Theme Group Leader: Professor Alice Lam

The Knowledge and Organisational Learning (KOL) group brings together staff and doctoral students at the School of Management who share a common interest in understanding how organisations learn, create and utilize knowledge, and respond to the challenges of new technology and globalisation. Our research adopts a cross-disciplinary approach, drawing on the expertise of colleagues from organisation studies and human resource management, technology and information management, innovation studies, and strategic management and international business. The group provides an intellectual space in which staff, students and visiting researchers can work together in a supportive environment. It acts as a link between various collaborative projects and the focus for external engagement with a wide range of academic and non-academic stakeholders.

The KOL Group organized six research events this year, including four Research Seminars given by eminent international/external speakers (Professor Storz Cornelia, Goethe University Frankfurt; Professor John Hagedoorn, UNU/MERIT/Royal Holloway; Dr. Karin King, London School of Economics; and Professor Israr Qureshi, Australian National University/DOS Visiting Professor). We also held a Research Grant/External Engagement meeting in October and a Knowledge Frontier Roundtable discussion in November where KOL colleagues discussed their leading edge research ideas and project proposals in the areas of ‘Creativity, Identity and Well-Being’. We have formed small sub-groups to take these ideas forward in developing collaborative projects. In June, the group held a final Research Workshop on ‘Talent Management’ (led by Dr Karin King, LSE), attended by 15 staff members/doctoral students and several external associate members.

KOL members continue to publish their work in top-ranked journals (ABS 4) across a range of disciplines. Some notable publications in 2018-19 include: Neil Conway’s work on ‘Sensemaking and the emergence of calling’ in Journal of Vocational Behavior(2019), ABS 4); John Hagedoorn’s study on ‘Contractual governance and the choice of dispute resolution-mechanisms’ in Research Policy 2018); Alice Lam’s work on Creative artists’ boundary-crossing careers’ in a special issue on Creativity in Arts and Science in Environment and Planning A (2018); and on ‘Hybridity and knowledge boundaries’ in Human Relations (2019); Knut Lange published his research on ‘multinationals’ knowledge-augmenting subsidiaries’ in British Journal of Management (2018); Sukanya

Several KOL members have been successful in obtaining external research grants. These include: Huaichuan Rui’s project with colleagues at Sussex University on ‘Trust, Global Traders, and Commodities in a Chinese International city’ is funded by the ERC (2016-2020); and Chloe Preece is the co-investigator of a BA/Leverhulme funded project on ‘Possessing and Being Possessed: Managing Agency in the Liminal Self’ (2018-2020). Preece is also the named researcher on a £6.8 million AHRC Creative Clusters grant (2018-2022) across the College, led by Prof. James Bennett in Media Arts.

The Group also uses seedcorn funding to stimulate novel projects and encourage external engagement activities. Neil Conway’s project on ‘the calling of Church of England clergy’ has led to a clergy practitioner impact case study for REF 2020. Amany Elbanna organized a successful KOL-sponsored practitioner engagement workshop, entitled ‘Social Media for Emergency Management: Innovation at difficult time’, which was attended by 20 practitioners including representatives from BT and Red Cross. Other novel projects facilitated by KOL include: Philip Wu’s project on ‘Knowledge sharing in online diabetes communities’ has led to a grant bid submitted to the ESRC (August 2018); Sukanya Sengupta’s developing project on ‘Creative performance in the Indian film industry’ and Amany Elbanna’s study on ‘Uber taxi drivers’ are attracting wide interest; Alice Lam and Huaichuan Rui’s pilot study on ‘Global Human Mobility and Knowledge Transfer: Highly Skilled Return Migrants As New Developers’ was presented at the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics in New York (June 2019).

Btissam Aboubichr, a PhD member, received funds to support her research on ‘Social learning and performance management’, which led to a 3-month Research Scholarship Award in the Faculty of Psychology, University of Calgary (2018). She successfully defended her PhD in April 2019.

