

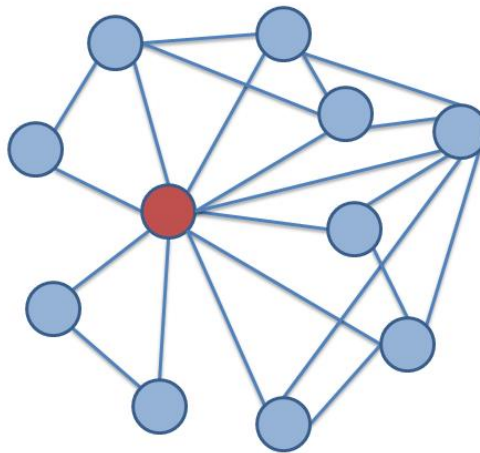
Professor Dr. Suleika Bort

Chair of International Management
and Social Entrepreneurship



Entrepreneurial Network Behavior

Master seminar (7 ECTS) in summer term 2021



Seminar objectives

This seminar aims to address the community of students interested in exploring the behavior of entrepreneurs and their founding teams in shaping and influencing their network relationships. Networks, partnerships and cooperations are an important resource for entrepreneurs and their teams as they are a base for innovation, competitive advantage, reputation and performance. In addition, networks and the relations they constitute, are common modes of new market entry. However, to build network partnerships and to move into beneficial network positions is a very challenging task due to the fact that entrepreneurs often have a lack of knowledge about potential partners and less experience in how to form such networks. This seminar is aimed to address these challenges. In particular, we are interested in exploring how entrepreneurs and their teams build their networks. We focus on individual attributes of the founders and their teams as well as their actions to explain network evolution and change. In today's business world founding a company is usually a complex undertaking which often neither one founder nor a founding team can fulfil alone. Moreover, entrepreneurship is increasingly understood as a social-interactive and action-oriented process, and one of the cornerstones of this thinking are social network theories (Gedajlovic et al., 2013).

Linking entrepreneurship and network research provides an integrated account in which the entrepreneur's organizing agency is combined with an emphasis on the larger social structure in which the entrepreneur is embedded. The importance of social relations and the associated interactions between entrepreneurs and their social structure gives insight into key entrepreneurial processes. These key processes involve multiple mechanisms:

First, they can be related to accessing established and new knowledge through social relationships, for instance to see and enact entrepreneurial opportunities. Thereby this

mechanism relates to acquiring resources, both tangible as well as intangible. A *second* mechanism deals with making networks more sustainable and productive, by embedding relationships. Through diversifying their ties and achieving brokering positions, entrepreneurs can enhance their position in a network and benefit from the advantages of such a position. Since at the initial stage of the founding process resources and time are especially scarce and fragile, but of critical importance as they may influence future network positions, we focus on the initial and early growth phase of startups.

To sum it up, entrepreneurs need a better understanding of what really underlies the success of networks and cooperation, and how entrepreneurs can act as agent to manage them in a better way. To gain such a better understanding is the aim of this seminar. In particular, we focus on individual attributes (i.e., character traits) of entrepreneurs and their founding teams and their action and behaviors. Former is important because character traits represent one important dimension of diversity in the founding team. Latter is important because for example via signals and skilled social framing entrepreneurs and their teams take actions to build and form their networks (e.g., Hallen et al., 2020).

Specific topics

1. Ego network level:

- 1.1. How do the character traits of the entrepreneurs and their teams impact alliance and network formation? (e.g., Burt, 1998; Fang et al., 2015; Kalish & Robins, 2006; Selden, 2018; Tasselli, Kilduff & Menges, 2015; Tasselli & Kilduff, 2021)
- 1.2. Investigation of the impact of team diversity on alliance and network formation intensity of entrepreneurs. (e.g., Brands & Kilduff, 2013; Tasselli, Kilduff & Menges, 2015; Triana et al., 2019; Zhou, Hu & Zey, 2015)

2. Whole network structure level:

- 2.1. What connections are vital for founders in the initial and early growth phase of the organization life cycle to create a beneficial network position? (e.g., Hite & Hesterly 2001; Patzelt et al., 2020; Peltier & Naidu, 2012)
- 2.2. How, through social interactions and networking, do entrepreneurs with an initial 'poor' network position try to escape their potential structural lock-in? (e.g., Al-Laham, 2010; Milanov & Fernhaber 2009)

Procedure

Each student will intensively deal with a scientific topic in the seminar. The topic has to be analyzed in detail in a 12-page seminar paper and finally presented in groups of two to three members. The seminar consists of interactive lectures, in which methods of scientific work and presentation skills will be discussed. In two to three individual consulting meetings, the groups present their interim results and receive individual feedback. Finally, the groups present their work and results will be discussed.

Proof of Proficiency

Within the seminar, each participant will write individually a 12-page seminar paper according to scientific standards and present their results in groups of two to three members. The seminar will be held in English.

Evaluation criteria

- Individual seminar paper (round about 12 pages) (40 %)
- Group presentation (15 min) (40 %)
- Active participation in seminar sessions (10 %)
- Peer-review (5 min) (10 %)

The final grade is determined according to the portfolio approach.

Target group

The target group is anyone who would like to optimally prepare for a master's thesis in the field of international management and who are particularly interested in research in entrepreneurship, networks, and diversity.

Application

In the upcoming summer semester, the chair will offer a seminar for Master students.

If you are interested, please apply for the seminar until **March 28th, 2021, 6 pm** at the latest (postponed). In order to do so, please fill out the online form: <https://www.wiwi.uni-passau.de/en/school/chairs/prof-dr-suleika-bort/teaching/seminar-application-form/>

For the application, a short letter of motivation (max. 250 words), your CV and the current HISQUIS statement - to be uploaded as a PDF file with your last name as file name - are required.

Until March 30th you will receive the information from the chair whether you are admitted to the seminar. Please confirm your participation until April 01st by sending an email to Sekretariat.Intman@uni-passau.de indicating your binding interest.

You will then receive further information about the structure and the content of the course. So far, the kick-off meeting for the seminar is scheduled for April 15th, 2021. The final presentation will take place on **July 08th, 2021** and the deadline for submission of the seminar paper is **July 31st, 2021**.

Maximum number of participants: 12

If you have any questions regarding the seminar feel free to get in touch: Jannes.Kormann@uni-passau.de

Provisional syllabus

We assume that the seminar will be conducted without classroom sessions. All dates take place synchronously via Zoom.

Date	Preparation for session	Subject
Thursday, 15.04.2021 14:00-16:00 s.t.		Kick-off <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to network research and the specific topics in this seminar• Introduction to the methods of scientific writing/ working.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the basics of scientific presentations and giving peer reviews. • Assignment of topics and groups
Thursday, 06.05.2021 (afternoon)	Submission of an outline (upload of the outline to StudIP one day in advance)	Guidance meeting/ Individual or group coaching (Q&A session)
Thursday, 10.06.2021 (afternoon)	Interim presentation Give an overview of the current state of your research project. (upload of the short presentation to StudIP one day in advance)	Guidance meeting/ Individual or group coaching (Q&A session)
Thursday, 01.07.2021	SUBMISSION	The final presentation has to be submitted to get the chance of a peer review
Thursday, 08.07.2021 14:00-17:00	Two presentations	Final presentations and peer review
Thursday, 31.07.2021	SUBMISSION Seminar paper	Guide for scientific working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission electronically via StudIP

Seminar instructors

Prof. Dr. Suleika Bort

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and

Jannes Kormann

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Literature (not every reference relevant for every topic)

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