

Chapter 6


Conceptual–Theoretical Approaches to the Ecology of Organizations

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the conceptual and theoretical approaches to ecology of organizations from the assumption that the unit of analysis of the ecology of organizations can be described, analyzed, and explained from different frameworks of reference. The method employed is the analytically referential and reflective of the main characteristics of the different perspectives already systematized in the theoretical and empirical research literature. It is concluded that the unit of analysis of the ecology of organizations in both the internal and external environments can be approached to be systematized from the perspectives of the open systems, the evolutionary theory, institutional and functionalist, and structural and community theories.

INTRODUCTION

The ecology of organizations contributes to the analysis of external environment and the structures that fit. The organization is an organism associated with systems theory, contingency theory and the organizational ecology approach, complexity paradigm and theory of chaos. There are various conceptual and theoretical debates focusing organizational ecology and organizational determinants; general and specific strategies, the liabilities of newness and smallness; organizational demographics and competitive industrial structures and modelling of organizational processes (Wholey & Brittain, 1986).

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The ecology of organizations has the elements of the industrial economy (Porter, 1980) and the population ecology approach (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, the adaptive capacity (Beinocker, 2006; Reeves & Deimler, 2011; Bernardes & Sá, 2009). The population ecology, from Hannan and Freeman (1977), through Wholey & Brittain (1986), the balance between ecological variation and selection process and the choices strategies (Wholey & Brittain, 1986 For Hannan & Freeman (1977).

Postmodern ontology tries to give a conceptual and technical response to the postmodern era and offers notions and concepts of the different theoretical-methodological versions and characteristics of postmodern organizational ecological theory that replace individual rationality, questions the stable, emphasizes the organizational procedural constitution. for communal and social construction (Rueda, 2022).

The biological ecology models describe changes in organisms not depending on the ontology of the involved populations. Direction and speed of social change of modern and dynamic constituent organizations and their diversity of organizational populations are responsive to the changing conditions of the society (Hannan & Freeman, 1989). The theoretical approach to the ecology of organizational populations can be done if it is taken as the unit of analysis and the second in the selection of adaptation. Ecological theory perspective is not prescriptive with an emphasis placed on population dynamics considering the variety of event types, structures, services, and strategies.

Social organizations are analysed using the organizational ecology and sociological perspectives framework, in their emergence, change, growth and decline of organizations, economic, social, and political conditions shaping organizational changes over time, organizations dealing with their environments through tactics and imitation, adaptation, interactions with competitors and other environmental actors.

The theoretical framework of organizational ecology drawn from ecology and environmental factors surrounding the organization, including the competition from other similar organizations, the target niche, and the organizational fitness to have access to the environmental resources. In religious ecology of organizations, the framework applies to voluntary organizations (McPherson, 1983; Ammerman, 1997; Eiesland & Warner 1998).

Organizational ecology theory supports the analysis of variables on the characteristics of organizational populations, institutional characteristics, environmental conditions, individual and specific to organizations, such as mortality, survival of created organizations, etc. (Bruderl et al. 1992). Organizational ecology theory and research is studied through change and mortality.

Ecological pressures on organizations have implications for unsustainable practices and strategies that they cannot cope with, such as decreased population density, mortality, and increased survival (Salimath & Jones, 2011). Eco-efficiency is the conception about the organizational ecology including the social demand on the organizations beyond the internal limits and that have influence in the human being in the climate and the natural environment.

The empirical research of the ecology of organizations undergoes changes. Research in population ecology of organizations with its different theoretical approaches of ecological population, provides a critique of the foundations of sustainability (Salimath & Jones, 2011).

This study intends to contribute to the analysis of the ecology of organizations by systematizing the theoretical and empirical literature review. It begins analyzing the systemic approach, to continue with the evolutionary perspective, the institutional and functional perspectives, followed by structural analysis and community theory. Finally, the analysis presents the conclusions.

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