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CALL FOR PAPERS

Analyze And Manage Institutional Transformations: Situation Studies Promoting Innovative Research in The Field of Change Management Within Institutions

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This call for papers proposes to question institutional transformations as a central object of management research, beyond the usual categories of organizational change and technical innovation. It invites us to analyze institutions as dynamic wholes, crossed by economic, social, symbolic and technological tensions, the effects of which unfold over time, at different levels of scale and in complex configurations. The challenge is to understand how structures, practices, representations and relationships between agents are transformed, stabilized provisionally or recomposed in collective action.

The expected contributions should shed light on the conditions of possibility, resistance and effects of institutional transformations, by articulating theoretical anchoring, historicity of situations, intervention methodologies and involvement of the researcher. Attention will be paid to the grey areas of transformation: the distinction between change and transformation, the relationship between instituted and instituting, the articulation of the economic and the social, the role of active units, digital transitions and the recomposition of mental structures. It is thus a question of renewing the managerial view of institutions by promoting situated, critical and innovative research.

To address these different aspects proposed for information purposes, we propose five lines of questioning:

1. Institutions, innovation and transformations: towards a renewal of the managerial outlook

Innovation is generally categorized according to its fields of application, the nature of the changes and the methodologies used. In management, this diversity can lead one to believe that only certain forms of change are transformative. The call for papers aims to shed light on innovations related to institutional transformations. The institution is established based on

the modes of regulation of human activities and is part of a continuous system of transformations. Its impacts are transdisciplinary, even when research limits them to a field which can introduce biases. Transformation therefore goes beyond the normative categories of change. Reducing transformation to radical changes alone leads to ignoring the ordinary transformations of day-to-day management, the importance and hidden cost-performance of which Savall and Zardet (1995, 2004) have shown. It would therefore be appropriate to develop a scientific field devoted to institutional transformations.

Each article should explain the historicity of its institutional roots, through the review of literature. The call suggests, as an indication, an anchoring in Giddens' (1987, 1991) structuring theory and Perroux's (1994) economic theory of active units, integrated by Savall and Zardet (1995, 2004) into the topological space of economic development. This anchoring is not prescriptive but invites us to strengthen the theoretical level of research in order to better argue innovation and the impact of results.

2. Institutional historicity and frameworks for structural transformation

Institutions are defined by their regionalization (Giddens, 1991) and by the structure they establish: activities, organization, governance, functioning, and path of transformation. This path expresses the regularities of the structural in human economic activities, which remain social constructions. Giddens (1987) leaves open the relationship between structure and structure, while recalling the role of the social in the duality of the structural. The instituted and instituting relations configure the structure and its dynamics; The economy appears as production and a factor of contingency, while managerial action aims at economic goals. The transformation requires the identification of the nodal point between contingency factors. The determinants of Space-Time should be thought of in a topological space with debatable boundaries, because transformations go beyond any delimited space. The ontology of the managerial situation, often reduced to its ontic aspects, remains a blind spot. Every transformation is instituted in a containing function that research choices must make explicit. However, Giddens limits the analysis of symbolic orders, the non-intentional and the subject of the institution. This deficit of Symbolism refers to the reality that returns and produces resistance, especially when research confuses mission goals with system goals.

The call is for critical proposals, if possible longitudinal, to shed light on the conflict between individuality and individuation of the researcher, about the social systems of scientific activity and the instituted and instituting representations. Economic, social and political issues, often caught up in a latent ideological constraint, are resolved in the orthogonality and equilibration of the structural (Yousfi and Boutillier, 2025). However, there are no transformations without transformations of invariants (Bonnet, 2025). Variation is not enough to grasp the folds of transformation (Deleuze, 1988): invariants coordinate institutional transformations according to the influence of factors and conditions of possibility. Convergences thus maintain the differences necessary for any possible and compossible organizational arrangement (Bonnet, 2024).

3. Institutional transformation at the crux of tensions

Rejecting opposition in the duality of the structural remains to be demonstrated: Giddens and Perroux postulate economic and social confrontation, while Savall and Zardet (1995, 2004) show that transformation is optimized by the compatibility of contingency factors.

The transformation is activated at the nodal point of the conflict, where the object relationship is built and convergent and divergent tensions are combined. It presupposes irreducible differences producing an operative structure, distinct from the social structure of change and economic production. Active agreements and units only stabilize a provisional state. Scientific discourse becomes deviant when it institutes reductive dualism and dominant discursive practices, as Perroux has shown.

To lead an institutional transformation, the researcher must be an active agent of the project, committed to the research and its concrete success. Transformations are often equated with profound or radical changes, whereas this distinction reveals conceptual confusions. Methods of change management or day-to-day management can produce profound transformations if they deal with problems at the right level of scale. The central question becomes that of the integral quality of the treatment of problems.

Methods evolve but can also wear out or become ossified. The requirements of sustainable development, social responsibility and environmental, technological, energy, social or geostrategic transitions impose new constraints on institutions. "Requirements management", often linked to AI and massive investment, must question technological costs and the variability of costs. Any transformation modifies the ago-antagonistic relationships between contingency factors, produces new ones and changes scale. Finally, it requires us to treat denial as an instituting and instituted problem: Denials - Les Echos (Favilla, Beytout J., 1996), "the fire that smoulders under the ashes".

4. Exploring the grey areas of institutional transformation

The call aims to work on institutional transformations, by opening up instituting and instituted innovation to the necessary paradigmatic corrections. The distinction between organization and environment is blurred with the new strategic configurations designed from the institution. Strategies and organizations develop into related components, including small and medium-sized units. The same function can be divided between disjoint components, while digital transformation interconnects functions between active units. These links become institutional, and their equipment, for example by an AI agent, produces institutional transformation devices, such as generalized electronic invoicing. The conglomerate unit and its associated units act as active, ordering, and ordered units, whose interactions govern the transformation into conflict-cooperation. According to Perroux (1994), an active unit adapts its environment to its program, but this modelling neglects implicit economic processes when they do not serve the conglomerate's interest.

The intervention must explore the grey areas of institutional transformation: additional costs borne by the units, the quality of the operation of the multiple and the risk of the competitive economy getting bogged down when the organization remains thought of as a simple

adaptation to the environment. A paradigm shift is needed around the transformation of the mental structures of organizations.

Proposals should report on research on groups organized into related components, such as cooperation between companies or value chains, without being limited to large structures. They will have to show that the promise of technological performance linked to AI does not only benefit the ordering units that capitalize the rent, but also the ordered units. Intervention in these constructions remains a blind spot for management. The economic, social and societal efficiency of an organisation, a territory, a network or a cluster can no longer be thought of without societal contingencies. The social fact, linked to the economic fact and permeated by the technological fact, recomposes the place of man in the institution. A distinction must be made between the agent, the subject of the institution and the bearer of contingencies, and the actor, who is often ordered by the mechanisms instituted. In the dialectic of active unity, the agent is instituted and instituting, while the actor can construct, at his own expense, the relationship from which the agent benefits. This tension refers to Castoriadis (1999) and the mental scales of Giddens (1991). The researcher can thus treat the subject of the institution according to several entry keys, taking into account its group structure (Kaës, 2010).

5. The blind spots of institutional transformation in digitalized configurations

Institutional transformations cannot be reduced to radical changes or technical innovations. They are the result of continuous, conflictual and cooperative dynamics, in which structures, contingency factors, active units and instituted and instituting representations are recomposed. Innovation then consists in questioning the paradigmatic frameworks of research and managerial action, in making visible the costs, tensions and denials of transformations, and in analysing organisations, territories or networks as sets of related components.

The expected research will thus have to go beyond the simplifying oppositions between change and transformation, organization and environment, economic and social, instituted and instituting. By explaining their theoretical roots, their institutional historicity, their methodology and the involvement of the researcher, they can contribute to a better understanding of the conditions, limits and effects of institutional transformations on mental, organizational and societal structures.

The submission schedule is as follows:

- November 30, 2026: receipt of proposals for articles in the form of an abstract, including the presentation of the methodology, the main expected results and the main bibliographic references,
- 15 December 2026: decision to accept abstracts, 31 March 2027: sending of the first version of the articles,
- June 30, 2027: Receipt of items after evaluation and acceptance.

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