

FGF Studies in Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Stephanie Birkner · Kerstin Ettl  
Friederike Welter · Ilona Ebbers *Editors*

# Women's Entrepreneurship in Europe

Multidimensional Research  
and Case Study Insights

 Springer

# **FGF Studies in Small Business and Entrepreneurship**

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Editors

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Insights

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# Preface

The internationally oriented German-based research association FGF (*Förderkreis Gründungsforschung e.V.*) has been partnering with Springer to showcase scholarly work in small business and entrepreneurship research since 2016. Titles in this series are by no means restricted to German-speaking countries, and this volume features research insights focusing on Germany with additional European perspectives. The aim of the *FGF studies in small business and entrepreneurship* is to acknowledge that small business and entrepreneurship phenomena occur on diverse levels of analysis. This is why the series addresses a plethora of research levels, has an interdisciplinary focus, and reflects on a wide range of methodological approaches. It aims to serve academics, educators, professionals, and policy makers as they disseminate and obtain new scientific insights and practical implications. The volume at hand is motivated by the discussions of a transdisciplinary group of researchers collaborating in the FGF standing working group “Gender & Entrepreneurship.” Their joint target is to follow a twofold strategy to foster the academic focus on women’s entrepreneurship. The first target is to offer researchers a portfolio of research approaches addressing current challenges and future perspectives of research on women’s entrepreneurship. The second target is to provide entrepreneurship educators with a contemporary reference and essential reading material for students interested in questions addressing the challenges of and future academic and practical perspectives on gender and entrepreneurship. The ultimate objective of this volume is to combine theoretical as well as empirical research papers with teaching cases to deepen the reflections on women’s entrepreneurship in research as well as in the educational field of the academic realm. Through this, the volume aims to serve as a vehicle to help researchers, educators, and professionals obtain multifaceted insights into women’s entrepreneurship in Europe as a further basis to inform their actions in fostering future women’s entrepreneurship. We would like to thank the FGF for the opportunity to shed this additional light on research and education about women’s entrepreneurship from a European perspective. A particular word of thanks and credit belongs to everyone who served as reviewers supporting the double-blind peer review process of the volume: Elisabeth Berger, Nora Block, Siegrun Brink, Alexander Göbel,

Brigitte Halbfas, Sebastian Händschke, Lisa Heinrichs, Vivien Iffländer, Rosemarie Kay, Frauke Lange, Anna Müller, Kirsten Mikkelsen, André Pahnke, Ralf Philipp, Kathrin Rössler, Sanita Rugina, Katharina Schilling, Susanne Schlepphorst, Julia Schnittker, Demet Tuncer, Davy Vercruyssen, Regina Wallner, and Claire Zerwas. Their critical and at the same time respectful feedback has been a major contribution. Furthermore, we would like to thank Elisabeth Berger who shared valuable insights from her experiences as an FGF series guest editor. Last but not least, we would like to thank Stephanie Weiss for providing patient and accurate assistance with the editing of the chapters.

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Siegen, Germany  
Siegen, Germany  
Flensburg, Germany

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# Contents

## Part I Research Studies

<b>Women’s Entrepreneurship in Europe: Research Facets and Educational Foci</b> . . . . .	3
Stephanie Birkner, Kerstin Ettl, Friederike Welter, and Ilona Ebbers	
<b>Female Migrant Entrepreneurship in Germany: Determinants and Recent Developments</b> . . . . .	15
Nora Zyburá, Katharina Schilling, Ralf Philipp, and Michael Woywode	
<b>Business Transferability Chances: Does the Gender of the Owner-Manager Matter?</b> . . . . .	39
Rosemarie Kay, André Pahnke, and Susanne Schlepphorst	
<b>Does Gender Make a Difference? Gender Differences in the Motivations and Strategies of Female and Male Academic Entrepreneurs</b> . . . . .	65
Vivien Iffländer, Anna Sinell, and Martina Schraudner	
<b>Towards Emancipatory Aspects of Women’s Entrepreneurship: An Alternative Model of Women’s Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy in Patriarchal Societies</b> . . . . .	83
Kirsten Mikkelsen	
<b>Women Entrepreneurship in Estonia: Formal and Informal Institutional Context</b> . . . . .	105
Sanita Rugina	
<b>Entrepreneurship Education and Gender in Europe</b> . . . . .	137
Davy Vercruyssen	

