

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**SPECIAL ISSUE: *Mode of international engagement and the small entrepreneurial firm***

**Guest Editors:**

Professor Pavlos Dimitratos: pavlos.dimitratos@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Sinéad Monaghan: sinead.monaghan@tcd.ie

**Introduction Background and Focus of the Special Issue:**

International expansion is often a key route to survival and growth for small and entrepreneurial firms. The entry mode and the subsequent mode of involvement in the foreign country - henceforth, mode of international engagement - is a significant strategic choice for those firms. However, it entails risks and uncertainty as it requires considerable resources and commitment to foreign markets, challenges in knowledge acquisition and network development and a possible discontinuous change within the organisation. As such, the mode of international engagement and related decisions is a complex area of research for small and entrepreneurial firms that calls for a more nuanced understanding. There is a rich body of research on foreign entry mode choices of large and established multinational firms. Traditionally, this research has mainly employed theoretical models such as transaction cost theories, resource-based view, institutional theory, network perspectives and to a lesser extent the commitment-trust view and agency theory, to demonstrate a more systemic understanding of how large firms enter new markets, the performance implications, and ultimately, their survival. More recently, research has explored variation in foreign entry mode based on the industry of the firm, an emerging market perspective and the role of stakeholders. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether these same theoretical frameworks can be used to explain small firm modes of international engagement.

Small and entrepreneurial firms engage oftentimes in advanced modes such as contractual or non-contractual alliances and partnerships abroad. Moreover, some of those firms form wholly owned subsidiaries and employ a *solo* approach to exploit opportunities and thrive in the foreign marketplace. The so called 'micromultinationals', that employ advanced entry modes such as alliances or wholly owned subsidiaries to succeed abroad, are growing in light of digitisation, anti-globalisation movements and hypercompetitive markets. Traditionally, firms that go abroad early in their inception, and at a fast pace, have availed of predominantly exporting modes of engagement, yet this rapid multinationalisation has further accelerated the visibility and viability of higher commitment entry mode choices. Hence existing international entrepreneurship literature may not portray the full spectrum of modes of international engagement activities. Research encapsulating other theoretical perspectives that focus on the entrepreneur's agency, entrepreneurial decision-making and other more individual characteristics remain under-researched. As such, research on modes of international engagement within entrepreneurial firms can significantly reinvigorate the international entrepreneurship literature, blending the literature with concepts and frameworks used in both small and large firms, and possibly delivering some novel research directions. Unsurprisingly, internationalisation and modes of international engagement for small firms are on the top of the agenda of policy-making organisations around the world.

The importance and prevalence of internationalised small and entrepreneurial firms may be a more common type of organisation in the years to come in light of increased protectionism, greater access and availability of private financing, and a growing propensity for digitally driven international business. In this era, small firms will face higher trade and related barriers, thus they may be propelled to establish advanced modes of international engagement and become micromultinationals in their attempt to overcome these barriers and grow.

For this special issue, we encourage submissions that address some of the unexplored questions regarding modes of international engagement in small and entrepreneurial firms. Although the list below is by no means exclusive, we invite conceptual and empirical submissions that would address the themes on the modes of international engagement activities of small and entrepreneurial firms such as:

- What are the main theoretical models that explain modes of international engagement behaviour?
- Considering a microfoundational perspective, what is the role of the entrepreneur, the founding team and the top management team in explaining their modes of international engagement?
- How can recent advances on modes of international engagement, such as the real option theory, promote relevant research and discussion for small and entrepreneurial firms?
- What do we know so far regarding modes of international engagement in the international entrepreneurship research and how can we progress this debate?
- How do advances in micromultinationals' research assist study on the modes of international engagement in international entrepreneurship?
- What is the extent, nature and justification of modes during switching, retrenching and variation between foreign countries and within the same foreign country over time?
- What is the role of digital business and online platforms in the choice of international engagement modes for small and entrepreneurial firms?

In addition to quantitative studies, we also encourage papers that deliver greater explanatory power including, yet not limited to, longitudinal, qualitative, ethnographic, contextually sensitive and in-depth explorations of modes of international engagement by small entrepreneurial firms.

The deadline for submission of papers is 30 September 2021. The journal submission site will be open for submissions from 13 September 2021. The Special Issue is scheduled to be published in December 2022/February 2023. Papers must be original and comply with ISBJ submission guidelines. Please refer <http://isb.sagepub.com/> for submission guidelines and a link to the on-line submission system. In the online system please ensure you submit your paper within Manuscript Type: 'Special Issue: Mode of international engagement and the small entrepreneurial firm'.

Questions and informal enquiries should be directed to the two Guest Editors.

Professor Pavlos Dimitratos: [pavlos.dimitratos@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:pavlos.dimitratos@glasgow.ac.uk)

Dr Sinéad Monaghan: [sinead.monaghan@tcd.ie](mailto:sinead.monaghan@tcd.ie)