



Seminar

FRANCISCO O. RAMIREZ

Fellow, SCAS.

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*The Institutionalization of American  
Universities as Organizational Actors:  
Will This Model Globalize?*

Tuesday, 14 November, 11:15 a.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall  
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala  
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## ABOUT FRANCISCO O. RAMIREZ

Francisco Ramirez's current research interests include a focus on the worldwide rationalization of university structures and policies. His work has contributed to the development of the world society perspective in the social sciences and international comparative education. Ramirez received his BA in Social Sciences from De La Salle University in the Philippines and his MA and Ph.D. in Sociology from Stanford University. He was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University (2006–07) and has been elected an Honorary Fellow of the Comparative and International Education Society (2018). Ramirez will be the next director of the Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research at Stanford.

He is the co-editor of *Towards a Comparative Institutionalism: Forms, Dynamics, and Logics Across the Organizational Fields of Health Care and Higher Education*, with R. Pinheiro, L. Geschwind, and K. Vrangbaek, eds. (Series Title: Research in the Sociology of Organizations, Emerald Press, 2016). While at SCAS, Ramirez will continue his investigation of the institutionalization of American universities as organizational actors and the globalizing impact of this "model of excellence." Prior studies include "In Pursuit of Excellence? Discursive Patterns in European Higher Education Research" (with D. Tiplic), *Higher Education* 67 (2014): 439–455; "The Formalization of the University: Rules, Roots, and Routes" (with T. Christensen), *Higher Education* 65 (2013): 695–708; and "The Rationalization of Universities," in M-L. Djelic and K. Sahlin-Andersson, eds. *Transnational Governance: Institutional Dynamics of Regulation*, pp. 224–245 (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

## ABSTRACT

American higher education is increasingly a field within which universities and colleges are expected to be accessible, useful, and flexible organizational actors. These expectations are at the core of what increasingly constitutes a global model of the good university. This model emerged earlier in the decentralized and competitive American higher education field, though some of its features have intensified in recent decades. This paper first contends that an optimistic, liberal, and individualistic culture facilitated the decentralized and competitive American higher education field. Next, this paper focuses on three key organizational components: the entrepreneurial university and development offices, the individual empowerment university and diversity offices, and lastly, the professionalized university and legal offices. I contrast these developments within a national sample with an IVY League plus data set. Lastly, I address the question of whether a theorized American higher education in the form of "best practices" aided by references to "world class" rankings impacts higher education throughout the world. At issue is whether universities face not only a local and national environment but also a global and globalizing one.