**Part II Case Studies**

**Coming to Entrepreneurial Berlin and Making Their Way in Silicon Allee: The Ups and Downs of Two Women Entrepreneurs . . . . . 169**  
Alexander Goebel and Sebastian G. M. Händschke

**Allure and Reality in FemTec Entrepreneurship . . . . . 183**  
Frauke Lange

**The Female Hunting Instinct: Entrepreneurial Life in Germany . . . . . 197**  
Juliane Mueller

# About the Editors and List of Contributors

## About the Editors

**Stephanie Birkner** is junior professor in the field of female entrepreneurship at the Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg in Germany. Prior to this, she was appointed as acting professor with a focus on business simulations at the Jade University of Applied Sciences in Germany. She graduated in business administration (University of Applied Sciences Emden/Leer, also in Germany) and received her doctorate in consulting research from the Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg. Dr. Birkner is an active member of the scholarly associations ECSB (European Council for Small Business) and the FGF (*Förderkreis Gründungsforschung e.V.*), initiating and leading the FGF “Gender & Entrepreneurship” standing working group. In addition to social science approaches in the context of digital transformation with a focus on topics such as entrepreneurial identity and talent profiling, she is particularly interested in engineering and natural science (public) health perspectives on gendered innovation. As a certified personal coach and LSP facilitator, she supports academic start-ups. Since 2015, she has been gaining her own practical entrepreneurship experiences as co-founder of GREP: German Real Estate Pioneers GmbH. Her experiences here inform her lectures at the IREBS (University of Regensburg, Germany) in places such as the “Digital Real Estate Manager” study program.

**Kerstin Ettl** is junior professor in the field of entrepreneurial diversity and SME management at the University of Siegen’s Department of Business in Germany. She holds a graduate and doctoral degree in business administration from the University of Siegen. She is country vice president for Germany of the European Council for Small Business (ECSB), active member of the FGF e.V. (the leading and most important scientific association for entrepreneurship, innovation, and SMEs in the German-speaking realm), and active member of the Women’s & Gender Research Network NRW. Her current research interests include diversity, entrepreneurship, and SME

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**Friederike Welter** leads the *Institut für Mittelstandsforschung (IfM) Bonn* in Germany and is a professor of entrepreneurship and small business management at the University of Siegen in Germany. Prior to this, she was a professor and associate dean of research at the [Jönköping International Business School](#) in Sweden, professor at the University of Siegen, and senior researcher/deputy head of the research group "Craft enterprises, SME and entrepreneurship development" at RWI Essen in Germany. She has also served as president of the European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship. For her entrepreneurship and SME research, she has been honored as an ECSB fellow, as a Wilford L. White fellow of the International Council of Small Business, and received the Greif Research Impact Award. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* regularly lists her among the most influential economists in Germany. She has published extensively on entrepreneurship in different contexts, women's entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship policies. Dr. Welter is also senior editor of [the leading journal \*Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice\*](#).

**Iiona Ebberts** is a professor of economics and its didactics at the Department of International Management and Economic Literacy at the European University of Flensburg in Germany. Before this, she was professor of economics and its didactics at the Department of Business at the University of Siegen in Germany and the Center for Economic Literacy in Siegen. Prior to this, she was an assistant professor for SME management at the Department of Business at the University of Hildesheim in Germany. She holds a graduate and doctoral degree in economics and business administration from the Bergische University of Wuppertal in Germany. She is an academic officer of the German Council for Economic Literacy and member of the FGF e.V. Her research interests are in the field of entrepreneurship education, women's entrepreneurship, the transition from school to work, and gender as a didactical category. She teaches bachelor's and master's classes for future teachers of economics and politics.

