

5 Conclusion

What are antecedents of social capital in corporate innovation communities? Motivated by numerous studies on the importance of innovation communities in general as well as the pivotal role of social relationships within these settings, I have examined this question using both qualitative as well as quantitative research methods. The research findings presented in this dissertation can be summarized in two major categories. First, social capital in innovation communities is self-reinforcing as multiple dimensions of social capital are related to each other in a circular manner. As this circle of relationships can result in a wheel of fortune (where social capital within the community reproduces itself), as well as in a doom loop (where social capital within the community destroys itself), antecedents of different dimensions of social capital are highly relevant for both the theoretical understanding of the rise of social capital as well as managerial efforts to influence social relationships between corporate innovation community members.

I have structured antecedents of interrelated dimensions of social capital on three interrelated levels, representing the second category of findings. On the individual level, which captures antecedents that are specific to individual community members, I have identified personality and motivations of community members as antecedents of social capital. On the organizational level, which captures antecedents that are related to the supporting organization and, thus, determine the environment in which the community enacts, data suggested that both formal and informal organization as well as corporate culture are important antecedents of social capital. Finally, the community level of antecedents entails aspects that affect the community as a collective and includes facets of creative task design, leadership as well as community workshop and platform design.