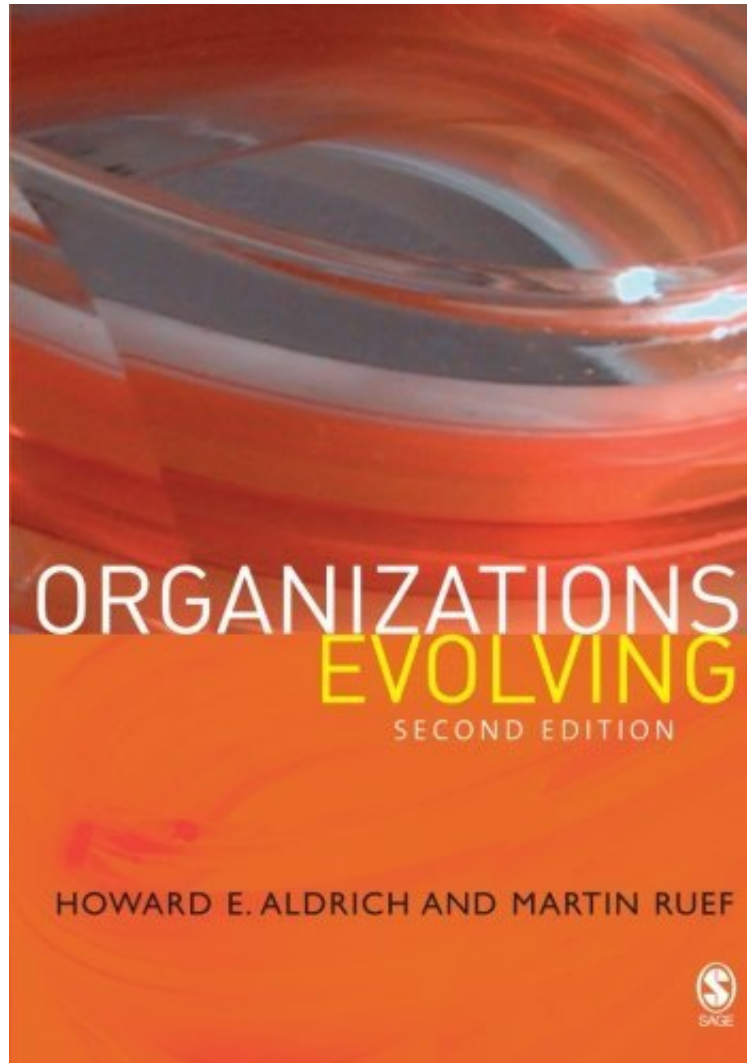


(Download pdf) Organizations Evolving

Organizations Evolving

Howard E. Aldrich, Martin Ruef
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Howard E. Aldrich, Martin Ruef : Organizations Evolving before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Organizations Evolving:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. AllBy CustomerGood to read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. nice dealBy Jinggood quality, and the price is nice. The book is the textbook of one of my classies this semester, and I really enjoy the deal.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Organizations EvolvingBy Kyle SilerIndicative of the North Carolina Sociology tradition of serving as an incubator for ecological-sociological perspectives, the book opens by quickly stating its goal to apply ecological principles to the study of formal organizations. Aldrich and Ruef define evolution as occurring via four major principles: variation, selection, retention and struggle for scarce resources. Environments shape and select heterogeneous organizations competing for market share, legitimacy and survival. Since Herbert Spencer and his eventual fall from theoretical prominence in sociology,

