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small business
and entrepreneurship



ISBE Early Career Researcher/Academic Winter Symposium 2025



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small business
and entrepreneurship



Welcome and introductions

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ISBE ECR Forum

- LinkedIn Group
- Travel funding
- Online workshops around submissions to the ISBE conference





**Strand A - Entrepreneurship, Ecosystems, resilience
(Chair – Kellie Forbes-Simpson, discussant – Maria Wishart)
Morning session**

Designing context-sensitive rural entrepreneurship policy

Rodrigo Frias, Durham University, Jonathan Kimmitt, Durham University, Pablo Muñoz, Durham University, Christopher Storey, Northumbria University

Impact of family traits on resilience of small businesses in Yorkshire: A study using a dynamic capabilities lens

Sarah Douglas-Lee, Leeds Beckett University

The evolution of women's entrepreneurship and ecosystem dynamics in Saudi Arabia

Nasreen Hasan Ashkanani, Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Strathclyde

Entrepreneurship policy and poverty alleviation in China:

***The entrepreneurial ecosystem under the targeted poverty alleviation
and rural revitalization policy in Hainan Province, China***

Hao Jiang, Newcastle University Business School



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Designing context-sensitive rural entrepreneurship policy

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Designing Context-Sensitive Rural Entrepreneurship Policy

ISBE Early Career Researcher/Academic Winter Symposium
Warwick Business School, London

RODRIGO FRIAS, JONATHAN KIMMITT, PABLO MUÑOZ AND CHRISTOPHER STOREY

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19 Feb 2025

Entrepreneurship and Context

- The relationship **between entrepreneurship and context** has gained relevant attention (Zahra et al., 2014).
 - However, the existing theoretical frameworks mainly explain this interaction **using macro-level approaches**. E.g., **agglomeration theory**, **economic geography**, **innovation systems** (Lundvall, 2007), and **entrepreneurial ecosystems** (Spigel, 2017).
 - Normally, these approaches are **insufficient to recognise the importance of contexts**.
- Rural businesses matter.** 92% of the UK is rural, 17% of the UK's population lives in rural areas, and 23% (590,000) of all businesses registered in the UK operate in rural places.

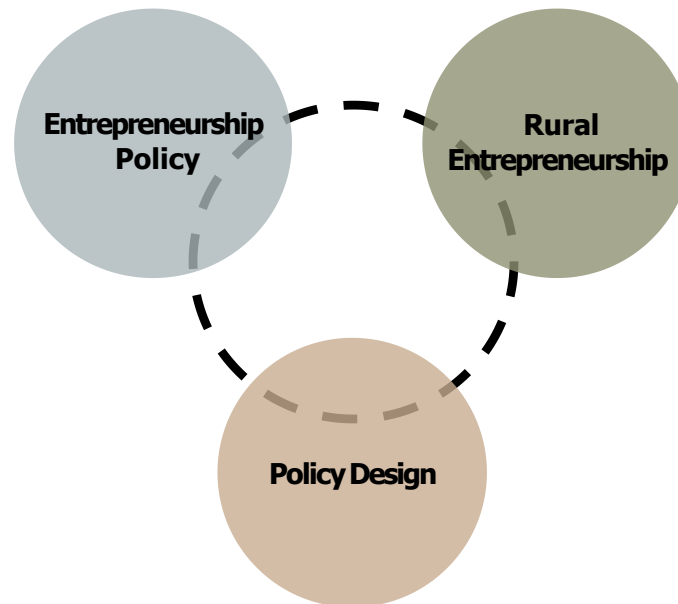
Research Question

How can policy formulation processes enable the development of more context-sensitive entrepreneurial outcomes in rural areas?



Literature

- Highly focused on innovation and technology.
- Policymakers tend to use selective evidence (Nightingale and Coad, 2014; Koppl, 2008; Brown et al., 2017)
- Policymakers must avoid bias and one-size-fits-all approaches in entrepreneurship policy (Arshed et al., 2014).



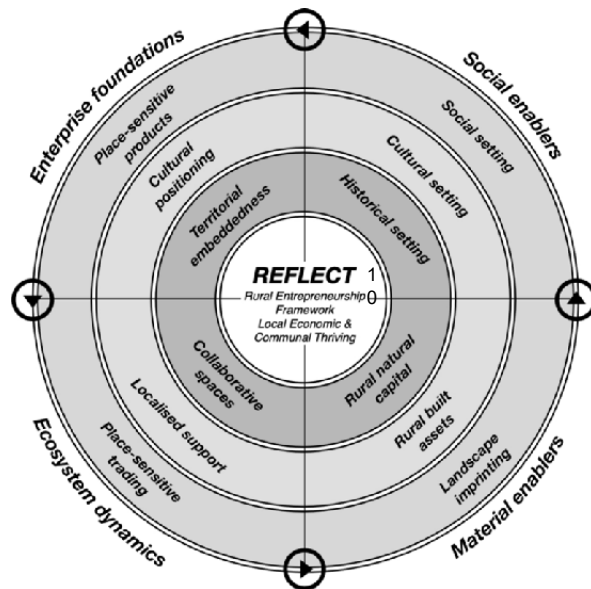
- Business in rural areas with emotional connection (Islas-Moreno et al., 2021).
- Shift in Focus Needed: We need to move from economic outcomes to a place-sensitive lens that considers social, material, and historical dynamics (Rooks et al., 2016).

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- Public Policy: Government actions to influence objectives (Cochran, 1993).
- Policy: Formal plan for specific goals (Richards & Smith, 2002).
- Policymaking: Complex and non-linear process (Arshed et al., 2014).

REFLECT Framework

Rural Entrepreneurship Framework for Local Economic and Communal Thriving (Muñoz and Kimmitt, 2019)



An integrated framework for rural entrepreneurship based in **Chile** (South America) that identifies and organises four distinct elements of a rural entrepreneurship ecosystem:

1. **Material enablers** (natural capital, landscape, etc.)
2. **Social enablers** (historical and cultural settings)
3. **Enterprise foundations** (business with emotional attachment, local identity)
4. **Ecosystem dynamics** (localised support, informal-private-public interactions)

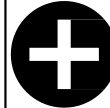
Research Methodology

How do we adapt the framework? By combining two research approaches:

1. Entrepreneurship Translational Research (Muñoz and Dimov, 2023)

ETR leverages translational research practices from biomedical sciences and design science to lay the ground for a broader research ecosystem of entrepreneurship.

“It helps to **translate the problems of practice with the solutions of theory...** by moving **discoveries made in basic entrepreneurship research to entrepreneurial practice, entrepreneurial communities, and entrepreneurship policy**” (p.5).



2. Design Science Research (DSR)

DSR is understood as the **study of artefacts** (Johannesson and Perjons, 2021) that were conceived to **resolve relevant problems for the world, with practical outcomes, by the combination of rigour and relevance** (Dimov et al., 2022).

An **artefact** is “**an object made by humans with the intention it is used to address a practical problem**” (Johannesson and Perjons, 2021, p.3),

Data Collection:

- 18 semi-structured interviews conducted (60-90 mins each).
- The Northeast region. Including Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, and Sunderland Wooler.
- Participants were represented by policymakers, business advisors/supporters, business owners, and researchers.
- Workshop to validate findings and artefact.

Findings: 4 categories of uncertainty

Our interviewees constantly pointed to the **uncertainties experienced while making policy decisions**. Some reflect the new normal, post-Brexit and post-COVID. Others, however, are deeply ingrained in the reality of the rural North East.

1. Local Communities	2. Local Assets	3. External Policies	4. External Support
Rural traits in terms of their diversity, skills, and collaboration capacity.	Resources that communities have in their area that could help them to thrive.	Policy definitions, outcomes and expected impact are defined by local and national authorities.	Resources and services delivered by external organisations.
1.1. Giveback	2.1. Connectivity	3.1. Impact	4.1. Business Activities & Services
1.2. Mixture	2.2. Infrastructure	3.2. Funding	4.2. Funding Available
1.3. Reconversion	2.3. Network	3.3. Long-term Policy	4.3. Physical Services
1.4. Skills	2.4. Broadband	3.4. Definitions	
1.5. Lifestyle & Wellbeing		3.5. Services	
		3.6. COVID-19/Brexit	

Findings:



Local Communities/Giveback:

"There's lots of networking, there's lots of support that's easier to cope with and manage in a small community than it would be in a bigger community. So, everybody knows everybody's business. So, if you're looking for somebody who's got expertise, then you just need to ask, and somebody will come forward".



Local Assets/Infrastructure:

"The last bank (Barclays) went about 15 years ago... [and] it's a 40-mile round trip to the nearest bank... [the solution] requires the money is to be taken to the post office... It takes a while for things to get from one place to another. And the post office is only open certain hours a week... it's not ideal."