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**Part I**  
**Research Studies**

# Women's Entrepreneurship in Europe: Research Facets and Educational Foci



Stephanie Birkner, Kerstin Ettl, Friederike Welter, and Ilona Ebbers

**Abstract** Women entrepreneurs currently enjoy their ascent as one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial populations worldwide. Nevertheless, they differ in both practice and in research from what is seen as “the norm.” This introductory chapter aims to outline previous research facets of women’s entrepreneurship by briefly mapping the status of the scientific field. In doing so, we lay the groundwork for presenting the scopes and foci of the articles in this volume which investigate different facets of women’s entrepreneurship across Europe. Fostering women’s entrepreneurship simultaneously implies including it in academic teaching. So in the second part of this introduction, we briefly talk about case studies as effective tools for teaching women’s entrepreneurship. We conclude by introducing the cases provided in this volume.

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# 1 Research Facets of Women's Entrepreneurship

## 1.1 *Mapping the Current Status of the Scientific Field of Women's Entrepreneurship*

Almost every article on women's entrepreneurship starts with the notion that one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial populations are women, and that they significantly contribute to the innovativeness and development of economies and societies. These articles often end with the plea to better understand how to foster and make use of this potential. The short version of all of this is: A lot has happened in politics, academia and education in the last two decades—a lot still needs to be done!

Although the gender gap (the ratio of women to men participating in entrepreneurship) of 63 (out of 74) GEM-profiled economies narrowed by 5% in the year 2016 (GEM 2017), women are still more likely to start a business out of necessity rather than opportunity. Their businesses furthermore expect lower growth rates. A similar picture emerges for Europe, as seen in a recent policy brief on women's entrepreneurship. Here, women are less likely to be owners of new businesses: over the period of 2010–2014, only 2% of women indicated that they own and operate a business, while the number of men was 4% (OECD/European Commission 2017). Within the European Union (EU), several policy attempts have been made during the last decade to foster entrepreneurial opportunities for entrepreneurial women, e.g. by providing dedicated incubator and accelerator programs. However, comparing the positioning of women entrepreneurs in Sweden and the United States through the lens of public policy, Ahl and Nelson (2015) found that women are still seen as the "others," being inadequate and/or extraordinary without taking into account the social and structural conditions that shape their work experience. Henry et al. (2017) illustrate that only few governments pay attention to normative institutions when designing and implementing women entrepreneurship policies. This is one of the reasons we see the need to gain more insight into women's entrepreneurship in Europe to address and evaluate not only the design of European policies to foster women's entrepreneurship, but also to assess and address the impact of the overall position of women in the context of entrepreneurial equality.

Concepts in entrepreneurship theory and practice have long been either dominated by a supposedly gender-neutral perspective (Marlow et al. 2009), or mainly eulogized as part of a dominant male discourse lacking the complexity of theories on gender aspects (Lansky 2000). To overcome the subordination of female founders and funders, an understanding of the "genderedness" of entrepreneurship research and practice is needed (De Bruin et al. 2006, 2007). A women's perspective on entrepreneurship has become increasingly prevalent since the early 1980s, with a distinct rise since the mid-1990s. Greene et al. (2006) illustrate how research traditions shifted from analyzing gender through the variable of sex (1970s–1980s) towards applying more of a gender "lens" (1990s–2000s).

The plea by Ahl (2006) to capture a richer perspective on women's entrepreneurship (research) in the first special issues on women's entrepreneurship in the

renowned journal *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* (De Bruin et al. 2006) found particular resonance in further special issues in the same journal (De Bruin et al. 2007; Hughes et al. 2012) as well as in special issues of *Small Business Economics* (Brush et al. 2018) or *Venture Capital* (Leitch and Hill 2006; Leitch et al. 2017). Since 2003, women entrepreneurship research has gained stronger visibility in the scientific community through its own international DIANA conference. Additionally, leading international scientific associations advocate focus groups and conference tracks on gender aspects in entrepreneurship. Another step forward in women's entrepreneurship research was the launch of the *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship* (IJGE) in 2009. The regular anthologies published from the DIANA conferences, e.g. on entrepreneurial ecosystems and the growth of women's entrepreneurship (Manolova et al. 2017); women's entrepreneurship in different contexts (Díaz-García et al. 2016); research agendas regarding women entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identity (Greene and Brush 2018); and research handbooks e.g. on gender and innovation (Alsos et al. 2016); on the performance of women-owned businesses (Yousafzai et al. 2018); or on the contextual embeddedness of women entrepreneurship (Yousafzai et al. 2018) inform and form the scientific community of women's entrepreneurship.

