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Organisational Forms and Knowledge Types: a cognitive multit-actor approach

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Abstract

In this article knowledge types are combined with organizational forms. Knowledge is something individual actors have. This paves the way for a semio-cognitive approach to actors. Organizations in which primary and organizational (secondary) processes are performed are viewed as multi-actor systems. Organizational processes consist of tasks, such as planning, control and administration. These tasks are performed by individuals with knowledge. With regard to knowledge not only content, but also type can be discerned. Three knowledge types are distinguished: tacit, coded and theoretical knowledge. In developing a conceptual framework for the cognitive analysis of knowledge management, I will illustrate and explain that the dominance of tacit, coded or theoretical knowledge matches well-known organizational forms with labels such as machine bureaucracy, simple structure, professional bureaucracy and market. Therefore, knowledge management is about the management of knowledge types and of representations of cognitive actors executing tasks in organizations.

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