

# PhD Workshop on “Contributing” to the Strategy Literature

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

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## MEETING TIME

28th October (Tuesday): 9:00 – 12.00 and 14:00 – 17:00

30th October (Thursday): 9:00 – 12.00 and 14:00 – 17:00

31st October (Friday): 9:00 – 12.00 and 14:00 – 17:00

Location: TBA

**Class Size Limit:** 10 students

**Application:** Please apply by sending a copy of your working paper to Dainis Zegners ([d.zegners@lmu.de](mailto:d.zegners@lmu.de)). Tentative Deadline: October 5, 2014.

**Requirement:** As a pre-requisite for participation in the workshop, each student must have a working paper that they are willing to share and discuss, and be able to commit to attending all three class days. While the workshop is hosted by LMU, it is open to students from across Europe.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES, FORMAT, & GRADING

What does it take to get your research published in top management journals? Editors and reviewers at top journals seek papers that make important ‘contributions’ to the literature. But what is a contribution? How do you know when your paper is making a contribution? More importantly, how do you write your paper to highlight its contribution?

In this workshop, I will share my experience publishing in and/or serving on the editorial boards of: *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Organization Science*, *Management Science*, and the *Strategic Management Journal*. My objective is to help you get your work published in these journals by framing your research to clearly articulate the contribution of your paper.

Over the course of the three day workshop, we will focus on identifying and framing contributions to the literatures in strategy and organization theory. Each of the days will be divided into two parts.

In the morning sessions, we will read and discuss published papers that highlight ways of contributing to the literature. While some of these papers are big blockbusters, others are less well-known. Nonetheless, each paper finds some way to make a clear and important contribution to the literature. In reading these papers, focus on answering the question: What was the contribution that got this paper published in a leading journal?

In the afternoon sessions, we will focus on your **own** working papers. Each student is required to submit a working paper that will be the focus of his/her attention during the workshop. The objective in this part of the workshop is twofold. First, I hope that a discussion focusing on the contribution of your paper will enable you to improve the paper and the likelihood of publication in a top journal. Second, in my experience, one of the best ways in which to come to understand how to craft a paper that makes a contribution is to help others do so.

There will be shared dropbox folder for the course. The folder will contain the syllabus, a folder with the published readings, and a folder for you to upload your working papers that will be the subject of our afternoon discussion. Please upload your paper as soon as is feasible so that others have ample opportunity to read. Additionally, please upload your working paper as a PDF and name the file with your last name only (e.g., Posen.pdf).

If you require a grade for the course, I will base it solely on your contribution to the seminar discussion. *There is not written work required for this workshop.*

## **READING LIST & PREPARATION**

All papers listed below will be posted to the dropbox share. (you will receive an invitation).

Please read Davis (1971) carefully — for background on what constitutes a ‘contribution.’ We will draw on Davis’ ideas throughout the workshop. In addition to the original article, I have posted a synopsis that may be a useful reference as we proceed through the seminar.

*Davis, M. 1971. That's Interesting! Towards a Phenomenology of Sociology and a Sociology of Phenomenology. Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 1: 304-344.*

Preparation instructions for published research (morning sessions): You should read the introduction, theory, and discussion sections closely. You should skim the empirical sections. The exceptions to this rule are for those papers that (a) attempt to make a pure theoretical contribution (using verbal theory alone), or (b) attempt to make primarily an empirical contribution — for such papers, please read the entire paper closely.

Preparation instructions for student papers (afternoon sessions): We will have substantial time to discuss each of your working papers. In order to make this time worthwhile, I would ask that each of you read all of the student papers in their entirety. *Your primary task is to identify the*

*contribution as intended by the author.* Then put your self in the position of a reviewer or editor at a top journal — assess the extent to which the paper makes a contribution to the literature.

To do so, you may find it helpful to answer the following questions: (1) What is the gap in the literature identified in the paper? (2) Why should we care about this gap — is it important (and for whom)? (3) Does the paper successfully fill the gap in our knowledge (theoretically and empirically)?

Our discussion in the workshop: For both published and student working papers, I will start the discussion by asking a subset of students for their understanding of the contribution of the paper under discussion, and an assessment of the extent to which the contribution is sufficient to warrant publication.

**\*\*Note that I do not expect you to do any additional reading outside of the syllabus to assess the contribution of the paper — use your own understanding of the literature as best you can (even if your domain is quite far from that of the paper) to make your assessment of the contribution.**

## DAY 1

Cohen, W., and Levinthal, D. A. 1989. Innovation and learning: The two faces of R&D. *Economic Journal*, 99(397): 569-596.

March, J.G., 1991, Exploration and exploitation in organizational learning, *Organization Science*, 2(1): 71-87.

Rivkin, J., 2001, Reproducing knowledge: Replication without imitation at moderate complexity, *Organization Science*, 12(3): 274-93.

Katila, R., and Ahuja, G. 2002. Something old, something new: A longitudinal study of search behavior and new product introduction. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(6): 1183-1194.

Nickerson, J. & Zenger, T., 2004, A Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm--The Problem-Solving Perspective, *Organization Science*, 15(6): 617-32.

*Afternoon session — Student papers: TBA*

## DAY 2

Levinthal, D. A. 1997. Adaptation on rugged landscapes. *Management Science*, 43(7): 934-950.

Westphal, J., and Zajac, E. 1998. The symbolic management of stockholders: Corporate governance reforms and shareholder reactions. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43(1): 127.

Feldman, M.S. & Pentland, B.T., 2003, Re-theorizing organizational routines as a source of flexibility and change, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 48(1): 94-118.

Villalonga, B. 2004. Diversification Discount or Premium? New Evidence from the Business Information Tracking Series. *Journal of Finance*, 59(2): 479-506.

Corredoira, R. A., and Rosenkopf, L. 2010. Should auld acquaintance be forgot? The reverse transfer of knowledge through mobility ties. *Strategic Management Journal*, 31(2): 159-181.

Posen, H., Levinthal, D. 2012. Chasing a Moving Target: Exploitation and Exploration in Dynamic Environments. *Management Science*, 58(3), 587-601

*Afternoon session — Student papers: TBA*

### DAY 3

Shaver, J., 1998, Accounting for Endogeneity When Assessing Strategy Performance: Does Entry Mode Choice Affect FDI Survival? *Management Science*, 44(4): 571-85.

Zhao, M. 2006. Conducting R&D in Countries with Weak Intellectual Property Rights Protection. *Management Science*, 52(8): 1185-1199.

Posen, H. & Chen, .S., 2013, An Advantage of Newness: Vicarious Learning Despite Limited Absorptive Capacity, *Organization Science*.

(I will provide the original submission, reviewer comments, and my responses as a background extended discussion on this paper.)

*Afternoon session — Student papers: TBA*