New Innovations in Neo-institutional Theory

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Why does neo-institutional theory need new innovations?
Because it has “jumped the shark”
We are all institutional theorists now

AOM Conference Submission Topic Linkages – OMT 2004

NOTES:
Node size = # of submissions (max, Institutional Theory = 92; min, Feminist Theory = 1)
Line width = # of ties between topics (max, Inst. Theory to Change = 23)
Line shade = Tie concentration (darker lines reflect a
But it’s a *structural* kind of institutionalism

Figure 1: Citations to Meyer & Rowan (1977), DiMaggio & Powell (1983), Hannan & Freeman (1977) and Pfeffer & Salancik (1978)
What’s wrong with structural institutionalism?

• Emphasize outcomes without understanding the processes behind them

• We lose focus on important questions and begin to study trivial things

• The “institutional story” loses coherence
AN example: Mimetic isomorphism & diffusion

• Original story:
  (a) firms increase their survivability chances by adopting characteristics that conform to broader socio-cultural ideals
  (b) Firms adopt practices that mimic their institutional environment, even though such practices do not confer an economic or competitive advantage
  (c) Firms in a common field begin to resemble each other
Mimetic diffusion: A ‘black box’

1. What are the motives of adoptees
   – i.e. do they adopt for technical or mimetic reasons

2. Does isomorphism occur because of mimicry or due to coercive or normative pressures?
   – Mizruchi & Fein (1999)
Mimetic diffusion: A ‘black box’

3. Mimetic Adoption is never complete

4. Post adoption, how are mimetic practices elaborated inside an organization?
   – Meyer & Rowan (1977)
Another example: institutional Entrepreneurship and change