

Special Issue Proposal for Small Business Economics: An Entrepreneurship Journal (SBEJ)

Exogenous linkages of and between entrepreneurial ecosystems : Perspectives from Interregional and Global connectedness

DEADLINES

Extended Abstracts: April 30, 2023

Full Paper Submissions: November 30, 2023

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1. INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE

RELEVANCE AND NOVELTY

Conceptualizations of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (EE) refer to elements or frameworks comprehending shared resources, networks, knowledge spillovers, local endowments and support from institutions and policy (Stam & van de Ven, 2021; Stam, 2015) which are regionally embedded in cities, metropolitan areas, regions, or even countries (for systematic reviews, see Theodoraki et al., 2022; Wurth et al., 2021; Cao & Shi, 2021). In this respect, EE involve the interactions between entrepreneurial actors (incubators, accelerators and other support systems), resource providers (investors, universities), connectors (business and sectoral associations), and entrepreneurial culture (education for entrepreneurship, normative and cognitive institutions towards entrepreneurship) (Brown & Mason, 2017).

Although most of these components are tied to the territory, EE are not isolated spatial systems with no linkages to their 'hinterland' or with one another. Addressing entrepreneurial ecosystems as isolated analytical units delimited by political/administrative boundaries can cause an inadequate comprehension of how entrepreneurship-oriented relationships are organized across territories (Theodoraki & Catanzaro, 2022). In fact, EE literature needs to further incorporate distinct compositions and dynamics (O'Connor & Audretsch, 2022), and this involves a closer inspection of their spatial configurations.

While this issue has been extensively discussed by geographers and economic geographers (e.g., Balland & Boschma, 2021; Bathelt & Glückler, 2005; Amin, 2004), EE scholars have dedicated scant attention to the geography of linkages formed to foster innovative endeavors. Brown and Mason (2017) point out that mature (or scale-up) ecosystems become less inward-oriented, and, as they evolve, their connections are geographically expanded. Their study proposes that the relationship with other regions can change over the course of EE's evolution. However, the dynamics behind such features appear to be more complex. Kapturkiewicz (2021) comparatively explores the trajectories of two entrepreneurial ecosystems (Tokyo & Bangalore), highlighting substantial differences in global linkages unrelated to maturity stages. Hence, the strength of interregional and/or global embeddedness of EE is likely attached to sectoral orientations (Audretsch & Belitski, 2021), institutional contexts (Audretsch et al., 2021) and evolutionary trajectories (Belitski & Büyükbacı; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Auerswald & Dani, 2017). Also, the increasing prominence of digitization processes is expected to play a pivotal role in affecting the territorial scope of EE, potentially shaping distinct dynamics of interactions that emerge as global phenomena (Autio et al., 2018; Sussan & Acs, 2017). Taken together, these features challenge the dominance of a 'local' perspective on the dynamics and evolution of EE.

So far, few empirical studies have shown that critical flows of technology, people, and other ecosystem elements enable the evolution and growth of entrepreneurial ecosystems (Schäfer & Henn, 2018; Kapturkiewicz, 2021). In order to engage in a more nuanced comprehension of these linkages, it is essential to delve deeper into their diversity of spatial linkages (Fischer et al., 2022). Although ecosystems are multiscalar in nature (e.g. cities and regions are embedded in country-level institutional frameworks), clearer contributions on defining the degree of extra-regional connections of EE are needed. This is particularly challenging given that spatial arrangements of EE are myriad. Moreover, these linkages evolve over time, potentially affecting their internal entrepreneurial structure. Since evolutionary trends shape the maturity stage of ecosystems, their linkages and outcomes (Cantner et al., 2021; Colombelli et al., 2019;

Brown & Mason, 2017; Malecki, 2018; Ratten, 2020; Godley et al., 2021), then taking spatial boundaries as fixed (e.g. political or administrative boundaries) can only provide a fragmented picture of EE dynamics.

