

Call for Papers

Social Norms and Institutions

Model Building, Empirical Corroborations, and Applications

**International Conference at the Congressi Stefano Franscini (CSF)
of ETH Zurich, Monte Verità, Ascona
10-15 May 2015**

Organizers:

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<http://www.socio.ethz.ch/sni2015>**

Social norms and institutions have had a large impact on how people behave in daily life, on economic activity, on solving political conflicts, and on the welfare of nations. By definition "Institutions are the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction" (Douglas North). Property rights, democratic institutions, patent rights, auction rules, divorce laws, voting rules, financial market and environmental regulations serve as examples of institutions. "Perverse" incentives leading to undesirable and inefficient outcomes for the society at large is an important topic in this research program, as sensible looking incentive mechanisms can lead to a variety of unintended consequences. Social norms and institutions govern all areas of society. Several authors have developed theories that propose that the character of institutions is a key factor in explaining why states prosper or fail.

Modern research in the field of norms and institutions relies on new theories and methods such as the concepts and theories of asymmetric information, signaling, social networks, classical and behavioral decision theory and game theory, psychological theories of motivation etc. Research is conducted by various methods: Case studies, survey studies, field experiments, lab experiments and computer simulation studies. Here are some examples of research questions:

- How do social norms of cooperation emerge endogenously without third-party intervention?
- What is the impact of social norms versus monetary incentives on human behavior?
- Which type of institutional rules will promote and sustain cooperation in social dilemmas?
- Which type of institutions will emerge to solve problems of trust, risk and asymmetric information?
- How are "social preferences" relevant to explaining the efficient functioning and behavioral consequences of institutions?

- There are an increasing number of rating systems and reputation institutions, both in the “offline” world and on the internet. What are the effects, and side effects, of these new institutions?
- What are the distributional implications of norms and institutions?
- What are the proper institutional schemes to tackle problems of climate change, corruption, international negotiations, financial crises and the risks of bank failures?

The conference will offer a platform for the exchange of ideas for experts developing, testing and applying theories of social norms and institutions in diverse social sciences. Invited participants are from a variety of countries and have different disciplinary backgrounds.

Speakers are from the department of Humanities at ETH and the Economics department at the University of Zurich. In addition, the following invited speakers will give presentations at the conference: Christina Bicchieri, University of Pennsylvania, Martin Dufwenberg, University of Arizona, Robert C. Ellickson, Yale Law School, Uri Gneezy, University of California San Diego, Christine Horne, Washington State University, Siegwart Lindenber, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Werner Raub, University of Utrecht, Linda Steg, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Thomas Voss, University of Leipzig.

We welcome further contributions. Contributions (title, abstract, manuscript if available) should be submitted no later than 31 January 2015 to Stefan Wehrli (sni2015@ethz.ch). Please mention whether you are applying for a conference presentation or a poster session.

See the conference website: <http://www.socio.ethz.ch/sni2015> for a description of the venue and for conference fees.

