

Taking Stock on Institutional Entrepreneurship

What Do We Know? Where Do We Go?

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TAKING STOCK ON INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

WHAT DO WE KNOW? WHERE DO WE GO?

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TAKING STOCK ON INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: WHAT DO WE KNOW? WHERE DO WE GO?

Abstract

This paper analyzes the literature that has been published on institutional entrepreneurship since Paul DiMaggio introduced this notion in 1988. Based on a systematic selection and analysis of articles, the paper outlines an emerging consensus on the definition and process of institutional entrepreneurship. It also presents the enabling conditions that have been previously identified and reviews the research methods that have been applied to the study of institutional entrepreneurship. Finally, based on this analysis, this paper highlights future directions for research on this topic. Researchers may use this paper to build targeted and sophisticated research designs that add value to the emerging body of literature on institutional entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Institutional Entrepreneur – Institutional Change - Paradox of Embedded Agency

INTRODUCTION

Institutional entrepreneurship is an abrupt change in institutional theory. While institutional approaches generally consider the constraints under which actors operate, works on institutional entrepreneurship try to build a theory of action based on the tenets of institutional theory (Fligstein 1997: 397). In the introduction of their widely known book *New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) called for the development of such a theory of action. The lack of an explicit and coherent theory of action is at the core of institutional theory's weakness when it comes to explaining change, as the role of actors and action in the creation, diffusion, and stabilization of institutions is not made clear (Christensen et al. 1997). Uncertainty about actors' agency raises serious questions about how macro-level institutional phenomena change (Hirsch and Lounsbury 1997).

When DiMaggio (1988) first introduced the notion of institutional entrepreneurship, he aimed at bringing agency back in institutional theory, thereby explaining how actors can shape the institutions while being constrained by them (Holm 1995; Seo and Creed 2001). More than 15 years after the publication of this seminal paper, what are the insights gained by research on

institutional entrepreneurship? Do these different studies constitute a coherent corpus of knowledge? What are the new emerging research areas? To address these questions, we propose to review the literature about institutional entrepreneurship. In doing so, our objective is not only to assess the degree of consistency and coherence of the studies but also to highlight potential future research directions about institutional entrepreneurship.

Until recently the literature on institutional entrepreneurship was mainly based on case studies and offered too little theorization. However, some researchers recently attempted to provide partial synthesis (e.g. Dorado 2005; Seo and Creed 2001). Despite these efforts, research on institutional entrepreneurs still appears as a rather disorderly and scattered body of research. This article suggests that to advance our knowledge of the phenomenon and to further theoretical development of the concept, it is necessary to review the theoretical and empirical research conducted so far on institutional entrepreneurship. Such a review will provide two valuable insights into the research on institutional entrepreneurship. First, it will allow us a more global perspective on the expanding field of institutional entrepreneur research in all its diversity. Second, it will allow us to identify which directions have been the most investigated, which ones remain under study, and where the research may fall short.

This paper is divided into six sections. First, we present the methodology used to conduct the literature review on institutional entrepreneurship, explaining the coding used to highlight the key questions associated with the study of institutional entrepreneurship. Second, relying on our coding, we highlight the problems raised by the definition of institutional entrepreneurs and the solutions provided by the existing studies. Similarly, in the next two sections, we review how the existing literature on institutional entrepreneurship accounts respectively for the enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship and for the process of institutional entrepreneurship. Then, we review the different research methods that have been used to study institutional entrepreneurship. Finally, relying on the exhaustive literature review that we conducted, we identify needs for further research on institutional entrepreneurship and propose directions future research.

METHOD

Selection of articles

In reviewing the literature on institutional entrepreneurship, we first developed a strategy for article selection. We searched EBSCO Business Source Premier and JSTOR databases for entries in peer-reviewed journals that contained at least one of the following keywords in the title, abstract, keywords or full text: institutional entrepreneur, or institutional entrepreneurship. This procedure generated 96 articles. From this pool of articles, we excluded book reviews, editorials and calls for papers as well as all articles that made reference to these terms only in passing or that referred to other meanings or theories. We then looked at the reference list of the selected articles to identify recurrent and apparently important references that were published in non-refereed journals or edited volumes. This procedure generated the following articles: DiMaggio (1988, 1991), Fligstein (1997), Rao et al. (2000). We added the recently published Hwang and Powell's chapter due to the prominent position of Powell in the field of institutional theory (2005). To make sure that no significant piece of work had been missed, we compared our list to articles that provide partial synthesis of the topic (Rao et al. 2000; Dorado 2005). This resulted in a list of 42 articles (see Annex 1).

Of the 40 articles, 38 are published in periodicals and 2 in edited volumes. The periodicals are primarily American management journals: Academy of Management Journal (7), Academy of Management Review (6), Administrative Science Quarterly (4), and secondarily European ones: Organization Studies (5), Organization (1), and Human Relations (1). Five are published in American sociological journals: American Journal of Sociology (3), the Annual Review of Sociology (1), and Sociological Theory (1). The publication frequency has increased significantly over time. Figure 1 shows a remarkable, relative increase in the number of new articles published every year since 1988, indicating growing attention to the subject of institutional entrepreneurship.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Analytical procedures

Having selected articles for review, we developed a strategy for their analysis. Based on our knowledge of the literature, we formulated four broad questions that appear to us to be central to the notion of institutional entrepreneurship:

- (1) Which features define an institutional entrepreneur?*
- (2) Which conditions enable an actor to become an institutional entrepreneur?*
- (3) How is the institutional entrepreneurship process developed?*
- (4) Which methods are appropriate for investigating institutional entrepreneurship?*

These four questions guided our selection of essential elements in the 40 articles. The textual passages that pertained to each question were then placed in a table.

Having thus created a manageable textual database, we proceeded to code the content separately for each question. Taking broad inspiration from Locke and Golden Biddle (1997) and from Strauss and Corbin (1990), we developed open codes through iteration, i.e., moving back and forth between the data in the table and our pre-existing knowledge of the literature. When in doubt, we gave relatively more weight to DiMaggio's 1988 classic paper on institutional entrepreneurship since it is the most widely cited paper on this topic. After coding each column, we compared codes across columns to eliminate redundancies and imprecision due to overlapping content and multiple coders. The coding guided our crafting and structuring of the paper and informed the suggestions we make for future research.

DEFINING THE INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEUR

The notion of institutional entrepreneurs refers to either individuals or organizations that act in discordance with the established institutional arrangements and that may eventually change them (e.g. DiMaggio 1988; Lawrence 1999; Zilber 2002). A number of difficult issues are associated with the definition of institutional entrepreneurs: What are institutional entrepreneurs' motivations? Do they act intentionally or not? What type of institutional change do they implement? Finally, how can institutional entrepreneurs innovate despite institutional pressures? So far, scholars provided different answers to these questions.

Motivation

Motivation is the force that drives institutional entrepreneurs to diverge from institutionalized patterns. Institutional theory emphasizes isomorphism and cannot explain what may motivate some actors to go against the grain. Any definition of institutional entrepreneurship must therefore address the topic of motivation. While some authors in the reviewed literature refer to motivation (e.g., Anand and Watson 2004), most evoke the concept of ‘interests’ (e.g., Beckert 1999; Rao 1998; Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996). This choice of wording appears to flow from the widespread use of DiMaggio’s definition of institutional entrepreneurship from 1988: “*New institutions arise when organized actors with sufficient resources (institutional entrepreneurs) see in them an opportunity to realize interest that they value highly*” (p.14). Whichever terminology they use, authors remain vague in their allusions to a broader notion of interests. It is proposed that institutional entrepreneurs are not narrowly self-interested (Fligstein 2001), but that they are driven by values (Wade-Benzoni et al. 2002), ideology (Rao 1998), power (DiMaggio 1991), or problems to be solved (Leblebici et al. 1991), more so than by material interests. Many studies consider missionary organizations as institutional entrepreneurs willing to change the established order as it does not correspond to their values (e.g. Haveman and Rao 1997; Rao 1998). Such institutional entrepreneurs act as “moral entrepreneurs”. Yet, other studies also document institutional entrepreneurs who act on the sole base of their material interests. Greenwood et al. (2002) show that the Big 5 were willing to change the rules in the Canadian accounting community once they considered that the existing institutional order would impede their strategy. Furthermore, their interests are described as partially fixed or partially constructed (Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996) in the sense of being shaped by existing institutions (Holm 1995).

Intentionality vs. non-intentionality

Intentionality of institutional entrepreneurs refers to the express will of institutional entrepreneurs to change the existing institution from the outset of their actions. Lawrence (1999) suggests that institutional entrepreneurs can either deliberately try to change the rules of the game for the whole field or unintentionally end up changing the rules. Deliberate institutional strategy involves an actors consciously working to affect institutional structures, while emergent institutional strategy involve a pattern of actions that affects or influences institutional structures while being associated with other intentions. Fligstein (1997) also suggests that institutional entrepreneurs can have goals that are not clearly fixed. Lawrence

and Phillips (2004) suggest that in emerging fields, institutional entrepreneurs are likely to be more emergent than intended. Yet, empirical research on emerging institutional entrepreneurs remains scarce. The vast majority of authors refer to deliberate goals.