Along with a growing number of empirical surveys from a multitude of perspectives that span different cultures and countries, theoretical attempts to study women's entrepreneurship are increasing as well. However, following Brush et al. (2009, p. 18) "a separate theory on women's entrepreneurship may not be required if existing theoretical concepts are expanded to incorporate explanations for the distinctiveness of women's entrepreneurship."

So from an original paucity of research on women's entrepreneurship (Gatewood et al. 2003), this topic has now spawned into an actual field of research, characterized by Hughes et al. (2012, p. 429) 5 years ago as being "at the brink of adolescence." The field now seems to be in its "teens," challenged by a liminal state of its own reaching for broader acceptance in the "adult world" of entrepreneurship research. More and more researchers focusing on women's entrepreneurship consider gender as socially constructed (Tedmanson et al. 2012). Related studies have for example analyzed how identities are gendered and practiced (Díaz-García and Welter 2013). Other studies argue for considering gender in a more integrated and sophisticated way to analyze its many different effects on entrepreneurial activity (Marlow and Martínez Dy 2018), or focus on gender aspects of learning and opportunity recognition (Ettl and Welter 2010a, b). Further recurring topics include gendered contexts and institutions (Brush et al. 2009, 2014, 2018; Welter et al. 2014).

In spite of this progress, most research on women's entrepreneurship has taken place outside mainstream entrepreneurship debates (Jennings and Brush 2013). This is quite unfortunate, and not only from the point of view of women entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship research in general would benefit from a gendered perspective because it would allow us to clearly articulate the full impact of entrepreneurship on societies and economies. It would also assist us in revising our assumptions about what constitutes success and performance as brought forth by Jennings and Brush (2013) and Baker and Welter (2017). For example, Calás et al. (2009) have used

feminist theoretical perspectives to call for a broader focus on entrepreneurship (i.e. critical entrepreneurship studies (CES)). Ahl and Marlow (2012) introduced the post-structural feminist analysis to inform entrepreneurship theory. Rouse et al. (2013) edited a special issue of the *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research* which brought together authors that employed existing gender theories to explore entrepreneurship. By way of example, Pathak et al. (2013) base their research on the sociological model of gender stratification to examine the effects of gendered institutions on women's entrepreneurship.

## ***1.2 Landmarks of Women's Entrepreneurship Research in This Volume***

To illustrate the multifaceted picture of women's entrepreneurship, the chapters in this volume address scientific as well as didactical fields of interest from various perspectives.

In chapter "Female Migrant Entrepreneurship in Germany: Determinants and Recent Developments", Nora Zybura, Katharina Schilling, Ralf Philipp and Michael Woywode investigate the growing group of female migrant entrepreneurs in Germany who have so far gained only limited scholarly attention. Migrant entrepreneurship is of increasing socio-economic significance in light of the current refugee crisis occurring in various parts of the world. Based on the German microcensus, the authors provide an overview of the structural characteristics of female migrant entrepreneurs. Looking at selective determinants such as qualification, occupational segregation and family responsibilities, they draw a detailed picture of female migrant entrepreneurship and its development in Germany between 2005 and 2016. Investigating a sub-group of women entrepreneurs under specific contextual conditions, Zybura et al. reveal the inherent, multifaceted nature of women entrepreneurship itself, emphasizing the intersectionality of gender and migration. Their results show for example that female migrant entrepreneurs often make career choices that lead to dependent occupations rather than entrepreneurship, and that a high qualification level is most favorable for female migrants in terms of entrepreneurial activities. Summing up, with a look at entrepreneurial activities and determinants of female migrants compared to women of German origin, the authors emphasize that it cannot clearly be stated that self-employed female migrants face a dual disadvantage per se.

