Rhetorical History as Institutional Work

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Abstract

Rhetorical history has emerged as a useful theoretical construct that bridges the long recognized gap between historical and organizational scholarship. Despite its growing popularity, the precise nature of rhetorical history as a construct, its scope conditions, and its utility in resolving critical issues in historical organizational analysis remains unclear. This paper addresses these issues. We define rhetorical history and contextualize the construct by elaborating its relationship to associated concepts like collective memory, rhetoric, and narrative. We ground the construct by reviewing literature that has applied rhetorical history in both theory and empirical research. Our inductive review identifies four recurring themes in which rhetorical history is used to construct perceptions of; (a) continuity and discontinuity, (b) similarity and difference, (c) winners and losers, and (d) morality and immorality. We conclude with a discussion of how rhetorical history is an essential mechanism of institutional work.

Keywords: Rhetorical history, Collective memory, Institutional work, Social-symbolic resources

Introduction

All social entities have a history. Nation states, organizations, even individuals are historically constituted subjects. Some social entities have a highly developed historical consciousness—a heightened awareness of their status as a historically constituted entity with a past and future, in constant conversation with the present. Some of these entities, particularly those that achieve the status of institutions—the nation state, the Catholic Church, the British monarchy—go beyond passive awareness of their historical nature and strategically manage their history.

Of all institutions, the nation state has developed the most sophisticated set of practices for managing history (Anderson, 1983). Monuments, museums, and educational curricula are all martialled to construct a carefully crafted narrative that disguises the nation state, not as a product of self-interested institutions but instead as a 'natural' product of history (VanSledright, 2008; Bouchard, 2013). The invented nature of these historical narratives is often more transparent in the early stages of nationhood where "the nation appears as the newly realized, sovereign subject of History embodying a moral and political force" (Duara, 1995: 4). It is typically in the early stages of nationhood, when the institutional veil that obscures the role of history in creating institutions is not yet fully woven, that we can observe the often clumsy efforts by which elites use tenuous interpretations of the past and invented traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) to impose a sense of collective memory (Trevor-Roper, 1983) and common destiny (Ben-Yudah, 1996) on a diverse population. These moments offer some of the best opportunities to observe the raw application of techniques of rhetorical history and its utility in nascent stages of institutional work.

Corporations are beginning to mimic the nation-state's capacity for using history to manage identity (Roowan, 2009), enroll stakeholders (Suddaby, Israelsen, Mitchell & Lim, 2021) or to construct a shared culture (Dellheim, 1986; Rowlinson & Hassard, 1993). Most large corporations have museums, archives, and historians (Lasewicz, 2015) and are learning how history can be used to manage the perceptions and social value judgements of key stakeholders. By mimicking the way in which government mobilizes history to maintain power, corporate managers have acquired an awareness that the past, and the historical narratives we create to make sense of it, is a valuable form of institutional work that can transmute stories of the past into material resources and power in the future. Organizational scholars are slowly beginning to understand the unique ontological status of the past in human consciousness and the important role history plays in enacting and legitimating institutions.

In a classic text first published over six decades ago, C. Wright Mills (2000: 143) observed that "history is the shank of social study". Mills believed that we could never have a robust theory of social institutions without a foundational understanding of history. Mills was not interested in the objectivity of history or its ontological status as science or literature, a debate that he said was "neither important or interesting" (Mills, 2000: 143). Rather, he wanted to understand the process by which historical facts were produced, which societal institutions were allowed to write history, how social facts become naturalized as history over time and, most profoundly, how historical interpretations of collective memory and social judgement are used by societal institutions to legitimate power. Mills understood that history was an essential component in the social construction of reality. He was intuitively aware of the essential dualism of history, that it is both the product of and the creator of dominant social institutions. And his mission was to encourage social theorists to empirically explore this recursive relationship.

Despite the six decades that have passed since Mills' insight, however, social scientists have largely failed to address the mutually constitutive relationship between history and social structure. The time for a more focused study of how institutions use history to constitute themselves is now. We live in a time in which "official" history is openly contested and the "settled" past is an arena for battles over what constitutes collective memory. Just as the use of history by established institutions to reinforce their power is a form of institutional work, so too is the contestation of history by social movements. Both incumbents and challengers recognize that the capacity to define history is a path to power. As such, rhetorical history holds the promise of focusing theoretical and empirical attention on the inherent duality of institutions and history.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the distinctiveness of rhetorical history as a field of inquiry and the potential that it provides for understanding processes of institutional creation, maintenance and change. Defined as "the strategic use of the past as a persuasive strategy to manage key stakeholders of the firm" (Suddaby, Foster & Quinn-Trank, 2010: 157), rhetorical history draws attention to how the careful cultivation of one's social-symbolic resources—legitimacy, authenticity, identity, status, reputation—can generate tremendous advantages in competing for material and economic resources and in motivating processes of societal and institutional change. Our core argument in this paper is that *rhetorical history is the primary mechanism by which institutions are created, maintained and disrupted. As such, rhetorical history is an essential tool of institutional work*.

We present our argument in three stages. In the first stage, we define rhetorical history by reviewing its foundational assumptions and describing its relationship to associated concepts like collective memory, rhetoric, and narrative. In the second stage, we contextualize the construct by reviewing literature that has applied rhetorical history in both theory and empirical research. Our inductive review identifies four recurring themes in which rhetorical history is used to construct perceptions of; (a) continuity and discontinuity, (b) similarity and difference, (c) winners and losers, and (d) morality and immorality. In the third stage we demonstrate how each of these perceptions contributes to our understanding of distinct forms of institutional work; (a) institutional change, (b) institutional maintenance or identity, (c) institutional agency, and (d) institutional legitimacy. We conclude with a discussion of how the construct of rhetorical history contributes to a better understand the relationship between social structure and human action. We begin with a discussion of six foundational assumptions of rhetorical history.

Foundational Assumptions

1. The past is not history

The observation that the past and history are related but independent concepts is a defining characteristic of modern historiography (Lowenthal, 1985; Carr, 1961; Gronbeck, 1995). The past is everything that occurred since the beginning of time. It is a vast, almost infinite accumulation of events, few of which are empirically accessible. History is how we interpret the past, how we assemble the events of the past that we know and give meaning to those events in the present. Accounts of the past are inevitably partial, pieced together from fragments of evidence that, despite the best efforts of well-intentioned researchers, offer an imperfect glimpse of a reality that may never be known but will, instead, be constructed from a tentative consensus of opinions, some expert, most not, and will be revised as new evidence occurs. Most critically, much of the evaluation of the various interpretations of the past will depend on how well those interpretations fit with prevailing cultural myths, cultural values, and social norms that reinforce collectively held cognitions of what the entity's history should be.

There was a time in which professional historians aspired to a "strict presentation of the facts, contingent and unattractive though they may be" (von Ranke, 1981, p. 58). Today, however, even the most empiricist of historians recognize the fragile contingency upon which interpretations of the past are constructed (e.g., Evans, 2012), and many have come to see their professional project as the "never ending telling of […] stories [so that] the dead past [is] reborn into memory to become living history, over and over and over again" (Cronen, 2012). The historian is thus engaged, not in value-free inquiry, but in the institutional work of "helping the group he or she addresses and celebrates to survive and prosper in a treacherous and changing world by knowing more about itself and others" (McNeill, 1985, p. 10).

The work of the historian, thus, involves more than only *historical facts*, it also involves *social facts*—concepts that arise from collective understandings that transcend the individual but, as they become reified, constrain and control individual behavior (Durkheim, 2014). As Weber (1958) observed, the object of human cognition is not the empirical fact; rather, it is the subjective meaning-complex of action. Historiography plays an important role in the creation of social facts. An event in the past, like the Russian Revolution, only become a historical object through the act of the historian, the commemorator, or the biographer, who ascribe significance and meaning to the event (Goddard, 1973; Stern, 1962).

It is the vastness and ambiguity of the past that makes it such a valuable resource for actors (entrepreneurs, organizations, institutions) with some skill in the realm of institutional work. The expanse of the past provides an inexhaustible resource of events that, through repeated telling and re-telling, gain their objective reality as social facts, not through direct or personal experience of the original event, but rather through one's vicarious experience of the original event in a story that, ultimately:

> "is experienced as an objective reality. It has a history that antedates the individual's birth and is not accessible to his biographical recollection. It was there before he was born, and it will be there after his death. This history itself, as the tradition of the existing institutions, has the character of objectivity" (Berger & Luckman, 1966: 77).

It is through repetition that rhetorical history moves from interpretation to social fact, or, in Berger and Luckmann's (1966: 58) terms, it gains 'exteriority' and becomes "experienced as possessing a reality of [its] own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact". Social facts are not "discovered", but rather are "constructed" (Suddaby, 2018). The capacity to assemble events from the vastness of the past and make them appear as "social givens", i.e., give them objective status through institutionalized repetition, is a critical component of rhetorical history.

2. History is a story about the past

The tension between understanding history as an empirical, versus a literary-discursive, endeavor is as old as history itself (Veyne, 1988). The Scottish economist Adam Smith was among the first in the modern era to observe that, despite claims of objectivity, many histories used sparse facts to deliver moral and political lessons to their audiences (Pocock, 1999). Perhaps the most eloquent and influential articulation of this tension has been offered by the American historian Hayden White (1973), whose seminal text *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, demonstrated how the narrative aspects of history, particularly its recurring tropes, are often far more influential than facts in the elevation of a particular view of the past to the status of received history.

The claim to pure objectivity made by past generations of historians has been seriously damaged by a series of critics, including Foucault (1969), Carr (1986), Novick (1988), Veyne (1988) and Hacking (2002), each of whom show how historical narratives of objectivity and universal knowledge break down to stories that reinforce the interpretive framework of elite discourses and prevailing culture. Academic historians have accepted, sometimes reluctantly, the essential hybridity of their scholarship as both art and science; and some have worked, along with philosophers of history, to develop nuanced understandings of the role of narrative in the production of historical knowledge (e.g., Munslow, 2008; Roberts, 2001). History can be seen as "a bivocal discursive practice…an argumentatively formed narrative—simultaneously a story and an interpretive or realistic argument about the past" (Gronbeck, 1995: 49). More critically, once understood as a claim to truth rather than truth itself, history becomes a valuable tool for institutional work because it is valued for its plausibility rather than its accuracy.

It is important to note, however, that despite the infinite vastness of the past, and its' potential plasticity as a social-symbolic resource, there are limits imposed on which elements of the past can legitimately be used to construct history. These limits are drawn, not from scientific historiography, but from culture which places constraints, not on objectivity, but on plausibility. Appadurai (1981) reminds us that culture determines plausibility by placing constraints on who can authoritatively narrate the history, the degree of continuity between the authority who speaks for the past and the historical story they tell, the degree to which the history told conforms to prevailing values and the overall coherence of the story in terms of its interdependence with other understandings of the past. All of these measures of plausibility are determined by whether there is a cultural consensus, in the present, about the plausibility of a narrative about the past.

3. Stories about the past emerge in an ever-moving present.

The essential hybridity of history as partly truth and partly fiction makes any historical narrative a prisoner of the time in which it is told. The primary contribution of critical perspectives on history is the observation that, despite their best efforts, historians (professional or otherwise) can never fully escape the time and culture in which they conduct their research and write the history. As a result, any history must be evaluated by critically examining the socio-cultural schema within which it was constructed. We tend to assess the validity of any history by the degree to which it fits with prevailing assumptions of what constitutes a social fact. As Berger and Luckman (1966) suggest, social facts are more likely to assume the status of objective facts when they conform to culturally determined schema. The tension between objectivity and subjectivity makes history a potent symbolic resource and, in turn, makes rhetorical history a powerful form of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006).

Given that a history is distinct from the past and is shaped both by the teller and the time in which it is told, a growing number of historians have extended their professional project to focus on the practical work that history performs in society. The ideas of "public history" and "popular history" are not new. Carl Becker (1932) criticized the elitism of his fellow academic historians—arguing that:

> *The history that lies inert in unread books does not work in the world. The history that does work in the world, the history that influences the course of history, is living history, that pattern of remembered events, whether true or false, that enlarges and enriches the collective specious present, the specious present of Mr. Everyman.*

The history created by professionals represents only a small part of the much broader category of knowledge termed by Beckert as "living history". In their analysis of the role of history in collective memory, Rosenzweig and Thelen (1988) analyzed semi-structured telephone surveys with 1,453 Americans to conclude that the vast majority were deeply and passionately enmeshed in stories and memories of the past in "the business of everyday life" (p. 18). They look at photographs with family or friends, actively preserve memories and mementos for the future, watch movies about the past, go to reunions with family or friends focused on shared experience, visit history museums and historic sites, and read popular books about the past. The idea of "living history", thus, represents the subset of history that is carried forward in collective memory.

4. Collective memory provides the cognitive context in which historical facts become accepted as social facts

Collective memory refers to the shared interpretations of the past held by a social entity. The term is derived from the French social theorist Maurice Halbwachs who observed that many elements of individual memory were not based on recollections of direct experiences of the individual, but rather were derived from family stories about events in which the individual participated. Through multiple retellings within the family unit, Halbwachs (1950) observed, the event may become subsumed into individual memory. Halbwachs, thus, revealed how the memory of individuals is often constructed by memories “in the group” (Wertsch, 2008).

The British psychologist Frederic Bartlett extended Halbwachs’ version of collective memory by demonstrating how “social organisation gives a persistent framework into which all detailed recall must fit, and it very powerfully influences both the manner and the matter of recall” (Bartlett, 1995: 296). In Bartlett’s (1932) famous War of the Ghosts study, respondents read a story taken from Indigenous folklore and asked to recall it at various intervals over time. Bartlett observed that the parts of the story that were most consistently remembered were those elements of the story that fit in the subjects’ cultural schema. Elements of the original story that did not fit with individuals’ shared experiences, knowledge and cultural expectations were most likely to be forgotten.

Bartlett’s analysis predates the more well-known experiment Herbert Simon developed with chess players showing that the Grand-master’s superior recall happens only whenever the disposition of the pieces are not random but represent common patterns in the game (Chase & Simon, 1973; Simon & Chase, 1988). Both studies reinforce the core insight that the prevailing culture of a society determines which events of the past are important and therefore remembered, and which events of the past are unimportant and therefore forgotten.

Halbwachs and Bartlett’s core ideas form the basis of modern social memory studies, which views memory as an intrinsic component of social life (Olick & Robbins, 1998) and analyzes how social practices like rituals, tradition, commemoration and cultural myths connect individuals and societies across time and shape social institutions, practices, and behaviours. The construct of collective memory and its associated terms—cultural memory (Assman & Czaplicak, 1995, communicative memory (Welzer, 2008), social memory (Olick & Robbins, 1998)—has been extensively elaborated in empirical studies of nation states (e.g., Schwartz, 2003, Spillman, 1997), social movements (e.g., Armstrong & Crage, 2006; Hall, 2005), and communities (e.g., Assmann, 2010; Orr, 1990).

Collective memory has emerged recently in organization studies as a counterpoint to the relatively simplistic models used to explain organizational memory. Early empirical (Casey, 1994) and theoretical (Walsh & Ungson, 1991) accounts of organizational memory tended to focus on the instrumental aspects of memory as an extension of organizational learning and understood it as a relatively mechanical process of acquiring, storing and retrieving information (Levitt & March, 1988). Rowlinson, Booth, Clark, Delahaye & Proctor (2010), however, invoked the concept of organizational mnemonics to demonstrate how corporations increasingly appropriate the collective memory of a society for commercial interests, through corporate museums, historical visitor attractions and related activities.

Contemporary applications of collective memory to organizations have come to focus on the core observation of rhetorical history—i.e., that collectively held memories of the past often form the building blocks of more complex social-symbolic resources such as organizational culture, leadership and identity. Anteby and Molnar (2012), for example, show how collective memory creates continuity of identity and persistence in an organization. They describe how a

French aeronautics firm used internal communications to shape the collective memory of the organization by structural omission of some parts of the firm's history and pre-emptive selection of other parts of the firm's history to reinforce the French character of the organization and strategically forget American and German contributions to the firm's success. Related studies have focused on the use of core competencies (Glynn, 2000), corporate museums (Ravasi, Rindova & Stigliani, 2019; Nissley & Casey, 2002), artifacts (Schultz & Hernes, 2013; Hatch & Schultz, 2017), and context (Illia & Zamparini, 2016; Oertel & Thommes, 2015) as mechanisms by which collective memory can be transmuted into forms of organizational identity.

5. Narrative Theory provides the technical tools for "doing" rhetorical history

Stories are the primary mechanism by which collective memory is created, maintained and changed. So profound are stories to collective memory that, in some studies, the stories that sustain the identity and collective memory of an organization persist long after the organization itself has ceased to exist (Sennett, 1998; Walsh & Bartunek, 2013). Stories are also the primary mechanism by which history is created, maintained, and changed (White, 1973). While the term 'history' has acquired a more specific meaning today that is detached from its roots in narrative, prior to the 15th Century, in Middle English there was no distinction between the word "history" and "story". Some languages, such as Portuguese and Spanish, have adapted to this narrative view of history and have removed the distinction between the two terms and use "history" meaning both history and story.

The link between history, collective memory and storytelling is most explicit in narrative theory where scholars such as Bakhtin (1986), Vygotsky (1987) and Bruner (1990, 2002) have each developed cultural theories that emphasize the power of stories to shape both collective memory and formal history. Collective memory provides the textual resources, a stock of stories about the past, that provide the raw material, or what Bruner (1990) termed the "cultural tool kit" from which more formal accounts of the past can be constructed. While the events themselves have a degree of resilience that resists gross misinterpretation, the historical record is never perfect and, more typically, provide a disorganized sequence of events looking for a degree of coherence and meaning that can only be provided by a story. More often than not, such meaning arises when the past is put to some form of use in the present, implying that history is typically told with some motive, intent or agency.

6. History is told with persuasive intent

The term "rhetoric" used in the construct "rhetorical history" connotes that historical narratives typically arise with persuasive intent. It also highlights the fact that discourse about the past is a specific, but highly effective, component of persuasive rhetoric. Classical theories of rhetoric focused on the highly agentic, purposeful, and skillful use of language, often in the form of targeted appeals and rhetorical strategies (e.g., Aristotle, 1991). Indeed, in highly stylized settings, such as congressional hearings (e.g., Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005) or in entrepreneurial pitches (e.g., Suddaby et al., 2021), rhetorical history is a strategic instrument of institutional work.

More commonly the use of historical narrative for persuasion is achieved through less conscious and more emergent means, such as through the use of broader systems of identification and justification that "owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull daily reinforcement than to exceptional rhetorical skill" (Burke, 1969, p. 26; see also, Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). History has the ontological status described by Burke (1969, p.

