

## **Sub-theme 07: [SWG] Networks, Goals and Organizational Effectiveness: The Idea of ‘Network Management’**

Convenors:

Julia Brennecke

University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

julia.brennecke@liverpool.ac.uk

Tiziana Casciaro

University of Toronto, Canada

tiziana.casciaro@rotman.utoronto.ca

Olaf N. Rank

University of Freiburg, Germany

olaf.rank@vwl.uni-freiburg.de

### **Call for Papers**

Although organizational network research has moved far from the structural determinism that characterized early statements of the network perspective (Mayhew, 1980), the role of agency in networks – the abilities, skills and motivations of individual social actors to purposefully orchestrate the social structure that surrounds them and take advantage of their network ties – is still understudied (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). While prominent in the popular management literature (e.g., Aalbers & Dolfsma, 2015; Cross & Thomas, 2009), network agency and network management are still peripheral areas of inquiry in organisational network research (for notable exceptions, see Bensaou et al., 2014; Casciaro et al., 2014; Soda et al., 2017; Berthod et al., 2017). When agency is an intrinsic component of a network argument, as it is in structural-hole theory (Burt, 1992), it is often assumed to be operating, but rarely tested directly.

Consequently, we still lack a thorough understanding of how individuals and organisations can purposefully create network ties and network structures to achieve desired outcomes. Similarly, few scholars have attended to how organizational networks as a whole can be actively managed to reach individual and collective goals (Hoffmann, 2007; Provan & Kenis, 2008). In an effort to start filling these gaps, we look for research that investigates organisational actors’ attempts to actively manage networks, their creation, maintenance, and adaptation – both from the perspective of the individual actor and the network as a whole.

Possible topics for submissions include, but are not limited to, the following:

The interplay of formal and informal structure in organizations: how deliberate changes to organizational systems and processes can operate as mechanisms for altering organizational networks

Identification of structural properties of networks that should be purposefully designed to enhance individual and group effectiveness

The role of social tie content for network agency and management

The psychology of motivation as a precursor of network agency

Cultural and institutional mechanisms for network management

The dynamic interplay of structure and agency for goal attainment and performance

The role of network managers in shaping network processes and structures

As its overarching goal, the EGOS Standing Working Group (SWG 07) on “Multi-Level Network Research” aims to encourage micro, macro and multi-level theorizing in organizational network research. The great opportunity presented by multi-level approaches to network theories of organizations has only recently crystallized in organizational discourse (Moliterno & Mahony, 2011; Oh et al., 2006; Payne et al., 2011; Phelps et al., 2012). This gap presents organizational scholars with a still largely untapped opportunity. Theorizing about organizational networks at either the micro or the macro level obscures insights that can be garnered by integrating the two. Significant advances are possible with research that relates micro-level social processes to the emergence – or purposeful creation – of social structure at the macro level. Likewise, macro-structural processes can influence the creation, stability and evolution of interpersonal networks within and between organizations. Therefore, we particularly welcome submissions that take multi-level issues into account when investigating the idea of network management.