

Selected Abstracts from International Business History Journals

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Christian Marx, “Der zerplatzte Traum vom industriellen Atomzeitalter: Der misslungene Einstieg westdeutscher Chemiekonzerne in die Kernenergie während der 1960er und 70er Jahre” [The short dream of an industrial nuclear age: The failed entry of the West German chemical industry into nuclear power during the 1960s and '70s]. With the increase in energy consumption during the boom years, the composition of energy sources in West Germany changed fundamentally. West German chemical companies followed the international trend towards petrochemicals and converted their production and energy generation systems to oil. But the unrestricted use of fossil fuels soon provoked concerns. As a consequence, nuclear power appeared as an attractive alternative to power generation by coal and oil. The examples of the large West German companies Hoechst, Bayer, and BASF show the connections between the chemical and nuclear industry under the conditions of increasing international competition. The Hoechst management discussed not only the question of nuclear power stations, but also considered nuclear chemistry as a potential business. In the case of BASF, the plans for a nuclear power station were more advanced than at Hoechst. The proposed location on BASF's factory premises, however, represented a distinct rejection of the current safety philosophy that could not be ignored by policymakers.

C. Edoardo Altamura, “A New Dawn for European Banking: The Euro-market, the Oil Crisis and the Rise of International Banking.” The 1970s are a crucial decade for understanding the modern financial landscape but it is still relatively unexplored in financial history. It was marked by the end of the Bretton Woods regime, the progressive liberalization of finance, the return of banking crises, and two massive energy crises. As archives are now providing new material, this article seeks to analyze a neglected aspect of the '70s that touches on all of the above-mentioned phenomena: the progressive privatization of international financial flows to Less Developed Countries (LDCs), especially in Latin

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America and Southeast Asia, and its impact on the European banking sector. After the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in 1973 and until the debt crisis of 1982, Western commercial banks assumed an increasing role in transferring huge amounts of dollars accumulated by oil-exporting countries to LDCs through the so-called "recycling" mechanism of the Euromarket. The trend marked a clear break with the past since, until the late 1960s, development finance had mostly been provided by public institutions and thus gave commercial banks a new central role in international financial matters. Many LDCs became subject to the imperatives of private institutions and prisoners of a debt trap throughout the '80s.

Robrecht Declercq, "Transnational Entrepreneurs? German Entrepreneurs in the Belgian Fur Industry (1880 to 1913)." This article examines a set of German immigrant entrepreneurs in the Belgian fur industry before the First World War. Their role as transnational entrepreneurs organizing cross-border firm activities in relation to economic integration and trade intensification between Belgium and Germany before the war is questioned, in contrast to multinational businesses, which are traditionally seen to be the agents of business globalization. Most German entrepreneurs in the Belgian fur industry were embedded in two contexts, that of the fur industry in Leipzig, the epicenter of the German fur industry, and Brussels, with its booming urban luxury consumption. On the one hand, the article focuses on the advantages of transnational entrepreneurship in organizing foreign trade, such as knowledge of the country of arrival and flexibility. As big businesses were rare in this sector, immigrant entrepreneurs constituted an attractive alternative for small- to medium-sized businesses in the organization of cross-border activities.

Martijn Lak, "'The Rhine in Ruins': The Consequences of World War II for Rhine Shipping between the Netherlands and Germany, 1945 to 1957." When the guns fell silent in Europe after the Third Reich's unconditional surrender in May 1945, the Netherlands was confronted with the fact that Germany, its most important trading partner since the late nineteenth century, was in ruins. In the prewar trade relations between the two countries, Rhine shipping and transit via Rotterdam had played an important role. After the Second World War, however, this was out of the question. Not only was Germany and especially its infrastructure in ruins, it was also occupied by the victorious Allies, whose strict autarkic policy was harmful to surrounding countries, especially to the Netherlands. Much has been written on the Allied occupation of Germany, but far less on the consequences of this policy for Germany's neighbors.

