

Intellectual Capital in a Seaport Context

José Vale, João Ribeiro and Manuel Branco

Institute of Accounting and Administration of Porto (ISCAP), Portugal

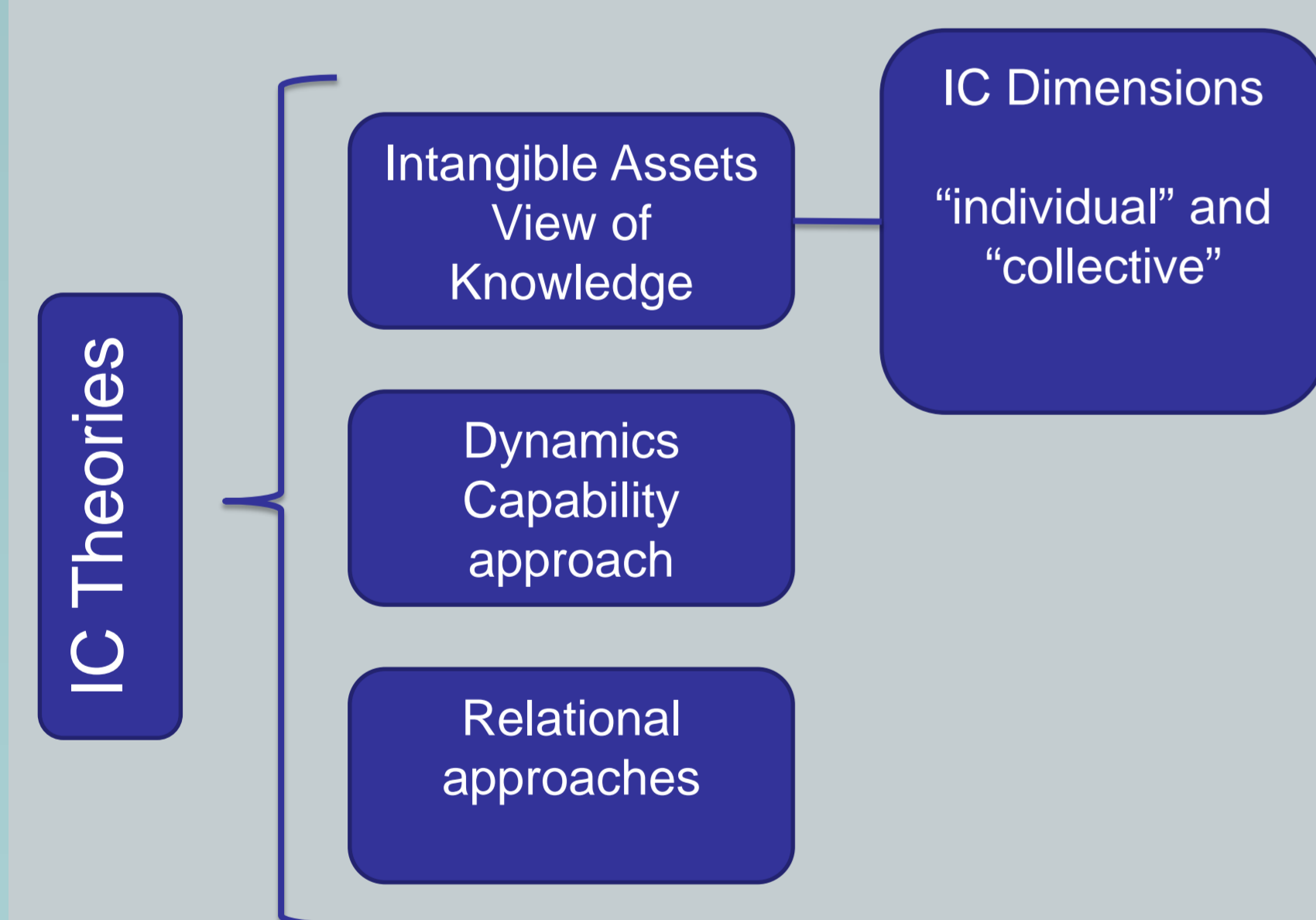
Faculty of Economics, Porto University, Portugal

Introduction

This poster, which is the result of an ongoing PhD thesis project, illustrates how and why the Intellectual Capital (IC) concept can be applied to a seaport. As far as the authors are aware, most of the research in IC has been focused on individual firms. Although some recent papers examine macro-level organizations, such as regions, none exist on seaports. Also, there is a lack of research related to the ways IC is created and maintained as a dynamic process. In addition, there is a paucity of management sciences' research on to maritime transportation and seaports. Several research questions are thus pertinent, whose answers can have important strategic and managerial implications for the seaport and its stakeholders.

IC in Clusters and Networks

The development of clusters located in a specific city, region or territory is very important because the organisations' ability to exchange or share knowledge develops new capacities, resulting in an increase of their "individual" IC and the clusters' "collective" IC. This knowledge-based capital can be composed by intertwined IC dimensions, comprising intangibles at an "individual" and at a "collective" level.



Also, the dynamics capabilities and the relational approaches try to analyse how this network is operating as a relational system and how this influences the network capability to create intellectual capital.

