

Research Group "Inter-firm Networks"

FOCUS OF RESEARCH

Inter-firm networks are a traditional and yet modern organisational form. In practice they appear as strategic alliances, regional and global networks, joint ventures, value-adding partnerships, and consortia. The Research Group aims at relating theoretical and empirical research on inter-firm networks. The focus of *theoretical research* is to develop a theory of inter-firm networking which is based upon the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens and which informs management practice as much as empirical research. *Empirical research* is oriented on the genesis and management of inter-firm networks, aiming to study their importance for economic performance and technological development.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Recent research activities focus on building a managerial concept of "reflexive network development", which relates the strategic conduct of firms in networks to the specific conditions of organisational fields, such as regions and industries. Special attention is paid to the impact of historical conditions on ongoing processes, for example on the development of organisational and technological paths. At the moment, this concept is being elaborated for the fields of the media industry and optical technologies.

MEMBERS OF THE RESEARCH GROUP

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| Carolin Auschra, M.Sc. (FU) | Dr. Uli Meyer (associated) |
| Dr. Olivier Berthod (FU) | Prof. Dr. Guido Möllering (associated) |
| Dr. Timo Braun (associated) | Prof. Dr. Gordon Müller-Seitz (associated) |
| Ass. Prof. Dr. Leonhard Dobusch (FU) | Dipl.-Soz. Manuel Nicklich (FU) |
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| Dr. Knut Lange (associated) | Ass. Prof. Dr. Miriam Wilhelm (associated) |
| Dr. Frank Lerch (associated) | Prof. Dr. Carsten Wirth (associated) |
| Prof. Dr. Stephan Manning (associated) | Prof. Dr. Rainer Zeichhardt (associated) |

EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS SINCE 2013 (others, see website)

P.40: "Service Networks in the Aviation Industry"

The German aviation industry is in the headlines: Continued and repeated industrial disputes, security gaps and low cost carriers. At the same time, business research has revealed a considerable organizational fragmentation of Human Resource Management (HRM) within service production networks. Against this background, our research project examines the service networks in the German aviation industry by focusing on inter-organizational HRM practices and labor relations. Research questions include the following: How does management enact and shape the interorganizational dimension of work in networked value-creation? How do networked firms sustain the consistency of HR practices within the tension of collaboration and competition? What are the consequences for labor relations? With the aim of examining these questions empirically, the project deploys a qualitative approach to network research, in which data collection and analysis starts with the core firms of the service networks and then continues to include the typical business-to-business and management-labor relationships. The German aviation industry is comprised of airport authorities, airlines, and various ground handling services from security to aircraft maintenance. The research basically aims at delivering insights into the management of service networks by examining whether and how the various configurations of interorganizational value creation allow or constrain an interorganizational dimension of various HRM functions.

Commissioned by: Hans-Böckler-Stiftung (HBS), Düsseldorf

Period: 01/2015 bis 12/2016

Award Holders: Prof. Dr. Jörg Sydow, PD Dr. Markus Helfen

Researcher: PD Dr. Markus Helfen

Research Partner: Prof. Dr. Carsten Wirth (Hochschule Darmstadt)

P.39: Building up the technology platform „Smart Transfer“

The technology platform "Smart Transfer" aims at the development and commercialization of products based on piezoelectric ceramics. Together with the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft (IKTS, IAP, IWU) and German SME's, the many ways of applying these materials as well as their high degree of technological maturity are to be turned into commercial opportunities. The research focuses on answering the following questions: 1) How ought conceptualize interorganizational capabilities be conceptualized and

operationalized? 2) How can the emergence of interorganizational capabilities be systematically promoted?

