

RGK Program
on
The Knowledge Economy
(Knexus)

Third Knexus Research Symposium
On
Ideas about Social, Political and Economic Change: Theory and Empirical Evidence

August 8-10, 2001
Bechtel Conference Center

Co-sponsored by
The National Science Foundation
and
Knexus

Institute for International Studies
Stanford University

Ideas about Social, Political and Economic Change: Theory and Empirical Evidence

"Change of some kind is prerequisite to the existence of uncertainty; in an absolutely unchanging world the future would be accurately foreknown, since it would be exactly like the past. [...] We live in a world full of contradiction and paradox, a fact of which perhaps the most fundamental illustration is this: that the existence of a problem of knowledge depends on the future being different from the past, while the possibility of the solution of the problem depends on the future being like the past."

(Frank Knight, Risk, Uncertainty and Profit, 1921/1971, p. 313).

The third Knexus Research Symposium is devoted to the exploration of theoretical and empirical issues relating to the phenomenon of change at the societal level. As the above quote of the classic treatise of Knight indicates, uncertainty is not an unusual condition but rather has been the underlying condition for the evolving structure of human organization throughout history. A serious study of change in economies, politics and societies must therefore deal with the ubiquitous phenomenon of uncertainty.

Our starting point is an account of human cognition, which is a fundamental prerequisite for explaining change. We address the cognitive foundations of change before proceeding to the processes of change at the social, political and economic level. Special attention will be paid to the mechanisms and institutions that lead to the emergence of new technologies and the way that they are absorbed and diffused in the economy. Recent advancements in network analysis offer the promise of empirically testable models and the symposium will address the role of networks in a theory of social and economic change.

The Symposium will build on the "Knowledge, Social Change, and Economic Performance" project co-sponsored by Knexus and the Mercatus Center at George Mason University with additional support from the Center for Institutional Social Science, Washington University in St. Louis. The project consisted of three workshops that brought together academics from a variety of disciplines in the social and the cognitive sciences. The first workshop focused on cognition and learning (November, 2000, Virginia), the second dealt with the relationship between beliefs and institutions (December, 2000, St. Louis) and the third addressed issues relating to economic and political markets (February, 2001, Stanford). This third Knexus Symposium will build on the insights of these three workshops and is designed to provide additional elements toward an empirically founded theory of economic, political and social change.

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August 8

6:00 p.m.-
8:00 p.m. Reception for symposium speakers
 at Encina Lobby (by special invitation)

August 9

7:30 a.m. Breakfast in the Bechtel Conference Center
8:00 a.m. Welcome and Introduction to the Symposium
 Woody Powell, Nathan Rosenberg and Syed Shariq

Session 1

8:15 a.m. The Cognitive Foundations of Change
 Merlin Donald (Chair), Elkhonon Goldberg, Kevin McCabe, Leslie Brothers, Mark
 Turner (discussant)

10:15 a.m. **coffee break*

Session 2

10:30 a.m. Social Change: On the Evolution of Social Norms
 Jean Ensminger (chair), Margaret Levi, Robert Cooter, Anjini Kochar, Chris
 Mantzavinos (discussant)

Lunch

12:30 p.m.

Session 3

1:30 p.m. Discontinuity in Political and Economic Change
 Woody Powell (chair), Gavin Wright, Barry Weingast, Jack Knight, Stephen Haber
 (discussant)

3:30 p.m. **coffee break*

Session 4

3:45 p.m. Distributed Knowledge, Technology and Economic Change
 Syed Shariq (chair), Nathan Rosenberg, Ole Andreas Engen, Bertin Martens,
 Sukkoo Kim (discussant)

Dinner

6:30 p.m. Cocktail Reception at the Faculty Club
7:00 p.m. Dinner served at the Faculty Club Gold Lounge
7:30 p.m. Dinner Lecture: John Searle on "Social Ontology and Social Change." Introduction
 by Nathan Rosenberg

August 10

8:00 a.m. Breakfast in the Bechtel Conference Room

Session 5

8:30 a.m. Operationalizing Networks: Concepts, Measurements, Modeling
Gavin Wright (chair), Woody Powell, John Padgett, Jason Owen-Smith, Dan
McFarland (discussant)

10:30 a.m. **coffee break*

Session 6

11:00 a.m. Research Directions for the Future: How General Can A Theory of Social, Political
and Economic Change Be?
Douglass North (chair), all participants

Working Lunch

1:00 p.m. Working Lunch –Conclusions and Wrap-up
Nathan Rosenberg (Chair), Merlin Donald, Jean Ensminger, Woody
Powell, Syed Shariq, Gavin Wright, Douglass North

Adjourn

2:00 p.m.

Session Chairs, Speakers and Discussants

Leslie Brothers, University of California, Los Angeles
Robert Cooter, University of California, Berkeley
Merlin Donald, Queen's University
Ole Andreas Engen, Rogaland Research Institute of Norway
Jean Ensminger, California Institute of Technology
Elkhonon Goldberg, New York University
Stephen Haber, Stanford University
Sukkoo Kim, Washington University in St. Louis
Jack Knight, Washington University in St. Louis
Anjini Kochar, Stanford University
Margaret Levi, University of Washington
Chris Mantzavinos, Max Planck Project Group, Bonn
Bertin Martens, Mercatus Center, George Mason University
Kevin McCabe, University of Arizona
Dan McFarland, Stanford University
Douglass North, Washington University in St. Louis
Jason Owen-Smith, Stanford University
John Padgett, University of Chicago
Woody Powell, Stanford University
Nathan Rosenberg, Stanford University
John Searle, University of California, Berkeley
Syed Shariq, Stanford University
Mark Turner, University of Maryland
Barry Weingast, Stanford University
Gavin Wright, Stanford University

Invited Participants

Mie Augier, Stanford University
Noemi Bitterman, Technion
Linda Capuano, General Electric
Chris Chyba, CISAC, Stanford University
Jeannette Colyvas, Stanford University
Jesse Czelusta, Stanford University
Christian Czernich, Stockholm School of Economics
Paul Edwards, George Mason University
James Evans, Stanford University
Chunliang Fan, Stanford University
Fabrizio Ferraro, Stanford University
Anna Gatti, Stanford University
Martin Gjelsvik, Rogaland Research Institute, Norway
Mark Granovetter, Stanford University
Per Willy Hetland, European Institute of Advanced Project and Contract Management (Epci)
David Holloway, Stanford University
Marianne Jelinek, National Science Foundation
Monique Lambert, Stanford University
David Laitin, Stanford University
Andreas Olsson, New York University
Kelley Porter, Stanford University
Karlene Roberts, University of California at Berkeley
Simon Rodan, INSEAD
Harry Rowen, Stanford University
Kathy Siacotos, Stanford University
Jennifer Silverman, University of Chicago
Michael Sims, NASA Ames
Richard Scott, Stanford University
Michael Wakelin, Bechtel
Jong-Chun Woo, Seoul National University
Valery Yakubovich, University of Chicago
Raymond Yeh, Zerotime Labs