

SECTION C

REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

REDISCOVERING THE POWER OF INSTITUTIONS: THE MACRO-FOUNDATIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a summary of the closing plenary at the 2018 Alberta Institutions Conference in which four scholars – Markus Höllerer, Marc Schneiberg, Patricia Thornton, and Charlene Zietsma – shared their views on how we could put the macro-foundations of institutional theory again more centre-stage in institutional analysis. The first major theme emerging from the panel discussion pertains to the meaning of macro-foundations. While Schneiberg sees institutions as socio-cognitive infrastructures, Zietsma emphasises their constitutive nature. Second, both Thornton and Höllerer caution that an exclusive focus on either the micro- or the macro-level might remain only partial and call for more cross-level studies of institutions – and also for understanding the micro and the macro as co-constitutive analytical categories. Finally, the panellists discuss how we could break academic silos in institutional analysis and strive for theoretical innovation through interdisciplinary studies, among other avenues.

Keywords: Academic; analytics; infrastructure; macro-foundations; rediscovering and organisational fields

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INTRODUCTION

The 2018 Alberta Institutions Conference was organised around the general theme ‘What of macro-foundations? Rediscovering the power of institutions’. In the closing plenary, four established scholars – Markus Höllerer, Marc Schneiberg, Patricia Thornton, and Charlene Zietsma – shared their views on, and together explored, how we could put the macro-foundations of institutional theory again more centre-stage in institutional analysis. Their conversations can be summarised along three lines of debate. First, they discussed what macro-foundations mean for institutional scholars. While Schneiberg sees institutions as the socio-cognitive infrastructures for solving problems and (re-)configuring fields, Zietsma emphasises their constitutive nature and the role of emotions in this respect. Second, both Thornton and Höllerer cautioned that an exclusive focus on either the micro- or the macro-level might remain only partial and called for more cross-level studies of institutions – and also for understanding the micro and the macro as co-constitutive analytical categories. Finally, the panellists discussed how we could break academic silos in institutional analysis and strive for theoretical innovation through interdisciplinary studies, among other avenues. In addition, during the open discussion session in the plenary, the four panellists discussed whether organisations have become ‘lost’ in institutional research, and how institutional theorists – Zparticularly, early-career scholars – could successfully reach out to other theoretical communities to enhance and reinvigorate institutional scholarship.

THEME 1: THE MEANING OF MACRO-FOUNDATIONS

Marc Schneiberg

Some of the most exciting things in the papers we heard during the last days were the insights and arguments they generated about how institutions operate as macro-foundations or infrastructures for doing things: solving problems, organising projects, building, or re-building fields. This is a refreshing revisiting of core ideas that animated institutionalism, both in its ‘classic’, or ‘old’, and ‘neo’ variants (Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997; March & Olsen, 1989; Schneiberg & Clemens, 2006; Stinchcombe, 1997). I am not going to do justice to the serious list of claims and insights the papers collectively produce on this front. Instead, I will just highlight a few of the different ways authors think of institutions as infrastructures and say, ‘Good work, but let’s reflect consciously on this if you want to play out this broader story and talk to each other more effectively’.

One form of the macro-foundations insight emphasises how institutions function as *socio-cognitive infrastructures* for activity, cooperation, and status orders. Institutional projects such as Sydney 2030 (Meyer et al., 2020, this volume, Chapter 4) create thought communities and the socio-cognitive infrastructures for experimentation and for imagining and fostering communities. Institutional complexity in categories in textile recycling shapes capacities for collaborations or failures of collaboration among recyclers (as in the paper by Grimes, Helms, and Conger). Christi Lockwood’s study demonstrated how discursive and narrative

formations in the hotel industry stabilised status hierarchies among hotels in the face of substantial changes in market conditions. Here, institutions serve as socio-cultural infrastructures for activities, projects, and social order.

