Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, EDI International Conference 2019 - Stream Proposal

**Stream title:** Diversity, Disagreement and Resistance in Institutions

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The literature debates extensively on the question 'what counts as an institution?' in contrast to 'everyday life' (Foucault, 1975/1995; Lefebvre, 1947/1991; Heritage, 2004). Institutions, as formal bureaucracies, are defined as organized structures with some particular purposes, where all members' activities and interactions *follow closely or completely conform* to "an official blueprint" (Blau & Scott, 2016, p. 175). This implies abiding constraints of different sorts that shape the interaction between members (Bates, 2014). The expectation of such conduct is grounded on laws, rules and administrative regulations (Weber, 1922/1978).

Nonetheless, scholars acknowledge the fact that institutions are *social* systems and that the individuals operating in them may depart from the institutional agenda and its consequential demands (see also the literature on management studies and organizational change; e.g. Barrett, Thomas & Hocevar, 1995; De Cock, 1998; Anderson, 2005). Despite the fact that institutions are centripetal (a term used when indicating a tendency toward unity and agreement; Billig, 1996) and that a reduction in the individual voice is therefore expected, personal diversity nevertheless exists. Several perspectives, e.g. behaviorist or cognitivist and a discourse approach may assist in understanding the nature and complexity of organizational change, especially issues pertaining to the construction of stability and change, and the role of agency (Tsoukas, 2005). With the emergence of new organizational forms (such as networks), where people regularly switch their positions, and their power and influence constantly vary, these phenomena are even more relevant (see Foss, 2003, on project-based institutions, and Mayer-Ahuja and Wolf, 2007, on small- and medium-scale Internet companies).

Heritage (2004) argues that institutions involve asymmetrical relationship. The imbalance between parties is revealed, inter alia, in the possibility of certain groups/individuals (usually, those at the top of the institutional pyramid) to impose sanctions on their subordinates, when the latter digress from "appropriate" behavior. Hence, overt resistance in institutions is often limited or subdued, albeit it can still appear (Kotter, 2007). People may range from expressing reservations and disagreement or diverging, to some extent, from managerial policy or guiding principles (while making certain adaptations in them), to bold defiance (in the sense of active struggle and a total disrespect for hegemonic decisions) (Argyris, 1957; Mumby, 2005; Fleming & Spicer, 2008).

In this stream, we seek to address the issue of diversity, disagreement and resistance in institutions. We invite researchers to submit theoretical or empirical abstracts that relate, but are not limited to the following:

* Overt and covert displays of disagreement in institutional settings.
* Values and conflicts of values in institutions.
* Diversified institutions: Current challenges and future prospects.
* Resistance and leadership.
* Resistance to institutional change.
* Various voices regarding assessment as a tool of centralization.
* Visual manifestations of disagreement in institutions.
* Power relations with regards to institutional agenda and decisions.
* Organized oppositions in institutions.

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