Master thesis themes

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Notes

• Often, more information per theme can be found on Brightspace, including references to literature and contact details.

• Most supervisors will handle 4-8 theses.

• It could be that supervisors (themes) will be added, I will keep you informed on this

• Use the ‘preference form’ from the Master thesis handbook; deadline Nov. 22; 17:00 hours
Coming up with a research topic

• Top down (theme) and bottom up (idea)!

• Active involvement required!!

• Talk to the people that will be supervising
Luc van de Sande MSc.

Dr. Nora Lohmeyer

Dr. Stefan Schembera

Dr. Raphael Smals

Dr. Arjen Verhoeff

Dr. Waldemar Kremser

Drs. Liesbeth Gulpers

Prof. dr. Patrick Vermeulen

Prof. dr. Kristina Lauche

Dr. Ir. Hans Lekkerkerk

Dr. Dirk Vriens

Dr. Matthijs Moorkamp

Dr. Berber Pas
• However, there is a lack of clarity when it comes to the conditions under which such cross-sectoral partnerships (or multi-stakeholder initiatives) evolve and are most effective.

• We can study such issues by looking at a recent and prominent example: the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textiles (AGT). The AGT is a coalition of businesses, NGOs, trade unions, industry associations, and state actors that have agreed to collectively address sustainability challenges in global garment supply chains.
Emergence of Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives as a Form of Collaborative Governance II

- Theses might take different aspects of the emergence of the AGT into account, such as:
  - different actors’ interests and motivations (e.g. firms, NGOs, …)
  - collaboration-enabling factors, such as trust or inter-organisational relationships
  - processes of interest negotiation and conflict resolution between stakeholder groups
  - …

More info on the AGT: https://www.imvoconvenanten.nl/en/garments-textile
Dr. Stefan Schembera  
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**Theme 1: Responsible Organizing**  
– The Role of Firm Size

Large internationally operating companies face rising and heterogeneous societal expectations with regard to their responsibility in a global economy. While small and medium-sized enterprises also increasingly operate internationally, they remain largely protected from such societal pressures.

Guiding questions:
- What are the actual differences between SMEs and MNCs in organizing corporate responsibility?
- Why are there differences and how did they develop over time?
- Can we identify whether one approach of responsible organizing is ‘inferior’ to the other?
Theme 2: Responsible Organizing
– The Role of Collaboration and Global Governance

In the absence of a global governance structure in today’s global economy, companies increasingly collaborate with each other, and with non-corporate actors, in tackling (un)ethical issues. Numerous initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact emerged to assist in this process.

Guiding questions:
• How and why do corporations collaborate with other corporate and non-corporate actors in tackling ethical issues (e.g., business partner training and monitoring, stakeholder dialogues, …)?
• How and why do companies implement responsibility initiatives like the UN Global Compact?
  - How did implementation develop over time, and why?
A new class of established firms has set out a strategy of disruptive renewal of their existing business model. These established firms are faced with an innovator’s dilemma: rely on current organizational design(s) or adopt a disruptive business model – and congruent organizational design.

The theme offers a variety of questions on to be studied on the why, what and how of organizational design.
Puzzle: New Organizational Forms

Agile, SCRUM, self-organized teams, Holacracy, etc. have become increasingly popular ways of doing Organization Design. However, there are very few critical, scientific studies that scrutinize the involved design practices.

- use of IT
- scaling-up
- typical problems
- resistance to change
- etc.
1. Meaningful work
What makes a job ‘meaningful’? Main premises: (1) the organizational infrastructure may support or frustrate the (experienced) meaningfulness of a job and (2) people can purposely redesign their work to increase meaningfulness.

Examples of previous projects:
- How clear in home care use job crafting activities to increase the meaningfulness of their work;
- Organizational determinants for meaningful work in high-level, professional jobs;
- The role of autonomy in experiencing work as meaningful;
- Team design and nurses’ experience of work as meaningful at an ICU.

