



RSA—Annual Conference Pushing Regions beyond Their Borders

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Open Special Session—SMEs and Family Firms in Urban and Peripheral Areas

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Despite big business, big data, and big transitions, there are still small and medium enterprises (SMEs), many of which are family firms or so-called hidden champions that serve as the economic backbones of and provide continuity in developed and emerging economies. SMEs and family firms comprise diverse types of businesses, from traditional century-old Japanese dynasties, American family farms, and German Mittelstand to novel Shanghai and Silicon Valley elites. Simultaneously, they are geographically uneven phenomena in terms of their distribution as well as their impact on and interplay with the local, regional, and national levels and beyond, thus requiring more academic attention in the field of regional studies. Against this background, this session aims to open up a profound debate on this often-neglected topic by collecting diverse work on SMEs and/or family businesses in urban and peripheral contexts. We invite scholars from manifold disciplines, such as regional economics, economic geography, family business, management, organization studies, and international business, as well as practitioners from diverse backgrounds to share their interests and to submit their research on the spatiality of SMEs and family firms, particularly in urban and peripheral areas.

Our rationale is to initiate a debate—independent of methodological approach (qualitative or quantitative)—on SMEs and/or family businesses played out in agglomerations and peripheries. Conceptual, empirical, and methodological papers might address, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conceptual and theoretical debates about the nature of SMEs/family firms and space (i.e. regional familiness, family relatedness in cities and peripheries).
- Contributions and impacts of SMEs/family firms in agglomerations and peripheries.
- Specificities in the evolution and trajectories of SMEs/family firms in urban and peripheral areas.
- Issues related to the place leadership or corporate urban/regional responsibilities of SMEs/family firms.
- SME-/family firm-specific issues (succession, governance, reputation, professionalization, etc.) from a spatial perspective.
- Role of SMEs/family firms in digitalization and platform-based economies and the impact of spaces.

If you are interested in presenting a paper in this session, please submit your abstract of no more than **300 words** via the RSA platform by **28 February 2019**. Feel free to contact us anytime: Lech Suwala (l.suwala@isr.tu-berlin.de) and/or Rodrigo Basco (rbasco@aus.edu), shall questions arise.

For more **information** and **registration** visit:

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