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Editorial

With the beginning of Volume 7, *Voluntas* officially becomes a quarterly journal. Having started as a biannual publication in 1990, the journal moved to three issues in 1992, and will now appear four times per year. The expansion of *Voluntas* reflects both the increased number of submissions, and the general growth of the field of non-profit sector research, which brings with it a greater diversity of topics and themes that come under the journal's compass.

While the field of non-profit sector research has generally expanded, the comparative-historical study of non-profit organisations remains one of the most underdeveloped and neglected areas. Few scholars populate this field, and fewer still attempt cross-national comparisons. To help stimulate the discussion on comparative historical perspectives in non-profit sector research, we thought it useful to confront the field with one of the most important recent works in the comparative study of business firms: Alfred D. Chandler's *Scale and Scope: The Dynamics of Industrial Capitalism* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990). In this book, Professor Chandler presents a comparative theory of the emergence of the modern corporation. And as has been the case for many other books on the economic history of industrial society, no mention is made of non-profit organisations. This brought two questions to mind.

First, is it possible to write a comparative-historical account of industrial development and the emergence of the modern corporate form without including a discussion of the non-profit sector? Are we presented with an incomplete picture if the role of the non-profit sector is left out, for example, in the fields of social welfare and health services or in the development of civil society more generally?

Second, what are the similarities, and what are the differences between the emergence of industrial corporations described by Professor Chandler and the development of non-profit organisations? What can the comparative-historical study of non-profit organisations gain from looking at the historical development of large-scale business corporations?

These questions were put to two prominent analysts of the non-profit

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sector: Peter Hall in the United States, and Alan Ware in the United Kingdom. Both prepared essays for a special review session, which opens this current *Voluntas* issue. We are pleased to have Professor Chandler comment on both essays, as well as on some underlying methodological issues in conducting research in the field of comparative-historical analysis.

The first number in this volume also offers our usually free-standing papers. We include an article on another topic which, to date, has received relatively little attention from non-profit scholars: the phenomenon of mergers. We also include two evaluations of the contribution made by contrasting types of foundation operating in South America and Eastern Asia in very different cultural contexts and fields. The issue is concluded with two book reviews.

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