2. Infrastructures supporting (im)moral behaviour
What makes people behave (un)ethically in organizations? Main premise: the organizational infrastructure may support or frustrate moral decision making.

Examples of previous projects:
- Organizational characteristics and their effects on whistleblowing behaviour of nurses;
- Moral awareness in mortgage advisor with high levels of formalization and decentralization;
- How centralization affected the formal ethical systems in a construction company;
- How organizational structures affect moral decision making by Dutch Special Forces in Mali.
Self-organizing teams: concept and implementation – Prof. dr. Patrick Vermeulen

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Patrick Vermeulen  p.vermeulen@fm.ru.nl

- Developments in healthcare
- Reorganization of healthcare organizations
- Self-organization or semi-autonomous teams
  - Focus on clients
  - Professional development
  - Cost control
Two research projects

Principles of self-organization

• What types of self-organizing teams can be identified in practice?

• What underlying theoretical principles can be identified in practice?

Implementation of self-organization

• What functional, social and infrastructural problems occur during the implementation of self-organization?

• What ways can be found for dealing with such problems?
MT thesis topics Prof. dr. Kristina Lauche: Bottom up change processes: Putting sustainability on the agenda

How do people who are convinced about the need for more sustainable business practices become internal change agents?

How do they use issue selling to convince their peers and senior managers?

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Dr. Ir. L.J. Lekkerkerk (Hans)
Note: not available when I supervised your BA-thesis
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Probably 4 OD&D-theses:
1. Innovation & Organization Structure
   1. Innovation after changing from EtO to CtO
   2. In EtO-organizations
2. Diagnosing Organizational Structure Design
3. Surprise your supervisor with your research passion
1. Structural innovations in healthcare (2 students)
   - evaluation of several structural redesigns in healthcare;
   - why do some structural reforms (e.g. self-contained teams) work in some cases and not in others?

2. Designing a game for explaining effects of structures (2 students)
   - formulate criteria of a ‘good design game’;
   - evaluate existing games
   - design a game yourself

3. Evaluating new forms of organizing (PWC – 1 student)
   - which new forms have emerged?
   - what do they amount to (in theory and practice)?
   - what are their results?

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Areas of interest Dr. Matthijs Moorkamp

Theme 1
• Temporary organizations: design issues
  - Often used in uncertain conditions: construction, crisis management, military and off-shore
  - Design important under such conditions
  - What does the relationship between structural design and outcomes look like in these contexts?
  - What kind of design related interventions are suitable for such contexts?

• Examples:
  - Temporary organization design at a construction site (Ramon Albers) – ‘survival of the unfittest’
  - Dynamics of coordination in a NAO network context aftercare of detaineness in Limburg (Merel Rijn)
Theme 2:

- Sociotechnical design: diagnosis and redesign interventions
- Some examples:
  - Diagnosis and redesign at the ministry of Defense – Air Force (Tim Cremers)
  - Diagnosis and redesign at local health services (GGD), streamlining vaccinations
  - Structural diagnosis at the orthopedic chain at Sint Maartens Kliniek (Giel Heezen)
Areas of interest Dr. Berber Pas

Overall theme

*Digital technology from a change perspective: how does DT affect how we work?*

- Dominant discourse of progress through digital technology, but what is lost or sacrificed? (moral & ethical issues)
- Great promises, but lacking interoperability (information sharing, ICT) – it is not just a technical issue to be solved! Practice-based, performative perspective needed to understand underlying mechanisms
- Contact with several hospitals, healthcare providers and (government) advisory organizations to participate in this study

• How do different actors negotiate and establish interoperability? (interorganizational decision making, strategic level)
• How are work processes and use of technology negotiated and established to improve interoperability within one organization?
• How do Chief (Medical) Information Officers (CMIOs) and IT workers span boundaries between different knowledge areas and work practices when implementing digital technology?

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