

**Project title: Transformation of employee-driven innovation into organizational routine**

Mainstream thinking about innovation stimulation within organizations focuses on R&D expenditures. Organizational practitioners assume these investments will result in *STI innovation* mode (*Science, Technology and Innovation*). Scholars pose questions about alternative ways of increasing organizational innovativeness, as European countries with high innovation rates have put resources into studies on *DUI innovation* mode (*Doing, Using, Interacting*). DUI innovation is based on work and interactions between actors. This may sound paradoxical, but **organizational routine - repetitive process involving many interdependent actors - is considered a source of innovation in the dynamic concept of organizational routine by Feldman and Pentland (2003). Innovation may stem from routine, because organizational routine consists of two aspects: ostensive** (what needs to be done) **and performative** (how it should be done in practise). Interactions between these two aspects turn organizational routine into source of innovation. Regardless of the dynamic concept of routines, scholars appointed **employees as valuable source of innovation, hence theoretic publications on employee-driven innovation (EDI) appeared. EDI reaches beyond innovation or R&D departments**, as it arises in course of employees' interactions and in processes of exchanging their experiences and knowledge.

Many EDI innovation studies were limited to first stages of the process, i.e. generation of ideas and evaluation systems. **Scarce theoretical studies refer to implementation of EDI innovations, not to mention its transformation into organizational routine. Transformation is crucial, because implementation of innovation: empowers employees, enables them to do sensemaking of their work, and motivates them to develop further innovations. It is crucial to understand factors affecting the process of transformation of innovation into routine.** While scholars (Lin in., 2017) have proposed an empirical model of turning innovation into routine, its adaptation to European organizations may be doubtful. The study concerned sole organisation and innovation (single case study) and did not meet EDI definition (was initiated by management).

**The rationale of the research project is to enrich theoretical knowledge on transformation of employee-driven innovation into organizational routine. It is a new approach to combining the area of innovation and routine, as it is a configuration inverted to the concept of creating innovation from routine presented by Feldman and Pentland (2003).** The project aim will be achieved through qualitative empirical research. **The expected outcome refers to scientific contribution - understanding the phenomenon** by the means of its in-depth descriptions or - perhaps - a model in terms of research questions: (1) How is the process of transforming employee innovation into organizational routines? and (2) What factors favor and what hinder this transformation?

**Case studies will involve 4 to 6 companies, where employee-driven innovations meet three conditions jointly:** (1) they are permanent, (2) they are processes and (3) they involve employees from different departments. Individual interviews will be conducted in every company with employees who participate in innovation process at its different stages or whose role in this process varies.

**The project is based on PI's previous qualitative research in the form of individual interviews with experts (March 2020)** in order to understand the context of employee-driven innovation, with emphasis on implementation stage. **The research revealed research gap - conditions and mechanisms of transforming employee-driven innovations into ongoing processes in the organization. Since March 2021, out pilot studies in this direction have been carried out by the PI.**

**In-depth empirical research into transformation of employee-driven innovations into routines is important in respect to current changes in organizations, in particular – employees' empowerment** raised during the Covid-19 pandemic. **This trend is expected to strengthen** as younger generations enter labor market, with much attention paid to employees' subjectivity. Rising expectations can be met by involving wider range of employees in decision-making and executive processes, such as creating innovations.