Special Track

Organizational Hybridity and Fluidity: Possibilities and Challenges for Knowledge Management

Research Area: Knowledge Management Evolution

Organizers

Harri Laihonen | Tampere University, Finland
Jukka Huhtamäki | Tampere University, Finland

Description

Hybridity and organizational fluidity are phenomena that are increasingly challenging management. These phenomena blur the previously clear boundaries separating professions and organizational entities, and will inevitably have implications for intellectual capital (IC) management as well as knowledge management (KM) more broadly. However, there has been very little discussion about these implications. This is surprising considering the fact that the practice of KM has evolved and changed rapidly during the last decade. Within this track, we will discuss the future of KM, its possibilities and challenges in the times of hybrid and fluid organizations. We encourage participants to consider the role of KM and IC, for example, from the viewpoints of

1) Data-driven organizations: data science, decision science or sense-making,
2) Governance, management and knowledge-based decision-making,
3) People factor: hybrid professions, self-management, people analytics etc.
4) Ecosystems, meso-level hybrids, institutional fields, networks, or clusters

Organization literature has recently been increasingly interested in hybrid organizations, hybrid governance, and hybridity more generally (cf. Hansmann, 1996; Thynne, 2011; Kreps and Monin, 2011; Reay and Hinings, 2009; Pache and Santos, 2013; Ebrahim et al., 2014). What makes hybridity and organizational fluidity interesting from the KM perspective are the overlapping and coexisting governance modes and especially their implications on managing knowledge.

Hybridity and fluidity both challenge our traditional way of thinking about organizations. Organizational fluidity refers to the increasing flexibility and dynamism and the decreasing importance of organizational boundaries, structure, and processes (Järvi, Almpanopoulou, & Ritala, 2018; Kellogg, Orlikowski, & Yates,
2006; Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010). Research suggests that the organizations are becoming more fluid to survive and thrive in the current increasingly dynamic and complex environment. Schreyögg and Sydow (2010) describe the characteristics of fluid organizations: “from hierarchies to networks, from formal programs and coordination rules to spontaneous interaction, from specialized departments and staff units to improvised processes and temporary project teams, and from vertical lines of command to lateral organization-wide communication. The emphasis is on diversity rather than similarity. The keywords are speed and adaptability.” Hybridity on the other hand has been approach from the viewpoints of institutional economics, which approaches them from the perspective of governance structures, and sees hybrids between hierarchies and markets (e.g. Powell, 1990; Williamson, 1975; Stark, 2009). For public administration theory hybridity refers to “ambiguous types of social organizing and manifests itself in institutional settings where public and private organizations operate according to public interest” (Johanson and Vakkuri, 2017).

From the discussions on hybridity and fluidity arises a question whether the organizational focus is restricting our ability to observe what is relevant from the viewpoint of value creation. Whether it creates an oversimplifying heuristics for analyzing the role of knowledge in hybrid and fluid organizations. If this is true, should we develop new theories that would break free from traditional; individual organizations, their objectives and business strategies and accept the presence of mixed ownership, goal incongruence, and competing institutional logics (Johanson and Vakkuri, 2017). Further, if the above is true, how should we approach knowledge management in the future?

**Keywords**

hybridity; hybrid governance; fluid organizations; knowledge; data

**Guidelines**

Researchers wishing to contribute are invited to submit an extended structured abstract (in MS-Word format) of 500-700 words by 15 January, 2019. The abstract should address theoretical background, research objective, methodology, and results in terms of expected contribution to Knowledge Management theory and practice. Authors are encouraged to follow the guidelines for both extended abstracts as well as full papers available on IFKAD site [www.ifkad.org](http://www.ifkad.org)
Important dates

15 January 2019    Abstract submission deadline
20 February 2019    Acceptance notification to authors
15 March 2019      Early-Bird registration cut off
15 April 2019      Full paper submission
15 May 2019        Registration deadline
5-7 June 2019      Conference sessions

For further information

For any further information, please see the event website at www.ifkad.org or contact the conference manager at info@knowledgeasset.org