Ports as Clusters of Organisations related in a Network System

Ports can be defined as clusters which include several activities and actors, and where proximity continues to be an important factor. Also, while most clusters are simple co-located organizations, some are networks of strong cooperation, encompassing relationships between various economic agents. Thus, it becomes fundamental the functional relationships among the seaport location, and the other maritime or inland functional sites.

Research Questions

Several research questions are pertinent attending to the specificity of the context:

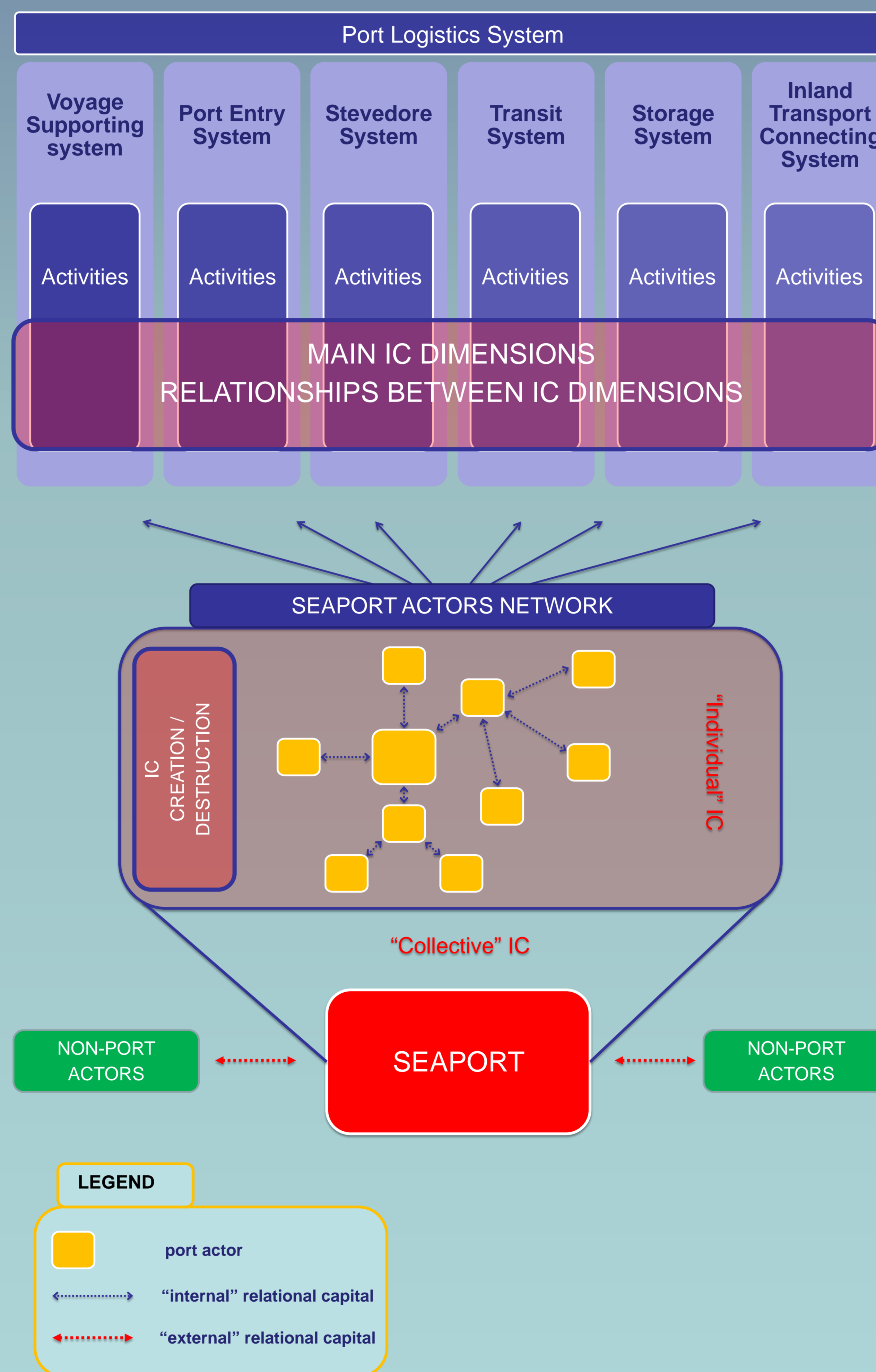
- What are the main dimensions of the Seaport's IC?
- How do these dimensions relate with each other?
- How is IC, in its different dimensions, created and/or destroyed within a seaport?

Methodology

Due to the fact that we are exploring a complex reality, a case study is being done in order to analyse a network in a socio-centric perspective. Rather than an organisation, a seaport is a network composed of many individual firms connected in a relatively complex way.

Early Insights

- Data from two interviews suggest that:
- we can find the three "main" dimensions of IC within a seaport context. Also, we can find two types of relational capital: an "internal" one encompassing the relationships between the actors belonging to the seaport and an "external" one encompassing the relationships between the seaport and external entities, such as universities or municipalities.
 - the main IC dimension may be the relational capital because a seaport is composed by several firms that collaborate with each other in order to achieve common internal and external objectives.
 - in a seaport, the IC dimensions may be interrelated.



Expected Contributions

- To produce knowledge by making the connection between the IC theory and networks theory;
- Transferability of the conceptualization (IC in networks);
- Extend literature related to IC in a context of a network.

References

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