Cronfa - Swansea University Open Access Repository

_____

This is an author produced version of a paper published in:
Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship Research

Cronfa URL for this paper:
http://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa48179

_____

Edited Book :

Higgins, D., Jones, P. & McGowan, P. (2019). _Creating Entrepreneurial Space: Talking Through Multi-Voices, Reflections on Emerging Debates Vol: 9A._ Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship Research, Bingley: Emerald Publishing Ltd.

http://www.swansea.ac.uk/library/researchsupport/ris-support/

Creating Entrepreneurial Space: Talking through Multi voices, reflections on emerging debates

David Higgins, Paul Jones, Pauric McGowan

Abstract
This chapter provides a rationale and introduction for this book. The organisation and structure of the book is identified and justified. Thereafter each chapter included within the book it introduced and profiled. The chapter concludes by drawing brief conclusions on the book chapters includes in this text with suggestions for further research opportunities and implications for the Entrepreneurship discipline.

Introduction

Interest in the field of entrepreneurship/small business research has developed exponentially in recent decades (Maas and Jones, 2017). Scholars have sought to explore the subject area across a range of multi-disciplinary fields of study all of which have sought to generate new research approaches and concepts, uncovering a wealth of new findings about how we can perceive entrepreneurial behaviour and the dynamics of the small firm (Marvel et al., 2017; Shepherd, 2015). The study of entrepreneurship/small firm involves the process of understanding and seeking meaning in behaviour and practice. However, concerns have been expressed regarding the need to engage more critically with the lived experiences of practicing entrepreneurs through alternative approaches and methods, seeking to account for and highlighting the social, political and moral aspect of entrepreneurial practice. The growing requirements to consider alternative perspectives in terms of how we engage with and study entrepreneurship from diverse perspectives is essential if the field is to effectively develop, by challenging the boundaries established through the adoption of dominant functionalist paradigms (Tedmanson et al., 2012). The study of entrepreneurship/small business research is demanding, complex and dynamic, shaped and influenced through human behaviour rendering prediction or certainty in findings difficult and challenging. Entrepreneurial behaviour is also influenced by cultural and technological change and evolution. This is not a conventional academic subject discipline, rather a multi-disciplinary subject area requiring researchers to tackle areas of investigation by drawing upon different disciplines and approaches. By drawing recognition to the lived practice of the entrepreneur/owner manager, one can begin to position the notion of action as a process of socially constructed emergent practice, such a change in perspective requires a conceptualisation of what we understand entrepreneurship to be, how we theorize, research, and develop new dialogue. Such discussion, would seek to provide the community, to give to an alternative perspective as a method of re-shaping and understanding what it means to practice as an entrepreneur (Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009).

The book aims to provide a thoughtful and contemporary discussion as a means of advancing the manner in which we think about and engage with various aspects of entrepreneurial practice and development. Entrepreneurship is still regarded by many as in the theory building stage, which has lead commentaries to suggest that the field is still highly fragmented and in various stages of development. In such a case it would be impossible to present a complete and detailed account of a field which has so many developing points of focus. The book brings together leading thinkers and researchers in the discipline in to explore questions surrounding the social embedded and contextualised nature of entrepreneur/small firm owner/mangers. The book provides an opportunity for contributors to

consider the main issues affecting entrepreneurial practice and develop insights about how we understand these issues more effectively from a critical perspective. The book seeks to inspire contributors and readers alike to think critically and reflexively about our own practice as a means of aiding and developing collective awareness of what are informative approaches to entrepreneurial practice and growth. Given the breath of the fields covered by entrepreneurship and small firm research, we sought to develop a publication which embraces and demonstrates the expanse of this literature, as such this publication encompasses a broad spectrum, in terms of topics and approaches, on diversity and critique in their perspectives towards entrepreneurial practice and scholarship.

For this publication we invited contributions which critically explore alternative dimensions to entrepreneurial/small firm research and practice. The book has equally sought to promote ideas from other research traditions and perspectives which culturally enriched and challenge what we term entrepreneurial/business research practice. The call for papers received an excellent response from a range of countries such that we are able to publish two volumes. The following chapters are presented in this text:

Foliard, Le Pontois, Fayolle and Diermann chapter adopts a multidisciplinary perspective and questions the perceived legitimacy of Entrepreneurship educators (EE) using a multi discipline literature review. The authors noted the question of recognition of teachers' professional status is not always addressed. The chapter suggests that the teaching models in EE remain experimental in the sense that they are seeking to confirm best practice and adapt to new emerging audiences and contexts. Certain content and practices are regarded as legitimate, others not and further research is required in order to offer clarity and robust evidence in relation to these issues (Fayolle et al., 2016).

