

# Call for papers

## Entrepreneurship and Regional Development

Special Issue on: **Cultural Values and Entrepreneurial Activity**

Guest Editors:

**Dr. Norris Krueger**, Entrepreneurship Northwest, Boise, USA; Max Planck Institute for Economics, Jena, Germany ([norris.krueger@gmail.com](mailto:norris.krueger@gmail.com))

**Prof. Francisco Liñán**, University of Seville, Spain ([flinan@us.es](mailto:flinan@us.es)), and

**Dr. Ghulam Nabi**, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK ([G.Nabi@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:G.Nabi@mmu.ac.uk))

What is an “entrepreneurial culture”? (Is there actually such a thing?) What does it look like, what influences its presence or absence? How do we know, how do we measure it? Cultural issues deserve rigorous, imaginative investigation. And the editors are eager to encourage outstanding manuscripts that break new ground.

The central question is: How do cultural values influence entrepreneurial activity? Conversely, how does entrepreneurial activity influence cultural values? Entrepreneurship scholars do not need experts like Granovetter (1983) to persuade us that entrepreneurial activity are irretrievably embedded in social and cultural norms and values. However, we have found rather quickly that understanding this co-embeddedness beyond a superficial level is challenging. The editors believe that accepting these challenges will move the field forward in important and likely in unexpected directions.

Even though the definition of culture is still controversial (Boggs 2004), Inglehart (1997) defines it as the set of basic common values which contributes to shaping people’s behavior in a society. The notion of culture also includes patterns of thinking, feeling and acting, which are learned and shared by people living within the same social environment (Hofstede 1991, 2003). However, we recognize that “culture” has many facets, just as each of us lives in multiple groups with differing norms and values. Thus, culture cannot be equated to nation anymore. Multiculturalism and immigration are widespread characteristics of present-day societies, and different sub-cultures do exist within any given country (Davidsson and Wiklund 1997; Garcia-Cabrera and Garcia-Soto 2008; Levie 2007), interacting at different levels, such as industry or organizational levels (Fayolle, Basso and Bouchard 2010). Again, the objective is to broaden and deepen our understanding of what elements of 'culture' influence (or are influenced) by entrepreneurial activity.

Differences in entrepreneurial activity among countries, and regions within those countries, are persistent and cannot be fully explained by institutional and economic variables (Davidsson and Wiklund 1997; Frederking 2004). A substantial part of these differences have been attributed to culture, which may influence entrepreneurship through two main mechanisms (Davidsson 1995). Firstly, a supportive culture would lead to *social legitimation*, making the entrepreneurial career more valued and socially recognized in that culture, thus creating a favourable institutional environment. Therefore, more people will try to start their

ventures, irrespective of their personal beliefs and attitudes (Etzioni 1987). Secondly, a culture sharing more pro-entrepreneurial values and patterns of thinking would lead to more individuals showing *psychological traits and attitudes* consistent with entrepreneurship (Krueger 2000, 2003). Thus, more people will try to become entrepreneurs (McGrath et al. 1992; Mueller and Thomas 2001). In this sense, it has been suggested that a high perceived valuation of entrepreneurship in a society will lead to more positive attitudes and intentions by individuals (Krueger and Carsrud 1993; Liñán, Urbano, and Guerrero 2011). Alternatively, it has also been argued that it is “misfit” individuals who attempt to start a venture. That is, irrespective of the specific cultural characteristics of a country, people not sharing dominant cultural values -*dissatisfied individuals*- will attempt the entrepreneurial path (Hofstede et al. 2004).