Other variants of the macro-foundations argument highlight how institutions serve as *legal and regulatory infrastructures* for creating organisations, an insight that harkens back to Commons, Schumpeter, and Stinchcombe. This approach appears in Johanna Mair's work on how legal and regulatory institutions are the foundations for social enterprise formation. Those foundations vary across countries, producing markedly different distributions of enterprises in different places. Still others highlight how *institutions as systems of organisations* can serve as platforms for economic adaptation, resilience, and recovery during crisis. This is an approach I pursue in my own work (Schneiberg, 2020), where I consider how systems of banking organisations in local economies, themselves historical legacies of regulatory politics and legal policies, shaped local responses to the Great Recession. Diversity in the form of community bank and credit union – alternatives to giant money centre banks in local economies – provided businesses, households, and banks with resources (e.g. embedded ties between lenders and borrowers, commitments to community that tempered shareholder value) for protecting themselves from the crisis and mobilising more quickly for recovery, producing milder recessions than in local economies dominated by giant, market-based banking corporations.

Other papers emphasise how *institutions as embodied or materialised histories* serve as infrastructures for industry formation. Histories, embedded in institutions, contain resources and possibilities for action, representation, and incitement that helped sustain the evolution of Canadian whiskey (as in the paper by Voronov, Weber, and Foster) and Swiss watches (as in the paper by Raffaelli and DeJordy). Thinking in these terms leads directly to questions about who tells these stories, and where and how stories are told and retold, underwriting an emphasis in some papers on institutional custodians who create cartographies that can structure and stabilise activities, or organise conference as venues for reproducing or reconfiguring practices, models, and norms. Here, too, are ways that institutions serve as infrastructures – as macro- (meso-, and micro-) foundations for accomplishing something, including their own reproduction.

Charlene Zietsma

I study social change in the context of wicked problems, and as a result, it's critical that I pay attention to the institutional factors that hold status quo beliefs and norms and practices in place: that is, the macro-foundations. While micro-foundations importantly show the agency by which macro-foundations are constructed and reproduced, without concern for macro-foundations, there is no need for institutional theory.

We have all been talking here about the constitutive nature of institutions. We are all embedded within specific institutional settings, and – to quote Renate Meyer's great insight – institutions inhabit us. They gain their force through our regular reproduction of them, whether in a habitual way, or in a purposeful and

forceful enactment of what we believe and care about. For the past few years, I have been looking at the emotional and values-based connections that people have to institutions, and these are very strong. As Friedland (2018) said, we are the way institutions make us feel. We feel pride and satisfaction when we perform valued institutions, and we feel anger and become institutional guardians when such institutions are threatened. We often feel passionately about them.

But not all institutions operate emotionally in the same way – Mary Ann Glynn alluded to this in her terrific talk last night when she talked about differences in what institutions mean: Do typifications and routines have the same emotional force as values?¹ I don't think so. For example, Piliavin, Grube, and Callero (2002) found that nurses were able to ignore their institutionalised role prescriptions to follow doctors' orders when those orders contravened their values for patient care. I think we have some theorising work to do to understand the force and persistence, and levers for change afforded by institutions of different types. Vaccaro and Palazzo (2015) give us some clues on this when they show how a small group of activists was able to challenge the mafia and convince local businesses to stop paying protection money. These activists shifted the frame of the situation from one macro-foundational context to another – turning something that was completely taken-for-granted into something that was morally intolerable based on community values. This frame shifting provides a clue, I think, into how macro-foundations can not only hold status quo arrangements in place but also be the keys for unlocking them.

How do macro-foundations hold the keys for unlocking beliefs and norms and practices? We are all simultaneously embedded in multiple macro-foundational contexts. We are academics, and institutional theorists, and work within our own universities and in our respective countries. We have families with different norms and values, and we belong to community groups, or have hobbies or interests where different values, norms, and beliefs hold sway. These were the means by which the activists against mafia protection payments were able to shift peoples' views of such payments. In addition, we all interact with others who inhabit different macro-foundations, and often we collaborate with them – and these collaborations may hold the keys to both reflexivity and the possibility for more flexibility in how we use different logics. For example, McPherson and Sauder's (2013) study of different types of actors in a drug court showed how some of these actors could use each other's logics rather flexibly and strategically, enabling collaboration and the formation of good relationships.

This is a social process, and can be facilitated by social and moral emotions, enabling people to be dually embedded in their home logics and more collaborative logics governing intersections among fields, as Fan and Zietsma (2017) found in studying water governance. So macro-foundations matter, but the merger of different macro-foundational influences in collaborative interactions has the possibility to get us to more integrative societal solutions. This is exactly what I am after, as it holds the key to enabling social change on wicked problems.

