



# **The Foundations of Evolutionary Institutional Economics: Generic Institutionalism (Routledge Advances in Heterodox Economics)**

*Manuel Scholz-Wäckerle*

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Generic institutionalism offers a new perspective on institutional economic change within an evolutionary framework. The institutional landscape shapes the social fabric and economic organization in manifold ways. The book elaborates on the ubiquity of such institutional forms with regards to their emergence, durability and exit in social agency-structure relations. Thereby institutions are considered as social learning environments changing the knowledge base of the economy along generic rule-sets in non-nomological ways from within.

Specific attention is given to a theoretical structuring of the topic in ontology, heuristics and methodology. Part I introduces a generic naturalistic ontology by comparing prevalent ontological claims in evolutionary economics and preparing them for a broader pluralist and interdisciplinary discourse. Part II reconsiders these ontological claims and confronts it with prevalent heuristics, conceptualizations and projections of institutional change. In this respect the book revisits the institutional economic thought of Thorstein Veblen, Friedrich August von Hayek, Joseph Alois Schumpeter and Pierre Bourdieu. A synthesis is suggested in an application of the generic rule-based approach. Part III discusses the implementation of rule-based bottom-up models of institutional change and provides a basic prototype agent-based computational simulation. The evolution of power relations plays an important role in the programming of real-life communication networks. This notion characterizes the discussed policy realms (Part IV) of ecological and financial sustainability as tremendously complex areas of institutional change in political economy, leading to the concluding topic of democracy in practice.

The novelty of this approach is given by its modular theoretical structure. It turns out that institutional change is carried substantially by affective social orders in contrast to rational orders as communicated in orthodox economic realms. The characteristics of affective orders are derived theoretically from intersections between ontology and heuristics, where interdependencies between instinct, cognition, rationality, reason, social practice, habit, routine or disposition are essential for the embodiment of knowledge. This kind of research indicates new generic directions to study social learning in particular and institutional evolution in general.

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