Matthieu Leimgruber, “Kansas City on Lake Geneva’: Business Hubs, Tax Evasion, and International Connections around 1960.” This article retraces the controversies that followed the arrival of four hundred U.S. multinational enterprises in Switzerland around 1960. If U.S. firms were present all over Europe, many chose Switzerland to locate regional headquarters and special base companies that transferred revenues and profits originating from other subsidiaries in order to benefit from low taxation levels and avoid costly repatriation in the United States. These tax deferral practices were considered by the Kennedy administration as harmful tax evasion and led to diplomatic and public condemnations of the Swiss tax haven. This article analyzes how multinational enterprises, international tax experts, as well as Swiss financial and diplomatic circles, resisted U.S. attempts to fight tax evasion at the domestic, bilateral, and multilateral levels.

Christian Möller, “Zwischen Gestaltungseuphorie, Versagen und Ohnmacht: Umwelt, Staat und volkseigene Wirtschaft in der DDR” [Between euphoria of action, failure, and impotence: Environment, state, and people’s economy in the GDR]. The environmental history of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is characterized by a strong discrepancy: While the East German state in the ’80s was in ecological crisis and Socialist Unity Party leadership and state security responded to a social commitment to the environment with repression, approximately a decade before, a political and social awakening had taken place that ended with extensive environmental legislation and new environmental institutions. What was the environmental policy that produced such a discrepancy? The article examines the relationship between the environment, the state, and the people-owned economy in the GDR. It’s about the question of how state actors tried since the ’60s to include the businesses and combines in a newly developed environmental policy and how state and company practices interacted with social developments.

Julia Brüggemann, “Die Ozonschicht als Verhandlungsmasse: Die deutsche Chemieindustrie in der Diskussion um das FCKW-Verbot 1974 bis 1991” [Negotiating the ozone layer: The role of the German chemical industry in the discussion on the CFC ban, 1974 to 1991]. Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) was produced and widely used by the chemical industry until the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was agreed to in 1987. However, the discussion on the prohibition of CFC first started in the ’70s following research on its damaging effects on

the ozone layer by Mario J. Molina and F. Sherwood Rowland. This article aims to answer the question of how the different actors within the chemical industry reacted to the discussion to forbid this profitable substance. Companies had to learn how to cope with environmental problems, reacting to the emergence of environmentalist values in society in the 1970s. The article focusses on German companies and compares them with U.S.-based Du Pont to show the scope of action different companies had in solving the new problems, as required by the public and legislators. The reaction of the companies to the planned CFC ban cannot be explained with a simple challenge-and-response model, but has to be seen in the complex structure of national, international and scientific developments regarding the CFC discussion.

Hendrik Ehrhardt, "Umweltpolitik in der Stromwirtschaft: Vom Kostentreiber zur Legitimationsinstanz?" [Utility companies and environmental politics: Clean air as financial and legitimate question]. This article focuses on the environmental politics of utility companies in the 1970s and 1980s, analyzing their stance and actions on upcoming environmental questions, especially clean air. Utility companies are not known as classical actors in environmental issues, since environmental protection does not seem economically profitable; moreover, it is seen as costly. In the German example, keeping the air clean was one of the main roots of environmental politics. The main political goal was to reduce emissions, especially of power stations, by installing filters within a short period of time. This political claim meant huge investments for the utility companies. They developed and tested different techniques and, finally, installed expensive filters. However, utility companies remained in the center of environmental criticism. Utility companies tried to solve the problem of emission control mainly by lobbying and public relations, but at the same time environmental issues became a question of legitimacy. At the end of the 1980s, this resulted in a significant reduction of emissions leading to cleaner air.

Monika Poettinger, "Milan in the 1850s: A Merchant Economy." In the 1850s the economy of Lombardy was characterized by extensive networks of personal relations, credit by trust, and family businesses and had no use for Gerschenkronian substitution or modern corporations. Wealth was maximized by maintaining the mercantile identity of the city, while manufacturing innovation was pursued only when economically profitable or strategic to further growth. Economic development resulted from individual investment decisions of merchant houses, private bankers, and foreign entrepreneurs, not government policies nor strategies of universal banks. In this essay the case will be made that such a

merchant economy, defined by extremely high retail ratios, shunned limited liability and entrepreneurs' restricted control over their enterprises. Capital democratization was pursued only in the cases of utilities and philanthropic companies. Thanks to a sample that includes extensive data on almost two hundred firms in existence in Milan from 1852 to 1861, collected from the surviving documents of Milan's Chamber of Commerce, it is possible to reconstruct the mechanisms governing this economy: how liquidity was collected and distributed; how partnerships were formed, inside which social circles partners were found; how much kinship ties determined business decisions; what criteria proved relevant in the investment decision making processes; and how innovation and entrepreneurship were rewarded.

