

## Potential Management & Marketing PhD Projects

### Management

- **Female entrepreneurship in STEM industries**

Contact: [Dr. Gillian Barrett](#)

Entrepreneurship is considered to be the driver of economic growth, employment creation and global competitiveness (Audretsch, 2009). Thus, the importance of entrepreneurship is not in question but the level of female participation in entrepreneurship remains an issue. Female participation in entrepreneurship plays an important role in the quality of entrepreneurship through greater diversity in gender teams but also through greater diversity of product, markets and processes (Verheul et al., 2006). Despite the significant importance of female entrepreneurship, it remains an understudied topic (Brush et al., 2009, De Bruin et al., 2007, De Bruin et al., 2006). Ireland lag behind other developed countries when it comes to female entrepreneurship (Fitzsimmons and O'Gorman, 2017) and in particular within Science Technology Engineering Maths (STEM) industries.

Increasing and ensuring the retention of women's entrepreneurship in STEM is a fundamental issue of national and social economic development. Furthermore, existing research indicates that women have been historically left behind in STEM entrepreneurship (Echeverri-Carroll et al., 2018) and STEM research (Beaudry and Larivière, 2016). This research project would seek to address this gap by exploring the subtle or unconscious boundaries preventing more women from entering careers in STEM. Also, by seeking to answer: how to increase the intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial creative skills of female scientists and engineers?

- **Management by Algorithm in the Gig Economy**

Contact: [Dr Ronan Carbery](#)

The gig economy broadly refers to an employment system whereby online platforms match the supply and demand of work in a range of areas, on a short-term and payment-by-task basis. Although offering varied services, organisations in the gig economy share a new, seemingly alternative means of conducting business exclusively via digital platforms (usually smartphone apps) to share and capitalise on skills and resources in local markets. A key feature facilitating this form of labour is the use of algorithms. Algorithmic management allows organisations to keep labour costs low, thereby ensuring the growth and profitability of the platform. Gigworkers are typically managed via tracking mechanisms and customer ratings, thus forming one of the

fundamental principles of the gig economy in that most processes are fulfilled by one of the two groups of users, rather than by the platform itself.

Algorithmic management occurs when software algorithms assume managerial functions, allowing companies to oversee a large amount of workers in an optimised manner at an unprecedented scale. Theoretically, an algorithm has the potential to ultimately be as flexible and adaptable as a human being from many labour perspectives, thus making the need for human labour less necessary, however this means that the vast majority of gigworkers have no human supervisors or managers. This project will consider the implications of algorithmic management for the employment relationship.

- **Synthesising value creation for Quadruple Helix Innovation: Academic researcher's as shock-absorber of break-through innovation**

Contact: [Dr Lawrence Dooley](#)

*“Innovation is now the single most important engine of long-term competitiveness, growth and employment”* (EC, 2001). Historically accepted ‘linear’ models describing the innovation process are now being surpassed by the contemporary view that innovation is most appropriately perceived as a systemic phenomenon engaging multiple contributing stakeholders (Deakins and Freel, 2003; EC, 2001; Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2001; Rothwell et al., 1974). Consistent with this new understanding, a number of academic studies have recognised the benefit of collaboration between the three institutional spheres of University-Industry-Government for Societal advantage. This triple helix model of co-operation (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000), later extended to the Quadruple Helix (Leydesdorff and Etzkowitz, 2003) promotes academic research and Public Institutions to the centre of society’s knowledge production system and National Innovation System.

While interaction between these macro institutional spheres is not a new phenomenon, the manner and speed in which these interactions are unfolding is, with University\ academic researcher being required to adapt their practices and perspective to better align to their enhanced position within the network. In publicly funded science, government and funding bodies (FBs) work together to set strategic agendas and implement corresponding funding schemes to support this ‘quadruple helix’ interaction. Within this system, principal investigators (PIs) at the micro-level of undertaking scientific research, find themselves in a fuzzy zone with respect to the need to achieve synthesis between competing goals of the quadruple helix stakeholders and ensure alignment of research results for translation into meaningful macro-level contributions. Since achieving such synthesis is problematic, this research seeks to examine how academic PIs’ use cognitive structures to interpret and synthesize issues to ensures sufficient strategic fit and value congruence is

achieved and facilitate synergistic value creation within the Quadruple Helix model.

In essence, this research asks, *how do academic PI's, as the 'shock absorber' between the micro and macro level, articulate and shape a path of research value creation and transformation?*

- **Growth and risk strategies within the LMT SME sector**

Contact: [Dr Lawrence Dooley](#)

Low to medium-low tech (LMT) firms are by their nature primarily small to medium enterprises (SME's), of strong family origin and within Ireland representing the majority of the indigenous manufacturing base. However, such LMT SME's are generally "*forgotten*" by innovation researchers and policy-makers alike (Hirsch-Kreinsen, 2008) despite still remaining of significant economic importance across all OECD countries (Kaloudis, 2005; Santamaria et al, 2009). Such firms are not only innovative in their own right (Som, 2012) but also demonstrate an organisational longevity that indicated high resilience to uncertainty (Robertson et al, 2009; Hervas-Oliver et al, 2011). However, Santamaria et al. (2009; 507) argues that a gap exists in our innovation understanding due to researcher's perspective being too heavily focused on R&D expenditure as the key determinant of future innovation, at the expense of subtler drivers, more applicable to the LMT SME innovation process.

LMT SME's are often growth constrained by limited resources and management team capability where the entrepreneur/owner exhibits significant influence. Appreciation of how these firms analyse their environment and arrive at innovative decisions within a context of high uncertainty and low influence is important to understand their innovation practices and routines. Leveraging analytical lenses such as Cumulative Prospect Theory (Tversky & Kahnemen (1992) and Upper Echelon Theory (Hambrick and Mason, 1984), this research will explore *how innovation decisions are arrived at in relation to growth and risk and the reality of how these firms innovate and remain sustainable in the face of ever increasing challenge.*

- **The impact of emotional capability on firm innovativeness**

Contact: [Dr Lawrence Dooley](#)

Given the turbulence of the modern economy, where even regional-based firms compete globally and where legacy competitive advantage can be obliterated by disruptive technological innovation, then understanding the capabilities that underpin innovation successfully is key.

Tidd and Bessant (2009) processual approach to understanding innovation management has aided in deciphering this nebulous activity and while some research has begun to focus on the firm capabilities underpinning this innovation process, most of this research is focused on technical, hard capabilities of the firm, at the expense of 'softer' capabilities. One key capability, as of yet, under-explored within the innovation management discipline is that of emotional capability and its impact on the innovation process. The effects of emotional capability, involving the dynamics of encouragement, freedom, playfulness, experience, reconciliation and identification constructs have particular importance to the creativity and exploitation necessary for innovation.

This research seeks to study the management of the innovation process within SME firms and explore how emotional capability within the firm nurtures and impacts the various stages of the innovation process.

- **Managing International Nonmarket Risk Through Business Model Innovation**  
Contact: [Professor Thomas Lawton](#)

Research on business model innovation (BMI) has proliferated, as firms focus on creating and capturing value through changing the economics of the value chain, diversifying profit streams, and modifying delivery models. Consequently, novel and innovative business models have become a major element of differentiation and competitive advantage.

However, there is a blind spot in business model research. Whilst we now know more about how BMI can change the dynamics and nature of market strategy, we know little about how it can impact on nonmarket strategy, i.e. how to anticipate and respond to actors, influences and actions emanating from the social, environmental, political and regulatory arenas and impacting on the strategic direction and objectives of the enterprise. In particular, how can business models encapsulate new ways of engaging external political and social stakeholders to reduce nonmarket risk when entering foreign markets?

This question becomes increasingly important as Irish and other western companies enter emerging economies where contextual risk tends to be higher. But equally, the uncertainties of today's international political economy increase the need for firms to embed nonmarket considerations in their business models and embrace new and novel ways of engaging external stakeholders and succeeding despite uncertainty and volatility.

- **Mental health and well-being in Irish organisations: Implications for policy and practice**

Contact: [Professor Stavroula Leka](#)

Mental health and well-being represent global policy priorities and have been recognised as important not only for countries' public health but also organisational competitiveness and sustainability as well as national development and prosperity<sup>1</sup>. The workplace setting is ideal for promoting mental health and well-being and achieving positive individual, organisational and societal outcomes. Using suitable theoretical frameworks (e.g. Job Demands-Resources Model), this research programme will be based on mixed research methods including both secondary analysis of existing survey data as well as semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. In the first stage of the project, Irish data from three European surveys (European Working Conditions Survey; European Quality of Life Survey; European Survey of Enterprises on New & Emerging Risks) will be analysed comparatively with those of other EU countries to identify key determinants of mental health and well-being in the workplace, barriers and drivers to positive organisational action as well as priorities to be addressed in future studies. The results from this first stage will inform the design of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in Ireland (e.g. policy makers, employers' associations, trade unions, subject experts) to identify current and future priorities in order to support the development of both appropriate policies and practices.

- **Determinants of well-being and innovation in the workplace: Implications for Ireland's economy and competitiveness**

Contact: [Professor Stavroula Leka](#)

Recent studies<sup>2</sup> have highlighted that determinants of employee well-being and innovative behaviour in the workplace are largely the same. They have also found that these are related to country innovative performance (process/product and marketing/organisational innovation) and hence country competitiveness. This research programme will seek to test these theoretical relationships in the context of Irish organisations. It will further seek to extend current knowledge by including additional suitable economic and development indicators in its analyses. Using suitable theoretical models, this research will be based on mixed research methods including both secondary analysis of existing survey data as well as semi-structured interviews with business key stakeholders. In the first stage of the project, Irish data from

---

<sup>1</sup> Leka, S. & Jain, A. (2017). Mental health in the workplace in the European Union: Consensus paper. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/mental\\_health/docs/compass\\_2017workplace\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/mental_health/docs/compass_2017workplace_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Dediu, V., Leka, S., & Jain, A. (2018). [Job demands, job resources and innovative work behaviour: A European Union Study](#). *European Journal of Work & Organizational Psychology*, 27(3), 310-323.

the European Working Conditions Survey will be analysed comparatively with those of other EU countries scoring high on innovation indicators to identify potential differences in these determinants. Further economic indicators will be included in this analysis to draw conclusions on implications for Ireland's economy and competitiveness. The results from this first stage will inform the design of semi-structured interviews with business stakeholders in various Irish organisations to explore practices that are used to promote both well-being and workplace innovation and identify gaps and current and future research and practice priorities.

- **Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Strategies: A Fault Lines Theory perspective**  
Contact: [Dr. Clíodhna MacKenzie](#)

The push for more sophisticated diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategies lies in the necessity to attract, retain and develop *diverse* talent (e.g. Duxbury and Halinski 2014; Festing and Schäfer 2014). Harrison and Klein (2007, p.1200) argue what is understood about D&I is 'confusing – difficult to understand and difficult to synthesize'. D&I solutions that focus on one set of problems, e.g. the 'business case for diversity' (Bendick et al. 2010; Herring 2009; Kalysh et al. 2016; Mease 2012; Peretz et al. 2015) potentially miss the point of what D&I is intended to address – inclusiveness and diversity as an end rather than a means. Faultline Theory (Bezrukova et al. 2016; Lau and Murnighan 1998, 2005; Meyer et al. 2015; Rico et al. 2012; Yunhyung et al. 2015) posits moving beyond a single variable such as gender or age and explores how gender, age *and* ethnicity together might influence perceptions of D&I in a group. To that end, does Faultline Theory help to better understand the negative consequences (Bezrukova et al. 2012; Rico et al. 2012) as well as the positive impacts (Hyuntak and Eugene 2016; Jackson et al. 2003; Joshi and Roh 2009; Schneid et al. 2015) of diverse teams and groups?

- **Organizational Risk Climate: A human resource risk management perspective**  
Contact: [Dr. Clíodhna MacKenzie](#)

Human resource management (HRM) research has predominantly focused on the positive contribution of HR systems and interventions (Cascio 2015; Chadwick et al. 2015; Cooke 2018; Guerci et al. 2017). Arguably, HRM plays a critical role both within and beyond the organization (Jackson et al. 2014). In the aftermath of a number of recent high-profile organizational crises and scandals (Armstrong 2017; Cremer 2017; Egan 2016; Elson et al. 2015; Grey 2017; Hearit 2018; McGee 2018), sophisticated risk management systems have been identified as unable to predict, much less control for uncertainty when it came to human conduct and behavior. The study of risk management is not

simply about compliance in a world of dynamic complexity (Stacey 2010), it is about recognizing that the greatest risk to the organization comes not from exogenous shocks but from a threat closer to home – its people. Human resources potentially pose the greatest threat to organizational stability and viability (Becker and Smidt 2016; MacKenzie et al. 2011, 2014). As Nickson (2001, p.25) trenchantly observed, ‘risk management is about mitigating risk and protecting resources. What is the most valuable resource of any company? Its people’. This research will explore the organization’s risk climate (Sheedy et al. 2017) to help better understand human resource risks and uncertainties.

- **Developing an evidence base on the impact of talent management**

Contact: [Professor Anthony McDonnell](#)

The word ‘talent’ has become pervasive in organisational terminology with business believed to be increasingly focused on the role of talent management in achieving competitive advantage. Many claims have been made about the positive impact of talent management typically in the form of consultancy styled reports. However, the reality is that we know very little about the impact and outcomes of talent management at individual, team and organisational levels. These gaps if addressed will not only contribute to academic knowledge but can provide much needed evidence based insights to inform practice in talent management. Proposals are welcome that focus on issues (these are not meant as an exhaustive list) that may include:

- the impact of being labelled a talent for individuals (e.g. well-being; career progression; job satisfaction);
- the impact of talent management on team and organisational outcomes (e.g. innovation, performance; productivity; retention);
- the ethical concerns around exclusive approaches to talent management.

- **The utilisation and management of alternative global mobility forms**

Contact: [Professor Anthony McDonnell](#)

Despite the increased interest in the use of international assignments in MNCs, most research focuses on traditional expatriation, largely ignoring alternative forms of international work such as short-term international assignments, international commuters and international business travelling. This appears surprising given that these alternative forms of global mobility represent a substantial global talent pool and with this comes significant opportunities (e.g. roles once exclusively for HQ staff may now workable elsewhere) and risks (e.g. working in high-risk, pressurised environments).

Proposals are welcome that focus on how MNCs utilise and manage non-traditional forms of global mobility/international assignments. This may include addressing questions (these are not posed as an exhaustive list) such as:

- How strategic are the use of non-traditional international assignments by MNCs and are they viewed as a replacement or as a complement to traditional expatriation?
- Is there a selection process in place for the use of these assignments?
- What are the benefits and challenges faced by individuals and organisations?

### Marketing

- **An exploration of the social influence, social influencers and followership in the digital age**

Contact: [Dr. Carol Kelleher](#)

This study explores online social influencers act as cultural intermediaries, cultivate influence generate followership. Using a consumer culture theory lens, social influencers and their followers are profiled and interrogated to discover the dynamic and evolving processes and far reaching impacts of social influencers on contemporary consumers.

- **Home is where the heart(h) is: Multiple perspectives on consuming in domestic dwelling- place markets.**

Contact: [Dr. Carol Kelleher](#)

This project responds to a recent call from leading consumer researchers worldwide to interrogate the places that consumers inhabit, purchase and furnish. Indicative research questions may include (but are not restricted to): how do families/differ groups experience shared domestic spaces (e.g. students, LAT – couples living apart together i.e. partners who occupy separate homes and come together to share them at certain times, experiences in blended/separated families, transnational families (i.e. members living in different countries for part of year, then together), persons with different abilities/disabilities sharing domestic accommodation, persons living in direct provision centres or residential care settings, hoarders, consuming spaces such as man/lady caves, sharing domestic spaces with non-humans (e.g. assistive technologies such as personal assistants such as Alexa or Internet of Things (IoT), pets, etc.



- **Staying on track: An exploration of the self-monitoring self in a neoliberal age.**

Contact: [Dr. Carol Kelleher](#)

The consumption of self-tracking technologies (e.g. Fit bits, sleep tracker apps, etc.) has proliferated over the last number of years. However, critical marketers question the potential dark side of such technologies. Building on Charitsis, Fyrberg Yngfalk and Skalen's (2018) and drawing on theories of the self, this study explores consumer experiences of such technologies and their potential for quantifying and framing the self-monitoring self. Potential areas for exploration include are consumers becoming the product to be consumed by collecting free data that can then be aggregated, marketed by consumers and sold back to them? Who or what are the "benchmarks of the ideal self" that consumers imagine and measure them self against? What are the impacts on the actual self and how it is represented and shared with others and companies (positive and negative)?

- **Plastic-free Consumption: understanding transformative changes to consumption patterns regarding single-use plastic food packaging**

Contact: [Professor Mary McCarthy](#)

The use of single-use plastics in the food system has rapidly expanded over the past number of decades. Innovations in packaging have made it much easier for consumers to purchase and consume healthily, conveniently and affordably. However, with plastic production comes the generation of plastic waste which is causing concern among academics, politicians, and consumers alike on waste management, resource depletion, dangers of toxic chemicals, and climate change. As of 2015, of the 6300 million metric tonnes of plastic waste produced globally, only 9% of this waste has been recycled, with approx. 79% going to landfill and a further 12% incinerated. Efforts to motivate sustainable behaviour among consumers, to entrust industry leaders to take responsibility, or to introduce environmental policy measures have thus far failed to significantly tackle single-use plastics production and consumption. Therefore, this research project will seek to understand how transformative changes to consumption patterns can be achieved from both a production and consumption perspective.

- **Exploring network developmental processes: A study of the Irish micro-brewing and distilling networks**

Contact: [Dr Helen McGrath](#)

Networks of relationships are important for small firms to succeed (Newbert et al., 2013; Semrau & Werner, 2014), creating value across organisational borders and between organisations in a system of interconnected

relationships (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989, 1995). The benefits to small firms of being embedded in networks are manifold and include; access to external opportunities and resources, critical information, advice and ideas, and enhanced reputation (Antoncic & Yi, 2015; Larson & Starr, 1993).

Dwyer, Schurr & Oh and Ford (1980) have developed two of the classic models of relationship development including (1) awareness, (2) exploration, (3) expansion, (4) commitment, and (5) dissolution or termination. Yet we know surprisingly little relating to network developmental processes or, more specifically, what changes take place as the network matures?

Using an established craft beer network and an emerging distillery network as an empirical base, the aim of this research is to analyse network developmental and change processes using an industrial network view (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989, 1995). Adopting the Actor, Resource, Activity (ARA) Model as an analytical framework, the study will explore the influence of core network themes, such as cooptation, network positioning and relational ambivalence, on these processes.