Either way, we ignore cultural and social influences at our peril. That also suggests fertile ground for exploring important research questions about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

It is clear that some socio-cultural practices, values and norms are more conducive to driving or inhibiting entrepreneurship. For example, historically in countries like the former Soviet Union or Singapore, socialist practices, or low tolerance of failure or risk-taking were not conducive to entrepreneurship (c.f., Henry, Hill, and Leitch, 2003). However, we need to dig deeper into ‘how’ and ‘why’ cultural practices, and underlying values and norms, matter in entrepreneurial action to more fully understand the complexities of the processes, without making cross-cultural or cross-national generalisations. Unique cultural, national, and institutional contexts present different practices in terms of opportunities and challenges for driving entrepreneurial action (Nabi and Liñán, 2011). This Special Issue therefore provides us with a vehicle to advance our understanding of value-driven behaviours.

Past empirical research about the cultural influence on entrepreneurial behaviours (McGrath et al. 1992; Mueller and Thomas 2001; Wennekers et al. 2005) has often used Hofstede’s (1980) four dimensions of national culture. Significant differences depending on the national culture have been found in entrepreneurial cognitions (Mitchell et al. 2002a; Mitchell et al. 2002b; Liñán and Chen 2009). Nevertheless, this characterization of cultures has been criticised (Tang and Koveos, 2008). Its usefulness may be limited, since these dimensions may be too broad and general. Therefore, papers testing other different frameworks, such as those of Schwartz (1999, 2004), Triandis (1995) or Inglehart (1997), are especially welcome.

Many additional unanswered questions remain, due to the difficulties in understanding, defining and measuring culture in its different forms. Ethnic minorities have often been found to present high entrepreneurial rates (Vinogradov and Kolvereid 2007). The interplay between wider societal culture, group-level and individual-level values is, however, far from clear (Basu and Altinay 2002). Therefore, we seek proposals that may contribute to a broader understanding of the many different roles culture plays in shaping entrepreneurial activity. Both empirical (quantitative and qualitative) and conceptual paper proposals are welcome. This Special Issue includes, but it is definitely not limited, to the following themes:

- How to best measure cultural values relevant to entrepreneurship
- The role of cultural values in explaining start-up activities
- Shared cultural codes as reducing uncertainty
- Ethnic minorities as sub-cultures that may/may not favour entrepreneurial activity
- Cultural values versus individual values, how do they interact?
- The impact of cultural values on entrepreneurial intent and motivation across the economic cycle.
- Cultural aspects of different countries that facilitate/hinder start-up activity, for example what aspects induce or reduce fear of failure?
- What are the cultural triggers and barriers to developing favourable entrepreneurial cultures?
- How do cultural values influence social norms, e.g., as associated with entrepreneurial intentions?
- What differs between otherwise similar regions that differ in entrepreneurial culture/climate? (Do more entrepreneurial communities induce changes in cultural and social norms and values?)

The editors intend to make this Special Issue of significant value to relevant entrepreneurial stakeholders. We all benefit from a clearer understanding of the ways in which culture shapes entrepreneurial activity, but it will contribute meaningfully to devising newer and improved measures and approaches by policy makers and government officials to promote a higher entrepreneurial culture in their country/region. Similarly, entrepreneurship education and training programmes could benefit from this new knowledge by making explicit the values associated with entrepreneurship. At the same time, specific value-transmission and value-transformation activities may be designed and incorporated into training programmes. Overall, the entrepreneurship and regional science research communities would benefit from advancement in the knowledge frontier within these fields.

Please join us in exploring this fascinating topic!

### **Format guidelines**

Abstracts and submissions must be prepared in line with the journal guidelines for authors: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/tepnauth.asp>.

### **Timetable**

The Special Issue is scheduled to be published in 2014. The following timetable/deadline dates are given for your information:

1. **Submission of full papers – by 31 October 2012, preferably earlier.** Early communication of intent (sending abstract) by prospective authors is desirable.
2. Feedback from reviewers - by 28 February 2013
3. Final revised submission - by 31 May 2013.

Please feel free to contact the Guest Editors if you have any queries about the Special Issue. If you have any colleagues who you feel may be interested in submitting an article, please feel free to forward this Call to them.

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