This possibility has also driven my interest in institutional fields (Zietsma, Groenewegen, Logue, & Hinings, 2017). I think our traditional conception of institutional fields, where people interact frequently and fatefully, and share

meaning systems (thanks, Dick Scott), is quite different from the idea of issue fields, where people with very different macro-foundational contexts interact because of a shared interest on an issue.

If we don't take those different macro-foundational contexts into account, we miss both analytical power in understanding how the situation will evolve, and practical power in understanding how to make it evolve. I firmly believe that our focus on institutional complexity, and the intersection or overlap of organisational fields with their various macro-foundations, holds the key to understanding how different people can come to understand each other and work together for more integrative solutions, which to me is a necessary condition for the survival of the species.

We live in dark times, with vast distances between ideological bubbles. I think as institutional theorists, we have the potential to identify the means by which such bubbles can be breached to solve a few wicked problems. There's a plenty of work to do, though.

THEME 2: THE POWER OF CROSS-LEVEL STUDIES

Patricia Thornton

'Rediscovering' the power of institutions is thinking more holistically to 'continually discover and remind' ourselves on why level of analysis is important. What does level of analysis give us? It gives us a lens by which to look at research questions and empirical phenomenon. It gives us a lens for collecting data in a certain way about our unanswered questions. But we should never forget that a lens has a bias of some kind. So if we're looking at it through the macro, we're missing something. If we're looking at it through the micro, we're missing something. So we need to continue to remind ourselves about the bias, and as a result, it behooves us to think about both. And that's a tall order. You can't always consider multiple levels in one study, but you can recognise what the limitations of your lens might be in one study.

And this is particularly important because I think institutional analysis or theory is fundamentally about the interaction effects, the cross-level effects. This is where the power of institutional theory and analysis lies. Those are hard studies to do, but it doesn't mean we shouldn't rise to the challenge. I can think about thought leaders in the field that have been important to my own work. Dick Scott, obviously being here, being one in particular. But let me also mention, in terms of the literature, DiMaggio has been one who has always argued across levels of analysis, and he's also argued to integrate different disciplinary literatures. That's what DiMaggio's (1997) *Culture and Cognition* is about. If you look at his chapter in Cerulo's (2001) *Culture in Mind*, he's doing the same thing. He has made this point over and over again in developing and understanding the limits of psychological and sociological theory. He makes the point he could not buy Swidler's tool kit theory until he had read the psychological research that supports it – yet the two seldom connect. We need to understand the cognitive mechanisms and institutional context concurrently. And he lays that out very convincingly. AQ3

The point he's making is that we need to connect levels of analysis. As scholars, if we want to be innovating in theory and empirical research and advancing institutional theory, then that's what we need to do, and we should not critique one level on the basis of another.

One of the things that is a peeve is when I see a set of arguments that's critiquing a macro-study by micro-criteria, or vice versa. It's a cheap shot. Why go there? It's not an innovation. I'll put in a plug for a piece, Durand and Thornton (2018), where we're trying to link categories with institutional logics and looking for what we do not know by not doing that. We review classic studies, take for example, Thornton and Ocasio (1999) to illustrate what more we would know had we considered such. Dick Scott has said to me, 'Well, what was causing the logic shift? You are doing all this work on what are the consequences of the shift in logics, but what was actually causing that shift?' That is not explored because I didn't trace in depth the logics back to the family houses to understand how the family logic was operative in the marketplace. I didn't look at the rise of publishing as a quasi-profession which explains the weak boundaries of why the market logic was able to invade. It's because I didn't consider all the different levels of analysis and cross-level effects that I have never addressed the question completely – theoretically. I gave a laundry list of events that happened. And that's no theory. So here is an example of my own early work that does not embrace the argument I'm making.

