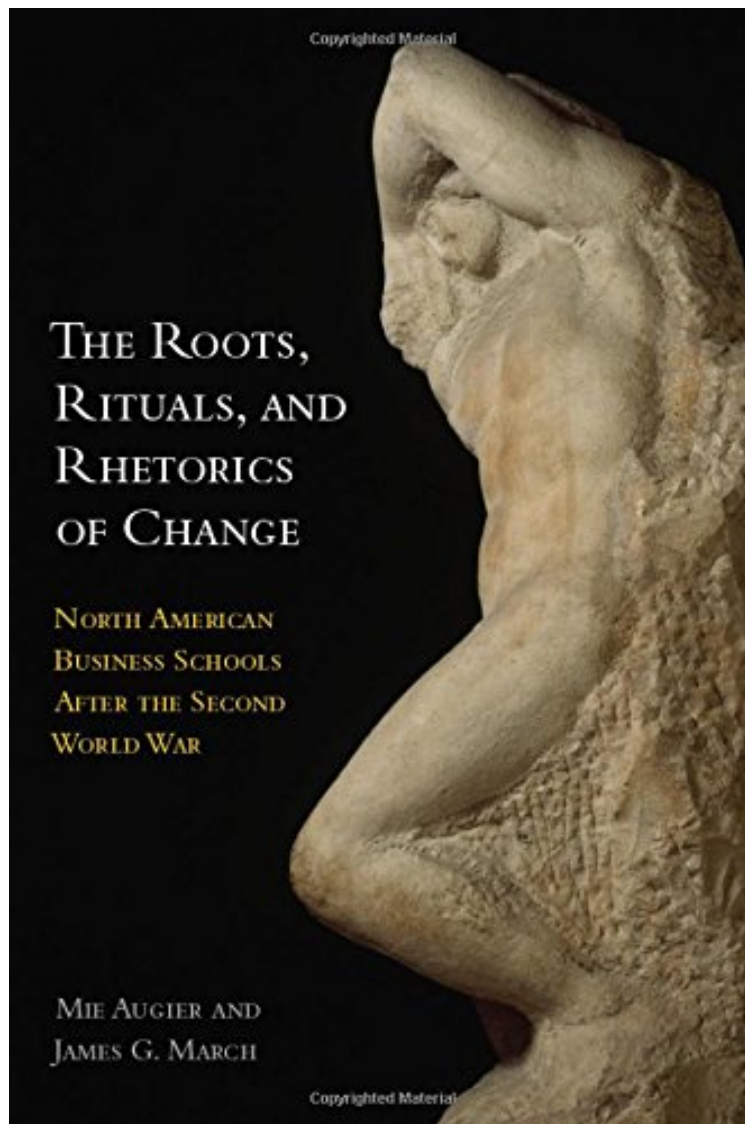


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## The Roots, Rituals, and Rhetorics of Change: North American Business Schools After the Second World War

*Mie Augier, James G. March*

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#314999 in Books Mie Augier 2013-01-01 2011-08-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .90 x 6.00, 1.10 #File Name: 0804786976376 pages The Roots Rituals and Rhetorics of Change | File size: 39.Mb

**Mie Augier, James G. March : The Roots, Rituals, and Rhetorics of Change: North American Business Schools After the Second World War** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Roots, Rituals, and Rhetorics of Change: North American Business Schools After the Second World War:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Must-Read for Business School Faculty and Administrators By

