiple modes of investigation and a variety of disciplinary lenses to deepen the field's knowledge (Crane, Henriques, Husted, & Matten, 2016; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007; Wicks & Freeman, 1998). Surprisingly, the historical lens is rather underutilized when it comes to issues and debates associated with the B&S agenda, despite a recent "veritable explosion of interest in history-work" (Weatherbee, McLaren, Mills, 2015, p. 4) in the broader management field (see Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014; Maclean, Harvey, & Clegg, 2016; Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016; Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014). Although management scholars have recognized the potential of historical research for quite some time now (Kieser, 1994; Zald, 1993), there are only a few historical studies that contribute to debates within the B&S research agenda (Lamberg, Skippari, Eloranta, & Mäkinen, 2004), but they mostly do not aim to produce theoretical knowledge (Carroll, 1999; Carroll, Lipartito, Post, & Werhane, 2012; Marens, 2013). Given the anticipated potential of historical research in the B&S field (Husted, 2015), we think this evident dearth is due to a lack of practical guidance as to "why" the B&S community should consider a historical lens and "how" scholars should use it. This article addresses this twofold task.

We further establish the "why" by arguing that a reflexive use of history allows scholars to confront and deal with what we call the *normative challenges* of qualitative B&S research. To develop this insight, we start from the premise that most scholars in the B&S field share an aspiration for "grander aims" (Wry, 2009, p. 151), namely to (re)shape business in ways to make a difference in society (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & de Colle, 2010; Sachs & Rühli, 2011; Scherer, Palazzo, & Matten, 2014; Walsh, Weber, & Margolis, 2003). We argue that this normative agenda proves to be full of pitfalls when scholars employ standard qualitative research templates designed for the epistemic objective to generate theoretical knowledge.

In particular, we demonstrate the limitations of the so-called positivist Eisenhardt (Eisenhardt, 1989) and the constructionist Gioia approach (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013) that Langley and Abdallah (2011) presented as the two prime methodological “templates” for qualitative research within management and organizational studies (MOS). Even though research that builds on these templates tends to present its arguments in different paradigmatic terms (Hassard & Cox, 2013), they both represent variants of *inductive* case(s) study research that aims at generating novel theory or models in a data-driven manner (Eisenhardt, Graebner, & Sonenshein, 2016; Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). Although both templates are valid approaches and have their own merits, we argue that, when it comes to the grander aims of the normative B&S agenda, they are limited in important ways.

First, these templates provide scholars with inadequate resources to grapple with the *human* dimension of reasoning in the social sciences. We call this the normative challenge to deal with researchers’ norms. Scholars following either one of those templates—regardless of the different underlying onto-epistemological ground assumptions—are compelled to commit to the scientific realist view of studying organizations (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). In this view, researchers proceed in a *computational* manner from empirical grounds to a set of theoretical claims (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013), and this in effect constrains scholars to disclose their own norms, values and beliefs.

Secondly, scholars guided by those templates are at risk of not making use of the empirical context they are studying to challenge their ever-present presuppositions about the phenomenon of interest (what we call the normative challenge to productively deal with research subjects’ norms). Other scholars have noted that inductive research risks falling prey to merely confirming what scholars expect to see (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Ketokivi & Choi, 2014): that is, the inability to make use of the empirical context in order to go beyond the taken-for-

granted or preconfigured assumptions of “fashionable trends” (Kieser, 1994) in academic discourse.

In this paper, we unveil and explain the pitfalls that emerge from those challenges by building on the philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002).¹⁰ Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is concerned with the act of understanding and grapples with its implications for the application of methods in the social sciences (see Barrett, Powley, & Pearce, 2011; Miller, 2005; Prasad, 2002, for overviews relevant for MOS). Although philosophical hermeneutics sporadically served organizational scholars as methodological guidelines for their qualitative inquiry (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Phillips & Brown, 1993), its epistemological implications remain “mostly ignored” or “only partial[ly]” acknowledged (Prasad, 2002, p. 13). We acknowledge that Gadamer’s philosophical view especially considers the potential of “history” to address both the researchers’ and research subjects’ norms in the process of producing novel knowledge.

For this reason—moving from “why to do history” to “how to do history”—, we deliberately build on Gadamer’s thinking and propose a novel historical research strategy that we call the *reflexive historical case study* (RHCS). Three key characteristics distinguish it: (1) RHCS aims to reflect on, challenge and refine existing theories. As a means for this epistemic aim, the research process is reflexive (Hassard & Cox, 2013). This methodological basis acknowledges the human reasoning context of scholars and has reflexive concerns about the nature of theories and empirical material. The methodology, then, benefits (2) from the virtues of, but equally reflects upon the limits of, naturalistic empirical material. The historical ap-

¹⁰ Engaging with Hans-Georg Gadamer’s work was suggested by a reviewer. It is greatly appreciated.

proach, finally (3), makes use of empirical contexts in the temporal past to challenge the scholars' preconceptions embedded in their contemporary place and time in order to produce novel understandings.

By following recent literature on history in MOS, we do not aim to explicate history on the basis of a "definitive, unitary statement of historical method" (Rowlinson et al., 2014, p. 252). The burgeoning literature demonstrates that historical research appears in a complex variety of alternative approaches, which, if they have anything in common at all, it is that they draw "extensively on historical data, methods and knowledge" (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 609). Even hermeneutics, sometimes reduced to an analytical tool and portrayed as one of the basic methods of historians (Kipping, Wadhvani, & Bucheli, 2014), is only one possible philosophical underpinning of historical research amongst many others, such as the realist scientific and the post-structuralist stance (Vaara & Lamberg, 2016). Given the vast assortment of alternative onto-epistemological and methodological assumptions, we adopt a hermeneutical approach to history and render RHCS distinct from other historical approaches for the purpose of grappling with a specific problem, the normative challenges.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to demonstrate why and how B&S research should consider a historical lens and, more specifically, a hermeneutical approach to history. By making this argument, we aim to make several contributions to B&S scholarship. In particular, we contribute to the development of methodological knowledge in the B&S field and introduce and develop a particular type of history to B&S scholarship. However, it is important to note that we perceive the historical lens as complementing, not substituting, the variety of disciplinary lenses and methodological approaches already employed within the B&S agenda. We believe that, if in a field a wide range of legitimate research styles and alternative ways of thinking and writing are appreciated, its "chance of more creative, imaginative and readable research being produced and published" increases (Alvesson & Gabriel, 2013, p. 254). Finally, while

this paper focuses on the reflexive potential of history in the B&S field, many of our points also apply to management and organizational research more generally.

The paper is structured as follows. In the first section, we clarify the normative challenges and identify a set of potential pitfalls pertaining to qualitative B&S research. Second, we contextualize our conception of history within recent approaches to history in MOS and outline three key characteristics of the reflexive historical case study approach that have the potential to confront and deal with the normative challenges. We illustrate those three characteristics by referring to one of our recent studies, which we call here the “Political Firm Case.” In the final sections, we propose possible avenues for future research and discuss the limits of the proposed methodology.

Exploring the Normative Challenges

In this section, we explore the two normative challenges. We first turn our attention to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s conceptual cornerstones of understanding.

Main Conceptual Ideas to Address the Normative Challenges

The philosophical hermeneutics by Gadamer is built on the intellectual labor of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and others and further developed in an exchange with the critical philosopher Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929) and Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005). Gadamer is especially concerned with the constitutive factors involved in the process of understanding (Prasad, 2002). Three main conceptual ideas about the nature and process of understanding can be distilled from his main opus “Truth and Method” (Gadamer, 2013; originally published in 1960 as “Wahrheit und Methode”). Their epistemological implications will address and clarify the normative challenges of qualitative research (see for the following also: Prasad, 2002).

Gadamer (2013) conceptualizes understanding and interpretation, terms that he uses interchangeably, as context-dependent. In Gadamer's view, researchers cannot perceive meaning objectively and directly, but their interpretation is always influenced by the social practices and "traditions" in which they are embedded. In Gadamer's (2013) conceptual language, the interpreters are bound to their "hermeneutic horizons" constituted by "prejudices," i.e., their particular cultural, political, aesthetic or ethical beliefs embedded in the historical time and place (Prasad, 2002). Gadamer (2013) then uses the metaphor of a "dialogue" to conceptualize the process of understanding. In this view, the meaning of a text emerges through a conversation between the researchers and the text (i.e., research data or an empirical instance studied). Accordingly, interpretation is not a unidirectional acquisition but a situated participation in the tradition to which the text belongs (Prasad, 2002).

Derived from these conceptual ideas, Gadamer (2013) criticizes the ambition of "empathetic understanding" (see Prasad, 2002). Interpreters will always fail to understand the intended meaning of a text due to the situated and participatory nature of understanding. Accordingly, the meaning of a text is not fixed: It goes beyond the original intention. As a consequence, the process of understanding cannot be described "merely [as a] reproductive but always [as] a productive activity as well" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 307). Ultimately, scientific understanding is not about "understanding better, either in the sense of superior knowledge because of clearer ideas or in the sense of fundamental superiority of conscious over unconscious production"—instead, "it is enough to say that we understand in a *different way, if we understand at all*" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 307; italics in original).

Gadamer's philosophical view of understanding has important epistemological implications that challenge the epistemic virtues of objectivity and truth of the classical philosophy of science. In the following paragraphs, we examine two epistemological implications that each

result in one of the two normative challenges. To begin with, we explain the normative challenge that deals with the researchers' norms and then move on to untangling the normative challenge to productively deal with the research subjects' norms. In each case, we address the potential pitfalls for qualitative research by highlighting striking examples of qualitative research published in *Business & Society* (see the appendix for more detailed information about the sample of 52 qualitative studies we considered).

The Normative Challenge that Deals with the Researchers' Norms

The first epistemological implication relevant for the B&S community draws on Gadamer's rejection of the idea of generating knowledge from an objective stance. This rejection implies that the knowledge produced by an academic field is prescribed and coined by the expectations, values, and presuppositions of both the individual scholars and the respective research community (see also Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). In the B&S context, Rost and Ehrmann (2015) confirmed this implication by scrutinizing the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate social performance (CSP) debate: They concluded that B&S scholars were biased to report favorable findings that meet the community's expectations, that is, that CSR pays off. In the realist paradigm, normative research can thus be questioned due to its potential to be biased towards the findings (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010). However, Gadamer (2013) stresses that these kinds of "prejudices" are not obstacles, but necessary conditions of all understanding. We will argue below that both the Eisenhardt and the Gioia template conceal the context-dependent nature of all scholarly understanding.

The computational view on reasoning. Both the Eisenhardt and the Gioia template struggle to acknowledge the human context of scientific knowledge production. As defining characteristics, research guided by these *inductive* templates makes a tremendous effort to demonstrate the "links between the data and the induction of [...] new concept[s]" (Gioia et al., 2013,

p. 4) to reach a “theory which closely fits the data” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 541). However, as Ketokivi and Mantere (2010) have argued, induction, on which both templates rely, is a philosophical dilemma: A theory does not logically emerge from repeated observation. To address but not solve the dilemma, both templates use the strategy to emphasize the *computational* manner in describing their research practice (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). In contrast to Gadamer’s *cognitive* view of the process of understanding, the computational view appeals to following explicit scientific rules and guidelines for justifying inductive arguments (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). By relying on the realist scientific stance, the templates stress “researcher invariance,” i.e., any researcher would discover that the same generalization emerges from the data (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010).

This description of qualitative research practice, however, is unrealistic (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010). Gadamer (2013) stresses that research is always done from a particular point of view: It will never reach an objective, i.e., a value-free, state. On the contrary, if scholars neglect to reflect their specific values, the research endeavor remains inevitably political, as Ghoshal (2005) points out. According to Ghoshal (2005), it was the unquestioned set of unfavorable core assumptions in management research that led to the corporate crisis in 2001. Ghoshal (2005) calls it the self-fulfilling prophecy effect of theorizing. From Ghoshal’s seminal paper, we thus derive the pitfall of (inadvertently) crafting political narratives even when researchers affirm to be objective.

Political effects in theorizing. B&S scholars are invited to reflect on the interests their theories serve. For example, Heugens, van den Bosch, and van Riel’s (2002) positivist study on stakeholder engagement promotes two different narratives that might influence practice. On the one hand, their study encourages firms to adopt the practice of stakeholder engagement according to the B&S agenda. In this vein, Heugens and colleagues (2002) demonstrate the firms’ “very concrete competitive benefits from building mutually enforcing relationships with

their external stakeholders” (Heugens et al., 2002, p. 57). On the other hand, the study also tells a subtler story. It legitimizes the introduction of genetically modified products by the Dutch food industry in the 1990s. Heugens and colleagues (2002) do so by (most likely unconsciously) tracing the events according to the meta-narrative of scientific progress (Boje, 1995): The industry, an agent of scientific progress, strives for continuous improvement for the good of all. As some “unbridgeable [partners]” are “against biotechnology” (Heugens et al., 2002, p. 53), the industry has to stem them by continuously providing “factually correct information” (id., p. 47). With this subtext, the study (inadvertently) supports the interests of the powerful food industry in a political struggle not yet settled in the European context.

To sum up, research guided by both templates is at risk of failing to acknowledge or even recognize the human dimension of scientific reasoning. As a result, scholars might inadvertently craft political narratives, based on unreflected assumptions. Zald (1993, p. 524) has argued before that the realist stance is value-free only by appearance and leads scholars “to lack a nuanced base for the discussion of value choice.” We will follow Gadamer (2013) who emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the researcher as an active reasoner.

The Normative Challenge that Deals with Subjects’ Norms

The second epistemological implication is derived from the fact that a new kind of knowledge should emerge from the dialogic process between the researchers’ preunderstandings and the empirical context. In this respect, Gadamer (2013) distinguishes “productive” prejudices from “false” ones, where the former are defined as those that lead to understanding and the latter are those that lead to misunderstanding. According to Gadamer (2013), the problem of understanding is that researchers cannot sort the false prejudices out in advance. This differentiation can only be realized when scholars encounter a hermeneutic context whose meaning challenges the

truthfulness of their prejudices (Prasad, 2002). This encounter is the condition in which understanding can occur: Understanding is achieved when the scholarly “productive” prejudices are reconciled with the research subjects’ prejudices. Gadamer (2013) refers to this as the “fusion of horizons.”

However, other scholars have noted that it is challenging to explore an empirical context and really remain open to being surprised by it (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). Or in other words, scholars are at risk of reinforcing their “false” prejudices. We call this challenge dealing productively with the norms and beliefs of the research subjects, in other words, their hermeneutic context, as we explicate below.

The positivist template and the research subjects’ norms. The positivist Eisenhardt template seeks to “understand each [research] case individually and in as much depth as is feasible” (1989, p. 539). However, Dyer and Wilkins (1991) have argued in their rejoinder to Eisenhardt (1989) that the Eisenhardt template encourages scholars to uproot their research subjects from their context. This uprooting is necessary in order to establish timelessness and universal generalizability. In our sample of B&S articles, Näsi and colleagues (1997), for example, have stressed the fact that they studied non-American companies—an underrepresented setting in B&S research at the time. The idiosyncrasies of their research setting, the forestry industry of Finland and Canada, however, has had no impact on the results of the study. The particular context, if considered at all, is reduced to a mere factor that can be externalized (McLaren & Durepos, 2015).

A positivist approach to context has far-reaching consequences for the ability of scholars to deal with the research subjects’ norms. In an attempt to generate universal theory, scholars are at risk of committing “violence [against] the integrity of text” (Prasad, 2002, p. 21). In Gadamer’s view, scholars who decline to participate in the hermeneutic horizon of the research subjects fall prey to “forc[ing] the text to fit into the straitjacket of the[ir] own prejudices,

categories, and constructs” (Prasad, 2002, p. 21). To illustrate this argument, we focus on Butterfield and colleagues’ (2004) positivist study on stakeholder collaboration. By evaluating the influence factors on the success of collaborations, they (2004, p. 186) state the following: “Not surprisingly, the interviewees once again perceived leadership (Category 47) as being important, but we were again interested to find that the interviewees viewed other moderating factors as being more central to alliance success than leadership”. Here, without contesting the merits of the highly cited study, the question arises to which extent they render the informants’ statements as objective facts rather than consider them answers to specific questions asked in an interview (see also Potter & Hepburn, 2005, on methodological pitfalls of the use of interviews).

The constructionist template and the research subjects’ norms. The social constructionist ground assumptions underlying the Gioia template offer the scholars more appropriate guidelines to deal with the research subjects’ norms. In contrast to positivist research, scholars employing the Gioia template are intrinsically entangled with the norms of their research subjects, since they aim to grasp their informants’ values, intentions and interpretations (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 6). However, scholars’ capacity for empathetic understanding is limited (Prasad, 2002), as scholars and research informants share their deep embeddedness in historical time. Gadamer (2013, p. 288-9) puts the limitations straightforwardly: “The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life,” i.e., the hidden prejudices make “us deaf to what speaks to us” (id., p. 282).

A study by Cook and Barry (1995), who extensively cite Dennis Gioia’s earlier empirical work in the method section, might be an illustrative example. After a careful analysis of the study, we suggest it illustrates the “fore-meanings that occupy the interpreter’s consciousness” (Gadamer, 2013, p. 306). As 20 years have passed since its publication, it is fair to say that Cook and Barry’s research endeavor appears to be influenced by some unnoticed prejudices.

The tacit libertarian mindset broadly circulating in the “land of the free” (cf. Schlesinger, 1999) clearly preconcerts the cast appearing in their study on small businesses’ interaction with governmental policymakers. In the subtext of their paper, the role of the villain is assigned to the government “that seeks greater control over the small firm—through more stringent environmental laws, anti-discrimination rules, increased efforts at workplace safety, and so on” (Cook & Barry, 1995, p. 341). By studying the attempts of small business firms from this perspective, it is not surprising that they “often found stories characterized less as epic heroes’ journeys and more as tales of the ‘hapless victim’ or the ‘Lilliputians versus Gulliver’.” (id., p. 340). With Gadamer (2013, p. 296) we can take a step back and recognize that the theme and object of research are actually constituted by the unnoticed prejudices, which preconfigure the production of any knowledge. In this sense, Kieser (1994, p. 610, italics added) has argued that the scholarly “identification of actual organizational problems and of their appropriate remedies” is often shaped by “‘fashionable’ trends in organization *theory* and *practice*.”

To sum up the second normative challenge, the pitfall in using the templates is that scholars might fail to go beyond preunderstandings in contemporary discourse (Kieser, 1994). Pre-understandings, either theoretical or other beliefs circulating in a specific historical context, can unconsciously guide research. We will follow Gadamer (2013, p. 309) who points towards the creative role of temporal distance that serves as a filter in order to make scholars’ contemporary prejudices more self-evident.

Key Characteristics of the Reflexive Historical Case Study

This section outlines a historical research strategy we call *reflexive historical case study* (RHCS) that allows scholars to confront and deal with both the researchers’ and research subjects’ norms. The RHCS constitutes a novel approach to studying organizations and rests on two pillars: The recent methodological knowledge about doing history in MOS (Maclean et al.,

2016; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016; etc.) and the interpretive research tradition to study organizations, which is also influenced by Gadamer's thinking (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011; Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). We first contextualize our approach to history by clarifying it according to Maclean and colleagues' (2016) typology of four conceptions of history. We then explain three key characteristics that constitute our proposed methodology, relying on Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and methodological literature from both historiography and interpretive research in MOS.

Alternative Approaches to History

In a recent synthesis, Maclean and colleagues (2016) classify historical approaches in MOS through a matrix based on the intersection of two axes. The first axis describes the purpose or epistemic aim of the research attempt and the second evaluates the mode of enquiry that guides the research process as a means for the respective end. The resulting matrix reflects the following four conceptions of history: *history as evaluating* (deductive theory testing), *history as conceptualizing* (inductive theory generation), *history as explicating* and *history as narrating* (both employ forms of abductive reasoning, but not explicitly aimed at theorizing). We have chosen *history as conceptualizing* as the basis of our proposed methodology, for reasons discussed below.

Maclean and colleagues (2016) distinguish the *conceptualizing* version of history by referring to the two dimensions introduced above. Its purpose is conceived as enabling the exposition or substantiation of ideas, constructs and theories. Furthermore, this explicit interest in engaging with theories differentiates *history as conceptualizing* from other historical approaches that favor the implicit embedding of theoretical ideas in the crafting of a historical

narrative: Namely, from history aiming at revealing the operation of transformative social processes (*history as explicating*) and explaining the origins of contemporary phenomena (*history as narrating*).

Referring to the second dimension, mode of enquiry, *history as conceptualizing* is distinct due to its narrative research process. This mode of inquiry accomplishes its epistemic aim by expressing theoretical ideas in a narrative way, thus remaining “embedded within the story being told (O’Connor, 2000)” (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 612). The *evaluative* alternative, in contrast, seeks to engage with theory by following a scientific theory testing mode of enquiry. In combining those two criteria, the value of *history as conceptualizing* resides in “generating new theoretical constructs” (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 614), thereby paralleling the inductive theorizing efforts of both the Eisenhardt and the Gioia template.

Based on *history as conceptualizing*, in the following, we discuss three distinct key characteristics that we consider useful to confront and deal with the normative challenges. Each of the following three paragraphs is devoted to one of the three key characteristics. Table 1 provides an overview of the similarities and differences of both the positivist Eisenhardt and the constructionist Gioia template. To illustrate each key characteristic throughout the paragraphs, we elaborate on an example of our recent research (Stutz, 2016), called the “Political Firm Case” here.

Insert table 1 about here

Introducing the Political Firm Case. The Political Firm Case is part of a comprehensive historical research project that studies a firm’s purpose and its interactions with society throughout historical times. The firm under examination is the Swiss multinational Landis & Gyr (LG), which was a large family-owned and export-oriented manufacturer of measuring

instruments. In our explorative research, we studied this company in the historical period of the Cold War (Table 2 in the appendix indicates some key facts about LG and Switzerland during the period studied). In the empirical instance, which we call here the Political Firm Case, LG made the decision to no longer maintain its relations to customers behind the Iron Curtain and leave the respective markets. This, from today's point of view, rather surprising decision was related to the suppression of the Hungarian uprising of October 1956 by Soviet troops, which subsequently gave rise to sharp reactions from the Swiss civil society that declared its solidarity with the Hungarian people. In our contextualizing research attempt, we soon learned that conservative and anti-communist pressure groups campaigned to break off all Swiss relations to the communist East long before the crisis. These campaigns attacked the official Swiss foreign policy that was based on the long-standing principle of neutrality and brought an issue to the political arena for export-oriented Swiss companies (i.e., to stop Eastern trade). This initial finding motivated us to pursue the question of why LG was susceptible to this public issue while most other firms continued pursuing regular business practices. From a theoretical standpoint, we used this case to examine the presuppositions of the recently introduced strategic cognition view of issue salience and firms' responsiveness (Bundy, Shropshire, & Buchholtz, 2013). This theory, contributing to, and partly departing from, the literature on stakeholder salience (cf. Mitchell, Agle, & Woods, 1997), describes the cognitive mechanisms that drive firms' actions in response to issues that stakeholders of the firms raise or the general public demands from the firms.