External Policies/Impact:

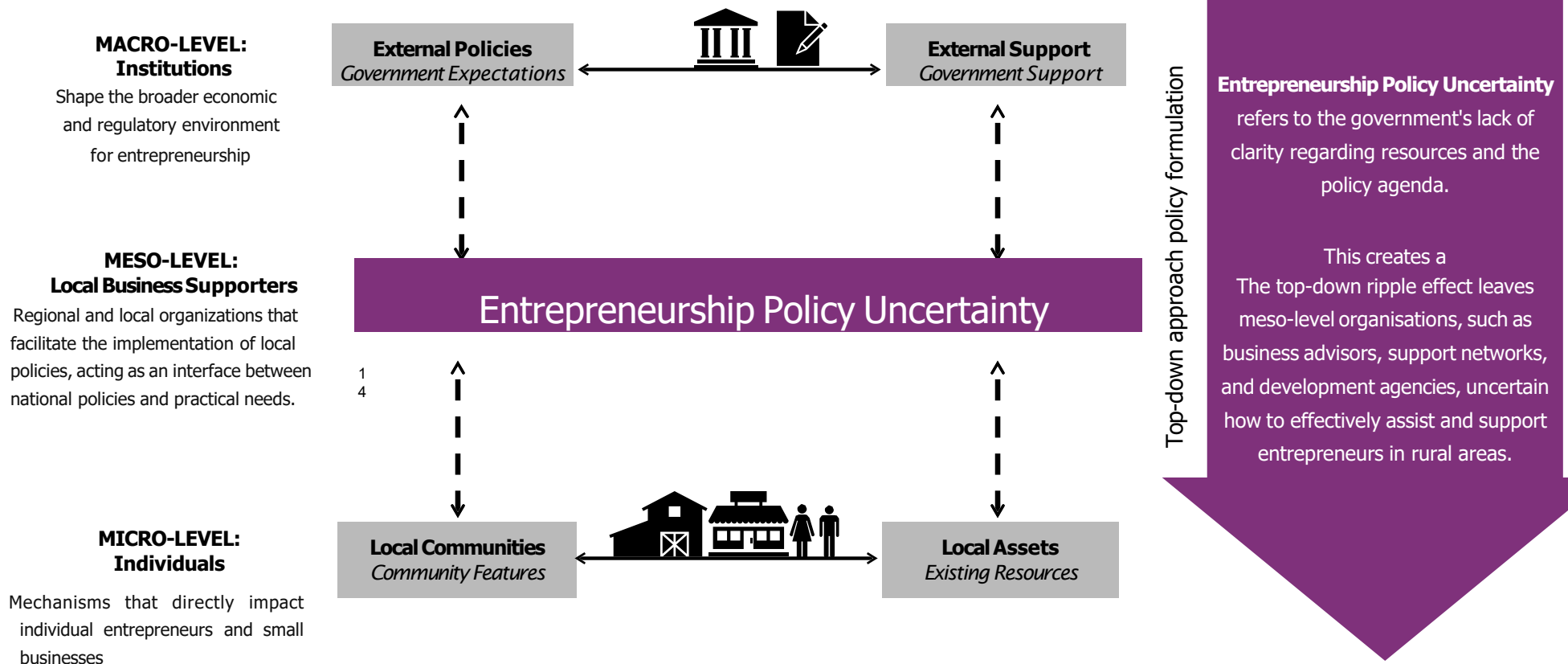
"Because of a lot of the funding and the grants, you've got to say that you're going to double your turnover, or you're going to expand, or you're going to employ so many people. Well, smaller businesses don't want to do that".



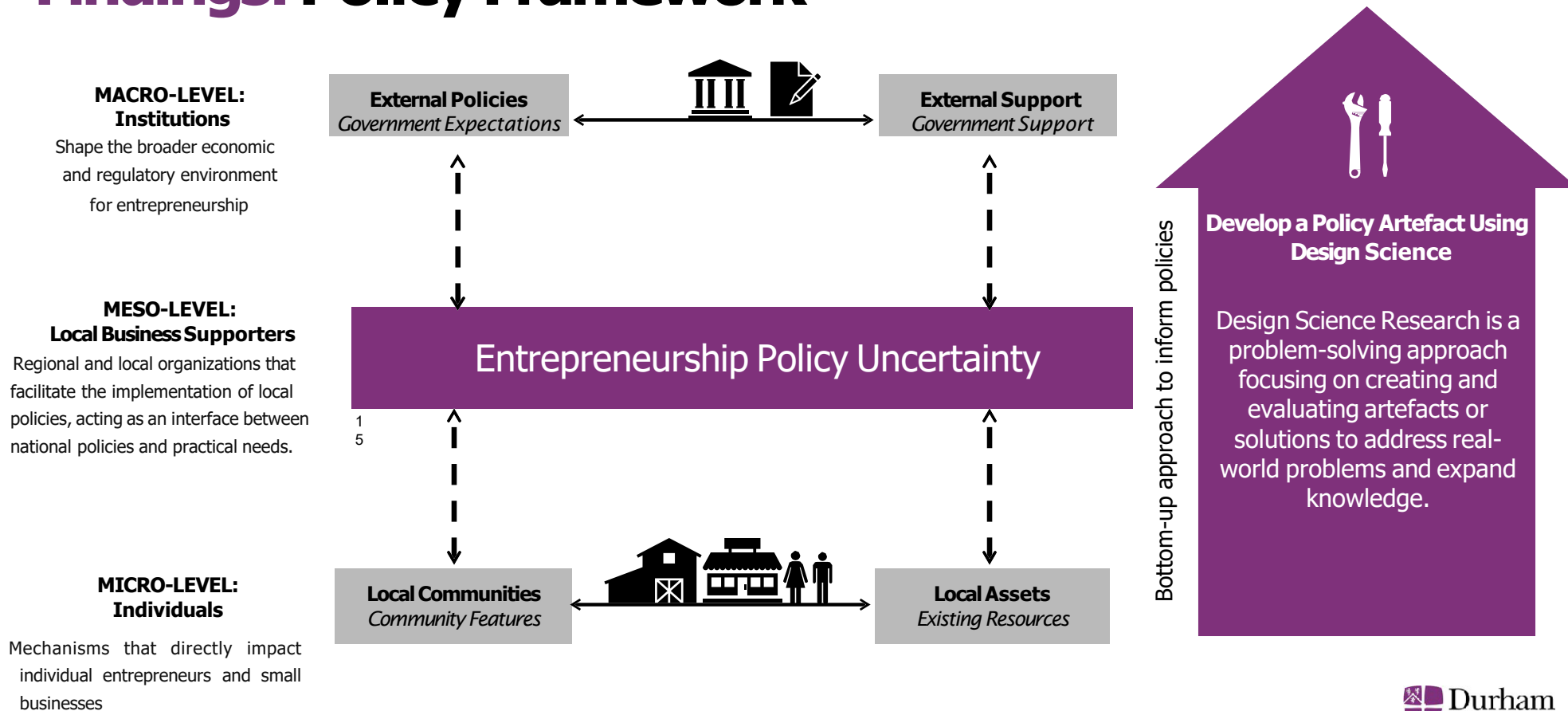
External Support/Business Services:

"People that need different support, if you like, not extra, just different."

