

Dissertations

Corey, Elizabeth Leslie. 1995. Social Network Influences on Gay Men's Attitudes Toward Gay Rights, Discrimination, and Sexuality. University of California, Los Angeles.

Applying Laumann's (1973) model of the relationship between network structure and attitudes, this study explores how network characteristics (homogeneity and density) influence attitudes about gay rights and sexual

behavior. In addition, this study looks at norms as they increase understanding of attitudes and community activities as they relate to attitudes. Data from the UCLA Natural History of Psychological AIDS (NHAPS) questionnaire study is used to demonstrate that homogeneity of gay sexual orientation within one's network is found to be significantly correlated with political attitudes, while density is correlated with partnership rights. With regard to sexual attitudes, it appears that density bears a significant relationship with both network norms and the individual's attitude about multiple partners. In regression analyses, the interaction between increasing density and network norms favorable to multiple partners significantly predicted a non-judgemental stance about multiple partners within the gay community. In networks supportive of gay lifestyles, including multiple partners, the denser the network the greater the likelihood that the individual was likely to feel that multiple partners was not destructive to the gay community. Hierarchical regression analyses

found that norms and HIV status predicted the individual's rating of the importance of multiple partners to self. In general, this study found support for the Laumann model, which predicts a relationship between structural characteristics and certain attitudes, namely

attitudes of a political nature. It also supports the addition of network norms to increase understanding of such attitudes. A possible limitation of the Laumann model and further research is suggested by the lack of findings for the relationships between structures and attitudes about the self.

Fudge, Heather Elizabeth Rycroft. 1995. Social Networks of Women Caregivers of Cognitively Impaired Older Persons. University of Alberta.

Previous research on social networks has addressed issues such as network size, yet limited attention has been given to caregivers' perceptions of the characteristics of their networks. This was a descriptive study of women caregivers' perceptions of their social networks and the support received. The study involved secondary analysis of interview data and results of the Arizona Social Support Interview Schedule of twenty caregivers, obtained in an earlier study. The data was analyzed using a code-recode process and a typology of networks was developed from the data. Those caregivers with diverse networks, composed of a large and varied membership, were generally satisfied with the support that they received. Caregivers with kin-dominated networks, composed mainly of family, were not satisfied with the support that they received and experienced considerable conflict. This information may prove useful to practitioners in a variety of health care settings and in the design of programs aimed to promote support while caregiving.

Harkola, Julia. 1995. Diffusion of Construction Technology in a Japanese Firm. Stanford University.

Despite potential benefits, many new con-

struction technologies are very slowly or never implemented. This research examines the ten-year diffusion of one tunneling process technology in a large Japanese construction company. The research methodology is based on social science diffusion studies; social network analysis was used to "map" technical advice exchange among 209 tunneling specialists. Social network measures describing interactions between people in this group served as independent variables to assess the influence of prominent individuals ("opinion leaders") and compare two network-based diffusion models (cohesion and structural equivalence). In the early diffusion phase, decision-maker contact with "formal" opinion leaders (having authority for new technology) was more strongly associated with utilization than contact with "informal" opinion leaders (central site people). Later, this was reversed when utilization had become normative. Informal opinion leaders first collected information, then served as information sources, facilitated by their social network position. This implies that central people can serve as "organizational memory" to store and disseminate technical information. Block modeling was used to partition the group into four structurally equivalent subgroups ("blocks") based on similarity of block members' ties to others. The results revealed that the social structure was split before introduction of the subject technology--members of the two largest blocks tended to exchange advice among themselves. This was reflected in divergent utilization of the subject technology: block one projects were "non-users" and block two projects were "users." Tests of cohesion operationalized as degree (number of contacts between project decision-makers and prior users) revealed that its influence was strongest in the early diffusion phase. Cohesion as closeness centrality was most influential in the middle phase; later, structural equivalence was the main influence. Group norms developed through cohesion were later reflected in

normative decision-making associated with structural equivalence. This highlights the importance of considering social structure and the phase-related nature of the diffusion process in programs for technology transfer. Cohesive relations are especially important in the beginning while group norms are being developed. Technology transfer efforts should work through opinion leaders and promote interaction between users and potential users.

Lee, Kyungmook. 1995. Social Networks, Firm Behavior, and Industry Evolution: a Study of Professional Service Firms (Accounting Industry). University of Pennsylvania

This dissertation examines the causes of industry evolution: adoption of innovation, mergers and acquisitions, and organizational dissolution. The research setting is the professional service firms, especially the Dutch accounting industry. Data on CPAs' demographic characteristics and their organizational affiliation were collected from CPA directories. The main body of this thesis consists of three empirical studies based on the data. To understand the research setting, I first survey the peculiarities of professional service firms and a partner-associate structure (PA structure). The first empirical study gives attention to the antecedents of the adoption of the PA structure. I distinguish population level factors from firm level ones, and at each level examine the role of "technical efficiency" and "legitimacy" conditions in accounting for adoption. Empirical analysis shows that adoption propensity is positively associated with market signaling, the level of PA diffusion, complementary needs, absorptive capacity, and social networks. The results also suggest that the market signaling, a technical efficiency factor, has a stronger influence during early diffusion periods, while the level of PA diffusion, an institutional factor, has stronger effect during later periods. The second study examines the events that firms founded by mergers and acquisitions (M&As)

experienced. Investigation of the history of large Dutch accounting firms shows that most of them were created by M&As. It indicates that M&As have been a route to the emergence of large accounting firms. The multinomial logit analysis shows that firms founded by an M&A of complementary and compatible firms performed better than others. The results indicate that firms that were unable to handle internal variations brought about by previous M&As experienced high dissolution rates. Firms that were successful in dealing with those variations were more likely to utilize M&A specific knowledge by engaging in additional M&As. The third study explores the empirical validity of density dependence hypothesis by controlling for fine-grained organizational factors in explaining organizational dissolution rates. Empirical analysis shows that the density has a strong U-shaped relationship with organizational dissolution even when fine-grained organizational level variables are controlled. The analysis provides a strong support for the density dependence hypothesis. In conclusion, I summarize the findings of the three empirical studies and discuss what we learn from the studies.

