

*Management and Organization Review*  
Second Research Frontiers Conference III

Call for Proposals

*The Coevolution of SMEs and Family Firms in  
Russia, Ex-Soviet Republics, and Eastern European  
Economies: Knowledge Creation, Entrepreneurship,  
Innovation, and Economic Growth*

Co-sponsored by RSM and the International  
Association for Chinese Management Research  
(IACMR)

Erasmus University Rotterdam School of  
Management

Rotterdam, May 17–19, 2017

**Panel Proposals are due January 27, 2017. Invitations will be issued by  
March 3, 2017.**

We are excited to announce the third conference of the *Management Organization Review* (MOR) Second Research Frontiers Conference Series. Whereas the first two conferences focused on China and India, the Rotterdam conference shifts focus to Russia, Ex-Soviet Republics, and Eastern Europe. This interdisciplinary Research Frontiers Conference serves as a key MOR exploration dialectic for advancing and opening new research directions of phenomena in the social sciences underlying management and organizations, globalization, and economic growth through boundary-crossing dialog and discourse with a focus on all transforming economies.

**The conference is intended to contribute to a special issue of MOR.** It draws together social science scholars and thought leaders from around the world, as well as executives, entrepreneurs, policy-makers, and non-business scholars in a stimulating community-building setting. The Rotterdam conference will form the basis for an MOR special issue on *Business Model Innovation in SMEs and Family Firms in Transforming Economies*.

**The core theme** of the conference explores the coevolution of SMEs and family firms in Russia, Ex-Soviet Republics, and Eastern European economies. Most scholars in strategy, organizational behavior, entrepreneurship, and international business study this question by considering environmental change as an exogenous variable. Moreover, they often employ a single theme for describing how and why organizations tend to become isomorphic with their (regional, national, and global) environments through processes of either adaptation or selection. Less frequently examined are questions of how organizations systematically influence their (regional, national, and global) environments and how global and national environments (comprised of other firms and new entrants) influence those organizations in turn. In this MOR Research Frontiers Conference we will discuss the complex, multi-level causal interactions in the context of Russia, Ex-Soviet Republics, and Eastern European countries and the firms residing in them, in particular how firms' strategies, management practices, and their eco-systems affect and are affected by the factors shaping innovation, entrepreneurship and national competitiveness.

Currently, we lack a thorough understanding of the micro-level causal links between national competitiveness and economically beneficial regional outcomes. Ultimately, it is firms, not regions or nations that compete in markets. Apparently, firms that are more resourceful (human and social capital) and that possess superior absorptive capacity tend to perform better in terms of their survival chances, innovation, employment growth, and productivity growth (firm competitiveness). To investigate the multi-level causes and consequences of national competitiveness and to shed light especially on the firm-level causal linkages between national competitiveness and national economic outcomes, this MOR Research Frontiers Conference focuses on the question, how do firms' strategies and management practices co-evolve with and drive national competitiveness? Studying coevolution is particularly important for SMEs and family firms as they often need to compete against established firms with superior resource endowments. The understanding of co-evolutionary processes in the context of SMEs and family firms' innovation in Russia, Ex-Soviet Republics, and Eastern European economies is surprisingly limited. This is a considerable blind-spot in our understanding because the emerging economies in this region provide an environment that is particularly fertile for innovation and economic growth as they are very dynamic, have high levels of entrepreneurship, and business ingenuity.

In addition to panels and posters on the core conference theme described above, submissions are also welcomed on any management topic set in Russia, Ex-Soviet Republics, or Eastern Europe as this conference aims to be the key meeting place for people studying this region of the world.

**Potential sub-themes** could include the antecedents and future of emerging economy innovations; exploiting institutional voids embedded in state and local policies and national innovation systems affecting SME innovation (e.g., incentives for innovation and R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship, industrial clusters and innovation); management practices as drivers of innovation/performance: leadership practices as a driver of SME innovation/performance; the role of networks in driving SME innovation; MNE and SME innovation; business model innovation of SMEs and family firms and how they coevolve with MNEs; history and culture; social and management innovations; the role of university training; SMEs and family business management that achieve extraordinary with ordinary resources; relationships between small and large firms; barriers to transforming size distribution of SMEs to accelerate rise of large companies; role of national culture and creativity and management of startups; regional differences between SME ecologies; evolution and role of ICT on SME innovation; business management practices and promotion of creativity and innovation; innovation competition between emerging economies; SME family business contribution to economic growth; professionalization and the role of outsiders in the innovation process of SME family firms; effect of the degree and type of family influence on innovation and creativity; critical success factors for product innovation in family firms and SMEs as compared to other governance and ownership archetypes; models of inter- and intra-organizational diffusion of innovation in SMEs with different governance (e.g. family firms vs. venture-backed firms), and entrepreneurship training programs.

The themes above are only indicative of what themes may emerge.

**Designing and Organization of the Program** The design of the program itself involves a novel approach. The program will consist of 7 plenary panel sessions in addition to the opening and closing gala plenary sessions. The Program will be created bottom up. The Program Committee is soliciting 3–4 page proposals for plenary panels on any aspect of the theme of the conference. Proposals must:

- Describe the specific sub -theme focus of the panel and why it represents an underexplored but promising line of inquiry.
- Identify 4 –5 panelists, the nature of their expertise, and a panel sub-theme that they will inform and motivate.
- Collectively each panel is expected to outline and delineate the contours of new lines of inquiry and opportunities for new leading edge research directions.

- Panelists are not expected to present lengthy papers. The challenge for each panelist is to plan on a high level, 15-minute compelling presentation motivating a research question.
- Lastly each plenary panel proposal must also include explicit statements from each panelist committing to personally participate for the entire conference if the plenary panel proposal is accepted for presentation and discussion at the conference.
- In addition to plenary sessions, there will also be organized poster presentations. Interested presenters need to submit a one-page summary of the study specifying the main findings and contributions.
- Doctoral students can also participate in conference by attending a PhD workshop. The workshop provides an opportunity for doctoral students to receive feedback on their research on firm from Russia, Ex-Soviet Republics, and Eastern European economies. Interested students can submit a one-page summary of their working paper.

**Panel Proposals must be received by January 27, 2017 to Ms. Stefanie McAdoo** ([stefanie.mcadoo@duke.edu](mailto:stefanie.mcadoo@duke.edu))

**Proposals for poster presentations and requests to attend the PhD workshop should be submitted to Dr. Oli Mihalache** ([r.o.mihalache@vu.nl](mailto:r.o.mihalache@vu.nl))

Each plenary panel session is allocated two hours (120 minutes). The format of each plenary panel involves a maximum of 90 minutes for the presentations by the panelists and the leadoff commentator. The formal presentation is followed by commentaries and discourse among the participants. The main focus will not be traditional Q&A with the panel, but some time for Q&A from the audience will be provided. The essential idea is to stimulate conversation and plant the seeds for follow-up networking and new collaborations. At the conclusion of each plenary panel the panelists will be given a few minutes to reprise and respond to discussion that followed the plenary panel presentation. Each day will also include downtime periods for networking, reassessment of discussions, emergence of new collaborations, and decompression.

### **Attendance**

Participation in the MOR Research Frontiers Conference is by invitation only on the basis of the quality, originality, and fit of the panel proposal with the conference theme. The program committee will make every effort to ensure that the assembled participants represent a cross section of senior and junior scholars, including advanced PhD students, and that participants come from diverse geographies. Fifty percent of the participants must have not participated in

a prior MOR Research Frontiers Conference. This rule ensures that this prestigious and influential conference continues to stay vigorously stimulating, welcoming of new ideas and new perspectives, and counteracts formation of in-groups and creeping parochialism.

**Program Committee:**

Henk W. Volberda, RSM Erasmus University

Oli R. Mihalache, VU University Amsterdam

Igor B. Gurkov, Higher School of Economics

Arie Y. Lewin, Editor in Chief MOR, Duke University

Carl Fey, Deputy Editor MOR, Aalto University & Chinese University of Hong Kong