In chapter "Business Transferability Chances: Does the Gender of the Owner-Manager Matter?", Rosemarie Kay, André Pahnke and Susanne Schlepphorst concentrate on the business transferability opportunities of female- vs. male-led family enterprises. Using large-scale panel data provided by the German Institute for Employment Research (IAB), the authors focus on the question of whether the sex of the owner-manager has an influence on the chances of business transferability. Their results support the findings on business successions and gender that highlight gender differences in general investment behavior, risk preferences, and business

performance of companies. Drawing a detailed picture of enterprises, and especially those with business succession plans, their data show structural differences between women- and men-led enterprises, for example with the tendency of women-led businesses to invest less. The authors were however not able to confirm general gender-specific differences in the economic behavior of companies in their pre-transfer phase. Apparently, it's less the sex of the owner-manager than structural differences such as company size or industry that influence the business transfer process. This highlights the importance of the contextual embeddedness of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior where gender aspects are just one facet among many others.

The chapters authored by Zybura et al. and Kay et al. are complemented by chapter "Does Gender Make a Difference? Gender Differences in the Motivations and Strategies of Female and Male Academic Entrepreneurs", co-authored by Vivien Iffländer, Anna Sinell and Martina Schraudner. These authors focus on the gender differences in the motivations and strategies of female and male academic entrepreneurs. Using an exploratory case study method, Iffländer et al. draw on 40 interviews with academic entrepreneurs in Germany. In their sample, female academic entrepreneurs were often motivated to make a social difference through their ideas and products. Male academic entrepreneurs more frequently aimed to achieve goals like financial success and recognition, placing strong focus on product values and technological advantages. The authors conclude that the motivations of women, although important for societal development, are rarely addressed in government initiatives and policies. Their study enriches the debate about the exclusion and "othering" of women entrepreneurs, pointing once again to the need for policymakers and academics to be aware of hidden assumptions underlying policy initiatives and entrepreneurship support.

In chapter "Towards Emancipatory Aspects of Women's Entrepreneurship: An Alternative Model of Women's Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy in Patriarchal Societies", Kirsten Mikkelsen offers a bi-national study, looking at both Germany and Denmark as patriarchal societies, and social mechanisms as a result of national cultural attitudes. She analyzes the emancipatory aspects of women's entrepreneurship and discusses an alternative model of women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE). In doing this, she addresses calls for more nuanced attempts at research on women's entrepreneurship, in particular arguing for the inclusion of gender into existing theories and concepts in entrepreneurship research. Her findings are based on 16 biographical narrative interviews with women entrepreneurs from diverse industries where women are underrepresented. Most studies on ESE treat gender as an external variable. However, Mikkelsen's approach stresses the value of inductive interpretative methods which enable researchers to find new concepts for understanding women's entrepreneurship as an alternative to what she calls "male-mainstream models and rationalities," and that are closer to the reality of women entrepreneurs.

Whereas Denmark has been in the top ranks of entrepreneurship rankings within Europe for years, in chapter "Women Entrepreneurship in Estonia: Formal and Informal Institutional Context", Sanita Rugina provides insights into Estonia, a former socialist republic and a country in which the women entrepreneurship rate

is lower than the EU-28 average, and among the lowest in Europe. Looking at formal and informal institutional contexts and based on 20 interviews with women entrepreneurs in some of Estonia's major cities, Rugina highlights the embeddedness of (women's) entrepreneurship in its social and societal contexts. Her results indicate that gender stereotypes within Estonian society restrict women on their way towards self-employment—although these women are in fact motivated and have the required qualifications and skills to set up a business. The author concludes that Estonian government and policymakers need to urgently pay attention to women entrepreneurs and their support needs to foster a more enterprising attitude in the country. This chapter also highlights and illustrates the contextual embeddedness of women's entrepreneurship, calling for increased attention to it in policymaking.

