

**A!**

Aalto University  
School of Business

# Methods of measuring, auditing and analyzing OC

*2.11.2022*

# Note on groupwork

- **Please inform me about your choice for the “case organization” by Friday 4.11. (email)**

# Agenda

- **Introducing the key methods of analyzing OC**
- **Reflecting on your own communicative behaviours and team interaction through a practical exercise**

# 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 some 300+ words...)
Connects the reading and the lecture	Ignores either the reading or the lecture altogether
Goes beyond the mere lecture slide information	Lacks reflection
<b>Has an own learning agenda</b>	Lacks internal coherence
Draws on and develops ideas from either other studies or working life	
Coherent, clear writing, academic style	

# Measurement, audit, and analysis

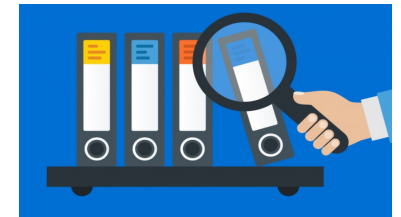
- **Measuring OC**

- 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



# Basic types of data sources

- Surveys (often used with other, qualitative data)
- Interviews
- Different spoken or written narratives about the organization (and its communication) or work in general
- Organizations' own materials (texts on websites etc.)
- Observational data
  - Defined simply: observing situations where people communicate at work
  - Ethnography (being and watching things there were people work), also video and photo methods increasingly popular
    - *(Autoethnography (researcher part of the situations ))*
    - *(Job-shadowing (following someone through daily activities at work))*

# From collecting data towards analysis

- **Quantitative results on communicative interactions, communication channel (media) preferences, communication satisfaction etc. (Data can be visualized)**
  - From description to analysis: e.g. connecting and comparing different answers; setting an testing hypotheses
- **Qualitative results from observational and textual data**
  - From description to analysis: typically addressing how-questions to data and searching patterns in how people communicate at work or how they communicate about (communication at) work

