



## GRONEN Research Conference 2018

### **Now, more than ever.**

Exploring avenues to increase the relevance and legitimacy of organizations and the natural environment scholarship

**June 13–15, 2018**

**University of Almería, Spain**

Despite decades of scientific research demonstrating that the actions of several industries have caused severe damage to the ecosystem, recent societal and political changes seem to challenge the urgency of taking action to avoid irreversible consequences for future generations. The revitalization of short-termism and simplistic approaches to business and the economy continue to undermine or simply deny the relevance of research on organizations and the natural environment (O&NE) as well as the concept of sustainability itself.

In this context, now more than ever, academics in the O&NE field must raise their voices. Our role as knowledge generators is to provide relevant and easy-to-understand criteria to decision makers and the general public. However, if we want our voices to be heard, our field needs to increase its legitimacy both within and outside of academia. To do so, O&NE research must be methodologically rigorous and address interesting problems; our teaching must be relevant to business praxis, and our opinions as experts must be based on accurate facts and solid theory.

Increasing the legitimacy of O&NE research has additional advantages for our community because the space that (top) academic journals devote to a topic, as well as its prominence in academia, are related to the perceived relevance of the research field. Similarly, decisions about tenure, promotions, and merit-based pay increases are partially dependent on the perceived value and legitimacy of the research conducted (Pfeffer, 1993). In this sense, we have made a lot of progress. In the past 5–10 years, the outlets specifically addressing O&NE issues have increased in number and have had a greater impact, and articles on O&NE are more common in leading academic journals. However, there is still a long way to go. If we want O&NE to be considered a theoretical framework, we need to reinforce and clarify our theoretical arguments and approach. If we feel that O&NE research has been peripheral to the mainstream management literature (Berchicci & King, 2007), we need to identify ways to gain exposure in top journals and to engage in current discussions in academia and across society, thereby becoming relevant partners in these conversations.

In addition to the academic program and plenary sessions, GRONEN 2018 will include a number of professional development workshops (PDWs) led by prominent scholars in the field. Plenary sessions and PDWs will explore how to further develop O&NE scholarship. For example:

- **How can O&NE scholarship have a greater impact on society and the natural environment?**
  - How can we interact with other actors of a democratic society, including nonprofits, corporations, social movements, media, governments, and local communities, to effectively address urgent environmental challenges?
  - How can we make O&NE more relevant?
- **How can O&NE literature provide new insights on topics of interest to most business scholars?**
  - What issues related to the natural environment may become mainstream topics? And how?
  - How can we better contribute to new, emerging theoretical approaches?
- **What are the main drivers and barriers for O&NE scholars to reach greater levels of legitimacy in academia?**
  - How can we reach greater levels of theoretical rigor in O&NE research?
  - How can O&NE research provide unique and novel insights to current and emerging organizational theories?
  - How can we improve the interest in and relevance of current PhD projects in the O&NE field?
- **How can we constructively assess O&NE research to identify methodological weaknesses and opportunities?**
  - What new qualitative and quantitative methods can we apply?
  - What are the most frequent methodological flaws found in O&NE research?
- **How can the O&NE community become an agent of change?**
  - Which useful insights are needed by environmental entrepreneurs that can be provided by O&NE scholarship?
  - Which tools do we have to induce critical changes in regulations, markets, and institutions that favor environmental entrepreneurship and ameliorate or even reverse environmental damage?

Although we are glad to receive papers dealing with general O&NE topics, **we invite papers related to the conference theme.** Specifically, although not exclusively, we **invite paper submissions dealing with the following:**

- Causes and effects of recent political and societal changes over the environmental strategy of organizations.



- The emergence of new business models, organizational forms and technologies, and their impact on the environment and on firms' environmental strategies.
- Identify new and alternative dependent variables that can better address the long- and short-term effects of business activity on the natural environment.
- New or emerging theoretical approaches with the potential to inform (and be informed by) O&NE research.
- Alternative qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches that may potentially be applied to typical problems addressed by O&NE research.

The program consists of both full paper and research development sessions. Full paper sessions are organized as a single track, with the research development sessions organized as parallel tracks. Authors will be asked to indicate which format they prefer. Our goal is to maximize the number of papers presented in single-track sessions. A doctoral consortium limited to 20 PhD students will take place just after the main conference, June 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. PhD students must apply separately for the consortium to be able to participate in the main conference afterwards.

### **O&NE special issue**

All submissions will undergo a double-blind review process prior to acceptance. A special issue of *Organization and Environment* will feature GRONEN 2018. We invite scholars who submit their work to the conference to also submit their work for publication in the special issue.

### **Schedule**

January 9, 2018: Registration opens  
February 15, 2018: Deadline for submissions  
March 30, 2018: Notification of acceptance  
May 4, 2018: Deadline for early registration  
June 13-15, 2018: Conference  
June 15-16, 2018: PhD Consortium

### **Conference web page and details regarding the call for papers:**

[http://gronenonline.org/conference\\_2018/](http://gronenonline.org/conference_2018/)

### **We look forward to welcoming you to Almeria in 2018!**

*The organizing committee:*

Jose Cespedes-Lorente (President)

Javier Martinez-del-Rio

Miguel Perez-Valls

Raquel Antolin-Lopez

Jose Antonio Plaza-Ubeda