Brentnall, Diego and Culkin chapters considers the value gained from enterprise education competitions for pupils in primary and secondary schools. The chapter tests some of the most prevalent stated beliefs from the psychology and education disciplines that such competitions motivate and reward young people, that they enable skills development and that learners are inspired by peers. The chapter provides novel insights for those who promote and practice the use of such competitions with a richer, more critical evaluation of the potential flaws within such activities.

In their chapter, Njoku and Cooney present a critical literature review examining how ethnicity relates to business opportunity formation through constant interactions. It introduces the Visual Mixed Embeddedness Framework (VMEF) as an empirical lens for understanding the differences in the business opportunity formation process models between immigrant and native entrepreneurs. By explaining how factors and traits from both home and host countries impact upon the immigrant entrepreneurial business activity process, the framework identifies how the concept of ethnicity influences immigrant entrepreneurial opportunity formation activities in different ways. The framework contributes to existing knowledge by offering a novel method for examining the influence on business opportunity formation of ethnicity, the role of home and host countries, and variations between immigrant and native entrepreneurs.

Gaddefors and Anderson chapter provides a longitudinal ethnography of a rural small town in Northern Sweden. The chapter evaluates the presence and identifies the processes associated with an incoming entrepreneur, to more effectively understand entrepreneurship in a rural context. The significant shaping of entrepreneurship by context is increasingly recognised,

with entrepreneurship in depleted communities an important element of this research movement.   The chapter introduces the concept of entrepreneurial energy. Here entrepreneurial energy is described as a vitality; produced in and by entrepreneurship. It operates in part, as a role model, holding up examples of what can be done. However, the presence of entrepreneurial energy serves to invigorate others. It becomes amplified in new ways of doing, novel ways of being, yet calcified in the entrepreneurial actions of others. The chapter discusses the outcome of this, how it unleashed the latent opportunity, promoted the possible, to entrepreneurially revive the town.

The chapter by Seaman considers the importance of succession in family business. Successful succession represents a key factor in the success of individual businesses owned and run by families. The importance of gender in family business succession is an emergent topic, which has focused on the trend for women to take on a family business as a successor. Minimal research, considers where a female leader passes on a business, whether that takes the form of family succession, a new leader from out with the family or indeed business sale. This dearth of research is not surprising: while female leaders in a family business context are not new, their numbers have been small and typically mediated through the lens of co-preneurship with a male partner. As women increasingly succeed to and found family businesses however, the gender dimension within family business succession develops and the research response forms the basis for this chapter.

Haddoud, Jones and Newbery chapter considers the requirements for SMEs from developing countries to succeed in export markets. Empirical studies from these regions on SMEs' internationalisation are nascent offering contrasting evidence to the literature from developed countries. To increase understanding on these issues, the chapter adopts a novel fuzzy-set comparative analysis (fsQCA) technique to investigate the combination(s) of different resource factors driving Algerian SMEs' export performance. The study identifies two distinct resource configurations likely to boost SMEs export performance. The chapter offers important implications for the internationalisation literature and the export promotion organisations in developing countries.

Warren, Anderson and Bensemann explore entrepreneurial change in Stanton, a rural small town in New Zealand. This town has suffered economically and socially as its industries have declined. Recently, the town has experienced a rejuvenation, partly due to the endeavours of a high profile entrepreneur (Sue) who has set up several businesses. The chapter adopts an entrepreneurial identity perspective in examining how Sue's arrival has transformed the town. The chapter employ a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews. The contribution achieved is in demonstrating how an ascribed entrepreneurial identity can enable but also inhibit change in this community, generating confidence and emotional contagion around entrepreneurship, but also uncertainty and resentment. In doing so, the study challenges the universality of entrepreneurship benefits.

