

## Managing change in interfirm networks

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**Purpose** This paper illustrates the applicability and importance of routine-level analysis to understand change dynamics in complex multi-organisational entities.

**Design/methodology/approach** The research is based on an inductive case study of a co-located multi-organisational entity, namely a shopping center. Our data consists of semi-structured interviews, analysis of archival documents, as well as data collected from public sources, covering all key actors involved with the centre. We study a selection of routines of these actors, focusing on three critical transformational events in the history of the shopping centre: its opening, expansion and internationalisation.

**Findings** We highlight the role of routine interactions during changes in the multi-organisational entity. In the shopping centre, the analysis of higher-order routines enabled actors to identify and recognise changes in their operating environment and translate this understanding to a business decision. While some actors were successful in adapting their routines, others were not, and consequently were not able to succeed within the entity.

**Practical Implications** We argue that by understanding the routines of individual actors, it is possible, for example, for the management of the higher-order entities, to model and predict the effect of potential changes in the operating environment on actors involved with and within the entity.

**Originality/value** Despite extensive applications of organisational routines, existing literature fails to address routines associated with multi-organisational entities and facilities, and their use in understanding change processes within these contexts. We apply theories and literature on the management of shopping centres, dynamics of multi-organisational entities and organisational routines to create novel contribution to understanding change within multi-organisational complex settings.

**Keywords** Routines, Multi-organisational entity, Shopping centres, Networks, Market dynamic

**Article classification** Research Paper

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