Entreprises et histoire

[Companies and history] Vol. 79 (2015):

Thomas Depecker and Nathalie Joly, "La Terre et ses manufacturiers: L'introduction d'une raison gestionnaire dans les domaines agricoles (1800–1850)" [The land and its manufacturers: The introduction of management rationality in agricultural estates (1800–1850)]. This article contributes to the analysis of the reform of quantification and use of numbers in farms during the first half of the nineteenth century. Research on the "productivist" ethos and its diffusion in the industrial world has generated a comprehensive literature that is focused mainly on techniques to make use of bodies at work and on disciplines that are specific of closed-in large-scale enterprises. Historians of labor and management, however, rarely take agriculture as an object of study despite the fact that at the start of a new phase of agrarian capitalism agents of "agricultural progress" were enthusiastic about and fascinated by the prospect of optimizing the use of animal and human labor in the sector. In the tradition of eighteenth-century engineers, they developed rigorous methodologies to investigate the use of land, people, and animals that are comparable to the advances obtained, albeit more systematically, in the industrial sector.

Mohammed Ali Dakkam, "Quelques aspects inexplorés de l'histoire managériale des chemins de fer en France: Les méthodes de calcul du prix de revient (1842–1883)" [Some unexplored aspects of the management history of French railway companies: The costing methods (1842–1883)]. This study focuses on the management practices of French

railway companies in the calculation of costs. The analysis of both the accounting literature and company practices highlights a gap between two types of knowledge. There is theoretical knowledge developed in the writings of engineers and practical knowledge that does not fully reflect the rich insights generated by the theoretical developments. This gap between theory and practice was caused partly by the fulfillment of public service obligations imposed on railway companies but also by conflicts between different stakeholders who sought to capture accounting information and to legitimize their position in the management of the railway companies.

Nathalie Angelé-Halgand and Thierry Garrot, “Discipliner par le chiffre: L’hôpital financiarisé au risque de la réification?” [Discipline by the numbers: Hospitals under a regime of financialization facing the risk of reification]. This article analyzes, from a critical perspective, the process of the financialization of French hospitals and the impact it has had on personnel matters. The analysis uses Michel Foucault’s theoretical work—in particular the recent publication of his lectures on bio-power—and Axel Honneth’s framework on reification. We show how numbers are the key to the disciplinary edifice that guarantees permanent monitoring that is mostly centered on medical doctors and their staff. Initially highlighting how the neoliberal prism leads to the financialization of health services, the paper then analyzes the process of building the hospital “panopticon” and concludes by documenting the emerging signs of the reifying of what is human, as a consequence of the establishment of governance from a distance.

Rémi Tréhin-Lalanne, “Le ‘miroir’ de la comparaison internationale: Politiques et mises en scène des chiffres sur l’éducation dans la ‘société de la connaissance’” [Through the looking glass of the international comparison: Politics and publication of numbers concerning education in the “knowledge society”]. This article examines the role of numbers in the “new European governance” through an ethnographic analysis of an international conference on comparative educational systems. The comparison model promoted at this meeting exclusively used quantification tools, developed jointly by consultancies, national bureaucracies, and supranational institutions, mainly UNESCO, OECD, and the European Commission. The use of numbers and the power that they wield are studied in their three dimensions: technical, normative, and symbolic.

Corine Eyraud, “Réflexions pour une sociologie de la quantification statistique et comptable” [Towards a sociology of quantification: Accounting and statistics]. Since its inception, sociology has used statistical

data to analyze and understand global society or specific social phenomena. Until recently, however, very few sociological studies critically questioned the data they used, considering them as measuring a pre-existing reality. It is only since the 1980s that certain sociologists have started to analyze the categories on which such figures are based. This article first highlights how and why calculative devices, whether statistical or accounting, are research topics of relevance to social sciences and particularly to sociology. A second objective is to show that social scientists can use these devices as a lens to examine the transformations of a specific social field or organization.