Type of institutional change implemented

The desired goals – i.e. the type of institutional change they advocate – relate to different levels of analysis and are quite different depending on the authors. At the field level, goals consist of changes to institutions, e.g. norms (Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002). More attention is given to radical change than to incremental change. For instance, institutional entrepreneurs may pursue a replacement of the dominant institutional logic (Suddaby and Greenwood 2005), a disturbance of the socially constructed field-level consensus (Greenwood et al. 2002), a significant alteration of institutional structures (Lawrence 1999), or a creation of entirely new industries (Haveman and Rao 1997) or institutions (Dacin et al. 2002; Maguire et al. 2004). Other authors suggest that institutional entrepreneurs have higher goals. Creed, Scully and Austin view these as “builders of identity” (2002: 494). Anand and Watson (2004) and Durand and McGuire (2005) share this view. Durand and McGuire (2005) consider that institutional entrepreneurs create new domains. Garud et al. (2002: 196) even state that “Institutional entrepreneurs create a whole new system of meaning that ties the functioning of disparate sets of institutions together (DiMaggio, 1988)“.

At the organizational level, institutional entrepreneurs can pursue goals such as a change in organizational practice (Rao et al. 2000), norms, values or beliefs within organizational systems (Wade-Benzoni et al. 2002). They may also seek to transform inter-organizational relationship in industry systems and influence the survival rate of individual organizations (Rao 1994).

At the individual level, institutional entrepreneurs pursue goals related to the realization or enhancement of their own interests and values (DiMaggio 1988; Beckert 1999). These motivations include deriving value from their transactions with others (Leblebici 1991), shifting power and control to their own group and imposing their own vision change (DiMaggio 1988, 1991).

The paradox of embedded agency

The notion of institutional entrepreneurship alludes to the classical debate on structure versus agency, implying that single actors are able to disengage from their social context and act to change it. How can organizations or individuals innovate, if their beliefs and actions are all determined by the very institutional environment they wish to change? This question refers to the ‘paradox of embedded agency’ (Beckert 1999; Holm 1995; Seo and Creed 2002).

Overcoming this paradox is a key challenge to the development of a definition of institutional entrepreneurship. To overcome this definition issue, Beckert (1999) suggests using Schumpeter’s definition of entrepreneur to develop the definition of the institutional entrepreneur. The adaptation of Schumpeter’s view of entrepreneurship within the institutional framework leads to emphasizing that institutional entrepreneurs are different from others in that not only do they develop their activities in accordance with the existing institutions but they are able to envision other institutional arrangements and to act to develop them. As Lawrence states (1999: 163): “*institutional strategy demands ability to articulate, sponsor and defend particular practices and organizational forms as legitimate or desirable, rather than the ability to enact already legitimated practices or leverage existing social rules.*”

In a similar effort to overcome the definition issue associated with the paradox of embedded agency, other scholars (e.g. Seo and Creed 2002) propose that institutional entrepreneurs are characterized by the fact that they are able to view and select among diverse and contradictory institutional logics and frames. Diversity and contradiction among institutional logics and frames are considered to be the very essence of most contemporary societies (Friedland and Alford 1991), thus offering many opportunities for fostering institutional change. While Beckert (1999) implicitly presents institutional entrepreneurs’ ability to envision other institutional arrangements as a personal trait that some actors have and others do not, Seo and Creed (2002) consider that this ability is triggered by the ongoing experience of contradictory reality.

Given the importance of overcoming the paradox of embedded agency to a theory of institutional entrepreneurship that is compatible with the premises of institutional theory, researchers have not only tackled the paradox in the definition of institutional entrepreneurs but have gone one step further in highlighting the enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship.

ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In an effort to explain how actors can act as institutional entrepreneurs despite institutional pressures, a number of studies account for the fact that institutional entrepreneurs are often ushered onto the stage by enabling conditions (Strang and Sine 2002). Two categories of enabling conditions that have so far received a great deal of attention are field-level conditions and actors' position in the organizational field.

The enabling role of field-level conditions

Different types of field-level conditions have been identified. Far from being mutually exclusive, these different conditions are often interrelated. Precipitating jolts or crises correspond to one type of field-level enabling condition for institutional entrepreneurship (Greenwood et al. 2002; Fligstein 1997, 2001; Holm 1995). Relying on the literature about institutional change, Greenwood et al. (2002) propose that jolts that take the form of social upheaval, technological disruption, competitive discontinuities, or regulatory changes may enable institutional entrepreneurship because they disturb the socially constructed field-level consensus and contribute to the introduction of new ideas. In their study about the creation of the single market in the European Union, Fligstein and Mara-Drita (1996) show how the economic and political crisis that characterized the European Union in the early 1980's facilitated the action of the European Commission that played a pivotal role as a collective institutional entrepreneur in the creation of the Single Market. The presence of acute field-level problems that may result in crises corresponds to a second type of field-level enabling condition (Phillips et al. 2000; Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996; Wade-Benzoni et al. 2002). Phillips et al. (2000) suggest that the existence of complex and multi-faceted problems, such as environmental issues enables participants in an inter-organizational collaboration to act as institutional entrepreneurs. On the opposite, Durand and McGuire (2005) show that jolts such as scarcity of resources and challenges in the existing domain of an actor can lead him to migrate and operate as an institutional entrepreneur in another field.

Organizational field characteristics correspond to a third type of field-level enabling condition. Among other organizational field characteristics, scholars have particularly

highlighted the enabling role of the organizational field's respective degree of heterogeneity and of institutionalization. Sewell (1992), Clemens and Cook (1999) state that the presence of multiple institutional orders or alternatives constitutes an opportunity for agency, and thereby for institutional entrepreneurship. They also underline that the less mandatory an institution is, and the more optional, the easier it is to deinstitutionalize. The heterogeneity of institutional arrangements, that is, the variance in the characteristics of these different institutional arrangements may facilitate the occurrence of institutional entrepreneurship. When there are heterogeneous institutional arrangements in a given organizational field, institutional incompatibilities are more likely to emerge. Such incompatibilities are a source of internal contradictions. A contradiction can be defined as a pair of features that together produce an unstable tension in a given system (Blackburn, 1994). Like other scholars (Clemens and Cook 1999; Dorado 2005; Levy and Egan 2003; Rao et al. 2000; Rao 1988; Haveman and Rao 1997; Leblebici et al. 1991), Seo and Creed (2002) highlight the enabling role of institutional contradictions for institutional entrepreneurship but they go one step further in trying to explain the mechanism by which those contradictions lead embedded agents to act as institutional entrepreneurs. According to them, the ongoing experience of contradictory institutional arrangements enables a shift in collective consciousness that can transform actors from passive participants in the reproduction of existing institutional arrangements into institutional entrepreneurs.

The degree of institutionalization of organizational fields has also been shown to affect actors' agency (Tolbert and Zucker 1996) and thereby institutional entrepreneurship. However, there seems to be a debate regarding the impact that the degree of institutionalization of organizational fields has on institutional entrepreneurship. Beckert (1999) suggests that strategic action is more likely to occur in relatively highly institutionalized organizational fields. Relying on Oliver's (1992) argument, he proposes that in relatively highly institutionalized organizational fields, uncertainty is lower and the need for security, stability, and predictability from the persistence of institutionalized rules and norms decreases. As a result, actors are more likely to engage in strategic action. Building on Beckert's (1995) work, Dorado (2005) proposes that substantial institutionalization, as opposed to both minimal and extreme institutionalization, creates room for strategic agency and thereby for institutional entrepreneurship. In contrast, other researchers suggest that uncertainty in the institutional order may provide opportunity for strategic action (DiMaggio 1988; Fligstein 1997). Fligstein (1997: 401) proposes that when the organizational field has

no structure, that is, when its degree of institutionalization is very low, 'the possibilities for strategic action are the greatest.' Similarly, Phillips et al. (2000) suggest that unstructured or under-organized contexts provide opportunities for institutional entrepreneurship. It is striking to note that so far the majority of empirical studies about institutional entrepreneurship have been conducted in emerging fields that are less structured and that are thereby characterized by higher uncertainty (Maguire et al. 2004; Lawrence and Phillips, 2004; Déjean et al. 2004; Garud et al. 2002; Lawrence 1999; Rao and Sivakumar 1999; Rao 1994, 1998).

Taking into account both the degree of heterogeneity and the degree of institutionalization of a given organizational field, Dorado (2005) developed a typology that aims at determining the extent to which fields offer opportunity for action, that is, for institutional entrepreneurship. According to her, organizational fields can adopt one of three dominant forms. When fields are highly institutionalized and/or isolated from the potential influence of other fields and thereby of new ideas, they are 'opportunity opaque,' which means that their characteristics do not provide any opportunity for action. In contrast, 'opportunity transparent' fields that offer a lot of opportunity for action are characterized both by the co-existence of heterogeneous institutional arrangements and by a substantial level of institutionalization. Finally, 'opportunity hazy' fields, characterized by minimal institutionalization and many heterogeneous models of practices, render opportunities for action that are hard to grasp for agents who have to deal with a highly unpredictable environment.

