

# Piccola Impresa/Small Business

## Call for papers – “Social Capital, Entrepreneurship & Entrepreneurial Ecosystems”



### Guest editors

Léo-Paul Dana, Montpellier Business School

Paola Demartini, Roma TRE University

Veland Ramadani, South-East European University, Republic of Macedonia

Giovanni Schiuma, University of Basilicata.

As per the definition of Bourdieu (1986), social capital describes circumstances in which entrepreneurs can use membership in a community and networks to secure economic benefits. This formulation treats social capital as an attribute of an individual that cannot be evaluated without knowledge of the society in which the individual operates (Putnam et al., 1994; Sobel, 2002). The role of social capital in entrepreneurship has become an increasingly prominent topic in business literature, and the debate about pros and cons has become increasingly complex (Casson and Della Giusta, 2007; Light and Dana, 2013; Ramadani and Dana, 2013).

Relationships of firms within regions has been explained through concepts such as industrial districts (Becattini, 1990) and clusters (Porter, 2003). Both streams consider social relations with a community and the actors of the territory, as a fundamental element of the birth and success of

enterprises. In the recent past, the economic geography of clusters has been changing, with new clusters developing in some locations (Bresnahan et al. 2001) and some old clusters, facing intense pressure because of globalisation, which loosens ties with territorial roots.

Recently, the entrepreneurial ecosystem has emerged as a popular concept to explain the birth of high-growth entrepreneurship within regions. Entrepreneurial ecosystems can be defined as “the union of localised cultural outlooks, social networks, investment capital, universities, and active economic policies that create environments supportive of innovation-based ventures” (Spigel, 2017). However, ecosystem literature is still underdeveloped.

One aspect that needs particular attention is the link between ecosystems and the talents and endowments distinguishing a territory, the so-called *genius loci* (Pellegrini et al., 2015). Social capital includes personal relationships, trust and bonds of various kinds (emotional, cultural, social, institutional and economic) that allow entrepreneurs to benefit from positive externalities. The personal relationships can take the form of informal relationships with family and friends. This networking, specifically in an initial phase, is particularly important to bring intangible resources and competence of various kinds, such as technological, commercial, administrative and organisational capabilities, that a single entrepreneur hardly owns (EIU, 2016; Romano et al., 2017). Also, relations with the community and the territory are equally important because they can facilitate the procurement of financial resources, through mechanisms such as crowdfunding (Giudici et al., 2018).

Furthermore, strong relationships with a local community and business network are even more crucial in shaping small businesses and family firm innovation activities. Historical roots and emotional attachment might also become a source of ideas and knowledge, whose recombination with new technologies or new meanings leads to unique innovations (De Massis et al., 2016).

Finally, a further aspect to analyse and deepen is whether social capital is the glue that decrees at a meso-level, the success of local public-private initiatives (Lerro and Schiuma, 2008) thanks to the form of governance and territorial social responsibility promoted by networks of local actors, public and private, who are oriented towards sustainable development (Demartini and Del Baldo., 2015).

Contributions for this Special Issue may address, but are not limited to, the following questions/topics:

- Does social capital still matter for the spur of entrepreneurship?
- What are the boundaries of social capital in entrepreneurship?
- What we have learned from existing studies, and what questions deserve further consideration?
- What are the pre-conditions that favour/hinder the development of social capital?

- How has today changed the concept of belonging to a (territorial and virtual) community for entrepreneurs?
- With the widespread of social media and virtual relationships, are online and offline networks complementary sources of support for entrepreneurs?
- Is it possible to reproduce an entrepreneurial ecosystem, or should it be designed and built on the local entrepreneurial resources, the so-called *genius loci*?
- What is the role that public administration can play in favouring the economic development of territory by leveraging on social capital?