Findings: Policy Framework



Findings: Policy Framework

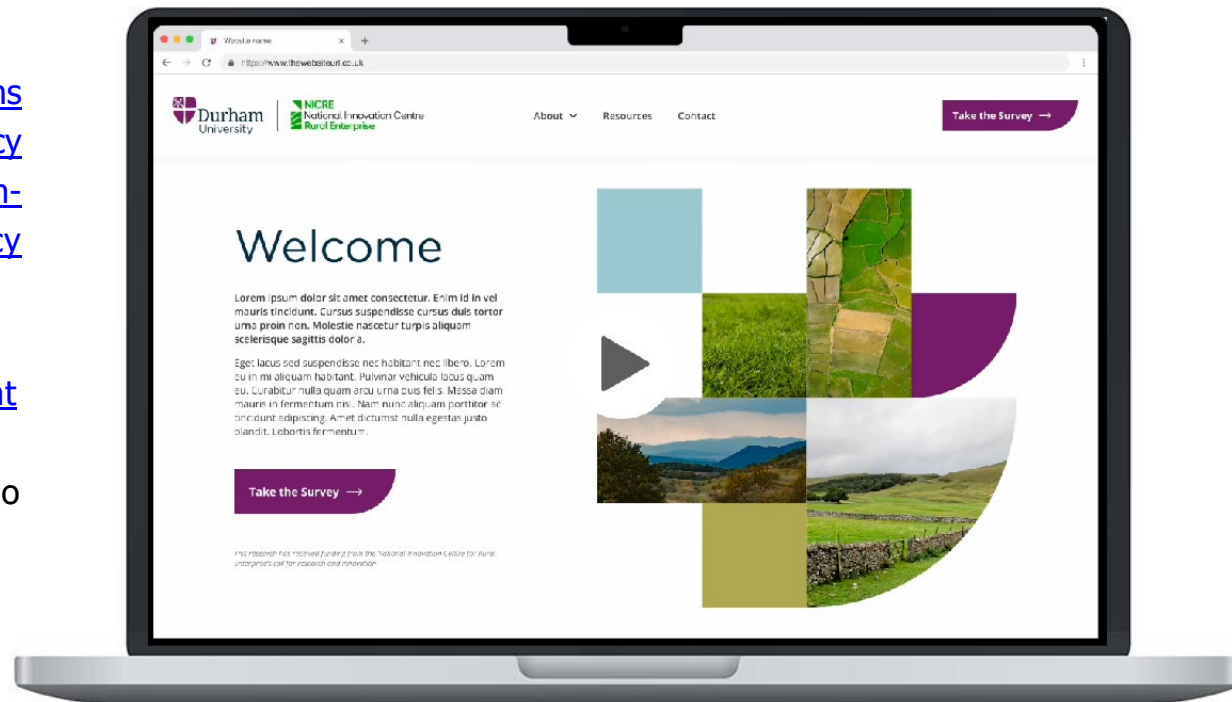


Artefact (Prototype)

Goal and Features

- REFLECT is a tool designed to ignite discussions about uncertainties in entrepreneurship policy that impact rural businesses, providing decision-makers contextual insights to guide policy formulation.
- Web-based solution
- Provides an understanding of the different conditions and challenges within rural areas
- It is **not an index** that seeks to establish who performs better or worse.
- The artefact should answer: **Is it useful?**

www.REFLECT.enterprises



Background & Research Question

Literature Review

REFLECT

Research Design



Findings

Artefact

Limitations &
Contributions

Q&A

Survey and Results



[Save Progress](#) [Exit Survey](#)

Category 1 of 4 | Question 1 of 6

Local Communities

Local Resources / Assets

External Policies

External Support / Resources

3%

Question 1

Understanding community needs

How are local businesses adapting to the diverse demands and expectations of different community segments, including stayers, day trippers, commuters, second homers, and engaged newcomers?

Not at all

To a small extent

Neutral

To a large extent

To a great extent

☐

☒

☐

☐

☐

Not important

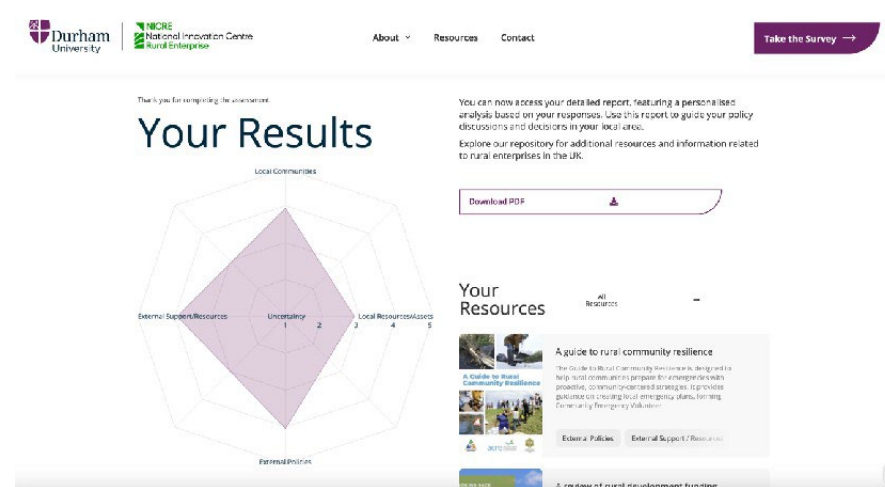
Somewhat important

Neither important nor unimportant

Important

Very important

[Back](#) [Next](#)



[Background & Research Question](#)[Literature Review](#)[REFLECT](#)[Research Design](#)[Findings](#)[Artefact](#)[Limitations & Contributions](#)[Q&A](#)[About](#)[Resources](#)[Contact](#)[Take the Survey](#)

Filter

Select Category...



Rural entrepreneurship in place: an integrated framework

Agglomeration-oriented theories have grown significantly in the past decade in the explanation and promotion of entrepreneurship. Theoretical frameworks and normative models such as entrepreneurial ecosystems are insufficient to observe, explain, and

[Local Communities](#)[Local Resources](#)[Academic](#)

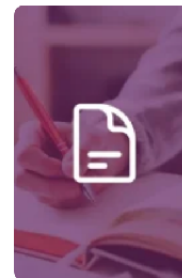
Shared Rural Network (SRN) Transforming Mobile Coverage Countrywide

The Shared Rural Network (SRN) will deliver reliable mobile broadband to 95% of the UK, addressing the digital divide by improving 4G coverage in the areas that need it most. Author(s):

[Local Resources](#)[Broadband/Mobile](#)[Policy Pro](#)

Connected Nations Spring 2023 update: Interactive report

This interactive report allows people to examine Connected Nations data at the level and locations in which they are most interested. It includes coverage and usage for both fixed and mobile

[Local Resources](#)[To understand](#)

Digital exclusion and the cost of living

What are the main causes of digital exclusion in the UK? What is the economic and social impact? The Rural Services Network (RSN) provided evidence to the UK Parliament, highlighting the

[External Policies](#)[Local Resources](#)[Broadband](#)

Communications Consumer Panel: The Struggle for Fairness



The Royal Countryside Fund

The Royal Countryside Fund, focused on rural UK communities, aims to empower local solutions for a

Limitations and Contributions

Limitations:

1. Contexts (Chile & UK) are different. How do we find common ground?
2. Usability could be a double-edged sword. i.e., what users want could differ from what users need.
3. Policymaking is a black box and a complex process. REFLECT aims to ignite policy dialogue to inform policymakers, not to fix any particular policy.

Contributions:

1. It contributes to a better understanding of rural entrepreneurship, as previous theories (e.g., economic geography, and innovation systems) are insufficient for policymaking.
2. It reduces the gap between theory and practice in social sciences by applying Translational Research and Design Science.
3. It provides an artefact that can help promote more inclusive and context-sensitive entrepreneurial outcomes, helping policy actors make better decisions and formulate better interventions.

Questions, ideas, comments ;)

Designing Context-Sensitive Rural Entrepreneurship Policy

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19 Feb 2025

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**Strand A - Entrepreneurship, Ecosystems, resilience
(Chair – Kellie Forbes-Simpson, discussant – Maria Wishart)
Morning session**

***Impact of family traits on resilience of small businesses in Yorkshire: A study using a
dynamic capabilities lens***

Sarah Douglas-Lee, Leeds Beckett University

The Impact of Family on the Resilience of Small – Medium, Hospitality Businesses in Yorkshire.

SARAH DOUGLAS-LEE

ISBE WINTER SYMPOSIUM

19/02/2025

Project Overview



- The Impact of Family on the Resilience of Small - Medium Hospitality Businesses in Yorkshire.
- PhD Research project, February 2024 – February 2028, Part time
- Mixed Methods, Exploratory approach, Qualitative – Quantitative



Resilience

- Resilience has gained increased recognition due to the frequency and severity of external events making operating environments difficult to navigate for business owners.
- Resilience in the broader context refers to an adjustment to adversity.
- Within a business context; How firms can maintain **healthy** functioning under complex and challenging conditions.

(Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003; Saad et al., 2021; Raetz et al., 2022)



Business Resilience: Building Adaptive Capacity



Key Components

- Adaptive capacity: The ability to adjust strategies and operations in response to disruptions while maintaining core functions
- Organisational learning: Continuous improvement through experience and knowledge sharing across departments
- Strategic flexibility: Maintaining multiple options and contingency plans for critical business processes

(Linnenluecke 2019)

Measuring Resilience

Resilience is measured through key performance indicators including:

- Recovery Time Objective (RTO)
- Business Impact Analysis (BIA) metrics

Context: Resilience within Small-Medium, Hospitality Family firms

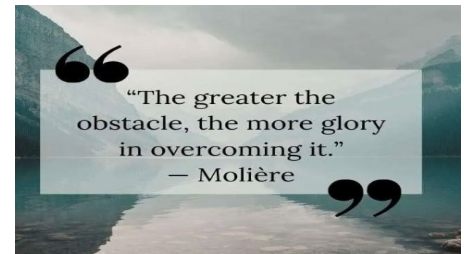
- Family businesses represent approximately 85% of private sector firms and employ 13.9 million workers (51.5% of private sector employment), contributing £575 billion to the national economy (ISB 2020, Baltazar et al 2023).
- Hospitality; Tertiary sector including Accommodation, Food & drink, Travel, Tourism and Events. Around 50% of hospitality firms are family-run (IFB 2022).
- More than 400 pubs closed in 2024, an average of 34 closures per month, because of several factors but most recently due to rising costs and cautious consumer spending (Kollewe 2024)
- Yorkshire, Distinctive landscape, Longstanding & Close-knit Relationships, Value for Money. Mitchell and Simpson (2021) note the strong influence of traditions and local heritage.



