Aalto University
School of Science

School of Science
https://www.aalto.fi/school-of-science

## Dissertation press release 29.11.2018

# Networking like Innovators

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title of the dissertation** | How do Innovators Network?<br>The Innovation Capacity of Potentially Strong Ties in Individuals' Social Networks |
| **Contents of the dissertation** | How do innovators – think Elon Musk – network? What is their social network structure? How do they form ties, what are they looking for in others, and why?<br>Surprisingly, a typical innovator actively connects different parts of her/his network, thus eliminating "holes" in the network. Another key insight is the potentially strong tie concept. Although innovators' networks are large and dense, most of their ties (i.e. connections to others), are infrequent, with little interaction (i.e. "weak") and thus require little care. Still, due to the combination of network density, transparency (provided by social network platforms, such as LinkedIn), and the innovators' preference for genuine, authentic relationships, most of their ties are potentially strong. Such ties can be strengthened quickly and efficiently, which constitutes a capacity for innovation.<br>The study's findings are important for all working professionals. They will have a better understanding of the dynamic mechanisms at play in their networks, and the location of innovation capacity. Furthermore, innovation managers will understand better why the innovators in their teams behave in certain ways, often altruistic and non-conformist at the same time.<br>The results have strong implications on social network research. First, the dynamic model of innovators' social networking is unprecedented. Second, this study's results encourage the scientific field to acknowledge the innovator as independent actor, with the social network as an outcome. Third, the common focus on gatekeeping and information flow control is redirected to altruism. Finally, the novel potentially strong tie concept may initiate a new research stream integrating theory on social networks, innovators, and knowledge processes. |
| **Field of the dissertation** | Industrial Engineering and Management |
| **Doctoral candidate** | Raphael Giesecke, Dipl. Ing. |
| **Time of the defence** | 01.02.2019 at 12 noon |
| **Place of the defence** | Aalto University School of Science, lecture hall TU2, Maarintie 8, Espoo |
| **Opponent** | Prof. Dr. Peter Groenewegen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands |
| **Custos** | Professor Eila Järvenpää, Aalto University School of Science, Department of Industrial Engineering and Management |
| **Electronic dissertation** | http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-60-8274-5 |
| **Doctoral candidate's contact information** | Raphael Giesecke,<br>Department of Industrial Engineering and Management,<br>Raphael.Giesecke@aalto.fi,<br>+358 50 5234132 |

A doctoral dissertation is a public document and shall be available at Aalto University, School of Science's notice board in Konemiehentie 2, Espoo at the latest 10 days prior to public defense.