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## **CONTENTS**

Lee & Pennings

Mimicry and the Market: Adoption of a New Organizational Form

Ocasio & Thornton

Markets with Hierarchies: The Effects of Alternative Strategies and Structures on Organizational Survival

Silverman & Baum

Alliance-Based Competitive Dynamics

Tomaskovic-Devey & Skaggs

Sex Segregation, Labor Process Organization and Gender Earnings Inequality

## **PAPER ABSTRACTS**

Mimicry and the Market: Adoption of a New Organizational Form

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#### Abstract

This paper investigates institutional changes in the Dutch accounting industry during the period 1925-1990. While all firms were composed of partners only before 1925, some among them began to partition professional accountants into partners and associates (PA-form) and the PA-form became a dominant form. We suggest that the institutional change was the result of an interaction between selection at the population level and imitative adoption at the firm level. In the empirical part, we focus on the effect of negative selection on imitation behavior, and propose that strong market feedback favoring the PA-form enhanced its legitimacy, which in turn fostered imitative adoptions. We also hypothesized on the spillovers between firms: that the market feedback differentially affects the adoption of PA-form on the basis of firm idiosyncratic filters such as network embeddedness to adopters, percentage of adopters among similar-sized firms and geographically proximate firms. The analysis produces results that are supportive of our hypotheses. We conclude with a discussion of innovation diffusion in the private sector as a legitimization process, where this process unfolds at both the industry and firm levels of analysis.

Paper forthcoming in the *Academy of Management Journal's* Special Research Forum on Institutional Theory.

#### Markets with Hierarchies: The Effects of Alternative Strategies and Structures on Organizational Survival

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## Abstract

We examine an unresolved question on past research on corporate hierarchies-their effects on business unit survival. Linking evolutionary perspectives with attention and resource dependence theories, we studied the comparative survival rates of alternative organizational strategies and forms for a random sample of 230 firms that competed in the higher education publishing industry from 1958 to 1990. We posit that the effects of corporate hierarchies on business unit selection are contingent on the specialization of attention at both the business unit and corporate levels and on the autonomy of business units relative to the corporate parent. We find that diversification at the business-unit level increases exit, while corporate level diversification decreases exit, consistent with our hypotheses. The study also finds that vertical integration decreases exit relative to contractual relationships, and that while mergers and acquisitions creates a temporary increase in exit rates, the effects of acquisition are lower for firms inside the population relative to outsider.

## Alliance-Based Competitive Dynamics

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## Abstract

Do rivals' alliances increase or decrease the competitive pressure experienced by a firm? Linking ecological and economic research on organizations, we propose that the effects of rivals' horizontal, upstream, and downstream alliances are determined by the degree to which they 1) foreclose a focal firm's alliance opportunities, and 2) increase industry carrying capacity. We also hypothesize that firms can co-opt rivals' alliances by partnering with well-linked rivals. An analysis of Canadian biotechnology firms supports these predictions.

Sex Segregation, Labor Process Organization and Gender Earnings Inequality

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### Abstract

In this paper we revisit Tam's (1997, 2000) potentially controversial finding that occupational sex composition does not influence wages. We approach this problem in two quite different ways. First, we point out a potential conceptual and methodological weakness in all research which focuses on national occupational, rather than local job and organizational processes. Second, we develop the implications of organizationally relevant social closure and gendered labor process theories for our understanding of wage determination models. The gendered devaluation and specialized human capital theories, which are stressed by Tam (1997, 2000) and his critics (England et al 2000), do not represent the entire story. We re-estimate Tam's models using variables that are measured at the appropriate job, rather than occupational, level. These models look quite similar to those reported by Tam and also fail to support a simple gendered devaluation hypothesis. Additional models are constructed to examine social closure and gendered labor process explanations of the gender wage gap as non-recursive organizational processes. We find that the sex composition effect on wages exists, but it is indirect and relatively weak, operating largely through lower access to training time. On the other hand, jobs that require long periods of training or have supervisory authority are less likely to be typically female jobs. Jobs with high task complexity but low on-the-job training are more likely to be typically female.

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