Catherine Vuillermot-Febvet, "Le chiffre: De l'absence à l'obsession, l'exemple du discours de Paribas à ses actionnaires de 1872 à nos jours" [The figures: From absence to obsession, a case study of Paribas's discourse to its shareholders from 1872 until today]. This study analyzes the use of figures in the annual reports to shareholders of the French bank Paribas. For reasons of business confidentiality, the communication from Paribas to shareholders was initially limited for a century and the bank used figures sparingly, concentrating mainly on accounting figures. Over the last fifty years, however, the company's accounting and financial data increased significantly, allowing for comparisons and evaluations. As they evolved into both arguments and a language unto themselves, such figures also became a basis for strategic decisions as their use moved from a posteriori to a priori. They described past, present, and future in an obsessive way. While they were ancillary and subordinate in the past, such figures now represent standards and beliefs and have become a kind of new religion.

Mathieu Floquet and Marc Nikitin, "L'illusion d'informer: Étude de l'information comptable dans les revues internes (1954–1982)" [The illusion of informing: A study of financial information in company newsletters (1954–1982)]. This study focuses on financial information between 1954 and 1982 in company newsletters distributed to the wage earners of three large French steel companies: Schneider and Co., De Wendel and Co., and Usinor. The research shows that financial information appears, disappears, and then reappears. These appearances are not time dependent as they reflect company decision-making processes and managerial challenges. In periods of major restructuring, negative financial information is thus widely disclosed while in times of prosperity, company newsletters focus on the day-to-day activities of plants and do not raise accounting issues. Finally, the study provides a summary of situations in which accounting information is disclosed and of those where it disappears. Investigating the underlying industrial

relations indicates that this practice can be interpreted as an attempt to alter the dynamics of the labor relations game in favor of management. Overall, however, the irregular nature of disclosure means that it only offers the illusion that it is informing.

Eugénie Briot, “Le 5 de chanel, numéro gagnant de la parfumerie française (1973–2012)” [Chanel N°5, the winning number of French perfumery (1973–2012)]. In numerous respects Chanel N°5 is a mythical product of French perfumery. Ninety years after it was created, it remains one of the best-selling perfumes in the world. The reasons for such long-lasting success are worthy of analysis. The marketing of the perfume and the adaptation of its particularly malleable image were studied over a forty-year period. Twelve television advertising campaign films produced from 1973 to 2012 were studied to highlight the discourses and motifs favored by the brand. The explanations given by the brand itself for the success of N°5 were investigated to emphasize the success factors of the perfume. The first of them was the choice of an abstract noun as a form of strong symbolism that was likely to accompany the perfume for decades and to evolve over time. In addition, it was able to construct an intricate image, capable of integrating any motif, of which only the most relevant are allowed to remain over time.

Béatrice Touchelay, “La ‘fabuleuse’ histoire de l’indice des prix de détail en France” [The “fabulous” story of the index of retail prices in France]. The “fabulous” story of the index of retail prices in France is that of the evolution of a social and political marker whose development parallels that of increased government intervention in the economic growth and the social organization of contemporary France. It also reflects the development of the machinery of the government statistical administration which obtained the necessary resources to provide quality indicators gradually and over time. The appearance of inflation at the beginning of the last century and its exacerbation during two world wars and reconstructions led to social and political demand for, among other things, a relevant indicator of the evolution of the purchasing power of workers. The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) was in the process of developing this indicator and the political authorities seized upon it. The minimum wage was indexed to INSEE’s retail price index and the mechanism of the sliding scale of wages was implemented between the liberation of France and the introduction of austerity in 1983. As a result, INSEE and its indicator became subject to significant pressure and criticism, from both governments and unions. The disassociation of wages and prices and the slowdown in inflation defused tensions and also suited the political will to insure a stronger hold of the

private sector through the production of the indicator. As a result, a new era of economic, social, and political history began in France.

Philippe Verheyde, “La bataille des chiffres des réparations ou les étranges calculs de monsieur Keynes” [The battle of figures for war reparations, or the strange arithmetic of Mr. Keynes]. This article focuses on the figures for war reparations and on how they were constructed and from which perspectives. The analysis is based on a critical reading of the founding work of John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, a book that met with immense success and that has a continuing impact. The article analyzes in detail the calculations made by the British economist to underline their limits and their potential errors.