Stuart, Toby Evan. 1995. Technological Positions, Strategic Alliances, and the Rate of Innovation in the Worldwide Semiconductor Industry. Stanford University.

This dissertation investigates the effects of firms' technological positions in shaping the formation of inter-firm strategic alliances, the rate of innovation, and the intensity of firms' innovative efforts. The thesis begins by developing a social networks-based conception of a firm's technological position, and concludes with empirical chapters that: (1) trace the evolution of firms' technological positions; (2) test for a relationship between firms' technological positions and the pattern of inter-firm, technology alliances; and (3) estimate the effects of different attributes of

firms' technological position on their rates of innovation. The thesis draws from a data set that describes the 150 largest semiconductor firms from 1976 to 1993. In addition to basic descriptors such as sales, age, and nationality, the data set contains information on 30,000 semiconductor patents awarded to the sample members, and it includes detailed information on the formation of approximately 4000 strategic alliances among semiconductor firms. The thesis hypothesizes that technological generalist and specialist firms engage in alliances for different strategic motives. Specialist firms are argued to use alliances to avoid duplicative R&D, to coordinate the competition in their niches, and to acquire technological inputs that are relevant to their niches. Generalist firms are argued to use alliances to acquire new technologies and skills that they did not previously possess and which are useful outside of their areas of previous concentrations. These hypotheses are supported in a statistical analysis of the formation of alliances in all potential pairs of semiconductor firms in each year of the data. The principal argument of the rate of innovation study is that the technological crowding of a firm's position is a determinant of both its rate of innovation and its R&D intensity. The thesis posits that the competitive consequence of technological crowding is an increase in rates of innovation. However, at extreme levels, the positive effect of technological crowding begins to taper, because firms' technological positions become so crowded that the potential for new inventions is saturated. A statistical analysis of firms' annual rate of patenting supports these and related hypotheses.

Sun, Shu-ling. 1995. The Development of Social Networks among Chinese Children in Taiwan. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The aim of this longitudinal study was to clarify the stability, continuity, and develop-

ment of social networks among Chinese children. A sample of 161 children in Taiwan was investigated over a two-year period. A major concern of this thesis was to identify the stability/ fluidity of friendships and peer groups and to determine whether there is continuity in the behavioral characteristics of friends and peer groups with whom a child associates across time. Loyalty and friendship fidelity have special meaning in Chinese history and literature. This investigation was the first to study the formation and change of peer social networks among Chinese children over an extended interval of time. The results indicated that friendships and peer groups showed considerable fluidity in membership over a two-year period. Social fluidity occurred over the two years when children were assigned to different school classrooms. Although there was considerable change in social membership, children's friendships and peer groups were reorganized in ways that maintained behavioral continuity. Specifically, the average scores in academic achievement and aggression of a child's friends and peer groups in the 4th grade were reliably correlated with those of the child's friends and groups in the 6th grade. The formation of friendships and peer groups and the assignment of individual network status partly reflected children's demographic and behavioral characteristics. Friendships and peer group were formed within the classroom and among the peers of the same gender. The correlates of network status remained constant over a two-year period. Moreover, individual status remained relatively stable despite the high fluidity of social relations across contexts. Friendships and peer groups were structurally correlated within the broader social networks. Friendships — reciprocated friendships in particular — were highly embedded in peer groups. Finally, Chinese children were highly similar to their American counterparts in basic social network processes. While the processes were similar, there were some differences in content. In particular, academic performance played a

more dominant role in social affiliation and social status among Chinese children than among American children.

Williams, Holly. 1995. Social Support, Social Networks and Coping of Parents of Children with Cancer: Comparing White and African-American Parents. University of Florida.

Having a child diagnosed with cancer is an overwhelming experience for parents. The goal of this research was to understand why some parents do better with this situation than do others. Research questions included the following: Who provides support to the parents? What is provided? What do parents do to cope? In addition, this research compared white parents to African American parents in an effort to explicate racial and cultural differences in experiencing childhood cancer. Two hundred two parents (150 white and 52 African American) of children with cancer were interviewed in a hospital or clinic setting in three southeastern US cities. In addition, several standardized psychological instruments were used to measure anxiety, depression, somatization, and general level of psychological symptomatology. Qualitative and quantitative analyses were performed on the data. This was a story of courage and of incredible human caring for others in distress. Overall, there were few significant differences by race, gender, or site. These parents had multiple sources of support. White parents had larger social networks, but African Americans perceived receiving more support from their network alters. Networks were small, dense, kin-centered social networks of long duration, with members living near to one another. Emic definitions of support differed by race, with whites defining support in emotional terms and African Americans defining it more broadly, both in terms of emotional and instrumental actions. Social network properties and characteristics did not significantly correlate with or predict the psychological outcomes. Most parents used a combination of problem-focused and emotion-

focused coping behaviors to deal with stressful situations. Only a small percentage of parents showed poor psychological functioning. However, use of emotion-focused coping behaviors, particularly escape-avoidance behaviors, best predicted poorer psychological outcomes. Few of the variables commonly thought to influence positive outcomes (such as social support, income) predicted the psychological variables. The

experience of having a child with cancer was so encompassing that nothing else mattered, not the amount of support, or who provided it, or how much.