



Università degli Studi di Napoli
“Parthenope”

WOA 2011
Generations and re-generations
of organizational processes

Track 09 – Institutions, organizations, and socio-economical evolution.

Sub-theme 1: ***Back to the Future: History & Institutions Matter!***

Convenors:

Giuseppe Delmestri
Università degli studi
di Bergamo

Luigi Moschera
Università degli studi
di Napoli “Parthenope”

Behlül Üsdiken
Sabancı University
Istanbul - Turkey

Supporters:

Luca Solari

Peter Walgenbach

Filippo Wezel

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Objectives:

World societies are shackled by unprecedented uncertainty and lack of knowledge as to which paths may be pursued to support more equitable and sustainable economic recovery and growth. The idea that market incentives are the necessary and sufficient condition for economic governance has proved to be a limited “monoculture” (Ferraro et al., 2005). The needed seeds of variety in organizational forms and practices can be found along two tracks. One leads to the past, where discarded institutional arrangements can be reevaluated and where the path-dependent trajectories of the present situation can be traced. The second escorts us in places distant from the cultural and institutional features of Anglo-American capitalism (the most studied and theorized form) to rediscover cultures and institutions considered outdated as ways to organize economic activity, like families, guilds, bureaucracies, cooperatives, or the state. We contend that the redefinition of organization theory as a realistic and pragmatic design theory (Greenwood & Miller, 2010) needs addressing the roles of history, culture and institutions as central elements in studying actors, organizations, populations of organizations and fields.

Themes and methodologies:

Some of the possible questions addressed by studies submitted to this track are:

- How can quantitative longitudinal studies be integrated with historical approaches?
- How can historical studies help us to avoid the paradox of embedded agency with regard to institutional entrepreneurship?
- What is the role of heroic individuals in comparison to wider social forces in shaping new organizational forms?
- How do routines and corporate culture interact in shaping organizational evolution?

- How do fields evolve? How do the historical conditions at their inception affect their future evolution?
- How are markets constructed and how do product categories come to be taken for granted?
- How do social categories (practices, organizational forms, products, technologies) become legitimated and taken for granted?

We are interested in studies that analyze either historically or comparatively actual organizational forms and practices (Üsdiken & Kieser, 2004). We are open both to quantitative longitudinal and to case study designs, that use a variety of related theoretical lenses such as new institutionalism (Ansari et al., 2010; Temple & Walgenbach, 2007), institutional logics theory (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999), organizational ecology (Wezel & Lomi, 2003), the world polity approach (Zelner et al., 2009), path-dependency (Sydow et al., 2009), to cite the most obvious ones.

Keywords

New institutionalism, organizational ecology, path-dependence, longitudinal studies

Literature

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