



Call for Papers and Research Designs for a Special Issue on: “Field Experiments in Organizational Sustainable Development”

Organization & Environment calls for the submission of papers and research designs on field experiments related to the rigorous testing of theoretically grounded hypotheses related to the development and integration of sustainability, across all its diverse phenomena, within the core functioning of organizations. In alignment with the new Domain statement of the journal (oae.sagepub.com), theoretical development can be grounded on any relevant domain of business scholarship or of social, environmental and life sciences. The core requirement is that the experiments are based on change interventions relevant to some aspects of organizational life, and aimed at validating their relative influence on sustainability-related outcomes.

Field experiments have become the norm in many scientific domains, but only recently have started to be attempted in the study of organizations (Chatterji et al., 2016). Even rarer is their use in the study of sustainable development in organizations (Zollo et al., 2013; Delmas & Aragon-Correa, 2016). To encourage this critical methodological development in organizational sustainability research, we invite contributions of two kinds to this Special Issue. In addition to the regular submissions of completed empirical studies using field experiments as a key methodological device, we call for the submission of “research designs”. These are papers that propose a field experimental design as an intermediary completion of the scholarly journey starting from the identification of a compelling knowledge gap, the development of solid theoretical arguments to fill the gap (typically, but not necessarily in the form of formal hypotheses), and the thorough design of a field experiment aimed at validating the proposed arguments. This type of submission will be reviewed like any other manuscript, and an editorial decision will be made on the basis of the potential for theoretical advancement and the quality of the empirical exercise designed to validate it.

In addition to publishing the best research designs in this Special Issue, *Organization & Environment* will commit to publish a second paper from the same study, dedicated to the execution of the experiment(s), if the review process will determine that all the final steps of the research process are correctly carried out, the data is well analyzed and the implications are correctly drawn from the results, *irrespective of their alignment with the theoretical expectations*.

The overarching goal, therefore, goes even beyond the contribution to the debate(s) on the sustainable development of organizations. It aims to help correct some fundamental weaknesses in the way social science is conducted, including the biased publication of “statistically significant” results and the backward construction of theoretical arguments based on them.

Practical Information:

- Deadline for submission: **Monday, April 2nd 2018**, 6pm CET
- Please mention the title of the Special Issue in the cover letter accompanying your submission
- For any further information, please contact Maurizio Zollo at Maurizio.zollo@unibocconi.it

References:

- Chatterji, A., M. Findley, N.M. Jensen, S. Meier, D. Nielson, 2016 “Field experiments in strategy research”, *Strategic Management Journal*, 37(1), 116-132.
- Delmas, M.A., J. A. Aragon-Correa, 2016. “Field Experiments in Corporate Sustainability Research: Testing Strategies for Behavior Change in Markets and Organizations”, *Organization & Environment*, 29(4), 391-400.
- Zollo M., Cennamo C., Neumann K. (2013). Beyond what and why understanding organizational evolution towards sustainable enterprise models. *Organization & Environment*, 26, 241-259