21) as the “ambiguities of substance” in that it represents not only a collection of facts but also an object of discourse which can be employed in the service of specialized ends that are sometimes very removed from the motives and interests of the participants in the historical events described.

It is in this sense that historical events, despite their seemingly innocuous or disinterested nature, can be repurposed or, to use Burke’s (1969, p. 10) language, “transformed” in the service of rhetoric to establish persuasive forms of identification. And, whether rhetorical agency is purposive and deliberate (Aristotle, 1991), emergent or enactive (Burke, 1969), rhetorical history involves actors (whether individual or collective) using stories about the past following some ascription of intent, whether stated or, more often, simply implied based on outcomes observed and ex post descriptions of motive. Rhetorical history, thus, is a form of institutional work—a purposive, historically conscious effort to construct the institutions and features that define our social world.

Rhetorical History and the Uses of the Past

Rhetorical history sits at the nexus of these six foundational assumptions. Rhetorical history is an incredibly powerful form of institutional work because the past, and by association history, has an ontological primacy in human consciousness that the present and future will never have (Hacking, 2002). This is precisely why history has such rhetorical potency and is such a powerful tool for institutional work. Actions in the present and potential actions in the future can be made to appear reasonable, probable or less risky simply be embedding them in a narrative that embraces the past (Suddaby et al., 2021). This is the core argument of rhetorical history and the six assumptions outlined above provide the foundation for the primary insight that the past offers a vast resource of material that, in the hands of a skilled rhetorician, creates larger social-symbolic resources used to create essential tensions that contribute to social structure such as (1) continuity and change, (2) similarity and difference, (3) success and failure and (4) morality and immorality, as we now explain.

Creating Continuity and Disruption: Rhetorical History's Contribution to Understanding Processes of Institutional Change

Rhetorical history is often used to create perceptions of disruptive (revolutionary) or incremental (evolutionary) change. To accomplish this, rhetoricians rely on the vastness of the past to selectively identify and narrate historical events that promote a view of the nature of historical change that is consistent with an organization or institution's strategic interests. Incumbent actors, typically, prefer historical narratives that promote incremental change while challengers typically prefer historical narratives that promote revolution. The effectiveness of this form of rhetorical history leans heavily on the unique narrative structure of history, which, because it places events in a roughly chronological order, implies causality.

When we experience events in temporal sequence, we tend to infer causation between those events (Roberts, 2001). If event A and event B are temporally proximate, and B occurs after A, it raises a presumption of a potential causal relationship between A and B. The causal presumption is enhanced if A and B share unique information (Granger, 1969) or are somewhat similar. Depending on the purpose of the history, the narrator can construct a strong informational relationship between A and B, and tell a story of continuity over time, a story of evolutionary change. Alternatively, the narrator can create a story of a weak or absent relationship between A and B, and thus tell a discontinuous story of disruptive change. Patent holders seeking to protect their patent from an encroaching innovation, thus, will strategically construct a narrative of continuity between the new invention and their existing invention. The new inventor, however, will seek to construct a narrative of disruptive change.

While the temporal inference of causality is clearly as flawed as the assumption of causality in correlational studies, philosophers from Hume to Husserl to Heidegger have acknowledged how influential this theoretical sleight-of-hand has been on human consciousness. In history, the elision of chronology and causality is reinforced by the folksy maxim attributed to Mark Twain – "history doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes". The temporal implication of causality can be put to strategic use when A and B are vicariously experienced in a historical story where the narrator has the capacity to select the events, to 'chunk' them in discrete sections (eras, epochs, periods), and to use different types of analogies to manage the degree of perceived causality between events. We elaborate each of these three strategies in the balance of this section.

***Selection of Events**:* Most theories of organizational change use some form of rhetorical history. Lewin's (1951) classic model, for example, describes change as a temporal sequence that moves from stasis (freezing) to disruption (unfreezing) to a new stasis (refreezing). We tend to view the stages as the result of explicit actions taken by management to shepherd an organization through the process of change. Increasingly, however, organizational change scholars see change as performative, and that the process of change arises from speech acts (Searle, 1969) that selectively frame events in a narrative of progressive causality. Change arises by conversations that strategically describe events in the organization in such a way that "consciously sets out to establish conditions and circumstances that are different" (Ford & Ford, 1995: 543) from what they were before and what they will be in the future.

In her challenge of Christensen's theory of disruptive innovation as a theory of change, Harvard historian Jill Lepore (2014) demonstrated the primary techniques by which a narrator constructs a history of discontinuity. Lepore (2014) challenged the empirical basis of the construct of disruptive innovation by noting that many of the cases used in the foundational research by

Christensen and colleagues included firms that subsequently withdrew from the market or declared bankruptcy. Christensen, Lepore argued, was “cherry picking” events that were sufficiently different from each other to create a narrative of disruptive change. Kaplan and Orlikowski (2013), similarly observe that organizational change is not dependent upon an essentialist or objective path through historical time, but rather is dependent upon “temporal work” capabilities of managers, as found in their capacity to articulate a selective interpretation of the past, present and future that creative a coherent and credible story of strategic choice and action.

The motivation for this process of selecting some events, units and cases from the past to create the future can vary. As previously noted, Anteby and Molnar (2012) observe that a French aeronautics firm deselected elements of the past that were inconsistent with their preferred identity narrative. Mena and colleagues (2016) similarly note that enduring corporations tend to engage in instrumental “forgetting work” to undermine collective memories of past corporate irresponsibility that may, subject to contingencies, enable either organizational continuity or change. More often than not, organizations use selective, rhetorical tactics to generate a sense of historical continuity or evolutionary change over time (e.g., Balmer & Burghausen, 2015; Bovers & Hoon, 2021; Golant, Sillince, Harvey & Maclean, 2015; Hernes & Schultz, 2020; Ybema, 2010).

Chunking Events into Periods or Stages: In some circumstances, however, organizations adjust their history in ways intended to *increase* the perception of discontinuity with the past. They do so by imposing “artificial categories on the continuous flow of time and experience” (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). Revolutionary change, thus, is constructed by using periodization to create an exaggerated sense of division between different time-periods and epochs. Ybema (2014), for example, shows how the editors of a Dutch national newspaper produced an illusion of revolutionary change, or what he termed the “invention of transitions”, by rhetorically presenting past periods of the organization's history as "untenable and undesirable despite obvious accomplishments" (p. 496) in order to justify radical change.

Analogies: Analogies are another technique by which rhetoricians can influence the perception of the degree of temporal change that arises between events. An analogy is a form of figurative language that maps underlying similarities from one conceptual domain to another. As such, analogies enable comparisons across domains that are manifestly distinct (Gentner, 1983). Historical analogies are a common trope in political discourse where policy makers are often reminded of George Santayana's famous quote "those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it". The stronger the analogical connection between event A and event B, the stronger is the inference of historical causality between A and B.

Organizational theorists have long realized that processes of change may be facilitated by a carefully selected analogy or metaphor that creates legitimacy for the change (Cornelissen, Holt & Zundel, 2011). An apt metaphor or analogy can influence the perception of similarity or difference between an organization at time A versus time B. Similarly, describing an organization as 'mechanistic' or 'organic' may have serious implications for an organizations' perceived capacity to change (Keeley, 1980). Brändström and Bynander (2004) have shown how policy-makers use historical analogies in varied ways to manage governmental crises. Alternatively, Smith et al (2021) describe how representatives from the private military industry in the US and cannabis industry in Canada have used historical analogies to promote the de-stigmatization of their activities. Perhaps the best illustration of how historical analogies can be strategically used to shape social structure is offered by Leblebici and colleagues (1991) who show the profound role of historical analogies in determining the regulatory framework for the emerging US radio broadcasting industry.

Long-standing family firms are particularly adept at using analogical inferences to present revolutionary change as being continuous with past generations of a business-owning family (Labaki, Bernard & Cailluet, 2019; Suddaby & Jaskiewicz, 2020). So, for example, Dalpiaz and colleagues (2014) observe that successor, Alberto Allesi, was able to successfully overhaul the value proposition of his father's Italian household goods firm to focus on the artistic rather than functional qualities of household products. He did so largely by telling stories to family and other stakeholders that downplayed manifested differences and emphasized underlying similarities between himself and his father. Boje, Haley and Saylors (2016) observe a similar use of analogical language, termed "historical inversion" from the American fast food giant, Burger King. To promote a risky strategy of international expansion, managers constructed false narratives that suggested international expansion was a critical part of Burger King's history. They relied on selective story fragments to dramatically reduce the number of plausible alternative futures available for an organization and in so doing delimit its strategic options for future growth.

Analogies that create a sense of similarity between past, present and future legitimate change by creating a false impression of "causality and how the past links to the future" (Maclean, Harvey, Sillince & Golant, 2014). In their analysis of the role of rhetorical history in Proctor and Gamble, Maclean et al (2014) elaborate the important role of corporate history in establishing an overarching ideology for the corporation that served as an analogical foil that could justify strategic changes as being loosely consistent with past practices. So, for example, when the corporation adopted short-term (3 year) financial targets, a practice the company had long disavowed, executives masked the change as being consistent with the companies' ideological commitment to growth. Prior commitments to prioritizing the long term in strategy formulation were, conveniently, forgotten.

