

**RESEARCHING THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF SMES AND MICRO-BUSINESSES – ADVANCES AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES****Track Chairs:**

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**Abstract:**

Internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is not a novel phenomenon but an increasingly relevant component of research in the field of international business. While early research on firm internationalization has focused on large multinational enterprises (MNEs) and previous research on SME internationalization has attempted to identify similarities and differences to MNEs (Ruzzier et al, 2006) and domestic ventures (Mc Dougall, 1989) fresh perspectives are currently emerging. While some early attempts in theorizing on internationalization derived from SMEs did find quite some acceptance in the past (for an overview, see e.g. Coviello & McAuley, 1999), even traditional concepts such as the Uppsala internationalization model are more recently being criticized for being too deterministic (Johanson & Vahlne 1993) and lacking explanatory power for non-mainstream forms of SME internationalization (Forsman et al 2002). This track provides empirical and theoretical contributions addressing those shortcomings and inviting critical thought on SME internationalization. Our track particularly invites (but is not limited to) research addressing the issues outlined below:

- Research highlighting the state-of-the-art in research on SME internationalization from various thematic and theoretical perspectives. Submissions are also invited to follow up existing reflections on recent developments which question or revisit existing work, e.g. the idea of a liability of outsidership and the role of networks (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009).
- Research identifying and/or responding to persistent gaps or contradictions in international entrepreneurship or SME research resulting from conflicting explanations and viewpoints, different empirical focus and imbalance of different theoretical perspectives involved (e.g., Keupp and Gassmann, 2009) and research integrating findings from such differing perspectives.

- Research contributing to underexplored and/or emerging areas in existing SME research, such as e.g. the internationalization of small and micro-businesses (as compared to merely medium-sized firms) and studies from different contextual perspectives. Examples of such perspectives are less researched industries (e.g., craft, art, trade) or regional contexts which might attribute different societal roles to SMEs (e.g. the German “Mittelstand”) and might be associated with specific internationalization patterns.

Furthermore, we invite research

- illustrating cases of successful (or unsuccessful) SME internationalization processes and modes of operation abroad,
- providing associations of SME internationalization with other disciplines or fields (marketing, entrepreneurship),
- dealing with time related aspects of SME or microbusiness internationalization (e.g., rapid internationalization patterns),
- identifying overlaps to research on MNE internationalization (e.g. Dunning’s advantage categories),
- looking at the role of (social) networks and new media for SME and micro-business internationalization,
- identifying factors affecting the ability of SMEs to continue to grow and to cope with growth, and
- analyzing growth patterns of firms with rapid internationalization patterns (e.g., born global firms).

While our call highlights areas of particular interest to this track, we also welcome contributions beyond these themes as long as they take an international perspective on SMEs and microbusinesses. Comparative studies of SMEs and microbusinesses are also welcome. Theoretical and empirical submissions associated with international business but without a clear SME or microbusiness focus should be submitted to the General Track of the SIG International Management.

**Keywords:** SME, micro-business, internationalization, networks, international entrepreneurship