I had a discussion with Rudolphe Durand about this in terms of the Rao, Monin, and Durand (2003) piece on *nouvelle cuisine*. That paper did not consider a more macro-perspective. Yet, the trends they study were going on in all sorts of creative industries at the same time. Zuckerman (1999) is another example. When you think about it, the scope conditions are narrow because market analysts are a very unique set of individuals. But, the concept of the legitimacy imperative was generalised across different audiences without understanding the differences in the audiences' larger institutional environments. These insights are now being incorporated into our scholarship; Ezra now argues that the legitimacy imperative is going to vary as audiences possess different theories of value and the market is only one institutional order in society, which is often influenced by non-market influences (Zuckerman, 2017). Institutional logics represent different theories of value as you cross different institutional contexts.

So without more studies that are multi- and cross-level, we risk omitting factors that can contribute to and modify (condition) the analysis and existing theory – and perhaps this is where the rub lies. Reigning theory does not like losing ground. It is a competitive business and, therefore, entry barriers get constructed. Multi-level studies are hard to design and to get through the review process because of the tribalism and because they are hard to do within a single paper; it is complicated and risks a greater chance of misunderstanding and rejection. But some recognition of that in these various papers I think would help to end tribalism and would do a lot to bring us together to look at things in a cross-level way. We are at a point in the historical development of institutional theory where we can take this risk.

Markus Höllerer

The call for papers of this conference urges us to rediscover the power of institutions by focussing on the ‘macro-foundations’ – as opposed to ‘micro-foundations’, one might think, as this was the overall theme of a previous conference here in Alberta. I am not sure about this strict dichotomy though ... but I’ll come back to that. For starters, I think this project is not so much about macro-foundations (of institutions), but about revisiting the *macro-sociological fundament* of institutional theory. And as such this seems a great endeavour. In the opening address, Mike Lounsbury asked whether we have lost touch, whether we have overdone it with the push back against isomorphism, structure, etc., and developed an obsession for agency, actors, work, etc. My answer here is: Well, maybe a little bit. For me, there is definitely value in what has been dubbed as ‘old-style institutional analysis’.

I wish to offer a few points for our debate here on the panel, inspired by the theme and call for papers of this conference. A first one concerns the *locus of institutions*. To begin with, what exactly is the micro, the meso, and the macro? These levels mean quite different things to different people, and are, therefore, rather differently employed. We have the global as in world society, we have the individual level as micro – these are somewhat clear and straightforward categories. But it gets much trickier when talking about society, field, organisation, groups, and so on. The bottom line here is that these are all nested categories, and, hence, macro and micro depend somewhat on perspective and point of view. Dick Scott, on the very first day in the workshop for doctoral students, also talked about the locus of institutions. The key point here is: Institutions are positioned across all these levels of analysis. We find them on the individual level (think of the handshake, the contract, etc.); we find them on the level of world society, and everywhere in between. So when ‘rediscovering the power of institutions’ with a ‘macro-foundations’ framework in mind, we ought not to forget that we won’t find this just on the global/macro-level, as the power of institutions will play out and become visible most likely on more local levels.

I have found German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk and his differentiation of ‘substance’ versus ‘instance’ – in a way that the former is more global/macro/abstract, the latter more local/micro/specific – quite useful. It nicely resonates with our own conceptual language. For instance, Friedland (2009) more recently talks about institutional logics as the invisible substances, while we empirically examine their instantiations. The key here is to focus on the ‘social in the individual’, to examine the social in the individual realm – the ‘institutions pulled down’ as Mary Ann Glynn emphasised yesterday.² An important point that came through in some of the papers, and also one that Renate Meyer and I made explicitly in the paper on the City of Sydney 2030 strategy we presented this morning, is that the so-called ‘micro-foundations’ are social in nature; they are themselves socially anchored. This is most obvious for language, of course, but also for cognition (referring to Ludvik Fleck and Mary Douglas, with their notions of ‘thought-styles’ and ‘thought collectives’), or also for emotions (think of socially learned, or collective, shaming in certain situations). In our paper, we explore a way out of the micro–macro divide by focussing on the shared socio-cognitive infrastructures that shapes individual reasoning and action.

Second, the term ‘foundations’ seems to be a rather *misleading metaphor*. We have been witnessing a quite inflationary use of ‘foundations’: There is a lot of work on the micro-foundations of institutions (such as language, cognition, and emotions), now we talk about macro-foundations, and some already joke about the ‘macro-foundations of the micro-foundations’ of institutions. We can indeed play this ad infinitum – and will end nowhere. ‘Foundations’ is a misleading metaphor, as the label suggests a hierarchical relationship of sub- and super-ordination. So maybe we should entertain the idea of abandoning the strong separation of micro- and macro-forces and the claims of one being the foundation of the other, as such ventures only will lead to circular arguments and perpetuate the divide between structure and agency through the metaphors it invokes. The social world is clearly more complex than that, so I would love to see organisation theory respecting such complexity and not oversimplifying things too much.

Finally, from what I have said I think it hopefully became clear that, for me, thinking in terms of micro and macro – or micro, meso, and macro – only makes sense in relation to each other. And that goes beyond the chicken-or-egg-problem that Mary Ann Glynn stressed yesterday. Micro and macro are not just recursive (as Giddens pointed out), they are in fact *co-constitutive*. Dick Scott referred to the work of Padgett and Powell (2012), presenting the example of networks: actors (or humans) create networks, and networks create actors. We can only understand the micro and macro in relationship to each other. Such a way of thinking of micro and macro is much in line with the work I have been doing on glocalisation (Drori, Höllerer, & Walgenbach, 2013; Höllerer, Walgenbach, & Drori, 2017), exploring the simultaneous and co-constitutive character of the global and the local. There is no such place as the global per se, as the global, or the macro-level substance, is constantly enacted and re-created through local practices and instantiations of the global template. So, most importantly: The relationship here goes both ways; it is co-constitutive in nature.

So, to come to an end: Mary Ann Glynn referred to Coleman’s (1990) ‘bathtub’ model, and, after all, we ought not to forget that micro and macro are *analytical categories*, and only as such I think they have purchase and value. And they can only be employed in a meaningful way if thought in tandem, in relation to each other.

THEME 3: BREAKING ACADEMIC SILOS

Marc Schneiberg

If institutionalists want to deeply engage questions of ‘what of macro-foundations?’ or ‘macro-foundations for what?’ and if we want to advance theory and research on institutions as critical infrastructures, there are two ways in which we can benefit by revising current research practices.

The first revision is to reflect on our becoming an insular, self-referencing intellectual community of institutionalists in management and organisational theory, and to break out of our academic silos. It is clearly important to have a vibrant community as well as infrastructure for intellectual, scientific, and professional advance. But innovation and creativity also rest on straddling worlds,

and engaging and collaborating with fellow travellers in related fields. In fact, there are two quite familiar crowds in related fields that have really been thinking about institutions as macro-foundations, but which the papers do not productively engage. One is the comparative institutional crowd. There is a long legacy of institutionalism in political science, sociology, and history interested in how the organisation of the economy, the organisation of the political system, and the linkages between those two create macro-foundations for the success or failure of industries, economies, and democracies. There is work on how the organisation of business associations and labour relations, financial systems, collaborative arrangements among firms, the ways in which states link to research institutions and more – a comparative analysis of institutions – that digs deeply into questions in which we are or might be interested. How do institutions create possibilities for political settlements or coalition formation, for sharing gains and losses associated with economic changes, or for collaboration and collective action? Under what conditions do democracies thrive, or stumble? Why do some industries and economies display greater adaptability or resilience than others in the face of globalisation, technological change, unemployment, or inflation? What might support the capacities of states to generate proactive welfare state policies that redistribution with immigration and economic development, perhaps forestalling right wing populism? Very little of the work here engages this crowd. But those institutionalists also produce handbooks as comprehensive, provocative, and useful as our own Sage volumes (Fioretos, Falletti, & Sheingate, 2016; Morgan, Campbell, Crouch, Pedersen, & Whitley, 2010). These are worth diving into not just for how they, too, think about institutional structures and practices as infrastructures, but also for the ways in which they address big questions, tackle ‘grand challenges’, and engage wicked and deeply consequential problems.

The other crowd from which the presented papers draw little for thinking about institutions as macro-foundations are scholars who study social movements and develop the organisations–movements interface (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2017). What this work offers are concepts and findings about institutional dynamics and structures as opportunity structures – as contextual factors that shape when and why actors mobilise to challenge or sustain existing arrangements, the forms claims making and mobilisation, and whether actors can translate their conventional power resources into outcomes. Here, too, are intellectual resources for explaining industry creation, the rise and fall of status orders, the rise of social enterprise and more, as well as a focus on power, contestation, and large-scale problems and fractures we current face. If we stay in our silos, cite narrowly and ignore these bodies of work, we fight out battles with one hand tied behind our backs. There are resources out there, with great potential for productive engagement.

A second practice we could productively revise involves a strikingly common methodological approach: conduct an in-depth study of a particular case, describe in that case how a set of activities, institutional practices, institutional dynamics or arrangements supported or sustained some outcome or process, and extract from that description an analytical model of that broader process. What’s missing here, and it is striking in light of how fellow travellers proceed, are comparisons or even counterfactual arguments. There are trade-offs involving how

many cases to study. It takes a lot to learn about a single case. But comparisons provide analytical leverage for assessing whether and how this or that process or structure might really matter. These assembled papers focus mainly on success cases, with lots of claims about what sustained those accomplishments. But we do not and really cannot know what sustained those successes on this basis alone. We need a failure case or two to tell you something about what makes success, to at least think about using a second case, or to use the single-case selections in an explicitly comparative way. Powerful methodological exemplars have standardised research efforts here. But it feels like another silo, which leads me to urge us again to think about whom to cite, and to engage substantive and methodological literatures outside of our standard precedent selection.

Markus Höllerer

Breaking academic silos, as Marc mentions, is, I think, really important. The lens of comparative institutionalism was indeed something very inspiring for me to read when trying to figure out the topography of institutional research some years back when getting started in my academic career. But I guess we should also go back to, and thoroughly revisit, the macro-sociological fundament of our own scholarly domain. In my view, it is not so much about pushing for a pendulum swing (back) to the ‘macro-foundations of institutions’, but to really take seriously the macro-sociological fundament of, and within, institutional theory. In general, going back to some of the classic readings will be a good thing. So not just read and cite stuff from the last few years, as we see so often in recent papers, but to go further back and trace the core ideas to their very origins. I do hope that this is an aspiration we all share here in this room.

THEMES FROM THE INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

On the Balance between Reaching Out and Successfully Publishing

Marc Schneiberg

There are lots of reasons to engage other literatures, not necessarily as a strategy for getting your first job, but that’s one way of thinking about it. Another way of thinking about it is as a strategy for building a bank of conceptual resources. There is the trade-off between diversifying and deepening your roster and sharpening the one tool you can hit over, and over, and over again. Being conscious of that trade-off and being aware of these other intellectual resources out there can serve you.

I’ve been a boundary-crosser my entire career, and that has both helped me a great deal and proved challenging. It has not always been positive for my mobility, but it did help get me here, and it has been extraordinarily intellectually exciting. I was trained by comparative historical scholars; we used to call them political economists back then: Wolfgang Streeck and Rogers Hollingsworth and Leon Lindberg. I also had Lauren Edelman on my committee, and Ann Shola Orloff, which connected me to the Theda Skocpol crowd. I was born at the interstices, and my first published paper was written in a volume edited by Oliver Williamson.

And in spanning those neo-institutionalisms, it took me a long time to get identity recognition, which was partly due to how the field was a lot less consolidated and specialised at that time. But it also made my life much more interesting.

It has also given me a unique perspective as a reviewer and NSF panellist. Sometimes I get papers and proposals with authors writing on topics about which others in nearby fields have written extensively but which the paper or proposal does not engage. These are quite easy to help – I direct them to those literatures – and sometimes as easy to send back or even reject. Not spanning boundaries can sometimes hurt.

Patricia Thornton

I agree with you. And I also think that institutional theory is largely a perspective, a meta-theory, so it needs to link to other research communities. It's about the interaction effects. And so we need to, you're right, not have group think about a mutual admiration society about institutions and organisations. As each of us has mentioned areas outside of the box, we need to actually incorporate that in our work. And to the question about how do you get through to the reviewers? Particularly if you're a junior person, you don't have to frame it that way upfront. You can put the institutional stuff in the backend of the paper and play to another research community. I do this in my own work in linking theories from outside the area to institutional analysis. More of that needs to happen, and that would break down the in-group/out-group boundary conditions – those barriers. And it also allows institutional theory to blossom across disciplines. It's very useful in that respect.

