



Aalto University
School of Business

Methods of measuring, auditing and analyzing OC

16.9.2020

Note on groupwork

- **Please inform me about your choice for the “case organization” by Fri 18.9. (email)**

Agenda

- **Introducing the key methods of analyzing OC**
- **Practicing the methods & discussing the applicability**
- **Reflecting on your own communicative behaviours**

Objective

- **To give you tools and ideas for analyzing/auditing/measuring OC – particularly to help with your case work**
- **To open up the research landscape of OC in general**
- **To give you transferable skills of analyzing your own communicative workplace behavior**

Feedback on your learning journal entries

+	-
Builds bridges between topics	Tries to cover too much (explain everything in a 2-hour lecture and 20 page article in 200 words...)
Connects the reading and the lecture	Ignores either the reading or the lecture altogether
Goes beyond the mere lecture slide information	Lacks reflection
Has an own learning agenda	Lacks internal coherence
Draws on and develops ideas from either other studies or working life	
Coherent, clear writing, academic style	

Measurement, audit, and analysis

- **Measuring OC**

- Collecting measurable data on topics such as communication satisfaction, frequency of certain communicative actions, preference for media use etc.
- Data type: survey



- **Audit**

- Objective evaluation (not analysis) of communication processes in organization
- Derived from the established audit practices in e.g. finance or accounting



- **Analysis**

- Seeking for an answer to a specific question or a set of questions
- Aims to go beyond mere description (poses either why or how questions)
- Uses quantitative or qualitative data



Communication audits



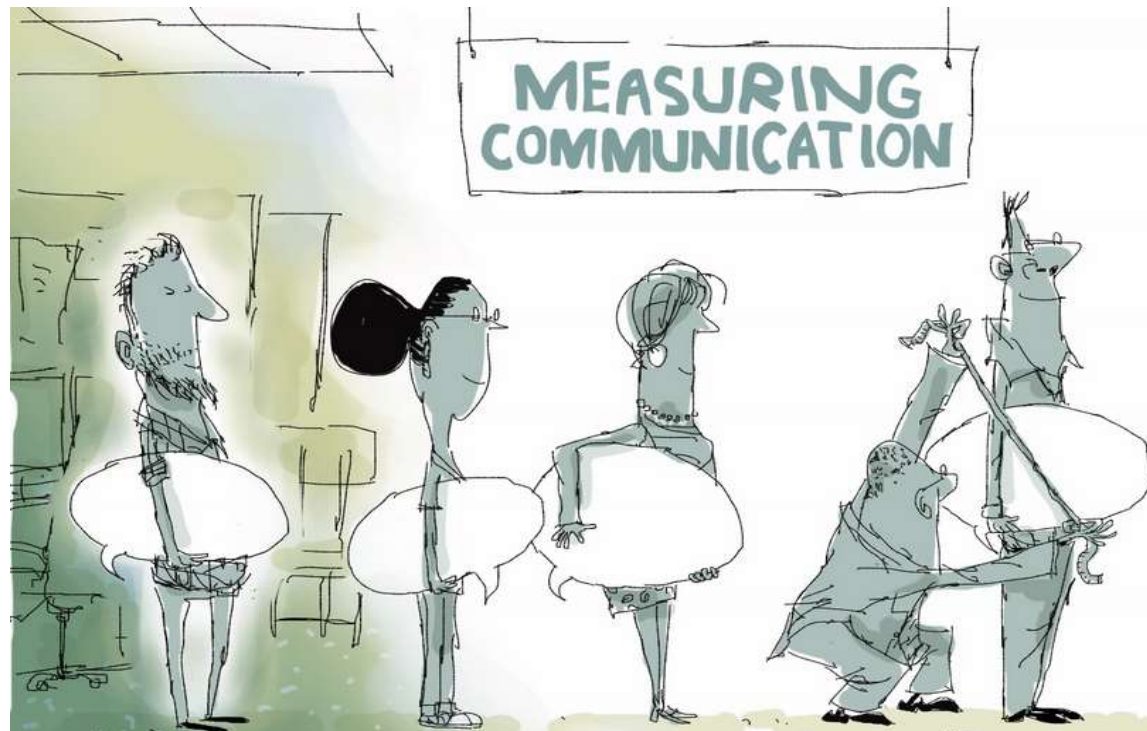
“What if, and I know this sounds kooky, we communicated with the employees.”

Audits aim to inform organizations and managers:

- Who they are talking to
- Who they should be talking to
- What issues people are talking about
- From which sources most people get their information
- Whether information reaches people through the media, face to face discussions with managers, internal publications or other communication channels
- The impact of all this on working relationships
- What needs to change to optimise effective communication

Tourish, D. & Hargie, O. (2017) Communication audits. C. Scott & L. Lewis (Eds.) *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*

Measurements/surveys



Example of some typical communication survey questions

	VERY DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	UNDECIDED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED
I am kept well informed about my work group's plans and progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am kept well informed about company plans and progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are opportunities available to me to express my ideas to upper management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is good communication in my group.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is good communication between people in different areas of the company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am kept well informed by upper management on what's going on in the company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Considering everything, how satisfied are you with the amount of quality of communications in the company?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Measuring “the amount” of communication???

