

**PUBLIC SELECTION BASED ON QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERVIEW FOR THE AWARDING OF NO. 3 EXPERIENCED GRANTS LASTING 36 MONTHS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH PURSUANT TO ART. 22 OF LAW NO. 240/2010 AT THE DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 2020 STARS PROGRAMME - I PART - CUP: F54I19000980001 (TYPE A)
PICA CODE 20AR018**

announced with decree of the Chancellor Rep. no. 210/2020 of 15.05.2020 and posted on the official registry of the University on 25.05.2020

RESEARCH PROJECT CODE 1

“Social impact as a driver for the innovation of business model, performance management, and accountability in nonprofit organizations”

Research structure: Department of Management, economics and quantitative methods

Duration of the grant: 36 months

Scientific Area: 13 – Economics and Statistics

Academic recruitment field: 13/B1 – Business administration and accounting studies

Academic discipline: SECS-P/07 – Business administration and accounting studies

Scientific Director: Prof. Laura Mariani

Social impact is the long-term effect of an organization's activities on both individual beneficiaries and their communities. In recent years, the measurement of social impact has become increasingly important for third sector organizations, and the production of reliable information on expected and past outcomes as well as the use of results-based effectiveness logics are, more and more often, necessary conditions for the access to public and private resources (Lumley et al., 2011).

If on the one hand impact measurement creates several operational difficulties, on the other it opens up to new scenarios that can be investigated under the twofold intra-organizational and inter-organizational perspective.

With regard to the first perspective, this project aims to investigate whether and how the measurement of social impact is helping to innovate nonprofit organizations' business models, forging their performance measurement systems, and influencing the communication of to external actors – potential financiers in particular (Objective 1).

With reference to the second perspective, the research to be carried out aims to understand if and under which conditions social impact reporting affects individuals' decision making concerning donation, provision of financial resources, or purchasing behaviors toward nonprofit organizations (Objective 2).

The neo-institutional literature provides the theoretical framework for the project (Greenwood and Hinings 1996). In particular, a framework that integrates the notion of institutional work and emotional aspects, particularly relevant among third sector's actors, will be developed to pursue the first research objective. Legitimacy theory combined with literature relating to decision and cognitive styles will instead be used as a theoretical framework for the second research objective.

The objectives will be pursued simultaneously, according to the temporal scan described below and using two different methodologies.

Objective 1: Analysis of multiple case studies (12/14). The joint analysis of the cases will take place by adopting a configurational approach – Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Ragin 2000) – aimed at identifying the combinations of forms of institutional work and other organizational conditions that favor the orientation towards social impact.

Phase 1: Literature review and research framework development (6 months).

Phase 2: Selection of case studies and preliminary interviews (6 months).

Phase 3: Interviews and complete reconstruction of the selected case studies (18 months)

Phase 4: Data analysis and preparation of research outputs with presentation of the same at international conferences (9 months, partially overlapping with phase 3).

Objective 2: Experimental research design. In particular, artifactual survey experiments (Morton & Williams 2010) will be conducted with different categories of actors - potential donors and customers of social enterprises, in particular - aimed at verifying individual responses to different types of social impact reporting practices.

Phase 1: Literature review and research framework development (6 months).

Phase 2: Operationalization of the variables to be tested, design of the experiments, creation of the sample and of the mailing list. Pre-tests of each experiment and consequent adaptations (12 months).

Phase 3: Implementation of the experiments (9 months).

Phase 4: Data analysis and preparation of research outputs for international conferences (9 months).

From a theoretical point of view, the project will contribute:

- to the debate on social impact measurement in the third sector, with particular attention to the little-investigated topics of organizational learning and the response of financiers to different forms of impact communication;
- to develop the neo-institutional theory by widening the perspective of analysis to the role, rarely considered, of feelings and emotions of institutional workers

From an empirical point of view, the project differs from previous works by helping to understand:

- what are the combinations of conditions that favor the assimilation of a social impact approach within nonprofit organizations' business models, measurement systems and reporting;
- how social impact communication can contribute to the fundraising process. The analysis will consider, in particular, the response of different categories of potential financiers to different stimuli.

From a methodological point of view, the project will use rarely used collection and analysis techniques. In fact, both the configuration analysis and the experimental research find little application in the context of nonprofit and impact measurement.

From a managerial perspective, the project will provide indications for the implementation of impact measurement systems and will encourage the spread of an impact-oriented managerial culture. At the same time, new evidence on the relationship between reporting and donor behavior can be used to support the development of new fundraising campaigns in nonprofit organizations.

The project will make it possible to strengthen UNIBG's internal expertise on the third sector and social impact and to strengthen collaborations with other scholars, both Italian and foreign, with whom the proposer is carrying out research activities.

RESEARCH PROJECT CODE 2

“Intermediation by Platforms in the Digital Era: Blessing or Curse?”