In this article, we use this case as an illustration to illuminate the key characteristics of RHCS. For a more detailed discussion of the case, we refer to Stutz (2016). Figure 1 shows the chronology of the unfolding events on the organizational, national and international level of analysis.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Key Characteristic No. 1: A Reflexive Approach to Theories

RHCS aims to reflect on, challenge and refine theories. As a means for this epistemic aim, the research process relies on abductive reasoning, in the sense of Gadamer, “where researchers seek—through a dialogue between their own preunderstanding and the empirical data—a new understanding of theory through an evolution of their own understanding” (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013, p. 82). In this paragraph, we bring forth RHCS reflexive concerns with the nature of theories, which allows acknowledgment of the researchers’ norms and the ever-present prejudices.

Theory as prejudice. Both the Gioia and the Eisenhardt template refer to theories similar to research that employs a quantitative research design: i.e., propositions that link key concepts (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 10). Following the logic of inductive reasoning, both templates burden the scholars with the “ideal of [a] clean theoretical state” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 536, see also Gioia et al., 2013, p. 12) when starting case research, neglecting the influence of unnoticed prejudices on scholars. The approach of RHCS, in contrast, follows ideas of the interpretive research tradition in MOS that has incorporated some philosophical ideas of Gadamer and others (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011). Critical of the realist scientific paradigm, this literature emphasizes that all knowledge arises from a prejudged point of view, entangled with values and interests (Putnam, 2002). By relaxing the status of knowledge in this way, Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) bring forth an understanding of theories similar to Gadamer’s notion of the hermeneutic horizon that is constituted by prejudices: Theories equip scholars with “a line of reasoning, a metaphor, or other tools that give us a sense of what to expect” (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007, p. 1278). To provide such a starting point for research, RHCS

advises scholars to consult a broad range of theories and develop a set of presuppositions necessary for hermeneutic understanding.

The prejudice for the Political Firm Case. For our research endeavor that produced the Political Firm Case, we selected the stakeholder salience literature as the debate we wanted to contribute to, which is one of the core debates of the stakeholder theory (Freeman et al., 2010; Laplume, Sonpar, & Litz, 2008). In this debate, Bundy and colleagues (2013) have redefined stakeholder salience and departed from the initial theory of Mitchell and colleagues (1997) and the subsequent stream of literature. They changed the unit of analysis from assessing external stakeholder characteristics (such as power, legitimacy, and urgency) to the organization's "cognitive structure" (or rather interpretation systems), proposing it influences and directs managerial interpretations of stakeholder issues. By using Bundy and colleagues' (2013) conceptualization as an initial illumination of our case, we developed the expectation that LG engaged with the public issue guided by the norms and values held in the particular organization. In the course of our research, we then reconsidered the preconceived theoretical explanation provided by Bundy and colleagues (2013).

Key Characteristic No. 2: Reflexive Concerns with Naturalistic Empirical Material

As the second key characteristic, RHCS has a strong preference to make use of empirical materials that come to scholars "from the time period of interest, ideally from actors involved in the events and incidents under study" (Lipartito, 2014, p. 285). These empirical materials, called primary sources by historians, meet the criterion of naturalistic data, that is, that "the activity of being recorded would have happened as it would have anyway" (Potter & Hepburn, 2005, p. 301). In what follows we discuss RHCS' reflexive concerns with its empirical material, which renders the potential of historical research to deal with the research subjects' norms.

The nature of historical sources. In the course of the “linguistic turn” in history, theorists of historiography questioned the epistemological status of sources and thereby challenged the positivist truth claims that objective knowledge about the past can be achieved (Hansen, 2013). By adopting this caution about the nature and limits of empirical material, RHCS approaches empirical materials in a different way than the well-known research templates. The Eisenhardt approach is, as discussed, at risk of considering the statements of its informants as objective facts. Also in constructionist research, Gioia and colleagues (2013, p. 3) convey their informants as “‘knowledgeable agents’, namely, that people in organizations know what they are trying to do and can explain their thoughts, intentions, and actions”. RHCS stresses the opposite. Rather than assuming knowledgeable agents, RHCS characterizes informants by a more holistic conception of the human being, stating that we are dealing with everyday life people who are “looking forward into buzzing alternatives, armed with fragmentary information, rule-of-thumb analogies, and incomplete knowledge” (Scranton, 2014, p. 68). In other words, the informants are bound to their hermeneutic horizons (Gadamer, 2013).

In order to study everyday lives, the main empirical materials are naturalistic data and not interview data, which are mainly used in the prime templates. In contrast to interview data, which is often only able to reveal issues towards which scholars steer the conversations (Potter & Hepburn, 2005), scholars using naturalistic data have to find creative ways to work with what is there. This can be provocative for scholars and may lead to surprising findings.

In our study, we identified the company archive of LG as an appropriate main research site. The company archive, preserved in a public repository, contains empirical materials from

1896 to 1996 and its volume amounts up to 260 shelf yards.¹¹ In the Political Firm Case research project, the preliminary strategy was to identify materials that provide insights into the firms' engagement practices with the wider society. In the very beginning of the fieldwork in the archive, we started the collection of the material by looking through the consulting catalogues and thematic files of the archive in order to get an impression of the kind of records that had been preserved. It was in one of these files that we noticed an interesting episode in the history of the company (i.e., LG's response to the Hungarian uprising) that later became the starting point for this theoretically motivated case study. From there, we then started to systematically collect any material related to LG's approach to Eastern trade in the company archive, for instance, minutes of the BoD, correspondence letters, transcripts of speeches, internal reports, newspaper articles and so on. It is important to note that we never considered these empirical materials to be a clear window into the company's past (Decker, 2013), but saw them as intentionally constructed, value-laden and ambiguous.

Source criticism. In order to make use of historical sources that are of an incomplete and ambiguous nature, RHCS relies on the methodological tool of source criticism (Lipartito, 2014; Kipping et al., 2014). Source criticism is a reflexive device for establishing arguments and for identifying the extent to which a historical source can be used to address a research question (Kipping et al., 2014). In dealing with data in such a reflexive way, it is important to understand that historians read "sources 'against the grain' (Clark, 2004: 126; Evans, 1997:143; Gunn, 2006: 169), inferring a meaning beyond, or even opposed to, what the sources were intended to mean" (Rowlinson et al., 2014, p. 256). With this operation, historians transform "traces [i.e., social documents] from the past into sources [i.e., research data]" (Hansen, 2013, p. 695),

¹¹ The company archive is preserved in the public repository of the Archives of Contemporary History (AfZ) in Zurich. The records are searchable in the virtual reading room (<http://online-archives.ethz.ch>).

meaning that historical sources are *made* the very moment scholars use materials from the past to answer their research questions

In our research endeavor, our main task was not to understand what *actually* happened but to understand how the informants created their reality in context and over time. Through source criticism, we concluded that part of the material—e.g., the BoD minutes—can account for analyzing the different organizational actors' interpretations of the public issue, i.e., meaning constructions or rationales used in the company. In documents referring to the particular episode, we were able to identify struggling narratives that were put forward to explain LG's role during the crisis. Some managers argued quite simply that a business' business is business. In contrast, other managers introduced the line of argument that a firm *should* be obliged to follow broader societal goals, defending the apparent “superior” values of the West against an “aggressive” Eastern bloc. In Gadamer's (2013) terms, the material reveals the different horizons of the actors. These texts were then complemented with sources that allowed us to contextualize the expressions of the actors within the overall hermeneutic situation. For instance, we collected pamphlets of pro- and anti-Eastern trade advocates from the relevant period. This contextualization reflects our approach to understand an empirical instance within pre-given but dialectically improving understandings. This brings us to the last key characteristic.

Key Characteristic No. 3: Theory Elaboration from History

The last and crucial key characteristic of historical analysis is the ability to look at developments and events from a temporal distance. We essentially argue, in line with Gadamer (2013), that an empirical context in temporal distance helps to filter out the scholars' “false” prejudices, which might be shaped by the taken-for-granted assumptions of the literature. In what follows, we clarify the reflexive space of history that enables understanding according to Gadamer.

Interpretive approach to challenge prejudices. RHCS adopts an interpretive approach to case research that is in sharp contrast to the two prime templates, which prejudge “the” case as an instance of the theory the scholars are inductively developing (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). Interpretive scholars, instead, as explicated by Alvesson and Kärreman (2011), regard empirical case research as a practice “to enhance [scholars’] ability to challenge, rethink and illustrate theory” (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011, p. 4). In Alvesson and Kärreman’s (2007) language, scholars have to create a “breakdown” in understanding, in which prior theoretical propositions fail to make sense of an empirical instance. To provoke such breakdowns, Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) direct scholars to look at rather striking and idiosyncratic empirical examples and to mobilize a broad “repertoire of lenses” in order to critically open up alternative ways of framing the empirical instance.

RHCS, however, has an additional leverage effect. Gadamer (2013) points towards the significance of temporal distance, separating the researchers’ and the researched context, which may facilitate the creation of such breakdowns. As argued above, researchers bring to the act of understanding not only their theoretical expectations but also their whole situatedness within a historico-cultural context. In this respect, the temporal distance “is not something that must be overcome” (Gadamer, 2013, p. 308). Rather, it is a productive condition enabling novel understandings, since temporal distance makes the taken-for-grantedness of prejudices, embedded in our historical time and place, intelligible (Gadamer, 2013). In our research, studying the early Cold War period was provoking because it gave us access to pre-theoretical empirical material. By going back in time, we had the opportunity to study phenomena not yet “distorted” by contemporary management discourses, such as CSR speech, trained in management education (Laamanen, Lamberg, & Vaara, 2016). Temporal distance, thus, provides a reflexive space in which present-day prejudices can be filtered out (Gadamer, 2013).

The hermeneutic circle. To facilitate an understanding of empirical instances, the so-called “hermeneutic circle” is the key concept to describe the research practice (Gadamer, 2013). It describes a practice in which understanding can only be achieved through considering the “whole” and the “parts”, whereas “the part [can only be] understood from the whole and the whole from the inner harmony of its part” (Palmer, 1969, p. 77 cited in Prasad, 2002, p. 17). In other words, scholars might start their research with a preunderstanding, the “whole,” in order to engage in a dialectic dialogue with the empirical instance, the “part.” A productive dialogue, then, leads to a novel understanding of the “whole”. This research practice is in sharp contrast to inductive approaches, in which theory seems to emerge computationally from the data by way of extensive coding. Hermeneutic understanding rather emphasizes the cognitive aspects of understanding where scholars are seen as active, historically embedded, reasoners.

In our research endeavor, we started with a theoretical expectation proposed by Bundy and colleagues (2013) and some preunderstandings about the historical context in which the events unfolded (e.g., secondary literature by other historians, such as Tanner, 1999). It is important to note here that the “context” is not a given but needs to be defined by the scholars (Prasad, 2002). In this explorative attempt, scholars can “zoom in” to decipher the empirical instance, but also “zoom out” to see the antecedents and consequences over a long period of time (Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014). In our empirical case, we took the large-scale political environment of the Cold War period into account, as well as the specific cultural, political and economic context of Switzerland, but also preceding events on the organizational level, such as the confiscation of LG property by communist Eastern countries that had occurred years before the empirical instance (see Figure 1).

Abductive reasoning. The scientific mode of reasoning that describes the practice of the application of the hermeneutic circle is abduction, that is, inference to the best explanation (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). The general logic of abduction is to turn surprising facts into

matters of course: When scholars find a conflict between the empirical instance and the existing theoretical postulation, they attempt to integrate the anomalies of the empirical instance into the initial explanatory scheme through a search process for the new best explanation that covers the anomalies (id.). In our study, the empirical instance—the termination of customer relations to Eastern countries—could not be explained by the prior theoretical propositions by Bundy and colleagues (2013). In particular, our analysis revealed that LG’s decision to terminate customer relations with eastern European countries draws on narratives from the broader socio-cultural context rather than on prevailing norms and values of the focal organization. Through contextualizing, we came to know that conservative and anti-communist pressure groups coined the political narrative about the political role of trade long before, aiming at adjusting business interests with the defense of the “free” Western world. These findings suggested that the external environment generates and justifies the firm-specific sensemaking processes; a finding that created a breakdown because prior propositions by Bundy and colleagues (2013) did not take this into account. This breakdown offered us an opportunity to examine the role of the social and political environment on the mechanisms that drive a firm’s actions regarding stakeholder issues more comprehensively (see Stutz, 2016).

To sum up, RHCS has guided us towards critiquing and reflexively elaborating on existing theory by looking at empirical instances in context and over time. In explicating the three key characteristics of RHCS, we brought forth reflexive ideas concerning theories, empirical material and research procedures that allow pursuit of the research agenda of the grander aims while simultaneously contributing to a theoretical debate.

Discussion

We set out to demonstrate the potential of historical research for B&S scholarship. With a particular focus on the normative challenges of qualitative research, we have presented a reflexive use of history as an alternative to two well-known inductive research templates that are limited in important ways in confronting and dealing with these challenges. This section elaborates on RHCS's potential for addressing issues and debates associated with the B&S agenda and then discuss possible limitations in its applicability in B&S research.

A Research Agenda for RHCS Research

In the following, we explicate three particular strengths of the proposed research strategy that would benefit B&S research domains. RHCS could be applied to almost any theoretical debate in the B&S field. However, we focus our application on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder theory literature given their prominence in B&S research (Crane, Henriques, Husted, & Matten, 2016).

Challenging assumptions embedded in CSR research. We have argued that RHCS has *reflexive concerns about theories* and aims at *challenging and refining them*. Our argument suggests that empirical instances in the past might stimulate us to question our contemporary concepts, because the separation between the scholars' contemporary context and the research context might provoke scholars to be surprised by the data and encourage them to engage in new ways of thinking about a phenomenon.

As a promising avenue for this kind of research, we suggest that scholars might begin to investigate more profoundly the ground assumptions in CSR research, for instance, in the literature about the political role of business (Matten & Crane, 2005; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007; Scherer, Palazzo, & Matten, 2014; Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Phillips, 2016). To examine the assumptions embedded in this literature, the recent historical study by Djelic and Etchanchu

(2015) can serve as an intriguing example for further historical research, although it is not based on in-depth analysis of archival records but on archival work of other historians. Similar to Gadamer, they regard theoretical concepts as both historically and ideologically embedded and analyze political CSR as “a particular and contextual form of business-society interactions that reflects and reveals certain institutional and cultural conditions, particular relations of power and a given ideological and value grounding” (id., p. 4). To uncover the taken-for-grantedness of political CSR (as articulated by Matten and Crane, 2005), Djelic and Etchanchu (2015) confront the set of presuppositions of political CSR with alternative historical patterns of business-society interactions. Amongst other findings, their study reveals that private actors have always played a political role and it shows how the nature, extent, and impact of that political role changed in conjunction with the dominant ideologies underpinning the particular business-society interactions.

In accordance with this study, we suggest that RHCS provides the methodological guidelines of how in-depth historical research can challenge the assumptions in contemporary literature. To transform what is commonly seen as unquestioned truths in our concepts, scholars might also be inspired by the heuristic categories of assumptions provided by Alvesson and Sandberg (2011). For instance, political CSR might hold an ideological assumption about the role of the nation state. We hope that historical research can further contribute to this influential stream of CSR research by challenging, refining and elaborating on its core concepts.

Approaching social context in CSR theorizing. We have presented RHCS as a *context-sensitive* methodology. To unleash this potential, a possible avenue of investigation involves applying RHCS to the branch of CSR research that examines the role of social context in CSR practices (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Matten & Moon, 2008). Athanassopoulou and Selsky (2015, p. 354) have recently called for more “in-depth and context-intensive research,” proposing that CSR researchers should incorporate multiple levels of social

context more deliberately and study their interrelations. While they do not outline how scholars could approach this research agenda methodologically, their call can be appropriately answered by applying RHCS as a context-sensitive methodology.

RHCS is context-sensitive in multiple ways: Scholars might start their empirical research by engaging with *different theoretical perspectives* that provide scholars with unlikely initial illuminations, insights, and preunderstandings to study different facets of social worlds. Scholars guided by RHCS could combine, as Athanasopoulou and Selsky (2015) have suggested, institutional, cultural and cognitive perspectives, each addressing distinct context levels. Scholars interested in exploring the conditions in which CSR initiatives emerge may then find in the hermeneutic circle an appropriate analytical tool to employ an analysis on *multiple levels of context* in a single study. In hermeneutic analysis, scholars increase their understanding in a spiral movement, in which they contextualize the empirical instance by gradually moving from a low level of context towards higher levels. Historical research uses heterogeneous types of naturalistic data that help to understand issues on micro, meso and macro levels.

Furthermore, RHCS directs scholars to reflexive concerns with “context,” recognizing *competing contexts*. McLaren and Durepos (2015) lamented that context is one of the most undertheorized terms across all research paradigms and rarely becomes a part of what is studied. Instead of treating context as a “fixed or pre-existing container” into which researchers can place phenomena, McLaren and Durepos (2015) propose to take contexts as socially constructed phenomena seriously. To account for the complexity of the lived world, they make a case to work with a variety of contexts rather than different levels of context. In this respect, researchers can find conceptual guidance in Gadamer’s thinking, the major philosophical-conceptual underpinning of RHCS. According to Gadamer, social groups construct their very own hermeneutic horizons, which shape distinct understandings, even though they are situated in the same overall hermeneutic situation. We suggest that RHCS research may contribute to a

more critical view of context and expand and enrich our understanding of CSR behavior in multiple interrelated levels of social context.

Converging “grander aims” and theorizing efforts. We have primarily argued that the “grander aims” of B&S scholarship are an obstacle for the application of the two well-known prime templates discussed above: The templates are committed to the scientific realist view for studying organizations and make scholars conceal their own norms and beliefs. RHCS, in contrast, allows scholars to deliberately acknowledge their agenda. In this regard, we propose that RHCS research can particularly add to approaches within stakeholder theory (Freeman et al., 2010; Post, Preston, & Sachs, 2002). Stakeholder theory presents itself more as a worldview with a “set of unifying ideas” or a “genre” of management research (Freeman et al., 2010, p. 64) than a scientific theory. Indeed, its value-laden core assumptions are carefully conceptualized out of the “theoretical ether” (Gioia, 1999, p. 230) to inform business decision making on normative grounds. Inspired by the pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty, the research agenda laid out by Freeman and colleagues aims to generate “insights that help us to lead better lives” (Freeman et al., 2010, p. 75). Any generated knowledge is, thus, assessed according to whether it is useful for the advancement of morally legitimate business practices.

RHCS is a reflexive methodology that can help ground stakeholder theory in practical reality. To be specific, RHCS acknowledges that not all textual interpretations are equally valid. In the operation of the hermeneutic circle, scholars can reflexively filter out illegitimate prejudices by going beyond the surface of the empirical instances studied (Prasad, 2002). In this regard, Tadajewski’s (2015) recent historical study of the Rotary Club is a promising starting point. Examining the key ideas about social responsibilities of business promoted by this organization in the early 20th century, he uses the historical case to underscore the lack of validity of the so-called separation thesis, i.e., that business and moral decision-making should and can be clearly differentiated. Indeed, values and facts are completely entangled (Putnam, 2002).

We share Tadajewski's conclusion (2015, p. 23) that “an extensive program of research that details the close connections between business practice and ethical responsibility can provide the intellectual tool to start to revise negative public perceptions [i.e., the view that has permeated popular culture, with business practice frequently depicted as ‘amoral’]”. In RHCS, theorizing efforts and grander aims converge to “change the underlying narrative about business” (Freeman, et al., 2010, p. 63).

Limitations

We recognize that there are many potential obstacles for implementing the proposed methodology in B&S scholarship. First of all, Gadamer understood hermeneutics as a human practice, not reducible to the application of formal methods (Miller, 2005). The question arises as to whether the proposed research strategy is doomed to failure. In the face of his radical conception of understanding, we recognize that he uses hermeneutics as a protection against the “abuse of method” (Gadamer, 1992, p. 70). Gadamer, however, does not come out in opposition to “methodologicalness” of science in general (id.). At the very end of his main opus, he clarifies that “[t]he fact that ... the knower's own being comes into play certainly shows the limits of method, but not of science. Rather, what the tool of method does not achieve must—and really can—be achieved by a discipline of questioning and inquiry, a discipline that guarantees truth” (Gadamer, 2013, p. 506). In this regard, we do not wish to portray RHCS as a set of formalized procedures that guarantees a successful research outcome. On the contrary, RHCS claims only to entail methodological guidelines derived from hermeneutics. In particular, we build on Gadamer's insights that point towards the potential of history for enhancing reflexivity for the generation of novel knowledge.

Second, the proposed hermeneutic approach to history shares ground assumptions with the interpretive tradition to study organization and appears to be in competition with the realist

view of studying organizations, which is the dominant style of research in MOS. Realist scholars might question its generalizability and the unbiasedness of its findings. Ketokivi and Mantere (2010), however, have argued that this kind of critique is of a political nature and is not adequate for a scientific debate between authors and the audience. Rather, the audience should accept the research strategy chosen by the authors and move from exogenous critique to an endogenous dialogue in order to critically evaluate the authors' argument within the research tradition. In particular, interpretive research faces the challenge of subjectivism (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010). In this regard, authors have to persuade their audience of the credibility of the judgments, assumptions, and explanations made (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013).

Thirdly, alternative approaches to history might be more appropriate in order to pursue the research questions that B&S scholars might wish to explore. To be specific, our proposed methodology is built on the *conceptualizing* alternative to history (Maclean et al., 2016), modified for the purpose of dealing with the normative challenges. Other variants of historical approaches serve different epistemic aims and are underpinned by philosophical assumptions different to those of RHCS (see also Rowlinson et al., 2014, and Vaara & Lamberg, 2016). For instance, scholars interested in understanding the origins of CSR and its development in time are best served by the *narrating* methodological alternative to historical research, as conceptualized by Maclean and colleagues (2016).

Fourthly and finally, historical research has some general limitations that should be considered when employing a historical lens. To begin with, historical research approaches are very time-consuming and difficult to plan. The research strategy has to be very flexible in order to work with what is there. It further faces the problem of survivor bias: i.e., sources are lost, widely dispersed and hard to identify (Decker, 2013). Even the identification of a suitable research site might be difficult, for instance, due to the preservation habits of companies, the arbitrarily granted access to company archives or the time seal that may prevent the use of

material before a certain time has elapsed (Lipartito, 2014). And finally, doing historical research requires experienced-based knowledge up to a certain extent. In this vein, reflexive historical case research might be best employed in an interdisciplinary collaboration between B&S scholars and historians.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this article, we have asked why and how B&S scholars should consider a historical lens and research strategies informed by historiography. Based on insights from philosophical hermeneutics and recent work on scientific reasoning in MOS, we have identified the potential pitfalls of the inductive prime templates and presented a hermeneutic approach to history as a way to address them. We have argued that both the Eisenhardt and the Gioia template emphasize the computational manner of doing research, when in our opinion interesting and novel findings are actually constructed by cognitive minds. By stressing researcher invariant activities, research presented in the realist paradigm can be criticized as to whether and to which extent the findings are biased by the normative agenda (Rost & Ehrmann, 2015). Moreover, research that does not acknowledge and reflect the researchers' norms is at risk of (inadvertently) crafting political narratives. Finally, by considering the normative challenge to deal productively with research subjects' norms, we have argued that both templates offer scholars methodologically incomplete guidelines to confront their preunderstandings with the research context in order to produce novel knowledge.