Charlene Zietsma

I do this as well. I like to work with different theories. But I do think there is some resistance to the perceived hegemony of institutional theory, and we've just got to expect that there's going to be some resistance because we've actually been relatively successful. We have a pretty dominant share of management journal publications.

Marc Schneiberg

But let me strongly urge you not to straw man your adversaries. Your alternative arguments are your allies; their advocates are people with whom you build your project. Consider that as a rhetorical frame. When you are declaring your value added, you are not saying, I win, you lose. Such overly reductionist language in the front-end of a paper can be tiresome or signal a problem.

The other thing I find helpful to keep in mind in locating work in prior research, building a theory section, and citing papers is to also remember that we are all working on cases, and that a fair bit might have been already written on those cases by folks who are not in our subfields. We may also find allies and fellow travellers there, and being deeply embedded in that work, drawing on that community as much as we can into the paper, and linking our arguments to that crowd in a way that that

crowd might recognise can substantially deepen the analysis and broaden a paper's impact and relevance. Yes, we will get reviewers from people who you are engaging and debating as organisational theorists, management scholars, or sociologists. But reviewers are often also folks who are working on our cases, so they should be explicitly engaged, though not necessarily in the front-end framing of the paper.

Markus Höllerer

It is one thing to reach out to other communities who have similar kinds of puzzles, problems, or cases – and to be appreciative of such work and try to integrate. At the same time, we will most likely (have to) stick to our conceptual tool box. And when we then come across as trying to convey to others that institutional theory sometimes explains a thing or two better, the anger may come out – the perceived hegemony of institutional theory, as Charlene warns us. So we have to be cautious, modest, and respectful in our endeavours of reaching out.

On Whether Organisations Have Been Lost in Institutional Research

Marc Schneiberg

Most of the papers here study organisations but also invoke some elements or aspects of either institutions or institutional dynamics and processes in their cases. I do not think we have lost organisations. Maybe we have lost or downplayed the co-evolution of institutional systems and organisational systems. I'd be sympathetic to bringing that forward in more work. In fact, this is something you see across institutionalisms. Somebody mentioned Douglass North the other day, and a key intervention of Oliver Williamson and North is to talk about the co-evolution of how the institutions and organisations interact to foster or undermine economic development. These are projects that ask those big questions, and make for Nobel prize-winning stuff.

Markus Höllerer

As institutional theorists, we are naturally more interested in the macro-level – in the structures of the social world that crucially impact individual or collective action. We focus on socially shared patterns of action, on underlying rationales, on typifications, rather than on the too often idiosyncratic behaviour of social actors. We are interested – given all the variation, all the heterogeneity – in what is common across the manifold instances we empirically observe. Organisations of course remain a core focus within organisational institutionalism. That said, what we currently don't study that explicitly or prominently anymore are questions of organisation design or, as Royston Greenwood put it, 'the inner workings of organizations'.

On Whom We Should Have in the Room

Marc Schneiberg

I'd have us read Mario Small a little bit more. And maybe go back to Sampson and McAdam, just to get a sense of why organisations matter. Sociologists.

Patricia Thornton

Paul DiMaggio would be one.

Charlene Zietsma

That's a tough one. To be honest, I get inspiration from reading science fiction... I know, funny, right? But it's a way to think outside of different silos and boxes so I would love to have Orson Scott Card in the room.

CONCLUSION

Though the general theme 'macro-foundations' seems a reverse imagery of recently revitalised 'micro-foundations', all of our panellists rather emphasised a more holistic view of institutional theory. A viable way to do so is to adopt a cross-level perspective and to choose the level(s) of analysis based on specific research questions. This requires an open mind rather than territorial thinking. Young scholars, in particular, are encouraged to help break academic silos, stepping out of our theoretical comfort zone. It is in the interstices between fields and disciplines that the real 'power' of institutional analysis is ready to be revealed.

NOTES

1. Editor's note: For a version of these remarks, see Glynn, this volume (Chapter 9).
2. Editor's note: again, see Glynn, this volume (Chapter 9).

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