

CALL FOR PAPERS – “Civil Society in the Age of Disruption” (sub-theme 33)
27th EGOS Colloquium in **Gothenburg 7-9 July 2011** (Reassembling Organizations)
Please visit: www.egosnet.org for more information and registration.

Convenors:

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Call for papers – “Civil Society in the Age of Disruption”

Civil Society is conceived as a sphere of dynamic and responsive discourse in the borderland between the state, the public sphere, the family and the market that is populated by a highly diverse universe of civil society organisations (CSOs) such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, churches, ethnic and community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, foundations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, fraternities, social movements, sports and leisure associations, business associations, political parties, coalitions and advocacy groups, among others.

Amidst market implosions, environmental crises, on-going transitions of traditional government and the jostling for position amongst developed and developing economies, the external conditions for organising – the resources or bases of legitimacy as well as various forms of regulations – are transforming, perhaps irrevocably at the same time as some of the organisations in civil society are actively driving or resisting these very changes.

Under this subtheme, we aim to explore civil society and its organisations as:

- Disrupters of societal institutions, driving the changes in conditions of organising
- Organisers of societal changes, test labs for inventing solutions and solving problems
- Organisations that must change quickly in response to altered external conditions

While we are looking for a diversity of papers in terms of theoretical as well as methodological approaches, in this sub-theme (No 33) we particularly would like to welcome papers under the following four themes:

Theme 1: Challenging and Changing CSO Landscapes

We invite papers that document and analyse the changing resource, support and possibility context for CSOs and the long-term effects of these changes in the current civil society landscape. For example, in the 19th and 20th centuries, mass movements emerged in many countries as strong collective forces that engineered social change and that evolved into established institutions. With ongoing individualisation and other modernity processes, the stability of these institutions is now challenged. We are interested in exploring (a) how the position, role and resources of these older organisations will change or re-assemble, as well as (b) which new types of assemblies will emerge and what roles these new kids on the block may play in shaping our societies.

Theme 2. Identity and boundary work.

Residing at the intersection of sectors, societal aims and stakeholder groups, many CSOs are engaged in continuous boundary work and the (re-)construction of viable identities. Lately, concepts of pluralism and hybridity have gained force as analytical tools in organisation theory in general and in CSO studies more specifically. CSOs seem particularly apt for studying how diverging logics and multiple constituencies are organised, and the consequences of pluralism over time. We therefore invite papers that examine internal organisational processes of maintenance and disruption in changing external environments. We encourage exploration of contemporary themes of CSO transition and change – for example social entrepreneurship, new philanthropy, or social investments.

Theme 3. Civil society and claims on legitimacy.

In this theme, we explore CSOs as drivers of change, creators of disturbances and proponents of shock in various fields of the organisational landscape. We invite papers that explore the role of CSOs as agents, facilitators or provocateurs of a changing or even disrupted societal landscape. We also invite contributions that address CSO organising modes which impact on organisational practices in the public or for profit sector. We encourage papers that consider the implications for CSO legitimacy in the face of profound organisational and institutional change.

Theme 4. Whither the CSO field?

The interdisciplinary field of CSO studies assembles political scientists, historians, anthropologists, economists, sociologists, and management scholars. We invite inter- and multidisciplinary reflections upon the consequences of existing scholarly constructions of CSOs, their roles and functions, for the research field more broadly defined. We also encourage papers addressing the move to sectoral borderlands, in the overlap of public, private and CSO sectors. What are the empirical implications when CSOs become less distinctive in form and practice from public and private counterparts, and how do we, as scholars, deal with the conceptual challenges that follow?

About the convenors:

Gemma Donnelly-Cox (IE) is a Lecturer in Organisation Theory and Academic Director of the Centre for Nonprofit Management, School of Business, Trinity College Dublin (TCD). Her current research interests include nonprofit management, social entrepreneurship, organisation growth and development, managerial leadership across sectors and cultures, as well as institutionalisation processes in society and organisations.

Michael Meyer (AT) is Professor at the Department of Management at the WU Wien. He has worked in various academic positions, e.g. as an Assistant Professor for marketing and cultural management, as Associate Professor for Organisational Behaviour and as a researcher in interdisciplinary projects. Currently he is head of the Research Institute for NPOs at the WU Wien. Areas of specialization and current research: managerialism in NPOs, functions and participation in CSOs, social systems theory, social networks and social capital, career research.

Kari Steen-Johnsen (NO) is senior research fellow at the Institute for Social Research, Oslo and active at the Centre for Research on Civil Society and Voluntary Sector. Her research deals with organizational change within voluntary organizations, and has focused on processes of globalization, professionalization and commercialization. In her upcoming research she is looking at the effects of the network society on voluntary agencies with regard to social participation, civic engagement and social communities, ways of organising activities and the organisations' political and democratic roles.

Filip Wijkström (SE) is working as Associate Professor and SSE Director of Research at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE). In his research he pays particular interest in the variety of civil society organisations – such as federations, foundations and beneficial societies – as well as in comparisons of the nonprofit sector and its roles in different regimes/countries. Most recent work deals with the distinctiveness of civil society actors; to understand in which ways this particular distinctiveness affects the CSOs, as well as how CSOs work strategically with these features.