The principal argument—why to do history?—has been that historical research has the potential to address those normative challenges. This was demonstrated by explicating three key characteristics. To be specific, RHCS acknowledges that scholars are historically situated active reasoners and it has reflexive concerns about the nature of theory and empirical material. RHCS then uses naturalistic “data” from the periods under study and further has the analytical

leverage of temporal distance: Empirical context in the temporal past might provoke scholars' contemporary preunderstandings and stimulate them to move towards new understandings. In order to give practical guidance—how to do history?—, we have illustrated and developed those characteristics with a case example. Building on the *conceptualizing* approach to history, we have presented a theory elaboration approach to history, synthesizing ideas of interpretive research, philosophical hermeneutics, and historiography.

We suggest that our argument has at least three implications for B&S scholarship. First, we have clarified the normative challenges and identified a set of potential pitfalls for qualitative research. Although the temporal angle of historical research is an inimitable comparative advantage, the synthesized methodological insights can inform scholars to adapt a more reflexive research habitus in order to partly confront these challenges. Future research is invited to extend the discussion about the normative challenges of qualitative research and broaden the legitimate styles of doing research within B&S.

Second, we elaborated on the *conceptualizing* approach to history and refined it as a reflexive theory elaboration approach. Our article thus also contributes to the very recent debate about the future direction of historical organization studies (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014; Maclean et al., 2016; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016, Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014) and business history (Decker, Kipping, & Wadhvani, 2015). Thirdly and finally, we have introduced a particular type of history to B&S scholarship in order to extend the work already done. To tap the potential of “history,” we have envisioned a research program for scholars interested in employing historical research in the B&S field. We hope that this article will encourage historical research that contributes to issues and debates within the B&S agenda.

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Appendix

Method to identify qualitative B&S literature. We searched the *Business & Society* journal archive for the use of terms such as “qualitative study,” “qualitative case study,” “qualitative research,” “qualitative method,” “qualitative approach,” etc. (record date: 11/2015). As some articles appeared as search results for several search terms, we then merged the results producing a list of 108 single articles. We then screened the method section of each article to sort out quantitative and conceptual studies (69 articles remaining). Furthermore, we excluded articles that were not fully developed studies in terms of text genres (such as dissertation abstracts), so we could restrict our sample of qualitative studies to 52 articles. We finally categorized the qualitative articles according to their affinity with research traditions (inductive research; interpretive research; theory-testing research according to Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013) and their underlying paradigmatic assumptions in theorizing (positivist or structural; constructionist or anti-structural, postmodern or post-structural positions according to Hassard and Cox, 2013). Our sample confirms the significance of the positivist Eisenhardt and constructionist Gioia template in providing guiding principles, both belonging to the inductive research tradition (cf. Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013; Eisenhardt et al., 2016).

Based on the sample of qualitative papers that we identified, we chose to read the most cited articles, using both Thomson Reuters’ Web of Knowledge and Google Scholar to indicate the scholarly attention each article received. From this selection, we chose examples for the article that were particularly compelling. However, we recognize the limits of the partially idiosyncratic set of articles, but evaluating a more extensive sample would go beyond the purpose of illustrating the pitfalls.

Key characteristics of Landis & Gyr and Switzerland during the study period.

Insert table 2 about here

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Characteristics of Case(s) Study Approaches in Comparison

	<i>Eisenhardt case(s) study</i>	<i>Gioia case study</i>	<i>Reflexive hist. case study</i>
Purpose	Generating novel theory	Generating novel conceptualizations or models	Reflexive elaboration on existing theories
Mode of enquiry <i>- Main concerns of enquiry</i>	Discovering facts and identify cause and effect	Understanding research subjects' understanding of a phenomenon	Understanding research subjects' understanding of a phenomenon in context and over time
<i>- Onto-epistemological assumptions</i>	Realist position	Moderate constructionist position; but also bound to the scientific realist view	Moderate constructionist position
<i>- Nature of researcher</i>	Rational researcher	Researcher as a "knowledgeable agent"; tends to emphasize researcher invariant research practices	Researcher as an active, historically embedded reasoner
<i>- Nature of data</i>	Research subjects' statements are rendered as objective facts	Research subjects as "knowledgeable agents"	Incomplete and ambiguous informants' accounts; using heterogeneous naturalistic empirical material
<i>- Main style of reasoning</i>	Mainly inductive reasoning	Mainly inductive reasoning	Mainly abductive reasoning
<i>- Main method of analysis</i>	Systematically comparing variation of features of the cases (method of eliminative induction)	Adopting a version of grounded theory	Hermeneutical circle as a key interpreting device but not reducible to a method Using source criticism for establishing prospects and limits of empirical material
Key references	Eisenhardt, 1989; Glaser & Strauss, 1967	Gioia et al., 2013; Corley & Gioia, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967	Historical research after "linguistic turn"; Gadamer, 2013; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007

Table 2. Characteristics of Landis & Gyr and Switzerland during the Period of Study

Characteristics	Descriptions
Characteristics of Landis & Gyr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family-owned company, established in 1896 and headquartered in Zug (Switzerland) - Manufacturer of domestic electricity and temperature measuring devices and complex network systems - LG acquired subsidiaries throughout Europe (Austria; (then) Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the UK) and established sales offices in overseas (USA, Australia)
Annual sales in Swiss francs (CHF)	1956: 150 m; 1960: 201.5 m
% of annual sales to foreign countries (Swiss plants)	1956: exporting 60% of sales; 1960: exporting 63% of sales
% of annual sales to Soviet bloc	1956: no numbers traced, but nonsignificant volume; 1960: 0.35% of annual sales;
# of employees in Switzerland	1956: 4'100 employees; 1960: 5'132 employees
# of employees worldwide (excl. Switzerland)	1956: 4'300 employees; 1960: 5'438 employees
Characteristics of Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National identity of „geistige Landesverteidigung“ (hedgehog mentality) - Foreign policy built on long-standing principle of neutrality - Economic participation in the Western transnational structures, without political integration (see also Tanner, 1999)
GDP growth	4.47% GDP growth (1950-1960)
Size of trade with Soviet bloc countries	Decreased from 8% (1940s) to 2.96% (1956) and 2.19% (1965)

See Stutz (2016) for further consultation.

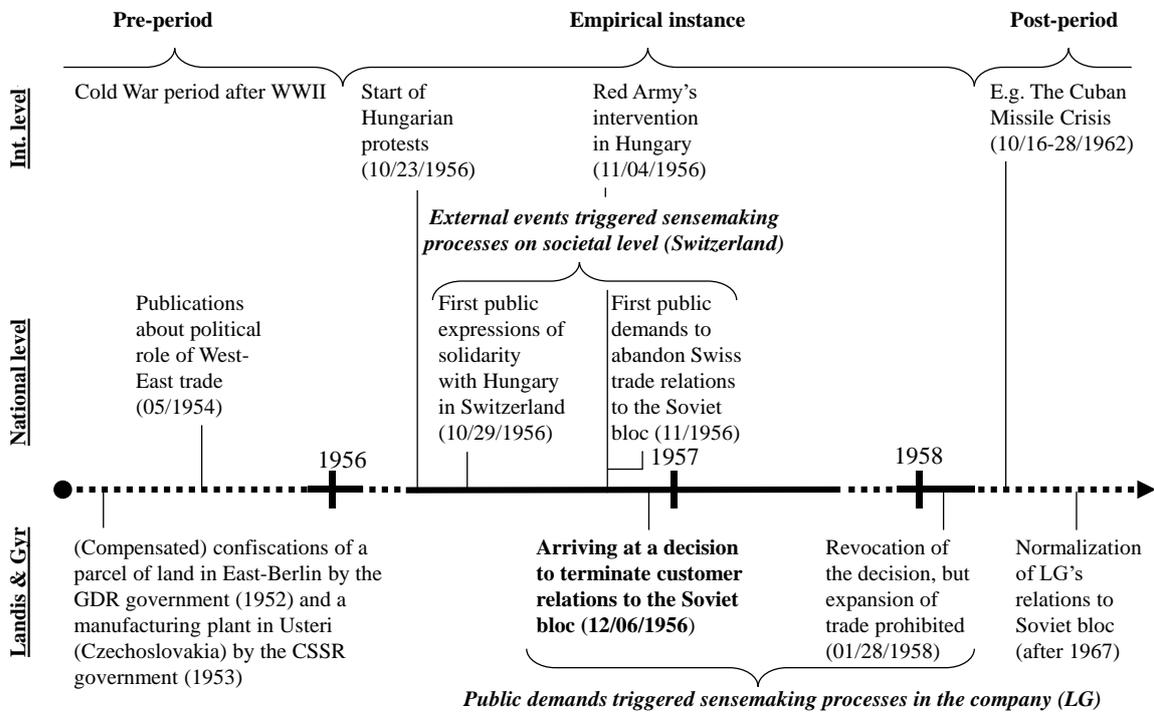


Figure 1. Timeline of Unfolding Events on Organizational, National and International Level

II

History in corporate social responsibility: Reviewing and setting an agenda

by

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The spelling of the article is in British English.

History in Corporate Social Responsibility: Reviewing and Setting an Agenda

The integration of historical reasoning and corporate social responsibility (CSR) theorising has recently received remarkable cross-disciplinary attention by business historians and CSR scholars. But has there been a meaningful interdisciplinary conversation? Motivated by this question that presumes significant limitations in the current integration, I survey existing research for the purpose of sketching and shaping historical CSR studies, i.e., an umbrella that brings together diverse approaches to history and CSR theorising. Drawing from the recent efforts to establish historical methodologies in organisation studies, I first reconcile discrepant disciplinary and field-level traditions to create a meaningful intellectual space for both camps. Secondly, I provide a synthesis of the history of CSR from three different meta-theoretical perspectives in the context of three maturing knowledge clusters. To bridge past and future work, I finally set a research agenda arising from current research and drawing on different sets of assumptions about history and CSR.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility (CSR), ethics, business history, historical organisation studies

Introduction

Business historians and CSR scholars have recently shown a remarkable interest in integrating history and CSR thinking (Carroll, Lipartito, Post, Werhane, & Goodpaster, 2012; Jones, 2013; 2017; Husted, 2015; Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Phillips, 2016; Stutz & Sachs, 2018), despite the discrepant disciplinary traditions of business history and the “business and society” field within management and organisation studies (MOS). Prior to this, research has rarely stretched the boundaries of the respective disciplines. For the business and society camp, it is fair to say that CSR scholars have largely neglected history (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Warren & Tweedale, 2002), i.e., broadly understood, an “empirical and/or theoretical concern with and/or use of the past” (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014, p. 537). Although it is a received view that the social responsibilities of business take on very different forms and meanings across historico-institutional arrangements (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Brammer, Jackson & Matten, 2012; Campbell, 2007; Matten & Moon, 2008), CSR scholars have only recently made greater efforts to pay closer attention to the work of historians (Husted, 2015; Stutz & Sachs, 2018). Beyond empirical concerns, Schrempf-Stirling and colleagues (2016) have likewise just introduced the notion of historic CSR that recognises history as “an important but underinvestigated element of organisational ontology” (p. 714; see also Mena, Rintamäki, Spicer, & Fleming, 2016). Applauding the intellectual novelty of this contribution, Godfrey and colleagues (2016) even speculated that it will come to be viewed as marking a “historic turn” in the field of CSR (Godfrey, Hassard, O’Connor, Rowlinson, & Ruef, 2016, p. 601).

In the other camp, mainstream business historians, concerned with the “study of the growth and development of business as an institution” (Wilkins, 1988, p. 1), have traditionally shown little interest in ethical questions of the CSR agenda (Amatori, 2009; Booth & Rowlinson, 2006). Recent developments, however, indicate that individual business historians

are open to joining an interdisciplinary conversation (e.g., Bergquist & Lindmark, 2016; Jones, 2017; Reed, 2017), since business history is arguably undergoing an “organisational turn” to MOS more generally (Rowlinson, 2015, p. 71; see also Decker, Kipping, & Wadhvani, 2015; Friedman & Jones, 2017; Maclean, Harvey, & Clegg, 2017; Ojala, Eloranta, Ojala, & Valtonen, 2017).

However, although there is a remarkable emerging cross-disciplinary interest, the extent of the interdisciplinary nature of the existing research can be questioned. Arguably, a limited mutual understanding on the matters of both history and CSR have so far obstructed the realisation of a two-way dialogue between the disciplines. Instead of blending ideas of history and CSR theorising, most research has contented itself with borrowing some aspects (concepts, methods or data), while refraining from fully engaging with the source discipline (Oswick, Hanlon and Fleming, 2011). In particular, the existing work in business and management history seems hampered by an unreflexive application of “CSR,” due to limited proficiency in the distinct conceptual languages. Conversely, in the CSR literature that incorporates aspects of “history,” history is mostly treated as a mere repository of facts for testing theoretical ideas (Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014).

Based on these observations, I recognise the need for an assessment of the current integration of history and CSR in order to contour the conditions that would enable an academic conversation that produces insights beyond either discipline. As the general mission of a *Perspectives Article* serves the purpose of creating an overview of and recommendations for a research area, I hence survey the existing literature from both fields to provide the first synthesis and develop new perspectives for future research.

Essentially, I draw on the notion of historical organisation studies that describes a creative synthesis between history and organisation theory (Maclean, Harvey, & Clegg, 2016; see also Godfrey et al., 2016). For creating an intellectual space that is meaningful for both

business historians and CSR scholars, I first lay the groundwork by recognising and reconciling discrepant disciplinary and field-level traditions. Based on this foundational work, I subsequently review a corpus of 75 relevant publications. Through my analysis, I am able to synthesise prior work focusing on three topics, i.e., the historical origins of CSR, its diffusion and globalisation, and the practising of social responsibility by business firms. To clarify the (implicit) positions of scholars within these knowledge clusters, I then set out to provide conceptual depth. Particularly, I differentiate three meta-theoretical orientations towards CSR (economic, critical, and the politico-ethical lens), which have been applied to firm-centric as well as to integrated studies at the business and society interface.

In the discussion, I problematise this integration of history into CSR because this view overemphasises objective aspects of history and misconstrues interpretive traditions of historical thinking. In particular, I propose that scholars are encouraged to embrace a wide range of traditions of historical theory that would serve as different intellectual starting points. To fuel the development of an interdisciplinary conversation, I finally cross-fertilise views of history and CSR theorising and develop a research agenda consisting of three avenues. Each avenue is designed to bring together different premises and approaches to historical research and CSR, reflecting the equal status of both disciplines in what I envision as historical CSR studies.

Taken as a whole, this article delivers three messages. First, I wish to encourage historians and CSR scholars to become involved in interdisciplinary inquiries. While previous research has reflected on the merits of a collective endeavour (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006; Warren & Tweedale, 2002), introduced empirical avenues (Husted, 2015), and outlined methodological opportunities for historical research (Stutz & Sachs, 2018), this article envisions distinct academic discourses, conceptual languages and methodological assumptions that might serve as the foundations for the emerging intellectual community of practice.

Second, CSR scholars may want to read this article as a general call for historical consciousness. As CSR has become institutionalised globally, there is a danger that “the CSR ideal may degenerate into a set of ideological practices that upholds the prominence of unsustainable CSR behaviours rather than challenging them” (Christensen, Morsing, & Thyssen, 2013, p. 387). I would argue that history is both the backdrop and a reflexive space to avert this risk. After all, this article problematises the history of the CSR ideal and thus provides historical depth and a background historical narrative for the ever-expanding CSR literature.

Third and finally, this article directly responds to and amplifies the call by Maclean and colleagues (2017), in which they conclude that “*it is time now to practice what has been proposed*” (p. 24, *italics in original*). In particular, they portray engaging in organisation theory discourses as an opportunity for business historians to overcome empirical eclecticism (where case histories are treated in isolation) and to reach out to a larger community of potential readers and authors. By bringing together the methodological paradigm of historical organisation studies with the business and society field, this article may be read as a prescriptive example of how to infuse other sub-communities within MOS with history.

Shaping a new intellectual space

Against the background of my understanding of the earlier and recent histories of both the business history and the CSR field (see Appendix 1),¹² my approach to conceiving an intellectual space meaningful for both camps is underlined by two main premises. I first suggest that difficulties in mutual understandings exist, which emanate from both different disciplinary

¹² An attentive reviewer pointed out the irony that I call to bring history to the centre stage, but exile the histories of both fields to the appendix, and thus to the margins. However, while I felt caught in the act, I decided to not interweave the historical narratives with my main body of text. For reasons of readability, this move would have forced me to cut out information, which I expect to be very informative to many readers.

traditions and unclear heterogeneous discussions at the field level. Secondly, to create a two-way academic discourse, both problems need to be overcome. I first turn my attention to how to map the disciplinary relations between history and organisation theory.

Mapping the disciplinary relations

Since the initial calls for a “historic turn” in MOS (Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Kieser, 1994; Zald, 1993; see also Rowlinson, 2015), an emerging network of scholars have done much preparatory work to bring history and organisation theory (back) together, especially since 2014 (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014; Maclean et al., 2016; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016; Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014; see Decker, 2016, for an overview). Arguably, this intellectual movement has successfully established a new methodological paradigm within MOS, called historical organisation studies (Godfrey et al., 2016). This paradigm, as conceived by Maclean and colleagues (2016), informs research that “draws extensively on historical data, methods, and knowledge, embedding organising and organisations in their sociohistorical context to generate historically informed theoretical narratives attentive to both disciplines” (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 609; see also Godfrey et al., 2016, p. 592).

By using the idea of historical organisation studies, I rely on its key principles designed to relieve the disciplinary tensions between (business) historians and organisation theorists (Maclean et al., 2016). In particular, I regard the criteria of “dual integrity” as the most important, that is, the studies should be deemed authentic within both disciplinary realms (Maclean et al., 2016, pp. 617-9). By the dual integrity ideal, research stemming from historical organisation studies pursues the twofold ambition to develop theory and demonstrate historical “veracity” – achieved through different logics of historical reasoning and representations of the past (Rowlinson et al. 2014; Coraiola, Foster, & Suddaby, 2015).

Recognising the exceptional conceptual and empirical demands to be met, I hence presume that most existing research combining history and CSR has favoured one aspect over the other. Following Godfrey and colleagues' (2016) categorisation, I expect that the existing business historical work in relation to CSR has had mainly historiographical concerns, without an explicit ambition to theorise (i.e., history-with-CSR). In turn, it is fair to suppose that the cross-disciplinary interest by CSR scholars had primarily theoretical interests, neglecting historians' concern for historical veracity (i.e., CSR-with-history). However, I conceive the intellectual space for historical CSR studies at the intersection of history-with-CSR and CSR-with-history. At this borderland, scholars may genuinely cross-fertilise ideas and approaches of history and CSR rather than producing knowledge apt only for their disciplinary peers (see visualisation in Figure 1). In sum, I propose that the assessment of the existing (cross-)disciplinary research is instrumental in creating this intellectual space.

 Insert Figure 1 around here

Considering key assumptions at the field level

Apart from the divergent disciplinary preferences that might produce interdisciplinary discussions of a cacophonous nature (Rowlinson et al., 2014), a second problem might arise at the field level where meaningful academic conversations occur. Both history and MOS are comprised of heterogeneous research communities "that neither ask the same questions nor have similar knowledge interests" (Ketokivi, Mantere, & Cornelissen, 2017, p. 638). At the field level, research communities are united by distinct academic discourses, conceptual languages, and methodological assumptions, by which the foundations, as well as the boundaries, of their collective interests are defined (Ketokivi et al., 2017). To create a new intellectual space at the intersection of two sub-communities, I thus suggest that the emergent research program must

embrace key assumptions about the matters of history and CSR from the relevant discussions at the field level.

The matters of history. The first set of assumptions to be considered stems from the recent methodological literature that contoured historical organisation studies. In a ground-breaking article, Rowlinson et al. (2014) address the ontological and epistemological problems of representing the past, focusing on the status of explanation, the nature of evidence, and the treatment of time. For non-historians, it is often surprising to learn about the extent of disagreement over what history is (Godfrey et al., 2016; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Suddaby, 2016). The ontological positions on the matters of history one can adopt range from the functionalist paradigm—history as objective truth—towards more postmodern understandings—history as an interpretive context (Coraiola, Foster, & Suddaby, 2015; Suddaby, 2016). The latter position acknowledges that the interpretation of the past evolves and is sedimented within pre-existing sensemaking patterns (Wadhvani & Bucheli, 2014).

As these contributions have laid a solid groundwork, the literature has further classified and developed a variety of methodological alternatives, built for instance on differences in onto-epistemological assumptions (Vaara & Lamberg, 2016) or in the epistemic purpose and mode of enquiry (Maclean et al., 2016). Taking into account the variety of assumptions about history and the methodological alternatives, I propose that historical CSR studies can make use of unique intellectual starting points likely leading to original scholarly insights. Next, I consider assumptions about CSR.

The matters of CSR. In a classical definition, Carroll (1979) describes CSR as encompassing “the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of organisations at a given point in time” (p. 500). From this early foundational contribution to CSR scholarship, most CSR scholars would suggest that the field’s knowledge has advanced within a scientific mode of inquiry, that is, that the “literature has developed from conceptual

vagueness, through clarification of central constructs and their relationships, to the testing of theory” (De Bakker, Groenewegen, & Den Hond, 2005, p. 284). Also, this view is reflected in the meta-analyses of the CSR literature (Gond, Mena, & Mosonyi, 2017). Reviewers of CSR research are inclined to organise the field’s knowledge into coherent frameworks that link antecedents and processes of CSR with outcomes on multiple levels (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016; Gond, El Akremi, Swaen, & Babu, 2017).

However, this representation of the literature obscures that there are rich traditions of CSR research underlined by other assumptions than those of the functionalist paradigm. For instance, a considerable stream of research has an inherent normative character, which emphasises ethical questions and prescriptive approaches (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & de Colle, 2010; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). Additionally, CSR is recognised as an “essentially contested academic concept” (Gond & Moon, 2011), that is, a concept upon which academics agree to disagree. Across time, scholars advocated and opposed CSR with reference to divergent ideological points of view (e.g., Berle & Means, 1934; Bowen, 1953; Friedman, 1970). Reflecting on this lack of accepted definitions, Brammer and colleagues (2012) reveal a “simple truth” for which I have sympathy from a historical perspective: “in as much as the ‘S’ in CSR differs in terms of societal institutions, we will also end up with different definitions and understandings of the concept” (p. 9).

