Penn Economic & Organizational Sociology Working Paper Abstract Series

Vol. 1 Nos. 5-6
September & November 2001

Published by the Penn Economic Sociology & Organizational Studies Group (PESOS).

For previous issues, please visit our website: http://pesos.wharton.upenn.edu

WE WELCOME YOUR SUBMISSION FOR THE NEXT ISSUE!!!

Our editorial policy appears at the end of the Newsletter.

To add your email address to the distribution list or to stop delivery:
Go to http://pesos.wharton.upenn.edu/papers.htm

Please feel free to forward this Newsletter to colleagues and friends.

CONTENTS

PAPER ABSTRACTS

19th-Century Spanish Lotteries in a Comparative Perspective.

Roberto Garvía
Universidad Carlos III of Madrid, Spain
mailto:garvia@polsoc.uc3m.es

Paper available from: mailto:garvia@polsoc.uc3m.es

Abstract

This paper explains how the two dominant 19th Centuries European lotteries (*lottos* and *Klassenlotterien*) were operated. A special emphasis is given to the Spanish lotteries. It is suggested that the peculiar characteristics of the latter probably made group-playing a more pervasive phenomenon in Spain than in any other European country in the second half of the 19th Century. It is also suggested that the extension and institutionalization of group-playing in Spain made the Spanish treasury to became the most efficient one at monopolizing the risk-taking behavior of its population.

Prototypes and Fuzzy Work Practices: Assigning Causal Credit for Performance

Bruce Kogut
Management Department
The Wharton School
University of Pennsylvania
mailto:kogut@wharton.upenn.edu
John Paul MacDuffie
Management Department
The Wharton School
University of Pennsylvania
mailto:macduffie@wharton.upenn.edu
Charles Ragin
Department of Sociology
Northwestern University
mailto:cragin@northwestern.edu

Paper available from: mailto:macduffie@wharton.upenn.edu

Abstract

The diffusion of practices poses the problem of credit assignment: identifying the path of causality between interacting practices and their effects. Because of the complex relationship between cause and effect, the adoption of better practices is frequently characterized as fads. We apply Ragin's (2000) fuzzy logic methodology to identify high performance configurations in the 1989 data set of MacDuffie (1995). The results indicate that discrete bundles of practices are associated with higher performance, but that the variety of outcomes points to experimentation and search. Managerial discourse around prototypical practices is, in this light, not simply a reflection of fads, but the groping for better performance when categorization and causality between practice and outcome are fuzzy.

Evolution towards Fit

Nicolaj Siggelkow
Management Department
The Wharton School
University of Pennsylvania
mailto:siggelkow@wharton.upenn.edu

Paper available from: mailto:siggelkow@wharton.upenn.edu

Abstract

This paper proposes four constructs, *thickening*, *patching*, *coasting*, and *trimming* that can be used as building blocks to describe organizations' developmental paths towards configurations and organizations' transitions between configurations. The constructs are linked to the creation and subsequent elaboration of organizations' core elements. We use the four constructs to describe two ideal types of development termed *thin-to-thick* and *patch-by-patch*. Within the context of a longitudinal study of The Vanguard Group we illustrate the constructs and offer an operationalization of the concept of a core element. Future research opportunities based upon the suggested constructs and the ideal types of development are discussed.

Two-Stage Partial Observability Models of Innovation Adoption

Christophe Van den Bulte
The Wharton School
University of Pennsylvania
vdbulte@wharton.upenn.edu
Gary L. Lilien
Smeal College of Business Administration
The Pennsylvania State University
G5l@psu.edu

Paper available from: vdbulte@wharton.upenn.edu

Abstract

Many theories on the adoption and diffusion of innovations posit that adoption is the outcome of a decision process. A two-stage conception of that process involving an awareness stage followed by a stage combining evaluation and adoption seems particularly useful. Several empirical studies indicate that the effect of mass media and change agents is relatively concentrated in creating awareness, while the effect of personal influence from earlier adopters (i.e., social contagion) is more concentrated in bringing about a positive evaluation and hence adoption. A frustrating problem, however, is that most data record only the final outcome of the process, i.e. the time of adoption. We bridge this gap in richness between theory and data by developing new event history models, which we call partial observability models of innovation adoption. An application to the classic *Medical Innovation* data illustrates that these finer-grained models can not only provide better descriptive fit but, more importantly, can also detect weak social contagion patterns that traditional event history models cannot detect in the presence of strong mass media effects.

Market Knowledge, Social Capital and Absorptive Capacity:
An Analysis of Knowledge Spillovers within Marketing Departments

Christophe Van den Bulte
The Wharton School
University of Pennsylvania
vdbulte@wharton.upenn.edu
Annouk Lievens
Antwerp University – UFSIA, Belgium
annouk.lievens@ua.ac.be
Rudy K. Moenaert
Tias Business School
Tilburg University, The Netherlands
r.k.moenaert@kub.nl

Paper available from: vdbulte@wharton.upenn.edu

Abstract

This paper investigates how marketing professionals' intra-departmental social network is associated with their knowledge about customers, competitors, and technology. There are three findings. First, we find no consistent effects for ego-network density or central brokerage position, the two network characteristics that have dominated social capital research. Second, however, we find stronger effects for social network exposure, i.e. access, to others' knowledge, a rather under-researched facet of social capital which we model using network autoregression. These two findings support recent conjectures that

brokerage positions and trust need not always lead to superior outcomes and that, in some contexts, social capital is better conceived as access to others' resources. Our third finding is that individuals' extant knowledge has a positive effect on learning from peers in the technology domain, but a negative effect in the customer and competitor domains. This suggests that the professionals studied were realizing positive returns on their own intellectual capital for learning outside their primary task environment, but negative returns for learning within their primary task environment.

EDITORIAL POLICY

A. Titles & Abstracts of working papers by social scientists actively engaged in research will be considered for inclusion in the Newsletter, provided they meet these criteria:

1. Papers must be scientific in nature.
2. Papers must not use inappropriate or discriminatory language.
3. Papers must address a topic related to economic sociology, work, occupations, professions, or organizations.
4. Papers must be at least 15 double-spaced pages long.
5. Papers must not have been yet published, although they may have been accepted for publication at a future date.

B. The editors reserve the right not to include papers that fail to meet any of the above criteria.

C. The papers accepted for inclusion in the Working Paper Series are not refereed. Rather, the role of the editors is to make sure that the criteria under point A above are met.

D. Full-length papers should be submitted in Windows Microsoft Word format to: guillen@wharton.upenn.edu. Abstract submissions without the full-length paper will be returned to authors. Submissions in formats other than Windows Microsoft Word will be returned to authors.

E. Authors of papers accepted for inclusion in the Newsletter are requested to provide:

1. Their institutional affiliation (if any), and an email contact address.
2. An abstract of the paper not exceeding 250 words, in Windows Microsoft Word format.
3. A means for people to obtain the full-length paper. These may include: a website or an email address. Non-electronic media of paper distribution will not be accepted.

F. Authors must respond to all requests for papers promptly. Failure to make the full-length paper available will result in exclusion of the paper from the Working Paper Series.