

Call for papers
Advances in Strategic Management

Employee Inter- and Intra-Firm Mobility: Taking Stock of What We Know, Identifying Novel Insights and Setting a Theoretical and Empirical Agenda

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Introduction

Studies have argued and demonstrated that employee mobility has significant implications for the ability of organizations to transform their capabilities and increase their competitive advantage. Over the past decade, scholars in strategic management, economics and sociology have been paying increasing attention to the strategic implications of the internal employee mobility (i.e., lateral vs. promotion) and of the external employee mobility (i.e., within and between industries; move to rivals and employee entrepreneurship). Overall, three streams of research have received growing attention. Drawing mainly from the knowledge-based view and behavioral theory of the firm, one such stream has focused on learning-by-hiring and/or losing talent. Cumulatively, this research has examined the conditions in which mobile employees affect the learning rates and changes in the organizational capabilities of both the firms losing workers and those hiring them.

The second stream has used economic and strategy lenses to examine the antecedents and consequences of employee mobility for rival firms and of employee entrepreneurship via spinouts. Relatedly, scholars in this tradition highlight the importance of various dimensions of employees' human and social capital in the context of internal and external employee mobility.

The third stream, using a sociological lens, has focused on how employees' social context affects their opportunity and motivation to move within firms as well as to move to other firms and to start spinouts. Furthermore, it also focused on the micro-mechanisms contributing to isomorphism across firms, and of when mobility results in gains or losses of status at the firm and individual levels.

A common theme across these streams is that organizational know how is embedded in the minds of individuals and that their movement within and across firms serves as a conduit for the transfer of critical knowledge. There is disagreement, however, on the degree of discretion people have over that knowledge and on the mechanisms that enhance or limit their ability to utilize that knowledge and expertise within and across firms. More critically, the lack of a unifying conceptual structure within and across these domains limits our ability to gain comparative insights regarding the varying effects of the various mechanisms associated with each type of mobility. Does the diversity of perspectives on mobility enrich or fragment our understanding of them? Alternatively, does it undermine our understanding by encouraging a proliferation of uncorroborated ideas? The diversity of theoretical lenses, contexts and methods motivates the current call for a critical theoretical integration.

The goal of this volume in *Advances in Strategic Management (AiSM)* is to identify new theoretical and empirical directions to the study of employee mobility, covering a broad set of theoretical frameworks, which can be embedded in strategic, organizational, sociological or entrepreneurial theories. **We seek thought provoking papers designed to provide novel insights into the antecedents and consequences of employee mobility at the industry, firm, team and individual levels of analysis.** Our objective is also to search for new areas and methods in which to test novel propositions on employee mobility, as well as to spark debates among scholars. Therefore, we also welcome contributions from different epistemological approaches and from all empirical contexts where issues of employee mobility are relevant to organizational and individual performance. In particular, we would like to encourage the corroboration and development of individual perspectives and conditional analyses of the boundaries of adjacent perspectives. Although we favor empirical contributions, we will also consider theoretical development and conceptual papers.

Expected Contributions

Types of contributions

- ❖ Empirical papers with an emphasis on testing theories and/or integrating them
- ❖ New theoretical and conceptual development
- ❖ Open debate: Critical theoretical and empirical commentary on published papers, whose authors will be invited to respond (e.g., critical replications and additions to existing research)
- ❖ Research notes
- ❖ Reviews of empirical challenges and opportunities in the study of inter- and intra-firm mobility

Suggested topics for contribution

- ❖ Tensions between and complements to various theoretical perspectives on employee mobility. For example, how can the sociological perspective inform KBV in the context of mobility?
- ❖ The importance of the technological and social context for the relationship between mobility and the transformation of the firm
- ❖ Investigations of the various theoretical mechanisms associated with each type of mobility, such as the direction of internal employee mobility (i.e., lateral vs. promotion) and the direction of external employee mobility (i.e., within and between industries; a move to a rival or to employee entrepreneurship)
- ❖ Novel insights into market push and pull forces that drive employees' decisions to remain with their current employer, move to a rival firm, or start a new venture
- ❖ Insights into the antecedents and consequences of different types of mobility, such as:
 - Seasoned employee vs. rookie
 - Prolific vs. non-prolific employee
 - Individual vs. collective employee mobility

- ❖ Industrial and temporal dynamics of each type of employee mobility, such as:
 - Life cycle of the industry: How do patterns of mobility and types of individuals moving around change in different stages of the life of the industry?
 - How do the characteristics of individuals moving to a new industry in its emerging stage shape the evolution of the industry (e.g., the industry's future competitive directions)?
 - When and under what conditions does the effect of mobility vary in different stages of the life of the firm?
 - Does the effect of mobility vary between early and late career mobility?
- ❖ Novel empirical approaches to studying the antecedents and consequences of intra- and inter-firm mobility and employee entrepreneurship.

Submission Guidelines

Submissions are due no later than March 31, 2019. All papers submitted must represent original research not previously published elsewhere. All submissions will be subject to in-depth review, and editorial decisions and revision requests will be communicated to authors by June 30, 2019. Revised papers will have to be submitted by September 30, 2019. The targeted publication date for the volume is early to mid-2020.

To submit a paper, send an email to Daniel Tzabbar (dt396@drexel.edu) and/or Bruno Cirillo (bruno.cirillo@skema.edu). To ask questions about the content of this AiSM volume or the editorial process, please contact any of the volume's editors, as well as Gino Cattani (gcattani@stern.nyu.edu), who is the AiSM series editor.

Further information about the AiSM series is available at:

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Selected literature

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