RESUMO EXPANDIDO (PÚBLICO GERAL/NÃO ASSOCIADOS AKB) / EXTENDED ABSTRACTS (NON AKB MEMBERS) - ÁREA 9. ECONOMIA INSTITUCIONAL ORIGINAL

THE INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS OF INSTITUTIONALISM: AN ORGANIZATIONAL AND QUANTITATIVE HISTORY OF AFEE MEETINGS AT THE ASSA (1965–2026)

Theodoro Cesar De Oliveira Sposito (theosposito@gmail.com)

Introduction

Reacting to a highly contested academic environment in the U.S., which was increasingly dominated by neoclassical orthodoxy in the mid-1960s, the pioneers of Original Institutional Economics (OIE) founded the Association for Evolutionary Economics (AFEE) to ensure their institutional survival. Although the history of AFEE's foundation and early years has been extensively documented (see Bush 1991; Rutherford 2015; Cavalieri and Almeida 2017), the concrete organizational mechanisms responsible for its long-term reproduction remain quantitatively unexplored.

This study reconstructs that trajectory through an original database produced from the computational extraction and non-destructive curation of 61 annual programs of the Allied Social Science Associations (ASSA), covering the entire existence of AFEE from 1965 to 2026. The dataset enables the empirical

estimation and quantification of gatekeeping practices, patterns of epistemic biodiversity, and transformations in institutional power structures.

The study argues that the historical durability of OIE within the ASSA was conditioned by the gradual reconfiguration of AFEE's internal mechanisms of symbolic reproduction, moving from a concentrated founding oligopoly toward a more pluralized and internationally connected organizational field.

Methodology

Archival records from the American Economic Association (AEA) provide the empirical baseline for this inquiry, which relies on sixty-one official ASSA programs to map the structural topology of the AFEE. Reconstructing this institutional landscape requires a dual analytical framework. At the broader thematic level, annual shifts in organizational asymmetry and conference pluralism are traced through measures of institutional concentration and diversity. Within this matrix, the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index isolates patterns of institutional monopolization, whereas Shannon Entropy captures systemic permeability and the shifting boundaries of epistemic biodiversity within the association (Shannon, 1948).

Shifting the focus to the micro-analytical level, the study adopts an alternative strategy to capture how scientific capital is accumulated and exercised within the organizational field. This approach draws upon the sociology of science and symbolic power formulated by Bourdieu (1975, 1988), which treats scientific authority as a relational form of institutionalized capital. To operationalize these dynamics empirically, the text establishes an Influence Index (I_p) conceived as an analytical proxy for the differential gatekeeping capacities exercised within the organizational structure:

the text establishes an Influence Index (Ip), calculated as the sum, for all roles r in R, of the weight of the role (w_r) multiplied by the frequency of that role ($n_{p,r}$)

The scalar multipliers (w_r) were calibrated nonlinearly in order to capture different levels of institutional control over the association's scientific agenda. The category "Abstract Author" received a weight of 1 (w=1), representing the base of the hierarchy of influence, since authors control only the production of their own work and remain dependent on institutional validation for access to the conference. The role of "Discussant/Commentator" received a weight of 2 (w=2), reflecting the evaluative and legitimizing functions performed by invited scholars responsible for publicly assessing papers before an audience – a mechanism closely associated with academic gatekeeping and peer recognition (see Merton, 1968).

The position of "Session Chair" received a weight of 3 (w=3), as it entails localized moderating authority, including control over time allocation, speaking order, and the framing of debate. "Organizing Committee Members" received a weight of 4 (w=4), because they exercise ex-ante selection and filtering power, determining which approaches and scholars achieve visibility within the scientific program. Finally, the category "Association President, President-Elect, and Distinguished Lecturer" received the maximum weight of 5 (w=5), representing the highest level of symbolic authority and academic consecration within the community, together with the capacity to shape the future trajectory of original institutionalism.

Algorithmic detection of endogenous historical ruptures was conducted through the application of a binary segmentation procedure to a standardized multivariate matrix composed of ten annual structural vectors. Drawing upon the econometric literature on structural breaks and change-point analysis (see Bai and Perron, 2003; Fryzlewicz, 2014), the matrix incorporated absolute counts of sessions, presented papers, authors, institutional affiliations, and participating countries.

Additional indicators captured the proportion of international participants, the share of women, the incidence of joint intra-ASSA sessions, as well as measures of concentration and entropy. The algorithm iteratively evaluated these vectors in order to maximize the relative reduction of the intra-segment

sum of squared errors. Under this protocol, a structural break was considered valid only when it generated a minimum error reduction of 12 percent and defined a distinct organizational phase lasting at least five consecutive years.

To reconstruct the association’s relational architecture, the study also developed undirected co-authorship and co-participation networks derived directly from the empirical incidence of session connections. This strategy follows the relational tradition of social network analysis (Freeman, 1978; Newman, 2001) and eliminates the need for algorithmic assumptions based on semantic similarity, allowing the organizational structure to emerge directly from observed patterns of interaction.

Preliminary Findings

Applying this algorithmic periodization yields five distinct institutional eras within the AFEE trajectory at the ASSA. Eras I (1967-1974) and II (1975-1981) encompass the formative and fragmented phases. A founding intellectual oligopoly drove demographic concentration, with sessions averaging between 6.12 and 9.43 per year, and the share of foreign-affiliated authors remaining below 3% (2.98% and 2.81%, respectively). Organizational stabilization defines Era III (1982-1990), where annual paper presentations settled at an average of 34.56. The subsequent institutional densification of Era IV (1992-2015) dismantled the early monopolies, pushing average annual papers to 50.58 and expanding the foreign author share to 14.37%. Era V (2016-2026) constitutes the contemporary phase, reaching an absolute peak of 59.91 average papers.

The application of the Influence Index reveals the structural centers of gravity governing this network over time. At the individual level, scholars such as F. Gregory Hayden (I_p=227), William T. Waller (I_p=216) and Anne Mayhew (I_p=202) exerted the most substantial gatekeeping and consecration influence across the association's history. Beyond institutional diffusion, the organizational evolution of AFEE demonstrates a marked demographic transformation regarding gender representation. During the formative eras, identified female participation remained structurally low. However, this configuration shifted

significantly over time, culminating in Era V, which is characterized by a much greater gender diversification among active participants. This shifting landscape was driven by the intellectual and organizational contributions of prominent female scholars who established themselves as central nodes in the association's network. Figures such as Anne Mayhew (77 appearances) and Janice L. Peterson (56 appearances) exerted profound historical influence , while scholars like Mary V. Wrenn (45 appearances) became highly visible organizational forces.

Concurrently, the association experienced a profound process of internationalization, transitioning from a domestically concentrated network to a highly interconnected global field, where the foreign-affiliated share reached 33.74% by Era V. This geographic expansion was catalyzed by a diverse cohort of scholars operating outside the U.S. The network's global reach is evidenced by the prominence of highly active foreign-affiliated participants across different regions, including Philip Arestis (United Kingdom) , Geoffrey M. Hodgson (United Kingdom), Felipe Almeida (Brazil), Faruk Ülgen (France), and Alicia Girón (Mexico). This geographic diversification effectively pluralized the organizational field, anchoring OIE in a broader, transnational academic context.

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Palavras-chave: association for evolutionary economics; original institutional economics; social network analysis; sociology of economic profession.