Given this lack of conceptual coherence and empirical clarity, I propose that this is likely to cause confusion that inhibits a dialogue between scholars of different backgrounds—if not done from a sound stance. In this article, I wish to provide this groundwork.

Methods

My review is guided by a systematic and comprehensive process recommended for conducting literature review studies (Aguinis, Ramani, & Alabduljader, 2017, p. 88-92). Table 1 specifies each step of my research process.

Insert Table 1 around here

Step 1: Goal and scope of review

Taking into account the goal of this review, I defined four scope conditions for conducting the literature search. First, because my review starts with the premise that a closer dialogue between business historians and CSR scholars is underway, I decided to select the leading specialist journals of both fields for my initial database search (while, at later stages, I also included relevant publications of other outlets). For choosing the leading specialist journals, I relied on the assessment of researchers within the communities, which is a known technique to select relevant journals for a review (Albrecht et al., 2010, see details in Table 1). Second, I narrowed down the time-period to cover items published between 1995 and today. The reason for this is that I suppose that the period of the initial calls for a historic turn (Kieser, 1994; Zald, 1993) marks a reasonable zero point to follow the traces of an eventual rapprochement since then.

Regarding the third scope condition, I applied a relaxed variant of the dual integrity principle for selecting the type of studies (i.e., to be included, the studies need to follow some historical research strategy). Finally, I added only publications to the corpus that explicitly use the term CSR (or a closely related notion). By limiting the scope of this research to studies that grapple with CSR, I acknowledge that my survey excludes rich traditions of business historical writing that could be interpreted as tackling issues and debates of CSR scholarship. However,

my study complements Husted's (2015) prior efforts. He reviewed work by business historians to examine proto-CSR practices in the context of industrial paternalism in the 19th century. This approach, distinct from mine, might guide further research that explores how historical CSR studies can build on earlier traditions of business historical scholarship (e.g., Cole, 1959).

Step 2: Building the corpus of relevant studies

To build the initial corpus of pertinent work, I began by conducting a keyword search in the electronic databases of the identified leading specialist journals of both the business history and the CSR field. The initial search resulted in a corpus of 135 publications, each of which I then screened by applying the parameter mentioned above to decide whether to omit or retain an article in the corpus. This examination reduced the number of items in the corpus to 27 journal articles. In a third phase, I systematically analysed the reference lists and citation patterns of the remaining publications in the corpus to find other potentially relevant work. In particular, I enlarged the corpus with articles of other journal outlets and studies published in publication formats other than journal articles. Given that monographs and edited volumes are highly appreciated in the business history discipline, this extension of the search, in addition to some handpicked suggestions I received at conferences and on other occasions, was instrumental in avoiding a silo view on historical CSR research. In Table 2, I describe the final corpus of 75 publications regarding published sources and periods. This overview indicates the collective interest in the relationship between history and CSR that cuts across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Also, I suggest that the accelerated numbers of publications over time confirm my initial impression that historical CSR studies can be considered an emerging area of research.

Insert Table 2 around here

Step 3: Analytical procedures

My analytical reading of the corpus was guided by standard coding techniques of qualitative research, which is appropriate for reviewing a body of mostly fragmented texts (Lamberg, Ojala, & Peltoniemi, 2017). I started to read and analyse the corpus by an initial set of attributes, such as research object(s), geographical foci, research periods, methods, level of analysis, and used theories, whereas other categories emerged at later stages of my investigation. For instance, in my initial phase of reading, I realised that the diversity of historical research approaches in relation to CSR had to be clarified. With this in mind, I further understood that the corpus could not be described as contributing to a coherent and unifying conceptual terrain. Instead, the literature seemed to be underpinned by different perspectives on the social responsibilities of business, which was not surprising, given the contested and historically contingent nature of the CSR concept and the various paradigmatic positions in the CSR field (Gond & Moon, 2011; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). To deal with these issues, I found it useful to complement my initial set of attributes with two interpretive categories, i.e., “assumptions about history” and “assumptions about CSR”. This helped me to develop an understanding of how CSR has been defined and used so far, which I will discuss below as the first finding to emerge.

As I proceeded with the analysis of the corpus using the extended set of categories, I started to create an Excel spreadsheet to mark the specification of the categories for each publication. If I failed to establish a spec, I tagged the item for further discussion with a colleague with expertise in historical research. At an advanced stage of analysis, I began to interpret the individual studies as parts of larger knowledge clusters, in the same way as historians use hermeneutics to analyse and situate a text as an instance of broader social discourse (Taylor, 2015; see also Stutz & Sachs, 2018). Creating visualisations of the relationships between the categories, based on the Excel spreadsheet, was helpful to identify academic discourses within the corpus. In particular, I delineated three main clusters, which can be characterised as connecting

ideas and research findings to enhance historiographical or theoretical knowledge progressively. Also, I classified some individual studies as pertaining to the cluster “others”, such as work that is concerned with the historical evolution of the CSR construct in academic discussion.

In sum, the process of building and analysing the corpus helped me to think about the weaknesses and strengths of the extant literature. Furthermore, the analysis brings me to a position to discuss ways forward, building on my reflection on both emergent themes with only limited existing research and current calls for action.

Analysis

This section presents the findings. I first introduce a framework to depict how previous literature defines and uses CSR from a historical perspective. Then, I synthesise the three main knowledge clusters.

A framework for approaching CSR from a historical perspective

The first finding to emerge from my analysis clarifies *what* is meant by CSR when researchers write about it from a historical perspective. In Table 3, I present some representative examples of CSR definitions that I found within the corpus. I distinguish the definitions by two dimensions that build a basic framework: First, my study suggests that the interpretations provided by the scholars tend toward particular meta-theoretical perspectives that frame the phenomenon of interest, i.e., an economic, a critical and a politico-ethical orientation. Second, and most important for the ontological understanding of the subject matter, researchers embrace either a firm-centric definition of CSR, by focusing on practices of business, or an integrated view of the interface between business and society. In what follows, I explain the two dimensions of the framework in more detail.

Insert Table 3 around here

The meta-theoretical understandings. To untangle the competing logics of CSR, I follow Heikkurinen & Mäkinen (2018) who make use of the Rawlsian concept of the “division of moral labour” to distinguish an economic, a critical and a politico-ethical orientation of addressing the responsibilities of business. The Rawlsian notion helps to unravel the distinct ways in which scholars view the social, political and economic responsibilities divided among different political and socio-economic institutions and actors operating within these structures (Heikkurinen & Mäkinen, 2018, p. 590).

According to Heikkurinen and Mäkinen (2018, p. 591-592), the dominant position in the CSR field derives its assumptions from a classical-liberal conception of an appropriate moral division of labour, which presumes an axiomatic separation between public and business responsibilities. By the logic of classical liberalism, which has been developed and took root in Britain and the United States in the early 19th century, business firms are mainly considered economic actors—and public agencies may deal with resulting externalities. That is why the topic of *voluntarism* is almost taken-for-granted in this perspective to CSR. Rey-Garcia and Puig-Raposo (2013), for instance, follow in their historical analysis the official definition of a white paper by the European Commission and regard CSR as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a *voluntary* basis” (p. 1038, *italics added*). Also, emphasising the clear-cut tasks of value creation by business firms, this literature views CSR as a useful instrument for advancing economic goals. A case in point is Michael Porter and Mark Kramer’s (2011) notion of creating shared value (CSV), which tackles pro-social business strategies as “a source of opportunity, innovation, and competitive advantage” (p. 80). This instrumental

approach to CSR, however, was already discussed by practitioners in the inter-war period (1918–1939) in the US and was (re)introduced into the academic debate with the (early) work of Archie Carroll (1979), Tom Jones (1995), Donna Wood (1991) and others (cf. Ireland & Pillay, 2010; Marens, 2010). In sum, this is the prevailing view in mainstream research, embedded in the functional paradigm of studying organisations (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

The critical perspective, in turn, departs from the “null hypothesis” (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017, p. 641) inscribed in the debates. It *criticises* the classical-liberal starting point, which naturalises a strict boundary between public and economic realms. Instead of seeing them as separated, proponents of this position view the voluntary and strategic self-regulation of firms through CSR as a way to serve the interest of business at the expense of civil society (Heikkurinen & Mäkinen, 2018, p. 593). Abdelrehim and colleagues (2011), for instance, (implicitly) follow this logic in their historical study and interpret “CSR as a mechanism of corporate control” (p. 829). This position, inspired by the emergence of postcolonial theory and other theoretical approaches, has been articulated by researchers such as Ronen Shamir (2004), Bobby Banerjee (2008), Gerard Hanlon and Peter Fleming (2009).

The third perspective, the politico-ethical, attempts to conceptualise CSR to “re-domesticate” economic rationality within societal rules and norms (Heikkurinen & Mäkinen, 2018). This stance builds upon many different philosophical traditions that conceive of the economic, the social, and the political as deeply intertwined. To fulfil its promise that rather seeks to ameliorate than transform the system (Ireland & Pillay, 2010), CSR is viewed as a means to advance social causes and a legitimate end in itself. Kaplan and Kinderman (2017), for instance, use the influential definition of CSR offered by Matten and Moon (2008), who understand explicit CSR as “clearly articulated and communicated policies and practices of corporations that reflect business responsibility *for some of the wider societal good*” (p. 14, *italics added*). This position has been advocated by business ethicists since the 1980s (Freeman et al., 2010)

and authors that argue for a political conception of CSR (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007), following the globalisation of the notion in the late 1990s.

Table 4 sums up the relevant characterising features of the three meta-theoretical perspectives. In the discussion section, I will suggest that the proficiency of these conceptual terrains is the main precondition to engage in a meaningful two-way dialogue.

Insert Table 4 around here

The subject matter. My analysis further indicates that existing historical CSR studies are concerned with firm-centric as well as with integrated issues at the business-society interface, following the distinction by Brammer, Jackson and Matten (2012). The firm-centric position focuses on the study of socially responsible practices of business firms, with diverse understandings of what this “responsibility” constitutes. This is the focus that prevails in the third knowledge cluster—practising social responsibility—, which I will present below. By contrast, other scholars employ an integrated study of the interface between business and society. By embracing the whole relationship and interactions between business and society, scholars have adopted a broad, historically rather insensitive view, which considers CSR a useful umbrella term to study *any* business and society relationships, irrespective of time and place. A narrower view, in turn, situates CSR in specific socio-historical contexts. By restricting the scope in this way, Scholars analyse CSR as a particular historical form of business-society interaction reflecting certain institutional and cultural conditions, associated with US-American corporate capitalism and the contemporary period of neoliberal globalisation (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017; Hanlon & Fleming, 2009; Ireland & Pillay, 2010). This finding motivates me to present the discourse cluster about the origins and diffusion of CSR in relation to a narrow – and historical cognisant (Kipping & Üsdiken, 2014) – understanding of the subject matter in what follows.

To summarise, this section has argued that historical CSR studies are underpinned by theoretical ideas and assumptions of three distinct traditions of CSR thinking, and the subject matters embrace firm-centric issues as well as integrated studies of the business-society interface. While the existing research mainly adopts a historical lens to uncover historical truths (and/or to test theory against these “facts”), I will argue in the discussion section that there is much promise for more interpretive understandings of history, expanding the possible subject matters of historical CSR studies.

Existing knowledge clusters

In the following, I will first present the three main knowledge clusters that emerged in the analysis and reveal the operation of the different meta-theoretical understandings of CSR in the historical accounts.

The genesis of CSR in the USA. The first cluster I identified conceives of CSR as a historically and contextually embedded phenomenon and is concerned with the genesis of the idea and the concept(s). Most research of this cluster follows a “history as narrating” methodological approach, which Maclean and her colleagues (2016, p. 614) render useful to explain the forms and origins of significant contemporary phenomena. In the literature, some consensus is reached that the idea of social responsibility as we understand it today was institutionalised in mid-20th-century USA. Its genesis is seen as a result of developments that scholars have traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In exploring different critical moments in the evolution of important institutions in relation to CSR, the largest group of research aims to challenge CSR’s “creation myth” (Brammer et al., 2012, p. 21), which was shaped by Milton Friedman’s strong opposition against the then unfolding CSR practices. Although Friedman’s *New York Times* essay published in 1970 does not cover the matter of the origins of CSR, his position influenced the

popularly held belief that regards CSR as a hostile invention imposed on business to nudge the economy towards collectivism (Acquier, Gond & Pasquero, 2011, p. 631).

Summarizing the collective efforts to deconstruct this economic narrative, Rami Kaplan (2015) suggests that research brought forward a “civil regulation” and a “corporate power” rationale. The first narrative, articulated in the historical work of Archie Carroll and his colleagues (2015), plots the genesis of CSR similar to Friedman’s understanding. Carroll and colleagues, however, interpret these emerging mechanisms to nudge business to become socially responsible affirmatively, as a counterforce in the context of the increasing power of corporations. In contrast to this rationale that reflects a politico-ethical perspective on the genesis of CSR, the critical “corporate power” narrative argues that “it is essentially business that brings CR [corporate responsibility] onto the scene as a mechanism for *regulating its regulation* by society” (Kaplan, 2015, p. 126. *Italics added*). According to this rationale, the “corporate capitalist elite” invented the idea not to just defer to societal pressure but to act as a buffer against anti-corporate political threats and to seize on political opportunities to advance the liberalisation of the economy.

Scholars have explored different critical events in the development of this business-led invention and its further evolution in the United States (Englander & Kaufman, 2004; Spector, 2008). Hoffman (2007) sees the preconditions of CSR emerging in the 1920s, including the full development of the modern corporate enterprise, which came to dominate the leading high-tech industries of the time, and the establishment of managerial control of business firms. In Marens’ (2010; 2012; 2013) work, the defeat of the labour movement by the emerging American giant corporations is the critical juncture in the development of CSR. Unlike its industrial rivals elsewhere, American corporate managers were able to preserve their autonomy in managing employment relations. Whereas European managers were constrained by both corporatist forms of democracy and strong labour movements, their American counterparts

were successful in dominating the political arena with the interests of business and block unionisation efforts of its employees. This “victory” came at a price, as Marens (2012) shows. He (2012; 2013) suggests that American managers introduced voluntary initiatives—(proto-)CSR practices—to be viewed as “responsible employees” legitimising its power in the eyes of society.

In sum, research has provided much evidence that the institutional conditions of the 1920s gave rise to a version of CSR, which presumes high managerial discretion to define and implement social responsibility. This conception shares many features with today’s successor.

The diffusion and globalisation of CSR. The second cluster is concerned with the spread and globalisation of CSR. A good deal of research exploits the capacity of the “history as explicating” methodological approach to “reveal the operation of transformative social processes” (Maclean et al., 2016, p. 613). Again, this cluster is underpinned by the different meta-theoretical assumptions: In an economic narrative, Rey-Garcia and Puig-Raposo (2013) use insights of institutional theory and exposes the operation of isomorphic pressures on corporations to adopt CSR. By contrast, scholars holding a politico-ethical perspective tend to portray the process of CSR as a legitimate expectation of society on business conduct (e.g., Schneider, 2014). The critical rationale, in turn, stresses the role of CSR in legitimating neoliberal transformations of business-and-society relationships (e.g., Kaplan & Kinderman, 2017; Kinderman, 2012).

Exploring different empirical contexts and periods, this stream of literature can be divided into three main categories: First, scholars have studied the changes and re-arrangements of particular institutional frameworks in the long run. Antal, Oppen and Sobczak (2009), for instance, explore the ways in which social responsibility was conceived of and practised *implicitly* in the German context before the CSR concept entered the country. They build upon Matten and Moon’s (2008) crucial distinction between US-American “explicit” and European “implicit” CSR, which ascribes this divergence in explicitness to historically grown differences

in the respective national institutional frameworks. Antal and colleagues (2009) find that implicit forms of CSR have remained stable in Germany for many years, encapsulated in laws, societal norms and industrial relations agreements, but that these structures were challenged in past decades (see also Hiss, 2009; Lohmeyer, 2017). Similar trajectories of how institutional frameworks eroded and gave way to more explicit CSR forms—as an “imperfect substitute” (Brammer et al., 2012) for institutionalised social solidarity—were studied in different European (Antal & Sobczak, 2007; Argandona & von Weltzien Hoivik, 2009; Ihlen & von Weltzien Hoivik, 2013; Kang & Moon, 2012), non-European (Jammulamadaka, 2016), comparative (Gond, Kang, & Moon, 2011) and global contexts (Jones, 2013, 2017).

The second group of research is more directly concerned with the dissemination of the concept from the United States to other countries and the adoption processes by business firms. According to the accumulated work of Daniel Kinderman (2012), Rami Kaplan (2015) and their cooperation (Kaplan & Kinderman, 2017), the concept first travelled to the global south (Venezuela, 1962-1967; the Philippines, 1970; South Africa, 1976) before arriving in Britain (1977), the first foreign country of the global north. In their research, they delineate two crucial conditions for the early adoption of the concept by business firms in foreign contexts, that is, a strong tie to the United States and a crisis of corporate capitalism on a national level threatening business interests. In the case of Britain, where the post-war economic boom was coming to a dramatic end in the 1970s, Kaplan and Kinderman (2017, p. 33) interpret the pro-active adoption of CSR by business firms in two different ways: to pre-empt regulative attempts and to seize the opportunity to step up a further liberalisation of the economy (where private social initiatives substituted public policies) (see also Marinetto, 1998; Kinderman, 2012).

The contemporary wave of CSR since the 1990s represents the third phenomenon of interest, assuming that, while national business systems globally moved towards more shareholder-oriented forms of corporate governance, business increasingly adopted CSR (Brammer

et al., 2012; Höllerer, 2013). In the recent past, CSR has been institutionalised globally through codes of conduct, standards and audit schemes as a voluntary but “necessary” issue for business firms (Avetisyan & Ferrary, 2013). “It may be, then, that even if CSR began to diffuse through corporate channels as a corporate strategy, from a certain point on, civil, governmental, and intergovernmental actors ‘kidnapped’ CSR and turned it ... into a mechanism of regulation”, as Kaplan and Kinderman (2017, p. 38) reflect. On the other hand, research suggests that the rise of CSR in recent periods is because multinational corporations take on a state-like role in contemporary vacuums of global governance, and CSR practices intend to re-establish a sense of legitimacy for multinational corporations (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017, see, e.g., Scherer & Palazzo, 2007).

In sum, a good deal of research has convincingly shown how diverse actors, favouring either mandatory or voluntary approaches, contributed to CSR’s legitimisation and its institutionalisation on the global level.

Practising social responsibility. The largest cluster of research in the corpus is interested in the practising of social responsibility by business firms. Most of the work, namely business historical, falls into the category of “history as narrating”. By formulating (theoretical) ideas about the responsibilities of business that remain “embedded within the story being told” (Maclean et al., 2017, p. 612), researchers explore “responsible” business conducts through case histories in a wide variety of geographical settings and periods, with CSR actually occurring only later in time.

A recent example that takes an economic perspective of CSR is Ann-Kristin Bergquist and Magnus Lindmark’s (2016) article on the adoption of proactive environmental strategies by a Swedish-based mining company in the 1920s. They (2016, p. 223) argue that their “case” is best explained as an example of Porter and Kramer’s (2011) CSV concept, which seeks to find win-win situations (profitability and “doing good”) through creative problem-solving. By

contrast, a vast amount of studies examine within the politico-ethical paradigm how responsible attitudes and norms for furthering social causes are explicable by a company's historical development or the founder's legacy. Parker (2014), for instance, investigates four Quaker businesses of the 19th and early 20th century and finds that the industrialists' actions and accountabilities for the common good were driven by their philosophical and religious beliefs. In a similar vein, Da Silva Lopes' (2016) and Kininmonth's (2016) recent company case studies show how religious values provide a strong sense of responsibility to work for the betterment of society. As another example contributing to the politico-ethical perspective, Reed's (2017) case study examines how the organisational identity of the American multinational Cummins Inc. enabled its management to take a stand for LGBT rights (as a form of political CSR) at a time when the larger American society still fuelled prejudices about sexual orientations other than the heterosexual "norm".

Abdelrehim and colleagues (2011), in turn, exemplify a critical position on CSR by studying how corporations exert social control through CSR. Interested in business practices that fall under today's definition of CSR policies (e.g., investments in education by endowing Tehran University), they examined how the management of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company retained control of its valuable assets in the face of threats from nationalism and organised labour (1945-1953).

In sum, while the individual case histories, mainly by business historians, are fascinating, I doubt that this research has tapped its full potential. In what follows, I will discuss my concerns and develop a clear trajectory for upcoming empirical historical research under the label of historical CSR studies.

Discussion

In the findings section, I revealed the operation of three different meta-theoretical assumptions of CSR in the context of three maturing knowledge clusters. This section now discusses the state of the art of the existing literature, emphasising the patterns of engagement between the sub-communities so far. Following from this discussion, I will outline three research avenues to fuel the development of the conversation.

Establishing a new pattern of engagement: From borrowing to blending

In arguing for a more profound integration of history and CSR theorising, I have sketched a map that conceives historic CSR studies at the intersection of history-with-CSR and CSR-with-history (see Figure 1). My central premise for historic CSR studies is that scholars of both fields make use of this intellectual space to genuinely cross-fertilise ideas and approach of history and CSR. Against this background, I find it useful to discuss the prior literature by exploiting insights from Oswick and colleagues (2011) who conceptualise the exchange of ideas between scholarly fields. In particular, I employ the notions of borrowing and blending. According to Oswick and colleagues (2011, p. 328), borrowing refers to the practice of using discourse elements from outside the home discipline. In blending, on the other hand, scholars invert the focus of inquiries by seeking to engage directly with the source literature (Oswick et al., 2011, p. 329), which suggests a cross-fertilisation and diffusion of knowledge beyond a single discipline.

Reading and evaluating my corpus against this backdrop, it is fair to say that the primary mode of engagement between the disciplines has been one-sided borrowing without much cross-fertilisation. In this pattern, business historians have mainly “domesticated” foreign theoretical ideas, that is, they streamline and modify the original concepts so that they fit with the empirical problems at hand (Oswick et al., 2011, p. 328). A recent article published in Business

History, paradoxically written by management scholars, exemplifies this scholarly practice predominating the business history cohort of the corpus. Loison and colleagues (2018), interested in responsible business practices before the emergence of the academic notion of CSR, derive from what they regard as the modern CSR literature the view that the environmental, social and economic concerns of business make up CSR. They then apply this interpretive lens to organise their historical account of responsible policies developed by a French subsidiary between the 1950s and the 1980s.