**Theme Group Members** (32 academic staff and 16 PhD students): *active/core members


Research Seminars/Workshops

Research seminars given by external speakers

Thursday 18 October 2018
Speaker: Professor John Hagedoorn, Royal Holloway/UNU-MERIT
‘Alliance design and inter-firm knowledge transfer’

Abstract
In this paper, we focus on the history of prior R&D alliances between two partner irms as an important source of variation in collaboration challenges. Our paper sets out to test two key hypotheses. The first hypothesis considers the positive effect that an increase of partner-specific alliance experience has on knowledge transfer in relationships governed by contractual arrangements relative to equity-based arrangements. The second hypothesis refers to the effect of an increase in partner-specific alliance experience that is expected to increase knowledge transfer in alliances with a broad sectoral scope relative to those with a narrow sectoral scope. In order to test these hypotheses, we use a longitudinal data set containing information on the interfirm R&D relationships maintained by a sample of U.S. firms operating in the information technology industry between 1980 and 1999. Our sample consists of 1,375 relationship-year observations involving 386 firm-partner relationships between 1980 and 1999. Our hypotheses are supported through empirical analyses based on fixed-effects models with linear estimates and fractional logit of estimates of the determinants of interfirm knowledge transfer, as well as a series of additional tests to examine the robustness of our main findings.
Wednesday 13 March 2019
Speaker: Prof. Dr. Cornelia Storz, Goethe University, Frankfurt
Title: ‘Comparative entrepreneurship in mobile games (US and Japan): Organizational identity and local resources’

Abstract
Why do entrepreneurial digital firms in different countries differ in their organisation despite operating in a global industry with global products? A firm’s organisational identity guides and restricts action and shapes its routines and capabilities. Research on strategic management has started to illuminate the complex relation between organisational identity and technology. In particular, attention has been paid to the difficulties for firms to pursue new technological opportunities when this requires a change in organisational identity (Tripsas, 2009). Less attention, however, has been paid to how organisational identity is forged in new firms in new industries triggered by technological change. In this case, firms face many challenges “as both entrepreneurs and crucial stakeholders may not fully understand the nature of the new ventures, and their conformity to established institutional rules may still be in question” (Aldrich and Fiol, 1994).
While new firms in new industries, on the one hand, do not face “inertia” from their organizational identity as experienced by incumbents in existing industries facing a technological shock, on the other, they face a lack of an established industry identity. These firms do not have established guidelines for the development of their products, capabilities, or for how they should behave or perform.

We extend the understanding of the relation between organisational identity, technology and institutions by exploring the role of the systems of production and innovation in shaping the organisational identities of new firms in new industries. We study entrepreneurial firms in a booming digital industry, the online games industry, in two countries, the USA and Japan. We propose that new firms in new industries triggered by technological change develop an organisational identity shaped by three factors: first, their unique entrepreneurial resources, second, the emergent sectoral innovation systems, and, third, the national systems of production and innovation, which filters the influences of the other factors. Our findings show the emergence of two clearly defined claims to organisational identity, which we call “digital engineer” and “digital creative”, which are related to different decisions on product innovation, especially the design and conceptualisation of new games. Organisational identity shapes the organisational actions of these firms, that is, firm boundary decisions, capability formation, and corporate development.
Wednesday 5 June 2019
Speaker: Dr. Karin A. King, London School of Economics and Political Science
‘Being Talent: Would That it Were so Simple. A Qualitative Inductive Exploration of the Employee Experience of Talent Status’

Abstract
Exploring the experience of employees recognised as “top talent” by their organisations, this inductive qualitative study investigated the perspectives of employees who have experienced exclusive talent management by their organisations. That is, the relative identification of employees as possessing a form of “talent” or “potential” relative to their peers. Semi-structured interviews were employed to allow a rich immersion into the experience of “being talent”, to consider talent status and its related outcomes for the employee and organisation relationship and to contribute a deeper understanding than currently exists in the literature. Six main findings are presented, drawing on emergent themes from inductive analysis. Implications for literature and management practice are discussed. A future research agenda and propositions are presented.

Wednesday 5 June 2019 (Joint DOS/KOL seminar)
Speaker: Prof Israr Qureshi, Distinguished Academic Visitor, ANU.
‘The Transformative Power of Knowledge Sharing in Settings of Poverty and Social Inequality’

Abstract:
Knowledge sharing is central to reducing inequality and alleviating poverty. However, communities in settings of extreme poverty are often bounded by distinct perspectives and understandings that hinder knowledge sharing. Furthermore, social fault lines may create internal boundaries that impede interaction, further complicating knowledge sharing. Despite these challenges, some knowledge sharing efforts are successful. The purpose of this study is to better understand how knowledge sharing overcome boundaries in settings of extreme inequality and poverty. Using qualitative data from rural India, we find that boundary work performed by boundary spanners overcomes external and internal boundaries by creating space for action, observation, and reflection in the recipient community. We seek to contribute to the literature by more fully exploring the transformative power of knowledge sharing within contexts of extreme poverty, and by explaining the process by which it occurs.
Other KOL workshops

KOL Group Meeting – Research Collaboration, Impact and External Engagement, 25 October 2018

At this group meeting, KOL members presented updates on their current research and discussed project ideas in the areas of ‘identity, creativity and well-being’. We also discussed our impact and external engagement activities with Neil Conway (Director of Research Impact) and Rob Fitzgerald (Director of External Engagement).