The common thread connecting each of these studies is that they collectively demonstrate the range of rhetorical strategies that use history to promote a particular (and often self-interested) view of change. Historical causality differs from scientific causality (Hacking, 2002). While science seeks to use highly controlled contexts to link a single cause to a single effect, historians face the more difficult process of trying to impose a single narrative of causation that unifies multiple causes and multiple effects. It is, however, the vastness of the past and the complex interaction of historical events that makes the search for scientific causality in history so difficult. As American philosopher, David Lewis (1986: 214) observes "Any particular event that we might wish to explain stands at the end of a long and complicated causal history. We might imagine a world where causal histories are short and simple; but in the world as we know it, the only question is whether they are infinite or merely enormous". As a result, historians must select, prioritize and sometimes overemphasize some events relative to others in creating causal explanations. The complexity of the past, therefore, enables alternative causal accounts of history and creates an opportunity to use history as a strategic resource.

Creating Similarity and Difference: Rhetorical History's Contribution to Understanding Institutional Maintenance and Identity

There is a well-established understanding of an important but nuanced relationship between memory and identity (Conway & Pendall-Pearce, 2000). Our claim of continuity of self depends on our memory. However, our memory is not always accurate. Our sense of identity is often a compromise between our aspirational future self and our memory of our past self (Ibarra, 1999). As Archer (2003) proposes, individual identity emerges as a provisional product of an ongoing "internal conversation" or a series of reflexive deliberations in the form of an autobiography, an internal story one tells oneself about oneself. The story is repeated in an ongoing present that continually works to mediate between our memory of our past self and our hopeful image of our future self. Often, we bend the objectivity of memory in our past self to meet the needs of our aspirational self, in deference to our need to maintain the illusion of continuity and coherence of self in time and space. This is the fundamental formula for identity.

Cognitive psychologists use the term “autobiographical memory” to refer to the process by which we narrate our self to our self (Nelson & Fivush, 2004). Autobiographical memory takes events from our past and stitches them together in a narrative account of self that maintains a coherent identity in the present. In a few rare cases, individuals suffer from a lack of autobiographical memory. These individuals have excellent recall of events in their life, but cannot place themselves in their own memories. Somehow, the ability to narrate memories of their past self to their present self has been lost. Unsurprisingly, these individuals suffer from a profound loss of identity (Addis & Tippett, 2004).

While autobiographical memory has largely been applied to the individual level of analysis, an emerging thread of theory adapts the construct to the collective level by researchers working within the tradition of rhetorical history (Suddaby, Schultz & Israelsen, 2020). This approach assumes an implicit historical element to identity and the observation that the “construct of identity refers to those elements of an entity, an individual or an organization, that endures over time” (Suddaby, Foster & Quinn-Trank, 2016: 311). Indeed, Lustigere-Thaler (2014) suggests the success of some social movements is premised on their capacity to appropriate collective meanings from the disparate memories of individuals with a shared traumatic experience as the basis for their individual autobiographical narratives and their collective sense of shared identity. The one distinguishing feature of this form of collective identity formation, however, is that the identity narrative, the story of self, told to self, occurs at both the individual and the collective level of analysis simultaneously.

The process by which the past is constantly revised to create a coherent sense of self in time is a clear application of rhetorical history to establish or maintain a claim of identity. At the organizational level, rhetorical history is used to make identity claims to two distinct audiences: external and internal stakeholders (Foster et al., 2017; Zundel, Holt & Popp, 2016). We elaborate both types of identity claims in turn.

Internally focused Identity Claims*:* Drawing on the notion of rhetorical history, Anteby and Molnar (2012), describe how organization members generate a coherent, temporally-extended sense of collective identity by omitting, de-emphasizing and supressing aspects of their organizational history that were inconsistent with who they wanted to be as an organization. While such organizational identity construction is clearly a subjective process (e.g., Maclean, Harvey & Stringfellow, 2017), Hatch and Schultz (2017) note—drawing on the archival, evidence-backed practices of organizational remembering the Carlsberg Group—that history can be used to construct organizational identity and reputation in authentic ways. This is not to say that the meaning of traces of the past are innate, rather that organization members find material memory to be particularly persuasive in that they help to give past actors and events a vivid effect of reality in the present (Basque & Langley, 2018; Ravasi, Rindova & Stigliani, 2019). One important aspect of organizational identity construction, thus, involves integrating past historical events into an overarching narrative that supports a temporally-extended sense of organization as a collective self (Oertel & Thommes, 2018; Suddaby, Schultz & Israelsen, 2020).

Whereas a temporally-extended sense of one's individual self can be created by simply stitching personally-experienced events into an overarching life narrative (Fivush, 2011), creating a temporally-extended sense of organization involves bringing heterogeneous organization members together to engage in collective action based on a common sense of solidarity or union.

Indeed, the discipline of social memory studies arose, in large part, thanks to early efforts to "elaborate mechanisms of social solidarity in a manner distinct from the Marxian emphasis on 'consciousness'" (Olick et al., 2011, p. 41) which worked to explain how "the cultic powers of the past underwrite solidarity and motivate action" (p. 3). In the contemporary discourse, such historically-motivated union or solidarity is generally referred to using value-laden concepts such as heritage, legacy or tradition. So, for example, Balmer and Burghausen (2015) invoke the concept of rhetorical history to bridge research on corporate heritage, organizational identity and organizational memory for marketing research. Poor and colleagues (2016) analyze the role of rhetorical history in the construction of the now iconic reputation and legacy of the American firearm maker Samuel Colt. And, Barnes and Newton (2018) observe that the Bank of England worked to consciously develop a tradition of erecting war memorials and, by so doing, was able to attach their corporate image to the broader institutional project of the nation state. Having a heritage, legacy and traditions, thus, enables organizations to mimic the nation state in establishing—not only a coherent organizational identity—but also a sense of union.

This idea that history confers solidarity in addition to comprehensibility is the foundational insight of the concept of "re-membering" introduced by Suddaby, Foster and Quinn-Trank (2016) to emphasize the fact that "memory and membership are common social constructions" (p. 298). As Zerubavel (2003, p. 3) writes, "acquiring a group's memories and thereby identifying with this collective past is part of the process of acquiring any social identity, and familiarizing members with that past is a major part of communities efforts to assimilate them". Rhetorical history, thus, acts as a form of "social cement" in which "consciousness of a common past […] is a powerful supplement to other ways of defining who 'we' are" (McNeill, 1986:3-5). As Lyle and colleagues (2021) have shown, leaders of organizations plagued with identity ambiguity may bring together dissenting groups using rhetorical histories that forefront their preferred identity meanings while obscuring different understandings of who they are as an organization. History creates group solidarity by identifying shared aspirational values and narratives, practices, and artifacts of belonging that emphasize how a group's ideals are continuous over historical time (Foster, Coraiola, Quinn-Trank & Bastien, 2020). In this sense the "character" of an organization represents an accretion of such historical values and ideals in the context of enduring organizations (Selznick, 1957).

External Identity Claims: Organizational character must, however, be carefully managed to not only remain internally continuous but also externally relevant. The risk that any organizational claim of continuity poses for the relationship between organizational identity, image and reputation is that such claims become premised exclusively on the values of a particular moment in historical time (Seidel, 2020). Thus, Golant, Sillince and Harvey (2015) observe a duality in organizational identity construction between maintaining coherence with the past and responsiveness in the present. Smith and colleagues (2021) note that the social values underlying what constitute stigmatized industries (e.g., private military contractors in the US or cannabis-related organizations in Canada) are subject to erosion, instability and change over time—a process of institutional change that, they argue, is partially endogenous to the cultural sphere of influence of interested actors such as entrepreneurs and organizations. Organizations are understood to manage their relationship with the evolving values and mores of a society within cultural contexts that are "typically littered with identity remnants from ancestral organizations" (Lamertz et al., 2016, p. 796). Thus, being on 'the right side of history' is a creative act that involves not only conforming to, but also using history to interpret and influence, the cultural categories in which organizational identification occurs.

External identity claims often rest, simply, on the historical longevity of an entity or its practices. In the emerging contestation over multidisciplinary partnerships in the business professions, the American Bar Association resisted a jurisdictional assault by large accounting firms by pointing to the long and successful history of the legal profession: "Americans expect to be true to the tradition that produced John Adams, Clarence Darrow and Thurgood Marshall" (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005: 52). More often, however, identity claims made via rhetorical history rely heavily on appropriating the cultural apparatus used by the nation state to construct a coherent identity. British confectionary giant Cadbury, for example, used museums to solidify their identity claim to external audiences, particularly consumers (Rowlinson & Hassard, 1993). Media, including annual reports (Chreim, 2005), television and newspapers (Brunnige, 2009) and even architecture (Marrewijk, 2009), has been used by organizations to assert their identity to external stakeholders through carefully constructed rhetorical histories.

Ultimately, both forms of identity claims rest on the logic of using select elements of the past to construct a historical narrative of internal similarity and external difference. Organizations use history to construct identity in much the same way as do both individuals and nation-states; by remembering, and occasionally inventing, those events from the past that reinforce 'our' *internal* similarity, while also remembering, and inventing, events from the past the emphasize how different are those *external* to 'us'. Rhetorical history is, thus, an effective tool for "othering" (Said, 1987). Identity, like history, is an ongoing narrative in which accuracy is often sacrificed for coherence. Anderson (1983: 205), however, identifies an important difference that distinguishes the identity narratives of individuals from those of nation states and, presumably, organizations: "In the secular story of the 'person' there is a beginning and an end…Nations, however, have no clearly identifiable births, and their deaths, if they ever happen, are never natural." As a result, Anderson concludes, there is a tendency to fashion national identities in themes of unending "progress", an observation that is likely equally applicable to the application of rhetorical history to claims of organizational identity.