By deducing such structuring devices from the CSR literature, most of the business historical works cite some of the pivotal CSR articles but demonstrate a somewhat limited acquaintance with relevant discussions. “Out-of-date definitions are brought forth as though they were fresh and new, and ambiguity is asserted where specificity has already been demonstrated,” as Wood and Logsdon (2016, p. 7) criticised “foreign” scholars publishing on CSR topics. A case in point is Bergquist and Lindmark’s (2016) study in which they set the CSV concept over and against CSR (especially, p. 223). CSR scholars, in turn, view CSV as nothing more than one among many contenders of an economic perspective to the social responsibilities of business (Wood & Logsdon, 2016, pp. 18-9).

To move away from borrowing and engage in blending, I thus suggest that the major challenge for business historians is posed by what Maclean and colleagues call the principle of “theoretical fluency,” that is, the command of conceptual terrains. This principle requires scholars to mobilise resources to gain proficiency in new literature and conceptual languages, which is costly in cognitive and political terms for any scholars (Kaplan, Milde, & Cowan, 2017).

On the other side, CSR scholars have also borrowed some aspects of history. While business historians mostly make use of concepts, CSR scholars borrow data or “historical facts” from historiography. For instance, Djelic and Etchanchu (2017) build their comparative case study on company histories and historiographical syntheses by historians. However, in many

such uses, history receives a subordinate role. If CSR scholars give history a greater role, they tend to rely on neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; see, e.g., a special issue by Brammer et al., 2012). This theoretical lens—the second most used perspective in the CSR literature after stakeholder theory (Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016)—has been mainly used to explain that firms adopt CSR practices for the purpose of obtaining legitimacy or passing as normal (institutional isomorphism). In these studies, history, however, has been mainly relegated to a mere repository of facts to test a theoretical idea (Rowlinson et al., 2014).¹³

Likewise opposed to the idea of “dual integrity”, my analysis has detected many instances that would not meet the state of the art of methodological approaches developed for organisational history. Indeed, many pieces by CSR scholars had no theoretical ambitions but historiographical concerns. Antal and colleagues (2009), for instance, narrate the development from “implicit” to more “explicit” forms of CSR in Germany, without even one methodological note. However, given that the methodological knowledge about historical research practices has only recently been made available to organisation theorists, it is encouraging the see examples that already blend history and organisational theorising.

Kaplan and Kinderman (2017), for instance, choose a *conceptualising* approach to history (Maclean et al., 2016) to provide both a significant contribution to CSR historiography and develop a theory of business-led diffusions of management practices. Further, scholars have begun to differentiate the subject matter of historical CSR studies by incorporating interpretive understandings of history. Acosta and Pérezts (2017), for instance, apply the “geological metaphor of sedimentation,” which “look[s] beyond [time’s] literal sense as a linear chronology of events and understands it as a constructed temporal frame” (p. 4). They explore the

¹³ However, I agree with Suddaby (2016) who argues that institutional theory has much promise for further rapprochement between history and organisation theory (see also Decker, Üsdiken, Engwall, & Rowlinson, 2018).

history of CSR in Colombia in the long run and suggest “unearthing different strata of business and society relations” of today’s business-society interface (p. 1).

In sum, both disciplines have prevailingly engaged in one-sided borrowing. Consequently, I suggest that it is necessary for research to move on from this practice and commence blending history and CSR scholarship.

Promising avenues for a dialogue

In what follows, I sketch three research avenues that I regard as most promising for a closer dialogue between business historians and CSR scholars. The first research avenue applies interpretive historical theory to CSR theorising (Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming, & Spicer, 2016; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016), which is analogous to the emerging “uses of history” approach within the broader field of MOS (Suddaby, Foster, & Quinn Trank, 2010). I then unpack two prior calls by CSR scholars for which an interdisciplinary author team is appropriately positioned to contribute to, that is, to tackle big-picture questions in business and society research (Marens, 2016; Waddock, 2016) and to rethink the historiography of CSR thought (Crane et al., 2015). Essentially, each avenue of the research program draws from different sets of assumptions about history and CSR. Table 5 summarises the features of these research avenues.

Insert Table 5 around here

Historic CSR and uses of history. The first emergent cluster stems from the recent contributions by Schrempf-Stirling et al. (2016) and Mena et al. (2016) that both investigate, albeit taking different paths, how organisations take responsibilities for past actions. Schrempf-Stirling and colleagues (2016, p. 41) introduce the concept of historic CSR for the analysis of how

contemporary managers engage with criticism on past wrongdoings, which may periodically flare up in public, and how this affects the legitimacy of the current business. In turn, Mena and colleagues (2016) conceptualise how organisations deliberately engage in instrumental activity to shape how larger audiences view events of past corporate irresponsibility. What both articles have in common is that they presume that there may be some objective truths of past wrongdoings, but highlight that history will be differently interpreted, remembered, and, eventually, fall into oblivion (Godfrey et al., 2016). In doing so, their research shares many assumptions with the uses of the past approach, which gains prominence in organisational history (Mordhorst, Popp, Suddaby, & Wadhvani, 2015). This type of research has typically examined how organisations deploy their history strategically (Suddaby et al., 2010). However, the importance of both articles is to remind us that history should not be limited to a strategic asset of corporations. It is also a contested space that societal actors may enter “for moral and moralising purposes” (Godfrey et al., 2016, p. 601).

Future research might build on these initial contributions to further explore how organisations take responsibility for history, including its constitutive elements for sensemaking as well as its objective elements of historical truth. Given the conceptual nature of the beginning of this discussion (see also Booth, Clark, Delahaye, Procter, & Rowlinson, 2007; Janssen, 2013), empirical historical research is best suited to push the boundaries. Historical CSR research should investigate particularly striking empirical instances in which companies have been challenged by historical accounts of their past, in order to substantiate and generate new theoretical ideas. Important issues to tackle are, for instance, the meaning of organisational legacy in doing good or wrong. What long-term effects have an (ir)responsible past for different stakeholder relations (Brunninge & Fridriksson, 2017)? Future research is also needed to understand how globally operating corporations should deal with memory cultures that differ

from their home country. Then, who can legitimately accuse organisations of their past wrongdoing? In turn, building on Mena and colleagues' insights, if managers engage in instrumental forgetting work that has clear benefits for the focal organisation, what are the adverse outcomes for society in general, especially regarding repeated mistakes and harms? Also, are managers cognisant of ethical issues when using, re-interpreting and shaping history? In sum, this research avenue is exciting as it points towards the contemporary relevance of history while also allowing for critical historiographical work.

Tackling larger issues. Another way to incorporate history into CSR theorising is to investigate larger, historiographically relevant, big-picture issues. Marens (2016) has recently criticised CSR scholarship for its overreliance on the experimental science model of building parsimonious theory and called for examining puzzling empirical phenomena that are more contingent on historical circumstances. He essentially argues that the development of historical-empirical theories is better suited to account for emerging critical issues of the CSR agenda in light of all the problems that contemporary capitalism faces, including growing inequalities both within and between societies, continual environmental exploitation, and the current rise of authoritarian regimes. Fundamentally, blending history and CSR theorising may motivate engagement in tackling broader societal “grand challenges” (George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016), that is, a “specific critical barrier(s) that, if removed, would help solve an important societal problem” (p. 1881).

Historical CSR research is urged to account for and incorporate historical dynamics and constraints influencing the relationship between business and society. Scholars may embrace historiographically relevant issues, as the organising of business during apartheid, the labour question during the Industrial Revolution, or, going back even further, to examine how business coped with devastating plagues and warfare during the late Middle Ages (see, e.g., chapters on “management and ethics” in Wilson, Toms, de Jong, & Buchnea, 2017, for inspiration). By

studying historiographically significant subjects, and also contributing to its understandings from an organisation theory perspective, historical CSR research may grapple with fundamental issues of the business and society research agenda. According to Waddock (2016, p. 17), this involves “questioning the proper roles and legitimacy of business (and other enterprises) in society [...], and what system best supports both successful businesses and, increasingly, sustainable societies and human civilisation.”

To be blunt, what I am proposing is not about discovering parallels between the present and the past or “extract[ing] lessons from the past through historical analogy”—at which most historians would look with the greatest reservation (Godfrey et al., 2016, p. 600). Much more relevant, I suggest that researchers should use all the recent methodological options and insights of how history can be used in theorising. For instance, scholars may inductively (or more precisely: abductively) explore their *unusual* empirical research settings, embedded in historical time and place, to develop novel theoretical ideas (Stutz & Sachs, 2018), much in the same way as qualitative research seeks to come up with alternative theoretical frames rather than preconfigured hypotheses to account for unfamiliar phenomenon (Eisenhardt, Graebner, & Sonenshein, 2016).

Rethinking the historiography of CSR ideas. The final pressing issue for which collaborations between historians and CSR scholars may be useful is to push the CSR community to become more historically conscientious. “The [business and society] field has largely suffered from an ahistorical perspective that reinvents the wheel with every new article,” as Crane, Henriques, Husted, and Matten (2015, p. 431) observe. Essentially, they propose that “business and society scholars need to recapture both the intellectual history of business and society thought as well as the history of its practice before the emergence of this particular field of academic inquiry.”

Crane and his colleagues understand that writing and reinterpreting the intellectual history of a field do not fulfil antiquarian purposes. More generally, in an attempt to revive management history, Cummings and colleagues (2017) have recently elaborated how a decline of substantially new ideas in organisational research might have roots in the past, “or more specifically, in management research’s narrow view of what in its past is relevant” (p. 3). Cummings and his colleagues show, by uncovering a more diverse past than conventional textbook histories of the management field account for, how rewriting intellectual histories enables us to think differently in the present.

Looking at the history chapters of textbooks and handbooks relevant for students and future scholars of CSR (e.g., Carroll, 2008; Frederick, 2008; Moon, Murphy & Gond, 2017), I doubt that the field engages reflexively enough with its past. For instance, Moon and colleagues’ (2017, p. 45) textbook contribution presents the history of CSR in three phases—from industrialisation over the rise of managerial capitalism to internationalisation—“as reflecting interactions between social expectations of business, business actions to meet these through CSR and governmental regulation of social responsibility.” This narrative weaves in assumptions of the politico-ethical perspective and is arguably overly glossy, with limited historical substance. For instance, though citing Kaplan’s (2015) critical account on the business-led emergence of CSR, Moon and colleagues withhold the central implications of the evidence presented, i.e., that CSR, as a form of corporate manipulation, has, at some time and places, uphold unsustainable business practices. Indeed, one wonders how CSR scholars reconcile, if not ignore, the critical historical accounts about CSR’s past with the field’s ambitions aimed at facilitating positive and impeding negative business contributions to society.

Writing a field’s history, however, is not a self-evident exercise and is surely not done by understanding the evolution of the CSR construct in the academic discussion in progressive terms (e.g., Evans, Haden, Clayton, & Novicevic, 2013; Knouse, Hill & Hamilton, 2007).

Instead, engaging with history always involves an opportunity to probe “whether alternative historical vistas might inspire thinking innovatively in our field” (Cummings et al., 2017, p. 42). Rethinking the intellectual past of CSR may follow paths already taken by critically minded scholars. Ireland and Pillay (2010), for instance, contextualise academic thoughts about the responsibilities of business within larger institutional changes and call CSR scholars to re-engage with more radical past intellectual ideas (see also Marens, 2010).¹⁴ Other paths may include engagement with more plural perspectives, including reincorporating and drawing on marginalised or other traditions than the Western philosophy of thinking about business and society. In sum, future research is invited to build new bridges from the past to the present to open up more imaginative futures.

Conclusion

In this article, I have set out to provide a review of and develop an agenda for historical CSR studies, a nascent interdisciplinary research endeavour bringing together organisational historians and CSR scholars. By looking back into the histories of both fields, my review uncovers how researchers have contributed to this emerging area of research, almost *avant la lettre*. In particular, I have synthesised three knowledge clusters from existing literature, i.e., scholarly work about the historical roots of CSR, its diffusion and globalisation, and the practising social responsibility before the formation of academic CSR scholarship. Drawing on the recent efforts to establish a new methodological paradigm within MOS, I have problematised the current integration of history into CSR and contoured the conditions that would enable a two-way dialogue to produce insights beyond either discipline.

¹⁴ As for sources, see for example the “oral histories of the business and society field” project by Wokutch, Steiner, Waddock, and Mallot (2018).

On the one hand, I have emphasised the lack of conceptual coherence in CSR scholarship, which causes ongoing confusion and inhibited prior attempts by business historians to engage with the source literature. To offer some guidance for entering into the dialogue, I have provided a framework that distinguishes the different premises of conceptual terrains (i.e., economic, critical and politico-ethical lenses) and the objects of studies (i.e., firm-centric or integrated studies, in either the narrow or broad variant).

On the other hand, I have proposed moving on from a basic conceptualisation, in which history is mostly treated as objective truth that authors may uncover to either inform historiography or use it to test a theory. Indeed, the philosophical positions available to understand history in historical CSR research span a wide array, from reconstructionist (objective truth), over constructionist (interpretive context) to deconstructionist (discourse) orientations (Coraiola et al., 2015), as exemplified by the three research avenues I sketched above. Mostly, I hope to have demonstrated that different assumptions about history may offer unique intellectual starting points that likely lead to novel scholarly contributions.

More generally viewed, by bringing together the methodological paradigm of historical organisation studies with the business and society field, this article contributes to our understanding of how to establish new interdisciplinary research programs. While previous literature has focused on reconciling the discrepant traditions at the disciplinary level (for an overview: Decker, 2016), this article suggests extending the relevant levels of analysis to the field level, as progress in academic conversations occurs in specific sub-communities. A shift in the level of analysis from discipline to sub-communities involves analysing both the foundations and histories of existing academic discourses and the practice of previous engagement between sub-communities. Future research, like other *Perspectives Articles* to come, might follow my example to sketch and shape a new interdisciplinary research program.

In all, I have conceived historical CSR studies as an intellectual space, where ideas and approaches of both fields are used on equal standing. The future will tell whether the offered research program garners sufficient collective interest to progress. Otherwise, it may remain what Marilyn Strathern (2004) called a “partial connection,” where scholars from different backgrounds engage in a short-term conversation without realising a single entity between them. My wish, however, is that this *Perspectives Article* encourages organisational historians and CSR scholars to become involved, as part of a long-term commitment, in interdisciplinary inquiries. Given that historical CSR research is not afraid to address significant questions of our time, this research hopefully produces insights relevant for building a socially, environmentally, and economically more sustainable future.

Appendix

A brief history of the business history field

From the vantage point of the presumptive “historic turn” in CSR (Godfrey et al., 2016, p. 601), one is inclined to compress the history of business history into a storyline that deterministically leads to the convergence of business history and organisation theory (see Kipping, Kurosawa, & Wadhvani, 2017, critically, for the following). In such a coherent but incomplete narrative, business history is likely to be seen as originating in the United States at the Harvard Business School in the 1920s, where enthusiasts for highly-detailed historical studies of individual firms advocated the case method in business education. Then, the arrival of Alfred Chandler (1918-2007) would mark the maturing period of the field. Indeed, he worked out a recognised methodological approach, with somewhat narrow empirical foci (e.g., the internal development of big business), and became an influential source for different schools of thoughts in the ever-diversifying fields of MOS. Business historians have, until now, taken pride and self-image in his ancestry. In the “post-Chandlerian” era, one could then argue that the field entered an interregnum denoted by the discovery of new topics with much broader foci (e.g., Hansen, 2012; Rosen, 2013), examined through a variety of methods (e.g., Decker et al., 2015; Friedman & Jones, 2017). Finally, this story would climax in the definite “organisational turn in business history” (Rowlinson, 2015, p. 71; see also, notably, Maclean et al., 2017).

While this narrative might resonate well with many business historians who moved from history and economics departments to business schools, it will not ring true for all. By contrast, Kipping and colleagues’ (2017) revisionist history of business history takes a longer-term view and considers “alternative paths—both from disciplinary and geographical perspectives and including the roads not travelled.” Moreover, Kipping and colleagues (2017, p. 22) suggest that business history possesses not even the characteristics of a discipline and see it as a kind of

“borderlands,” where scholars of different backgrounds—economics, sociology, history, or organisation theory—find a temporary or permanent home. In the course of changing frontiers of business history, some enduring institutions nonetheless enabled scholars to converge on topics of common interests. Specialised journal outlets, with long-lasting traditions, launched and kept discussions going (e.g., *Business History Review*, established 1926; *Business History*, 1958; *Business and Economic History*, 1972-1999; *Enterprise & Society*, 2000; *Journal of Management History*, 1994-2000, 2006; *Management & Organizational History*, 2006). The topics of interest covered in these scholarly discourses were broader as the above account suggests, which overemphasises the path that Chandler’s work pursued (Friedman & Jones, 2017; Kipping et al., 2017). For instance, threads of business history took from early on an interest in the cultural, political and moral status of corporations *in* societies (e.g., Cole, 1959; Heald, 1970). However, in whatever ways the past is told, it is important to notice that business history is right now in an “inventive mood, bursting with multiple futures and paths forward” (Kipping et al., 2017, p. 2). In one of these trajectories, business historians are led to closer cooperation with organisation theorists to benefit from a broader audience of authors and readers (Maclean et al., 2017). Ultimately, they may become members of the community of practice of organisational history (Godfrey et al., 2016).

A brief history of the CSR field

Conventionally, historical accounts of CSR acknowledge that the business and society field, as it is more broadly known, began to consolidate during the 1960s and 1970s within American business schools (Carroll, 2008; Frederick, 2008; see, critically, Marens, 2010). Its early subject matters, as Cheit (1991, p. 72) notes in a keynote address at an annual gathering, were found “among the leftovers, subjects no one else [at the business school] had laid claim to.” To put it the other way round, Waddock (2016), a doyen of the community, suggests that the field’s

“mission has always seemed to involve staying at the cutting and somewhat critical edge of management practice, and thinking and reflecting seriously about the (proper) roles and impacts of business in society”. The critical edge may have impeded the field’s acceptance and credibility in business schools, as it was often regarded “with some suspicion as either closet social-democracy [sic!] or an excuse for executives to neglect their duty to shareholders” (Marens, 2013, p. 471). Nevertheless, the field was successful in institutionalising vital associations with annual meetings (*Social Issues in Management* division at the *Academy of Management*, 1971; *Society for Business Ethics*, 1980; *International Association for Business and Society*, 1990) and established highly-regarded journals devoted to its domains (*Business & Society*, 1960; *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1982; *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 1991).

A longer-term perspective even suggests that business ethics played a vital role in the business school’s quest for legitimacy and higher-education status at the beginning of the 20th century. As ethics was “bound up with the project of turning business into a profession, like law or medicine, which had codes of ethics,” it was initially positioned at the centre of the business education project (Abend, 2013, p. 191). However, business ethics had limited success in establishing itself nationwide in the curricula. Instead, law, economics, and other professors initiated important conversations early on about the responsibilities of business (e.g., Berle & Means, 1934; Bowen, 1953), whose traces are readily incorporated into the historiographical accounts of the field (Acquier, Gond, & Pasquero, 2011; Marens, 2008). Further, a geographically more diverse historical perspective shows that the field took longer to take off outside the US. In the case of Germany, for instance, it was not until the late 1990s and after the turn of the century that larger numbers of scholars entered the field who “mistakenly saw the country as a blank spot on the CSR landscape” (Antal, Oppen, & Sobczak, 2009, p. 291).

Regarding the intellectual structure of the broader business and society field, CSR is just one discourse cluster amongst other major themes, including morality and social contract theory, ethical decision making and stakeholder theory (Calabretta, Durisin & Ogliengo, 2011). However, while some fundamental contributions to CSR date back to the early stages of the field (e.g., Carroll, 1979), the attention to CSR exploded at the beginning of this century. As an empirical analysis of the knowledge base of the *Journal of Business Ethics* (1982-2008) illustrates (Calabretta et al., 2011, p. 514), CSR has become by far the single most covered topic in recent years. Looking at this recent history of the literature, it is fair to say that mainstream scholars in the field regard it as progressing in the sense of what Kuhn called “normal science” (Gond, Mena, et al., 2017). In accord with Kuhn’s analysis of the evolution of scientific disciplines, CSR scholars increasingly specialise and address more precise and narrow constructs to examine the empirical implications of the primary paradigm. For instance, a recent stream has begun to look at the psychological micro-foundations of CSR at the individual level of analysis (Gond, El Akremi, Swaen, & Babu, 2017). After all, it has been argued that studying CSR as a steadily progressing and coherent body of knowledge was instrumental for finally obtaining acceptance as a legitimate field of management research (Gond, Mena, et al., 2017).

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NOTE: The references used in the analysis are marked with an asterisk (*).