Commissioned by: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (funding program „Zwanzig20 – Partnerschaft für Innovation“)

Period: 3/2014 – (expected) 12/2016

Award Holder: Prof. Jörg Sydow, Dr. Andreas Schönecker (Fraunhofer IKTS), in cooperation with Prof. Georg Schreyögg

Researchers: Waldemar Kremser, Claudia Walther

P.38: "Entrepreneurial Network University" (EXIST IV – Start-up support program)

The Freie Universität Berlin and the Charité won a funding on 2013/09/01 under the EXIST IV competition of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. With the concept "Entrepreneurial Network University", the Freie Universität and the Charité will jointly strengthen the start-up support as well as the teaching on entrepreneurship issues within the next 5 years. Prof. Dr. Sydow and Dr. Thomas Schmidt assume responsibility for the accompanying research and in particular co-ordinate the development and implementation of the networking concept.

Commissioned by: Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology

Period: 4/2013 - (expected) 4/2018

Award Holder: Prof. Jörg Sydow

Researchers: Dr. Thomas Schmidt

P.37: "From HRO to HRN? Coordinating Organizations in the Face of Emergencies"

Unexpected emergencies like disease outbreaks or relief operations following a plane crash kindle in a renewed interest in how individuals, organizations and societies actually face such crises. For management and organizational researchers, this raises a crucial question: how can organizations effectively face challenges the have not been prepared for? In business research, studies on high reliability organizations (HRO) feature prominently and focus upon how organizations deal with crisis situations. This project builds on this ground and advances research on HRO in two ways. First, HRO studies have so far had a focus on single organizations. However, as large-scale emergencies illustrate, collaboration among HROs is frequently a vital requisite. Hence our first objective is: to explore the range of possible constellations of HROs in the face of significant emergencies towards the formation and coordination of High Reliability Networks (HRNs). The focus here is on forms of formal governance, including different forms of network governance. The second objective is to develop a practice-based framework informed by structuration theory that would take into account the peculiarities and contextualities of HROs/HRNs. Focusing in particular upon the actual coordinative practices in which actors engage across organizations, we aim at substantiating research on network genesis and evolution in settings with extreme uncertainties. In the last year of the project we will compare the implementation of the German and US incident control systems.

Commissioned by: Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)

Period: 10/2013 - 10/2016

Award Holder: Prof. Jörg Sydow

Researchers: Dr. Olivier Berthod, Michael Grothe-Hammer, in cooperation with Prof. Gordon Müller-Seitz (TU Kaiserslautern)

PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH

A. Books and Special Issues

- A.11. Sydow, J./Schüßler, E./Müller-Seitz, G. (2016): Managing Interorganizational Relations – Debates and Cases. Palgrave-Macmillan. London.
- A.10. Lundin, R./Arvidsson, N./Brady, T./Eksted, E./Midler, C./Sydow, J. (2015): Managing and Working in Project Society – Institutional Challenges of Temporary Organizations. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- A. 09. Mangematin, V./Sapsel, J./Schüßler, E. (2014): Disassembly and reassembly: An introduction to the Special Issue on digital technology and creative industries. In: Technological Forecasting and Social Change 83, 1-9.
- A. 08. Schüßler, E./Grabher, G./Müller-Seitz, G. (2015): Field-configuring events: Arenas for innovation and learning? In: Industry & Innovation 22(3), 165-172.
- A.07. Fichter, M./Sydow, J. (2013) (Eds.): Temporary Organization and Workers' Representation. Special Issue of "Industrielle Beziehungen - The German Journal of Industrial Relations" 20 (2). Hampp. München und Mering.
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B. Journal Articles

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- B.90. Schüßler, E./Grabher, G./Müller-Seitz, G. (2015): Field-configuring events: Arenas for innovation and learning? In: Industry & Innovation 22(3), 165-172.
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- B.43. Fichter, M./Helfen, M./Sydow, J. (2011): Employment Relations in Global Production Networks: Initiating Transfer of Practices via Union Involvement. In: Human Relations 63 (4), 599-624.
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- C. Book Chapters**
- C.28. Sydow, J./Koll, F. (2016): Platforming for Path-breaking? The Case of Regional Electromobility Initiatives. In: Glückler, J./Lazega E./Hammer, I. (Eds.): Knowledge and Networks. Knowledge and Space 11. Berlin. Springer (forthcoming).
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