Table: defining an SME

Turnover or balance sheet total	Headcount	Business size
Turnover less than €50 million, or balance sheet total less than €43 million	Fewer than 250	Medium sized
Turnover less than €10 million, or balance sheet total less than €10 million	Fewer than 50	Small
Turnover less than €2 million, or balance sheet total less than €2 million	Fewer than 10	Micro

Resilience within Family Businesses



The Paradox of Resilience

- **Resistance to Creative Destruction:** Strong family traditions and emotional attachments can prevent necessary business model innovation and adaptation
 - **Path Dependency:** Historical success formulas become rigid barriers to change, leading to strategic lock-in
- 67% of family businesses report resistance to technological change compared to 45% of non-family firms (PWC Global Family Business Survey, 2021)
- 3.2x Family firms are 3.2 times more likely to maintain unprofitable legacy operations than non-family counterparts (KPMG Family Business Report, 2020)

Critical Challenges

- Emotional attachment to legacy products/services despite market obsolescence
- Maintaining unprofitable business units to preserve family employment
- Resisting technological transformation to protect traditional practices

"Business resilience is an organization's capacity to both adapt during disruption and recognise when adaptation requires strategic discontinuation of existing practices. It balances persistence with the wisdom to stop, ensuring long-term survival through both strategic endurance and purposeful abandonment."

(Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003; Saad et al., 2021; Raetze et al., 2022)



Literature



FAMILY BUSINESS REVIEW

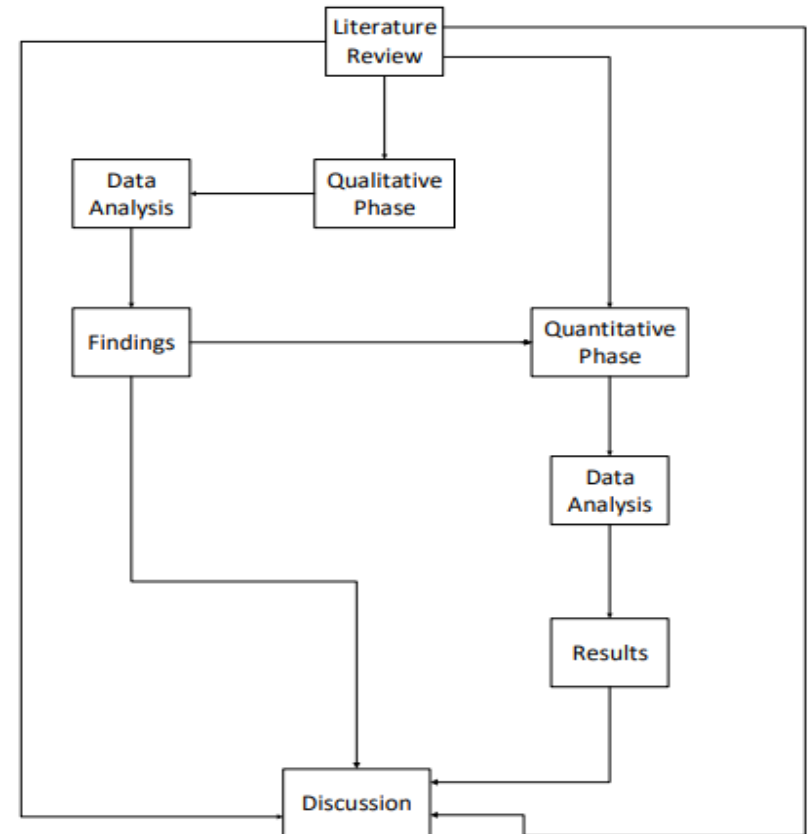
Family Businesses – Resilience – Hospitality

- Limited understanding of why some small, family firms demonstrate resilience in the face of adversities while others fail. (Kussudyarsana et al 2024)
- Family Business literature to date appears to focus on succession, structures and governance. At present, quantitative studies make up 80% of published works in this area.
- According to Raey and Zhang (2014), out of 78 qualitative articles examined, 67 used a case study and adopted either a positivist or interpretivist approach.
- Resilience within Hospitality. Qualitative, Mixed Methods & Quantitative approaches adopted. Focus so far on; Crisis response, Business adaptation and recovery strategies
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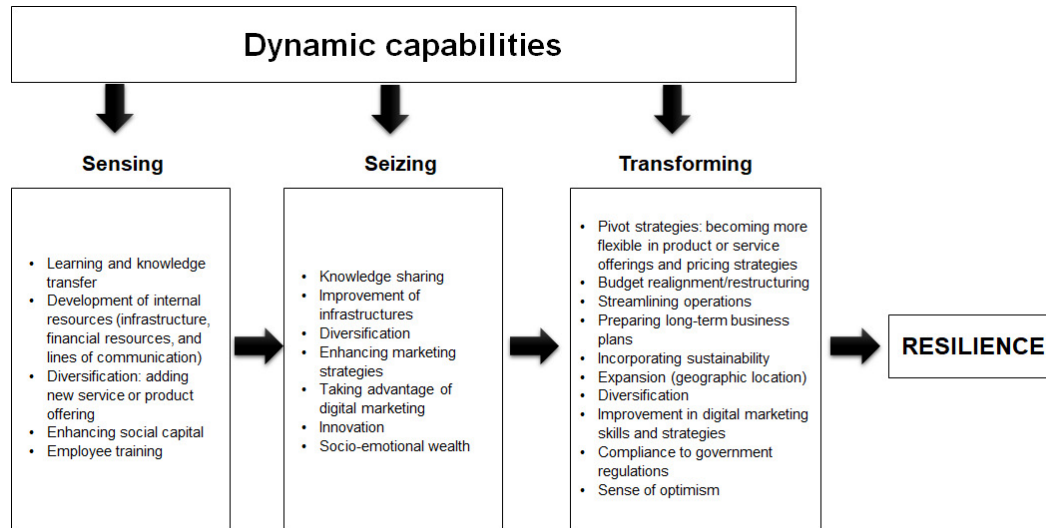
Methodology

To understand the influence family has on resilience a Pragmatic world view has been adopted;

- Exploratory, sequential, mixed methods approach.
- Interviews with 12-15 family business owners and employees working as part of a Hospitality, family business within the Yorkshire area.
- Quantitative questionnaire with an anticipated, minimum yield of 200 participants from Hospitality businesses with the Yorkshire area.
- An exploratory sequential, mixed method will enable the researcher to use data derived from qualitative interviews to build into the second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis (Creswell & Creswell 2023).
- This approach was deemed most appropriate as it will combine the depth of qualitative insights with the breadth of quantitative data (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010).



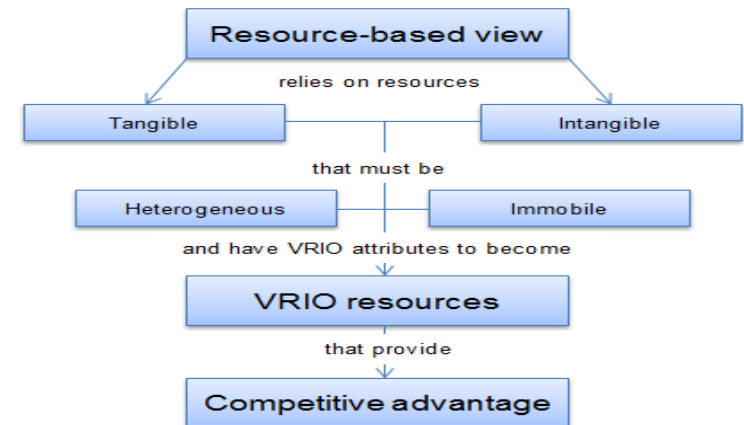
Potential Theoretical Frameworks



Small island family-owned accommodation sector

Socioemotional wealth (SEW) is a non-financial factor that helps family businesses maintain their long-term success and resilience.