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Figures and Tables

Figure 1. The intellectual space at the intersection between business history and CSR studies

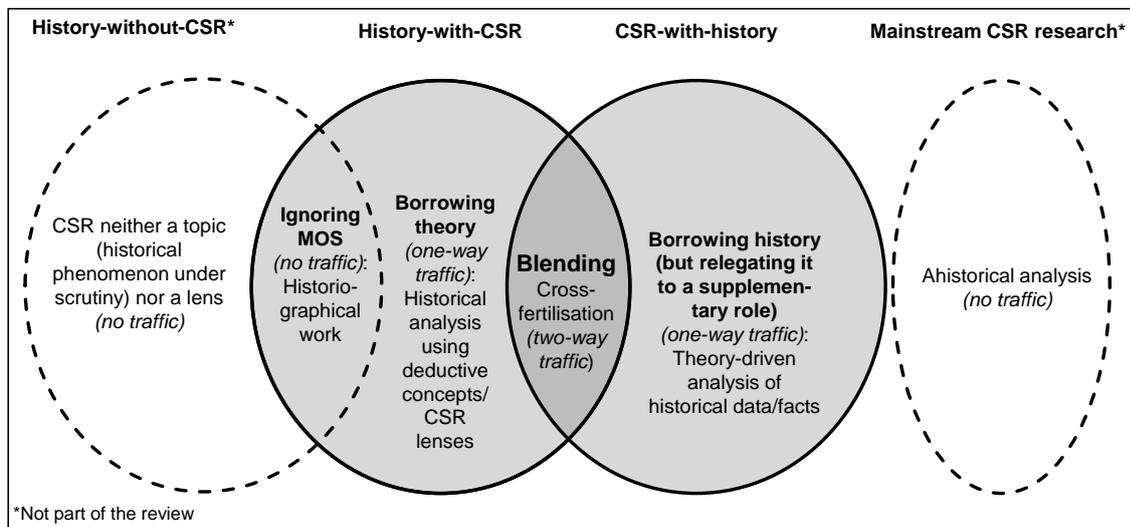


Table 1. Description of the procedures: Defining the goal and scope, building the corpus of relevant studies and its analytical reading

Step	Description	Search and limitation parameters	Outcome
Step 1: Goal and scope of review	Goal: Providing a synthesis of prior literature through the perspective of historical CSR studies to develop recommendations for a further rapprochement	Scope conditions: 1) Selection of the primary journals to be included, based on opinions of researchers within both fields (Albrecht et al., 2010; Ojala et al., 2016; Godfrey et al., 2016). 2) Time-period covered: 1995 until today 3) Applying a relaxed variant of the dual integrity principle for selecting the type of studies 4) Explicit usage of the term CSR (or a closely related term) as a requirement	Selected business and organisational history journals: <i>Business History</i> , <i>Business History Review</i> , <i>Enterprise and Society</i> , <i>Journal of Management History</i> , <i>Management & Organizational History</i> Selected CSR journals: <i>Business & Society</i> , <i>Business Ethics Quarterly</i> , <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , <i>Business Ethics: An European Review</i>
Step 2: Building the corpus of relevant studies			
Step 2a: Keyword search	An initial search of articles in the leading journals of both the business history discipline and the CSR field to build an initial corpus of articles.	Parameters used to search the electronic databases of business history journals (title, abstract, keywords): CSR, social responsibility, shared value, corporate citizenship, stakeholder management (record date: 08/2017). Parameters used to search the electronic databases of CSR field journals: CSR AND history, CSR AND historical, CSR AND longitudinal (record date: 02/2017)	Total publications: 135 Business history journals: 28 articles CSR field journals: 107 articles
Step 2b: Screening of publications	Screening of title, abstract and full-text of the articles to decide whether to omit or keep them in the corpus.	Business history journals: Omission of articles that are a) not using CSR (or a related term), b) not of an empirical nature CSR field journals: Omission of articles that did not employ a historical research strategy (in the widest sense, following standards by Maclean et al.).	Total publications: 27 Business history journals: 13 articles CSR field journals: 14 articles
Step 2c: "Mining" the reference lists of the articles in the corpus	Enlarging the corpus by systematically screening the reference lists of relevant studies already identified to find other potentially relevant studies. Also, I considered suggestions by the journal editors and various commentators at seminars and conferences to be included in the corpus.	Studies from different outlets were included in the corpus, using the same parameters as in step 2b. With regard to books, I included only publications written by authors who self-identify as business historians or CSR scholars.	Total publications: 75 Business history journals: 34 CSR field journals: 19 Other management journals: 5 Journals of other disciplines: 8 Books/chapters: 9
Step 3: Analytical reading and coding of the corpus	Analysing the corpus by a set of categories to find patterns and relationships between the categories to identify the knowledge clusters, the main meta-theoretical rationales, and the strengths and weaknesses of the corpus.	Used categories include the assumptions of history, perspective to CSR, research setting, the definition of CSR, used theories, level of analysis, methods, etc.	See step 2

Table 2. Main publication sources of historical CSR research across time

Category	Journal	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	2015-2018	# of articles	% of Total
<i>1. Business and management history</i>		2	1	8	11	12	34	45%
	Business History	1	0	0	4	7	12	16%
	Journal of Management History	0	0	4	2	2	8	11%
	Business History Review	1	0	1	0	3	5	7%
	Enterprise and Society	0	1	1	3	0	5	7%
	Misc	0	0	2	2	0	4	5%
<i>2. CSR field journals</i>		0	0	7	7	5	19	25%
	Journal of Business Ethics	0	0	4	3	2	9	12%
	Business & Society	0	0	1	0	3	4	5%
	Business Ethics Quarterly	0	0	1	2	0	3	4%
	Misc	0	0	1	2	0	3	4%
<i>3. Top tier and other management journals</i>		0	0	0	4	1	5	7%
<i>4. Other disciplines</i>		0	0	2	5	1	8	11%
	Socio-Economic Review	0	0	0	3	1	4	5%
	Misc	0	0	2	2	0	4	5%
<i>5. Books and book chapters</i>		1	0	1	2	5	9	12%
	Total	3	1	15	29	24	75	100%

Table 3. A basic framework for approaching CSR from a historical perspective, based on definitions of the surveyed literature

	Firm-centric definitions, focusing on the practices of business	More integrated definitions, focusing on business-society relationships
Economic orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ „Porter and Kramer argued, in broad terms, that businesses which create economic value by addressing the needs and challenges in society might enhance a competitive advantage. Ansvar provides a historical example of how shared value was created between the company and one of the largest popular movements in Sweden – the temperance movement.“ (Bergquist & Eriksson, 2017, p. 16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broad view: „... companies and entrepreneurs defined their responsibilities depended to a large extent on the criticisms launched by the outside world. Entrepreneurs and company managers responded to concerns in the society of which they formed part, and the progressive ones among them, the true leaders, searched for ways of reconciling the requirements of their business with the demands of the society.’ (Sluyterman, 2012, p. 313)
Critical orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ „Between 1945 and the early 1960s, the concept of ‘social responsibility’ became popular among business leaders because it provided a language and loose set of ideas to help them improve their image and strengthen their ability to negotiate their relationship with the government.“ (Chapin, 2016, p. 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Narrow, historical cognisant view: „CSR, we propose, is one form of business-society interactions reflecting a unique ideological framing.“ (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017, p. 641)
Politico-ethical orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ „CSR implies pursuit of social good by businesses (Bowen, 1953; Fredrick, 1960; Walton, 1967) and given that Bombay’s mills accommodated needs and roles of employees as human beings, parents, family members and citizens, this would have made them responsible.“ (Jammulamadaka, 2016, p. 451) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broad view: „As a concept, it is the idea that the corporation exists in society and has rights and responsibilities as a member (or citizen) of that society.“ (Carroll, Lipartito, Post, & Werhane, 2012, p. 7)

Table 4. Meta-theoretical perspectives to CSR

Dimensions	Economic perspective	Critical perspective	Politico-ethical perspective
Description of CSR	CSR as an instrument for advancing the long-term financial value of the firm	CSR as embedded in the neoliberal discourse	CSR as both a means to acquire legitimacy and an end in itself
Broader underlying assumptions	- Classical-liberal conception of business-society relationship: Strict separation between business and public spheres	- E.g., Postcolonial theory - Criticising the extension of business influence at the expense of civil society	- E.g., Pragmatism or Habermasian philosophy - Attempting to re-embed business activity into society
Practices, behaviours and mechanisms	- CSR practices have both a voluntary and discretionary nature (but likely to be justified in fiscal terms via business case) - External pressure to comply with demands: Seen as violating the principle of voluntarism	- CSR practices related to practices of manipulation and exploitation - CSR as a means to acquire power by corporations	- CSR practices are directly concerned with the public welfare - Business internalise the “right” behaviour or societies “softly” regulate corporate conduct through CSR expectations
Representative examples in the CSR literature	Carroll (1979) Jones (1995) Wood (1991) Porter & Kramer (2011) Aguinis & Glavas (2012)	Banerjee (2008) Hanlon & Fleming (2009) Shamir (2004)	Freeman et al. (2010) Scherer & Palazzo (2007)

Sources: Heikkurinen and Mäkinen, 2018; Palazzo and Scherer, 2007.

Table 5. A research program for historical CSR studies

	Historic CSR and uses of history	Tackling larger issues	Rethinking the historiography of CSR thought
Description of research avenue	Understanding how organisations take responsibility for the past	Understanding larger big-picture issues	Understanding the past of the discipline more broadly and deeply to create a larger repertoire of innovative thinking in the present and future
Assumptions about history	“History as interpretive context” is deciding, while assumptions of history as representational truth are useful	A wide range of combinations between “history as interpretive context” and “history as objective truth” may be useful	A rather poststructuralist variant of “history as interpretive context” is deciding: History is seen to be discursively produced
Assumptions about CSR	Contemporary (instrumental, critical, and politico-ethical) CSR understandings are deciding. Mostly following a firm-centric approach	- Contemporary CSR in a more integrated variant is useful as an umbrella term to connect ideas and research findings	Theoretical work of CSR scholars is itself a form of literature
Methodological options for empirical research	<p><i>Variants with more interpretive assumptions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflexive historical case study (Stutz & Sachs, 2018) - Microhistory (Vaara & Lamberg, 2016) - Ethnographic history (Rowlinson et al., 2014) - Narrative type of history (Maclean et al., 2016) - Explicating type of history (Maclean et al., 2016) - Constructionist history (Coraiola et al., 2015) <p><i>Variants with more positivist assumptions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceptualising type of history (Maclean et al., 2016) - Reconstructionist history (Coraiola et al., 2015) - Analytically structured history (Rowlinson et al., 2014) - Evaluating type of history (Maclean et al., 2016) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foucauldian genealogy (Vaara & Lamberg, 2016) - ANTi-History (Durepos & Mills, 2012) - Deconstructionist history (Coraiola et al., 2015) - Narrative type of history (Maclean et al., 2016)
Representative research question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do narratives of past wrongdoings reflect the various layers of specific contexts in time and space? - How is the legitimacy of a claim about the past constructed and enacted in specific contexts? - What are the ethical implications of “using history” strategically by managers? - What effects has a legacy of an (ir)responsible past for the relations to different stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can and should business firms relate to grand challenges (e.g., growing inequalities)? - What can or should be done about the grand challenges? - Which historico-institutional arrangements have spawned the most desirable, efficient and stable ways of organizing business conduct? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the taken-for-granted assumptions in conventional histories of CSR thoughts? How can they be problematised? - How does change in CSR discourse occur in conditions of larger transformations of epistemic systems? - What marginalised or forgotten discourses may help to think differently in contemporary CSR thinking?

III

Fear and deinstitutionalization: The case of identity threat by mass immigration

by

Stutz, Christian

Article III is currently under review

You may request a copy of the paper from the author.

A previous version of this paper has been selected by the OMT Division of the Academy of Management as the *runner up* for the 2019 *Louis Pondy Best Dissertation Paper Award*.

An abridged version of Article III has been published in the 2019 *Best Papers Proceedings* of the Academy of Management (top 5-10% of program):

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IV

The strategic cognition view of issue salience and the evolution of a political issue: Landis & Gyr, the Hungarian Uprising and east-west trade, 1953–1967

by

Stutz, Christian, 2017

Stakeholder Engagement: Clinical Research Cases, pp. 139-166

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The strategic cognition view of issue salience and the evolution of a political issue:

Landis & Gyr, the Hungarian Uprising and East-West trade, 1953-1967

Why do firms facing similar stakeholder issues respond quite differently? The recently introduced strategic cognition view of issue salience and firm responsiveness (hereinafter: issue salience model) seeks to tackle this core question of stakeholder theory. I extend the nascent theorizing with a historical case study in order to rethink the model's firm-centric perspective. The firm under examination in this historical case study is the Swiss multinational Landis & Gyr (LG) during the Cold War period. Like many other Swiss export-oriented companies in the 1950s and early 1960s, LG was challenged by Swiss pressure groups, which were highly effective at putting an issue on the public agenda: the call to break off trade relations with the communist East. The empirically grounded explanation of issue interpretation and response mechanisms derived from this case study offers two key theoretical implications: First, it shifts our focus outwards, toward the social and political context, in which issues evolve and play out over time. This elaboration seeks to understand the role of the social and political surroundings in constituting firm-specific issue interpretation processes and response outcomes. Second, the findings suggest that the issue salience model emphasizes an overly homogenizing conception of the firm. By pointing towards the tensions and ambiguities in a firm's collective sense-making efforts, I start a critique of the theory in order to push this important stream of research further.

Keywords: Stakeholder Theory; Issue Salience; Historical Research

This study tries to make sense of rather astonishing events and developments in the life course of an organization: It examines the actions of the Swiss multinational Landis & Gyr (LG) and its attempts to make sense of a political instance during the Cold War. In November 1956, the Red Army invaded Hungary in order to suppress the emerging civil movement against Hungary's communist regime. The West was shocked: While civil societies all over displayed solidarity with the Hungarian people, pressure groups in Switzerland called for action and pushed to break off any relation with the communist East. In this socio-politically tense atmosphere, LG made the decision to no longer maintain its relation to customers behind the Iron Curtain and to leave these markets. In contrast, most other firms in Switzerland and in the surrounding countries kept on pursuing their regular business practices.

To provide an initial understanding of the case, we start our examination with Bundy, Shropshire and Buchholtz' (2013) strategic cognition view of issue salience and firm responsiveness (hereinafter: issue salience model). Essentially, the issue salience model tackles one of the core questions of the stakeholder theory literature (Freeman et al. 2010; Sachs and Rühli 2011) and describes firm-specific cognitive processes and underlying motivations to respond to issues, i.e. "gap[s] ... between the actual performance of a corporation and public expectations about what that performance should be" (Post 1978, p. 23). In the issue salience model, a firm's engagement with an issue is determined by the firm-level construct *issue salience*, which is defined as "the degree to which an issue resonates with and is prioritized by management" (Bundy et al. 2013, p. 353). In focusing on cognitive processes within firms, Bundy and his coauthors "enter the black box of managerial decision making" by seeking "to understand how firms act as *interpretation systems* to receive and process stakeholder issues" (Bundy et al. 2013, p. 356, italics added). In doing so Bundy and colleagues (2013) depart from existing theoretical perspectives of the stakeholder theory literature, as we will see below (cf. Mitchell

et al. 1997), and introduce a new research agenda for exploring firms' responsiveness to stakeholder issues.

Equipped with this theory, we are likely to adopt a too hasty conclusion of the case: We are tempted to interpret LG's decision to leave the Eastern markets following public pressure because it resonated with LG's sense of self and its strategic goals (i.e., the interpretation systems, as presented by Bundy et al. 2013). However, this firm-centric explanation overlooks the constitutive role of the external social and political contexts in LG's sensemaking efforts. Indeed, long before LG announced its decision in the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising, conservative and anti-communist advocates entered the public arena and started to create an atmosphere opposed to the involvement of Swiss companies in Eastern trade. The political discourse about West-East trade brought forth by those advocates challenged the "official" Swiss foreign policy, which had been emphasizing Swiss neutrality towards both the Eastern and the Western bloc—which, in reality, was mainly useful to legitimate the exploitation of all possible business opportunities (Tanner 2015). Essentially, I argue that LG's engagement with the issue is best explained if we take into account the constitutive role of these discursive struggles on the macro level, which contributed to the definition of a Swiss national identity after the turmoil of World War II. In this study, I will explore different ways of making sense of this case in order to find a new best explanation with the potential to develop the issue salience model further.

The purpose of this study is to build on and develop the new stream of literature initiated by Bundy and his coauthors (2013) further. The research questions are as follows: How did LG interpret and respond to emerging and evolving campaigns that advocated for stopping trade with the East throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s? Why was LG susceptible to this public issue while most other firms continued pursuing regular business practices? By addressing these questions, I intend to advance the issue salience model by broadening the model's firm-

centric perspective and by also considering the role of deeper political and cultural structures within society. The elaboration will shift our focus outwards, toward the external social and political contexts, so we can understand the mechanisms on an organizational level more accurately.

In the next section, I first explain the underlying assumptions and the general propositions of the issue salience model. Then I consider a recent theoretical extension of the model based on institutional theory literature to finally articulate a critique highlighting the need for further empirical research.

Theoretical Background: The Strategic Cognition View of Issue Salience

Bundy and colleagues (2013) have moved away from the idea that firms or managers give priority to stakeholders with the most affirmative characteristics (such as power, legitimacy, and urgency), a perspective that was suggested by Mitchell and colleagues' seminal theory of stakeholder salience (1997) and examined further in a considerable stream of subsequent research (Agle et al. 1999; Eesley and Lenox 2004; Magness 2008; Myllykangas et al. 2010; Neville et al. 2011; Parent and Deephouse 2007; Tashman and Raelin 2013). Instead, by drawing on the issue management literature (see Dutton and Jackson 1989; Wartick and Mahon 1994), Bundy and colleagues (2013, p. 535) argue that firms or managers respond to specific issues. Defined as mismatches between firm behavior and outside expectations, issues might be raised and be relevant only to a small group of stakeholders close to a firm. Other concerns and requests, as in our case, reach public issue status when multiple stakeholders and members of the wider society, with competing values, interests and normative expectations, become interested in it (Bigelow et al. 1993; Clarkson 1995; Nalick et al. 2016). Bundy and colleagues (2013) then set the focus on firm-specific issue interpretation processes, taking an organiza-

tional perspective, and anchor their theory in the cognitive perspective of studying organizations (Bundy et al. 2013, p. 369; e.g., Weick 1995; see Sandberg and Tsoukas 2015 for a recent review).

The underlying argument is that the actions of firms in responding to stakeholder/public issues are not responses to objective characteristics of those claims, but are conditioned by the issue interpretation of the managers of the firms. They assume that managers follow simple heuristics and develop the idea further that firms form distinct *interpretation systems*, which shape the ways managers interact with stakeholders (see, e.g., Berman et al. 1999; Brickson 2005; Crilly and Sloan 2012; Jones et al. 2007). Their theory is thus helpful for us to explain why firms that face similar stakeholder concerns respond differently: Their response depends on the firm-specific interpretation system.

To sum up, the strategic cognition view of issue salience and responsiveness can be understood as an input-process-output model: It describes the key mediating process by which firms translate external stimuli into action. Figure 6.1 illustrates Bundy and colleagues' (2013) organizational perspective on *strategic cognition of issue salience*, which is intermediating between *stakeholder issues* as inputs and *firm responsiveness* as outputs—I define and discuss these constructs in more detail in the discussion section of this article.

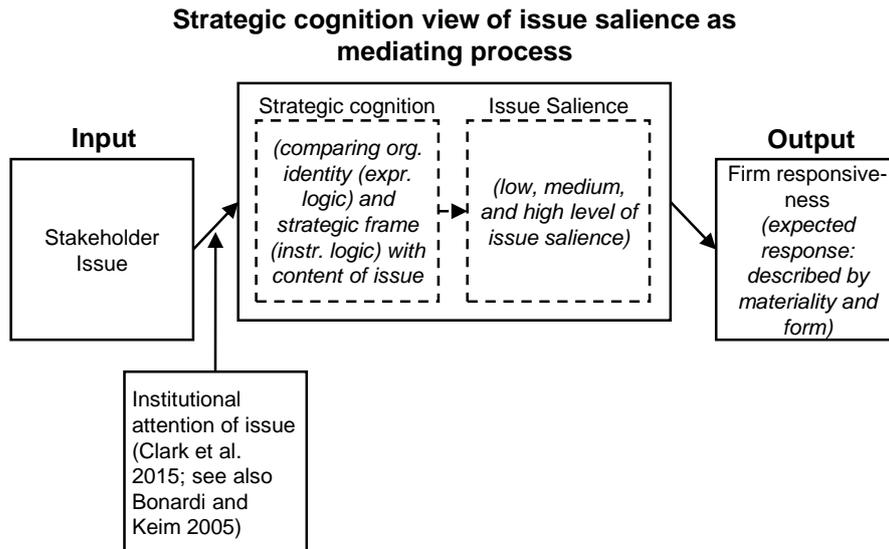


Fig. 6.1 Organizational perspective on processing and responding to stakeholder issues by Bundy et al. 2013 with model extension by Clark et al. 2015 (own representation)

Elaborating the Model: Embeddedness in Socio-Political Contexts

Fundamentally, the issue salience model by Bundy and colleagues (2013) is firm-centric: “Firm managers ... need only look inward and examine the firm’s identity and strategic frame to understand how the firm might respond to an issue” (Bundy et al. 2013, p. 372). While these cognitive processes are arguably not independent of the firm’s social and political environment, this is beyond the interest of the model. Clark and colleagues (2015) have extended the model by considering the interplay between social issues and issues the firm engages with. Basing their arguments in institutional literature, Clark and colleagues (2015) suggest that the firm-level issue salience is determined by the degree of *social issue salience*: namely, that issues that are “salient to society and often reflect current public opinion” (Clark et al. 2015, p. 2) are salient to organizations as well. Their insight is that firms engage with socially contested issues—with a high degree of societal disagreement—on a higher level than with issues that have social consensus. This theoretical extension is a first step to consider how firms process and respond to stakeholder issues “from a more holistic perspective, not just from the firm’s perspective, by acknowledging society as more than a single, monolithic variable” (Clark et al. 2015 p. 27). However, I argue that this holism can be further developed.

The extension by Clark and colleagues (2015) is limited in two regards. First, the notion of social issue salience is not clearly connected to the original issue salience model. In my understanding, Clark and colleagues' (2015) concept of social issue salience is related to the notion of *institutional attention of an issue* (Bonardi and Keim 2005) that can be understood to *moderate* the firm's perception of a stakeholder issue. With regard to the issue salience model as represented in Figure 6.1, this consideration of society can, despite Clark and colleagues' (2015) claim, be reduced to a more or less "single, monolith variable" affecting the model as an almost independent factor. I argue that a different theoretical perspective than the one proposed has the potential to develop the issue salience model in a more holistic manner further.

Second, while Clark and colleagues' (2015) extension of the issue salience model gives a greater role to social context, institutional literature tends to emphasize homogenizing institutional pressure, which prevents us from understanding the agency of individual firms. Institutional theory's master concept, isomorphism, suggests that firms that share the same environment converge to similar forms to ensure legitimacy and correspond with the societal expectations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). In this regard, the extension of the issue salience model explains only the *response of an entire population of firms* to certain societal issue types. But how can we explain *response variance in a population of firms* to the same public issue?

These problems of the issue salience model and of its extension—i.e., the lack of fine-grained knowledge about the embeddedness of firms in their social and political surroundings—form the central research interest of this article.

What is an Appropriate Research Strategy to Elaborate on the Model?

To advance our understanding of the mechanisms that drive firms' actions in response to stakeholder issues, Bundy and colleagues (2013, p. 371) suggest that the model would "benefit from case study or other qualitative research design, which may motivate further inductive theory

building.” I accept this invitation to empirically *elaborate* the model through a case study to pursue this important stream of research further.

In my research strategy, I am guided by ideas introduced by Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) who ask scholars to systematically explore a theory’s weakness and problems concerning the phenomena it is supposed to explicate. In this attempt, the role of the empirical case, that is, a striking and idiosyncratic empirical example, is to provoke scholars to *challenge* and *rethink* the initial theory (see also Ketokivi and Choi 2014). This is in sharp contrast to the inductive case study strategy (see, e.g., Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt et al. 2016), which suggests that *new* theories or concepts have to emerge from data, where “the” case becomes an instance of the theory. Alvesson and Kärreman (2007), in contrast, advise scholars to compare and confront the initial theory by studying a single case in greater detail. In this process, if scholars encounter a phenomenon not understandable by prior theory, this research strategy directs scholars to extend the explanatory scheme of the initial theory in order to find a new best explanation for the encountered phenomenon.

The Case Study

In this section, I first present my research setting, the Swiss company Landis & Gyr (LG), which I have studied in the historical periods of the 1950s and 1960s. I then explain why studying specific aspects of the company’s life course contribute to the advancements of our understanding of the mechanisms that drive firms’ actions in response to stakeholder issues. Finally, I explicate the methods applied to analyze and interpret historical evidence in order to elaborate on the issue salience model.