Knowledge Frontiers Research Roundtable, 28 November 2018

In this workshop, five members of KOL gave presentations on the leading edge ideas in their current research and project proposals. At the end of the workshop, we discussed emerging common themes and funding opportunities.

Neil Conway; ‘Motivation and calling’
Alice Lam: ‘Career mobility and creativity’
Maria Simosi: ‘Careers and professional identity’
JR Cordoba Pachon: ‘Creativity and well-being’
Chloe Preece: ‘Liminality and creativity’
Philip Wu “Online communities: Knowledge sharing and creation’

Outcomes of past KOL-funded projects

The KOL group has been successful in using seedcorn funding to encourage and support cross-disciplinary research and public/practitioner engagement activities. Some recent examples include:

- **Neil Conway**’s KOL-funded project (2014-15) on ‘the calling of Church of England clergy’ has led to a clergy practitioner impact case study titled: ‘A job design intervention to support Church of England clergy in pursuing their calling and improving quality of life’, and his inclusion in a grant application being prepared by Olivia Swift about the calling and wellbeing of seafarers, involving other investigators from the School of Law.

- **Philip Wu** (with Roberti Bderndai) received KOL funding for a project on “The Role of Online Health Communities in Patient-centred Care” (2016-2017). This work was featured in Diabetes Times (https://diabetes-times.co.uk/diabetes-forum-empowers-wellbeing-among-users/) and on the Diabetes.co.uk website
External grant application linked to this KOL project:

Philip Wu (CoI) – “Epistemologies and the Empowering Role of Knowledge in Online Health Communities: A Study on Person-centred Diabetes Care”. Submitted on 31 August 2018 to ESRC. Amount: £35K. (pending)

- **Philip Wu and Yingqin Zheng** received KOL funding for a pilot project on ‘Identity, Agency, and Algorithmic Control in Gig Economy: A Case Study of Chinese Food-Delivery Workers’ (2017-18)

External grant application linked to this KOL project:

- **Knut Lange** received KOL funding support for a pilot project on: ‘How do graduate entrepreneurs perceive the effectiveness of entrepreneurship at their universities?’ (2017-18)

External grant application linked to this KOL project:
ESRC bid entitled "How do graduates perceive the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in British universities?" to be submitted in collaboration with The Open University and the University of Westminster.

Other related output:

- **Amany Elbanna** received KOL funding for a pilot project (2016-17): “Occupational identity in the Gig economy”

External grant application linked to this KOL project:
Amany Elbanna: Digital Backpack: Digital platforms for positive identity building for the transient…’. Submitted to Newcastle University, 30 April 2019, Amount: 30K (unsuccessful)

Media Publication linked to this work:

- **Sukanya Sengupta** received KOL funding for a project on ‘*Creative performance in the Indian film industry*’ (2016). Her conversation with Suman Ghosh, film director, was featured in the *Telegraph* (India), September 14, 2018. https://www.telegraphindia.com/entertainment/inside-his-mind-202069
Research publications, grant applications and external engagement activities of core KOL members:

Conway, Neil

Publications


Research grant applications/awards:

- 2016- 2020. £46,000 the Church of England Diocese of Sheffield, split equally between Royal Holloway and King’s College London. ‘Evaluation of the Mission Partnership Development Worker Project’

Research impact/external engagement

- SoM impact case study titled: A job design intervention to support Church of England clergy in pursuing their calling and improving quality of life

Cordoba Pachon, JR

Publications


Research impact/external engagement

• Interviewed by the BBC Surrey and Sussex Radio Breakfast Programme on the 10th of August 2018 as a recycling expert, offering views on how recycling can be seen as a systems thinking problem.

Elbanna, Amany

Publications


Research impact/external engagement


• Amany Elbanna has collaborated with a core team from the UK business sector to establish the UK Chapter of the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP-UK Chapter) in May 2018. The UK Chapter was successfully launched in May 2018 with an event attended by over 70 participants from different UK business organisations.

• In June 2018, Amany became a founding Board Director in the role of Director of Professional Development. In this capacity, Amany organises a series of monthly webinars, roundtables, networking meetings and an annual conference for the UK business community.

