

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

# — mapping entrepreneurial group trajectories

Research Conference, 25-27 September 2019, Technische Universität Berlin, organized by the Research Group “Entrepreneurial Group Dynamics” and the DFG-Research Network “Venturing Together!”

Entrepreneurship, in the sense of creating, discovering and exploiting opportunities (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Shane, 2007), is a source for change and agility in capitalist societies (Schumpeter, 2009 [1941]; Swedberg, 2000). An increasing number of scholars can agree upon conceptualizing entrepreneurship as collective action (Klotz, Hmieleski, Bradley, & Busenitz, 2014; Ruef & Lounsbury, 2007; Thornton, 1999). The implementation of entrepreneurial projects, as Martin Ruef (2010) points out, involves a recruitment process of multiple individuals that invest time, money and energy. In this process, not only organizations emerge but also entrepreneurial groups are formed. Such small groups of individuals jointly subscribe to the entrepreneurial project, see themselves as being in this together, and develop a capacity to act collectively.

Numerous studies on new venture teams, start-ups, copreneurs, entrepreneurial families, migrant entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, or community engagement examine various forms and aspects of entrepreneurial groups, even if they may not refer to them as such. Together these studies create a large pool of empirical material and put forward theoretical concepts about the dynamics, context conditions and the group’s capacity to act collectively. A lot less research efforts, however, have gone into studying the full trajectory of various entrepreneurial groups. This would require theorizing about the long-term development of entrepreneurial groups, a framing of key events as transitions in these trajectories, and longitudinal studies of the full pathway of entrepreneurial groups.

Small groups as collective agents of entrepreneurial action add a layer of complexity to studying the entrepreneurial process. The composition of entrepreneurial groups may vary greatly across cases and across time ranging from former friends starting a business to multi-generational entrepreneurial families (Stamm, Discua Cruz, & Cailleut, forthcoming). While each group member may have individual motives for joining the group – for example creating their own job, striving to increase wealth, or dreaming to emancipate (Rindova, Barry, & Ketchen, 2009; Welter, Baker, Audretsch, & Gartner, 2016) – they share a common devotion to the entrepreneurial project. Each member fulfills a certain role within the group, and can hold various informal and formal roles within the organization(s) (e.g. founder, owner, successor, helping family member). The group has to react to or generate disruptions in the market, the industry or technology, but also has to deal with or initiate changes in group composition. From its formation to its dissolution, the entrepreneurial group forms its own trajectory; with entries and exits of group members as well as founding organizations and detachment from organizations (e.g. acquisitions, sale or closure) marking key transitional

events. The entrepreneurial group thus forms a distinct social unit beyond the formal organization with its own routines, social identity, power structures and pathways.

It is the goal of this research conference to create a platform for researchers interested in mapping entrepreneurial group trajectories over time and space. The tentative program features keynote speeches by Martin Ruef and Ugo Corte, who will reflect upon entrepreneurial groups as social orders and their collaborative trajectories. Invited and commented presentations will address the dynamics in the formation of groups, key transitional events such as member entry / exit or further business founding and closing (habitual entrepreneurship), and contextual influences on the trajectories of entrepreneurial groups. Please find a tentative program below.

The conference targets an audience of sociology and management scholars with a strong theoretical or empirical interest in a dynamic small group perspective on entrepreneurial action. With this Call for Participation, we intend to invite scholars at all levels who are currently engaged in or starting up research projects on issues concerning entrepreneurial groups and their pathways.

At this stage, we are particularly searching for poster presentations in our FORUM ON NEW RESEARCH. The idea is to create a working atmosphere, in which we can discuss new research ideas, concerns and methodological challenges at an early stage in the research process - open to researchers of all levels. Potential research interests include, but are not limited to the following:

- What are typical conditions under which entrepreneurial groups form?
- How does the group decide to include new members?
- What are strategies to synchronize life courses in entrepreneurial groups?
- In which ways do groups exclude members and force their exit?
- What are factors that influence habitual entrepreneurship of groups?
- How do groups engage in and disengage from additional businesses?
- Under what conditions do entrepreneurial groups dissolve?
- What are the methodological challenges of mapping group trajectories?

Interested scholars can submit an abstract of 200 words until April 30<sup>th</sup> to [isabell.stamm@tu-berlin.de](mailto:isabell.stamm@tu-berlin.de). Final posters should fulfill academic standards and depict the research question, theoretical framework, methodological design, expected findings and contributions.

If you are interested in attending the conference (or presenting a full paper), please contact the conference coordinator Marie Gutzeit at [m.gutzeit@tu-berlin.de](mailto:m.gutzeit@tu-berlin.de). Registration fees for attendees are 95 EUR. We have limited seats available on a first come, first serve basis.

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## Tentative Program

### \_ September 25 (Wednesday)

16:30	Welcome
17:00	<i>Key Note: Martin Ruef “Entrepreneurial Groups”</i>
18:00 - 19:00	<i>Presentations: Mapping Groups Across Time I</i>
19:30	<i>Networking Dinner</i>

### \_ September 26 (Thursday)

9:00 – 9:15	Opening Remarks
9:15 – 10:30	<i>Key Note: Ugo Corte “Collaborative Circles”</i>
10:30 – 11:00	<i>COFFEE BREAK</i>
11:00 – 12:30	<i>Presentations : Working-Together</i>
<b>12:30 – 15:00</b>	<b><i>FORUM: Poster Session on New Research (Flying Lunch)</i></b>
15:00 – 16:30	<i>Presentations: Mapping Groups Across Time II</i>
16:30 – 17:00	<i>COFFE BREAK</i>
17:00 – 18:30	<i>Presentations: Sense-Making of Future and Failure</i>
19:00	<i>Dinner</i>

### \_ September 27 (Friday)

9:00 – 10:30	<i>Presentations: Contextualizing Entrepreneurial Groups</i>
10:30 – 11:00	<i>COFFEE BREAK</i>
11:00 – 12:30	<i>Presentations: Trends in Collective Entrepreneurship</i>
12:30	Closing Remarks

## Organizers

The conference is organized by the research group “Entrepreneurial Group Dynamics” located at the Technische Universität in Berlin and funded by VolkswagenFoundation. Headed by Dr. Isabell Stamm, the research group is divided into three empirical projects examining the long-term development, imagined futures and exit processes of entrepreneurial groups. [www.entrepreneurialgroups.org](http://www.entrepreneurialgroups.org)

The DFG-Research Network “Venturing Together!” brings together 15 researchers of three countries to collaborate closely on issues of collective entrepreneurship over a period of three years. For more details, please see: <http://www.entrepreneurialgroups.org/en/conference>

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