Research Setting

The firm under examination in this study is LG, a multinational manufacturer, headquartered in Zug, Switzerland. Founded as a small factory for electricity measuring meters in 1896, LG's manufacturing program expanded from domestic meters for measuring electricity and temperature to the most complex recording instruments (e.g., for nucleonic measuring). Quite typical for a Swiss multinational manufacturer, almost 70% of the items produced in Switzerland were exported, 78% of which going to countries in Western Europe and 22% being distributed in Asia, Australia, America and Africa (numbers from 1963; LG archive: radio show transcript 1964). The family-owned enterprise also set up or acquired manufacturing subsidiary companies in Switzerland and abroad (e.g., Germany, France, England, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy), resulting in considerable market shares. For instance, in 1949, LG held 13% of total market production in the worldwide electric meter business (LG archive: company magazine 1949).

During the research period, an export-oriented Swiss company like LG was affected by specific constraints of the regulatory, political and economic environment of Switzerland and the *Machtpolitik* of the Great Powers of the Cold War. After World War II, when the development of the world markets was shaped by the growing antagonism between the East and the West, Switzerland had a considerable presence and participated to a great extent in the transnational economic structures of the West (Tanner 2015). The "official" Swiss foreign policy, however, insisted on the long-standing principle of neutrality, aiming at displaying Switzerland as an attractive commercial partner to both blocs. As a result, Swiss foreign trade policy worked towards normalizing the relations with communist countries and refrained from *formally* participating in the emergent international and European institutions (e.g., the European Economic Community, EEC, established in 1957). However, the particularities of the East-West trade, such as state-monopoly on foreign trade in the East, state-directed payment operations on both

sides and the malfunctioning COCOM embargo of the East by the West (Ammann 2016), made operating on the Eastern markets very difficult for Swiss companies.

In the examined period, Switzerland experienced an “era of the economic miracle” (Tan-ner 1999). In LG’s case, its products met the exploding demands of the construction industry, which was booming, backed by the Marshall Plan, in its efforts to rebuild Europe destroyed in war. The markets behind the Iron Curtain, however, lost dramatically in importance after World War II. Table 6.A in the appendix enumerates some of the key characteristics of LG and Swit-zerland during the examined period.

Object of Study

The object of investigation is LG’s approach to dealing with a public issue. During the research period, pressure groups campaigned to break off all Swiss relations to the communist East, attacking the official Swiss foreign trade policy that was based on the long-standing principle of neutrality.¹⁵ I understand these campaigns (the so-called *Osthandelskampagnen: East-Trade-Campaigns*) as an attempt by conservative pressure groups to bring an issue (i.e., to stop Eastern trade) to the political arena for export-oriented Swiss companies. These campaigns reached their peak and gained broad institutional support in 1956 (oppression of the Hungarian uprising by the Red Army) and in 1961/62 (building of the Berlin Wall), and they undermined the strategic objectives of export-oriented companies to develop new markets abroad.

By choosing to study LG’s approach to engaging with this public issue, I follow the sug-gestion of Bundy and colleagues (2013, p. 372) that “empirical research could ... follow ... the evolution of issue salience as an issue changes”. This case provides particularly rich insights

¹⁵ In LG’s perspective, the following countries belonged to the Eastern bloc, as a list compiled in 1967 shows: Republic of Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Soviet Union, Republic of China, Czecho-slovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Cuba, North Korea, North Vietnam, Mongolia. Inter-estingly, communist Yugoslavia was not included in the list (Report, 30 June 1967).

into the complex interplay between a firm's interpretation of an issue and the political and cultural context and constraints of the social environment over an extensive period, which is difficult to capture otherwise (see Bundy et al. 2013, p. 371).

Research Methods

My analytical procedure involved two steps: I first conducted a hermeneutical analysis in order to develop a historical understanding of LG's issue interpretations and responses over time (see Kipping and Lamberg 2016 on basic historical research methods). Secondly, I attempted to refine the issue salience model.

Hermeneutical analysis and empirical material. The hermeneutical analysis followed the example of others (e.g., Khaire and Wadhvani 2010) and drew on the interpretation of two types of empirical material: *Focal* empirical material and *contextual* material (see Table 6.1 for an overview of the material used).

Tab. 6.1 Overview of empirical material used

Type	Empirical material Years produced	Intended audience	Prospects and limits; relation to core concepts	Source
Focal empirical material	Minutes of BoD, correspondence letters of BoD, minutes of board of employee representatives 1950-1967	Company or private material intended for a very restricted audience	Grasping motives and arguments of focal actors; reconstruction of unfolding events	Archival records of the L&G archive (AfZ)
Focal empirical material	Internal guidelines, internal reports, copies of speeches 1950-1967	Company material intended for internal use	Grasping the firm's interpretation systems; reconstruction of unfolding events	Archival records of the L&G archive (AfZ)
Focal empirical material	Annual reports, company magazine articles, commercials, copies of speeches 1949-1967	Company material intended for external use	Grasping the firm's interpretation systems; reconstruction of unfolding events	Archival records of the L&G archive (AfZ)
Contextual material	Pamphlets by pro and con Eastern trade advocates (14 printings from 1944-1962, e.g., by Röpke, Förster, and Weber); Swiss newspaper articles (altogether 165 articles, from 1952-1967)	Material targeting the public at large or special interest audience	Contextualization of the focal texts; reconstruction of institutional attention to issues and the unfolding events	Collections of the Swiss Social Archives
Contextual material	Texts of the Swiss Federation of Commerce and Industry (Vorort); Official diplomatic texts; 1948-1967	Intended for a restricted audience	Contextualization of the focal texts; reconstruction of institutional attention to issues and the unfolding events	Archival records of the Vorort (AfZ); Dodis.ch
Contextual material	Analytical accounts of historians (e.g., Tanner 1999; Tréfás 2008)	Historical research intended mainly for academic audiences	Contextualization of the empirical instance in an historical period; reconstruction of unfolding events	Library

More specifically, I built a database with *focal* empirical material related to LG's approach to Eastern trade. I collected this set of records in the company archive of LG, which is preserved in the public repository of the Archives of Contemporary History (AfZ) in Zurich (see appendix). The LG company archive contains records (including written documents, images, artifacts, etc.) from 1896 to 1996 and its volume amounts to 240 shelf meters. Most instructive for the research questions were sources which capture outcomes of issue interpretation processes of LG managers, such as board meeting protocols and memos, correspondence between members of the top management team and others, transcripts of speeches and strategic

planning documents. While this material does not reveal the deeper cognitive processes of the actors, it is adequate for analyzing the rationale and arguments used by the different actors in specific situations. I also consulted other focal empirical material, such as internal reports, annual reports and company magazines, in order to triangulate the initial evidence with new material.

To provide a way to contextualize LG-specific developments, I complemented the *focal* with *contextual* material, which has helped me understand the specific historico-cultural context in which the events unfolded, “much as an archeologist judges an artifact by where it lies in the sediment” (Lipartito 2014, p. 288). This second set of material contains pamphlets of pro- and anti-Eastern trade advocates (e.g., Wilhelm Röpke, anti, and Emil Arnold, pro) and newspaper articles from the relevant period. I consulted them through publicly accessible collections in the Swiss Social Archives in Zurich. This material has helped me make sense of the circulating truth generating discourses and track the evolution of public opinion towards Eastern trade (see Hansen 2012, p. 696, on discourses/narratives).

This material was complemented with records of the Schweizerische Handels- und Industrie-Verein (the Swiss Federation of commerce and industry, called Vorort), preserved in the AfZ in Zurich. Vorort was one of the two key players—besides the Division of Commerce in the Federal Department of Economic Affairs—involved in the design of the Swiss foreign economic policy in the 1950s and 1960s (see Ammann 2016). These sources represent not only the official angle of Swiss foreign policy but also give insight into the background of the policy processes otherwise hidden from the public. Finally, secondary literature by other historians about the examined period (e.g., Ammann 2016; Halbeisen et al. 2012; Kecskemeti 1961; Lohm 2000; Meyer 1999; Tanner 1999; 2015; Tréfás 2008) provided an understanding of the larger developments on the macro level of analysis.

In the process of hermeneutical analysis, my understanding of LG's engagement with the public issue became increasingly more comprehensive: By first "zooming in" to decipher LG's sensemaking processes and actions and then "zooming out" to see the larger context and the antecedents and consequences over a longer period of time (Wadhvani and Bucheli 2014). As a result of this analysis, I have written a historical narrative that represents my understanding of LG's approach to deal with the East-Trade-Campaigns throughout the 1950s and 1960s. I did not seek to represent the only "truth" about what happened but this narrative is instead, based on Gaddis' (2002) understanding of the work of historians as making sense of the world by telling stories, my temporally situated attempt to make sense of the distant past.

Theoretical elaboration: Search for a new best explanation. To achieve an elaboration of the strategic cognition view of issue salience, I follow prominent examples of historical case studies (Danneels 2010; Lamberg and Pajunen 2010) that have demonstrated how an in-depth understanding of empirical instances in the past can be used to elaborate theory (see also Stutz and Sachs *forthcoming*). These examples guide me to interpret the historical narrative within the prior theoretical framework, in my case Bundy and colleagues' (2013) issue salience model, and search for deviations or anomalies that cannot be explained within this framework. In this abductive mode of analysis, the initial explanatory schemes of the theory are expanded through a search process for a new best explanation that is also able to include those anomalies (Alvesson and Kärreman 2007; for abduction, see: Mantere and Ketokivi 2013). The interplay between the issue interpretation of LG and the social and political developments surrounding it forms the core of my theory elaboration, which I will further explore in the discussion section.

Historical Narrative: Landis & Gyr and the East-Trade-Campaigns

In this section, I first present my historical narrative of LG's approach to engaging with the public calls for stopping Eastern trade throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Figure 6.2 provides a

timeline of the unfolding events on the organizational, national and international level of analysis. I then interpret this narrative regarding the expectations of the issue salience model to develop the theory further.

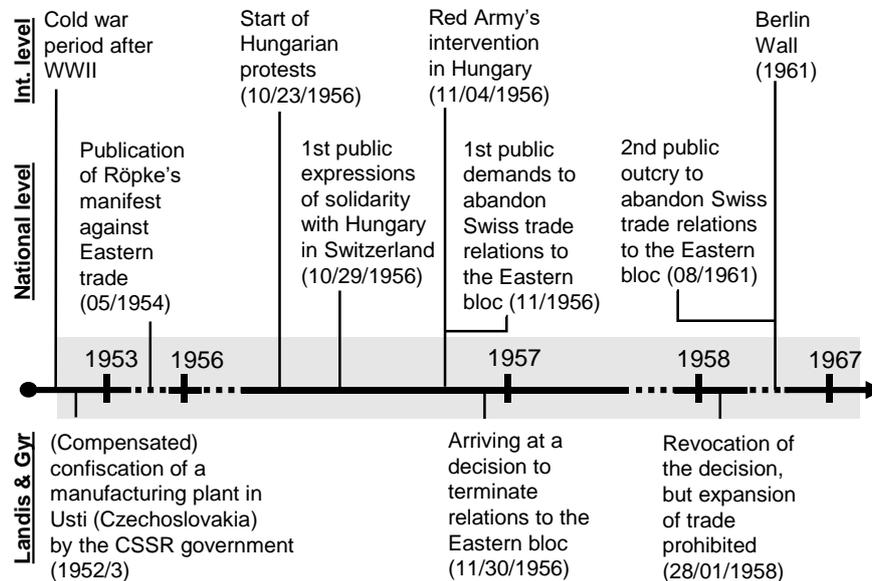


Fig. 6.2 Timeline of unfolding events on organizational, national and international level

Emergence of the issue in the early 1950s. While the early 1950s were marked by more or less successful efforts by representatives of the federal state and of “corporate Switzerland” to establish the Swiss export industry as an attractive commercial partner for both blocs, the question of West-East trade entered the public arena as a disputed political and moral issue (see also Fritzsche and Lohm 2006; Lohm 2000; Meyer 1999; Tréfás 2008). On the one hand, leftists, such as Emil Arnold, member of the National Council, coined a political discourse on the East-West trade being a “policy of peace” that secures a peaceful coexistence of the rival systems of the West and the East (e.g., Arnold 1953). On the other hand, conservatives and anti-communists fought against trading with the East, led by the German economist Wilhelm Röpke who was later called the leading “theorist” of the East-Trade-Campaigns by a leftist newspaper (Vorwärts, January 26th 1962; see Solchany 2010 on Röpke’s life and work in Switzerland). In May 1954, Röpke published an article titled “Der Handel mit dem roten Imperium” (Trade

with the Red Empire) in the right wing Swiss journal Schweizer Monatshefte. By depicting Soviet Communism as a clear and imminent danger undermining Western values and beliefs, Röpke provided a political argument that communist regimes considered “trade with the deadly enemy” as a means for the consolidation and expansions of their power.¹⁶ Mainly based on an anti-communist attitude, Röpke’s advocacy for stopping Eastern trade aimed at sensitizing Western business people for the “political role of trade” and at adjusting business interests with the defence of the “free” Western world. He suggested that companies should voluntarily discontinue trade but, by emphasizing his libertarian position, spoke out against the defamation of companies that continued trading with the East. Although not receiving much resonance in the mid-1950s, the political discourse about Eastern trade was ready to circulate within the broader Swiss public and meeting rooms of Swiss export companies.

The Hungarian Uprising in 1956: Breakout of the issue. On November 30th, 1956, Prof. Dr. Werner Niederer, president of LG, and the two remaining members of the management board, Dr. Andreas C. Brunner-Gyr and Gottfried Straub-Gyr, decided to stop preparing new offers for existing and potential customers behind the Iron Curtain. Only eight days later, when the board of directories (BoD) held its regular meeting, the management board confronted LG’s BoD with this *fait accompli*. Niederer waited to reveal this decision until the end of the meeting, amongst other “miscellanea,” as the minutes of the meeting indicate (BoD minute, December 8, 1956). The other directors welcomed the decision. In response to a question that asked whether LG could do even more, Niederer and Brunner-Gyr expressed their view that LG should neither directly nor indirectly be proactive to prevent other Swiss companies to trade with the East. If nothing else, the BoD supported the proposition to communicate the decision

¹⁶ All quotes are translated by the author.

in the next issue of the company magazine. A short notice without any explanations was then published (LG company magazine, issue 1, 1957). *What had happened?*

Change of scenery: Hungary, October 23rd, 1956. Students and workers took the streets of Budapest. A march, organized by student organizations, turned into a largely spontaneous uprising against what was viewed as a vicious Communist regime (see for the following Kecskemeti 1961 and Lendvai 2010). The regime, backed by Stalin's Red Army, had absorbed the Hungarian Republic by the end of 1947, paralleling developments in other Eastern European countries, such as East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, and Rumania.

After the revolt broke out, the Soviet Politburo took a calculated risk to regain Hungary. In the morning of November 4th, when the West was preoccupied with the Suez Crisis, the Politburo sent new military formations to Hungary in order to crush the revolt. The unequal battle continued only for a couple of days, until all public opposition was suppressed and the Soviets could install a new government. With this, the thaw period, which had begun with the passing of Stalin and had peaked in 1955 with a summit of the Great Powers in Geneva, came to an abrupt end.

The West was shocked: Concerns that these crises affect political stability between the blocs arose everywhere. In Switzerland, the initial euphoria after the first news of the people's uprising turned into fear of war (Tréfás 2008). The commentator of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (November 5th, 1956) identified the real villain in the East who had removed his mask to "show his grimace of violence": "The methods of the Politburo reveal the unvarnished truth at once. Now we can clearly see the web of lies about the 'peaceful coexistence', in which the relenting and naïve world public believed." The Swiss people, the commentator goes on, did not fall for the lies and empty promises of the communists, since the unforgotten experience of Nazi Germany had guided the Swiss to resist the "calling of any Sirens."

Rallies and other public efforts to support the people of Hungary were organized. New organizations, such as Studentische Direkthilfe Schweiz-Ungarn (student direct aid Switzerland-Hungary), which were led by a new spirit to help the “brother nation,” sprung up everywhere and launched passionate donation and fundraising projects for Hungary (Tréfás 2008). On November 1st, as many as 10’000 protesters in Zurich applauded a read resolution calling for concrete actions *against* countries under communist control:

We call upon the Swiss people to draw the necessary conclusions from this new appalling crime that has revealed the illusion and lie of the ‘peaceful coexistence’: We have to break-off contacts and relationships to the communist East immediately, such as through cancelling sporting events, travel and trade. By contrast, we must double our efforts to strengthen our purpose of national defense [original: geistige, wirtschaftliche und militärische Landesverteidigung]. Vigilance is therefore called for!“ (speech documented in Volksrecht, November 2nd, 1956, cited in Tréfás 2008, p. 210)

In response to such calls, the libertarian party Landesring der Unabhängigen (alliance of the independents) provoked a debate in the National Council, with which it aimed at terminating any relation to the Soviet Union (Meyer 1999). Press campaigns asked individual entrepreneurs and companies the “question of conscience” (Neue Zürcher Zeitung, December 14th, 1956) to relinquishing Eastern trade.

Due to these public rallies and press campaigns (see, e.g., various letters to the editor in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung on December 1st, 1956), the Swiss Federal Council was pushed to answer calls for breaking off relations with Eastern Europe. It addressed these concerns in an attempt to calm the situation by making it easier for Hungarians to apply for asylum (Tréfás 2008). However, the Swiss Federal Council, also took up the stance that a termination of relations with Eastern European countries would not serve Swiss interests (Meyer 1999).

At a point when public opinion, fostered by conservative and anti-communist commentators such as Röpke, was set against any kind of relations with Eastern Europe, the management board of LG made its decision to stop preparing new offers for existing and potential customers behind the Iron Curtain. As a result of the press campaigns, this issue was discussed

in other companies, too. A circulation letter issued by Vorort on December 17th and widely circulated among its members after being approved by both the minister of the Department of Public Economy and the Department of Political Affairs (Vorort archive, correspondence letters December 1956), indicates that firms asked for guidance on how to react to these public campaigns and the developments in the East. In a general statement that reached the management board of LG after its decision (LG archive, 1956), Vorort emphasized the difference between the attitude of individual companies and of the official Swiss foreign policy. While pointing out that any official interruption of relations would contradict the principle of neutrality, Vorort encouraged each company to “solve the problem as it feels to be appropriate and right.” Vorort stated that, “even before the recent events in Hungary, it knows of many firms that declared to make no business with states under communist control because of fundamental concerns.” However, Vorort also countered the argument raised by Röpke, i.e., that “East-West trade strengthens the potential of the East.” The portion of Swiss trade with Eastern countries was considered vanishingly small (see appendix, Table 6.A), as the report states. As a result, most Swiss firms kept on doing their regular business with the East (see Lohm 2000; Meyer 1999), while only a few companies, such as LG, suspended their relations drawing on the political discourse circulating since the mid-1950s.

Internal discussions in LG (1957/58): Conflicting issue interpretations. In the aftermath of the proclamation of LG’s resolution to stop Eastern trade, the BoD’s resolution provoked considerable discussions in the LG headquarter in Zug. In particular, Nikolay von Kotschubey, the director of the sales department, strongly opposed withdrawing from the Eastern markets. On January 8th, 1957, he sent an internal message to president Niederer in which he weighed all arguments for and against the decision. Although emphasizing his hopes for the liberation of the people behind the Iron Curtain, he points out that, “by pinching off our relations with the hitherto loyal customers in the East, we serve the people behind the Iron Curtain neither

politically nor morally.” On April 25th, 1957, he repeats that „individual engineers who are still with us from pre-communist times have contacted us and requested the reasons for which they are left in the lurch.”

In addition, Kotschubey (January 8th 1957) argued that the BoD’s resolution could harm the future development of the company. Although LG had established a market in Eastern countries only for a limited number of products, a withdrawal from these markets could potentially have negative effects: „When our customers switch to using the devices of our competitors, the delivery of our products might become impossible from there on.” Kotschubey warned Niederer that it meant to „give up a large market, which might be in the future of the utmost importance for LG.”

Niederer gave these warnings by one of his most valued top managers special consideration. In the next meeting of the BoD, in May 1957, he brought Kotschubey’s arguments up. The heated discussion that followed indicates that the BoD was not united on this matter anymore. In particular, Dr. Charles Barrelet-Siegfried argued for supplying LG’s existing customers. In his words, to engage with its former customers is a “moral responsibility” of LG. Nevertheless, the trade prohibition was not abandoned, but Niederer agreed to return to the issue in one of the next meetings. In January 1958, more than half a year later, the issue was discussed again.

In preparation for the meeting, the president and his top management team met for an informal debate at the end of the year in order to obtain the different views on the matter, as the protocol of the follow-up BoD meeting indicates. This follow-up BoD meeting took place at a time when the wave of solidarity with Hungarians had almost entirely ebbed away and the embargo of the Eastern countries had been loosened again under the stewardship of the United States and the UK (Meyer 1999), so the advocates of a break-off fought a losing battle. Dr.

Arnold Muggli, who had also been the director of the section “food rationalization of the federal nutrition office” during World War II, tried in vain to bring forth the political discourse, which Röpke had published again in February and May of 1957. In Muggli’s words:

Any product that LG supplies to the East permits the Soviets to use their scarce resources for the production of war material. A short-termed profit-oriented view [that other Western companies might hold] stands in contrast with the long-term goals of the Soviets... Even if it might be senseless [because other companies continue doing business], we have to relinquish Eastern trade (BoD minute, January 28th 1958)

The majority of the members of the BoD, however, voted for the annulment of the resolution. The main reason, as advocated by Niederer, was that „all other companies in Switzerland and the countries around Switzerland are trading with the East.” In addition, he remarked that he had expected a „certain resonance in Switzerland [...], but the decision had not received any attention at all.” However, Niederer clearly stated that „it is not the intention to actually promote business with communist countries.” Only former customers should be served again.

The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961: The flaring up of the issue. In August 1961, more than three years later, the East-Trade-Campaign got revitalized in Switzerland when construction workers had begun to install wire entanglements and fences that later became the Berlin Wall. And this second wave of campaigning, highly debated in the press in December 1961 and January 1962 (almost 50 articles in the contextual database), now focussed entirely on trade. In particular, conservative parties and pressure groups called on the public to boycott products and goods from Eastern Europe. In addition, “corporate Switzerland” was attacked: People were requested to publish blacklists of companies doing business with the communists. Moreover, some companies had to deal with opposition from their own employees: For instance, 250 academic employees confronted the top management of CIBA Basel with a petition to terminate its relations to the East (see Fritzsche and Lohm 2006). In this climate, the Federal

Council found itself again forced to repeat its position and to speak out against the systematic use of intimidation and defamation (Meyer 1999).

The directorate of LG was also challenged to address critical questions raised by its employees. In a regular meeting with the labor representatives in October 1961, Straub-Gyr defended the revocation of their resolution that allowed serving long-standing customers in the East. He quieted the employees by restating that LG does not seek to build new relationships or accept considerably large orders from the East. “Although the directorate would be willing to break off these weak relations with the remaining customers,” Straub-Gyr continued, “the marginal volume of Eastern trade—under 0.5% of the orders received—gives no incentives to do so” (minutes of meeting with labor representatives, October 17th, 1961). This period resulted in a small and temporally limited decline in the quantity of Swiss trade with the East; this is interesting, since the Swiss were the only ones to diminish the Eastern trade volume (Meyer 1999).

