

## CALL FOR PAPERS

# Knowledge Transfer and Cultural Diversity in MNCs

July, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014 - Neuchâtel, Switzerland

### 1. CONFERENCE THEME

Multinational Companies (MNCs) increasingly play an important role in international exchanges and world domestic product. They are further more and more considered as the main engine for knowledge transfers worldwide. For MNCs, the topic of knowledge transfer has been studied in different ways, and from different disciplinary perspectives. While economists have mainly studied the effects of knowledge transfer on MNCs' productivity, management scholars have rather shed light on the processes of transferring knowledge. In this singular conference, we invite papers that look at knowledge transfer and take intercultural diversity into account. More precisely, **two objectives** are constitutive of this conference.

The first objective is to **create relationships between economic sciences and management sciences**. The conference thus aims at building a bridge between these two disciplinary fields, by highlighting the contributions and methodologies related to each of these disciplines. In addition, if a large number of studies have explored the determinants and effects of knowledge transfer, the intercultural dimension seems however to have been much less studied. The second objective of the conference is thus to **stimulate debates around the role of intercultural diversity for knowledge transfers in MNCs**. In other words, the conference aims to attract scholars with a background in economics and management sciences who are interested in the role of intercultural diversity for knowledge transfer and its effects on the performance of MNCs.

The conference deals basically with topics directly related to economic issues. In a context of a growing intercultural diversity, the theme of knowledge transfer clearly involves the sharing and exchange of knowledge within MNCs as well as more strategic aspects for MNCs. Also, the contributions of management sciences are necessary for understanding intercultural issues. The meaning and importance of cultural diversity for the processes and effects of knowledge transfer within MNCs have to be taken into account. Questions of interest include: Does cultural diversity constrain knowledge transfer within MNCs? How can knowledge transfer succeed when taking cultural diversity within MNCs into account? What is the role of management? What are the coordination mechanisms related to cultural diversity that promote knowledge transfer within MNCs? How do knowledge transfers impact MNCs' productivity by integrating the intercultural dimension?

## 2. PLENARY SESSIONS

We are delighted to announce that **four distinguished speakers** will deliver keynote addresses during the conference:



**Tina AMBOS** (University of Sussex, United Kingdom): *“Effective knowledge sharing across distance: managing practice groups in MNCs”*



**John CANTWELL** (Rutgers Business School, United States): *“Explaining patterns of MNC subunit knowledge creation and knowledge sourcing”*



**Yih-teen LEE** (IESE, Spain): *“Managing cultural differences: individual- and organization-level competences, identities, and adaptation”*



**Riikka SARALA** (University of North Carolina at Greensboro, United States): *“The impact of cultural diversity on knowledge transfer in international acquisitions”*

## 3. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Authors are initially requested to submit a synopsis (**700 words**) of their paper indicating the key theoretical and empirical questions addressed in the paper, the conceptual field(s) informing the paper, if applicable the data set used in the paper and the major theoretical and empirical contributions of the paper. All synopses for the conference need to be sent before **March 14<sup>th</sup> 2014** to [GES.MNCs@he-arc.ch](mailto:GES.MNCs@he-arc.ch)

All submissions will be subjected to a competitive review process on the basis of originality, rigor and relevance. No author information or other identifying information should appear anywhere in the submission. All authors will be informed about the outcome of the review process no later than **April, 15<sup>th</sup> 2014**.

Authors of selected papers are requested to submit completed papers (4000-6000 words, without references, graphs and tables) by **June, 15<sup>th</sup> 2014**. At least one author of each paper must register for the conference and present the paper.

More specifically, authors should submit a **synopsis in one of the following tracks**:

- **Track 1: Economics of knowledge transfer**

The increase in international knowledge flows, both within the MNC and across different innovation systems, involves technology transfer from headquarters to foreign subsidiaries and ‘reverses’ technology transfer from foreign R&D units to domestic operations and between subsidiaries. These international knowledge flows improve the performance of the MNC as well as domestic and local firms in the same and related industries. This track calls for papers discussing the impact of knowledge transfer on host and home economies.