Research structure: Department of Management, economics and quantitative methods

Duration of the grant: 36 months

Scientific Area: 13 – Economics and Statistics

Academic recruitment field: 13/A1 - Economics

Academic discipline: SECS-P/01 - Economics

Scientific Director: Prof. Salvatore Piccolo

The crucial role of digital platforms, which act as intermediaries in numerous emerging markets, is widely recognized both in academia and in policy circles. On the one hand, digital platforms (e.g., Amazon, Booking, Expedia etc.) promote competition, increase the transparency of the markets, and contribute to reaching consumers who otherwise would not have been served or, at best, should bear research costs high. On the other hand, in some circumstances, these intermediaries exploit their strategic position to extract non-competitive profits from both sides of the market (two-sided markets), an inefficiency that is typically passed on to consumers through higher prices. The opposite direction of these effects poses new intellectual challenges that are stimulated by competition policy needs. Can the intermediation of platforms in digital markets harm consumers? If so, why and under what conditions? What are the aspects that regulators should examine more carefully to correct possible market inefficiencies? What is the risk of choosing the wrong policy

Evaluating the effects on the social welfare of these new forms of intermediation is not always easy. The reason depends on some interconnected and crucial aspects that often characterize digital markets: (i) the complexity of their organizational structure (for example, the number of intermediation and bargaining stages before a product reaches end consumers); (ii) the distribution of bargaining power among the main market players; and (iii) the contractual relationships between them and, in particular, the existence of contractual restrictions on the ability of sellers to discriminate between indirect distribution channels (operated by intermediaries) and direct sales channels. Parity agreements are a class of contracts that, in fact, prevents forms of price discrimination between and within the distribution channels. Therefore, these contractual forms drew the attention of competition authorities and regulators on both sides of the Atlantic. The competitive nature hitherto emphasized by the economic literature lies in the limits that these practices place on the ability of sellers to channel the final demand towards their own direct sales channels at the expense of intermediaries. The adverse effects are instead linked to the excessive market power that intermediaries obtain from the price parity regimes. The aim of the research project is to analyze the competitive effects of these agreements. It is intended to show how they depend, among other things, on: (i) the type of parity; (ii) the vertical structure of the sector; (iii) the business model of the industry (wholesale versus agency); and (iv) the intensity of competition between direct and indirect distribution channels.

This would allow a more effective competition policy and a more targeted and less expensive regulation activity for the community. Besides, the project intends to identify some simple empirical predictions to evaluate the net effect on the social welfare and consumer well-being of such practices. This is in order to guide empirical analyzes on the topic that are currently underdeveloped and highly desirable for policy needs.

Finally, a lateral aspect that the project intends to develop is that of the exchange of information between competitive platforms and, at the same time, between the companies that operate and compete on the same platform (Amazon). The activities will be organized in weekly meetings with the tutor, as well as through a cycle of seminars in Italy and abroad. Objectives: three articles in the three-year period, each to be delivered to the tutor at the end of each year.

The project intends to pursue various scientific/cultural objectives. First of all, we intend to train a young researcher on issues at the frontier of the industrial economy, but at the same time, with a cut applied and addressed to the regulatory challenges that the digital age poses to society and economists. In this sense, it is believed that a profile appropriate to the project must be characterized by a solid analytical-quantitative background and proven scientific maturity. Secondly, the topics dealt with intend to strengthen the research group's position on digitalization issues, the importance of statistical data, and theoretical support for empirical work. The cutting of the project is absolutely innovative: the aim of the project is to offer original ideas to the European Commission on critical

topics, and at the same time to suggest to the experts' results and analysis techniques whose development requires scientific skills that are difficult to find in a non-academic setting. This process aims to give the researcher international visibility not only academic but also in policy circles, with a positive impact not only for research but also for the third mission. Finally, the project aims to develop knowledge in the broadest sense, not only in the form of scientific publications that undoubtedly improve the international visibility of the Department and the University, but also intends to contribute to the construction of a scientific and cultural identity aimed at UniBg's research group in economics among the first in Italy in the field of competitive economics as well as in the more general line of research in law and economics. The advancement of knowledge and research activity must be understood in the production of scientific articles on the themes of the project, participation in national and international research groups, organization of workshops and seminars

RESEARCH PROJECT CODE 3

“Querying the data without knowledge about the data: towards the data independence principle applied to collections of JSON typical of Big Data”

Research structure: Department of Management, information and production engineering

Duration of the grant: 36 months

Scientific Area: 09 – Industrial and information Engineering

Academic recruitment field: 09/H1 – Information processing systems

Academic discipline: ING-INF/05 – Information processing systems

Scientific Director: Prof. Giuseppe Psaila

The goal of the research project is to query large collections of JSON documents, formulating queries without knowing the actual structures of documents. A novel, standard and high-level query language should be defined, that allows users to specify searches of interest. An execution system should be developed, that encompasses novel and flexible querying techniques, based on the effective structure of data to query. Everything should be developed as an extension of the J-CO framework, and possibly based on the J-CO-QL language, under development by the supervisor of this activity research.