

36th EGOS Colloquium

Organizing for a Sustainable Future:
Responsibility, Renewal & Resistance

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ORGANIZING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE:
RESPONSIBILITY, RENEWAL & RESISTANCE

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Sub-theme 37: Organizing for Responsibility: The Role of Ethics, Strategies, and Capabilities in Contradictory Environments

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Call for Papers

The 36th EGOS Colloquium in 2020 calls upon “organizations and the organized... to address a broad variety of questions on how to perform economic /and other/ activities in a responsible manner”, emphasizing the dilemmas and contradictions related to that seemingly simple imperative.

This sub-theme addresses the contradictions and conflicts between the rhetoric and policies of public and private organizations – corporate social responsibility statements, personal integrity policies, certification programs, anti-corruption policy templates – and their actual behavior in situations characterized by time pressure, career interests, resource scarcity and intense competition (Harley, 2019). Recent reports highlight how:

- R&D organizations may espouse strong scientific norms, but at the same time encourage or condone questionable practices and neglect whistleblower alarms (Berggren & Karabag, 2018; Karabag & Berggren, 2016);
- Social media giants advertise their mission to build community and bring the world together but disregard the integrity of their users and exploit their personal data (cf. Brusoni & Vaccaro, 2017);
- Consumer brands invest in broad ethics codes while workers at their sub-contractors don't earn a sustainable living wage (Yu, 2008);
- Car firms develop attractive products which pass stringent regulatory tests, but at the same time equip them with software which manipulates the very same tests (Rhodes, 2016);

- Companies in materials-intensive industries engage in exploitation of resources in far-away locations in spite of human rights violation and risks of ecological destruction (Adeola, 2017; Özen & Akkemik, 2012);
- Banks officially adhere to financial transparency and responsibility, while at the same time collude with grey-zone actors to help customers with money laundering and tax evasion (Harding, 2016; Sikka, 2010);
- Hybrid organizations struggle to reconcile the conflicts between economic efficiency and the social objectives they were set up to address (Ramus et al., 2017).

In spite of these transgressions, this sub-theme builds on the convictions that actors and institutions, the organized and their organizations are able to change and build skills, values, and strategies which take the responsibility imperative seriously in technology development, as well as in marketing, manufacturing, supply management, etc. Thus, we invite all researchers who are interested in the formation of capabilities, values, and strategies which support responsible behavior, from norm subscription in research groups and professional associations to structural and institutional arrangement in major organizations.

The sub-theme welcomes conceptual, empirical and methodological contributions, from micro-level studies of individual/group interaction to macro-oriented analyses of organizations, networks, and industries. We particularly invite contributions that focus on one or more of the following issues:

- What capabilities and strategies do organizations, which operate multi-layered global supply chains, need to enforce sustainable social standards in their ecosystem?
- In what ways can ethical values and infrastructures guide technological development, from advanced engineering to product realization?
- How can R&D organizations nurture capabilities and values which support strong ethical standards, and resist the use of questionable practices which may lead to rapid, but potentially harmful results?
- What means may turn CSR programs into operational realities which make substantive differences to employees, customers, and external stakeholders?
- What strategies, capabilities and alliances are important for firms in rapidly growing industries, which depend on scarce mineral resources, to minimize reliance on socially and ecologically destructive locations?
- How can international firms build capabilities and strategic values which help them to detect and avoid corrupt practices on markets controlled by authoritarian regimes?
- Under what circumstance do new digital technologies enhance unethical versus ethical practices and forms in organizations?
- How does institutional complexity/competing institutional logic influence opportunities for ethical versus unethical technology development in organizations?

The sub-theme intends to foster an exchange of theoretical ideas and empirical research across these and related topics and is open to contributions that are ready to be submitted to a research journal as well as research in progress. It will create rich opportunities for engaging in constructive dialogue and learning among all participants.

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Christian Berggren is Professor of Industrial Management at Linköping University, Sweden, where he co-directed a nine-year research program on "Knowledge Integration and Innovation in an Internationalizing Economy". He was the lead editor of "Knowledge Integration and Innovation. Key Challenges Facing Technology-Based Firms" (Oxford University Press (2011), and co-edited the sequel "Managing Knowledge Integration Across Boundaries" (2017). Christian's current research focuses on two themes: public policy and innovation in sustainability technologies, and academic misconduct and the role of scientific norms.

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Solmaz Filiz Karabag is an Associate Professor at the Department of Management and Engineering, Linköping University, Sweden. Her latest research explores how firms transform their organization to meet disruptive digital technologies, and how firms in emerging economies build innovation capabilities and gain sustainable competitive advantages in global markets. Moreover, she studies how scientific misconduct has been managed and shaped by competing institutional logics. Solmaz is currently Editor-in-Chief of the 'Journal of Applied Economics and Business Research'.

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