The enabling role of actors' position in the organizational field

Apart from field-level enabling conditions, studies about institutional entrepreneurship have also highlighted the enabling role of actors' position in the organizational field or even more broadly at the societal level (DiMaggio 1988; Dorado 2005; Leblebici et al. 1991; Haveman and Rao 1997; Garud et al. 2002; Rao et al. 2000; Levy and Egan 2003). Actors' position is a key factor insofar as it may have an impact both on actors' perception of the field (Dorado 2005) and on their access to resources that may be needed to engage in institutional entrepreneurship (Lawrence 1999). It has been shown that actors who are at the margins of a given organizational field (Leblebici et al. 1991; Haveman and Rao 1997; Garud et al. 2002) or at the interstices of different organizational fields (Phillips et al., 2000; Rao et al. 2000) are more likely to act as institutional entrepreneurs. In a historical study about the U.S. commercial radio broadcasting industry, Leblebici et al. (1991) have shown that organizations from the periphery of the field are likely to act as institutional entrepreneurs. Analyzing the

evolution of the U.S. broadcasting industry between 1920 and 1965, they found that most new practices were introduced by peripheral organizations that were, in fact, lower status organizations, such as “shady traders, small independent stations, renegade record producers, weaker networks, or enterprising advertising agencies” (Leblebici et al. 1991: 358). In contrast, higher status organizations mobilized resources to maintain the status quo. Drawing from research on the emergence of the Alternative Dispute Resolution industry (ADR), Rao et al. (2000) described how social movements at the interstices of multiple organizational fields bundled together particular sets of practices into new organizational forms. ADR involved lawyers, social workers, community organization therapists, judges, social work agencies, mental health agencies and community organizations using informal methods to handle minor disputes. Out of those encounters a new field emerged.

Yet, dissenting opinions can be found. Zilber (2002) indicates that institutional entrepreneurs are likely to be actors central to the field. DiMaggio (1988, 1991) suggests that they are powerful actors or actors supported by powerful actors or strategically positioned groups. Such positions provide them with ideological, human and financial resources.

While most studies that take into account the enabling role of actors’ social position use organizations as units of analysis, some studies (Dorado 2005; Maguire et al. 2004) have started analyzing the enabling role of individuals’ social position. Dorado (2005: 397) proposes that actors’ “social position,” that is, “their position in the structure of social networks,” which correspond to the set of persons to whom they are directly linked (Aldrich 1999), affects their perception of their organizational field, and thereby their likelihood to behave as institutional entrepreneurs. Studying institutional entrepreneurship in the field of HIV/AIDS treatment advocacy in Canada, Maguire et al. (2004) suggest that institutional entrepreneurs in emerging organizational fields tend to be actors whose “subject positions” (Bourdieu 1990; Foucault 1972) provide them with both legitimacy in the eyes of diverse stakeholders, and the ability to bridge those stakeholders, enabling them to access dispersed sets of resources. In their study, the notion of “subject position” refers to formal position, as well as all socially constructed and legitimated identities available in a field. Yet, he suggests that this ‘subject position’ is not only related to the position in the network but also include characteristics specific to the institutional entrepreneurs.

The enabling role of actors' specific characteristics

While individuals' social position is the individual-level enabling condition for institutional entrepreneurship that has received the most attention so far, a few studies (e.g. Dorado 2005; Fligstein, 1997, 2001; Maguire et al., 2004; Seo and Creed 2002) have mentioned the impact of other individual-level enabling conditions.

Fligstein (1997, 2001) considers that institutional entrepreneurs are socially skilled actors. While « *skilled social action revolves around finding and maintaining a collective identity of a set of social groups and the effort to shape and meet the interests of those groups* » (Fligstein, 1997: 398), social skills revolve around empathy. Institutional entrepreneurs are able to relate to the situations of other actors and, in doing so, are able to provide those people with reasons to cooperate. Fligstein (1997, 2001) considers these social skills as distinctive for institutional entrepreneurs.

Other authors also suggest that institutional entrepreneurs link their project to their characteristics. Wade-Benzoni et al. (2002) take the example of activist groups who connect the values of their cause with their personal identity, creating a value congruence that is a potent force for social change when acting as institutional entrepreneurs. Although they have little material stake in organizational output but will ideologically influence it. Maguire et al. (2004) indicate that in the specific case of the HIV/AIDS treatment advocacy in Canada, HIV positive, gay volunteers with a history within the movement had considerable legitimacy.

Finally, Dorado (2005) and Seo and Creed (2002) emphasize the importance of temporal orientation, another specific characteristic. This condition corresponds to individuals' ability to envision the possibility of change in the field in which they are embedded. Relying on the work by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) about human agency, both Dorado (2005) and Seo and Creed (2002) have highlighted that to act as institutional entrepreneurs, individuals must display a projective capacity that is the capacity to imaginatively generate possible future trajectories of action that may lead to the creative reconfiguration of existing structures of thought and action. Institutional entrepreneurs are oriented toward the future. Revisiting three empirical studies, Dorado (2005) has shown that in each case, institutional entrepreneurs have had a temporal orientation toward the future. While, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) state that this temporal orientation depends on actors' position in the field, Dorado (2005) suggest distinguishing between this characteristic and the actor's position.

This temporal orientation toward the future favors the emergence of Praxis – i.e. the free and creative reconstruction of social arrangements on the basis of a reasoned analysis of both the limits and the latent potentials of present social forms (Seo and Creed, 2002). Praxis is both a reflexive moment, involving the critique of existing patterns and the search for alternatives and an active moment, involving mobilization and collective action. Praxis is a crucial step that articulates the move from enabling conditions to the process of institutional entrepreneurship.

THE PROCESS OF INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Authors describe the institutional entrepreneurship process as a complex political and cultural process (DiMaggio 1988; Fligstein 1997; Rao 1998). The necessary skills and resources are different from those usually used by actors developing strategies (Lawrence 1999). The literature emphasizes the need to mobilize diverse assets and develop a discursive strategy to mobilize allies or impose the institutional entrepreneur's project. It also emphasizes the need to strategically organize action according to context.

Mobilizing assets

Institutional entrepreneurs build from their existing assets. Scholars have identified several such assets: legitimacy, formal authority, position in the field, and the access to scarce and critical resources in the field.

Authors identify previously earned legitimacy as a central asset. Institutional entrepreneurs build on their already established legitimacy and identity according to which they must articulate their action if they want to benefit from this legitimacy (Durand and McGuire 2005). Yet, this previous legitimacy allows them to be acknowledged as serious by stakeholders. According to Maguire et al. (2004) institutional entrepreneurs in emerging fields are likely to have legitimacy toward different stakeholders. Wade-Benzoni et al. (2002) indicate that activist groups connect the values of their cause with their personal identity, creating a value congruence that build on their legitimacy and is a potent force for social change. Overall, Suchman (1995) indicates that institutional entrepreneurs can secure three forms of legitimacy. Pragmatic legitimacy refers to organizational and personal reputation

with regards to reliability and performance, asserting that the institutional entrepreneur's project is superior to the existing institutional arrangement. Moral legitimacy results from embedding new structures and practices in networks of already legitimate institutions, and cognitive legitimacy is earned by conforming to established models or standards. Those forms of legitimacy can be used to favor the acceptance and diffusion of the institutional change advocated by the entrepreneur (Greenwood et al. 2002: 60).

Formal authority and leadership that institutional entrepreneurs may have is also an asset. Fligstein (1997, 2001) and Phillips et al. (2004) investigate the influence of this asset on the construction and diffusion of entrepreneurs' discourses. Fligstein (2001) indicates that formal authority helps in framing stories. Phillips et al. (2004) suggest that institutional entrepreneurs can use this asset in the diffusion of their discourse to make it increasingly acknowledged and 'consumed' by other actors. Maguire et al. (2004) relates formal authority to subject position, considering this authority as a feature of the entrepreneur's position in the field. Phillips et al. (2000) indicate that institutional entrepreneur's leadership position in the field favors institutionalization.

Many works underline the importance of the institutional entrepreneur's position in the field. Fligstein (1997: 398) suggests that successful institutional entrepreneurs are likely to be actors with high levels of social capital. Referring to Coleman (1988), he defines social capital as one's position in a web of social relations that provide information and political support, and considers the concurrent ability to draw on that standing to influence actions of others. He suggests that institutional entrepreneurs can use this position to sever the links between some groups, which they can then use as allies, and the rest of the field. Phillips et al. (2004) suggest that being central in the field favors that the texts created by the institutional entrepreneur will be acknowledged and consumed. Institutional entrepreneurs must reach positions that allow them to bring together diverse stakeholders, and then to act as champions and orchestrate collective action (Maguire et al. 2004) or to be powerful enough to impose institutional change through controlling the access to resources (Dorado, 2005). Hence, institutional entrepreneurs have a strong interest in securing such positions.

