Abstracts

The Impact of Technology on Organizational Design

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In the future, companies and the public sector will become far more technology-driven. Over time, technology will lead to the disappearance of many established companies while brand new companies emerge. Companies such as Apple, Facebook and Microsoft, just to name a few, are examples of companies that have succeeded in taking advantage of new technologies. However, the importance of technology will also affect far smaller companies which may have an even better chance of competing with large companies. In the public sector, many tasks will also be digitised while at the same time it is imperative to have much more cooperation with other players to provide (even better) service to the citizens. The Danish Agency for Digitisation is, thus, an example of a public authority that has already rolled out many technology-driven projects and will launch even more projects in the future.

Technology will have a decisive influence on the way in which companies and the public sector design their structures (technological imperative). Both companies and the public sector may therefore just as well start thinking about and working on designing organizations that contribute to managing the new technology in a way that enables them to utilize the technologies in relation to their customers and the people to whom they supply services.

This article zooms in on what new technology is and explains the technology in relation to a private company's production- and customer-oriented activities, and how the new technology can be used administratively in the public sector. A number of factors that show how technology influences the way in which organizations will work in the future will then be inferred. Based on these technological influences, the article provides three specific proposals for future organizational designs.

The Adjustment Paradox: A tradeoff between flexibility and coordination in the workforce

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Covid-19 has economic effects on Danish firms. Using survey data collected from 237 Danish SMEs during Covid-19, our study provides preliminary evidence that those firms using more freelancers are those that perceive the largest amount of uncertainty and coordination problems, following an exogenous shock such as the pandemic. We argue that this can be explained by the fact that freelancers cannot rely on tacit coordination to the same extent as regular workers.

Tacit coordination mechanisms, however, are often useful for coordinating when it becomes harder to specify how tasks should be done. Thus, firms using more freelancers before the shock might perceive greater impact and more coordination problems, due to freelancers' need for clearly specified tasks. We conclude with suggestions to how firms can manage the tradeoff between using freelancers and benefitting from robust coordination mechanisms.

Out of Eye, Out of Sight: The role of random interactions in the workplace

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Working from home, one will often replace work relationships and social relationships, either by e-mails, Zoom meetings or other similar media. However, one will typically not replace the interactions that are perceived as unnecessary "noise" – that is, the typical talk at the coffee machine, or random lunch conversations. We argue that this can have fatal consequences in the long run, as seeming unnecessary talk can prove to impact new, useful knowledge. We build these arguments on recent literature from organization design which provides us with a framework to shed light on what happens when (part of) the employees work from home. We present a simple design tool that organizations can use to assess their need for adjustments in the organizational design when planning future home working.

The importance of organizational design for the quality of patient care

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The design of an organization is unambiguously a determining factor in the success of its attempt to achieve its goals. Due to blanket national guidelines, Danish emergency departments exhibit a variety of designs with some changing it within a 24-hour period. To measure goal attainment, emergency departments look at mortality – the risk of dying after hospitalization – as a prominent factor in determining the quality of patient care. Quality of treatment, resources and their organizations, communication and decision-making processes constitute significant but previously overseen factors in determining the risk of dying. Taking point of departure in Danish emergency departments, we investigate the importance of organizational design in goal attainment, particularly the quality of patient care – the risk of dying after hospitalization. We provide an overview of essential organizational design elements: the basic organization and use of IT systems throughout a 24-hour period, and a generic tool to assess an organization's design.

The Incentive System and Organization Design

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The incentive system is an important component in organization design as illustrated by Galbraith's Star Model. Hence, organisations should

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choose their incentive system taking the model's other components (strategy, structure, people, and processes) into account. In this article, three well-known incentive systems are described (fixed pay, performance pay, and seniority based pay), and their similarities and differences are clarified by illustrating the consequences when an organization shifts from one incentive system to the next. Particular attention is given to a case where a change in an organization's environment induce strategic decisions that lead to a change in the incentive system and thus the organizational design.

Problem-solving Strategies in an Organizational Context

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This article deals with two problem-solving approaches that organizations in both the public and private sector need to take into account in their daily work with problems. One of the problem-solving approaches is the exploitative, where experiences from previous problem solutions are exploited, while the other one is the explorative focusing more on experimentation with new and radically different solutions. Both approaches are end points at a continuous scale, where organizations have to find the appropriate combinations of these to each specific task or group of similar tasks. Here, the environment in terms of its dynamism, exogeneous shocks, competitive intensity and protection of intellectual property rights plays a significant role as important antecedents for the appropriate trade-off between the two approaches. Furthermore, organizational design in terms of the degree of formalization, centralization and specialization is discussed as a tool for implementing the chosen problem-solving approaches.

Regional inequality – an irreversible trend?

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The article analyses the development of regional inequalities in OECD countries 2000-2017. A common notion is that increasing regional inequalities is a (structural) universal trend determined by urbanization, globalization, and economies of agglomeration. Our analysis reveals, however, that this notion is highly questionable. Calculating the change in regional disparities on key indicators from the OECD regional database, we show that increasing regional inequality in GDP is confined to two particular groups of countries, i.e., the post-communist OECD countries and the British Isles (Ireland and U.K.). When it comes to unemployment and long-term unemployment, we find no average trend at all, or even a weak trend towards lower disparities. Some countries experience rising inequalities, others the opposite. The absence of a universal trend towards increasing regional disparities indicates that the development of regional inequalities follows more complex and multifaceted processes than commonly assumed.

Political Opinion and Interest among Students at the Teacher Education. The Source of Democratic Edification in Denmark?

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This article examines the political profile of the students at the Teacher Educations in Denmark. These students will in the future assume the role of undertaking the mandatory democratic education of pupils in Danish elementary schools. On the basis of an online survey conducted in April-

May 2021, it can be seen that these students are politically immensely left-leaning and very concerned about the climate issues. They consider themselves politically interested, but many of them are not particularly knowledgeable about several central ministers in the current government. The students are politically a quite homogenous group across choice of specialization, but students who have been enrolled at other education programs prior to the Teacher Education seems to be more politically confident and well-informed. This could be an argument for further academic strengthening of the Teacher Education in Denmark in the future.