We invite submissions from various disciplines; we look for empirical and conceptual articles that can provide a unique perspective using diverse theoretical and methodological approaches for examining the role of social capital for the birth and the development of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

## References

- Becattini, G. (1990), "The Marshallian district as a socio-economic notion," in F. Pyke, G. Becattini, and W. Sengenberger, eds., *Industrial districts and intra-firm collaboration in Italy*, Geneva: International Institute for Labor Studies.
- Bourdieu, P., 2011. The forms of capital.(1986). *Cultural theory: An anthology, I*, pp.81-93.
- Bresnahan, T., A. Gambardella, and A. Saxenian (2001), " 'Old economy' inputs for 'new economy' outcomes: Cluster formation in the new Silicon Valleys," *Industrial and Corporate Change* 10 (4), pp. 835-860.
- De Massis, A., F. Frattini, J. Kotlar, A. M. Petruzzelli, and M. Wright (2016), "Innovation through tradition: Lessons from innovative family businesses and directions for future research," *Academy of Management Perspectives* 30 (1), pp. 93-116.
- Demartini, P. and M. Del Baldo (2015), "Knowledge and social capital: drivers for sustainable local growth," *Chinese Business Review* 14 (2), pp.106-117.
- Economist Intelligence Unit (2016), *Informal innovation networks that power start-up cities*, London: The Economist.
- Giudici, G., M. Guerini, and C. Rossi-Lamastra (2018), "Reward-based crowdfunding of entrepreneurial projects: the effect of local altruism and localized social capital on proponents' success," *Small Business Economics* 50 (2), pp. 307-324.
- Helliwell, J. F. and R. D. Putnam (1995), "Economic growth and social capital in Italy," *Eastern Economic Journal* 21 (3), pp. 295-307.
- Light, I. and L-P. Dana (2013), "Boundaries of social capital in entrepreneurship," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 37 (3), pp. 603-624.
- Pellegrini, M. M., A. Caputo, C. Ciappei, and L-P. Dana (2015), "*Genius loci* & entrepreneurial innovation: Evidences from patterns in the Florence-Prato district," *Academy of Management Proceedings* 2015 (1), Briarcliff Manor, NY: Academy of Management, p. 13022.
- Porter, M. E. (2003), "The economic performance of regions," *Regional Studies* 37 (6 & 7), pp. 549-578.
- Putnam, R. D., R. Leonardi, and R.Y. Nanetti (1994), *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Ramadani, V. and Dana, L.P., 2013. The state of entrepreneurship in the Balkans: Evidence from selected countries. In *Entrepreneurship in the Balkans* (pp. 217-250). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.
- Romano, M., Nicotra, M., & Schillaci, C. (2017). Nascent Entrepreneurship and Territorial Social Capital: Empirical Evidences from Italy. In *Technology-Based Nascent Entrepreneurship* (pp. 71-93). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Schiama, G. and Lerro, A., 2008. Knowledge-based capital in building regional innovation capacity. *Journal of Knowledge management*, 12(5), pp.121-136.
- Sobel, J., 2002. Can we trust social capital?. *Journal of economic literature*, 40(1), pp.139-154.
- Spigel, B. (2017), "The relational organization of entrepreneurial ecosystems," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41 (1), pp.49-72.

### **Timeline and submission information**

- Submission of full paper: July, 30 2019
- Notification of acceptance/rejection/revision: September, 20 2019
- Deadline to submit revised version: November 20, 2019
- Notification of final acceptance/rejection: December 20, 2020

All articles will be subject to the standard double-blind review process. The Special Issue is scheduled to be published as No. 3, 2019. Full papers need to be submitted through the online platform <http://www.rivistapiccolaimpresa.uniurb.it>. The platform can be browsed in English by using the button "selection language" on top right side of the home page. Authors will be first requested to fill in the section "Registrazione/registration" after which they will need to click on "Nuova Proposta/New proposal" in the section "Cruscotto/Dashboard" to upload the files related to their submission. All the papers need to strictly adhere to the specific guidelines of the journal that can be found at this link:

<http://rivistapiccolaimpresa.uniurb.it/index.php/piccola/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>. The guidelines can be browsed in English by using the button "selection language" in top right side of the webpage.

### **About the journal**

Piccola Impresa/ Small Business Journal aims to contribute to the study and diffusion of knowledge on small-sized entrepreneurial firms. It is an academic journal with international vocation, dedicated specifically to the investigation and theoretical reflection on the administration and management of small businesses, their role in the economy, as well as the policies and regulations they face.