

SEMINAR

The “speed of knowledge”, teamwork and the organization of innovation

By Dr. van der Wouden

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Date: 3 November 2022 (Thursday)

Time: 4:15PM – 5:45PM

Venue: WYL314, 3/F, Dorothy Y. L. Wong Building, Lingnan University

ABSTRACT:

There is wide consensus that the production of knowledge is central to economic growth. In this talk I present two research projects that examine changes in the way we produce knowledge.

In the first part, I examine the shift in the organization of knowledge production from individual to team-work. The common explanation is that the increasing complexity of knowledge is driving individuals to specialize and collaborate with other specialists to produce knowledge. I propose an additional explanation, related to the accelerating rate of knowledge advances over time.

In the second part, I zoom in on knowledge produced through team-work, and argue that team-work can be done best in geographical proximity. Analyzing 17.6 million publications authored by 1.7 million scholars, I examine how knowledge spillovers between scholars collaborating at different geographical distances impacts their future knowledge portfolios. I show that in 1975, scholars collaborating locally were 57% more likely to learn from knowledge spillovers than similar scholars collaborating non-locally. By 2015 this increased to 85%. I discuss the four factors structuring these findings.

The findings I will present have implications for debates in innovation and management studies concerning knowledge spillovers, the (spatial) organization of knowledge-intensive economic activities, innovation policies, structuring team-work and working-from-home vs. returning to office.

BIOGRAPHY:

Frank van der Wouden’s research interests center around the strategic dimensions of technological change, innovation management, collaboration and economic development, using quantitative methods and tools from a diverse set of academic fields. Common topics in his research are innovation, collaboration, learning and cities. His work uses data-mining tools, machine learning techniques, methods from social network analysis and econometric models. Frank holds a PhD in Economic Geography from the University of California, Los Angeles. Before joining the department, Frank was a post-doctoral researcher at the Management & Organizations department at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and an affiliate of the Northwestern Institute on Complex Systems.

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