

# ***What of Macro-Foundations?***

## ***Rediscovering the Power of Institutions***

Call for papers for the 5th Alberta Institutions Conference (and PhD Workshop)  
June 7-9, 2018 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada



Over the past couple of decades, organizational institutionalists have redirected attention from isomorphism and the effects of wider environmental forces, toward the efforts of skilled, strategic actors, institutional entrepreneurship, inhabited institutions, work, change, and the microsociology of logics. This line of inquiry has been fruitful, but we believe it is time to take stock of where we have been, and where we are headed. In our effort to account for meaningful cognition and agency, have we begun to lose sight of the constitutive power of institutions, and their influence on the emergence and unfolding of interactions, organizations, and fields? In this installment of the triennial Alberta Institutions Conference, we call for renewed attention to the macro-foundations of social and organizational life.

To ask, “what of macrofoundations?” is to remind ourselves of the power of institutions to shape the contexts for individual and organizational action; and their limits in so doing. We encourage a re-engagement with classic texts dedicated to these questions. Phenomenologists, such as Berger and Luckmann, have pointed to the role of institutions in furnishing us with social facts that aid in decision-making and social interaction. Mary Douglas reminds us that institutions (e.g., classifications) shape the very means by which we think about the nature of the world. Goffman and Garfinkel, in turn, tell us that the macro-foundational context is at stake during interaction: that just a few words or gestures could transform an academic discussion into a partisan debate, a personal attack, an ivory-tower indulgence, or harassment. Such traditions, and their tensions, provide us with powerful tools to think through the interweaving of the institutional and interactional, the macro and micro—providing substantial scope for generative debate, and cross-fertilization. So too do our home-grown traditions: including the institutional logics perspective, world society institutionalism, Scandinavian institutionalism, the old and new institutionalisms, social movement theory, and the like.

As usual, our aim is to bring together diverse institutional scholars from all career stages, including PhD students, to discuss these topics. We are also delighted to announce that **Mary Ann Glynn** (Joseph F. Cotter Professor, Carroll School of Management, Boston College) will provide the keynote address.

We invite papers (our preference is for empirical papers) that explore topics and questions such as:

- How do institutions shape the context of interaction? How do they focus attention on certain kinds of happenings and decisions? How do they render some matters emotionally significant, and others less so? How do they help and hinder collective sense-making, mobilization, and organization?
- How do institutions shape the unfolding of micro-processes? For example, what is the role of institutions in providing people with ready-to-use categorizations, to guide interaction and sense-making? How, and to what extent, do institutions specify emotional registers and competencies?
- To what extent can macro-foundations be reframed, resisted, or subverted? When, by what means, and in the face of what constraints? Furthermore, what are the roles of institutional complexity and value practices in the 'negotiation' of macro-foundations? If culture is imagined as a toolkit, what is the scope for actors to re-make elements of logics or fashion new ones?
- How do macro-foundations play out over time? Thus, how are individuals and organizations shaped by, or how do they shape themselves through the identities, biographies, and technologies of self that are offered by institutional environments? When and how do the micro-implications of institutions sustain or challenge institutions over time? Is the felt continuity of institutions the result of reification, guardianship and restoration, adoption, or unnoticed transformation? And some 50 years after Berger and Luckmann, what do phenomenologists have to say about such questions?
- With all these topics in mind – and mindful of a turbulent global and political environment – where do we find the true powers and limitations of institutions? How do the powerful and powerless seek to co-opt, subvert, or survive them? How do institutional macro-foundations draw our attention – politically, and academically – to certain grand challenges, and blind us to others?

### **Conference Details**

The Fifth Triennial Alberta Institutions Conference, sponsored by the **Alberta School of Business**, will be held from Thursday, June 7 to Saturday, June 9, 2018 at the Westin Edmonton, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Approximately 25 papers will be selected for presentation. The Alberta School of Business has available a limited budget from which to sponsor 'two nights' room and board for first authors who are selected to present papers. Please indicate whether you can provide your own support or would like to be considered for support when applying.

### **PhD Paper Development Workshop**

The PhD Paper Development Workshop, co-sponsored by the **Alberta School of Business** and the journal, **Organization Studies**, will be in the afternoon on Thursday, June 7 at the Westin Edmonton, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Participants are encouraged to arrive on Wednesday, June 6. If you are a Ph.D. student interested in participating, please make this clear when submitting your abstract for consideration (put PhD workshop abstract in the subject line of your email submission).

### **Deadlines/Submission**

- Abstract submission (approximately 500 words): November 27, 2017
- Notification of acceptance: January 31, 2018
- Submission of full paper (maximum 8,000 words): May 1, 2018
- Use the subject line "Alberta Conference Abstract" and email your submission to: [ahusak@ualberta.ca](mailto:ahusak@ualberta.ca)

### **Organizing Committee**

Emily Block, Tony Briggs, David Deephouse, Joel Gehman, Vern Glaser, Royston Greenwood, Tim Hannigan, Bob Hinings, Dev Jennings, Michael Lounsbury, Trish Reay, Angelique Slade Shantz, Chris Steele, Madeline Toubiana, Marvin Washington, and all of the University of Alberta.

As it becomes available, additional information will be posted at: [AlbertaInstitutions.com](http://AlbertaInstitutions.com)