



Special Issue Call for Papers

Personal Proximity and Social Proximity Empowering Collaborations: The Glue of Knowledge Networks

Guest editors

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Topic and Objective

In this special issue we aim to put the analysis of social and personal proximity centre-stage. Proximity between partners is necessary for forming and maintaining collaborations, because interaction between heterogeneous parties triggers creativity and leads to innovative solutions. For a long time proximity was interpreted as geographical proximity, but the concept has been extended to other dimensions over time, i.e. cognitive, organizational, institutional and social proximity as well as personal proximity.

As personal and social aspects of collaborations seem to be the glue of collaborations the interest in them has been growing in recent years. The idea underlying this trend is that compensation and substitution mechanisms may be at play. For example, close relationships and personal affection between individuals may attenuate negative consequences of institutional and organizational distance or may enhance opportunities to exploit cognitive and organizational proximity. The concept of personal proximity captures the degree to which individuals like each other as well as enjoy working together. The effect of personal likes and dislikes is apparent from various empirical works, for example, on task-related ties and cluster governance. Personal proximity inspires 'clicks' or 'disclicks' between (potential) collaborators and, hence, on a personal level affects any collaborative efforts. Social proximity points to trust-based interaction between actors emanating from friendship, kinship or joint experience.

While there has been a vast amount of literature on social network analysis showing the quantitative aspects of social proximity with various measures, despite some exceptions, very little is known about the details of how personal and social proximity, together with other kinds of proximity, affect collaborations. Hence, there is a clear need for further research uncovering the impact of personal and social proximity between individuals involved in innovation-related collaborations as well as the nature of interactions and trade-offs between those proximities and other kinds of proximity.

Scope

While theoretical considerations and empirical evidence suggest that personal and social proximity play a crucial, sometimes even decisive, role in whether or not collaboration forms, blossoms and works, there is need to investigate the following aspects in more detail:

1. More research is needed that advances our understanding of the **relation between social proximity and personal proximity**. It is likely that these dimensions of proximity interact as they substitute or overlap one another. Questions that immediately come to mind are: To what extent does social proximity affect perceptions of personal proximity? Does social proximity substitute for personal proximity or vice versa? To what extent can personal proximity exist without social proximity? What other factors may drive the development of personal proximity (such as temporary geographical proximity)?
2. Insights need to be gained about **the mechanisms that keep personal and social proximity in balance**. In the absence or lack of personal and social proximity the question would be how and to what extent can personal and social proximity be triggered, enhanced and nurtured? However, as with other kinds of proximity, people can be too close on the personal and social level so that they do not sufficiently gain knowledge and input from outside their group which leads to the well-known lock-in problems.
3. Thirdly, little is known about the **consequences of personal and social proximity**. Research is needed on whether personal or social proximity inspires more intense use of certain network relationships. How do personal and social proximity affect one's power and influence in innovation processes (i.e., does it matter to whom you are personally or socially close)? How do personal and social proximity interact? Can they substitute each other? Are their effects particularly weak or strong when they emerge individually or together?

We invite contributions that conceptually/theoretically and empirically study personal and social proximity in collaborative settings such as research collaborations, cluster initiatives, strategic alliances, and innovation systems. We will welcome contributions advancing the conceptualization of personal and social proximity in relation to other dimensions of proximity and/or contributions operationalizing these particular proximity dimensions. Contributors can base their empirical analysis on surveys, multi-level studies, experiments, case studies and other designs.

Important deadlines

- Submissions to the Special Issue due by **31 October 2016**
- Final selection of manuscripts **31 October 2017**
- Publication of the Special Issue in **spring 2018**

Related events

The guest editors will organize a workshop open to all potential contributors to the special issue. The workshop takes place on 21 October 2016 at the Open University (Heerlen, The Netherlands). Please contact Ward Ooms at ward.ooms@ou.nl for further details about the workshop.

Submission Process

Paper submissions will undergo rigorous editorial screening and double-blind peer review by a minimum of two recognized scholars. The standard requirements of *Industry and Innovation* for submissions apply. Please consult the journal submission guidelines available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=ciai20&page=instructions>.

Key references

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- Hassink, R. (2010). Regional resilience: a promising concept to explain differences in regional economic adaptability? *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 3(1), 45–58.
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