



Call for Papers

“Exploring Entrepreneurial Ventures, Family Firms, and Hidden Champions”
6th International Research Forum on Mittelstand, biennial conference 2020

Track 02: Narratives and Topics of Sociology & Psychology in Entrepreneurship & Family Firms

Mannheim, Germany, May 24th-26th, 2020.

Submissions accepted until January 25th, 2020.

Track Chairs:

Jan-Philipp Ahrens (University of Mannheim, Germany)

Isabell Stamm (Technical University of Berlin, Germany)

Francesco Barbera (Adelaide University)

Allan Discua Cruz (Lancaster University)

Description of the Track:

Part of being entrepreneurial is acting “as if” an imagined future will come true (Gartner, Bird and Starr 2016; Beckert 2016). Entrepreneurs thus envision future states and plan and take concrete economic actions towards their targets. An important part of this consists in telling a good story. Having a vision for one’s venture and being able to convince with that story helps in the process of recruiting financial and social capital (Downing 2005; Gartner 2007, 2010). Hence, in

entrepreneurship research, narratives have played an important role (Johansson 2004; Steyart and Horth 2004). Likewise, many researchers have examined the process of storytelling within the family firm and across generations in business families as an important vehicle of transgenerational entrepreneurship (Barbera, Stamm and DeWitt 2018; Dawson and Hjorth 2012; Dalpiaz and Philipps, 2014; Hamilton, Discua Cruz, and Jack 2017; Jaskiewicz, Combs and Rau 2015; Kammerlander, Dessi, Bird, Floris and Murru 2015). Despite this turn towards narratives as key to understand the particularities of the actions and the success of entrepreneurs and family firms, there is still much to learn. Open questions are, for instance: Where do entrepreneurial narratives come from? How are they disseminated within the organization and the family? What makes up powerful narratives?

Remarkably, narratives have mainly been looked at as “internal tools” that entrepreneurs can more or less strategically use to attract employees, customers, investors, or successors. However, we are lacking research that systematically scrutinizes external perceptions. Take for example the recent turn to entrepreneurial teams: Is the idea of collective entrepreneurship that requires equal partners in a joint venture a new idealized narrative on entrepreneurship? What are the stories investors, bankers, policy-makers or the public tell about entrepreneurs and family firms? What are typical metaphors used, images crafted or stereotypes transported through these narratives? And how do these narratives shape the institutional environment in which entrepreneurs and family firms operate, such as funding policies, company law, tax regulations, business advising or consumer behaviour?

This session welcomes research on the issue of narratives in and on entrepreneurship and family firms. This spans contributions from management, psychology, sociology, linguistics, communication and media studies. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Storytelling as part of self-marketing
- Visions, fictions and dreams in entrepreneurship
- Organizational narratives
- Narratives within the entrepreneurial family and entrepreneurial legacies
- Public narratives of entrepreneurs
- Family firms in the media
- Metaphors on family firms and entrepreneurs
- Narrative methods in entrepreneurship and family business research

For details on timeline, formatting, and manuscript length, please kindly refer to the general guidelines on the conference website at: <http://www.forum-mittelstandsforschung.de>

To submit your paper to the 2020 conference:
<http://www.forum-mittelstandsforschung.de>

Literature:

- 1) Barbera, Francesco; Stamm, Isabell; DeWitt, Rocki (2018): Entrepreneurial Legacies and Transgenerational Entrepreneurship in Family Firms: From Imprinting to Imagined Futures. *Family Business Review*. 31(3): 352-378.
- 2) Beckert, Jens (2016): Imagined futures. Fictional expectations and capitalist dynamics. Cambridge, MA, London, England: Harvard University Press.
- 3) Dalpiaz, E. Tracey P. & Phillips N. (2014): Succession Narratives in Family Business: The Case of Alessi. In: *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice* 39 (6): 1375–1394.
- 4) Dawson, Alexandra; Hjorth, Daniel (2012): Advancing Family Business Research Through Narrative Analysis. In: *Family Business Review* 25 (3): 339–355.
- 5) Downing, Stephen (2005): The Social Construction of Entrepreneurship: Narrative and Dramatic Processes in the Coproduction of Organizations and Identities. In: *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice* 29 (2): 185–204.
- 6) Gartner, William B., Barbara J. Bird, and Jennifer A. Starr (2016) Acting as if: Differentiating entrepreneurial from organizational behavior. In: *Entrepreneurship as organizing: Selected papers of William B. Gartner*, edited by William B. Gartner. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing: 108–26.
- 7) Gartner, William B. (2007): Entrepreneurial narrative and science of imagination. In: *Journal of Business Venturing* 22 (5): 613–627.

The deadline for submissions is 25th January 2020.

Submit your paper [here](#)