

## Preface

---

Since the early 1980s, institutional organization theory has become increasingly established as a way of explaining how organizations work in interaction with the world around them. Many studies have been conducted and numerous scientific publications have been produced. For over a decade, institutional organization theory has been used – for example, at the Stockholm School of Economics, the academic environment I am most familiar with – as a central theory starting in first-term courses where the relationships between businesses and their environment are studied. However, both teachers and students have experienced a shortage of literature that takes a more general approach to the studies conducted over the years. Attempts to summarize the current state of research and package it into a single format have been few. And even if these attempts are commendable and work well at the graduate and doctoral level, they have not been very accessible to a wider audience.

This book is based on lectures I have given for a number of years at Stockholm School of Economics, in a course on organizational change. Over the years, the idea to compile the main theme developed in these lectures into a book slowly took shape, and a first version in Swedish was published by Liber in 2007. It is important to note that the book does not claim to be

an exhaustive review of institutional organization theory or to present everything that has been done in the field from the late 1970s onward. The ambition is, rather, to describe what the institutional environment is made up of and how organizations are governed by it.

Although it is my hand on the pen (or rather, the keyboard), the book must be seen as a product of the research environment in which it was written: Score (Stockholm Centre for Organizational Research), a joint multi-disciplinary research centre of Stockholm School of Economics and Stockholm University. The course from which the idea of the book arose was originally developed by me in cooperation with Karin Fernler, Bengt Jacobsson and Nils Brunsson. These people have therefore been a key source of inspiration, though all of my colleagues at Score have contributed directly or indirectly to my writing of this book. Many conversations with John Meyer over the years also inspired me to finally sit down and write a book on institutional theory and organizational change.