The disappearance of the issue in the mid-1960s. From the mid-1960s on, the large-scale political tensions began to ease again. In Switzerland, the East-Trade-Campaigns lost their ground (Fritzsche and Lohm 2006). Although state officials treated the issue in the early 1960s with reserve, the federal bodies and Vorort wanted to expand Swiss business with Eastern Europe. The first official Swiss industrial fair in Moscow in 1966 was, for instance, an enormous statement (Meyer 1999).

LG did not participate in this upswing of Eastern trade (see appendix, Table 6.A). In 1964, an internal report by Paul Lusser, director of LG’s newly formed marketing department, suggests that LG should seek to stimulate trade with the East: On the one hand, LG should follow the “international trend” to operate in the East, on the other hand, Lusser saw an enormous market potential, as Kotschubey had foreseen in 1957 (Report January 3rd 1964). Yet changes were only made three years later. In 1967, an internal report confirms that LG’s participation

in Eastern trade was below average compared to other Swiss export companies (see appendix, Table 6.A). However, while the BoD was willing to make some adjustments in its strategy, it concluded: “We wish to limit Eastern trade along existing volumes” (LG guidelines Eastern trade, March 23rd 1967).

Discussion

In this section, I explain and discuss the empirical phenomena as presented in the historical narrative in relation to the core concepts of the issue salience model. For the observations that the model cannot explain, I seek to give plausible theoretical interpretations. The discussion of my findings is organized according to the core concepts *strategic cognition* of *issue salience* and *firm responsiveness* introduced by the issue salience model. Then I explore a different way of making sense of this case. Table 6.2 indicates these core concepts in conjunction with the empirical phenomena.

Tab. 6.2 Core concepts in conjunction with the empirical phenomena

Core concepts	Key references	Analytical level	Empirical phenomena
<p>Strategic cognition of issue salience</p> <p><i>and</i></p> <p>Firm Responsiveness</p>	<p>Bundy et al. 2013</p>	<p>Organizational (meso) level; processual dynamics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1956: In the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising, the directorate perceived the issue as reinforcing its desirable sense of self and as not related to its strategic objectives. The issue, thus, received moderate salience and presented an expressive opportunity. As a result, LG engaged with the demands of the issue in a symbolic and accommodative way. - 1957-8: Internal stakeholders, such as the sales director, perceived the East-Trade issue quite differently. As a result, the directorate engaged with the internal stakeholders and relaxed its initial resolution. - 1961: After the issue was put on the public agenda again (Berlin Wall), labor representatives confronted the directorate with the issue again. The directorate confirmed the relaxed resolution. - 1964-7: Internal stakeholders, namely the new sales director, demanded to tackle more effectively Eastern markets; the demands are only partially met: Not forcing the markets was still perceived as opportune by the directorate, although the directorate remarked that LG missed market opportunities.
<p>Negotiation of institutional order</p>	<p>Symbolic interactionist model of issue evolution (Lamertz et al. 2003)</p>	<p>macro level; processual dynamics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1954: Political agitators started creating an atmosphere against Eastern trade (e.g., Röpke). In contrast, the official interpretation pattern was focused on economic prosperity and exploitation of opportunities. - 1956: Pressure groups were successful to set public opinion against any kind of relations with communist Eastern countries; official positions, such as of the federal government and of trade associations, however, were reserved against these demands. - 1957-1960: Eventual flickering up of the East-Trade-Campaigns - 1961: After incident with the Berlin Wall, Switzerland experienced the second wave of the East-Trade-Campaigns. In response, the officials worked effectively against the atmosphere of defamation. - 1963 – the end of the 1960s: Disappearance of the issue. In contrast, official declaration of intent to reinforce presence in the Eastern markets.

Theoretical Interpretation within the Issue Salience Model

Strategic cognition of issue salience. In the issue salience model, Bundy and colleagues (2013) first consider how managerial perception is organized cognitively. To conceptualize an organizational perspective on managerial issue interpretation processes, they suggest analyzing the *cognitive structures* (or interpretation systems) of an organization, constituted by *organizational identity* and the organization's *strategic frame*. Both interpretation systems, which describe the crucial lenses used by managers to interpret the world, work simultaneously but distinctly: Organizational identity facilitates issue interpretation using an *expressive* logic, which pursues the aim of displaying and maintaining a positive self-image (Bundy et al. 2013, p. 357). Managers can hence perceive an issue as conflicting with (i.e., materially challenging or threatening), consistent with (i.e., materially confirming or reinforcing) or completely unrelated to organizational identity, which determines salience due to a motivation grounded in an expressive logic. The strategic frame, in contrast, leads to salience by invoking a motivation grounded in an *instrumental* logic, which can be described as the rational pursuit and achievement of the firm's performance objectives (Bundy et al. 2013, p. 357).

To interpret the first resolution of LG to prohibit trade with the East, I suggest that the issue salience model provides us with an initial understanding: The directorate of LG perceived the issue as consistent with its desired identity. In contrast, in relation to the strategic frame, the directorate interpreted the issue as unrelated. Indeed, LG failed to work the Eastern markets effectively after its outpost in the East (plants in East Germany and Czechoslovakia) were confiscated during the waves of nationalization of foreign assets by the communist authorities.

Bundy and colleagues (2013) further conceptualize issue salience as the perceptual outcome of the cognition process (p. 363). They suggest that the managerial perception of expressive and/or instrumental importance (i.e., whether the issue resonates with the expressive

and/or instrumental logic of the firm's interpretation systems) guides the managerial prioritization of a stakeholder issue (i.e. high, moderate, or low level of issue salience). In this sense, the East-Trade-Campaigns resonate only with LG's expressive logic. As a result, the model suggests that the issue received expressive but not instrumental salience by the directorate of LG. Therefore, I argue that the issue had moderate salience for the company and was perceived as an expressive opportunity to reinforce the company's desirable identity.

Firm responsiveness. Bundy and colleagues (2013) finally connect the perceptual outcome of issue interpretation to firm actions in the form of the construct of *firm responsiveness*. This is defined as the "degree to which a firm is willing to provide a thoughtful response to stakeholder concerns and commit to continued work on the issue" (Bundy et al. 2013, p. 352). To relate the perception of issues to actual behavior, Bundy and colleagues (2013) use the level of issue salience (high, medium, low) in order to discuss a firm's expected response. They consider both the materiality of the response (ranging from *symbolic* to *substantive*) and the general form of the response (ranging from *defensive* to *accommodative*).

By taking into account the moderate level of salience of the East-Trade issue as perceived by LG's directorate, the issue salience model expects a *symbolic accommodative* response of LG. The materiality of this response is *accommodative*, since LG engaged with the issue. The engagement then took the form of a *symbolic* response, where organizations "may seek to signal compliance with external demands, while, in reality, continuing in their own incumbent self-interest" (Bundy et al. 2013, p. 364). In this respect, I interpret LG's resolution as a form of symbolic management. Niederer's statement that he was disappointed to receive no public resonance for the resolution is informative. It is fair to conclude that the directorate hoped to reinforce a desirable public image of the company but failed to do so effectively.

To sum up, the case study demonstrates that the issue salience model introduced by Bundy and colleagues (2013) has considerable predictive power. In particular, by understanding the strategic cognition view of issue salience and responsiveness as a firm-level input-process-output model, it allows understanding the directorate's processing of the external issue and its response in the aftermath of the outbreak of the Hungarian uprising. However, my historical narrative reveals that there is a gap in the existing issue salience model. Specifically, the model does not give us guidance on how the directorate's issue interpretation and response is affected by the constraints of the socio-political environment, as my historical narrative above has highlighted. In addition, the model does not cover the subsequent internal discussion on the issue in conjunction with its evolution over time, which led to an alteration of the resolution.

Theoretical Interpretation beyond the Issue Salience Model

To develop a more fine-grained macro-level and dynamic understanding of the case, I suggest considering an issue life cycle model on the macro-level to complement the firm-level issue salience model. While earlier literature has discussed linear issue life cycles, in which issues gain importance over time (Wartick and Mahon 1994; e.g., Sethi 1979), more recent approaches inform a more contingent conceptualization by emphasizing the controversial nature of issues in political arenas. In what follows, I rely on the issue evolution model by Lamertz and colleagues (2003), while arguably also other theories would prove useful (e.g., Fligstein and McAdam 2011).

Negotiated institutional order. The issue evolution model by Lamertz and colleagues (2003) basically puts emphasis on the complex institutional environments in which actors strategically formulate and propagate issues. In such complex institutional environments, social actors are prevalingly guided by a pervasive interpretation framework (i.e., the *institutional*

order) to make sense of events, drawing on the shared norms and rules of a society. The birth of a social issue is marked when an established institutional order fails to account for the causes and consequences of new events. After an issue is set free, its evolution resembles “an ongoing sense-giving battle in which actors seek to restore the order by imposing their unique solution preferences on the situation” (Lamertz et al. 2003, p. 82). In this model, “issue evolution is ... less a natural process of fluctuating public attention” (Lamertz et al. 2003, p. 84), as conceptualizations based on institutional theory literature suggest (see Clark et al. 2015; Bonardi and Keim 2005). Rather, based on the social constructionist stance (Berger and Luckmann 1966), the meaning of an issue is continuously being framed and reframed by the involved actors across time. As the next section shows, this issue evolution model assists us in discussing and explaining the case and enhances our initial understanding.

The issue evolution model directs us to interpret the political discourse by Wilhelm Röpke and the advocates of the East-Trade-Campaigns as an (un)successful intervention into the dominant institutional order by presenting an *alternative* interpretation framework. The dominant interpretive frame of Switzerland came into being in the 1930s in response to the threat posed by Nazi Germany: The nation’s identity was constituted by a defensive hedgehog mentality reflected in the long-standing principle of neutrality (see also similar historiographic interpretations of the period by Tanner 1999; 2015).

The growing antagonism between the East and the West in the post-war period then exerted external *pressure* on the dominant interpretive framework, causing mental tension for the Swiss: While formally independent from blocs and alliances, the Swiss people deeply identified with the West, as Switzerland was regarded as the prototypical nation of the “free world”, firmly demarcated against the communist ideology. This partly led to a *structural failure* of the institutional order in which a “fundamental misalignment between the existing social arrangements and the interests and needs of actors” (Lamertz et al. 2003, p. 84) occurred. Unaware

that the top-secret Hotz-Linder agreement of 1951, in which Switzerland agreed to comply with the Western economic blockade of Eastern countries, had already undermined the Swiss policy of neutrality before, advocates of the East-Trade-Campaigns presented a solution that relieved this mental tension: The pressure groups forged a more pronounced national identity, portraying Switzerland “more westerly than the West” (Meyer 1999). However, although the pressure groups were highly effective at putting the issue on the public agenda in 1956 and 1961/62, they failed to alter and redesign the institutional order accordingly. The Federal Council and the Vorort were the main predominant actors who restrained the East-Trade-Campaigns.

Theoretical Elaboration of the Issue Salience Model for Future Research

Conceptually, this explanation of the case is significantly different from the perspectives that Bundy and colleagues (2013) and Clark and colleagues (2015) offer. In particular, it portrays the firms’ processing of and responding to issues as embedded in their socio-political surroundings, as a context factor that is mutually interacting and interdependent with the other factors of the model. In this perspective, the different discourses (interpretation frameworks), which are competing to govern the institutional order, are generating and justifying the firm-specific cognition processes and response outcomes. The difference in conceptualizing the institutional context is represented in Figure 6.3.

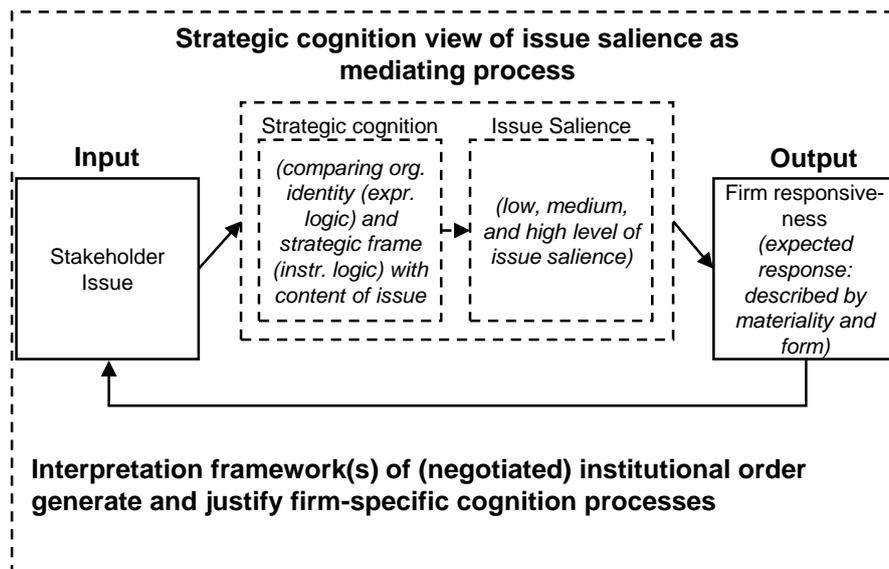


Fig. 6.3 Theoretical elaboration of Bundy et al. 2013

In the previous Figure 6.1, which illustrates Clark and colleagues' extension of the issue salience model, the political and cultural context is represented by the box *institutional attention* whose arrows point to the connecting arrow between *stakeholder issue* and *strategic cognition of issue salience*. In Figure 6.3, which represents the theoretical elaboration of this study from a social constructionist perspective, the context forms the ground of the entire figure. This representation demonstrates the role of the political and cultural context as a constitutive element within the mechanisms that drive firms' actions in response to stakeholder issues. Then the figure incorporates also possible feedback loops. In our case, Swiss companies found different solutions to the problem by drawing on the respective discourses circulating in the society that enabled the firm-specific sensemaking processes. Indeed, the LG's directorate initially drew on the political discourse introduced by Wilhelm Röpke to make sense of the developments in Hungary.

As a result, the ontology of the model has been shifted to consider the local and historically situated processes on both the organizational and macro-level of analysis. Future research is invited to build on this elaboration. For instance, a fruitful avenue might be to explore and

understand the conditions, which trigger either the firm- or macro-level sensemaking resources that direct managerial interpretation processes.

In addition, I argue that the issue salience model's understanding of interpretation systems as fixed "containers" (Kuhn 2008) is obstructive. Rather, interpretation systems should be seen as "fragile constructs subject to temporal and contextual events" (Beaulieu and Pasquero 2002, p. 103). Our case study reveals multiple contradictory interpretations of the issue which circulated within the focal firm. In contrast to the directorate, internal stakeholders perceived the emergent issue quite differently. For Kotschubey, the director of the sales department, the demands of the East-Trade-Campaigns were conflicting with both the organizational identity and the strategic objectives: To abandon existing customers behind the Iron Curtain, was in Kotschubey's eyes conflicting with the desirable image as a trusted company fostering long-term business relations. A withdrawal from the markets was in his opinion conflicting with the strategic objectives, since considerable business opportunities were expected in the East. In the subsequent negotiation processes that led to the relaxation of the resolution in 1958, Kotschubey and other internal stakeholders, such as the labor representatives, engaged with the directorate to define the appropriate meaning of the issue; a process that adjusted the firm's response to the issue.

The initial issue salience model leaves these internal developments unexplained. Bundy and colleagues (2013) suggest a conception of the firm that leads to homogenized sensemaking processes within the firm. In Figure 6.1, the straight lines of the box entailing the mediating process (strategic cognition of issue salience) represent this conception of the firm. In contrast, Figure 6.3 entails the box with dashed lines, indicating that collective sensemaking processes are fluid and polyvocal; interpretation systems are thus subject to change. In this vein and anticipating this flaw, Bundy and colleagues (2013, p. 370) suggest that future research might

explore “when issue characteristics such as institutional attention or stakeholder salience are more likely to challenge or impel change in strategic frames and organizational identity.”

Managerial implications. This elaboration of the issue salience model has also managerial implications. In the initial issue salience model, Bundy and colleagues (2013, p. 372) suggest that “firm managers . . . need only look inward and examine the firm’s identity and strategic frame to understand how the firm might respond to an issue”. Essentially, the model exempts managers of any responsibilities, if they follow the logics of their firm’s interpretation systems. In contrast, by recognizing the fluid and polyvocal characteristics of firms, my elaboration suggests that managers, deeply embedded in changing environments, are continuously encouraged to solve value-laden issues through interaction with internal and external stakeholders. In this sense, this article also entails a critique of the ethical implications of the model, which a subsequent stream of research might explore further.

Limitations

This study has limitations that should be considered. First, the historical research approach has some general limitations (Maclean et al. 2015; Rowlinson et al. 2014). For instance, historical research relies on a collection of empirical material from the past that might be framed through survivor bias. Nonetheless, this study has found creative ways to capture strategic cognition, interpretation and sensemaking processes in organizations, although Bundy and colleagues (2013, p. 371) have acknowledged that their theory, specifically the construct of issue salience, is challenging to apply empirically. This study has dealt with these challenges by critically assessing the limits and benefits of the incomplete records of a company archive in order to illuminate the firm-level processes of engaging with stakeholder issues.

Second, this study has sought to find a new best explanation to understand our case more comprehensively. To elaborate the issue salience model, I have mainly drawn on ideas of the

issue evolution model by Lamertz and colleagues (2003), while arguably other theoretical approaches might also be helpful, e.g., the sensemaking perspective (Sandberg and Tsoukas 2015), the competing institutional logics (Reay and Hinings 2009) or the strategic action fields theory (Fligstein and McAdam 2011). By incorporating the issue evolution model to complement the issue salience model, I have shifted the ontological basis of the model towards a social constructionist perspective. This decision has far-reaching consequences, as it presents challenges for theory testing from a scientific realist view of studying organizations.

Third and finally, I have asked at the outset the research questions: How did LG interpret and respond to the issue? And why was LG susceptible to the issue while most other firms continued pursuing their regular business practices? While this study has clarified the “how” (LG’s sensemaking draws on the broader societal discourses), it is limited in fully exploring the reasons behind LG’s decision (the “why”). The historical narrative and theoretical interpretation presented in this study emphasize LG’s motivation to reinforce a desirable image in public, while not focusing on personal motives of involved actors or power struggles in the BoD that might also have influenced the decision-making process.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to elaborate on the strategic cognition view of issue salience and firm responsiveness by confronting it with an empirical case study. In doing so, I propose that this study has pushed this stream of research further in many ways.

First, this study has examined in great detail how the Swiss multinational LG engaged with a public issue, namely, the evolving campaigns for stopping trade with the East. This examination is important considering that the issue salience model is rather theoretical in nature, grounded by only anecdotic evidence. This study has explicated the key concepts of the model and demonstrated its remarkable predictive power. To the best of my knowledge, this is the

first study that provides initial empirical support for the model proposed by Bundy and colleagues (2013).

Second, this study has used a striking and rather idiosyncratic case to elaborate on the issue salience model. In particular, I have emphasized the historical embeddedness of the focal company, as has been called for in the course of the “historic turn” in management and organization studies (e.g., Kipping and Üsdiken 2014; Vaara and Lamberg 2015). In doing so this study has revealed an important gap in the theoretical discussion of the issue salience literature: I have argued that in addition to the firm-centric explanation of issue salience, we must incorporate a macro-level perspective to reach a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that drive firms’ actions in response to stakeholder issues.

Third, I have started a critique in order to challenge the issue salience model. I have pointed towards the tensions and ambiguities in firms’ collective sensemaking efforts that the model conceals and have criticized the ethical assumptions inherent in the model. Future research is invited to follow this path to pursue this important stream further.

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Appendix

Table 1. Characteristics of Landis & Gyr and Swiss economy during the period of study

Characteristics	pre-pe- riod	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
# of employees in Zug*/†	-	3856	4100	Ca. 4600	Ca. 4600	Ca. 4600	5132	5402	5472	5637	5769	5713	5605	5235
# of employees in subsidiary companies*	-	3900	Ca. 4300	Ca. 4700	Ca. 4500	Ca. 4700	5438	5962	6279	6180	6891	7855	7842	7130
Annual sales ("Fakturaausgang") in million Swiss francs* ¹	-	n.d.a / ca. 132	72 / ca. 155	75 / ca. 160	76 / ca. 170	82 / 180	93 /201	103/ 224	117 / 247	132 / 266	145 293	163 / 329	175 / 359	174 / 369
% of annual sales to foreign countries (numbers of LG Zug)****	-	Ca. 60	Ca. 60	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	65	63	61.5	62.4	69.1	69	n.d.a.	70	70
% of annual sales to the Eastern bloc**	-	n.d.a	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	0.36	0.38	0.35	0.26	0.23	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
GPD per capita growth of Switzerland††	1939-1945: -0.52 1945-1950: 5.62	1950-1960: 4.47					1960-1973: 4.42					1973:-1980: 0.43		
% of Swiss trade to Eastern bloc††	1940s: 8.0	3.11	2.96	2.69	2.78	2.82	2.72	2.73	2.28	2.27	2.21	2.19	2.93	2.9
% of LG exports in relation to total Swiss exports (specific class of goods)***	-	n.d.a	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a	2.4	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.4	n.d.a.
% of LG export in relation to total Swiss exports to the Eastern bloc (specific class of goods)***	-	n.d.a	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a	0.27	0.23	0.18	0.26	0.25	0.12	n.d.a.

Archival records of the Landis & Gyr archive: * LG Annual Report 1955-1967; **LG Report Lusser, January 3rd 1964; ***LG Report June 30th 1967; ****Radio show transcript 1964.
 Secondary Literature: †Lussi (1986): Landis & Gyr (1896-1980): Eine Unternehmensgeschichte; ††Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Schweiz im 20. Jahrhundert (eds.: Halbeisen, Müller, Veyrassat).
¹ First number = sales of LG Zug; second number = numbers consolidated with worldwide subsidiaries. From 1964 onwards, only consolidated numbers published.
 n.d.a.= no data available
 Imprecise numbers (marked by "ca.") are extracted from charts.

Archival and database references.

The Archives of Contemporary History (AfZ) at the ETH Zurich, Switzerland

(<http://onlinearchives.ethz.ch/>):

The archive of Landis & Gyr, collections from 1896-1996

The archive of Schweizerische Handels- und Industrie-Verein („Vorort“), collections from 1870-2003

NESTRO documentation on Eastern trade

The Swiss Social Archives in Zurich, Switzerland

(<http://www.sachdokumentation.ch/>):

Collection on Hungarian Uprising, 1956-1959

Collection on Foreign Economic Policy: Eastern Trade, 1952-1966

Base de données des élites suisses au XXe siècle. University of Lausanne, Switzerland

(<http://www2.unil.ch/elitessuisses/>)

Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland 1848-1989

(www.dodis.ch/):

Collection on East-West-Trade (dodis.ch/T293)