INTRA- AND INTER- ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIAL NETWORKS: FEATURES, DYNAMICS AND CONSEQUENCES

When: February 13, 2014, 18.45 – 21.30

Instructor: Prof. dr. Tal Simons

Topic: Intra- and Inter- Organizational Social Networks: Features, Dynamics and Consequences.

Aim: To gain knowledge about the basic concepts and characteristics of interpersonal networks and how this can be used to understand the networks’ implications for some internal organizational dynamics; To gain knowledge about inter-organizational networks, how they’re formed, and function; To acquire skills of critically reading scientific articles and discussing the research methods that are relevant to social network analysis (SNA).

Content: In this block students are exposed to an exciting area of organization theory research that has shown to have far-reaching implications for internal organizational phenomenon as well as to phenomenon that are related to interorganizational relations. The session will be divided such that during the first half we will discuss some basic concepts and characteristics of interpersonal networks and how this can be used to understand the networks’ implications for some internal organizational dynamics. The second part will be devoted to discussing some of what we now know about inter-organizational networks, how they’re formed, and function and in particular what are some of important outcomes of networks that have been observed, ultimately relating to organizations’ performance and survival. Examples of phenomenon to be discussed are the distribution of power and the flow and effectiveness of communications; implications for organizations and their performance in such areas as entrepreneurship, innovation and learning; as well as implications for the organizational ‘landscape’ through networks of organizations that produce various organization level and network level outcomes such as scientific collaborations, fine grained information sharing, and joint problem solving. Like any other social and organizational phenomenon, intra- and inter-organizational networks can also result in negative consequences (e.g., cliques) and we will address some of those as well.
Preparation:

Students are expected to read a number of papers by leading network scholars who have investigated both characteristics of networks as well as how those affect various outcomes of interest. Some questions to guide the reading and help students in teasing out the main points of the papers are provided and students are required to **hand in their answers at the beginning of the session**.

Mandatory readings:


A. Please read the papers above before the session and for each of the papers address briefly in writing questions 1-4, question 5 pertains to all the papers put together:

1. At what level does the network in this paper operate (individual, group, intra/inter-organizational, etc.)? support your answer by some specific illustrations from the paper.

2. What is the nature of the network tie(s) that the paper focuses on?

3. What is/are the network ties’ outcome(s) that the paper theorizes about? Do the empirical tests substantiate the theoretical arguments? Provide examples from the papers to support your answer.

4. Give your opinion of the paper, was it convincing? To what extent did you find the theory convincing? To what extent did you find the findings convincing? What is your opinion of the interpretations of the findings and the authors’ conclusions?

5. Based on all the papers together: what do you think is social network theory about?

Please limit your answers to the questions above to no more than four (4) double spaced pages, font size 12. **Bring your answers to the class and hand them in, please indicate your full name and ANR on the document.**
B. Prepare a presentation that includes one slide per paper. In it address the following:

1. What is your main ‘take-away’ from the paper?

2. One question that reading the paper triggered for you and that could in your view provide a good basis for discussion and/or follow-up study.

Some students will be asked to present (a part or all of) the above during the session, so please have the files easily accessible. **Send the PP presentation by noon (12) of 13 February 2014 to the instructor: t.simons@tilburguniversity.edu**

**Note that fulfillment of both preparation tasks (A and B) is required in order for the student to receive credit for this module.**

**Suggested additional readings:**


(some) Books:
