The Swedish Research School of Management and Information Technology

Summer greetings

One of the research school's latest alumni is Belén Casales Morici who defended her thesis "Acting Entrepreneurially and Strategically in Heavily Regulated Sectors" May 5, 2020, at Uppsala University.

Belén, can you brief us – what was the thesis about?

The thesis is about strategic entrepreneurship in heavily regulated sectors. In such sectors, firms operate in an unusual multi-actor marketplace where various interdependencies of systems often complicate their development. An important inquiry with significant practical relevance in these challenging settings is how firms can act strategically (create and sustain a competitive advantage) while acting entrepreneurially (identifying and exploring new opportunities). This is what strategic entrepreneurship is based on, placing it at the nexus of strategic management and entrepreneurship and bringing together two types of activities in firms: the sustaining of competitive advantage (advantage-seeking activity) and the identification of opportunities (opportunity-seeking activity).

And what will you do next – continue studying strategic entrepreneurship?

I would like to continue the research on strategic entrepreneurship, especially in the framework of decision-making. I would like to conduct this research in the healthcare sector since it is a highly regulated sector which makes decision-making difficult in different ways.

Did you experience any advantages with being part of a research school in management and IT?

Yes, belonging to the research school in management and IT gave me several advantages. It provided me with an inspiring environment. Furthermore, as an MIT Ph.D. student, I had the chance to attend several conferences and complete several cross-cutting Ph.D. courses that helped to develop and improve my research. MIT gave me valuable knowledge about management and the IT spheres and interacting with the experienced and committed MIT broad community was a great opportunity to enrich my research by getting feedback from them. The diversity at the school across all academics and Ph.D. students enriched my journey as a Ph.D. and contributed to forming my critical thinking. It also led to my personal development as a researcher that dares to think differently.

And do you have any funny anecdote from your time at the research school?

I don´t remember any special anecdotes but I can say that all the conferences and meetings have been fun, entertaining, and inspiring.

Belén Casales Morici ▼
(private photo)

Good luck with your future work!

Thank you, Peter, for doing such a great job with the research school in management and IT, together with all the academics and Ph.D. scholars involved, making MIT a great place to be. Thank you also for being a great opponent in my thesis defense. The best opponent I could wish for ∎

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MIT Alumni Update

One of our more recent alumni, Ott Velsberg, has the title 'Government Chief Data Officer of Estonia'. Can you explain what such position means?

I'm the current Chief Data Officer of Estonian Government and in charge of coordinating data governance and data science, including domains of artificial intelligence, open data, citizen-centric data governance, data privacy and regulation, once-only principle, data architecture, government-to-business data exchange and much more. For instance, this has meant that I have been leading citizen-centric data governance in Estonia to support the re-use and transparency of government held data. Initiatives include consent management platform, personal data usage monitor, privacy regulation and data hygiene best-practices.

Supported the development of data science and management education, for instance, led the creation of first data science master's degree program in Estonia. Lead the renewal of government data policy, regulation and strategy, including adherence to European Union, Council of Europe and OECD regulation and policy.

I'm also led Estonian Government from 27th to 5th place in open data according to European Data Maturity Index within two years from 2018 to 2020. During this time, the known open data use-cases increased 15-fold and available data by 10-fold. Among other things, relaunched open-data portal, developed open-data standards, renewed regulation and policy, created open data strategy.

Your thesis that was defended at Umeå University had the title "In the Age of IoT: Exploring Public Sector Smartness." What was it about?
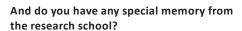
The research outlined areas of IoT implementation in the public sector in Northern Europe and key application areas in which IoT is widely used to enable smartness. The research found that transportation and infrastructure are the most prevalent application areas for IoT, with more than half of the participating municipalities applying IoT. However, the expected results and wide-scale IoT adoption differ significantly from the results of previous theoretical research, and that IoT systems do not meet public sector needs, particularly sectoral needs.

The research concludes that the public sector is in its early stages of IoT implementation, namely exploring, prototyping, and piloting. Therefore, it is essential to provide solutions that satisfy the basic requirements of the public sector to support the use of IoT in the public sector and to transition towards smartness. However, this is complicated by the broad spectrum of conditions in which local governments find themselves, and no unique paradigm of smart city evolution exists.

Have the thesis been of use in the current position?

The research and its outcomes has greatly affected my strategic planning and project initiation within the government. This has allowed to link the theoretical research and its findings with the real-world setting and plan activities accordingly. For instance, we are currently working on various projects directed at municipalities. These include implementation of a solution called Public Eye within municipalities. Public Eye is simply put a multi-platform end-to-end Crowd Counting System based on Deep Learning which utilizes CCTV cameras. The study further highlighted how IoT enables a smarter public sector and how we can increase contextual awareness, lead to data-driven value creation and how we can enable innovation-oriented financing. For instance, it affected how we provide funding for innovation projects and enable innovation projects to fail. This was previously not possible.

And do you have any special memory from the research school?

The time spent at Umeå University overall provided me with valuable experience and knowledge required to pursue anything. One of my earliest memories is from my master's degree studies where my supervisor Daniel Nylén and I were studying how dental health cards were implemented. The meetings with dentists highlighted the need to improve how we handle and re-use data and the many problems that arise with ICT implementation. This in return sparked my interest in pursue PhD studies and move to government.

Thanks for taking your time!

Thanks ■

MITSC2022 at Umeå University Online

The spring conference was hosted by Umeå University during three days in March.

Jan Recker, professor of information systems and digital innovation at the University of Hamburg, was the invited keynote speaker. *Anna Uhlin* from Mälardalen University had her final seminar with Professor Fredrik Tell and PhD student Yunchen Sun, both from Uppsala University, as opponents. *Sara Bomark* from Umeå University was awarded the MITSC2022 Best Reviewer Award. The next conference (MITAC2022) will take place at Uppsala University October 4-6 ■