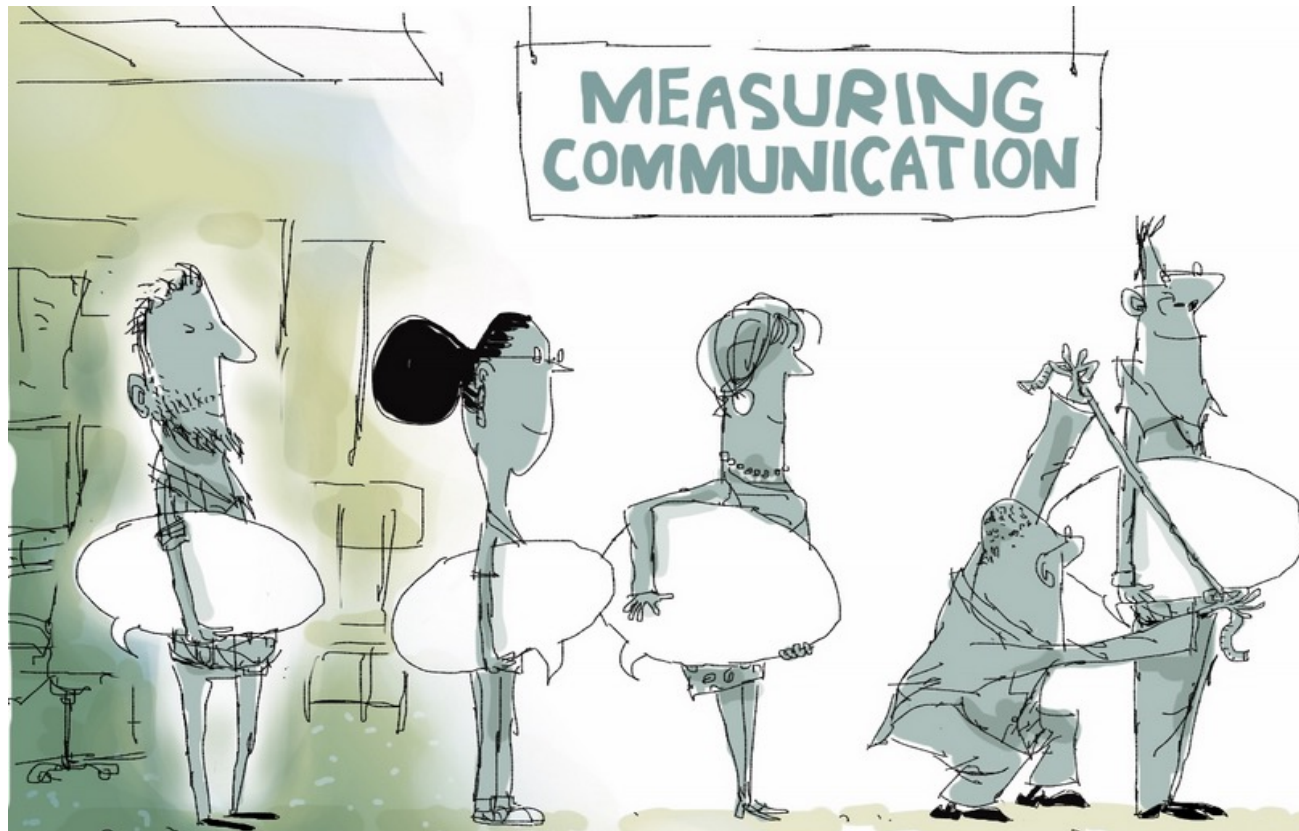


# Communication audits



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

# 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?

# 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)

# The main method in OC research: Organizational Discourse Analysis

- Discourse as the basic unit and data for analysis
  - Discourse = talk, or text, or visuals or other forms of communication
- Organizational means
  - analyzing talk/text in conjunction with some organizational phenomenon or practice and related organizational theorizing
- Posing (typically) how-questions instead of what or why
  - Underlying analytical “attitude”: how people talk about certain issues (or their recurring patterns of talk) is indicative of how they feel or think about those issues
- Social constructionist commitment
  - Organization is constructed/constituted through discourse

Read more: Fairhurst & Cooren (2019: Organizational Discourse Analysis, in The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods. <https://methods.sagepub.com/base/download/BookChapter/the-sage-handbook-of-qualitative-business-and-management-research-methods-v2/i887.xml>

# Discourse analysis and content analysis

- **Close to each other – with one basic methodological difference:**
  - Discourse analysis stresses the question how things are said or talked about, searching for common ways or patterns of talk/text – interpretation of what is said (the content) is secondary to that
  - Content analysis stresses the question of what is said (although in different ways), searching for common themes/content