Hagedoorn, John
Publications

- The open innovation research landscape: established perspectives and emerging themes across different levels of analysis, in *Industry & Innovation*, with M. Bogers, A-K. Zobel and twenty other co-authors, 2017, 24, pp. 8-40


- Contractual governance and the choice of dispute resolution mechanisms: evidence on technology licensing, in *Research Policy*, with V. Duplat and R. Coeurderoy, 2018, 47, 1096-1110 (ABS 4*)

- Partner type diversity in alliance portfolios: multiple dimensions, boundary conditions and firm innovation performance, in *Journal of Management Studies*, with B. Lokshin and A-K. Zobel, 2018, 55, 809-836 (ABS 4)


- Walter Zegveld: engineer and practitioner, in Leijten, J. (ed.), 2018, What would Walter say? 50 years of innovation policy, The Hague, Six Countries Programme, pp. 65-72 (The Six Countries Programme (6CP) is an international network of public policy-makers, business leaders, academics, and other experts working in the field of innovation and meeting periodically to discuss the latest developments in innovation research, policy and practice.)

Other activities

- Appointed to Honorary Member Réseau de Recherche sur l'Innovation (France), Nimes, June 2018

- Keynote speaker at Congrès RRI – ‘Les nouveaux modes d’organisation des processus d’innovation’ Iut de Nîmes and Université de Montpellier, June 4-5 2018

**Rui, Huaichuan**
Publications


Research grant applications/awards:


Lam, Alice

Publications


Conference papers:


of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE), New York, June 2019.

Research impact/external engagement


- Expert advisory session with Cannon Europe Senior Consultant on ‘Tacit knowledge and new technology’, and discussion of potential collaboration with the KOL group (July 2018).


- Research grant reviewer (2018) for Riksbankens Jubileumsfond - Sweden’s leading grant-making foundation in the humanities and social sciences

Lange, Knut

Publications


Research grant applications/awards

- ESRC bid entitled "How do graduates perceive the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in British universities?" (in collaboration with The
Open University and the University of Westminster; received KOL funding support). To be submitted in late September or early October 2018.

Research impact/external engagement


Lee, Robert

Publications


Under second review:

- Lee, R., Tuselmann, H. and Freund, D. 'Effects of home-host social capital and human capital on SMEs deeper internationalisation', Journal of Business Research (ABS 3)

Rui, Huaichuan

Publications


- Rui, Huaichuan; Cuervo-Cazurra, Alvaro ; Un, Annique. (2016) Learning-by-doing in emerging market multinationals : Integration, trial and error, repetition,

**Research grant applications/awards:**

Co-investigator, ‘Trust, Global Traders, and Commodities in a Chinese International city’ ERC grant (2016-2020)

**Sengupta, Sukanya**

**Publications**


**Conference papers:**


**Research impact/external engagement**


**Preece, Chloe**

**Publications**


**Research grant applications/awards**
• Co-investigator of a BA/Leverhulme funded project on ‘Possessing and Being Possessed: Managing Agency in the Liminal Self’ (2018-2020).
• Named researcher on a £6.8 million AHRC Creative Clusters grant (2018-2022) across the College, led by Prof. James Bennett in Media Arts.

Research impact/external engagement

• Chair of the Arts, Heritage, Non-Profit and Social Marketing Special Interest Group of the Academy of Marketing

Tan, Hui

Publications


Wainwright, Tom

Publications


Under final review:

• Huber, F. Wainwright, T., and Rentocchini, F. (Minor revisions) Open Data for Open Innovation: Managing Absorptive Capacity in SMEs. R&D Management (ABS 3)
Research impact/external engagement

- Ran a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), ‘Open Data for Business’, co-branded with the globally pioneering Open Data Institute, based on his own research with over 4,000 participants from over 130 countries, ranging from high school students to experienced tech entrepreneurs.

- Designed and ran a training course for public and private sector practitioners at the Open Data Institute: ‘Open Data for Business

Wu, Philip

Publications


Research grant applications/awards


Research impact/external engagement

- Roberta Barnardi and Philip Wu’s research work was featured in Diabetes Times (https://diabetestimes.co.uk/diabetes-forum-empowers-wellbeing-among-users/) and on the Diabetes.co.uk website (https://www.diabetes.co.uk/in-depth/diabetes-forum-shown-empower-wellbeing-university-london-study/).

Zheng, Yingqin

Publications
