

Corporate democracy and performance

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The purpose of this track is to raise challenging issues for general management science through the study of: the so-called “cooperative” and “mutual” firms. Those are ruled by democratic governance and have as primary objective to create customer value for their members and clients.. How can we explain the success and sometimes the industrial leadership of some of these firms (as, for example, in the banking and in the farming sectors in diverse countries)?

According to the general theme of IFSAM 2010, this track will be enriched by the diverse historical and cultural backgrounds of the multiple forms of cooperative and “mutual” corporations across Europe and other continents, concerning the aims of justice and sustainability.

This track is focused on the hypothetical causal link between the institutional peculiarities of “democratic” firms and their level of performance. Concerns are as well empirical (case studies) as theoretical (what can be the grounds of democratic efficiency) and methodological (what frameworks of investigation and interpretation).

Some research questions will be discussed:

- Is there a countervailing power of cooperative banks ?
- Is their customer focus different from other enterprises?
- What is the effective role of members in the cooperative ?
- How can we qualify the nature and categories of “corporate democracy” among existing cooperative and mutual firms?
- Is democratic corporate governance a disadvantage or a success factor when the firm faces a fast evolving environment ? How may we characterize the quality of governance and the network advantages?
- Management and democracy: idiosyncratic isolated experiences or a principle that could be generalized?
- Is there a difference in the level of autonomy and responsibilities of managers in cooperatives compared to commercial organizations (compare equal management positions)? If this is the case, how does it affect the business?

**Keywords: Institution – Corporate democracy – Cooperatives – Mutual benefit societies
- Compared performance**

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He currently manages research activities at the ISTEC. He also taught humanities at the Ecole Centrale Paris and has been formerly management consultant for 13 years. His special interests are strategy, organisation, institutional phenomena, Foucault's archaeological method and non profit business organizations. He has published articles in *Society and Business Review*, *Sciences de gestion*, *Expansion Management Review*, *RECMA*, and a book linking theory of power and change management practice : *Les lendemains qui mentent – peut-on civiliser le management*, *Les empêcheurs de penser en rond*, 2001. He has been member of the Gnosis project supported by AIMResearch and led by Elena Antonacopoulou. He was co-chair of track 3 : “Practice, practicing and practising” at Paris Euram 2007 Colloquium. He is reviewer for the *Society and business Review*. He co-organized the Colloquium “Coopératives et mutuelles : impact des statuts sur l’efficacité managériale” (ISTEC, Paris, 20 September 2007).

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Nadine Richez-Battesti, PHD in Economic Sciences in 1991. She is responsible of one of the fourth research program « Organization, innovations and territories » in LEST-CNRS. She currently coordinates a master in social economy and teaches social economy, financial economy, comparative social policy, and european integration.

Interested in the varieties of capitalism and organisational trajectory of firms and territories, she has published in reviews like *Revue économique*, *Annals of Public and cooperative economics* and articles in books, for example in « La gouvernance des entreprises coopératives », directed by Munoz, Radrigan Rubio et Regnard, PUR, 2008. With P.

Gianfaldoni, she was responsible for the book « Les banques coopératives en France : le défi de la performance et de la solidarité », L'Harmattan, 2006.

She is member of the Think Tank on cooperatives banks from the European Association of Cooperative Banks (EACB). She is also member of Scientific Committee on Social Economy for International CIRIEC.

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