

EURAM  
2010



10<sup>th</sup>

19th-22nd May, Rome

**Back to the Future**

Tor Vergata University, Rome, ITALY

## SIG: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

---

### **TRACK 36: Rethinking the Strategic Imperative of Organizational Learning Practices - Absorptive Capacity from a Process and Network Perspective**

#### **Track Chair:**

*Prof. Wolfgang H. Güttel*, Johannes Kepler-University Linz, [wolfgang.guettel@jku.at](mailto:wolfgang.guettel@jku.at)

#### **Co-track Chairs:**

*Prof. Elena Antonacopoulou*, University of Liverpool,

[Elena.antonacopoulou@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Elena.antonacopoulou@liverpool.ac.uk)

*Prof. Roberto Filippini*, University of Padua, [roberto.filippini@unipd.it](mailto:roberto.filippini@unipd.it)

*Prof. Stephan Kaiser*, Universität der Bundeswehr Munich, [stephan.kaiser@unibw.de](mailto:stephan.kaiser@unibw.de)

*Dr. Allan Macpherson*, University of Liverpool, [a.macpherson@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:a.macpherson@liverpool.ac.uk)

*Dr. Gordon Müller-Seitz*, Freie Universität Berlin, [gordon.mueller-seitz@tu-berlin.de](mailto:gordon.mueller-seitz@tu-berlin.de)

#### **Organizational coordinator:**

*Prof. Wolfgang H. Güttel*, Johannes Kepler-University Linz, [wolfgang.guettel@jku.at](mailto:wolfgang.guettel@jku.at)

#### **Abstract:**

The ability of firms to sense their environment, to recognize new opportunities and to capture new information is important for gaining and sustaining competitive advantage. Research on absorptive capacity addresses this topic by investigating the process by which firms recognize valuable information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends. However, nearly 20 years after Cohen and Levinthal's (1990) pioneering work and several conceptual (e.g. Todorova and Durisin 2007) and empirical contributions (e.g. Jansen et al. 2005), Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) conclude that the progress in this field is still insufficient to help us to understand how the strategic imperative of organizational learning can be operationalized in practice. The absorption of *new knowledge from outside and the embeddedness* into the firm's existing knowledge base is complex and happens continuously and simultaneously on various levels within a firm (Okhuysen and Eisenhardt 2002, Antonacopoulou et al. 2008).

In this track, we seek to develop further the strategic orientation of Organizational Learning research and to bridge these gaps, especially in relation to processes of absorptive capacity,

knowledge integration, dynamic capability or ambidexterity. We strive to advance the qualitative-orientated process perspective (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008, Filippini et al. 2008) on absorptive capacity by inviting papers that explore a process and network perspective (Gnyawali and Madhavan 2001). Some of the questions we hope to discuss include but are not restricted to the following:

- How and on which level(s) do firms deliberately or unconsciously recognize and process new information and knowledge?
- How and in which ways do organizations embed new information and knowledge into their existing organizational routines and, more broadly, into the firm's knowledge base?
- Which research strategies, methods and techniques are adequate to capture the complex interplay between different organizational network levels in recognizing, assimilating and applying new information and knowledge?