Instead, we argue that the circulation of resources (innovation, people, etc.) across EE's boundaries has been neglected in the current debate and that the focus on endogenous EE's elements is overemphasized. An explanation for this bias is the data availability at the administrative levels and the perceived lack of data addressing these flows.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

For this Special Issue, we expect contributions that tackle the spatial configurations of EE in terms of their interregional and global connections. Conceptual and empirical exercises dealing with these dimensions of ecosystems' configurations are welcome. A non-exhaustive list of research questions of interest in this domain include:

- How do entrepreneurial ecosystems evolve in terms of their interregional and global linkages?
- What are the key drivers and actors shaping the dynamics of territorial expansion of entrepreneurial ecosystems' activities?
- How do policies associated with entrepreneurial ecosystems affect their embeddedness in Global Value Chains?
- To what extent do digitization processes affect the notion of territories in terms of entrepreneurial ecosystems' configurations?
- How do migration (national and international) flows connect different entrepreneurial ecosystems?
- What is the role of Born Global start-ups in fostering ecosystems' international linkages?
- How does the geography of venture capital (local/national/international) change over entrepreneurial ecosystems' maturity stages?
- To what extent does the sectoral orientation of entrepreneurial ecosystems affect their embeddedness in interregional/global networks?
- Does the territorial scope of entrepreneurial ecosystems change according to the perspectives/narratives of different groups of actors (entrepreneurs, policymakers, incubators, etc.)? If so, how and why?

This discussion inevitably leads to analytical and methodological challenges, so novel methods and data sources for spatial analysis of entrepreneurial ecosystems (e.g., social media, venture capital flows, migration dynamics) will be highly valued. While actor-centric approaches using the information on administrative units (mostly cities and regions) have undeniably moved forward our knowledge of the dynamics of EE, they fall short in offering an appropriate comprehension of the outward connections of EE based on its patterns of interactions – thus, hardly reflecting how economic events take place in geographical space (Bosker et al., 2018). Since the core of the entrepreneurial ecosystem concept is based on linkages and interactions, then relational data is key (Schäfer, 2021). The need for methods to address interactions and knowledge flows within spatially-bounded economic systems has long been recognized as crucial to identifying proper geographical scales of innovative activity (Dicken & Malmberg, 2001). Accordingly, we expect this Special Issue to bring contributions that allow overcoming these challenges.

Inductive methods based on case studies also make critical contributions to these matters. For instance, these studies collect entrepreneurial narratives from EE agents and their perspectives on the geographic scope of the ecosystems in which they see themselves embedded (Muñoz et al., 2020). Furthermore, the use of Social Network Analysis – an inherently relational approach – deserves more attention from EE scholars (Walsh, 2019; Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Malecki, 2018, Neumeyer et al., 2019), especially if such networks are plotted in maps. Comparative assessments can be particularly valuable to help understand heterogeneous patterns across different entrepreneurial ecosystems.

2. TIMELINE AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

The proposed timeline for this Special Issue is outlined below.

- Deadline for abstracts: April 30, 2023
- Paper development workshop with manuscript proposals (virtual): June/July 2023
- Full paper submissions will be accepted between August 1, 2023 and November 30, 2023
- Paper development workshops with invited authors (virtual): July/August 2024

Abstract proposals should be 5-10 pages (double spaced, including references) and should contain (1) a clear description of the research question and rationale for why it is important (i.e., how it resolves an important problem or question); (2a) theoretical/conceptual framing for conceptual papers, a description of the logic in the paper and the conclusions that can be drawn from it; (2b) for empirical papers, a description of the hypotheses, data collection strategy/feasibility, methods, and expected results; and (3) a summary paragraph. Abstracts should be sent directly to Bruno Fischer (bfischer@unicamp.br).

The guest editors will manage the editorial and review process of the SBEJ Special Issue submissions. All papers will be subject to the standard referee process of Small Business Economics, and will undergo a final review by the Editorial Board after conditional acceptance by the guest editors.

Submissions must be original, unpublished works that are not concurrently under review for publication elsewhere. All submissions should conform to the SBEJ manuscript submission guidelines available at <https://www.springer.com/journal/11187/submission-guidelines>

Submissions to the special issue should be sent electronically with the subject line of the special issue proposal to Bruno Fischer (bfischer@unicamp.br) on or before October 31, 2023.

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