

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The XVI Medici Summer School in Management Studies, Bologna, June 23-June 28, 2024

Theme: Space and Place in Organizational Thinking

We are pleased to announce the organization of the 16th edition of the Medici Summer School in Management Studies for doctoral students and young researchers, which will be held in **Bologna, June 23-June 28, 2024**. The school is organized and sponsored by [Bologna Business School](#) (University of Bologna), HEC Paris ([S&O Institute](#)), and [MIT Sloan School](#).

Mission

The Summer School is designed to promote doctoral education and research in organization theory and related fields (economic sociology, management studies, strategy) and contribute to the development of enlightened practice in the management of business organizations. The Summer School is a unique educational program for qualified doctoral students interacting with thought leaders in the management field who will share their knowledge and wisdom on frontier research topics.

The Medici Summer School is hosted yearly, on a rotating basis, by the three founding institutions. It combines lectures and research seminars by prominent international scholars with active engagement by participating students. Every day of the one-week program is scheduled to end with the presentation of students' research related to the topic of the School and with a panel of senior faculty providing feedback. The School has also a tradition of hosting keynote speeches from leading practitioners as well as organizing short field trips to local places of intellectual interest, including companies, research labs, NGOs, museums, etc.

A typical day will feature a guest faculty member presenting on their research, an integrative session led by a host faculty member that explores links among the guest faculty research, and a workshop in which the host and guest faculty work with students to flesh out their own ideas, both theoretically and empirically.

Overall, students will advance in their own research via:

1. Exposure to the cutting edge of research in this area
2. Open discussion of key research challenges experienced by the faculty in their own research
3. Direct feedback on how to tackle complex questions of both theory and empirics

Theme

The complexity of contemporary organizational life in which boundaries are fluid, people and technologies are entangled, and the spatial reach of organizations stretches ever further calls for sustained theoretical and empirical efforts to understand the role of space and place in shaping organizational outcomes. After all, everything organizational and social theorists focus on is emplaced; it happens somewhere, it is constituted in part through location, it is spatially and temporally bounded, and it involves a complex interplay of material objects, people, meanings, and values. So, while it may seem that location and distance are becoming less significant in our hyper-connected world, the reality is quite the opposite. The concept of place remains a vital cog in the machinery of organizational theory, while the spatiality of social life has evolved from a peripheral issue to a core concern for management and organizational scholars. This move has ushered in the treatment of space as both enabling and constraining actions rather than functioning as a neutral backdrop.

This shift is further highlighted by societal and technological changes, which have heightened our awareness of how individuals engage with their environments, the relationship between space and place, and how work shapes and is shaped by spatial arrangements. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically blurred the lines between home and work, propelling organizations into rapid, often groundbreaking transformations. Technological advancements in digital realms and artificial intelligence are continually redefining our workspaces, sparking accelerated change across a myriad of organizations. Moreover, the looming presence of climate change intertwines organizational evolution with spatial dynamics, reshaping the cities and communities we inhabit. In essence, while the significance of physical distance may be diminishing, the interest in understanding spatial and social locations within organizational contexts is soaring to unprecedented heights.

For social scientists, the intricate dance between space, place, and organizational behavior presents a fertile ground for exploring new ideas, relationships, and logic of organizing. This dynamic field also opens the door to the use of creative visual methodologies, crucial for dissecting the complexities of place in its two and three dimensions. The 2024 Medici Summer School stands at the forefront of this scholarly endeavor. It aspires to convene leading researchers committed to advancing our understanding of the multifaceted ways in which space and place shape what organizations are, how they function, and how they interact with their environment. Our ambition is to ignite discussions around state-of-the-art organizational research, casting light on new theoretical insights, uncovering hidden processes, and exploring methodological avenues that can elevate our comprehension of key organizational questions.

Some of the topics and questions that will be discussed include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Envisioning a New Theory:** How can we conceptualize a theory of organizing that truly embraces the nuances of space and place?
- **Evolving Significance of Location:** In today's dynamic world, does location hold the same sway over organizational behavior and performance as it once did?