Ève Lamendour, “Gérer l’erreur: Le quotidien décisionnel d’un institut de sondage” [Managing errors: Decision making as the everyday life of a French poll institute]. This research focuses on one of the leading companies among the private French polling institutes that provide clients with political, advertising, and marketing studies. Based on a sequence of participant observations conducted between 1989 and 1991, it describes the work of market research specialists and their intermediate managers. The analysis stresses the gap that confronts these intellectual workers on a daily basis. On the one hand, they are required to produce high-quality research that builds the company’s reputation while on the other hand, they must manage the inevitable flow of errors appearing in these studies.

Red de Estudios de Historia de Empresas
[Business history studies network bulletin]
No. 18 (September 2014):

The business history studies network (REDHE, by its acronym in Spanish) is pleased to publish the eighteenth issue of its virtual bulletin. The “Debates” section comments on the economics book that took the world by storm at the beginning of this year. Lavih Abraham’s review of *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* by Thomas Piketty presents a future research agenda in political economy, which includes some of the discussions raised by Piketty. Three other books are reviewed in this issue. Javier Vidal comments on a compilation of country case studies on business groups and family firms in Latin America (Martin Monsalve, ed., 2014). María Inés Barbero reviews a book on the life of

Cesare Civita, an Italian publisher who arrived in the late 1930s in Argentina (Eugenia Scarzanella, 2013). Daniel Moyano considers a recent state-of-the-art book on Colombian business history literature by Carlos Dávila, Joaquín Viloria, and Jorge Elías Caro (2013).

Also in this issue, under “Resources,” there is an invitation to browse the site of the Harvard initiative on creating emerging markets, the network of biographical studies in Latin America, and European Historical Economic Society blog. The section “Doctoral and Master Theses” presents the summary of a doctoral thesis in history recently submitted by Grisele Lemiez on labor relations in the cement industry (IEHS-FCH-UNCPBA, “Relaciones laborales paternalistas, identidad y clase obrera en la industria del cemento, Olavarría, 1940–1970”). There are also summaries of a dissertation in history by Elena Salerno on the railway’s technocracy between 1909 and 1948 in Argentina (Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, “El Estado empresario antes del Estado empresario: La burocracia técnica en los Ferrocarriles del Estado, 1909–1948”) and a master’s thesis in economic sociology by Alejandro Dulitzky on the internationalization of the economic elites (Instituto de Altos Estudios Sociales, Universidad Nacional e General San Martín, “Extranjerización económica, ¿internacionalización de las elites? Empresas transnacionales, elite empresarial e internacionalización de las carreras directivas en la Argentina del último cuarto del siglo XX”). To close this bulletin, the section on archives for business history describes the SITRAC archive, which contains the files of the Concord Union.

No. 19 (December 2014):

The business history studies network (REDHE) is pleased to publish the nineteenth issue of its virtual bulletin. Divided in six sections, the bulletin presents a thorough review of 2014’s most important publications and events within the business history discipline in Latin America.

In the first section, “Debates,” the editors present a continuation of a discussion on gender and business history. In August, the history, business and entrepreneurship newsletter (School of Management, Universidad de los Andes, Colombia) published a dossier on women in business history, opening the debate on gender issues in the discipline. María Inés Barbero and Andrea Lluch show that only a few studies in Latin America have focused on gender; hence the invitation to pursue a historical revision of women in business. In this issue, two books are reviewed. Evangelina Tumini comments on a book about industrial policy, entrepreneurs, bureaucracy, and Peronism (Belini, 2014). María Inés

Barbero reviews a study on the history of market research in Colombia (Ospina et al., 2014).

Also in this issue, the section “Resources” presents an invitation to browse the Harvard conference proceedings on “New Perspectives on Course Development on the Business History of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.” There is also a call to use international history statistics and the Digital Humanities Network.

The section “Doctoral and Master Theses” presents the summaries of two theses recently submitted by Alejandra Landaburu (PhD in Social Sciences, Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, “Los empresarios azucareros y la cuestión social: Tucumán, 1904–1930”) and José María Saccomanno (MSc in History, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, “Los ganaderos argentinos y el frigorífico nacional”). Lastly, the section on archives for business history calls attention to the Pemex archive, a newly available online source.