Constructing Winners and Losers: Rhetorical History's Contribution to Understanding Institutional Agency

One of the core contributions of rhetorical history to the strategy and entrepreneurship literature is the observation that history is a key resource for organizations. As such, the ability to write history is a critical capability of competitive success. This observation reverses the logic of the old saying "history is written by the winners" to suggest, instead, that writing history is an essential part of "winning". Early theorists in strategic management offered an initial articulation of this foundational element of rhetorical history. Clark (1972: 178) used the term "organizational saga" to describe the important role played by the capacity of a firm to articulate, "a collective understanding of a unique accomplishment based on historical exploits of a formal organization". Clark's study of three successful academic organizations, demonstrates how the ability to express a coherent legacy, helps to create "strong normative bonds within and outside the organization". An effective historical narrative, Clark finds, creates the conditions for future success.

Much of the nuance of Clark's argument, however, was lost in contemporary efforts by strategy theorists to explain how history creates competitive success. While strategy scholars acknowledge the importance of history as a competitive resource, they theorize history as an exogenous variable, a 'given' that is beyond the control of management. Perhaps the best example of this error is Porter's (1998) explanation about the role of history in creating economic clusters. Clusters are regional concentrations of interconnected organizations that succeed because of the accumulated collection of expert knowledge and self-reinforcing interactions that grow over time.

Examples of clusters include the Napa Valley wine cluster, the cluster of Italian leather firms or the German-Swiss regional cluster in pharmaceuticals. Likely the most famous contemporary cluster is the regional grouping of incredibly successful technology firms in Silicon Valley (Saxenian, 1996). History, according to Porter, is the source of competitive advantage in clusters. In theorizing clusters, however, history is viewed as a property that successful firms inside the cluster have, but firms outside the cluster do not. In contrast to Clark's more nuanced distinction between the objective facts of history and the sagas used to narrate them, cluster theorists view history as an exogenous variable independent of the firm or the agency of management.

A closer approximation of Clark's nuanced understanding of history as both an objective and subjective resource emerges from Barney's (1986) early articulation of the Resource Based View (RBV). Noting that most "hard" economic resources, like human capital, financial capital, and material inputs to manufacturing, are easily acquired, or imitated, Barney (1986: 661) describes how some resources, particularly organizational culture, are valuable because they depend on history, which is so difficult to imitate:

> "Valuable organizational cultures may be intrinsically bound up with a firm's unique history and heritage—and history defies easy imitation… Selznick (1957), Stinchcombe (1965), and Zucker (1977) observed that the constellation of persistent symbols, beliefs, and values that characterize a firm's culture at least partially reflect the unique early history of the firm."

While Barney still treats history as an objective resource that arises more out of luck than human agency, he opens the door to managerial influence by suggesting that, embedding history in a firm's organizational culture can be a rare, valuable and inimitable resource. Despite Barney's early insight into considering history as a social-symbolic resource, few applications of RBV take the narrative aspects of history seriously.

From the perspective of rhetorical history, Porter, Barney and colleagues are conflating history with the past. Firms in a cluster may share a common past, but they have not necessarily articulated a history. This is a problematic view of history which places history beyond the agency and control of managers. History, in traditional strategic management theory, is a matter of luck rather than managerial action. More recent studies of regional clusters raise precisely this concern about the construct, noting that the construct of a cluster often has "more to do with local policy aspirations than with realities on the ground" (Martin & Sunley, 2003: 21). The primary criticism of clusters is that they are often more accurately a carefully constructed marketing narrative than an empirical reality. Perhaps ironically, economic clusters may be a clumsy attempt to deploy rhetorical history. This was the observation of MacNeil (2016: 54) in his historical analysis of the "Oceans Cluster" in Nova Scotia, Canada. MacNeil concludes that this was a weak rhetorical history imposed on the region by a series of government agencies in a failed effort to "assemble a cluster as a historical fact".

A contrary view of history emerges when a clear distinction is made between the past, which *is* beyond the agency of managers, and history, which, as Clark (1972) observed, is a manageable resource. Rhetorical history focuses managerial attention on the capacity to select elements of the past, and construct a coherent and compelling historical narrative that appeals to internal and external stakeholders by offering an explanation for past success and a roadmap for future success (Suddaby, Foster & Quinn-Trank, 2010). History is a powerful discourse that constructs meaning and purpose in an organization, creates legitimacy with stakeholders, and articulates a unique and authentic identity (Suddaby, 2016; Vaara & Lamberg, 2016). The primary contributions of rhetorical history arise in two streams of strategic management research; managing stakeholders and managing strategic fit through dynamic capabilities.

***Managing Stakeholders**:* Most early research in rhetorical history has focused on demonstrating how firms mobilize history to build commitment from external stakeholders – customers, suppliers and regulators. In nearly all cases, firms deploy history to enhance the social value judgements of key stakeholders by building the firm's claim to—and the stakeholder's perception of—reputation, status, identity or authenticity (Foster et al., 2017). Canadian fast-food retailer Tim Horton's drew from the legacy of one of the founders and namesake of the company, a professional hockey player, to build mass-market reputation and legitimacy with customers (Foster, Suddaby, Minkus & Wiebe, 2011). The firm creatively blended the founders' historical narrative with ancillary historical narratives of the history of hockey, the military, and the nation-state. The strategy of tying Tim Horton's brand identity to enduring societal institutions and values through shared history helped build an incredibly powerful affective connection by consumers as reflected in an extraordinarily powerful brand reputation (Fullerton, 2005; CBC, 2015).

Perhaps the most common use of rhetorical history to influence social value judgements from external stakeholders focuses on how firms use history to build legitimacy with regulators. Incumbents often use regulatory history to resist disruptive changes proposed by innovative challengers. In a study of North American lightning protection standards, McGaughey (2013) shows how incumbent firms attempted to overturn 100 year old standards that prevented the introduction of new lightning protection technology. They failed largely because incumbent firms were more skilled at deploying rhetorical history, particularly the notion of "historical precedent" to create doubt about the scientific evidence used to justify the new technology. Especially influential was a comment raised by an agent of the Department of the Army who observed that the existing standards were based on "over 200 years of empirical observation… on the Franklin/Faraday systems" (McGaughey, 2013: 89).

Rhetorical history can also legitimate radical change amongst regulators. This was the conclusion of Maclean, Harvey, Suddaby & O'Gorman (2018) in their study of the international expansion of the Hilton hotel chain after the Second World War. Detailed analysis of Conrad Hilton's speeches before and during the expansion demonstrate how the founder effectively wove his commercial ambitions into the growing expansionist ambitions of the US government. The authors conclude that Hilton effectively accessed considerable economic and social-symbolic resources (i.e. legitimacy) from the US government by constructing a rhetorical history narrative for his company that drew heavily from, and reinforced, a strong anti-communist discourse prevalent in US government political ideology at the time.

A growing stream of research elaborates the importance of history in strategically managing stakeholder relationships. Smith and Simeone (2017) describe how the Hudson's Bay Company, one of the oldest corporations in the world, only recently discovered the value of managing its rich history for competitive purposes. The authors document how the three hundred year old company only began to systematically mobilize its archives for strategic purposes in the late 1930s. By 1933 a historian was appointed as its public relations manager and academic historians were actively solicited to study the company in the expressed belief that their research would provide a "fairly helpful form of unpaid propaganda" (Smith & Simeone, 2017: 348).

Rhetorical history is also an effective tool for strategically managing stakeholders inside the firm. Employee commitment can be reinforced by constant references to the continuity of enduring values of the organization (Hatch & Schultz, 2017; Rowlinson & Hassard, 1993; Anteby & Molnar, 2012; Sasaki, Kotlar, Ravasi & Vaara, 2020) or by glorifying past achievements of the firm as an aspirational "golden-age" (Howard-Grenville, Metzger & Meyer, 2013; Ravasi & Phillips, 2011). More commonly, rhetorical history is used to help manage change by convincing internal stakeholders of the need for change or, alternatively, to minimize the impact of change by presenting it as a form of continuity (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). So, for example, Ybema (2004) uses the term “managerial postalgia” to describe the practice of managing strategic change by simultaneously glorifying the past and idealizing the future as a means of reducing employee resistance to change. In other cases, such as in the previously mentioned study of a leading Dutch newspaper (Ybema, 2014), rhetorical history can be deployed, not to minimize the perception of change but, rather, to exaggerate it by encouraging “discontinuity talk” to create “invented transitions” designed to encourage change by constructing a crisis.

Dynamic Capabilities*:* A second contribution to strategic management theory is the emergent awareness of rhetorical history as a type of dynamic capability. While this stream of theory and research is only emergent, it builds on the implicit understanding that strategic adaptation to changes in the environment are inherently connected to how we frame connections between the past, present and future. The concept of dynamic capabilities emerged from the observation that resources, in and of themselves, cannot determine competitive success, particularly in environments subject to rapid and unpredictable change (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). In such high velocity environments (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) competitive advantage is premised on the ability of firms to *sense* impending technological changes, *seize* the opportunities inherent in the changes by mobilizing the commitment of key stakeholders, and by *reconfiguring* the firm around the anticipated path of change (Teece, 2007).

Firms skilled in rhetorical history are better equipped to sense change, seize opportunities and reconfigure the firm around the anticipated path of change because they have an enhanced ability to interpret the past, in the present, for the future. Firms that can overcome the cognitive limitations and biases that arise from historically embedded experiences will be more adapt at sensing institutional change (Suddaby, Foster & Mills, 2014). They will also be better skilled at mobilizing stakeholders (Suddaby et al, 2021). And, they will be better able to legitimate change by articulating a vision of the future grounded in a coherent path from the past (Suddaby, Coraiola, Harvey & Foster, 2020).

A growing number of empirical studies elaborate how rhetorical history facilitates strategic change. Sinha, Jaskiewicz, Gibb & Combs (2020), thus, demonstrate how a New Zealand corporation used rhetorical history to complete a strategic reorientation by incrementally altering and reprioritizing corporate objectives. Similarly, Maclean, Harvey, Sillince and Golant (2018) describe how Proctor and Gamble evolved to a global enterprise by disguising large-scale strategic change as a 'natural' evolution of existing corporate strategy. And, as previously referenced, Kaplan and Orlikowski (2013) analyze the role of rhetorical history in enabling strategic change in a large communications manufacturer and conclude that strategy cannot be understood as the product of accurately forecasting the future because "projections of the future are always entangled with views of the past and present" (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013) and a facility with history and temporality is an essential part of playing with alternative paths between the past and the future.

Creating Heroes and Villains: Rhetorical History's Contribution to Understanding Moral Legitimacy

A unique aspect of the inherent tension between objective fact and narrative interpretation in history is the tendency of the historian to weave a moral judgement into the historical narrative (Cracraft, 2004). Sometimes the moralizing is explicit and intentional. Herbert Butterfield introduced the term "whig history" to describe an interpretation of British history, prevalent in the 19th century Liberal party, that implicitly promoted the views and objectives of constitutional and parliamentary reform advocated by the party and that—like entrepreneurial narratives that cast founders as heroic, white knights—often adopted a romanticized narrative trope to describe the great men of history.

The term “whig history”, however, has come to refer more broadly to the difficulty historians encounter in separating issues of objective fact and moral value in constructing historical narratives. In some cases, as in the example of Whig history, the moralizing elements of the historical narrative are explicit, set out boldly by the narrator in the conclusion of the narrative. More often, however, the moralizing is couched in the use of certain adjectives to characterize some actors as heroes and others as villains. Similarly, the moral and ethical judgement can be hidden by choosing some events over others, emphasizing some events over others or expounding some causal argument while ignoring an equally probable alternative.

Historians tend to present the history of social groups with which they personally sympathize or identify in ways that support the aspirational ideals of the group’s past. American historian William McNeill (1986: 12-13) famously theorized that we tend to write histories that “conform to our cherished principles: that we are free with Herodotus, or saved with Augustine, or oppressed with Marx, as the case may be. Grubby details indicating that the group fell short of its ideals can be skated over or omitted entirely”. This tendency is part of what gives history and myth a shared ontology in which “membership in a group [i.e. a heroic tribe or nation state] and participation in its sufferings and triumphs give meaning and value to individual human lives” but also where “mythical, self-flattering versions of rival groups’ pasts simply serve to intensify their capacity for conflict”. By placing historical events into an overarching plot, historians cast social groups as either heroes or villains. In this sense, McNeill (1986) suggests, the relationship between historical truth and social fact is coordinated by myths—the higher-order ideals of moral and aesthetic value of a society.

An emergent stream of research empirically explores how moral sentiment is woven into history to create villains or heroes. Issues regarding moral value judgements in historical narration are a serious, perhaps even an intractable, challenge to the original objectivist project of the professional history (e.g., Ranke, 1981). But, viewed from a more holistic lens, history is a way of integrating various different types of truth—integrating personal truths about who “we” are (whomever “we” happens to be), with descriptive truths about the way the world is, and with aesthetic truths about how the world could be. History may, thus, be similar to the legal profession in its pursuit of empirical understanding circumscribed by the broader pursuit of normative ideals. Yet the moral dimensions of rhetorical history—and their capacity to unite and divide organizations and societies based on ideological and value-laden commitments—are not yet well understood.

Unresolved ethical and philosophical considerations abound. Not the least of these being how to explain the role of outright lying in the rhetorical construction of social and organizational life. We know, on the one hand, that ethical challenges in organizational history may become technical advantages when interested actors care little about history as a truth claim and, instead, see history as a powerful means of achieving organizational objectives in a social entity. Mena, Rintamäki, Fleming and Spicer (2016), for example, draw on the concepts of rhetorical history and social memory to explain why some instances of corporate irresponsibility are forgotten by organizations and their environments. They observe that the “forgetting work” required to cast corporations as moral actors can have positive consequences (at least in the short run) on the economic success of the corporation.

On the other hand, as Mena and colleagues (2016) note, such forgetting can also have negative societal implications. For this reason, Mena and Rintamäki (2020) introduce the concept of "mnemonic integrity" to describe the value of "maintaining honesty and truthfulness in accounts of the past, even when it might yield uncomfortable managerial outcomes" (p. 477). In this sense, whereas much of the scholarship of rhetorical history has emphasized the ways in which social facts are construed in line with the instrumental economic motives of the corporation, Coraiola, Suddaby, and Foster (2018) recall that narrating the past is in itself a moral act. There is thus a growing awareness that the most successful uses of the past tend to be premised on the higher-order ideals relating to moral or aesthetic values of society (e.g., Suddaby et al., 2021).

The moral basis of collective memory appears in Coraiola and Derry's (2020) empirical analysis of intentional forgetting by large American tobacco companies. The study demonstrates how industry leaders developed an ethics of remembering based on an honour among thieves code that encouraged members to suppress evidence of their harmful products while propagating false and self-servicing interpretations of science and truth. This idiosyncratic ethic, premised on the economic interests of an industry, acted as a countercultural view of morality, which, ultimately, violated prevailing societal legal and moral systems. The effort to create and implement an industry-wide strategy of 'collusive social forgetting', paradoxically, required that corporations "remember the truth about smoking, they had to preserve the evidence of what they knew, and they had to share these memories with the new generations of managers, lawyers, and scientists that would run the companies" (Coraiola & Derry, 2020: 248-249). The situation changed only when activists and public defendants were able to craft a new convincing narrative explaining the illicit actions of the companies. Depicting Big Tobacco as villains and smoking as a vice helped undermine the view of smoking as a choice and smokers as conscious consumers.

Corporations are increasingly being held responsible for past instances of corporate irresponsibility, a phenomenon that lends support to the notion of "historical CSR" (e.g., Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo & Phillips, 2016; Stutz, 2018; Van Lent & Smith, 2019). Stakeholders increasingly believe that the "accountability of organizations towards their pasts is a moral responsibility that does not disappear over time" (Coraiola et al., 2018, p. 61). As a result, history has become as politically contested in corporations much as it has been contested within the nation state. For this reason, Stutz and Schrempf-Stirling (2020) argue that managers can draw lessons from professional historians about the importance of integrity, reflexivity and responsibility in uses of rhetorical history. The moral dimension of historical narrative, thus, begins to blur the (somewhat artificial) boundaries we construct between ourselves as researchers, and the objects of our research. Because we are both scholars and moral beings, we are not (and should not be) capable of adopting a value free approach to studying the construction of heroes and villains in society.

Accordingly, rhetorical history scholars, in this stream, play two roles simultaneously: On the one hand, the rhetorical history scholar acts as a humanist historian—working to understand historical truth on the basis of a broader set of normative ideals such as responsibility, authenticity and justice. On the other hand, the scholar acts as a rhetorical scholar—working to understand social facts by describing the rhetorical uses of the past by organizational actors in the present. Moral value assessments in rhetorical history research, thus, occur at two diegetic levels (e.g., Suddaby et al., 2021)—within the internal narrative universe of the organization (the intradiegetic story of the actor being observed) and within the narrator's overarching moral view of the organization as either hero or villain in history (the extradiegetic story of the scholarly observer).

As noted, at the intradiegetic levels there is a tendency toward the use of romanticized tropes to depict actors either as unambiguously moral (heroes) or as overwhelmingly immoral (villains). However, existing research shows that those descriptions tend to be fluid. For example, Hamilton and D'Ippolito (2020) show the efforts of Monsanto to disown undesired part of their past and shade a more positive light over the company. However, some organizational actions and contexts—such as slavery—are unambiguously immoral and cannot be easily whitewashed. Some rhetorical history scholarship has noticed that although some organizations may be successful in keeping a heroic narrative for a while, the emergence of new evidence about the past may undermine their claims (Booth, Clark, Delahaye, Procter, & Rowlinson, 2007). This research shows how intradiegetic uses of the past are contextualized within a broader extradiegetic moral framework and highlight that organizations that appear to be heroes may, in fact, be villains (e.g., Boje, 1995).

However, many organizational actors occupy a liminal moral zone between the epic, but somewhat exaggerated, tropological characters of hero/villain (Frye, 2002). In this sense, the extradiegetic moral frameworks of the rhetorical history scholar are not necessarily bound by conventional literary archetypes. For example, much of the rhetorical history research in the context of philanthropy has used a less idealized and more ironic idiom to cast business elites not as villains *per se* but as antiheroes, protagonists that perform actions that are morally correct (e.g., charitable giving), but for reasons that are unheroic (e.g., reputational career benefits) (e.g., Maclean, Harvey & Chia, 2012) or as anti-villains, characters that commit immoral acts (such as the magnification of inequality) in attempts for noble desires (such as the pursuit of transformational social goals) (e.g., Harvey, Gordon & Maclean, 2021).

Discussion: History, Institutions and Four Types of Work

Rhetorical history has emerged as a construct with considerable potential to bridge the gap between historians and social theorists in the study of social structures, particularly organizations and institutions. Others have usefully commented on the various epistemological barriers that persist between historians and social theorists. The critical difference between historical and social analysis is perhaps best summarized by Mills (2000: 144) who observed that when “historians study types of institutions they tend to emphasize change over some span of time and to work in a non-comparative way; whereas the work of many social scientists in studying institutions has been more comparative than historical”. In both cases, however, the focus is on either the institution or the historical context. There is little effort to examine the recursive relationship between history and institutions. That is, we lack any systematic empirical or theoretical examination of how, on one hand, institutions determine what constitutes history, how it is produced and who is authorized to legitimately write it. Reciprocally, we lack any systematic empirical or theoretical examination of how the institutional determination of what constitutes history determines the creation, maintenance and entropy of institutions.

Rhetorical history addresses this gap. As we have demonstrated in our review of its empirical and theoretical application, rhetorical history has been used to analyze fundamental questions of institutional change. One distinct thread of scholarship demonstrates how history is used to construct narratives about continuity and discontinuity in social structures over time. This stream of research begins to address a critical question of how organizations and institutions change. More importantly it offers the suggestion that perceptions of continuity and discontinuity may be less a product of objective empirical analysis and more the result of which interested stakeholder group has the most compelling historical narrative of evolutionary or revolutionary change.

This thread of scholarship offers a fundamental challenge to the somewhat essentialist and binary analyses of institutional change as being either incremental and therefore evolutionary or disruptive and therefore revolutionary. As we see in historically based case studies of institutional change (i.e. Leblebici, Salancik, Copay & King, 1991; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Hargadon & Douglas, 2001) the categorization of a process of change as being disruptive or incremental is, itself, an important form of institutional work. Contesting the nature and character of change has implications for the mobilization of resources, the enrollment of stakeholders and the varied interests of incumbent and challenger institutional actors (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012).

A second cluster of research addresses the critical question of how organizational and institutional identity is created, maintained or changed. This category of scholarship uses rhetorical history to understand how history is mobilized to make claims of similarity and difference in social structures over time. Again, the answers seem to point to skill in description and storytelling, rather than offering any objective empirical criteria that might distinguish similarity and difference. This cluster of research addresses the fundamental question of how organizations or institutions engage in maintenance work. This category of rhetorical history research offers empirical validation to the long-standing assertion that organizations and institutions are, largely, narrative constructions (Czarniawska, 1997; Zilber, 2009). Rhetorical history also provides a theoretical construct that incorporates the various empirical mechanisms of institutional work by which institutions maintain themselves including rituals (Dacin, Munir & Tracey, 2010), traditions (Suddaby & Jackiewicz, 2020), and artefacts (Blanc & Huault, 2014; Rafaeli & Pratt, 2006; Ravasi et al., 2019).

A third theme of study uses rhetorical history to explore the cultural construction of historical agency in organizations and institutions. Management research in both strategic management and entrepreneurship is obsessed with agency. That is, the primary focus of both disciplines is to explain why some social actors are winners and others are losers. Scholarship in both areas tends to ignore historical explanations. However, the growing research in rhetorical history that addresses this question also suggests that the production of winners and losers is not really an essentialist process of the application of power by highly agentic actors, but is more often is a post-hoc attribution of agency to actors that have emerged as such. This was the observation of Selznick (1949) in his historically contextualized account of change in the TVA. Selznick (1949) describes the institutionalization of the TVA as a process by which the organization effectively absorbed and subsumed a range of conflicting agentic actions of a variety of self-interested constituencies, both within and outside the organization, into a common narrative by which a new power coalition appropriated and used an institution in new ways but without fundamentally changing the structure and identity of the institution. Similarly, the conversion of the YMCA from a religious to a secular organization occurred not as a forceful assumption of power by external stakeholders, but rather by "new elites [that] came to power and orchestrated the shift from within" by effectively framing the change in a narrative of path dependence (Mahoney & Thelen, 2009: 18).

Finally, a somewhat more recent topic of research uses rhetorical history to analyze how some organizations or institutions become recognized as heroes and villains. While the early research in this area has begun to explore how history is used to make attributions of morality and stigma (or legitimacy and illegitimacy), one can easily see this branch of research extending to all other forms of social value judgments, including the role of rhetorical history in constructing reputation or status (Trank & Washington, 2009; Rojas, 2010), authenticity (Siebert, Wilson & Hamilton, 2017; Columbero & Boxenbaum, 2019) and related forms of social evaluation. Perhaps the best example of the role of history in shaping moral legitimacy can be seen in Haveman and Rao's (1997) analysis of changes in the underlying logic of banking in California which was founded on an assumptive logic of the morality of "thrift" but, over time as the population changed through immigration and as the industry grew and became more bureaucratic, shifted toward an assumptive logic of secular rationality.

Table 1 summarizes the four themes that characterize current research on rhetorical history and their connection to different aspects of institutional work. Collectively, the extant research reviewed in this paper supports an emerging consensus that rhetorical history is an effective instrument of institutional work. By attending to the ways in which the objectivity of history is negotiated over time, we can gain insight into the constitution and exercise of power by societal institutions. Reciprocally, by attending to the way in which institutional processes unfold over time, we can gain insight into the ways in which historical processes and events shape institutions.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

While these processes tend to unfold on multiple levels, from the individual to the macro-societal, at once, the best theoretical and methodological device for capturing this complexity, familiar to both historians and organizational theorists, is the narrative (Abbott, 2001). The capacity to elevate a narrative of an event in time to the status of a legend or a myth is the core phenomenon captured by rhetorical history. It is also the core phenomenon described by the term institutionalization, which refers to "the infusion of meaning and value beyond the technical purpose" of the social structure or, as Selznick (1957) observes, "the task at hand". Both share an interest in understanding the processes by which a story can be told at multiple levels; the level of the actors and the events they experienced, the characters' unfolding reinterpretation of those events over time, and, ultimately, the incorporation of those narratives into collective memory or myth.

Rhetorical History as Institutional Work: Future Directions

Traditional approaches to understanding the relationship between institutions and history have been premised on the assumption that institutions are formed by history to fulfill a socio-economic purpose that existing institutions failed to satisfy. This logic, which has provided the foundation of most contemporary economic and organizational approaches to historical institutionalism (i.e. Williamson, 1985; Coase, 1960; Leblibici et al, 1991; Russo, 2001), illustrates the limitations of structural functionalism in social theory where we seek explanations that explain social and economic stability by taking existing institutions and explaining their existence by extrapolating them backwards in time. Such functionalism has rightly been criticized for ignoring the ability of powerful institutions to perpetuate themselves over time and across varying social and economic conditions despite their ability to fulfill social or economic need. Functionalism mistakenly attributes agency to abstract social constructs (values, norms and conventions) instead of acknowledging the agency of powerful actors who control the social processes that produce those constructs (Guhin, Calarco & Miller-Idriss, 2021). One cannot understand processes of social reproduction without also attending to those actors who create, maintain, or contest them (Erimbayer & Miche, 1998).

The ability to control the interpretation of the past is a critical form of social reproduction, but one that has not received much analytic attention. We cannot understand the relationship between history and institutions by attributing agency to history without also studying the role of powerful actors (i.e. institutions) and how they influence history in order to maintain power. This is the essence of rhetorical history, both as a construct and a theory. Institutions are not simply the "carriers of history" (David, 1994). They are active managers and promulgators of history who can fabricate power through their ability to reinterpret history as they justify their power as a natural outcome of historical processes. In some cases, the manipulation of history is blatant, reliant on clumsy forms of historical work, i.e. invented traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) or patently false histories (Gabba, 1981; Wood, 2020). More commonly, however, false histories and invented traditions evolve slowly, nurtured subtly through narrative repetition over generations in which ideology, fact, and fiction are blended into a "meta-code" (White, 1989) that allows individual to make sense of existing institutional arrangements and accept them as natural (Berger & Luckman, 1967). We understand these meta-codes as myths and legends. However, placing a kernel of fiction in established historical narratives is an incredibly effective mechanism by which institutions invent, enhance and exert their power. It is primarily through historical narratives that rhetorical history becomes a foundational form of institutional work.

Much more empirical research is required to understand the process by which institutions use history to create, maintain and reshape their power. While the potential paths to achieving this are many and varied, we discuss below three emerging empirical areas with considerable promise to deepen our understanding of how institutions are more than mere carriers of history.

Family Controlled Businesses: A recent study by McKinsey found that the average life span of companies listed in Standard & Poor's top 500 companies was 61 years in 1958 while today it is less than 18 years (Garelli, 2016). It is a unique irony that the modern corporate enterprise, an institutional form designed to exert influence beyond the lifespan of its founders, on average fails to last beyond its teen years. Family businesses, by contrast, comprise the dominant structural form for enduring economic success. Family controlled businesses dominate the lists of the most successful organizational form as measured by survivability, with several extreme examples of firms that have survived beyond twenty generations (Ward, 2016). Moreover, family controlled businesses, like Tata, Cargill and Walmart, easily rival the largest publicly traded corporations in both their annual revenue and their contribution to the global economy.

Despite acknowledging the importance of the "dynastic motive" in explaining the longevity of family businesses, economic and management theorists have largely resisted the study of family firms as a subject in its own right because the tendency to recruit family members was thought to inhibit the growth of the firm (Casson, 1999; Morck & Yeung, 2003). Such resistance is misguided. Family owned business groups, an organizational form quite rare in the US and the UK but popular in the rest of the world, comprise an increasingly dominant proportion of the global economy. They are an enigma, not only because of their economic success and longevity, but also because they succeed while defying many of the "rational" prescriptions of modern corporations (Suddaby, Israelsen & Jaskiewicz, 2022). A growing body of literature attributes their longevity and economic prowess to their skill in rhetorical history (Sinha, Jaskiewicz, Gibb & Combs, 2020; Ge, De Massis & Kotlar, 2022), using history to maintain values, identity and trust (Dieleman & Konig, 2020) and the strategic reproduction of traditions (Suddaby & Jaskiewicz, 2020) and family stories (Labaki, Bernhard & Calliut, 2019). Clearly the phenomenon of successful growth and longevity in family controlled business groups can be, at least in part, attributed to their skill in managing history. Yet we lack an accumulated body of empirical research that rigorously explores how history is mobilized in these firms. Considerably more research is needed to help us understand how successful family firms skilfully weave family and firm history together to create the conditions for intergenerational success.

Colonization/Decolonization: On March 8, 2015 a student activist at the University of Cape Town in South Africa threw feces on a statue of the British mining magnate and colonial politician Cecil J Rhodes. The action was a protest against Rhodes' contribution to colonialism in Africa and not only triggered the removal of the statue but quickly grew into a global movement termed Rhodes Must Fall that mobilized activists to challenge the legitimacy of colonial monuments in the Commonwealth as well as Confederate statues in the United States. It inspired similar decolonization movements by indigenous populations in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South America. The movement has not only accelerated, it has raised public awareness of the role of powerful institutions and their ability to influence knowledge production by their control over what constitutes history and who may officially write it.

The Rhodes Must Fall movement offers an outstanding illustration of the role played by rhetorical history in processes of institutional work. The colonial and confederate monuments stood unquestioned for several generations. They were unquestioned because they had acquired cognitive legitimacy, a degree of acceptance so powerfully embedded in history and culture that they became taken-for-granted and therefore invisible (Suddaby, Bitektine & Haack, 2017) As such, the Rhodes Must Fall movement provides an excellent empirical context by which we can study the multi-generational process by which rhetorical history can be used to construct cognitive legitimacy. It also offers a promising empirical context within which we can begin to understand how, why and when historically grounded cognitive legitimacy can be disrupted. Why did it take so many generations before activists began to resist confederate and colonial monuments? What were the historical conditions that permitted some individuals and not others to pierce the institutional veil that masked present-day villains from historical heroes? Focused empirical research will help us better understand how power and history are combined to construct intergenerational cognitive legitimacy and how, over multiple generations, cognitive legitimacy erodes.

Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation: There is growing empirical evidence of a reciprocal relationship between the cultural canon of stories in a society and their economic institutions. Michaelopoulos and Xue (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of the stock of stories, legends, fairy tales, and myths in nearly a thousand global societies and determined that entrepreneurial societies tend to embrace stories that valorize risk while non-entrepreneurial societies tend to tell stories that demonize risk. Folklore represents the interstitial space in which collective memory meets history (Burke, 2004). A growing body of research in entrepreneurship, similarly, acknowledges the important but largely unexplored role of historically grounded narratives in motivating social innovation and entrepreneurial change (Suddaby, Israelsen, Mitchell & Lim, 2021).

Clearly the use of folklore to legitimate norms, values and conventions in a socially productive way is a critical instrument of institutional work. It is also a critical instrument of rhetorical history. Biographies of entrepreneurs, stories of risk-taking inventors and the growth of movies and television programs that exalt the lifestyles of successful entrepreneurs all speak to the somewhat recent emergence of a cultural industry devoted to the production and promulgation of cultural products designed to legitimate an ideology of entrepreneurship in western society. History, or more accurately, rhetorical history plays an important role in this new cultural industry. We know that cultural produces are economic commodities used to legitimate the existing power structure in society (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1972) and we are beginning to understand the importance of history in articulating an ideology that naturalizes risk taking and entrepreneurship as an ideology that encourages some workers to abandon the security of labor laws and unions and embrace the platform economy under the illusion of entrepreneurial freedom (Srnicek, 2016). But we need a clearer understanding of the precise process by which history is used as a tool for the social construction of reality. Entrepreneurship, as a dominant and still growing ideology in contemporary society, offers a useful empirical context to better understand the process by which history is used to condition human perceptions of reality.

These three phenomena provide useful empirical contexts that may benefit from the application of a lens of rhetorical history. Reciprocally, our understanding of rhetorical history will likely progress more quickly if research can focus on analyzing processes of rhetorical history in the present, rather than only focusing on instances of rhetorical history in the past. Just as Foucault (1975: 19) revised the meaning of history to apply to the historical constitution of human subjects by focusing on how historically determined discourses were allowed “to exist within the present historical moment”, we need to similarly revise our understanding of the study of management history by examining more closely the processes by which ontological claims of history are used to justify social value judgements – i.e. claims to authenticity, legitimacy, status, reputation and identity – in the present. Rhetorical history is also a history of the present, less interested in what is true in the past and more interested in how discourses from the past are mobilized in the present to create, maintain or challenge institutions, power and ideology.

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Table 1: Rhetorical History and Institutional Work[1]

Theme 1: Articles that demonstrate how rhetorical history is used to construct perceptions of *Continuity* and *Discontinuity* and articles from institutional theory that implicitly use rhetorical history to construct *Institutional Change*.		
Construct	**Representative Articles from Rhetorical History**	**Representative Articles from Institutional Theory**
Selective Narration of Events	Mena et al (2016) Balmer & Berghausen (2015) Bovers & Hoon (2021) Golant et al (2015) Hernes & Schultz (2020) Ybema (2010)	Hargadon & Douglas (2001)
Periodization	Ybema (2014)	Zilber (2002)
Analogies	Cornelissen et al (2011) Brandstrom & Byanander (2004) Smith et al (2021)	Leblebici et al (1991)
Promising avenues for future research	• Explaining the role of specific mechanisms of rhetorical history in processes of continuity and change in historical institutionalism. • Historical case studies exploring the evolution and contestation of narratives of continuity and change advanced by specific constituents of institutionalized organizations.	

Theme 2: Articles that demonstrate how rhetorical history is used to construct perceptions of *Similarity* and *Difference* and articles from institutional theory that implicitly use rhetorical history to construct *Institutional Identity*		
Construct	**Representative Articles from Rhetorical History**	**Representative Articles from Institutional Theory**
Internal Identity Claims	Suddaby, Schultz & Isralesen (2020) Anteby & Molnar (2012) McClean et al (2017) Hatch & Schultz (2017) Basque & Langley (2018) Ravasi et al (2019)_ Oertel & Thommes (2018) Olick et al (2011) Poor et al (2016) Barnes & Newton (2018) Foster et al (2020)	Lustigere-Thaler (2014) Selznick (1957) Suddaby & Greenwood (2005) Dacin, Munir & Tracey (2010)
External Identity Claims	Golant et al (2015) Lamertz et al (2016) Rowlinson & Hassard (1993) Brunninge (2009)	Chreim (2005) Anderson (1983) Czarniawska (1997) Zilber (2009)
Promising avenues for future research	• Understanding the role of autobiographical memory in the historical construction of institutional identity • Historical case studies focused on understanding the precise mechanisms of rhetorical history through which actors engage in institutional work to unite and/or divide organizations / institutions.	

[1] The articles in the table are selected as exemplary illustrations of each of the four themes that were inductively generated from a systematic review of 343 papers generated from a search of the term "rhetorical history" on Google Scholar, Scopus and Clarivate's Web of Science. The entire corpus of articles identified are not included in this table nor are they all incorporated into the text of this paper. However, the articles from the search that are referred to in this manuscript are identified with an asterisk in the References section.

Theme 3: Articles that demonstrate how rhetorical history is used to construct perceptions of *Winners* and *Losers* and articles from institutional theory that implicitly use rhetorical history to construct *Institutional Agency*		
Construct	**Representative Articles from Rhetorical History**	**Representative Articles from Institutional Theory**
Managing Stakeholders	MacNeil (2016) Suddaby (2016) Vaara & Lamberg (2016) Suddaby et al (2021) Foster et al (2011) McGaughey (2013) McClean et al (2018) Smith & Simeone (2017)	Clark (1972) Stinchcombe (1965) Zucker (1977)
Dynamic Capabilities	Suddaby et al (2020) Suddaby, Foster & Mills (2014) Sinha et al (2020) Kaplan & Orlikowski (2013)	Selznick (1949) Mahoney & Thelen (2009)
Promising avenues for future research	• Understanding how variance arises in organizational performance *between* organizations that use rhetorical history. • Historical case studies focused on how entrepreneurial projects emerge, evolve and are institutionalized over time.	

Theme 4: Articles that demonstrate how rhetorical history is used to construct perceptions of *Morality* or *Immorality* and articles from institutional theory that implicitly use rhetorical history to construct *Institutional Legitimacy.*		
Construct	**Representative Articles from Rhetorical History**	**Representative Articles from Institutional Theory**
Moral Sentiment	Mena et al (2016) Mena et al (2020)	Trank & Washington (2009) Rojas (2010) Siebert et al (2017) Columbero & Boxenbaum (2019) Haveman & Rao (1997)
Immoral Sentiment	Coraiola & Derry (2020) Schrempf-Stirling et al (2016) Stutz (2018) Van Lent & Smith (2019)	
Promising avenues for future research	• Understanding the nature and scope of organizational lying and its implications for institutional legitimacy • Historical case studies focused on the role of organizing in the creation of moral and ideological divides and their effects on the institutional resilience of communities	