- **From Space to Place (and Back):** What transformative process turns mere physical spaces into places imbued with meaning? When do places regress to spaces?
- **Innovation's Spatial Footprint:** How does innovation leave its mark on the spaces and places within organizational realms?
- **Physical Arrangements and Social Dynamics:** What is the influence of physical layouts in either sustaining or challenging the existing social order?
- **The Changing Essence of Space and Place:** How do the values and meanings tied to space and place evolve over time?
- **Space, Place, and Organizational Evolution:** What is the significance of space and place in the context of organizational and institutional transformation?
- **Designing Experiences:** How does the design of space shape the lived experiences of individuals and organizations?
- **Institutional Processes Across Dimensions:** In what ways do institutional processes unfold over time, through spaces, and across places?
- **Spatial Concepts in Organizational Theory:** How do spatial and placial concepts refine our understanding of organizational change and continuity?
- **The Generative Power of Organizational Spaces:** When and why do organizational spaces become hubs of creativity and innovation?
- **Interdisciplinary Spatial Insights:** What insights from fields like humanistic geography, architecture, urban planning, or cartography could enrich our theorizing about space and place in organizing?
- **Methodological Innovations for Space Analysis:** What new methodologies are required to capture the essence of space and its role in organizing?
- **Custodianship of Space and Place:** What are the necessary custodial strategies to manage access and interaction with spaces and places?
- **Changing Orientation via Space and Time:** How do the institutional and organizational arrangements that orient day-to-day (work) life change? How might they change for the better?

Program and Faculty

The host faculty members include representatives from the three co-sponsoring institutions and those who have been organizing the Summer School over the years. Host faculty at this year's summer school include Ezra Zuckerman Sivan, Nathan Wilmers, and Emilio J. Castilla (MIT); Simone Ferriani (Bologna & Bayes); and Rodolphe Durand (HEC Paris).

In addition to the host faculty, the Summer School will bring together guest faculty who are leading strategy, organizations, sociology, and social psychology scholars. As in prior years, these guests each have an exciting research agenda that touches on the chosen theme. And they are also chosen to be diverse on multiple dimensions, including empirical application, specific research question, and research methodology. This helps to spark exciting cross-fertilization of ideas that is one of the hallmarks of the Medici experience. Another aspect of that experience is a consistent focus on the research process. Participants gain less from learning about "fully baked" research than from sharing ideas about the "baking process" itself.

The tentative schedule outline is as follows:

- *Sunday, June 23: Evening Welcome Reception*
- *Monday, June 24: Guest faculty leader: Mercedes Delgado, CBS*
- *Tuesday, June 25: Guest faculty leader: Abhishek Nagaraj, Berkeley Haas*
- *Wednesday, June 26: Guest faculty leader: Juan Alcacer, Harvard*
- *Thursday, June 27: Host faculty leader: Ezra Zuckerman Sivan, MIT Sloan*
- *Friday, June 28: Guest faculty leader: Catherine Magelssen, LBS*

Each faculty member will be in residence at the School for several days, allowing ample time for one-to-one sessions, knowledge sharing, and networking opportunities.

A typical day will feature a guest faculty member presenting their research, an integrative session led by a host faculty member that explores links among the guest faculty research, and a workshop in which the host and guest faculty work with students to flesh out their own ideas, both theoretically and empirically.

Overall, students will advance in their own research via:

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Application procedure

The School will admit 20-25 student participants. Applications are welcome from current Ph.D. students in Management, Strategy, Organization Theory, Economic Sociology, and related disciplines from universities worldwide. Students for the Summer School will be selected in accordance with the quality of their doctoral curricula, research interests, and application materials. Applications from students who have completed at least two years of doctoral training will be considered, with preference given to those who have satisfied their course requirements and qualifying exams but have not yet embarked on their dissertation research. Applications from post-docs will also be considered.

There is no application or participation fee. Student participants will be responsible for covering their own travel expenses to and from Bologna, but the Summer School will cover accommodation and board expenses during the week of sessions provided that students attend the entire week. Applications should include:

1. A simple statement declaring that the applicant is interested in being considered for admission to the Summer School together with the applicant's contact information:

email address, telephone, and mailing address. All of this should be in the body of an email sent to the address below.
2. Curriculum vitae listing educational background, Ph.D. program, scholarly achievements, nationality, etc.
3. A motivation letter (no longer than 1 page) indicating the applicant's current research activities and their specific interest in the proposed topic for the 2024 Summer School.

4. A brief recommendation letter from one faculty member of their dissertation committee.
5. Applicants are also encouraged (but not required) to submit an extended abstract or discussion note that they could present during the Summer School. The Selection Committee will evaluate the relevance of this paper to the 2024 School theme.

All application materials should be sent by **March 20th, 2024** exclusively via email to the following address: registration@medicisummerschool.it with the application *Medici Summer School* in the subject of the email. For any specific inquiry or clarification, please also contact registration@medicisummerschool.it. Admitted candidates will be notified by **April 12th, 2024**.