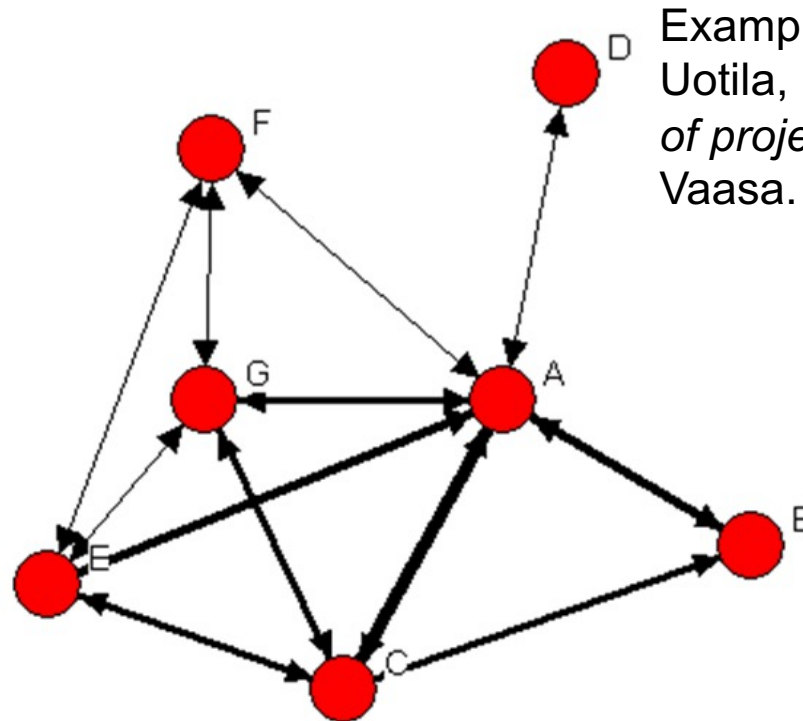
# Social network analysis

## 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

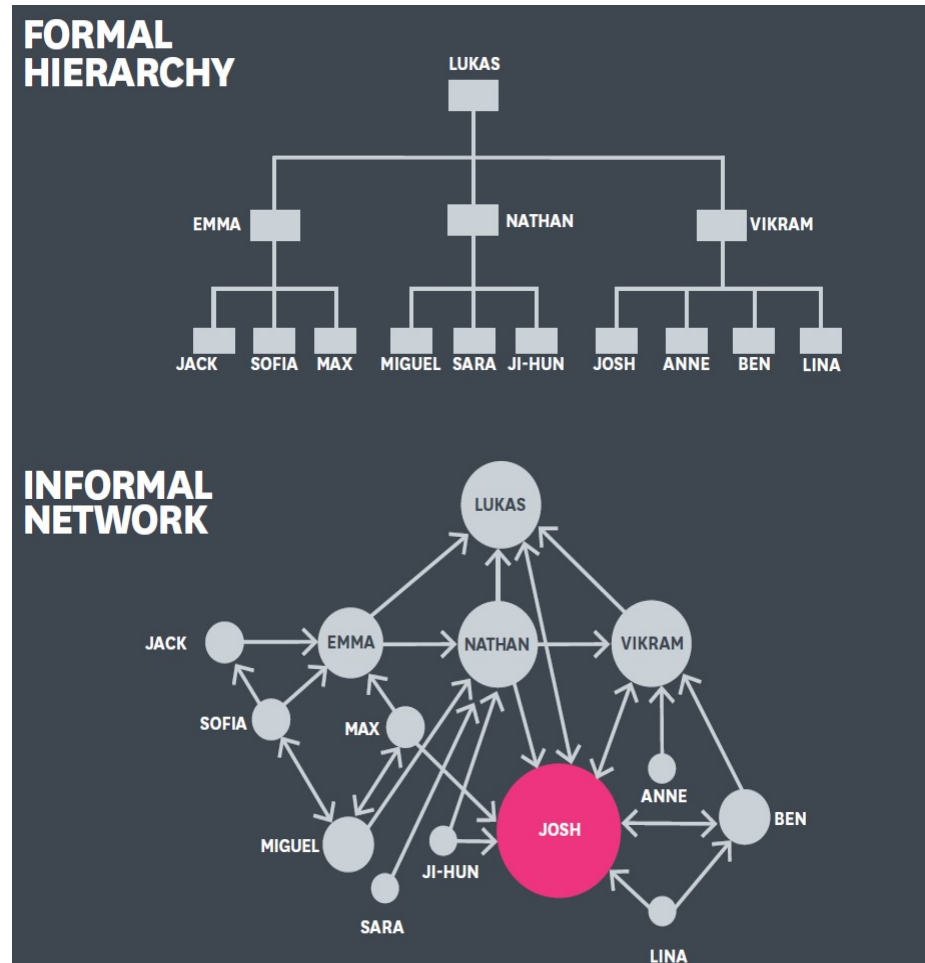


# Example description of a project's organization



Example picture from Uotila, Pekka (2011): *Narrative construction of project planning*. PhD thesis. Uni. of Vaasa.

# 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

## Background and scenario

- Performance appraisal discussions (yearly one-on-one supervisor-subordinate meetings, also called performance review 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 of a new way to conduct the appraisal discussion

# Everything that comes out of interaction between people, is an interactional achievement/accomplishment

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)?

Discussion

