

**PHD IN MANAGEMENT**

**XXV Cycle**

**THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT**

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ACTORS, STRATEGIES AND PATHS THAT  
LEAD TO THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF A NEW DISCIPLINE**

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## ABSTRACT

Modern economy, especially over the last 20 years, and the continuous development of new technologies brought to the modification of society and the way people work. As a result, a number of new professional figures emerged and embarked on what has been historically termed a professional project. The focus of this thesis is on one of those new expert occupations: *project management* (PM). As new expert occupation, being hampered by multiple players with contrasting interests, it is forced to develop its professional projects in a new way differently from old and traditional, professions. Professionalization is then seen as the spatially and temporally contingent outcome of the negotiations between different actors (i.e.: professional associations, big corporations, State, universities), each with their own objectives, interests, resources, and capabilities. The used methodology is a qualitative case study made up of semi-structured interviews and archival data (retrieved through websites, journals and newspapers) with all above mentioned actors. Thus, the methodological unit of analysis is Italian PM field. Setting the Italian field as a unit of analysis, I resorted to different archival data to demonstrate in a first moment how, around the discipline of PM, there is a growing interest and then I drew a comparison between the two main existing professional strategies. The strategies focus, on the one hand, on the struggle to compete in the private and public sectors, and, on the other hand, between national and international level. Thus this thesis is the first detailed and comprehensive study in the field of PM within the Italian context. To analyze the development of the PM professional project, I looked mainly at the three main PM professional associations that are active in this field: PMI, IPMA, and ISIPM. The result shows that the development of PM in Italy is following a new pattern of professionalization with distinctive characteristics either respect to traditional professions that to the new ones.