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CALL FOR PAPERS



The dynamics of entrepreneurial ecosystems

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Call is open from 1 July 2018

Deadline for submissions: 28 February 2019

Entrepreneurial activity exhibits significant geographical variations within and across countries, both in terms of start-ups and scale-ups. As entrepreneurs typically found their businesses in the localities in which they are already living and working, and businesses, once they have started trading, rarely move to distant locations, this suggests that some geographical environments are more conducive to entrepreneurship while others inhibit it.

The concept of entrepreneurial ecosystems (EEs) has emerged in recent years as a framework to understand the nature of places in which entrepreneurial activity flourishes. Spigel (2017) defines entrepreneurial ecosystems as follows: 'combinations of social, political, economic, and cultural elements within a region that support the development and growth of innovative start-ups and encourage nascent entrepreneurs and other actors to take the risks of starting, funding, and otherwise assisting high-risk ventures'.

However, the existing literature has several shortcomings. Despite some progress (Acs et al. 2017), the concept is under-theorised. It remains unclear how entrepreneurial ecosystems is distinctive from other concepts that seek to explain the geographical concentration of entrepreneurial activity (e.g. clusters, learning regions, regional innovation systems). Much of the literature comprises 'superficial generalisations ... rather than [on] rigorous social science research' (Stam and Spigel 2017, 2). Specifically, empirical studies are static rather than dynamic which does not capture the genesis and evolution of EEs (Mason and Brown 2014; Mack and Mayer 2016; Alvedalen and Boschma 2017). There is little consideration of the context in which entrepreneurial ecosystems emerge (Mack and Mayer 2016). The network of interactions of individual elements in the EEs has not been sufficiently explored (Motoyama and Watkins 2014). And the causal mechanisms are weak: it is not clear how the various elements in entrepreneurial ecosystems enhance entrepreneurship (Alvedalen and Boschma 2017; Stam and Spigel 2017).

Accordingly, this special issue invites papers that address the questions:

- How do the dynamics of people, process and place nurture entrepreneurial behaviour?

- What are place-based dynamics that generate greater entrepreneurial behaviours through managing the inputs and processes that result in entrepreneurial outputs and outcomes?

Entrepreneurial behaviour can be defined broadly within a range of activity including start-up, scale-up, opportunity recognition, economic development, market development, etc.

Specifically, we identify a need for papers that address the following themes:

- (1) Papers that focus on individuals within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, investigating how do people work within and interact with firms and institutions in an entrepreneurial ecosystem to bring about the outputs and outcomes that result from entrepreneurial behaviour.
- (2) Papers that focus on how the different elements in an entrepreneurial ecosystem interact with one another and how these interactions develop over time? How much path dependency is there in the system?
- (3) Papers that focus on the role of networks in the entrepreneurial ecosystem context. Can these interactions be mapped and analyzed? In addition, we also welcome papers that adopt a 'pipelines' perspective (Bathelt, Malmberg, and Maskell 2004), examining the extent, role and significance of the external networks of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Papers that also consider network tipping points, critical densities and vitality that assist to explain EE behaviour would also be valuable.
- (4) Papers that examine the temporal dynamics of entrepreneurial ecosystems. How do they develop over time? What are the causal relationships? What are the processes by which entrepreneurial ecosystems develop and change over time? Why do some emerging entrepreneurial ecosystems fail to develop? And why do some go into decline? And, perhaps drawing on recent work on resilience (e.g. Simmie and Martin 2010; Martin 2011; Williams and Vorley 2014; Boschma 2015), what are the processes that result in the revitalisation of entrepreneurial ecosystems that are in decline or moribund.
- (5) Papers that address policy issues. Policy-makers are continually searching for instruments that can be implemented to stimulate entrepreneurial activity and have therefore been active in seeing to promote entrepreneurial ecosystems. What roles do governments, non-profit organizations and private companies, as well as key individuals, play in the emergence and growth of entrepreneurial ecosystems and what types of support are in evidence? What is their rationale for intervention? And what has been the effect of intervention? How does policy specifically influence elements of an EE and conversely how do elements of EEs influence policy?
- (6) Papers that take into account industry specific EEs and how these develop individually or integrate more broadly into regional or city based EEs. What are the layered effects of EEs and interactions between supra and sub entrepreneurial ecosystems? How does cognitive and geographic distance influence the relationships within and between EEs? What is the effect of global relationships on local and/or industry EE dynamics?
- (7) Papers that also consider the methods, data and approaches that support EE research would be highly valued as a means to contribute to building common approaches and developing a research community.
- (8) Papers that critique the concept of entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Guest Editors

Allan O'Connor is an Associate Professor in Enterprise Dynamics (from 5th February 2018) and has been an active researcher of and contributor to the local dynamics of his home city entrepreneurial ecosystem. He has previously led and contributed to Special Issue editions for the Journal of Futures Studies and the Small Business Economics Journal. In addition he has been co-editor on two volumes of invited chapters; one for the Springer series International Studies in Entrepreneurship and the second for University of Adelaide Press.

Colin Mason is the founding editor of *Venture Capital: an international journal of entrepreneurial finance* (Taylor and Francis) now in its 20th year of publication. He is on the editorial boards of eight journals, including *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*. He is co-author of a widely cited OECD publication: *Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Growth-Oriented Enterprises* <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/entrepreneurial-ecosystems.pdf>.

David Audretsch is a Distinguished Professor and Ameritech Chair of Economic Development at Indiana University, where he is also serves as Director of the Institute for Development Strategies. He also is an Honorary Professor of Industrial Economics and Entrepreneurship at the WHU-Otto Beisheim School of Management in Germany and a Research Fellow of the Centre for Economic Policy Research in London. His research has focused on the links between entrepreneurship, government policy, innovation, economic development and global competitiveness. He is co-author of *The Seven Secrets of Germany*, published by Oxford University Press. He is co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Small Business Economics: An Entrepreneurship Journal*. He was awarded the Global Award for Entrepreneurship Research by the Swedish Entrepreneurship Forum. He has received honorary doctorate degrees from the University of Augsburg in Germany and Jonköping University in Sweden. Audretsch also was awarded the Schumpeter Prize from the University of Wuppertal in Germany.

Morgan P. Miles is currently is an associate editor of *Journal of Business Research* and was a founding co-editor of the *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*. He has published in journals such as *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Technovation*, *Journal of Business Ethics* and *Journal of Business Research*.

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