- **Track 2: HRM and knowledge transfer**

Within companies, people play a central role to transfer knowledge. While ability and motivation are important for employees to absorb and disseminate relevant knowledge, little is known about how national values, industrial contexts, corporate cultures or managerial practices influence the likeliness and/or success of knowledge transfer. This track aims to gather studies that focus on the contextual influences and HR managerial practices that influence knowledge transfer, especially within MNCs.

- **Track 3: Individual competencies and cultural diversity**

To succeed in cross-cultural contexts, it is important to understand critical competencies that help individuals and MNCs function effectively in such settings. Recent development in the theories of cultural intelligence, global mindset, global identity, and global leadership offers valuable insights on such competencies and their possible contribution to cross-cultural effectiveness at both individual and organizational level. We invite papers that explore the nature and function of cultural competencies that help managers and MNCs alike to better leverage cultural diversity.

- **Track 4: Knowledge management in MNCs**

Fostering knowledge transfer among subsidiaries and between headquarters and subsidiaries contributes to performance of MNCs. We need however to know more about practices, tools and types of knowledge that support knowledge transfer in specific contexts, as well as about the challenges of detecting valuable and potentially transferable knowledge in MNCs. This track aims to discuss studies that deal with knowledge detection, transfer and management in MNCs.

- **Track 5: Cultural diversity and knowledge transfer**

Managing cultural diversity has been of interest to both research and practice. While creativity, innovation and conflict, among others, have been in focus, the challenges in the process of transferring relevant knowledge for MNCs between different entities located in different countries still exist. In this track, we invite papers that focus on the various relationships between cultural diversity and knowledge transfer, especially in MNCs

#### 4. CONFERENCE DATE, VENUE & REGISTRATION

The conference will be hosted by:

**HEG ARC**  
**21, Espace de l'Europe – 2000 Neuchâtel, Switzerland**  
<http://gestion.he-arc.ch/>

The conference will start on **1 July 2014 at 9.00am** and will end on **2 July 2014 at 6.00pm**.

Conference registrations will start from **3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014**. Requests for registration will be addressed to **GES.MNCs@he-arc.ch**

The regular conference fee is **CHF 180**. Doctoral students will be charged a special rate of **CHF 100**.

Beside conference proceedings, selected papers following a process of peer review will be published in a book by L'Harmattan.

## 5. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (\*)

Sabrina ALIOUI (ESTA School of Business and Engineering, France)  
Lamia BEN HAMIDA (HEG Arc Neuchâtel, Switzerland)  
Flore BRIDOUX (Amsterdam Business School, The Netherlands)  
Sylvie CHEVRIER (Université Paris Est, France)  
Aurélié DUDEZERT (Université de Poitiers, France)  
Dominique FORAY (EPFL, Switzerland)  
Alain Max GUÉNETTE (HEG Arc Neuchâtel, Switzerland)  
Philippe GUGLER (University of Fribourg, Switzerland)  
Guldem KARAMUSTAFA (HEC, University of Geneva, Switzerland)  
Helena KARJALAINEN (EM Normandie, France)  
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Dana MINBAEVA (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark)  
Evalde MUTABAZI (EM Lyon, France)  
Philippe PIERRE (Université de Paris IX-Dauphine, France)  
Grazia SANTANGELO (University of Catania, Italy)  
Jean-Claude SARDAS (CGS, Mines ParisTech, France)  
Jean-Pierre SEGAL (Université de Paris IX-Dauphine, France)  
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Alain VAS (Louvain School of Management, Belgium)  
Axèle GIROUD (UNCTAD)  
Francesca SANNA-RANDACCIO (University of Roma)

*(\*) As of January 2014*

## 6. ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Lamia BEN HAMIDA (HEG Arc Neuchâtel, Switzerland),  
Alain Max GUENETTE (HEG Arc Neuchâtel, Switzerland)  
Christophe LEJEUNE (ESTA School of Business and Engineering, France, and Louvain School of Management, Belgium)

## 7. CONTACT AND INQUIRIES

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