



## **Call for Papers**

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

### **Track 06 - Family Firms and Geography – Sustainable Regional and Urban Development and Topics of Internationalization**

Mannheim, Germany, May 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 2020.  
Submissions accepted until January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

#### **Track Chairs:**

Jan-Philipp Ahrens (Universität Mannheim, Germany)  
Rodrigo Basco (American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates)  
Annegret Hauer (Universität Mannheim, Germany)  
Baris Istipliler (Universität Mannheim, Germany)  
Detlef Keese (Universität Mannheim, Germany)  
Lech Suwala (Technical University Berlin, Germany)

#### **Description of the track**

It is well known that the intersection of the family and firm systems may give rise to a competitive advantage due to garnering familiness resource (Habbershon and Williams, 1999, Ahrens et al., 2019). While family business research has put a lot of attention to the ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions focusing on the formation of familiness at the firm level, intersections of family firms with other dimensions, for instance the spatial dimension, have received far less scholarly attention. Interestingly, despite being the most common forms of organization around the world (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003; Faccio & Lang, 2002), and therefore having a genuine spatial and scalar character, those characteristics of family firms have been largely neglected so far (Stough et al. 2015). Although family firms have in common that they provide the socio-economic backbones and continuity in most economies, there are definitely varieties of family firms depending on their geographies from traditional Japanese century-old dynasties, America's family farms, Germany's Mittelstand to novel Shanghai and Silicon Valley elites. Moreover, family firms are geographically uneven phenomena with regard to their distribution, and impact at the local, regional, national, or global scales.

Against this background, the track aims to open up a profound debate on this often neglected topic by collecting diverse work on family businesses and their spatialities. By spatialities, we mean a kind of 'spatial familiness' (Basco & Suwala 2020; Basco et al. 2020), that can be manifested in different forms. 'Spatial familiness' incorporates the nexus of "family firm and (economic) spaces" that can be approached from two perspectives: the family firm's effect on economic spaces, which attempts to unfold the role family firms play in different economic spaces, and effect of economic spaces on family firms, which considers the role economic spaces play on firm behavior and firm performance. This track addresses the peculiarities of family firms and their recursive relationships with spaces (e.g., locations, places, landscapes) and scales (e.g., local, regional, national, global). Other spatial manifestations such as (social) contexts, (political) territories, (ecologic) environment or spatial typologies (e.g. urban and peripheral) are also conceivable. Hereby, we also aim to address the dynamics, for the good (e.g. urban or regional development by family firms) or the bad (e.g. regional lock-ins due to the lack of innovativeness or rigid values in family firms), unfold through this intersection of family firms and spaces or scales.

We invite scholars from manifold disciplines such as Regional Economics, Economic Geographers, Family Business, Management, Organization Studies, Economic Sociology, Economic Psychology and International Business as well as practitioners from diverse backgrounds to share their interest and to submit their research about spatial patterns of family firms.

This perspective is inherently multidisciplinary, thus we invite all empirical (quantitative and qualitative), conceptual, and methodological work that advances our understanding at this exciting intersection. We believe that methodological exchange from fields, such as **geography, business studies, economics, history, politics, information systems, and sociology** will foster scientific progress in this young field of research. By sharing novel approaches, we see this track as an opportunity to jointly develop further knowledge about the potential, benefits, and constraints of different methods to enable researchers to improve the design and execution of their research and to spread and share their practices within the community and beyond.

This track and the respective research field being empirically in their infancy, constitutes the only track in this conference that also **welcomes drafts and extended research proposals** besides full academic papers. Submissions in German language are also possible. This track is linked to the German Journal of Economic Geography and papers may be selected for an inclusion of a dedicated special issue.

Moreover, we especially invite **YOUNG SCHOLARS** to submit their work to this track. In case of questions if your topic might fit the track, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

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

## Literature:

- (1) Ahrens, J.-P., Calabrò, A., Huybrechts, J., Woywode, M. (2019). The enigma of the family successor–firm performance relationship: A methodological reflection and reconciliation attempt. **Entrepreneurship, Theory & Practice**, 43(3), 437-474.
- (2) Albino, V., Berardi, U., Dangelico, R. M. (2015). Smart cities: Definitions, dimensions, performance, and initiatives. **Journal of Urban Technology**, 22(1), 3-21.
- (3) Suwala, L., & Micek, G. (2018). Beyond clusters? Field configuration and regional platforming: the Aviation Valley initiative in the Polish Podkarpackie region. **Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society**, 11(2), 353-372.
- (4) Stough, R., Welter, F., Block, J., Wennberg, K., & Basco, R. (2015). Family business and regional science: "Bridging the gap". **Journal of Family Business Strategy**, 6(4), 208-218.

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**The deadline for submissions is 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020.**  
**Submit your paper [here](#)**

