Business History
Call for Papers for a Special Issue
Changing Secondhand Economies

For a special issue of Business History on Secondhand Economies, we invite original research papers focusing on secondhand markets and economies involving a variety of commodities ranging from used clothing, pre-owned cars, and antiquities, to recycled ships and electronic waste. This special issue aims to present the best of ongoing interdisciplinary scholarship on historical and contemporary processes involved in the flow of secondhand objects and materials, their transformations and revaluations, and the persons, policies, and markets involved with them. Recent concerns with the speed and effects of commodity flows have brought fresh scholarly attention to secondhand economies both in terms of their history and of their contemporary significance for livelihoods and sustainability. Since the rise of global capitalism has markedly altered the functions of secondhand exchanges, content will be limited to the mid-nineteenth century to the present.

The secondhand clothing trade, both domestic and transnational, has a long history explored mainly in fragments, reflecting historical limits of marginalized groups such the Jewish diaspora and connecting European countries with the North American colonies, and Europe with Africa, Asia and Australia. More recently, secondhand economies have attracted new attention in the context of global economies of recycling. Studies of the international secondhand clothing trade have explored the role of charitable organizations in the West in the export of donated used clothing, revealing a gray area between thrift and profit, questioning the impact of imported secondhand clothing on domestic textile/clothing industries, and highlighting the complicated relationship between the production of fast fashion, and the overconsumption of clothing in the West resulting in huge volumes of worn clothing in landfills. Recent concerns with sustainability in the West have spurred some to ‘rediscover’ practices of clothing re-use, re-purposing and recycling at the same time as major high-street retailers are establishing programs to return used clothing to their stores for re-sale or recycling. Relatedly, clothing trends, particularly those connected to subcultures, have for some time periodically embraced secondhand material use and systems of exchange.
Issue contributions might include longitudinal explorations of

- specific sites of secondhand exchange
- legislation and policies effecting secondhand economies
- the relationship between new and used commerce
- political uses of secondhand exchange and material
- transnational/global costs and benefits of secondhand economies
- cultural and social responses to secondhand materials and trade
- the material culture of secondhand objects/goods
- genealogies of secondhand acquisition
- gendered and sexualized uses of secondhand commerce and goods
- secondhand fashions and trends/subcultures
- business and labor histories of secondhand economies
- theories of informal economies centered on used goods

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Articles should be based on original research and/or innovative analysis and should not be under consideration by another journal. All articles should be submitted by December 1 2016 via ScholarOne using the URL link listed below, clearly indicating in the drop-down list that they are for the Special Issue on Changing Secondhand Economies. All the articles will be peer reviewed and, therefore, some may be rejected. Authors should ensure that their manuscripts fully comply with the formatting regulations of Business History.

https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/fbsh

GUEST EDITORS

Karen Tranberg Hansen, Professor Emerita, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University; Jennifer Le Zotte, Lecturer, Department of History, University of Nevada, Reno.


Karen Tranberg Hansen’s work concerns urban economic livelihoods in Africa with particular focus on Zambia, the informal economy, consumption, dress and fashion, and