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Markets from Culture

Institutional Logics and Organizational Decisions in Higher Education Publishing

Patricia H. Thornton

“Patricia Thornton offers a powerful, insightful work that opens up further research and theory for the rest of us. This book will have a substantial impact on organizational studies.”

—Harrison White, Columbia University

Institutional logics, the underlying, governing principles of a corporation, strongly influence organizational decision making. Any shift in institutional logics results in a similar shift in attention to alternative problems and solutions, and results in new determinants for executive decisions. Examining changes in institutional logics in higher-education publishing, this book links cultural analysis with organizational decision making to develop a theory of attention, explaining how executives

concentrate on certain market characteristics to the exclusion of others.

Analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data from the 1950s to the 1990s, the author shows how higher-education publishing moved from a culture of independent domestic publishers focused on creating markets for books based on personal, relational networks to a culture of international conglomerates focused on creating markets from corporate hierarchies. This book offers broader lessons beyond publishing—its

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theory is applicable to explaining institutional changes in organizational leadership, strategy, and structure occurring in all professional services industries.

Patricia H. Thornton is Associate Professor at Duke University, Fuqua School of Business. She is the recipient of the American Sociological Association's W. Richard Scott award for the best organizations research article.

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