As a perfect bridge to the second part of this volume, Davy Vercruysse provides in chapter "Entrepreneurship Education and Gender in Europe" insights into entrepreneurship education in Europe, with special emphasis on gender aspects. His results are based on a systematic literature review of studies about higher education, presenting the state of entrepreneurship education and gender within the last decade. Vercruysse develops a European map of research to identify implications for European educators and policymakers attempting to foster entrepreneurial ecosystems that also support women entrepreneurs. He concludes from his review that more customized, women-centered and diversified educational programs could allow female students to become more interested in entrepreneurial careers and have higher entrepreneurial intentions. He mentions promising elements within these programs such as networking events, tutoring sessions, testimonials of successful women entrepreneurs and female role models. Additionally, he discusses structural support from European and national governments as a key factor for stimulating women's entrepreneurship.

## 2 Teaching Women's Entrepreneurship Using Case Studies

Interestingly enough, the recognition of male dominance in the practical realm of entrepreneurship (Hamilton 2013), although repeatedly discussed in women entrepreneurship research, has not yet led to a shift that expands upon the entrepreneurial gender bias in teaching cases.

Empirically grounded teaching cases that include gender perspectives in entrepreneurship education continue to lack. So the second section of this volume attempts to do something about this deficit. It consists of three case studies that are accompanied by detailed teaching instructions. All of them are based on the actual life stories of women entrepreneurs; these case studies originated from empirical research projects on entrepreneurship issues.

But first things first: Why do we need (more) case studies about women entrepreneurs? Providing such cases in entrepreneurship courses aims to enhance women's visibility in entrepreneurship and sensitize (female) students towards starting their own business. By facing the cases and working through their inherent problems and challenges, students can experience societal realities via real case scenarios (Kaiser

1983) and holistically act, learn, and make decisions in situations that are drawn from actual business reality (Weitz 2011). Real cases offer the opportunity to reflect on one's own actions by diving into real scenarios and challenges (Kaiser and Kaminski 1997). The case study method requires an action- and decision-making orientation, and supports the development of key competencies such as systematic thinking, creativity, communication skills, cooperation competencies, decisiveness, and problem-solving skills (Wolf 1992). In general, case study didactics are guided by the students' living environment/realities, and thus corroborate the situation-theoretical approach of didactics. Utilizing cases in teaching facilitates individuals to mature and develop into autonomous decision makers who are able to take responsibility for their own decisions and actions (Kaiser 1983).

Successful teaching with cases is only possible if the teacher considers the specific background of the target group. This makes a horizontal internal differentiation within this group necessary. A division into two groups could be a viable didactical step in supporting internal differentiation, helping to underpin the multiple opportunities of using case studies to get individuals with different backgrounds interested in and motivated to work with or within the topic. This specifically means:

1. Students who want to discuss the discourse related to the cases presented
2. Students who already have (start-up) experience and use the cases to enrich their own experience with second-hand experience (Rebetja and Villnow 1994).

The cases presented in this book follow the principles of exemplarity, clarity and action orientation (Weitz 2011). They combine case study methods and case- problem methods. A case study method provides students with information, inviting them to identify challenges and find solutions for them. By contrast, the case problem method offers a more detailed description of an existing problem where students are invited to elaborate upon solutions (Kaiser and Kaminski 1997). Consequently, different levels of knowledge and experience on behalf of the students can be taken into account. In sum, the case studies presented in this book support the internal differentiation in (academic) entrepreneurship education and are a promising way of sensitizing and motivating students to get involved with the topic of women's entrepreneurship as both a field of research as well as an exciting career path. And who knows? They may even play a part in developing future knowledge in entrepreneurial intentions and actions.

The first case (chapter "Coming to Entrepreneurial Berlin and Making Their Way in Silicon Allee: The Ups and Downs of Two Women Entrepreneurs") describes and recounts the "ups and downs" of two female entrepreneurs from their early childhood experiences to reflections about recent entrepreneurial activity. The authors Alexander Goebel and Sebastian Händschke especially focus on how both women entrepreneurs coped with failure, allowing students to analyze an often neglected facet of (women's) entrepreneurship.

A female entrepreneur struggling in the mechanical engineering entrepreneurial ecosystem is the protagonist of the second case presented by Frauke Lange (chapter "Allure and Reality in FemTec Entrepreneurship"). Similar to the first case, the topic of failure is here handled as the "allure and reality" together with aspects of the contextual embeddedness of entrepreneurial paths.

