The last two chapters of the book contain brief summaries and recommendations, and point to directions for future research into mergers and acquisitions. It is on the basis of personal research that the author defines the need for more study in the following fields: key success factors in the integration phase following the formal takeover of the company, cultural conditions inherent in merger and acquisition processes and an analysis of aspects of Polish culture on acquisition processes in line with the Hofstede model, for example, analysis of the creation of value in the merger and acquisition process, and a comparative analysis of successfully concluded mergers and acquisitions in selected Central and Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

A large appendix containing a wealth of data from both secondary sources as well as the results of the author's personal research and questionnaires applied in studies forms a valuable part of the reviewed book.

As mentioned in the introduction, this book is a valuable source of information for persons involved in the transformation processes of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Its conclusions can serve as a basis for formulating scientific hypotheses for further, in–depth research such as qualitative studies of individual cases of mergers and acquisitions. It may also serve as something of a manual for companies intending to enter the Polish market through mergers or acquisitions.

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# Mike Geppert, Beyond the Learning Organizations. Path of organizational learning in the East Germany context, Gower, 2000

In the latest decade, management passed through a paradox, that was not being able to master its own paradigm: *the change*. There is no time for explaining the change, because it is in a big hurry. While the ink on the books and studies about "organizations learning to change" has not dried yet, *Mike Geppert* proposed to pass beyond this syntagm. He did it in a very documented way, in his latest book - the outcome of more than 10 years of research about learning organizations in East Germany's firms. As, in his modesty, the author suggests, the testing field of his conclusions might be not only Eastern Germany, but also the whole Eastern and Central European zone. In fact, it is an excellent book about the practice of organizational learning, in general.

As the author confesses, the purpose of his research has changed over the time: he started with a study on *managerial and organizational processes* in East Germany firms and ended with a *theoretical construction* about organizational learning. Any researcher would like to have such an experience as Mike Geppert had. In the following we will shortly describe his accomplishment, using the reader's logic.

Based upon a tune research of organization learning literature, the author makes a critical analysis of the most important previous approaches: *intervention research* and *neo-institutionalism*. Both are seen as having one-side view on the institutions' role in the process of organizational learning: the first approach underestimates this role and the second, overestimates it. Thus, the *main objective of the study* becomes a better understanding of the "dialectic relation" between organizational learning and institutional framework. In achieving this objective, the author introduces the analyzing of organizational learning, the *enactment concept*. Based upon this concept, the organizational learning is a *social interactive process through which the actors and groups of actors in the organization build both the social constrains and opportunities confronted with in the continuous process of learning*.

The author is not concerned with learning organizing and planning, but with its *social practice*, the way in which the actors actually learn. Thus, he approached the *case study* research. In each of the three cases, the organizational learning process is studied in different moments. In this way, the author discovers the ways the actors build their *internal and external* environments, the *intra and inter organizational relationships*, the relevant *paths of human resources management* in the process of organizational learning and *how these relationships and paths change* over the time. The process of organizational learning is an outcome of the interactions between three couples of "dialectical tensions": between *old and new tasks*, between *homogeneous and heterogeneous knowledge creation* and, respectively, between *intended and non-intended forms of organizational learning*. These tensions act in different manners on the organizational learning in each of the cases, according to the *meanings* of their cultural systems, these systems have *degrees of awareness and structuration* and their *temporariness*. In order to offer a deeper insight on the relationships between organizational learning and institutional framework, the organizational learning processes are compared based upon a pack of *seven dimensions*. This comparative approach led to understanding the *institutional nature* of organizational learning. Organizational learning is a specific social creation embedded in a specific, more or less institutionalized cultural system.

The *structure* of the book is designed in an appropriate way, serving the conceptual and methodological framework described above. It contains six chapters, including the *Introduction*. *The second* chapter establishes the conceptual framework of the book. The critical reflection on the main previous

approaches of the organizational learning led the author to believe that the *enactment perspective* on organizational learning is the most appropriate, because it is based on it, the organizational learning can be explained as a *social construction of constrains and opportunities* for the actors' future learning. *The third chapter* explains the *methodology* of the study. Here, the research design is developed and the book's logical structure is explained. Out of this explanation one might understand that each of the book chapter's has a specific function in the research process, seen as a whole. As the author confesses, *the book itself is a learning process. The fourth chapter* approaches the three *case studies* on East German firms. The most important part of this chapter is the description of the organizational learning processes in each of these companies. In each case, the author uses the enactment perspective in describing the ways of changing the internal and external interrelations after the wall came down, and the ways in which these changes influenced participation and human resource management. Each case ends with a synopsis referring to the initial conditions, enactment processes and perspectives for future learning. *The fifth chapter* is devoted to comparative analysis of the three cases, based upon the following seven *dimensions*: firm's identity-building, its learning recipes, learning from others experience, participation, continuity of learning, role of the slack resources in the organizational learning and planning of this process. These seven dimensions are, in fact a guide in explaining the differences between the processes of learning in the investigated companies. *The sixth chapter* (as a final discussion) is the most interesting. In fact, it approaches the three *institutional tensions* the actors and groups of actors confront with in interactive learning. With respect of the *tension between old and new tasks*, the author concluded that in the investigated cases, the organizational learning processes are based not so much upon new knowledge and recipes, but on creative forgetting of old organizational modes. It is not about learning through recipes, but learning through practice. *Acting, the actors learn and forget*. Some organizations "refine" existing learning recipes, others "reshape" the existing recipes, while others learn through "experimentation". With respect of *tension between homogenous and heterogeneous knowledge creation,* the author considers that the companies looking for increasing the efficiency of their traditional tasks, need a *homogenous* knowledge creation, focused on their internal environment. They learn primarily through "exploitation". In opposition, the companies opened to new tasks need a *heterogeneous* knowledge creation, focused on learning from others (*in, from* and *through networks*). Here it is about learning primarily through "exploration". Concerning the *tension between intended and non-intended learning,* the investigated firms show that in the cases of well structured learning recipes, the outcomes of non-intended learning are usually neglected (learning is like a *game* with severe rules). Conversely, in the "creative" organizations, the managers are aware of the opportunities brought by non-intended learning (learning is like an *open game*, without severe rules).