

Célia Blanchet

Host University: Université libre de Bruxelles (Brussels, Belgium)

Host Department: Centre Emile Bernheim (Research Institute In Management Sciences)

Supervisor: Pr. Claudia Toma

From January 2018 to March 2018

Thanks to the ADRIPS travel grant, I had the opportunity to realize a postdoctoral research visit to the Centre Emile Bernheim of the Université libre de Bruxelles. The main goal of this stay was to initiate - with Pr. Claudia Toma - a new research project on information withholding in organizations, its antecedents and consequences.

Indeed, today, one of the biggest challenges for a company is to optimize collaborative work by encouraging employees to share their information. However, even if information-sharing practices have been put in place, organizations ironically have to deal with a common and detrimental phenomenon: *information withholding*. For example, 76% of employees retain their information from their co-workers (The Globe and Mail, 2006) and at least 11% of knowledge transfer events are incidents of knowledge hiding (Connelly, Zweig, Webster, & Trougakos, 2012).

Information withholding phenomenon refers to two behaviors: information hoarding and information hiding (Connelly et al., 2012; Webster et al. 2008). Information hoarding is an unintentional accumulation of information, which could be shared or not in the future. Information hiding is an intentional and individual effort to conceal information requested or not by someone else. In organizations, individuals may hide information in three ways. Individuals may not respond to information requests by pretending they do not have it (i.e., playing dumb), they may deliberately give incorrect information (i.e., evasive hiding), or they may also explain why they are unable to reply to the request (i.e., rationalized hiding). Research has begun to highlight the detrimental organizational consequences of information withholding among employees (e.g., Bogilović, Černe, & Škerlavaj, 2017; Connelly & Zweig, 2015). For instance, information withholding has negative impact on creativity (Černe, Cobik, Dysvik, & Škerlavaj, 2014).

However, knowledge hiding and its consequences in organizations remain largely unexplored (Connelly et al., 2012), and none research focus in the Belgian and French context. Moreover, research on its broader effects on organizations, such as its influence on interpersonal relationships or job satisfaction, is lacking. Therefore, the first aim of our first cross-sectional study was to identify the presence of information withholding in Belgian and French organizations. More specifically, is there a certain asymmetry in the way the employees perceive this phenomenon? Do they remember more information withholding behaviors from their colleagues than their own? The second aim of this study was to identify some consequences of this phenomenon in organizations. As different forms of information withholding exist (i.e., information hoarding and information hiding), we investigated whether some types of knowledge withholding are more detrimental than others. Moreover, do the relationships between information withholding and its consequences are affected by whether employees recalled information withholding behaviors from themselves or from colleagues?

Thus, we conducted a first survey study between January 2018 and March 2018. A total of 293 Belgian and French employees coming from a large spectrum of professional sectors and organizations responded to our survey. The first section of the questionnaire aimed to measure the

two forms of information withholding (i.e., information hiding and information hoarding) and information sharing (Connelly et al. 2012). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions: “Self” (e.g., *I pretended that I did not know the information*) vs. “Other” (e.g., *My colleague pretended that he or she did not know the information*). The second section of the questionnaire aimed to measure some organizational consequences of information withholding, related to individual level (i.e., turnover intention, job satisfaction, perceived individual performance) and group-level (i.e., cohesiveness, intragroup conflict, trust, perceived team performance). As information withholding is an undesirable work behavior, we included a scale of social desirability. In the last section of the questionnaire, socio-bio-demographical data were requested. The questionnaire also covered some professional details, such as job status, size of organizations, and job sector in which participants work. The data analyses are currently ongoing and results will be reported in a peer-reviewed article.

I truly thank Claudia Toma for supervising my research program during my stay to the University libre de Bruxelles, for her friendly welcome, our stimulating exchanges, and for giving me the opportunity to be a full member of the CEB. I’d also like to thank all the members of the CEB: I have learned so much from attending in our multidisciplinary scientific seminars and other scientific events. Thank you for your advices and for allowing me to present my researches. I also thank all the members of the Center for Social and Cultural Psychology for inviting me to attend their research seminars and to share my work. I would specifically like to thank Laetitia Renier - PhD student at the CEB - for our challenging and friendly exchanges. This postdoctoral visit has been helping me to acquire an applied perspective and organizational-level background in my research. Moreover, working with a multidisciplinary research team was personally and professionally stimulating. Finally, I sincerely thank the ADRIPS, as well as the EASP, for giving me this wonderful opportunity: some new research projects are already underway!

References.

- Bogilović, S., Černe, M., & Škerlavaj, M. (2017). Hiding behind a mask? Cultural intelligence, knowledge hiding, and individual and team creativity. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 26*(5), 710-723.
- Černe, M., Nerstad, C. G., Dysvik, A., & Škerlavaj, M. (2014). What goes around comes around: Knowledge hiding, perceived motivational climate, and creativity. *Academy of Management Journal, 57*(1), 172-192.
- Connelly, C. E., & Zweig, D. (2015). How perpetrators and targets construe knowledge hiding in organizations. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 24*(3), 479-489.
- Connelly, C. E., Zweig, D., Webster, J., & Trougakos, J. P. (2012). Knowledge hiding in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 33*(1), 64-88.
- The Globe and Mail. (2006). The weekly web poll. Friday May 12, 2006, C1.
- Webster, J., Brown, G., Zweig, D., Connelly, C. E., Brodt, S., & Sitkin, S. (2008). Beyond knowledge sharing: Knowledge withholding at work. In J. J. Martocchio (Ed.), *Research in personnel and human resources management*, Vol. 27 (pp. 1–37). Bradford: Emerald Group Publishing.