Mills chapter considers the gap in the creative enterprise literature through an examination of New Zealand fashion designers' accounts of their responses to startup challenges. The analysis, focused on the relationship between social capital and reported strategic practice, revealed that the designers' challenge profiles and strategic responses were linked to very 'biographical' personal networks and their personal enterprise orientations. The findings provide further confirmation of the importance of social capital and network management

during start-up. but, most significantly, they demonstrate why designers need to be forward-looking and develop a strategic approach to developing and accessing social and business decision-making as those that accessed social capital in ways that supported strategic responses were more likely to have viable ventures than those who accessed social capital in order to react to unanticipated challenges.

Kelliher, Murphy and Harrington chapter explores the perceived impact of strategic learning plans on growth-focused small service firms from an owner-manager's (OM) perspective. Adopting a social learning lens, the chapter employs an action research method, involving three cycles performed over a 12-month period wherein they studied the co-created design and implementation of a strategic learning plan in three participant firms. Findings present insights into in how firms who wish to grow can be facilitated to learn strategically. A contextualised approach involving OMs in both design and implementation resulted in openness to the formal planning process. Notably, OMs impede growth depending on their learning orientation, planning perspective, and their ability to delegate tasks. Over time, the OMs refined their reflective skills to the benefit of organic learning strategies. There was a preference for social learning, and perceived requirement for external monitoring to sustain plan momentum. The chapter offers a framework for embedding a strategic learning approach in order to leverage strategic position. It also highlights the value of considering and evaluating OM perceptions of their own learning activities and the impact such perceptions have on the enactment of enabling policies to promote firm growth.

Conclusions

This text has provided a diverse set of contributions which offer novel insights into a range of different entrepreneurial contexts and entrepreneur/owner manager behaviour. The growth of the EE discipline continues globally with a desire to identify and reflect on best practice. This evidence here reflects on the requirement for effective experiential pedagogy and support systems (e.g. business competitions) plus the creation of internal and external University eco-systems to support entrepreneurial behaviour between student populations and the business community. Further research is required to critically evaluate such practice both in terms of design and longitudinal impact (Jones et al., 2017). Such evidence will offer further justification for the value and contribution of the EE discipline. Thus EE providers must consider the nature of their EE provision and look to evaluate its effectiveness. EE ecosystems must provide effective infrastructures to support the incubation and growth of Entrepreneurial behaviour.

In terms of research exploring small business behaviour, we include several studies of entrepreneurial behaviour considering the role of ethnicity, the concept of entrepreneurial spirit, female succession within family firms, export behaviour in a developing world context, Entrepreneurial change in a community, social capital in a business start-up and strategic learning to enable growth. These studies all critically explore alternative dimensions of small firm behaviour and practice. It is apparent this the SME sector is rich in emergent behaviour and cultural evolution. Thus it is critical that these new emergent behaviours are reported and evaluated in the academic literature. As reflected previously, Entrepreneurship remains a nascent discipline with sub disciplines focusing on gender, social enterprise and family business emerging. Further research is required in all these areas plus the need to reflect on entrepreneurial behaviour in different academic disciplines.

References

Fayolle, A., Verzat, C., & Wapshott, R. (2016). In quest of legitimacy: The theoretical and methodological foundations of entrepreneurship education research. *International Small Business Journal*, 34(7), 895-904.

Jones, P., Maas, G., and Pittaway, L. (2017) New Perspectives on Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship Education (Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship Research), Vol 7. pp. 1-13, Emerald Publishing Ltd

Maas, G. and Jones, P. (2015) *Systemic Entrepreneurship: Contemporary Issues and Case Studies,* Available at: http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doifinder/10.1057/9781137509802. ISBN: 978-1-137-50978-9.

Marvel, M., Davis, J. and Sproul, C. Human Capital and Entrepreneurship Research: A Critical Review and Future Directions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice,* 40(3): 599-626.

Shepherd, D. (2015) Party on! A call for entrepreneurship research that is more interactive, activity based, cognitively hot, compassionate and prosocial. *Journal of Business Venturing* 30(4): 489-507.

Tedmanson, D., Verduyn, K., Essers, C. and Gartner, W. (2012) Critical perspectives in entrepreneurship research, *Organization*, Vol 19, Issue 5, pp. 531-541.

Weiskopf, R. and Steyaert, C. (2010) Metamorphoses in Entrepreneurship Studies: towards an affirmative politics of entrepreneuring in *The Politics and Aesthetics of Entrepreneurship: A Fourth Movements in Entrepreneurship Book* edited by Hjorth, D. and Steyaert, C. pp 183-201. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK.