

Intra-organizational Knowledge and Learning Networks: In Search for Empirical Research

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Track Description

This track aims to bring together researchers from different disciplines that are interested in empirical investigations of social networks related to intra-organizational learning and knowledge transfer. Consistently with the main theme of the conference, we are looking for diversity – diversity of research approaches, theoretical backgrounds, principal levels of analysis and methods adopted. The track is intended to provide a rich forum where empirical work at various levels of analysis and using diverse theoretical backgrounds will be presented and discussed. The purpose of accumulating empirical research related to intra-organizational knowledge and learning networks is: 1) to elaborate on frequently used and emerging research questions and 2) to evaluate methodology used and, 3) to compare results of different research settings.

The empirical literature studying various aspects of organizational learning and knowledge transfer and examining their antecedents and consequences is abundant (e.g., Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Cummings, 2004; Dimovski, Škerlavaj, Kimman, Hernaus, 2008; Reagans, Zuckerman, & McEvily, 2004; Lazega & Pattison, 2001; Lazega, Lemercier and Mournier, 2006; Škerlavaj, Indihar Štemberger, Škrinjar, & Dimovski, 2007; Tsai, 2001). Currently, researchers are moving away from why to how questions and are occupied with studying the structure and patterns of organizational learning and knowledge transfer processes. As the phenomena under observation occur across organizational levels it is desired that a research design considers multiple levels of analysis and as a consequence consults multiple

theories. Hence, similarly as the broader social network research, the study of intra-organizational knowledge and learning networks is inherently multi-level and multi-theoretical (Brass, 2000; Monge & Contractor, 2006}. Apart from traditional levels of analysis (i.e., individual, group, organization) egocentric, dyadic and complete network levels should be considered. In addition, this area of research should combine theoretical background from theories of homophily, proximity, social exchange, generalized social exchange and resource interdependence, small-worlds, social process theory, evolutionary theory, etc. Fortunately, recent development of explanatory and confirmatory social analysis methods (such as Exponential random graph modelling and MRQAP) and applications (e.g. Pajek, StocNet with SIENA, UCINET) provided accessible research tools to build on the potential of multilevel and multi-theoretical research.

Scholars who have been working in this promising research area kindly invited to submit their research. Both exploratory as well as confirmatory empirical work is appropriate for submission. Multilevel research and research simultaneously using multiple theoretical backgrounds are especially welcomed. Submission can be related but are not restricted to the following issues:

- The network (relational) perspective to intra-organizational learning
- Effects of contextual factors (e.g., organizational structure, leadership, organizational culture, HRM practices, work design) on intra-organizational learning and knowledge networks
- Effects of homophily and physical proximity in intra-organizational learning and knowledge networks
- Other antecedents to knowledge and intra-organizational networks
- Dynamics (effects in time) of knowledge and learning networks
- Knowledge and learning networks and performance
- Other consequences of learning and knowledge networks (e.g. creativity and innovations)
- How are learning and knowledge networks related to other networks (e.g. advice, friendship, innovation, and decision-making)?

A selection of best papers is intended to be published in European Journal of International Management.

About track chairs

Emmanuel Lazega is Professor of sociology at the University of Paris Dauphine. He has published two books related to intra-organizational learning and knowledge intensive work: *Micropolitics of Knowledge* and *The Collegial Phenomenon*. His latest paper looks at the dynamics of advice networks among judges in a courthouse: "A spinning top model of formal structure and informal behaviour: Dynamics of advice networks in a commercial court", *European Management Review*, 3:113-122, 2006.

Miha Škerlavaj is a teaching and research assistant of management at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, Department for Management and Organization, where he teaches courses on management, organizing and decision-making, and business research methods. His research interests include knowledge and learning networks, impact of organizational learning and information technologies on performance, learning organization. He has published in *International Journal of Production Economics*, *Expert Systems with Applications*, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge, and Management*, *Journal of Applied Business Research* etc. He is an Associate Editor at *International Journal of Management Learning* and reviewer at *Omega*. He holds a PhD from University of Ljubljana for his dissertation *The Network Perspective and Performance of Organizational Learning: Theoretical and Empirical Analysis*.

Robert Kaše is a teaching and research assistant at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, Department for Management and Organization. Currently, he is finishing his doctoral dissertation "Effects of HR practices on knowledge transfer in knowledge-intensive firms: The mediating role of social network dimensions". His research interests lie in human resource management, knowledge management, intellectual and social capital, and social networks. His work has appeared in *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *International Journal of Manpower and Economic & Business Review*.