

24.4.2020, 14:00-15:30. Grace Augustine (Cass Business School): *From Movements to Managers: Changing Positions in the Field of Sustainability*

Abstract

This paper investigates the pattern by which individuals who are active in forming a field – “field initiators” – enter new positions inside organizations to manage the concerns of that field. Utilizing data on the career pathways of 800 individuals who were involved in establishing the field of sustainability in higher education, we test a set of hypotheses related to who is most likely to move from being active in the field of sustainability to professionalizing their interest in the issue by becoming a sustainability manager inside organizations, and how these patterns of entry change over time. As the field of sustainability was initiated by a social movement, we examine the trajectories of those field initiators who are most aligned with the goals of the movement. The question of who enters these positions matters, because ultimately it is these individuals who are largely working to institutionalize the practices and policies associated with the movement-initiated field. We test three hypotheses related to field initiators becoming sustainability managers, and our findings contribute to our understanding of how movements influence the creation of new occupations, and importantly whether or not, and when, movement-aligned individuals have direct access to positions as internal change agents in nascent movement-initiated fields.

Bio

Grace Augustine completed her PhD in the joint program in Sociology and Management and Organizations at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University in the summer of 2019 and joined Cass Business School, City University of London in the UK as a Lecturer (Assistant Professor).

In her dissertation and resultant papers, Grace investigates how social movements spur changes in organizations, in particular in terms of how their efforts can bring about entirely new movement-initiated fields and occupations. Grace’s analyses strategies are primarily qualitative (e.g. interviews and archival data analysis), but she also uses computational text analysis techniques, such as topic modelling, and standard statistical methods, to explore changes in discourse, practices, and positions over time.