- How many channels/arenas?
- How many practices for sharing and constructing information?
- How many interactions and through what channels?
- How much time used in and for communication practices?
- How much talk/text/information?

**Thinkpoint: Would these be sensible questions at all?
And if, how and in what context?**

Analysis methods of organizational communication

1) Analyzing interview and other discourse data

- Various methods: e.g. content analysis, thematic analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis (aim: findings patterns of talk)

2) Social network analysis

3) Different sophisticated methods of analyzing "real-time" interaction

- What all have in common is that they analyze the micro-level of interaction with an aim of finding patterns of interaction (e.g Relational Control coding method, Interactional processes analysis, Conversation Analysis)

Exercise on how to analyze talk

- Think for a minute about your typical day at work (if not working at the moment, think about e.g. the last job you had – or if you wish to, think about your typical school day)
- Prepare as if you would be telling it in a form of a 2-minute story

...cont

- **Pair up – random pairs in Break-out rooms**
 - First, the other one may tell his/her story, 2 mins. no interruptions, DO NOT begin before the teacher gives you a shout
- **The listener tells what s/he heard**
 - Just anything – no wrongs or rights. But concentrate on work in particular, what is it and how what you heard for two minutes informs you about the work (personal attitude to work, style of working, working relationships, workplace..) 2 mins.
- **Then change roles, begin and stop on teacher's command**

Compare what you heard about work in randomly assigned small groups

Why did we do this exercise?

- Learn to see (just possibly?) some *patterns* of talking about work
- Learn to make visible (to our selves) what we think about work
- Do a very light version of discourse analysis (or narrative analysis)
- Listening skills are underrated (this was a listening exercise!)
 - The busy executive spends 80% of his time LISTENING to PEOPLE . . . and still doesn't hear half of what is said.... Behind this widespread inability to listen lies, in our opinion, a major oversight in our system of classroom instruction. (Nichols & Stevens 1957: Listening to people. *Harvard Business Review*.)

What did you just probably hear

- **Actions and acts of work**
 - *Informing about "what work is"*
- **Descriptions of oneself, informative of**
 - *Attitude to work, style of working*
- **Descriptions of people and doing things with people, informative of**
 - *Working relationships*
 - *Workplace ethos and organizational culture (and leadership)*
 - *Organizational hierarchy and power relations*
- **Communication and interaction**
 - *Role of communication in work and at the workplace*
 - *Media used for communicating and interacting*
 - *Formal and informal interaction and their role*



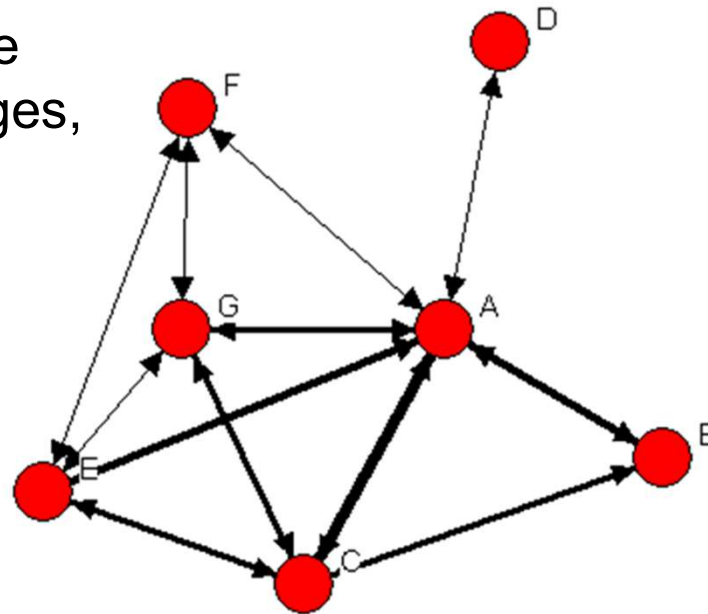
Social network analysis

Idea in brief:

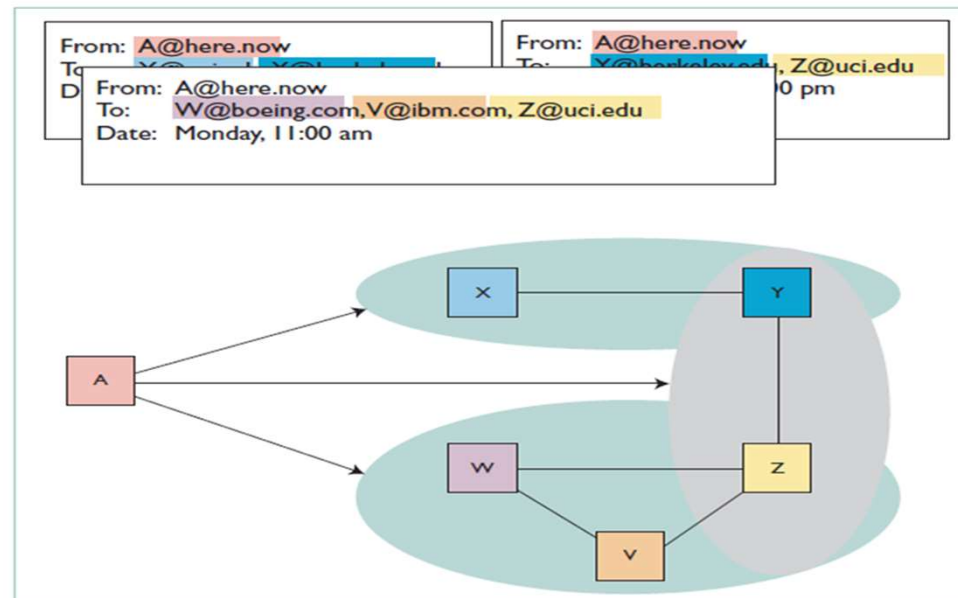
- Answering the question 'Who is communicating with whom?' may provide important and interesting knowledge about communication patterns, leadership, information flow, and power in organization
- Social network analysis may yield data that can be easily visualized and reveal patterns as regards the above-mentioned issues

Example description of a project's organization

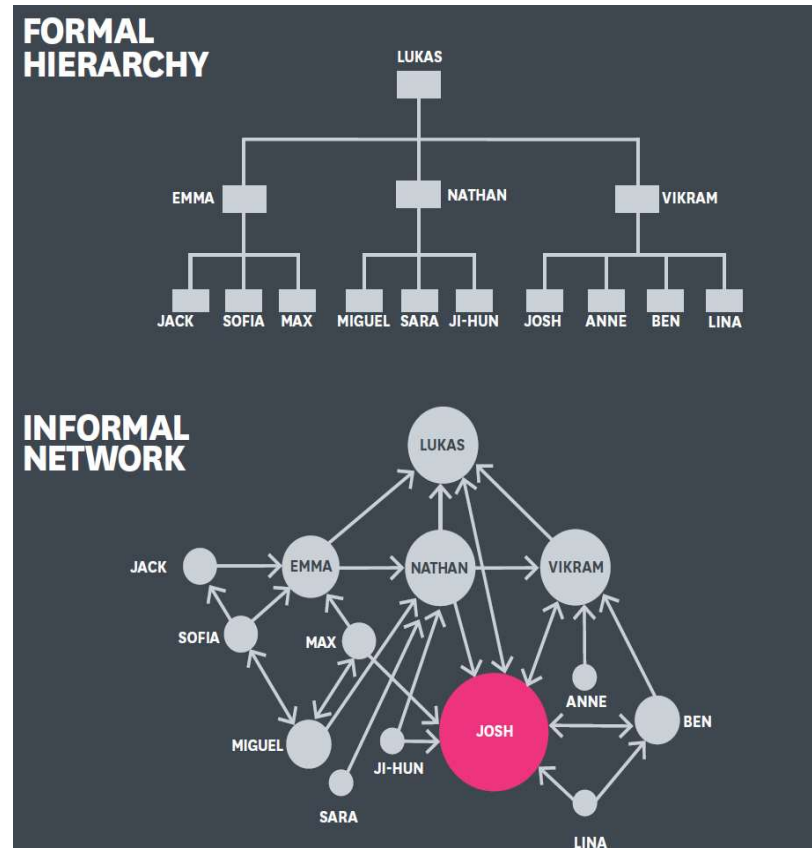
Example shows that A is the one who is most exposed to messages, is in contact more than others, while F, E, C, B and D are informed only



Social network: Example visualization based on outgoing mail



Social network analysis: example visualization revealing the "true leader" (?)



Battilana & Casciaro (2013) The Network Secrets of Great Change Agents. *Harvard Business Review*.

Interaction in real-time

Interaction exercise

- In groups of 4 students
- Performance appraisal discussions (yearly one-on-one supervisor-subordinate meetings, also called performance review discussions, direct translations from Finnish (and Swedish) would be ‘development discussions’) are a common practice in your imagined organization
- You are (a management) team that tries to invent new ways of conducting the discussions, due to the fact that your personnel is dissatisfied with these discussions
- However, you must have the practice of appraisal discussion
- You have 8 mins. to come up with at least an initial idea

Take a moment to think about: what were the interactional dynamics or interactional features through which you accomplished the task you just performed in groups (or interactional dynamics/features that shaped the way you performed the task)?

Share your ideas in small groups, choose at least three things and write them down in our chat