The success of institutional entrepreneurs is affected significantly by their access to scarce and critical resources and their skills in leveraging them (Fligstein 1997). These resources are necessary for political action (Seo and Creed 2002). They can be used to bypass the sanctions

that opponents to the institutional change are likely to impose on the institutional entrepreneur who questions the existing institutions (Greenwood et al. 2002). Phillips et al. (2000) indicate that the control by institutional entrepreneurs, acting collectively as collaborators, of scarce and critical resources in that institutional field, favors the institutionalization of the innovations emerging out of the collaboration. Control of scarce and critical resources can be used in different ways. It can be used to apply pressures on other actors when the institutional entrepreneur controls the resources necessary to those actors (e.g., Demil and Bensédrine 2005). More expeditiously, it can be used to impose institutional change on actors who might not agree with it without having to convince them. Meyer and Rowan, (1977) have already pointed out that dominant players were likely to impose rules on the dominated players. Dorado (2005: 389) applies this to institutional entrepreneurs, taking the example of Rockefeller as developed by Chernov (1998) to illustrate this point. As he controlled most of the oil refineries in the USA, John D. Rockefeller could change the way the oil market worked by controlling prices while other actors could not oppose this change.

Developing a discursive strategy

The discursive dimension is crucial in the literature on the institutional entrepreneurship process. Some authors even state that institutional entrepreneurship is mainly a discursive strategy whereby institutional entrepreneurs generate discourse and texts which aim at affecting the processes of social constructions that underlie institutions (e.g. Suddaby and Greenwood 2005; Munir and Phillips 2005; Phillips et al. 2004).

New organizational forms entail an institutionalization project (DiMaggio 1988; Rao et al. 2000). Drawing from Tolbert and Zucker (1996), authors (Greenwood et al. 2002; Maguire et al. 2004) indicate that theorization by the institutional entrepreneurs implies two major tasks: *specification* through framing of the existing organizational failing and *justification* of the innovation as superior to the previous arrangement. This is a complex and ambiguous exercise since institutional entrepreneurs must develop projects that are sufficiently incompatible with the existing arrangements to generate a fundamental departure from the past, while being sufficiently redundant to mobilize support (Seo and Creed 2002). The aim is both to emphasize the failings of the existing institutionalized practices and norms and to show that the institutionalization project can ensure superior results, to coalesce allies and reduce the contradictions inherent to the coalition, while exacerbating those among opponents (e.g. Fligstein 1997; Haveman and Rao 1997; Holm 1995; Rao 1998; Seo and Creed 2002;

Suddaby and Greenwood 2005). Hence, the institutional entrepreneur must both de-legitimize the existing institutional arrangements and those supported by opponents (e.g. Suddaby and Greenwood 2005; Creed et al. 2002) and legitimate its project toward stakeholders and potential allies (e.g. Déjean et al. 2004; Demil and Bensedrine 2005).

To analyze how institutional entrepreneurs strategically develop legitimating accounts of their institutionalization project, authors drew the notion of framing from the literature on social movements (e.g. Creed et al. 2002; de Holan and Phillips 2002; Dorado 2005; Fligstein 1997, 2001; Maguire et al. 2004; Rao 1998; Rao et al. 2000; Seo and Creed 2002). Rao et al. (2000: 244) indicate: “*Institutional entrepreneur can mobilize legitimacy, finances, and personnel only when they are able to frame the grievances and interests of aggrieved constituencies, diagnose causes, assign blames, provide solutions, and enable collective attribution processes to operate (Snow & Benford, 1992: 150)*”.

Institutional entrepreneurs must develop frames that are sufficiently incompatible with the existing arrangements in order to generate a fundamental departure from the past, while at the same time being sufficiently redundant with the most resonant frames available, those with the higher mobilizing potential available at the time, in order to mobilize support, new members, mobilize adherents, and acquire resources (Seo and Creed 2002). Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) suggest that one possible way to combine those contradictory requirements is to do decoupling – i.e. limit institutional entrepreneurship to one area and conform to established institutional requirements in all the others.

When developing a strategic frame, institutional entrepreneurs must both specify the functional, social or political failings of existing institutional arrangements and justify why their institutionalization project is superior (Dacin et al., 2002; Greenwood et al. 2002; Maguire et al. 2004). To do so, they elaborate from pre-existing frames that are either specific to an organizational field (Déjean et al. 2004) or of wider societal frames (de Holan and Phillips 2002; Hardy and Phillips 1999; Lawrence and Phillips 2004). According to Haveman and Rao (1997: 1614), the very essence of institutional entrepreneurs is the ability to skillfully align an organizational form, and the specific institution it embodies, with the master rules of the society. Each existing frame provides constraints and resources for actors’ strategies (Hardy and Phillips 1999). Institutional entrepreneurs select frames according to their mobilization potential which is a function of the degree to which it (1) is endowed with some

level of legitimacy in the same social system and have some resonance with the targeted audience and (2) gives rise to tension and contestation over the legitimacy of a particular institutional arrangement (Creed et al. 2002; Seo and Creed 2002). They also use rhetorical strategies to alter those frames (Subbary and Greenwood 2005). Legitimizing accounts can transform listeners' identities by successfully framing what it means when a person supports or opposes a cause (Creed et al., 2002). Rao et al. (2000) suggest that defining and redefining identity is central to build a sustainable coalition.

To emphasize the failures of the existing institutional arrangement, they develop institutional vocabularies of recurrent phrases, references and texts intended to accentuate and exploit inherent contradictions in logics prevailing in the field (Subbary and Greenwood 2005). They combine multiple frames to justify the project and maximize its resonance (Creed et al., 2002). Institutional entrepreneurs must then show empathy and be able to imaginatively identify with the state of others and relate to their interest (Fligstein 1997). The institutionalization project then becomes a common carrier for the multiple aggregated interests of different actors. Presenting the sponsored norm or practice as altruistic (Fligstein, 1997) or nested it in impersonal institutional-base trust through standard structures and stable rules (Haveman and Rao, 1997) also favor its diffusion.

Mobilizing allies

Mobilizing allies is crucial for institutional entrepreneurs insofar as the allies will act to diffuse new practices and beliefs. Zilber (2002) indicates that all the actors may be or may become active participants in the process of interpreting institutions –refining, sustaining, or rejecting institutional meaning, which makes the institutionalisation process highly uncertain. Authors mainly consider how institutional entrepreneurs could cooperate with potential allies. Indeed, the mobilization of ‘subsidiary actors’ who support the project is central to institutional entrepreneurship strategies (e.g. Beckert, 1999; DiMaggio, 1988). Rao et al. (2000) suggest that strong mobilization structures can broaden political opportunities and reduce the need to broaden the frame as these dimensions are reciprocally intertwined. Institutional entrepreneurs are likely to create new networks of relationships among actors through cooperation and association (Lawrence and Phillips, 2004; Leiblebici et al., 2001). Those networks can lead to the reconfiguration of the field, thereby eroding the centrality of the established players (Leiblebici et al., 2001).

Research by Hardy, Lawrence and Phillips (Lawrence et al. 2002; Phillips et al. 2000) show the importance of interorganizational cooperation in the emergence of institutions. They suggest that the more allies are embedded in the field (i.e. are tightly linked to other members of the field) and the more they are implied in the project, the higher the chances to succeed in the implementation of the institutional change (Lawrence et al. 2002). Accordingly, when institutional entrepreneurs are involved in collective arrangements, the institutionalization of the developed practice through collaboration is likely to be enhanced (Phillips et al. 2000). Rao (1994) indicate that powerful allies that can endorse the institutional entrepreneur's action such as legal authorities, government bodies and other powerful organizations can provide socio-political legitimacy. Dorado (2005) distinguishes three forms of arrangements: leveraging where institutional entrepreneurs first develop a project and then gain the support of others, accumulating where entrepreneurs are 'running in pack' and institutional entrepreneurship is not an individual but a collective action that emerged out of the aggregation of multiple singular actions (e.g. Rao and Sivakumar, 1999), and convening where institutional entrepreneurs must convince stakeholders to collaborate to jumpstart the development of a solution to a problem. She also suggests that interpersonal trust can be used here (Dorado, 2005).

Actors who benefit from the existing institutions and are likely to be former successful institutional entrepreneurs will oppose the institutional change (DiMaggio, 1988).

The need to mobilize allies might lead institutional entrepreneurs to review their plans during the institutional change process. Fligstein (1997) insists on the need for the institutional entrepreneur to remain flexible in its strategy during the process. The institutional entrepreneur must be flexible enough to allow the institutionalization project to evolve depending on the support it is likely to obtain. Negotiation might be necessary to adapt the institutionalization project and ensure its success (Fligstein 1997; Rao 1998).

Only recently some authors, focusing on power relations in institutional change, have suggested that institutional entrepreneurs might be able to impose change through the exercise of power (Dorado 2005) or the domination they exert over other actors (Lawrence et al. 2005) without having to mobilize allies. Institutional entrepreneurs would draw this possibility from the control they have over scarce and critical resources.