Juliane Müller authored the third case (chapter “The Female Hunting Instinct: Entrepreneurial Life in Germany”) which introduces a woman entrepreneur who founded a knowledge-intensive business service while also trying to successfully balance work and life as the mother of two children. The motivational factors—“the female hunting instinct”—of founding and running an own business are a main topic in this case. The additional teaching material accompanying this case study outlines an effective use of the jigsaw method, a cooperative learning approach encouraging the participation of learners by making their learning outcomes dependent on and interactive with each other.

### **3 Guideposts for Advancing Women’s Entrepreneurship Research**

This volume achieves advances in terms of the questions raised, methods used, and explanations proposed in the field of women’s entrepreneurship research. With its teaching cases, it offers an additional element that raises the awareness and stimulates the appreciation of women-specific aspects of entrepreneurial intention and activity among future entrepreneurship researchers and educators, as well as (soon-to-be) start-up founders, funders, and supporters.

Nevertheless, and as stated in the first paragraph above, a lot remains to be done to further the frontiers of women’s entrepreneurship research. One critical aspect lies in the fact that women’s entrepreneurship research tends to fall into the trap of affirmative action. The growing breadth of scholarly, educational, and political activity is encouraging in how it continues to correct the historical inattention paid to the perspectives of female entrepreneurship (Hughes et al. 2012). But research on women’s entrepreneurship still in fact has its own blind spots: It takes women as the proxy for gender perspectives in entrepreneurship research, while simultaneously criticizing entrepreneurship research for positioning women as “the other” (Ahl 2002). We concur with Marlow and Martinez Dy (2018) that it is time to open up the gender agenda in entrepreneurship research to generate a richer and more robust understanding of the impact of gender upon entrepreneurial intention, propensity, and activity. This also implies that we need to rethink our label for this strand of research. When we study entrepreneurship from a woman’s perspective, why is this automatically gender research? Can’t it also be women’s entrepreneurship research with a focus on gender aspects, or maybe just plain old entrepreneurship research, period? Challenging ontological as well as epistemological assumptions from a woman’s perspective have been vital in revealing the masculine bias and the masculine norm in entrepreneurship research. Therefore, in order to further the field of women’s entrepreneurship research, we suggest better distinguishing between research on women’s entrepreneurship and gender research on women and men entrepreneurs.

So what is left to do? A further step in acknowledging the complexity and diversity of gendered ascription in the context, processes, and interaction inherent to entrepreneurship would be a good idea that would open up promising avenues for future

research. For example, gender studies have emphasized gender as something that we “do,” not as something that we “are” (West and Zimmermann 1987; Bruni et al. 2004; Butler 2004; Deutsch 2007). We encourage more studies that draw attention to “doing gender” and “undoing gender” (e.g. Bianco et al. 2017; Díaz-García and Welter 2013; Pecis 2016); also in relation to gendered contexts (Baker and Welter 2017). Moreover, with the need for enhanced transnational exchange in women's entrepreneurship research, especially in accordance with the powerful role of globalization as an economic, social, and cultural force (Hughes et al. 2012), gender is one of the aspects that needs to be studied when conceptualizing intersectionality in entrepreneurship: How for example do gender, demographic and structural characteristics interact and influence entrepreneurship? Interesting research impulses are currently coming from studies on ethnic, migrant and refugee entrepreneurship (see e.g. the special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* edited by Romero and Valdez (2016); Barrett and Vershinina (2017)). Another signpost for future research points to the role of gender in digital transformation and digital entrepreneurship. Here we need interdisciplinary research approaches that broaden the scope of gender capture to include human-digital interactions of all kinds in entrepreneurship to better understand the extent to which technologies change gender positions, create or destroy gendered institutions and gendered contexts, and any (dis)advantages that result.

From a historically ignored issue to a road less travelled, gender has emerged to become a construct of its own with the potential to enrich the collective work of entrepreneurship research. Some promising strands have been identified and continue to develop, and many are still untapped.

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