the imposition of scientific analogies to explain social science phenomena has been controversial. However, the evolutionary metaphors presented are lucid and intuitive, and may be especially compelling to newcomers to the field, who are immediately presented with a clear heuristic to understand markets and organizations. Aldrich and Ruef adroitly apply the evolutionary perspective to all main organizational theories, including population ecology, institutional theory and resource dependency theory. However, regardless if one accepts or prefers the ecological rubric that is sketched out in the early chapters, I believe the book's prime contribution is serving as a comprehensive and contemporary review of the literature in organizations, markets and networks. The standard chapters on organizational forms, boundaries and populations are included, but the book also stands out for its emphasis on the dynamic and fluid nature of markets, institutions, networks, organizations and other relevant social entities. Numerous chapters focus on the emergence of new organizations and populations, showing how the dynamic and static states of organizations and social phenomena in general are intertwined and how organizations often serve as harbingers of social change and development. The chapter on entrepreneurship and the emergence of new organizations emphasizes the author's emphasis on the dynamic processes that underlie organizational creation. Entrepreneurship and the decisions entrepreneurs make serve as the precursors for the development of organizations in addition the environments they are situated in. Forming (or at least strategizing) one's organizations and networks is an integral part of commerce and economic behavior, and may be one of many areas where economic sociology and formal organizations overlap. As was the case with the book's 1999 edition, the emphasis on nascent and dynamic organizations and entrepreneurs provides valuable perspectives on the struggles of individuals and organizations for survival and legitimacy, and driving forces of innovation and change within populations and industries. A question the book left me pondering was to what degree formal organizations can be treated analogously to markets and other institutions. While the broad ecological principles Aldrich and Ruef sketch out may provide such an analogy, neoclassical and evolutionary economists have also used similar analogies to evidence their own theories. When an evolutionary perspective is applied to formal organizations or economic phenomena, how does it differ (and should it differ?), if at all, from the Darwinian/Smithian notion of "the survival of the fittest" often invoked by many economists. Some sociologists argue that contemporary economic life is characterized by much adverse selection, with insufficient or undesirable variation, unfair struggle and the retention of undesirable firms and behaviors, which may or may not be uniquely human/social issues and problems that transcend evolutionary theories and phenomena. At the very least, an evolutionary perspective provides an interesting metaphor to explore these macro-level questions. In short, the second edition of *Organizations Evolving* can serve as a textbook for introducing undergraduates to organizational, market and network phenomena, in addition to providing a clear, comprehensive and up-to-date review of a vast array of relevant literature that more experienced scholars will also appreciate. (A similar version of this review appeared in *Accounts*, the Economic Sociology Newsletter of the ASA, Summer 2006.)

Howard Aldrich and Martin Ruef's tour de force shows us how the evolutionary approach can explain change not only in organizational populations, but within sectors and within organizations. Aldrich and Ruef display an astonishing command of the management literature, using vivid illustrations from cutting edge research to show how the processes of variation, selection, retention, and struggle operate within organizations and across them. A lucid and engaging book that should appeal both to the newcomer to organization theory and to the old pro' - Frank Dobbin, Harvard University

A keenly anticipated Second Edition of an award winning classic, *Organizations Evolving* presents a sophisticated evolutionary view of key organizational paradigms that will give readers a unified understanding of modern organizations. This Second Edition is an up-to-date survey of the literature, as well as an overview of the new developments across organization studies. It contains new sections on organizational forms, community evolution and methods for studying organizations at multiple levels. The field of organization studies contains many contending paradigms that often puzzle and perplex students. This book is a stunning synthesis of the major organizational paradigms under the umbrella of organizational theory. Scholars and students will find it an excellent guide to the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches, as well as an outstanding review of the best recent empirical research on organizations. The book includes many helpful features, such as: -Review questions and exercises that will consolidate reader's learning -A methodological appendix that assesses common research methods -Engaging cases that bring principles and concepts to life

This Second Edition is a rich resource for study, discussion and debate amongst organizational scholars and postgraduate students of organizations.

About the Author Howard E. Aldrich received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and is Kenan Professor of Sociology, Chair of the Sociology Department, Adjunct Professor of Business at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Faculty Research Associate at the Department of Strategy Entrepreneurship, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University. His book, *Organizations Evolving* (Sage, 1999), won the George Terry Award from the Academy of Management and was co-winner of the Max Weber Award from the OOW section of the American Sociological Association. In 2000, he won the Swedish Foundation on Small Business Award for his research on entrepreneurship. In 2002, he won the J. Carlyle Sitterson Award for Excellent in Freshman Teaching at UNC-

CH. In 2011, the graduate students in sociology at UNC-CH gave him their "Best Instructor" award. His most recent book is *An Evolutionary Approach to Entrepreneurship: Selected Essays* (Elgar, 2012). While formal organizations (and the institutions that support them) are key features of the contemporary social landscape, sociologists have only recently developed empirical descriptions of the processes that lead to their emergence. My research considers the social context of entrepreneurship from both a contemporary and historical perspective. Large-scale surveys of entrepreneurs in the United States permit me to explore team formation, innovation, exchange processes, and boundary maintenance in nascent startups. My historical analyses address entrepreneurial activity leading to the founding of U.S. medical schools since the 18th century and the organizational transformation of Southern agriculture and industry in the post-bellum period.