Acting in context

Authors suggest that the context in which institutional entrepreneurs act is crucial. It would influence the institutional entrepreneurs' necessary abilities (Maguire et al. 2004), as well as the strategies they adopt (Dorado 2005; Fligstein 1997). Research tends to emphasize emerging fields and fragmented fields as especially fertile for institutional entrepreneurship (Déjean et al. 2004; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002).

As previously stated, most empirical studies have been done in emerging fields which are situations providing many opportunities for institutional entrepreneurs (e.g. Phillips et al. 2000; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002). Research identifies two needs in this type of field: to legitimize the new activity toward major stakeholders (e.g. Déjean et al. 2004; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002) and to set rules to stabilize the field, create a specific body of knowledge, establish its boundaries, increase the density of organizational contacts and flow of information in the field, and reduce uncertainty due to the lack of existing models and standards (e.g. DiMaggio, 1991; Lawrence 1999; Garud et al., 2002). Empirical studies document the use of institutional strategies such as the development of measures (Déjean et al. 2004), professionalization (DiMaggio 1991), membership strategies (Lawrence 1999), certification contests (Rao 1994) and the establishment of standards in emerging fields (Garud et al. 2002). The aim is to develop a center-periphery structure and to attract resources for development (DiMaggio, 1991). Institutional entrepreneurs build on frames that resonate with the major stakeholders' essential demands and established cognitive frames (Déjean et al. 2004; Rao and Sivakumar 1999; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2006). Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) suggest that emerging fields favor the use of rhetorical strategies by institutional entrepreneurs, using the fascination for novel practices and styles present in any social group, thus becoming 'fashion setters' in creating institutions that can interest and attract decision makers. Authors suggest that in emerging field institutional entrepreneurship is likely to be associated with rapid imitation and relatively little conflict (Lawrence and Phillips, 2004).

Fragmented organizational fields, where contradictory and competing frames and institutional logics co-exist, are also presented as favorable grounds for institutional change (Clemens and Cook, 1999; Levy and Egan, 2003; Rao et al. 2000). Rao et al. (2000) indicate that in such situations promoting consensus would be a successful strategy. Fligstein and Mara-Drita (1996) document the way Jacques Delors developed the European Union. In 1983, leaders were caught in a bargaining trap, because there was no program on which all could agree, and

any initiative would be blocked. Delors developed an institutionalization project around the vague idea of the completion of the single market. Yet the content of the project “was left unspecified and actors could read anything into it”, favoring the aggregation of multiple actors with eventually different interests (Fligstein & Mara-Drita 1996: 12).

Less research has been done on hierarchical fields where the prevailing logics are supported by well established dominant actors, and where institutional change is considered more difficult to implement. Levy and Egan (2003) suggest that the coordination of dominant actors magnifies the resilience of established institutional arrangements. Resistance to institutional change is likely to be stronger than in other forms of fields as the dominant coalition can use its resources to resist (Greenwood et al., 2002). Hence authors suggest that in such situation institutional entrepreneurs must secure the support of the dominant coalition’s members such as professional bodies (Greenwood et al. 2002), elites (Hwang and Powell, 2005), funders (DiMaggio, 1991), or political authorities (Holm 1995). Two alternative strategies have been envisioned. Rao et al. (2000) and Fligstein (2001) suggest that sub-fields can be developed. Levy and Egan (2003) indicate that institutional entrepreneurs can introduce breaches in the dominant coalition by creating tensions and contradictions, in order to change the situation into a fragmented field.

METHODS REVIEW

Looking at the methods used so far to institutional entrepreneurship reveals a major shift in institutional theory. Most traditional institutional research would use methods to follow the diffusion of practices among populations, most of which were quantitative methods. Qualitative methods have seldom been used so far (Lawrence et al. 2002). In sharp contrast, most research on institutional entrepreneurship tends to use qualitative methods. Most empirical papers reviewed use qualitative methods or a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods (Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996). Mainly quantitative empirical study is rare (Rao 1994). This can be justified by the need to develop comprehensive descriptions that provide a deeper understanding of the actors’ actions, their reasons to act and their subjective perceptions, as well as to gain a detailed knowledge of the process. Also, qualitative case studies are well suited to build theory on concepts and processes that are poorly understood (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 2003). Institutional entrepreneurship certainly qualifies on both counts.

Considering data collection, the need to provide qualitative information and to study processes led researchers to perform interviews, mostly semi-structured to favor the expression of actors' visions of the process (Déjean et al., 2004; Greenwood et al. 2002; Levy and Egan 2003). Some studies also rely on archival data (DiMaggio 1991; Haveman and Rao 1997; Holm, 1995; Leiblebici et al. 1991; Rao 1998, 1994) and secondary sources (Déjean et al. 2004; Holm 1995; Leiblebici et al. 1991; Levy and Egan 2003; Rao 1998). Emphasis on discourse led to the consideration of the important varieties of text from editorial cartoons (Hardy and Phillips, 1999) to advertisement campaigns (Munir and Phillips, 2005). Ethnographic studies remain an exception (Zilber 2002).

Data analysis uses qualitative methods, developing narratives to account for the institutional entrepreneurship process. Most empirical studies are monographs of institutional entrepreneurship based on in-depth and longitudinal case-study (e.g. Déjean et al. 2004; de Holan and Phillips 2002; Munir and Phillips 2005). Multi-case, comparative research is more rare (for an exception, see Lawrence et al. 2002). The emphasis on discourse analysis led to the use of new tools. Several directions have been explored. Drawing from literature on social movements, some others start using frame analysis as a method to investigate the elaboration and diffusion of institutional entrepreneurs' discursive strategies (Creed et al. 2002). Some authors used a mix of interpretive methods and critical discourse analysis (e.g. Lawrence and Phillips 2004; Munir and Phillips 2005). Recently, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) suggested moving one step further by using the long standing tradition of rhetorical analysis to provide deeper insights on strategies based on language used by institutional entrepreneurs to manipulate, combine and alter established frames. Another trend seems to be the increasing use of qualitative software such as NUD*IST or NVivo to perform content analysis of interviews and texts and isolate semantic units (e.g. Déjean et al. 2004; Lawrence 1999; Lawrence and Phillips 2004; Suddaby and Greenwood 2005). This software might arguably favor rigor, handling important quantities of texts and develop collaborative research involving several researchers.

DISCUSSION

This paper intended to review the insights gained by research on institutional entrepreneurship and to suggest some directions for future research. On the basis of a mainly inductive analysis

of 40 studies, both theoretical and empirical, we have proposed a review of the main insights and topics considered so far by the literature. In this section we focus on the inconsistencies and shortcomings of this literature and draw directions for future research.

Defining institutional entrepreneurship

Fifteen years of research on the topic of institutional entrepreneurship has yielded many empirical examples and theoretical propositions about institutional entrepreneurs. Most studies about institutional entrepreneurship refer to DiMaggio's (1988) definition. However, a number of key issues are not addressed in this definition. For this reason, the concept still remains elusive and unclear. Firstly, it is not clear which features differentiate institutional entrepreneurs from other actors, i.e., individuals and organizations that primarily reproduce existing institutions. Certainly, institutional entrepreneurs have an imaginative or 'projective' capacity (Emirbayer and Mische 1998), but is that capacity sufficient to characterize them? In addition, a definition of institutional entrepreneurs must distinguish between institutional entrepreneurs and customary entrepreneurs. Some actors are innovative, creative and imaginative, but they do not change, or seek to change, the institutions in their field. While they may certainly become entrepreneurs if their ideas materialize into new services or products, they can hardly qualify as institutional entrepreneurs if they do not somehow break with the existing institutions at the field level.

Second, relying on the existing studies about institutional entrepreneurship one may think that actors need to succeed in the institutionalization of new practices to be regarded as institutional entrepreneurs. Indeed most studies that have been conducted so far analyzed the action of institutional entrepreneurs who succeeded in imposing new practices and beliefs. Since our analysis demonstrated that successful institutional change is not only dependent on the actor, but also on enabling field conditions, a definition of institutional entrepreneurs should avoid making success a defining feature. Failures should be permitted. Actors whose innovations never diffuse or impact on the field can still be regarded as institutional entrepreneurs as long as the changes that they initiate break with the institutions in their field.

Another difficult issue related to the definition of institutional entrepreneur has to do with the degree of intentionality of institutional entrepreneurs. Do actors have to be willing to change institutions to be regarded as institutional entrepreneurs? Some actors may be willing to change institutions and may initiate change projects that actually break with institutions.

Others may not be aware of the fact that the change that they initiate breaks with the existing institutions. However, in both cases, actors can be regarded as institutional entrepreneurs. In contrast, actors who are willing to change institutions and end up initiating changes that actually do not break with those institutions cannot be regarded as institutional entrepreneurs. Relying on what we said so far, we could define institutional entrepreneurs as actors who initiate changes that break with the existing institutions and that subsequently have intended or unintended consequences at the field level. They may succeed or they may fail in their project, but they are institutional entrepreneurs if they formulate a project that somehow breaks with the existing institutions and take action to make it happen. This definition resonates with the entrepreneurship literature. Actors qualify as entrepreneurs when attempting to turn an innovative idea into a new organizational form or a new product; the outcome is not crucial. The same principle should apply to the definition of institutional entrepreneurs.

Enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship

Most studies that aim at highlighting the enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship have, so far, concentrated on the role of organizational field-level and organization-level enabling conditions. In particular, organizational field-level enabling conditions have already received a great deal of attention. However, it would be interesting to complement the existing studies that highlight field-level enabling conditions with empirical studies examining institutional entrepreneurship in mature fields instead of emerging fields. It may be that the enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship in different types of field vary.

At the organizational level of analysis, there is a need for more studies about the impact that organizations' position in the field may have on the likelihood for this organization to engage in institutional entrepreneurship. Most studies that have tackled this issue concluded that peripheral organizations were more likely to engage in institutional entrepreneurship. In a recent study, Greenwood and Suddaby (Forthcoming) showed that organizations that are at the center of a field may also engage in institutional entrepreneurship. It is now necessary to compare the conditions under which central vs. peripheral actors are more likely to act as institutional entrepreneurs.

So far very few studies have analyzed the enabling role of individual-level enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship, though it has been shown that all individuals are

not equally likely to act as institutional entrepreneurs, even when they are embedded in the same environment (Clemens and Cook 1999). As acknowledged by Dorado (2005), all individuals will not necessarily perceive field-level conditions in the same way. Even though they may be embedded in a field that offers opportunity for action, individuals may not perceive them. A number of individual characteristics may have an impact on individuals' perception of the field, their willingness to act as institutional entrepreneurs and their ability to do so. Maguire et al. (2004) and Dorado (2005) have started analyzing the enabling role of individuals' social position. Empirical researches show that individual trajectories might explain the propensity for an actor to develop institutional innovations. Kraatz and Moore (2002) and Thornton (2002) studies show that newcomers into the field are more likely to develop institutional innovations than 'field born' actors. In the same vein, Boxenbaum and Battilana (2005) have taken into account the impact that individuals' trajectory has on the likelihood for them to act as institutional entrepreneurs. In particular, they have highlighted the enabling role of individuals' inter-organizational mobility within and across fields, and of individuals' previous engagement in social movements. We need to know more about how individuals' social position affects their perception of the field, their willingness to act as institutional entrepreneurs and their ability to do so. Future studies should also account for the impact that changes in individuals' position have on the likelihood for them to act as institutional entrepreneurs.

Individual factors other than individuals' social position may also be conducive to institutional entrepreneurship. While Emirbayer and Mische (1998) link the actors' dominant temporal orientation with their social positions, other conditions may play a key role. For example, future research may explore the impact that psychological factors have individuals' temporal orientation, that is, on the likelihood for them to act as institutional entrepreneurs. This line of inquiry, although promising, is very demanding because it requires researchers to control for the impact of other identified enabling conditions to avoid the trap of methodological individualism. One way to avoid this trap is to examine the role of psychological factors in relation with individuals' social position. Such an approach will more comprehensively account for individual-level enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship.

The Process of Institutional Entrepreneurship

Reviewing research on the institutional entrepreneurship process also provides some useful information on the achievements and the directions of the literature. When considering the steps of the process, some have received more attention than others. Until recently, authors focused more on the way institutional entrepreneurs were able to renegotiate their project (e.g. Fligstein 1997; Rao 1998) rather than on the initial theorization of the institutionalization project. Little work has been done to relate the initial project with the outcome of the process and see whether the institutional entrepreneur feels he succeeded or failed. To the best of our knowledge no institutional research has yet investigated the actual elaboration of the institutional project.

Equally, there are some biases in the selection of the context considered when doing empirical research. Most research has analyzed institutional entrepreneurs acting in emerging fields. We need more research on institutional entrepreneurship in both fragmented and stable organizational fields. While theoretical elements permit to argue that opportunities for institutional change might be rarer than in emerging markets, we can still expect to learn a lot from studying institutional entrepreneurs in more difficult environments.

Some dimensions of the process have been more studied than others. The discursive dimension, and the institutional entrepreneur's assets related to it, such as legitimacy, has received much interest. This is coherent both with the interest of institutional analysis with culture and legitimacy, and with the methodological emphasize on discourse analysis. The more material resources have received less attention. Indeed, Hargadon and Douglas (2001) suggest that the material dimension is crucial as well. Analyzing the way Edison was able to institutionalize changes in the public light system, they show that he imitated the form of the traditional gas lighting system to develop a new electric lighting system, using what they call 'robust design'. This study suggests that the material dimension should be considered as well and unless authors consider this material dimension in institutional entrepreneurship it seems difficult to state that the discursive dimension prevails. Equally, strategies based on the development of a coalition and a consensus have received much more attention than strategies based on the abrupt use of different forms of power to impose the institutionalization of practices even against other actors' will.

Methods Review

Investigating the methods used so far by research on institutional entrepreneurship suggests some important opportunities for future contributions. The first striking feature is that most empirical papers are monographs of successful institutional entrepreneurs. Multiple case analysis is rare (for an exception Lawrence et al. 2002). The lack of comparative studies limits the possibility to generalize findings. Another bias is the undersampling of institutional entrepreneurs' failures in the present literature. None of the empirical research reviewed documents a complete failure to institutionalize a project. This is unfortunate, especially as failure is more likely than success in this kind of enterprise according to DiMaggio (1988). It appears that cases are selected on the dependent variable (successful institutional change) and studied retrospectively. More studies should be conducted in real time and cases should be selected on the independent variable (individuals or organizations with an institutionalization project).

One crucial implication associated with the proposed definition of institutional entrepreneur above has to do with sampling. In any study that aims at analyzing the strategies used by institutional entrepreneurs and/or the outcomes of their action, it is important to sample on the independent variable, that is, on actors who initiate changes that break with the existing institutions at the field level. Sampling and testing should occur prior to the outcome of these activities to avoid two important biases: a) that the sample over-represent successful outcomes of institutional entrepreneurship, and b) that the test results over-represent deliberate strategic action and goal-directedness. Identifying institutional entrepreneurs in real time can be difficult, which may account for the absence of this kind of study. A better understanding of institutional entrepreneurship requires that researchers face this challenge.

When considering data analysis methods, some suggestions can be made as well.

While much discourse analysis has been performed, much remains to be done in the use of discourse analysis methods. Recently Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) suggested that using rhetorical analysis might be a good way to go deeper into the discourse's analysis. Other methods to analyze discourses such as hermeneutics or critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2005) might provide interesting results as well. The institutional entrepreneur's social position is said to be important both as an enabling condition and as an asset in the process of institutional entrepreneurship yet network analysis is used in none of the research. This raises the issue of using quantitative approaches to study institutional entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the literature about institutional entrepreneurship that we conducted suggests that it constitutes a fairly coherent body of works. Overall, it shows that quite a lot has already been achieved in our understanding of institutional entrepreneurship since DiMaggio's seminal paper in 1988. In particular, researchers have managed to set up foundations for a theory of institutional entrepreneurship by highlighting a number of enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship and thereby overcoming the paradox of embedded agency. They have also gone far in capturing the process of institutional entrepreneurship.

Many directions for future works remain yet open as the discussion part of this paper shows. While certain phenomena associated with institutional entrepreneurship have been extensively studied, others remain understudied. In particular, there is a need for more comparative studies, more studies in mature or stable fields, more studies about failing institutional entrepreneurs and more studies about individuals acting as institutional entrepreneurs. All these correspond to promising research directions that would complement the existing body of research about institutional entrepreneurship. This paper not only analyzes the existing works but it also proposes an ambitious research agenda about institutional entrepreneurship that requires more systematic investigation about this phenomenon.

Advancing on institutional entrepreneurship can contribute greatly to improving institutional theory. Institutional entrepreneurship has already been a major step in the introduction and development of agency within institutional theory. Further insight into institutional entrepreneurship can help advance a more complex and extended view of new institutionalism (Hoffman and Ventresca, 2002), which views actors as both embedded in institutional arrangements and as developing creative activities. This articulation between agency and structure is one of the major challenges of contemporary research in institutional theory.

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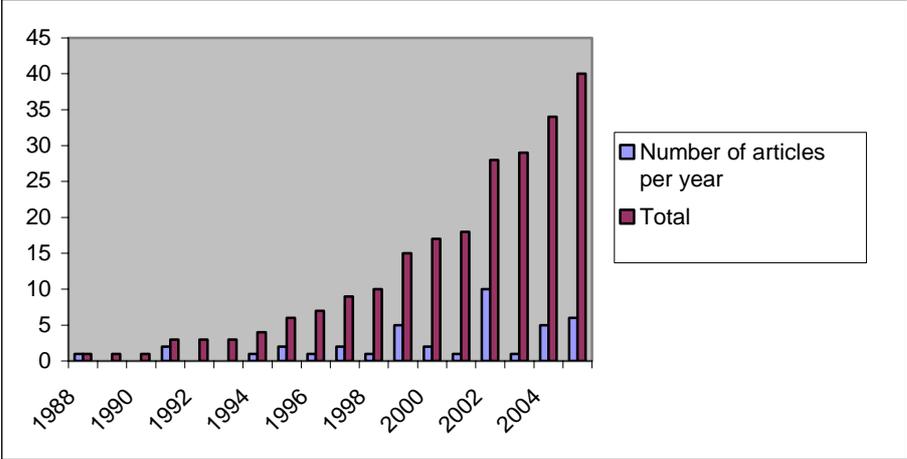
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Figure 1: Evolution of the number of articles published on institutional entrepreneurship



ANNEX 1

REVIEWED ARTICLES

	Reference	Definition	Enabling conditions	Process	Method
1	Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006		Actors are more likely to act as IEs when they face adverse performance, have connections outside the field. Such connections can be supported by: Boundary misalignment (discrepancy between the scale of operations of an actor and the regulatory boundaries), boundary bridging (access to actors outside the field), resource asymmetry between the IE and others in the field		
2	Hwang and Powell, 2005	IEs influence professional knowledge, standards and formal laws		IEs recombine existing material. For de novo institutions they must theorize their project to facilitate its understanding and diffusion. Most commonly they transpose institutional logics from one setting to another	
3	Munir and Phillips, 2005.			Discursive strategies in an emerging field Framing	Discourse analysis
4	Demil and Bensédrine, 2005.	IEs motivated by their self interests		Double strategy: - Legitimation through conformity - Pressures through financial power over the public agency	
5	Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005.	"Attempts to alter or replace an institutional logic are referred to as acts of institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988)".		Discursive strategies Exposition of the contradictions in the institutional arrangements Articulation of new institutions with the existing arrangements Theorization of change	Using transcripts of testimonies in front of commissions. Data analysis: Qualitative content analysis, NUD*IST

6	Dorado, 2005.	IEs are organized actors who leverage support and acceptance for new institutional arrangements to serve an interest that they value highly” (p. 398-399).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - temporal orientation toward the future - network position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cognitive, social and material resource mobilization by framing - interpersonal trust - collaboration - 3 processes: leveraging (one IE and backers), accumulating (running in packs), convening (reorganizing the field) which efficiency depends on the kind of field. - Distinguishes three kinds of fields: opportunity transparent, opportunity opaque and hazy fields 	Theoretical paper
7	Durand and McGuire, 2005.	Actors who create and expand domains and common identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - scarcity of resources and challenges in the existing domain - opportunities in the new one where there is a need for ambiguity reduction 	First build on the already established legitimacy and identity then adapt to the new domain specificity	Qualitative Interviews Triangulation with previous study on the same issue
8	Lawrence, Mauws, Dyck and Kleysen, 2005.	Interested actors who work to connect new ideas and practices to the existing arrangements.		Access to the right resources and their skills in leveraging those resources Domination exerted through this access.	Theoretical paper
9	Maguire, Hardy and Lawrence, 2004.	Individuals as well as organizations. Not all actors are equally adept at producing desired outcomes.		Political struggle In an emerging fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject position - Theorization: framing and justification. - Individual characteristics 	Qualitative discourse analysis
10	Phillips, Lawrence and Hardy, 2004.	IEs are generators of influential texts that are aimed at influencing the nature and structure of discourses and in turn, affecting the institutions that are supported by those discourses.		Discursive activity. Legitimacy, resources, formal authority, and centrality support the acknowledgement and consumption of the texts.	Theoretical paper

11	Lawrence and Phillips, 2004.	Draw on the pre-existing institutions, and macro cultural discourse, to structure new networks of relationships and sets of institutions	actors draw from multiple pre-existing institutional fields and the ambiguous and contested macro-cultural discourse. Adapt and modify these institutions to fit their own purposes.	- New networks of relationships (cooperation, associations) are formed. - Strategies of the institutional entrepreneur are likely to be more emergent than intended in emerging fields - in emerging field institutional entrepreneurship is likely to be associated with rapid imitation and relatively little conflict	Qualitative. Interviews taped, transcribed and entered into NUD*IST, broader discourse analysis of regulatory discourse, anti whaling discourse, popular culture discourse
12	Déjean, Gond and Leca, 2004.	Actors who create new institutions and reduce the uncertainty linked to a new activity.	Emerging field provides opportunities (need to reduce uncertainty, ensure legitimacy toward external stakeholders)	Aligning on established field's frames	Qualitative. Interviews taped, transcribed and entered into NVivo software program. Secondary sources.
13	Anand and Watson, 2004	central or peripheral motivated resourceful social actors who shape the thrust of institutional forces		- mobilize collective resources - discursive logics (legitimation, assimilate into existing institutions, creation of self-serving logics and categories).	
14	Levy and Egan, 2003		IEs can be positioned at the the margins and interstices. Institutional fields fragmented and overlapping facilitate this.	Power lies in the alignment of field forces capable of reproducing the field. IES must provoke shifts in this block. 'War of positions' with incumbents to coordinate sources of power and build alliances.	Qualitative research. Semi-structured interviews and secondary sources. Narrative.
15	Creed, Scully and Austin, 2002.	IEs construct shared social identities to effect institutional change.		- Framing process using multiple cultural accounts selected for their resonance and the way they alter each other. - Legitimizing accounts frame what it means when an person supports or opposes a cause. - Those accounts frame identities.	Texts and interviews analyzed using the framing analysis as a method

16	Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002	Institutional entrepreneurs create norms, values and so forth consistent with their identity and current practice, and then get others to accept these norms, values and so forth.	Emerging activities	Strategies: - Decoupling: limit institutional entrepreneurship to one area and be conform in the others. - IEs must use the fascination for novel practices and styles presents in social groups	
17	Seo and Creed, 2002.	IEs use the contradictions and diversity of institutional logics. Institutional change views as dialectical.	Contradictions among institutional logics, i.e. ruptures and inconsistencies both among and within the established social arrangements are the fundamental driving force of institutional change. Praxis is a both a reflexive moment, involving the critique of existing patterns and the search for alternatives and an active moment, involving mobilization and collective action.	IEs must: - Develop alternative models of social arrangements - Develop frames that are incompatible with the existing and resonant to maximize mobilization - Mobilizing resources for political action.	
18	de Holan and Phillips, 2002.	Institutional entrepreneurship is one among several institutional strategies performed by the same company		- Legitimizing narratives build on existing societal frames - Internally: new approaches to human resources management to attract and reward workers in a way compatible with the dominant ideology	in-depth and longitudinal case-study. Interviews, visits, notes and informal conversations.
19	Dacin, Goodstein and Scott, 2002.	Institutional entrepreneurs legitimate and support the creation of institutions that they deem to be appropriate and aligned on their interests. Have resources and the power to shape institutions.	Pressures to change are either functional, political or social (Oliver, 1992).	Change goes through a critical stage of theorization and legitimation by actors. Importance of the interpretation by actors.	No empirical study. Authors recommend the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, intensive interviews, archival records and participant observation/

20	Greenwood, Suddaby and Hinings, 2002.	IEs disturb the socially constructed field-level consensus by introducing new ideas and the possibility of change.	Social, technological and regulatory jolts bring about deinstitutionalization. IEs are less captured by the prevailing routines. Being at the intersice of different fields favor the awareness of emerging opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several stages of institutional change. Institutional entrepreneurs operate mainly during desinstitutionalization and theorization. - Theorization involves both the specification of the failings of existing norms and practices and the justification of new norms and practices. - Resources help IEs to resist opposition. - Powerful established allies (such as a professional association) play an important role in theorizing change, 	Archival data analysis supplemented by interviews. A chronology of events was constructed and a textual analysis conducted.
21	Garud, Jain and Kumaraswamy, 2002.	IEs can create entirely new industries and associated institutions	New technologies favors institutional entrepreneurship	<p>Discursive strategies: create a whole new system of meaning that ties the functioning of disparate sets of institutions together. Do not exacerbate the contradictions that are inherent in institutions but provide synthesis.</p> <p>Political strategies: define, legitimize, combat, or co-opt rivals. Energize efforts toward collective action. Devise strategies for establishing stable sequences of interaction with other organizations</p>	Naturalistic inquiry: tracing historical roots using inductive logic; iterative process between data and theory using publicly available documents.
22	Zilber, 2002	Importance of meaning for institutional entrepreneurs as they may “motivate cooperation of other actors by providing them with common meanings and identities” (1997: 397).	IEs are likely to be central actors	<p>The process of institutionalization is a political process imbued with power and individual interests (p.236). Institutional practices and symbols are used by different actors to gain political power.</p> <p>Institutionalization is an interpretation process with political outcomes. People have the power to decide to become active participants in the process of interpreting institutions.</p>	Interpretive research. Ethnographical method. Participant observation, interviews, administrative texts.
23	Lawrence, Hardy, and Phillips, 2002.			<p>They show that collaboration can play a role in the production of new emerging institutions (proto institutions) by facilitating their creation and making them available inter-organizationally.</p> <p>Collaborations that have high levels of involvement among partners and that are highly embedded in their institutional field will be positively associated with the creation of new proto-institutions.</p> <p>Uncertainty favors collaboration.</p>	Qualitative, multi-case, comparative research design. In comparing cases the unit of analysis was the collaboration.

24	Fligstein, 2001.	Skilled social actors. Neither narrowly self-interested nor do they have fixed goals.	Crises/ external jolts	<p>The basic problem is to frame stories that appeal to identity and interest to help induce cooperation. Acting emphatically is central.</p> <p>Sources of framing can be: direct authority, Appear hard to read and without values oriented toward personal interests. Strategies depend on context.</p>	Theoretical paper. Call for longitudinal studies
25	Wade-Benzoni, Hoffman, Thompson, Moore, Gillespie and Bazerman, 2002.	Activist groups that lobby for social change based on value objectives rather than strict material interests.	<p>Activist groups connect the values of their cause with their personal identity, creating a value congruence that is a potent force for social change.</p> <p>They have little material stake in organizational output but will ideologically influence it.</p>		Theoretical paper.
26	Rao, Morrill and Zald, 2000.	IEs lead efforts to identify political opportunities, frame issues and problems, and mobilize constituencies. They spearhead collective.	<p>Opportunities arise from market failures: failure of trade associations, inadequacy of 'normal' incentives, failure of market mechanisms to reduce social costs, the exclusion of actors from traditional channels.</p>	<p>New organizational forms entails an institutionalization project.</p> <p>Need to frame grievances and to set mobilization structures to obtain support</p> <p>Defining and redefining identity is central to build a sustainable coalition.</p> <p>Opponents to institutional change</p> <p>Reactive politics against social movements include: 'spin-off movements', 'counter movements' and 'boundary truces'</p> <p>Three field conditions powerfully influence the activities and patterns of social movements and new forms</p>	Theoretical paper with examples from previous researches.

27	Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2000.	Institutional entrepreneurship through collaborative arrangements within and between fields'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complex and multi-faceted problems not previously addressed - Collaboration with actors from other fields allows translation of institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IEs draw from existing institutional structures that they use as resources in their negotiations Innovations emerging out of a collaboration are more likely - control scarce and critical resources in the field by IE favors institutionalization - IE's Leadership position in the field favors institutionalization - IE's involvement in collective arrangements in that field favors institutionalization . 	Theoretical paper
28	Beckert, 1999.	IEs have the capability to take a reflective position towards institutionalized practices and can envision alternative modes of getting things done.	Institutional stability is the basis for strategic agency of IEs.	IEs destroy existing institutions to create the need for certainty and control the institutional re-embeddedness process.	Theoretical paper
29	Lawrence, 1999.	Both organizations and individuals can be institutional entrepreneurs. Intended or unintentional/ emergent strategies.	The potential for organizational actors to manage institutional structures depends both on the nature of the institutional context and on the resources held by the interested actors.	Emerging field. Two types of institutional strategies documented (1) membership strategies (2) Standardization strategies.	Qualitative study. Purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews.
30	Rao and Sivakumar, 1999.			Complement between two kinds of institutional entrepreneurs: activists (investor rights activists) and professionals (financial analysts).	
31	Hardy and Phillips, 1999.		IEs develop discursive strategies based on discursive material available in the field and at the societal level.	Discourse at the societal level provides constraints and resources for actors' strategies in the field	Qualitative analysis of editorial cartoons as an indicator of broader societal discourse.
32	Clemens and Cook, 1999.	Refer to Haveman and Rao's definition of IE's essence (p. 459)	Three conditions facilitate institutional entrepreneurship: (1) Mutability of the rules (optional facilitate more than mandatory) (2) Internal contradictions of institutional arrangements (3) Multiplicity of competing institutions constitutes an opportunity for agency.	Entrepreneurs may mobilize by deploying familiar models of social organization in unfamiliar ways. They may also propose with news models. Complex task when multiple audiences for whom new political events or arrangements must be interpreted and legitimated.	

			Exogenous events may play a key role in initiating institutional change.		
33	Rao, 1998.	Institutional entrepreneurs are ideological activists who combine hitherto unconnected beliefs and norms into an organizational solution to a problem.	Political support from the state, professions, key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar goods and services.	A multi-organizational field with two competing ideological frames. Entrepreneurs recombine prevalent cultural materials to frame the new form as necessary, valid, and appropriate. They assemble resources, to legitimate the new form, and to integrate it with the prevalent institutional order. They must also define opportunities for resources, forge alliances and deal with antagonists and competitors.	A historical case study. Mostly qualitative analysis of primary data (facts and raw numbers) from archival sources, supplemented with secondary sources and theoretical texts.
34	Haveman and Rao, 1997.	IEs create whole new systems of meaning and industries by combining disparate sets of institutions together. Political and cultural activity. Organize collective action.	Technical requirements of consumer demands.	Ideological conflict between two models. Political strategies (lobbying, public attacks on the opposite model) Framing (model associated with positive cultural elements) The institutionalized model was a practical solution to a widely experienced problem and it was nested in impersonal, institution-based trust (standard structures, stable rules, and legitimate cultural elements).	Same as above.
35	Fligstein, 1997.	Institutional entrepreneurs are actors who have social skills – i.e. empathy that motivate others’ cooperation by providing common meaning and identities.	“When the organizational field has no structure, the possibilities for strategic action are the greatest” (p. 401).	The process is one of using selective tactics in response to other actors. The IE must consider the current condition of the organizational field, the place of the various groups in that field and the types of strategic action that ‘make sense’ given the objective conditions before choosing a tactic. Many several tactics are possible.	Theoretical paper

36	Fligstein and Mara-Drita, 1996.	Flexible bargaining actors with partially fixed, partially constructed interests engaged in political negotiations to define new role structures.	External jolt that can not be fixed generate a political opportunity for IEs.	IEs must perceive a crisis and recognize their interdependence. They must be convinced potential allies that their proposal for a new arrangement is in their interest. They negotiate and traded off the interests of surrounding actors.	Quantitative analysis. The authors use secondary sources to develop hypotheses and primary archival data.
37	Holm, 1995.	IEs are better able to see and to pursue their interests than are other actors. Their actions are driven by interests and power.	Enabling conditions included a market crisis, relative bargaining position of actor groups, conditions for collective action, and the access structure of the political system.	Existing institutions shape both processes and outcome. Mobilization of allies Construction of accounts that makes sense of the proposed institutional project and discredit the alternatives. Construction and politicization of the problem that becomes so important that it merited a place on the political agenda. IEs ensured that the solution survived through the various stages of the decision-making process and that votes were cast in their favor.	Historical case study. Qualitative analysis of facts and raw numbers obtained from archival or secondary sources.
38	Suchman, 1995.	Organizations or individuals that have the capacity to reach beyond their boundaries and act in concert by recruiting or creating an environment that can enact their claims	A weak technical or institutional environment facilitates the task of IEs.	IEs must legitimize their inst project. They use pragmatic legitimacy (organizational and personal reputation with regards to reliability and performance), moral legitimacy (embedding new structures and practices in networks of already legitimate institutions, p.588), and cognitive legitimacy (conforming to established models or standards).	Theoretical paper
39	Rao, 1994.	IEs are actors that engage in legitimation processes. Need to gain both sociopolitical legitimacy and cognitive legitimacy.	Ambiguity, field emergence, lack of standards in field.	IEs engage in a legitimation process when pursuing repeated certification of their organization. - Define, legitimate, combat or co-opt rivals and succeed in their institutional projects - skillfully use culture to legitimate their organizational innovations	Archival data. Quantitative paper on the causal relationship between certification (independent variable) and (a) reputation, (b) organizational survival.
40	DiMaggio, 1991.		Increased municipal support for the sector and ideological fit between IEs and strategically positioned groups in the sector. These conditions increased the ideological, human and financial resources that were available	The process is one of interest-driven conflict and professionalization. First, the formation of formal associations and a disciplinary voice, i.e., professionalization, which secondly led to the formation of a new field, defined by informal and associational activities among IEs. Third, the emergent field then attracted additional resources for development. The entire process	Historical case study. Qualitative analysis of archival data and secondary sources.

				comprised the following: creation of a body of knowledge, organization of professional associations, consolidation of a professional elite, increase of the organizational salience of professional expertise, increases in the density of organizational contacts, increases in the flow of information, emergence of center-periphery structure, collective definition of a field.	
41	Leblebici, Salancik, Copay, King, 1991	Organized actors with sufficiently high levels of interest and resources to introduce institutional change. Fringe players	Inconsistency or conflict between social order at the macro and micro level (p.337). The legal context can also facilitate the process.	From the fringe to the center Development of agreements with identifiable parties, diffusion to key constituents, thereby eroding the centrality of the established players.	Qualitative analysis of raw data and events from archival and secondary sources.
42	DiMaggio, 1988.	Organized actors with sufficient resources who see in new institutions an opportunity to realize interest that they value highly.	Social and geographic distance to core 2) Low level of dependency on other organizations 3) Transformation of an existing field/ contradictions in the field. Often powerful groups.	- legitimating accounts - financial support from powerful and subsidiary actors to legitimize their project and overcome opposition from formerly successful IEs.	Illustrative case. Archival