Engaged scholarship:
Overcoming so what? who cares? questions

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The family business research field

- Historical root of today's family business research is a close collaboration and interaction with practice (Sharma et al., 2007)
- Combination of academia with consulting (e.g. Ward, Jaffe, Gersick, Lansberg etc.)
- ES is essential in addressing the complexity of family business and produce research that offers both <u>**relevance**</u> and <u>**rigor**</u>

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What is engaged scholarship?

Engaged Scholarship involves what could be labelled as 'co-inquiry', *"where the research questions, problematizations and theory development are co-constructed with family business stakeholders (rather than respondents) in the fieldwork setting"* (Fletcher, De Massis & Nordqvist, 2016: 23).

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Why do we need ES?

- Better understand social phenomena with high level of complexity;
- Complex topics can only be well understood if approached from multiple views and perspectives (Banks et al., 2016; Wiklund et al., 2018);
- Limited impact of traditional research > gap between theory and practice (Shapiro et al., 2007):
  - Translation problem
  - Little to no collaboration between academics and practitioners
  - Knowledge production problem
- Vocal scholars and important stakeholders argue for relevant studies

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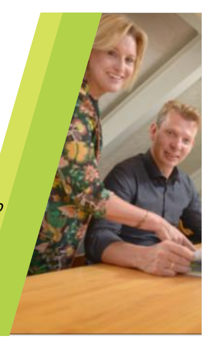
"…only if theory is developed with reality in mind will it reveal true insight. Without a deep understanding of organizations and the problems they face, academics may study the wrong things, interpret results incorrectly, and generate findings that may be rigorous but too detached from reality to be relevant."
(Vermeulen, 2007: 2)



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Create a learning community

- Stakeholders who are also interested in or own the problem; family CEO's, family owners, family members not involved in the firm, non-family CEO's/employees, policy makers, advisors…
- Distinct kinds of knowledge needed to provide complementary insights to better understand reality
- Relationships characterized by negotiation, mutual respect, reflexivity and collaborative learning

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(1) Problem formulation (RQ)

- RAAK subsidies require a joint problem formulation > focus on advisory boards
- Governance context (professionalization of SME family firms), but with a focus on emergence and strategy
- Link to literature:
  - ➢Literature on advisory boards in family firms basically non-existent
  - ➢Link to advising literature
  - ➢Link to strategy as practice and process literature

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(2) Theory building & (3) research design

Key: engage with practitioners to understand their perspectives and assumptions (Van de Ven, 2007)

- Risk averse approach because of role as PhD student
- Open theoretical perspective and an abductive research method
- Participant observation

		RESEARCH QUESTION / PURPOSE	
RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE		To Describe / Explain	To design / intervene
	Detached Outside	Basic science with stakeholder advice	Policy / design science Evaluation research for professional practice
	Attached Inside	Co-produce knowledge with collaborators	Action / intervention research for a client

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Methodology and data collected

- Multi-level case study research approach (firm level and individual level):

"qualitative research which examines, through the use of a variety of data sources, a phenomenon in its naturalistic context, with the purpose of 'confronting' theory with the empirical world" (Piekkari, Welch, & Paavilainen, 2009)

- Four cases, purposeful sampling (Emmel, 2013)
- Data: meeting reports, interviews, secondary data

	Solar Innovations Group	Florax Group	Collectron Group	Treelab
Time period	12/13 to 08/16	01/14 to 08/16	03/12 to 08/16	09/11 to 08/16
Extensive reports of meetings	9 (71 pages text)	7 (61 pages text)	10 (83 pages text)	12 (53 pages text)
Interviews	9 (6 different actors)	8 (7 different actors)	7 (5 different actors)	4 (3 different actors)
Other	Reflections, selection profiles, agendas, newspaper articles, strategic plans, financial figures, annual accounts, other background materials			

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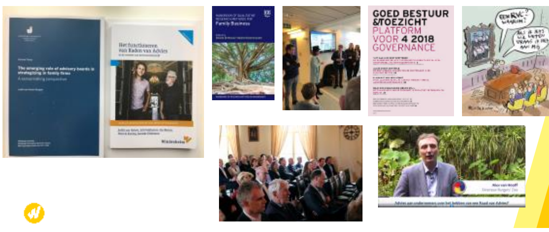
Output

International Small Business Journal
CALL FOR PAPERS

SPECIAL ISSUE
Special Issue on the Navigation of the Paradoxical Landscape of the Family Business

Guest Editors:
Professor Maura McAdam – Dublin City University, Ireland.
Professor Clay Dibrell – The University of Mississippi, USA.
Dr Eric Clinton – Dublin City University, Ireland.



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Managing tensions as paradox in CEO succession: nonfamily CEO in a family firm

- Topic has emerged through close collaboration with family firm
- Single-case, real time, longitudinal study
- Third author is one of the advisory board members
- Status: under revision after 2nd review round, special issue of ISBJ

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Managing tensions as paradox in CEO succession: nonfamily CEO in a family firm (2)

- Transition to a non-family CEO; highly relevant topic in FF research
- Tensions in work relationships emerge > which ones?
  - Professionalization
  - Collaboration
  - Resource allocation
  - Role transition
- Perspective of paradox management: by whom and how are the different tensions managed, i.e., through changes in behaviour and/or through changes in the underlying subsystems of the family firm
- Advisory board supports family members with paradox management

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Dilemmas and challenges

- Collaboration costs (Banks et al., 2016)
  - Information assymetries
  - Goal incongruence
- Politicization (Martin, 2010)
- Extra work to be done:
  - Initiate and negotiate research cooperation
  - Secure funding
  - Ensure commitment
- Divergent ways of working, interests, priorities, assumptions, expectations and concerns > may result in tension
- Tensions between:
  - Openness vs secrecy
  - Privilige vs equality
  - Distance vs empathy

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Thoughts on how to practice ES

- Start with a preparation phase instead of directly diving into problem formulation
  - Interact with practitioners regularly
  - Develop relationships and trust
  - Is there a phenomenon, dilemma, challenge that is of interest to all the stakeholders involved?
- Appoint a project leader and clarify each party's role and commitment in the project
- Specify terms of conditions
- Action research: separate tasks of researcher and the person performing the intervention
- Use transparency as a quality criterion for research (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Bluhm et al., 2011)

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Q & A

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