Foreword

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When we set out in 2001 to initiate a new movement in entrepreneurship studies, we hoped to prevent the field from settling into an already established discipline. Indeed, ‘the field’ is still somewhat of an awkward metaphor, and we noted back then that: ‘Some suggest that it is only through movement that a space – or a field – can be described or identified. The field of entrepreneurship, indeed, is a number of movements, and this is how we relate to it here’ (Steyaert and Hjorth, 2003, p. 11). What we sensed around the turn of the millennium was precisely the gradual loss of movement, of energy, of intensity. The ‘Movements’ book series (Steyaert and Hjorth, 2003; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004; Steyaert and Hjorth, 2006; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2007) became our response to this – our response to the potential loss of movement.

This endeavour for ‘powering up the field’, for infusing colleagues, journals, books, conferences with the energy and urge to move, was sketched along some line of thinking that we still find pertinent. In order to move from the past and to counter stabilization, we saw it as crucial:

1. to keep open a space for reflecting, that is, what we would now describe as reflexivity;
2. to stress the need to multiply entrepreneurship;
3. to intensify and connect entrepreneurship (develop communities);
4. to experiment, radicalize and move entrepreneurship.

This, we imagined, would result in a number of possible movements:

1. to remove obstacles and to move into new directions;
2. we would become moved, in the sense of passion and play;
3. we would need to create movements, in the sense of organizing collectives;
4. and we would place emphasis on the momentum of the process, embrace the processual, and start asking what entrepreneurship could become.

This was and remains a highly ambitious programme, if we can call the ‘Movements’ series such. As for its main qualities, we would like to manifest principles and parameters of entrepreneurship studies to come.

It strikes us now that the book you hold in your hands could well be described as being responsive to our call to look at the movements and to enable new manifestations of these movements. We do not write this in the manner of the strategist who seeks to appropriate a space of their own – movements of entrepreneurship have indeed to be considered as the result of very open and collective efforts – but rather as colleagues engaged in a movement, affected by its latest contribution, we are enjoying to see how the movements alter and take surprising shapes. As first readers, we can tell future readers that this book is worthwhile plunging into to find out how it changes what we imagine the entrepreneurship discourse can create and what it cannot do.

In this sense, we still believe it is correct to describe our collective effort as one of resisting the majority (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009). Our project was, from the start, one of the minority’s: we wanted to create a series of books that:

should perhaps be described as a transformative insinuation, a tactical move, trying to make use of the dominant strategy of the field at the time: to locate its boundaries, define its concepts, appropriate a place in the world of business schools. The book series was thought of as one contribution to remedy this tendency to strategize a place by trying to argue for keeping the adolescence of entrepreneurship, for staying with its child-like curiosity and playfulness, keeping the language of minoritarians, staying on the move. (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009, p. 1)

If we maintain that we are operating in a minority of entrepreneurship studies – which is not a reference to the number of people that constitutes ‘us’ in this case, but rather describes the mode of engagement with entrepreneurship as discourse (to speak with this book) – the question vis-à-vis this book is how it changes the minority by its publication. We may ask like the poet what is made possible, what is opened up; or, what kind of people to come is imagined in this book? We may inquire into its political possibilities: What does it interfere with? What does it try to alter? What ethics does it propose?

We acknowledge that we might inevitably come across as possessive as we implicitly limit this present book to a function in a minority discourse that we see energized by the ‘Movements’ book series. Obviously this is not the whole story. Even as we, for reasons of limited space, focus on our own contributions, it is obvious, as Steyaert has shown (2007) and we have also indicated elsewhere (Hjorth et al., 2008; Hjorth, 2008), that several

forces have operated to move the field of entrepreneurship, including process thinking, qualitative methodology, and an emphasis on creative and contextual approaches in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the critical position inscribed in the 'Movements' book series can be positioned in a much broader and emerging community of critical scholars that destabilizes what can be called entrepreneurship studies. As a consequence, critical, feminist, poststructuralist and postcolonial theory has moved into and will continue to interrupt theoretical analyses of entrepreneurship, which becomes questioned, critiqued and unmasked. There is thus a critical-affirmative force that interferes with the proliferation of the entrepreneurship discourse as a grand narrative (Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009).

The present book – *(De)Mobilizing the Entrepreneurship Discourse* – carries a clear reference to the politics of moving the field of entrepreneurship studies by taking a critical stance on how entrepreneurship discourse has been mobilized, as well as by investing in other versions of framing entrepreneurship practices. Although the book is explicitly related to the 'Movements' series, what we wish its readers is to grasp is how its multiplication of entrepreneurship demobilizes many taken-for-granted assumptions of the entrepreneurship discourse, and mobilizes entrepreneurship in novel ways.