- SEW helps family businesses maintain their long-term success
- SEW helps family businesses make decisions that prioritize non-financial goals
- SEW helps family businesses maintain their identity, family control, and legacy
- SEW helps family businesses maintain their altruistic attitude toward the family (Reina et al 2023)



Proposed conceptual framework, based on the dynamic capability perspective by Teece (2018).



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**Strand A - Entrepreneurship, Ecosystems, resilience
(Chair – Kellie Forbes-Simpson, discussant – Maria Wishart)
Morning session**

The evolution of women's entrepreneurship and ecosystem dynamics in Saudi Arabia
Nasreen Hasan Ashkanani, Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Strathclyde



Empowered by Technology, Constrained by Traditions: The Dual Impact of Digitalization on Rural Saudi Women Entrepreneurs

Nasreen Hasan Ashkanani
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Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and
Strategy University of Strathclyde

Women's Entrepreneurship and Digitalization in Rural Saudi Arabia

The Landscape of Women's Entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia

- Saudi Arabia has seen significant progress in women's economic participation, largely driven by Vision 2030 reforms aimed at increasing women's employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Despite these advancements, rural women entrepreneurs face unique challenges that differ from their urban counterparts.
- Historically, rural women engaged in home-based businesses such as handicrafts, agriculture, and small-scale trade, often without formal business registration or access to financial services.

Research Question/s:

Primary Research Question:

- How does digitalization impact rural Saudi women entrepreneurs in terms of both empowerment and socio-cultural constraints?

Secondary/Sub-questions:

- In what ways do digital tools enable rural Saudi women entrepreneurs to overcome geographical and societal barriers?
- How do socio-cultural norms and patriarchal constraints continue to shape or limit the entrepreneurial activities of rural Saudi women despite digitalization?
- How do digital platforms reinforce or challenge existing institutional and gendered power structures in rural Saudi Arabia?
- What role do feminist technology theory and feminist institutionalism play in explaining the intersection of digitalization, gender, and entrepreneurship in constrained contexts?
- How do generational differences affect the adoption and impact of digital tools among rural Saudi women entrepreneurs?
- What policy interventions or digital literacy initiatives can enhance the inclusion of rural women entrepreneurs in the digital economy?

Motivation for the Study:

- **Underexplored Research Area:** The intersection of gender, entrepreneurship, and digitalization in rural Saudi Arabia.
- **Urban and Western Bias in Literature:** Existing research on women's entrepreneurship primarily focuses on urban settings and Western economies, neglecting the unique experiences of rural women in non-Western, patriarchal societies.
- **Impact of Societal Norms and Institutions:** In Saudi Arabia, cultural traditions and institutional structures play a significant role in shaping women's economic participation.
- **Dual Impact of Digitalization:**
 - **Empowerment:** Digital platforms provide greater economic autonomy, market access, and operational ease.
 - **Constraint:** Digitalization also reinforces societal restrictions, limiting visibility, mobility, and community acceptance.
- **Relevance to Vision 2030:** The study aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which aims to increase women's participation in the workforce and entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- **Bridging the Empowerment-Constraint Paradox:** By analyzing the contradictions between empowerment and restriction, the study contributes to broader discussions on:
 - Women's entrepreneurship in constrained environments.
 - Digital inclusion in the Arab world.

Theoretical Framework

1. Feminist Technology Theory (FTT)

- Focus: Examines how technology interacts with gendered power structures, either challenging or reinforcing existing inequalities.
- Relevance to This Study:
 - Digital platforms empower rural women entrepreneurs by providing access to markets, financial resources, and business networks.
 - However, these same platforms operate within patriarchal systems, where societal norms may restrict women's mobility, visibility, and decision-making autonomy.
 - This dual effect highlights the complex relationship between digitalization and gendered constraints in rural Saudi Arabia.

2. Feminist Institutionalism (FI)

- Focus: Analyzes how formal institutions (laws, policies) and informal institutions (cultural norms, societal expectations) shape women's economic participation.
- Relevance to This Study:
 - Formal Institutions: While Vision 2030 reforms promote women's entrepreneurship, regulatory and bureaucratic barriers still limit rural women's access to resources.
 - Informal Institutions: Cultural expectations restrict women's ability to fully engage in business activities, even when digital tools are available.
 - This perspective helps explain why digitalization alone is insufficient for women's empowerment without addressing institutional and societal constraints.

Theoretical Framework

Contribution to Gender and Entrepreneurship Research

- This study extends feminist entrepreneurship discourse by contextualizing digitalization within a non-Western, rural setting.
- It highlights the contradictions between digital empowerment and institutionalized gender barriers, contributing to broader discussions on women's constrained entrepreneurship.
- By integrating FTT and FI, the study provides a localized, theoretically grounded lens to examine how rural Saudi women navigate technology, institutional frameworks, and cultural expectations in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Methodology

A qualitative research design.

Research Design

- The study follows a phenomenological research approach, focusing on how rural women entrepreneurs experience and interpret digitalization in their entrepreneurial journeys; exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and meaning-making processes of women navigating both empowerment and constraints.

Data Collection Methods

- Primary Data Source:
 - In-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 rural Saudi women entrepreneurs across various sectors.
- Sampling Strategy:
 - Purposive sampling to ensure representation of women from different age groups, business types, and digital adoption levels.
 - A mix of early-stage entrepreneurs and established business owners to capture varying levels of digital engagement.
- Interview Themes:
 - Role of digital platforms in business operations.
 - Impact of cultural norms and institutional regulations on entrepreneurial activities.
 - Generational differences in digital literacy and platform usage.

Findings: Gender Dynamics in Rural Women's Entrepreneurship

- 1. Digitalization for Economic Empowerment**
- 2. Digitalization Reinforcing Socio-Cultural Constraints**
- 3. Generational Divide in Digital Adoption**
- 4. Institutional Barriers to Digital Entrepreneurship**
- 5. Emerging Strategies to Navigate Constraints**

Contribution to Gender and Entrepreneurship Literature

- 1. Challenging Prevailing Assumptions on Digital Empowerment Beyond the "Liberatory" Narrative of Digitalization.**
- 2. Expanding Theoretical Understanding of Gender and Entrepreneurship**
- 3. Contributions to Contextualizing Entrepreneurship Research by Addressing the Urban Bias in Women's Entrepreneurship Research and Bridging Generational Differences in Digital Adoption.**
- 4. Practical Implications for Policy and Development for Inclusive Digital Entrepreneurship.**

Areas Where Feedback Would Be Valuable

Positioning within the Gender and Entrepreneurship Literature

- Does the study effectively differentiate itself from existing research on women's entrepreneurship and digitalization?
- How can I strengthen the argument that digitalization both enables and constrains rural Saudi women entrepreneurs?

Theoretical Clarity and Integration

- Are the applications of Feminist Technology Theory (FTT) and Feminist Institutionalism (FI) well articulated?
- Are there additional gender or entrepreneurship theories that could enhance the conceptual framework?

Thank You !

Nasreen Hasan Ashkanani

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**Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and
Strategy University of Strathclyde**



**Strand A - Entrepreneurship, Ecosystems, resilience
(Chair – Kellie Forbes-Simpson, discussant – Maria Wishart)
Morning session**

***Entrepreneurship policy and poverty alleviation in China:
The entrepreneurial ecosystem under the targeted poverty alleviation
and rural revitalization policy in Hainan Province, China***
Hao Jiang, Newcastle University Business School

Entrepreneurship Policy and Poverty Alleviation in China: the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem under the Targeted Poverty Alleviation and Rural Revitalization Policies in Hainan Province, China

Hao Jiang (PGR)

Email: c3057967@newcastle.ac.uk

Supervisors: Hanna Bahemia, Andreas Giazitzoglu

Research Questions

- How do the Targeted Poverty Alleviation (TPA) and Rural Revitalization (RR) policies shape the relationships between leading entrepreneurs and local deprived communities in poverty alleviation?
- How do Targeted Poverty Alleviation (TPA) policy and Rural Revitalization (RR) policy cultivate TPA-transitioned entrepreneurs and support other local entrepreneurial actors in poverty alleviation?
- How do micro-level interactions between EE actors contribute to the macro-level EE outcome?

Entrepreneurship and Poverty

Background:

- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1: to end poverty in all forms everywhere (UN, 2015).
- Entrepreneurship & Poverty Reduction — generating income, fostering job opportunities, and eradicating poverty (Si et al., 2020; Baskaran, Chandran and Ng, 2019).
- Government & Entrepreneurship Policy — generating employment opportunities, enhancing productivity, and promoting greater social inclusion
- Enterprise policy and poverty alleviation in China — the Targeted Poverty Alleviation & Rural Revitalization policy

Literature

- Remediation perspective ---Financial Capital, Human Capital and Social Capital (Bruton, Ahlstrom and Si, 2015; Becker, 2009; Putnam, 2000; Rupasingha, 2017).
- Reform perspective--- BoP Initiatives and BoP entrepreneurs (Prahalad, 2008; Simanis and Hart, 2008); Social Exclusion and Social Entrepreneurs (Diochon, 2013; Kimmitt, Mandakovic and Muñoz, 2022)
- Entrepreneurial Ecosystems
- EE Components, Context, Collaborative and Co-dependent relationships between EE components (Roundy, 2016; Spigel, 2017; Isenberg, 2011).
- Microfoundations of EE — systemic exploration of micro-macro relationship, theory advancement and policy insights

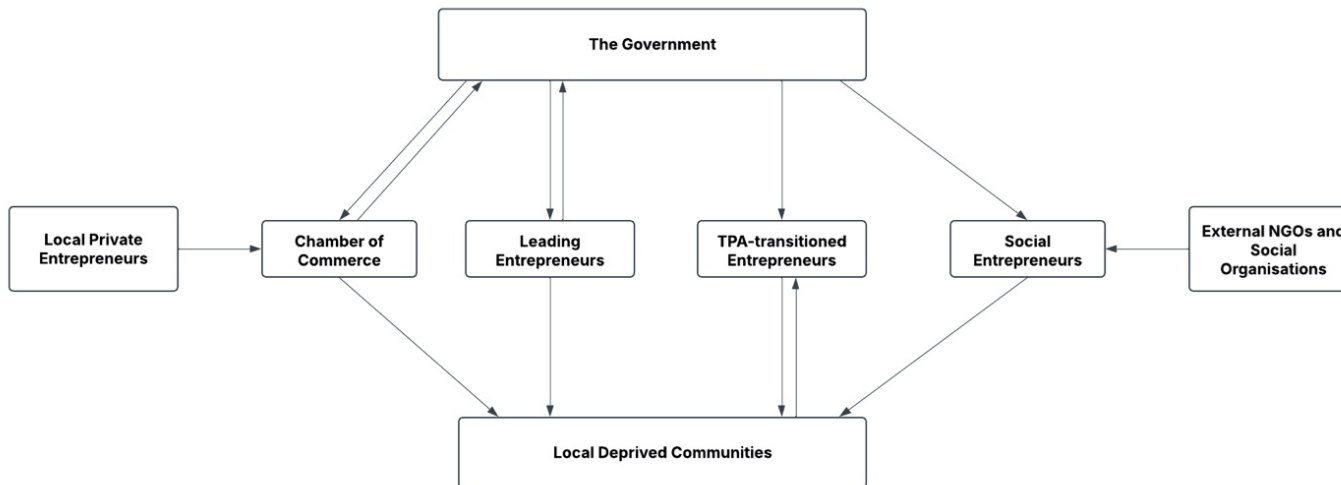
Methodology

Phenomenology and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

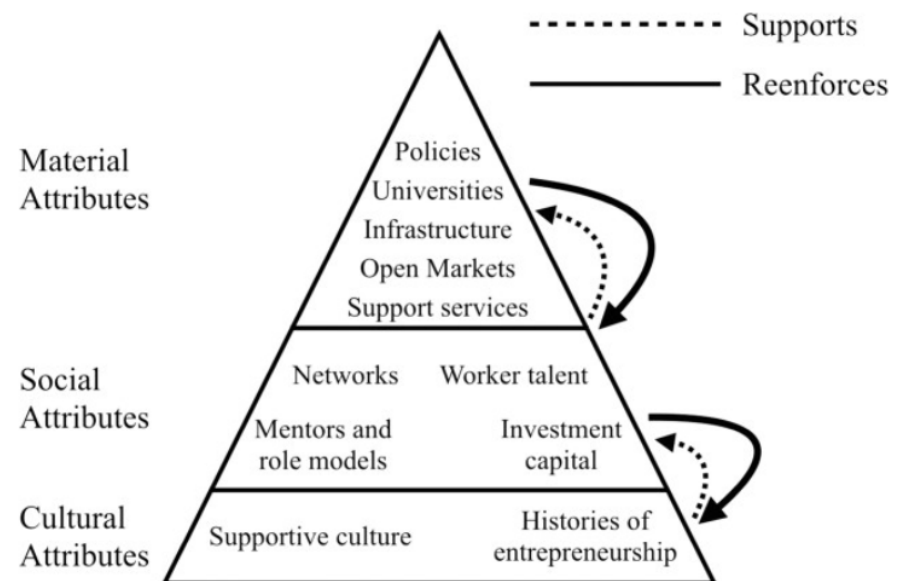
IPA: explore the lived experiences of research participants, aiding in comprehending the phenomenological significance of these experiences and their impact on the participants (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2022).

Current Findings

Micro-level: Configural Relationships Model



Macro-Level: Material, Social and Cultural



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small business
and entrepreneurship



Lunch and Networking



Strand A - Entrepreneurship, Ecosystems (Chair – Kellie Forbes-Simpson, discussant – Maria Wishart) Afternoon session

An evaluation of the impact of government supported investment schemes on recipient firms' performance

Adam Lynch, Fiontair Agus Scoil na Gaeilge, Dublin City University

Dr Ciarán Mac an Bhaird, Fiontair Agus Scoil na Gaeilge, Dublin City University

Dr Seán O'Reilly, University College Dublin

Facilitating entrepreneurial partnerships:

Stakeholder roles in returnee-smallholder collaboration in Ghana

Pauline Shabani

ADHD, women and entrepreneurship: A different brain, a different path

Paula Gahan, Northumbria University



**Strand A - Entrepreneurship, Ecosystems
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DCU

Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

Papers in Entrepreneurial Finance

An Evaluation into The Impact of Public intervention within the Entrepreneurial Finance Landscape

Does Policy Make Practice

Adam Lynch, Dublin City University
Ciarán Mac an Bhaird, Dublin City University
Seán O'Reilly, University College Dublin

Institute For Small Business & Entrepreneurship (ISBE)
Early Career Researcher/Academic Winter Symposium
19th February 2025



Introduction

The importance of SMEs to European economies is well regarded and recognized by the policy makers responsible for creating an environment that is conducive to facilitating entrepreneurship in order to generate employment.

Governments have demonstrated a commitment to facilitate growth for these companies through various proposals and incentives, but concerns remain around the design and effectiveness of these schemes. (Cowling 2016) (Footpoulos and Storey 2019)

Despite large amounts of public funding dedicated to support businesses, evaluations into effectiveness of state aid are rare. (Decramer & Vanormelngen 2016), with studies analysing recipient companies even rarer. (Prasannath et al., 2024).

A method of government intervention which has garnered much attention is the implementation of Tax Incentive Schemes for investors.- with examples in a UK (EIS) and Irish (EIIS) context.



Evaluating the effectiveness of Investment Tax Incentives on the Entrepreneurial Landscape & Recipient Companies

Literature

Carpeinter & Suret (2007) find that tax incentivised investments may result in ‘poor investment’ practices—money being transferred into subpar companies with limited growth potential.

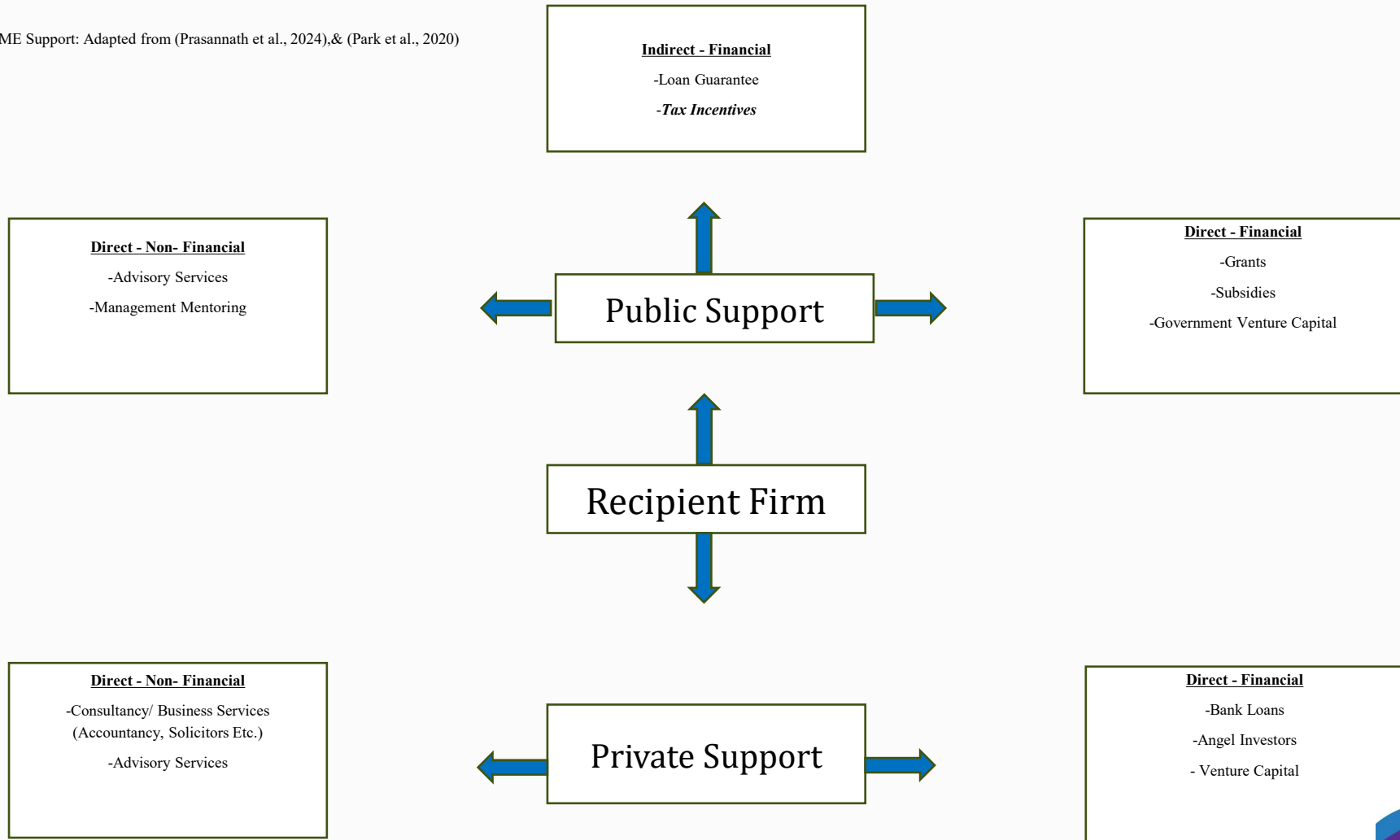
Results yielded from a US study on the effectiveness of investor tax credits for fostering entrepreneurship show an increase in investment following the introduction of credits, but little impact on firm growth. (Denes et al., 2023)

Examples of Fixed Assets Investment Incentives for SMEs provide results showing that recipient firms increase investment levels and productivity. (Liu & Mao 2019) (Zhang et al., 2018) (Hoseono et al., 2023)

R&D focused Tax Incentives have shown examples of increasing innovative processes such as new product creation, but evidence of improvement in general firm performance (profitability) indicators is limited. (Czarnitzki et al., 2011). Additional studies showing little product service innovation to justify foregone taxes.



Types of SME Support: Adapted from (Prasannath et al., 2024),& (Park et al., 2020)



Employment Investment Incentive Scheme (EIIS)

The EII scheme is a tax relief which aims to encourage individuals to provide equity-based finance to trading companies.

Tax relief of 20-50% can be claimed by individual investors on investments of up to €500,000 subject to shares being held in qualifying companies for a minimum of four years.

The aim of the EIIS, introduced in 2011 to take over from the Business Expansion Scheme is to facilitate the access of small and medium sized companies to development capital to promote entrepreneurship and ***support employment***. (Dept of Finance 2014)

EIIS: recent changes to terms- Finance Bill 2023

Prior Relief Rate	New Relief Rate	Criteria
40%	50%:	Businesses that have "not operated in any market".
40%	35%:	Businesses less than 7 years old and raising its first EIIS fundraise.
40%	30%:	For investments through a "Qualifying Investment Fund".
40%	20%:	Businesses fundraising its second or subsequent EIIS fundraise round.
40%	20%:	Businesses expanding into new markets or region.

Additional Changes to Maximum investment eligible for investor claim €250,000-€500,000

Minimum holding period standardised to 4 years for all qualifying investments (Previously 7 years for amounts in excess of €250,000)

Maximum investment limit for company increased to €16.5m, yearly limit increased to €5.5m



Research Question & Hypothesis Development

Research Question: How does the receipt of investment via the EII scheme affect the post investment performance of companies in comparison to a control group?

Hypotheses 1: The amendments to the EIIS scheme have impacted the uptake and effectiveness of the scheme based on recipient company performance.

Hypotheses 2: Recipient companies of EIIS tax incentivised investment are more likely to increase asset levels.

Hypotheses 3: Recipient companies of EIIS tax incentivised investment exhibit no enhanced likelihood of increasing employment numbers post investment.

Recipient Firm Performance Metrics

Metric For Success	Indicator	Details & Examples
Economic Value of the Investee company.	Revenue	Revenue levels and variances post receipt of incentivised investment.
	Net Assets	Changes in Asset levels post receipt of incentivised investment.
	Research & Development	Total R&D spend post receipt of incentivised investment. Expansion of product portfolio post receipt of incentivised investment (potential indicator of successful R&D undertakings) Increase in Intangible Assets.
	Export generation	Total export generation.
Job Retention & Creation	Retention	No. of employees retaining employment in investee company post incentivised investment.
	Creation	Total number of jobs generated by the investment. Direct = (measured by growth in employee numbers.)
	Wages	Income increases amongst staff.

Sources: (Tavares-Lehmann et al., 2016)

Data & Methodology



- Dataset Acquired using Revenue Commissioner publication of beneficiary dataset. Information available on amounts raised through EII scheme from 2011-2022.
- Correlate this data with financial and growth metrics obtained from the FAME database & Search4Less
- Total Number of Companies in dataset **1209** (971 Active, 238 inactive)



Quantitative Analysis & Next Steps

- DiD Analysis with a control group. -Apply propensity score matching to obtain a matched sample of firms not in receipt of Employment Investment Incentive Scheme.
- Linear Regression Analysing the change in Performance Metrics post investment receipt.



Preliminary Results & Summary Statistics

		One Period Pre Investment (i-1)	Year of Investment (i)	One Period Post Investment (i+1)	Three Periods Post Investment (i+3)	Five Periods Post Investment (i+5)
#Employees	Average Median	3 0	5 0	6 1	11 4	16 4
NTA	Average Median	€314,174 €16,603	€666,061 €172,992	€865,642 €206,265	€2,177,717 €221,025	€2,425,685 €281,931
Fixed assets	Average Median	€473,107 €70,445	€546,682 €87,896	€954,644 €127,376	€2,210,397 €185,225	€2,524,414 €249,419
Liquidity	Average Median	2.12 0.80	3.95 1.41	4.06 1.21	3.22 0.99	2.85 0.98
Gearing	Average Median	116.16 43.68	94.07 35.19	77.89 25.07	98.43 31.11	100.89 39.33

Thank You





Strand A - Entrepreneurship, Ecosystems
(Chair – Kellie Forbes-Simpson, discussant – Maria Wishart)
Afternoon session

Facilitating entrepreneurial partnerships:
Stakeholder roles in returnee-smallholder collaboration in Ghana

Pauline Shabani

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

Facilitating Entrepreneurial Partnerships: The Role of Stakeholders in Returnee-Smallholder Collaborations in Ghana

Dr. Pauline Shabani

Wednesday 19th February 2025

ISBE Early Career Researcher/Academic Winter Symposium 2025

What's to Come



Background: Ghana's Agricultural Sector



Significance of Agriculture

Employs over 40% of Ghana's population.
Key contributor to national GDP and food security.



Dominance of Smallholder Farming

80% of farmers operate on small-scale holdings.
Low access to capital, technology, and formal markets.



Government Initiatives

Policies promoting agribusiness investment.
Programs like 'Planting for Food and Jobs' to modernise the sector.



Diaspora Involvement

Increased investment and technology transfer.
Yet, barriers remain in integrating returnee entrepreneurs effectively.

My 2023 Research: Diaspora Involvement in Agriculture

Title: *The Yield of Two Fields: Redefining the Value of Smallholder Farming through Human Capital Interplay in Ghana (Shabani, 2023)*

Key Findings:

- Returnees bring capital, technology, and networks.
- Smallholders offer indigenous knowledge and adaptive techniques.
- **Challenges identified:** Hierarchical relationships, constrained knowledge-sharing, lack of structured collaboration mechanisms.

Implication:

- Need for reframing smallholder contributions.
- Importance of structured engagement strategies.

Key Collaboration Issues Identified

- Resource Inequality
- Divergent Expectations
- Power Imbalances
- Stakeholder Engagement Gaps

Literature Review

- ▶ **Why Stakeholder Engagement Matters?**
 - ▶ Essential for balancing power dynamics.
 - ▶ Ensures participatory decision-making.
 - ▶ Facilitates recourse and network access.
 - ▶ Establishes and influences policy.

Research Gaps

Limited focus on structured stakeholder engagement

Existing studies highlight barriers but offer few practical solutions.

Western-centric development models

Overlooks indigenous knowledge systems (Mkandawire, 2005).

Lack of intersectional analysis of returnee-smallholder relations

Power imbalances remain underexplored.

Research Objectives



Create Supporting Ecology: Develop a conceptual framework defining stakeholder roles in fostering collaborations.



Define Stakeholder Actions: Provide step-by-step strategies for stakeholders to facilitate the creation of partnerships, focusing on trust-building, equitable resource-sharing, and integrating local and returnee expertise.



Develop Collaboration Models: Establish practical, replicable models detailing processes for relationship-building, ensuring mutual benefit and scalability for smallholders and returnees.

Research Question

How can structured stakeholder engagement facilitate returnee-smallholder entrepreneurial collaborations in Ghana's agricultural sector?

Methodology: Multi-Method Approach

Postcolonial Ethnography

- Centres voices of smallholders and returnees (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).
- Methods: Participant observation, semi-structured interviews.

Comparative Case Studies

- Analyses successful vs. failed collaborations (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999).
- Identifies replicable best practices and challenges.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) Workshops

- Stakeholder-driven framework development (Kindon et al., 2007).
- Ensures inclusive, real-world application.

Critical
Realist
Ontology

Postcolonial
Epistemology

Anticipated Contributions

Theoretical Contributions:

- ▶ **Expanding Stakeholder Engagement Theories**
 - ▶ Can build on Ostrom's (1990) collective governance model.
- ▶ **Challenging Western-Centric Development Theories**
 - ▶ African-centered governance models (Mkandawire, 2005) to provide a more contextually relevant framework.
- ▶ **Applying Postcolonial Theory to Agribusiness**
 - ▶ Investigate power hierarchies in returnee-smallholder relations using postcolonial perspectives (Spivak, 1988; Escobar, 1995).

Practical Impact

- ▶ **Implementation Guidelines**
 - ▶ The study aims to propose stakeholder-driven collaboration frameworks informed by the data collected.
- ▶ **Policy Recommendations**
 - ▶ Findings could help to develop practical tools for government and NGOs to enhance returnee-smallholder engagement.
- ▶ **Academic Publications**
 - ▶ The research is expected to contribute to Entrepreneurship, Development, and Postcolonial Studies discussions.

I now open the floor to any

Questions

Conclusion & Research Significance

- Explores how structured stakeholder engagement can improve returnee-smallholder collaborations
- Aims to inform theory, policy and practice in Ghana's agriculture sector



Strand A - Entrepreneurship, Ecosystems
(Chair – Kellie Forbes-Simpson, discussant – Maria Wishart)
Afternoon session

ADHD, women and entrepreneurship: A different brain, a different path
Paula Gahan, Northumbria University



Can't you just act
normal for once?



Women, ADHD, and Entrepreneurship

**An Investigation into
the Lived Experience of
Female ADHD
Entrepreneurs**

What is ADHD?

- **Common form of neurodiversity**
- **Symptoms: Inattention, impulsivity, hyperactivity**
- **Prevalence: 3.3% of adult women**



Why do Women with ADHD choose Entrepreneurship?

Flexibility in work
environment

Creativity and
Risk-taking

Empowerment and
self determination

Research Gap- Lack of Research on Female Entrepreneurs with ADHD

- **Limited
Understanding of
their experiences**
- **Need for insight into
adaptive strategies
and trauma**



Research Aims and Objectives

**1. Explore
Intersection of
Gender, ADHD, and
Entrepreneurship**



**2. Investigate lived
experience of
female ADHD
Entrepreneurs**



**3. Examine
Adaptive Strategies
and Trauma**

Research Methodology

**Semi Structured
Interviews with
Female ADHD
entrepreneurs**

**Focus on
personal
narratives and
experiences**

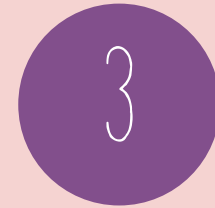
Theoretical Framework

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**1. Phenomenological Approach:
Understanding lived experiences**

A red circle containing the white number 2, positioned at the top of the second column.

**2. Constructivist epistemology:
Knowledge through social interactions**

A purple circle containing the white number 3, positioned at the top of the third column.

3. Importance of context in shaping experiences

Expected Outcomes

**Enhanced
Understanding of
women with ADHD
in Entrepreneurship**

**Insights into coping
strategies and
support needs**

**Recommendations
for inclusive
Entrepreneurial
practices**



Conclusion

- Highlight unique experiences of female ADHD Entrepreneurs
- Foster empowerment and diversity in Entrepreneurship
- Encourage further research and support for neurodivergent women



Keynote and discussion session

Maximising the impact from your research

Professor Stephen Roper
Jonathan Slow, Scottish Government

Communicating research for impact

Stephen Roper and Jonathan Slow

ERC/ISBE ECR event 19/2

ERC Funded by

Creating impact – a researcher's perspective

Why good research communication matters for social scientists

- Rapid change in society and rise of ‘wicked problems’ means there is a clear need and demand for timely and quality insights... policymakers need evidence now (...or yesterday!)
- Increased recognition of the value of evidence-based policy
- Publishing your research in academic journals isn’t enough if you want to reach a wider audience
- Information overload and shorter attention spans
- Rising importance of the impact agenda amongst funders
- Future funding and career development
- Enriching knowledge and discourse and making new connections
- A moral imperative?



10 principles of good research communication

1. Know your audience

Really think about it. Understand their interests and needs. Make your research relevant to them. Communicate with them, not to them.

2. Drop the jargon

Academic language can be a real barrier to understanding. Reduce use of cluttered phrases. Be clear and inclusive.

3. Don't assume prior knowledge

Non-academic audiences often do not have the in-depth understanding you do. Don't assume they do.

4. Think about the 'story' you are telling

Stories can be compelling, bringing research to life and enabling people to connect with it.

5. Be clear on the 'so what?'

Why are the findings important? What do the results tell us that we didn't know before?



10 principles of good research communication... continued

6. Think visually

Make use of the range of media available to you. Don't underestimate the power of pictures.

7. Don't shy away from reflecting on policy/practice implications

Stopping short of policy recommendations is a common frustration of working with academics.

8. Be open and innovative

There isn't one way of doing good research communication. Be receptive to the (changing) opportunities open to you.

9. Build your networks

Always a worthwhile investment that can lead to new opportunities to share your work.

10. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself

Some research insights take time to be understood. It isn't always about the new. This is a long game!



Creating impact – a policymaker's perspective

Key Points

- Building impact takes time but often worth it:
 - **You** get kudos, invitations for further work and insights (and potentially money)
 - **We** get useable material to increase our impact
 - Sometimes the best option for a piece of work is direct policy interaction before or instead of publication
- However, too often, ‘Implications for Policy’ are viewed as a necessary evil for publication:
 - As a result they can be ‘thin’, ‘limited’
 - And sometimes plain ‘wrong’
- Sadly, reviewers/editors often don’t have a policy background which can make it doubly-difficult...
- ...and to make it triply-hard journals can insist on a policy element where perhaps it isn’t appropriate/feasible, hence making the thin, limited, wrong situation more likely
- That will be a source of frustration for you and is a source of irritation for us
- People in a policy/specialist role are, in my experience, happy to help and advise if and where we can
- Top tip for impact potential maximisation:
 - *Keep it short and focused – due to time pressures, many policy/practitioners will quickly read the Abstract, Introduction, Policy Section and Conclusions to see if it is worth reading the full paper*

Mini Checklist

- **Customer** – focus on the audience that is likely to read the paper
- **Context** – does the research have a potential relevance to policy-makers or economic development practitioners? If not...
- **Contingencies** – what else is needed to develop that relevant context
- **Content:**
 - Papers that raise policy discussion areas and some indicative delivery options are good; stimulate our thinking ✓
 - Jumping too deep into delivery is dangerous and can come over as telling us how to do our jobs ✗
 - Keep it short and clear – please remember, we are very busy, but we are also often well-versed in the area (including theory) ✓

The Big Question of the Day... $2+3 \times 5 = ?$

Customer	Minister	Policy Civil Servant	Specialist Civil Servant	Economic Development Specialist	Economic Development Delivery
Context	Why is this relevant to the Policy Person? Why should they explore it further?				
Customer Answer*	25	May see 17 but will present as 25	17	17	I just want to 'do stuff'
Focus		Indirect via Specialists			
Content			Short Appropriate Correct Simple language: 17 not XVII		

*Important note: this is not to imply that Ministers are not very clever (far from it) but they see different things.

Thank you!

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