



### **European Journal of International Management**

#### **Special Issue on: "Entrepreneurship Responses to Disruptions, Crises, and 'Black Swans' – A Cross-Country, Comparative Perspective"**

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The world has been severely disrupted in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Davidsson, forthcoming). It was disrupted earlier (e.g., Global Financial Crisis, 2007/2008; The Great Depression, 1929), and it will be disrupted again as “environmental change is one of the few constants for organizations” (Bradley, 2015, p. 135). Disruptions have entailed worldwide, social, political, and economic crises, and these disruptions have also been coined ‘Black Swans’ (Taleb, 2007).

Disruptions, crises, and Black Swans have affected entrepreneurship to a large extent. For example, crises have pulled many people to become entrepreneurs as they spot new opportunities, and crises have pushed people to become entrepreneurs in financial needs, e.g. after losing their jobs as a consequence of the disruptions (e.g., Jackson & Dutton, 1988; Meyer et al., 2020). Disruptions have often shifted markets, and, thus, have largely modified entrepreneurial behaviours and strategies, while some entrepreneurs have exited the markets as a direct consequence of these disruptions.

In the past, crises have led governments to make new policies for and through entrepreneurship. The behaviours of people, entrepreneurs, and governments have differed widely among societies. For example, authoritarian governments and democratic governments tend to react differently in crisis situations (Alon et al., 2020). The current COVID-19 pandemic has clearly illustrated how government responses can differ widely across countries in the world (e.g., South Korea, UK, USA, Sweden, New Zealand, Vietnam) (e.g., Gao & Ren, 2020). This raises intriguing and interesting issues for entrepreneurship, as the behaviours, strategies, and characteristics of entrepreneurs and stakeholders can be compared informatively and illustratively across countries, thus leading to novel and unique insights and contributions for both entrepreneurship theory and practise, and policy-makers (Jones et al., 2011; Eberhart et al., 2017).

Entrepreneurial research from a gender perspective has traditionally been an interesting and important research topic (e.g., Bird & Brush, 2002; Ahl, 2006). Njoku (2009) states that women are generally known to play valuable roles in the community during times of crisis. This is equally true for female entrepreneurs who often adapt their business models during times of crisis to assist communities in need. This is specifically the case in many rural entrepreneurial examples. Chambers (2020) continues to highlight several challenges that female entrepreneurs may face during times of crisis and disruptions as a result of increased social and personal pressures. COVID-19 has specifically placed an increased burden on females in terms of household duties, homeschooling for children, and other additional caring roles. More generally, the majority of entrepreneurs, not just women, need to re-examine and re-think the way they do business as a result of COVID-19 and other earlier Black Swans and disruptions. From a gender perspective, it seems evident that previous times of crisis were likely to impact women more strongly, as they are generally more exposed to economic and socially vulnerable conditions (Teleki, 2020). This is also the case for female-owned businesses, as they are often smaller in size and situated in sectors that tend to be more sensitive to economic downturns. A case in point are tourism, education, and personal care industries.

Another sphere of entrepreneurship that may be uniquely affected by crises and Black Swans are family-owned businesses. Widz and Leleux (2020) argue that even though family businesses are often viewed as not very agile, they are generally able to respond more quickly and flexibly as a result of pooling together skills developed over generations. Family businesses are often characterised by multi-generational ownership, leading to an institutional memory of surviving past crises, Black Swans, and disruptions in the broader context of localness and community (Shepherd & Williams, 2014). Family-owned businesses also tend not to downscale their workforce as much as other businesses during economic crises (Jaffe, 2020). Understanding how family businesses adjust during crises and challenging, uncertain circumstances in various countries and cultural contexts could, thus, be beneficial to future growth of these businesses.

Finally, international small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and international entrepreneurship (IE) are generally strongly impacted by disruptions, crises, and Black Swans (e.g., Baier-Fuentes et al., 2019). This is manifested in the disruptions in the global value chains of businesses (Gao & Ren, 2020). Due to the scarcity of financial, human, and intangible resources and capabilities of international SMEs, including international new ventures (INVs) and born globals (BGs), these types of small, entrepreneurial firms are often disproportionately more severely impacted by disruptions than resource-rich, financially stable and established multinational enterprises (MNEs). In this context, the entrepreneurial qualities and characteristics of international SMEs, such as entrepreneurial orientation (EO), passion, perseverance, and resilience may appear to be key success factors for the survival, growth, and sustainability of these firms (e.g., Gerschewski et al., 2016; Santos et al., 2020).

For this Special Issue, we are interested in cross-country, comparative studies of entrepreneurship responses to disruptions, crises, and Black Swans.

### Subject Coverage

Suitable topics include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Pull- and push- factors that people have experienced, inducing them to intend to and actually become entrepreneurs during disruptions.
- Changing eco-systemic conditions making it easier or more difficult to start a business.
- Changing conditions enhancing or constraining expectations for growth.
- Difficulties during disruption which have been pressuring entrepreneurs to exit from their business.
- Opportunities that have emerged during the disruptions which have led alert entrepreneurs to change direction.
- Constraints that have emerged during the disruptions which have pressured entrepreneurs to abandon old directions and to seek new directions.
- Changing innovation during disruption.
- Changing exporting during disruption.
- Entrepreneurs' well-being and mental health issues during disruptions, notably stress, anxiety, and uncertainty.
- Entrepreneurs' adoption of new forms of organising, notably by virtual collaboration, remote working, working from home, and digitalisation (e.g., Zoom).
- Changes in work of employees who are working entrepreneurially versus routinely.
- Business angels changing funding and investment in new enterprises.
- Policies that some governments have introduced to promote and support entrepreneurial enterprising.
- Responses of people, entrepreneurs, and government during the Covid-19 disruption compared to responses to the Global Financial Crisis in 2007-2008.
- Implications of Black Swans for entrepreneurship.
- Disruptions as opportunity exploration for new, innovative entrepreneurship.
- Implications of disruptions for international entrepreneurship (e.g. born globals, international new ventures, early and rapidly internationalising firms, international SMEs, SME exporters).
- Implications of disruptions for female entrepreneurship.
- Implications of disruptions for family businesses.

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### Notes for Prospective Authors

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. (N.B. Conference papers may only be submitted if the paper has been completely re-written and if appropriate written permissions have been obtained from any copyright holders of the original paper).

All papers are refereed through a peer review process.

**All papers must be submitted online.** To submit a paper, please read our [Submitting articles](#) page.

Submissions will be reviewed faster than usual and will be accepted (or rejected) on a rolling basis. Authors are requested to email an extended abstract (5-10 pages, double-spaced, specifying research question, theoretical background, research design, available data, expected contributions) to the guest editors before 1 October 2020 (Stephan Gerschewski, [s.gerschewski@kent.ac.uk](mailto:s.gerschewski@kent.ac.uk); Thomas Schött, [tsc@sam.sdu.dk](mailto:tsc@sam.sdu.dk); Natanya Meyer, [natanyam@uj.ac.za](mailto:natanyam@uj.ac.za); and Ondrej Dvouletý, [ondrej.dvoulety@vse.cz](mailto:ondrej.dvoulety@vse.cz)). Within two weeks of submission, the abstract will be reviewed by the guest editors, and the authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts by 31 December 2020 for standard, double-blind review.

### Important Dates

Extended Abstracts due by: *1 October, 2020*

Manuscripts due by: *31 December, 2020*

Notification to authors: *1 March, 2021*

Final versions due by: *1 May, 2021*