JCNow that about one in four of ALL American college students is 'studying business' our understanding of what - precisely - this means is becoming a national issue, not merely one of the student's personal choice. The educational 'opportunity costs' are becoming huge. Students are probably attracted to 'business studies' because it seems to give them better access to a job, obviously important in these days of the Precariat - see Guy Standing's book or wonder what the Occupy Wall Street movement is about from a young person's point of view. But why do firms recruit from business schools? And does business education do anything to prepare students for working in business? The answers here are wobbly at best. It is no secret that many inside and outside the business of business education doubt its substantial value, even as most accept it as an increasingly mandatory 'rite-de-passage', especially into the upper tier firms. These doubts have generated considerable discussion about how to make business education 'better'. That's the good news. The bad news is that the discussion has actually been going on for many decades without impacting the doubters' case one little bit. An intelligent alternative way into this discussion is to look at the history of US business education and, through that lens, get a sense of why it has grown into the monster that it now is - perhaps the next great bubble, as Peter Theil asserts. The business education community is surprisingly ill-informed about and largely indifferent to its history. This is weird and worrying, and makes talk of a bubble even more sensible. No match, of course, for the AACSB's stunning smugness on this whole matter. The Augier March book is absolutely essential reading for those who want to grasp the history of the US business school, its staggering growth, and content of business studies programs. It is written by two insiders who know most of the industry's movers and shakers and who have a deep understanding of what happened during the years of the explosive growth. One part of their story is business schools' adoption of rigorous research methods. These are now regarded with considerable suspicion, the argument being that they induce a numbers-only, ethically-blind, view of the world. Detailing the process of adoption in the business schools of Harvard, Wharton, Chicago and Stanford, Augier March reveal a great deal of important new material about the contested nature of this methodological transformation - the choices that were made, and who made them. The business school critics' general charge is that micro economic thinking has displaced discussion of the 'better angels' managers need to bear in mind if business is to serve the community rather than shareholders alone. The current concern with business ethics, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and so on is an attempt to push back against the self-maximizing presumptions of economics. It is not at all clear that this new line of discussion is making any substantial difference to the students' perceptions of what management is or should be about. It is worth noting that several Papal encyclicals have engaged this topic - though Augier March do not mention this. Augier March's conclusion is that business schools are unlikely to move towards being more ethical or professional institutions, with more substantive and ethical impact on the students who pass through them, until economics changes or business schools 'veer away from dominance by economists' p.276. Knowing the characters and institutions involved, they are not holding their breath. But these issues are growing, not going away. Insiders concerned about the future of business education, and university and national policy-makers concerned about the impact of business studies on the university sector and/or on the body public, badly need the insights Augier March offer if they are to move on from the aimless she-said, he-said ideological arguments about what is going on in business education - whether in public universities, private universities or the rapidly expanding for-profit sector. Students, and the parents who finance them, would also benefit from (a) serious doubt about the whole business education enterprise, and (b) the historical analysis this book offers - which that shows that what is going on in business schools was never much shaped by student or public interest but was always about faculty (and universities) exploiting a new business opportunity for themselves. Business schools' single most obvious feature is that they are 'profit centers' offering low-cost and high-priced products of questionable value - for which there happens to be a huge and still growing demand that has never been adequately explained. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic overview of the business education in North America By Customer Authors take a reader on a trip back in time to the era of business school reformation. The book is a fascinating read, full of interesting stories and authors offer a wealth of very insightful observations. I recommend to anyone interested in business academia. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. See Warsh's review at <http://www.economicprincipals.com/issues/2011.12.18/1321.html> By George Colpitts See Warsh's review at [...]: "the most unexpectedly illuminating book I read this year ... The Roots, Rituals, and Rhetorics of Change is an indispensable point of entry to one of the most important stories of our time." Note the rating is not mine but a guess at what Warsh rates it. On that basis maybe it should be 5.

Some rather remarkable changes took place in North American business schools between 1945 and 1970, altering the character of these institutions, the possibilities for their future, and the terms of discourse about them. This period represents a minor revolution, during which business school are reported to have become more academic, more analytic, and more quantitative. The Roots, Rituals, and Rhetorics of Change considers these changes and explores their roots. It traces the origins of this quiet revolution and shows how it shaped discussions about management education, leading to a shift in that weakened the place of business cases and experiential knowledge and strengthened support for a concept of professionalism that applied to management. The text considers how the rhetoric of change was organized around three core questions: Should business schools concern themselves primarily with experiential

knowledge or with academic knowledge? What vision of managers and management should be reflected by business schools? How should managerial education connect its teaching to some version of reality?

"This book has a distinct sensibility and depth that will make it important. The authors' nuance of ideas and range of perspective is excellent." (Anne S. Miner University of Wisconsin)"This is a great story that has never been told with such clarity, empirical support, and conceptual breadth. The book draws on the particular strengths and perspectives of each of the authors. Augier is a stunningly accomplished intellectual historian of business school culture. Meanwhile, March is the preeminent organizational theorist, who shares a story only he is fit tell as story about how risky and foolish change is for organizations, how it happens more through arrogance and ignorance than skill and foresight." (David F. Labaree Stanford University and author of *Someone Has to Fail*)"In *The Roots, Rituals, and Rhetorics of Change*, Augier and March offer us a compelling discussion of the transformations [in education] that follow [the Second World War]. The reform story is a complicated one of course, but in their hands, it is easy to grasp. . . Augier and March wrote a terrific appraisal of the reformation and its legacy." (James P. Walsh *Administrative Science Quarterly*)

About the Author  
Mie Augier is a social science research associate at Stanford University and Research Associate Professor at the Naval Postgraduate School where she works on research for the Director of Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense. James G. March is Professor Emeritus at Stanford University, where he has been on the faculty since 1970. He is best known for his writings on decision making and organizations.