

THE CENTRE FOR BUSINESS HISTORY

BI Norwegian Business School, has the pleasure to invite you to the workshop:

Business and Commercial Culture



Time: 26 – 27 November 2012

Venue: BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo – Nydalen
Lunch and dinner included

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Theme: The concept ‘commercial culture’ is often used to explain how new businesses emerge and markets change over time. It is also deployed to describe the particular path towards mass consumption in the 20th Century and the making of the modern consumer. However, Norwegian historians have rarely made use of the concept and, more broadly, it is not clear whether its diverse meanings have been problematized and its methodological potential exhausted.

This workshop aims to demonstrate how the study of businesses and markets, in time and space, requires the inclusion of various commercial cultures. Commercial cultures are not only important variables in shaping society and business, they potentially offer new methodological insights. We therefore ask to what extent this concept offers a way to link shifting local and regional experiences with global processes in historical perspective. If it does, the study of commercial cultures might assist in escaping from the methodological nationalism that dominates much historical scholarship in the field.

PROGRAM

Monday 26 November

- 09.30 **Arrival and coffee**
- 10.00 **Welcome and practical information**
A brief introduction to the seminar and the Section for Business History
Knut Sogner, Professor of economic history, BI Norwegian Business School
- 10.15-12.30 **Session I: Economic Growth – a Question of Developing a sound Commercial Culture?**
“Bourgeois Dignity and the Wealth of Nations”
Deirdre N. McCloskey, Professor of Economics, History, English, and Communication, University of Illinois at Chicago and Professor in Economic History, University of Gothenburg
“Insurance as Business. Small Scandinavian Countries face International Competition”
Mikael Lönnborg, Associate Professor, BI Norwegian Business School
- 12.30-13.30 **Lunch**
- 13.30-17.00 **Session II: When Commercial Cultures Meet**
“Creating Cultures? Rooms for Manoeuvring in International Cartels”
Espen Storli, Postdoctoral fellow, Norwegian University of Science and Technology
“Scandinavian Shipping Companies and the use of Ethnic Agent”
Per Kristian Sebak, Associate Professor, Bergen Maritime Museum
- 15.00-15.15 **Coffee break**
“The State as a Businessman: The Case of Norwegian Aluminium”
Jan Thomas Kobberød, Professor, Vestfold University College
“Long-term Foreign Owners in Norway? The Rise and Fall of ABB in the Oil Business”
Sverre A. Christensen, Associate Professor, BI Norwegian Business School
“Bankers, investors and variation in risk-taking cultures”
Sverre Knutsen, Professor, BI Norwegian Business School
- 19.30 **Dinner**

Tuesday 27 November

- 09.00 **Coffee**
- 09.15-13.00 **Session III: Professionalisation in the Commercial Era**
“The Birth of a Salesman: The Transformation of Selling in America – and Europe?”
Walter Friedman, Professor, Harvard Business School
“The Creation of a Consumer Society: Wholesalers and the Coming of National Markets”
Lars Thue and **Christine Myrvang**, Senior Researchers, BI Norwegian Business School
- 11.00 11.15 **Short break with coffee and a small bite**
“A Necessary Evil or a Wanted Transformation: Norwegian Cooperatives Meeting New Commercial Challenges”
Espen Ekberg, Senior Researcher, BI Norwegian Business School
“Letting the Enemy in? The Establishment of a State Investment Fund in the Central Bank”
Tine Petersen and **Christoffer Kleivset**, Research Fellows, BI/Norges Bank
Final questions and discussion
- 13.00 **Lunch and good buy!**