

# THE CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

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**Abstract:** *The rapid urbanization and globalization of our world have positioned metropolitan areas as focal points for economic, social and technological advancement. Consequently, the study of entrepreneurship within these dynamic environments has gained significant attention from researchers. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the contemporary state of research concerning the evolution of entrepreneurship within metropolitan areas and also reviews the current landscapes of research. As urban centers continue to grow and evolve, they have become crucial hubs for entrepreneurial activities and innovation. The article synthesizes recent studies on various aspects of entrepreneurship in metropolitan environments, including factors influencing entrepreneurial growth, the role of local ecosystems, policy interventions and the impact of technological advancements. The role of local ecosystems in nurturing and sustaining entrepreneurial ventures is explored, along with the influence of government policies and regulatory frameworks. By examining the latest findings and trends, this article aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how entrepreneurship is unfolding in metropolitan settings and to highlight potential avenues for further research, moreover it concludes by identifying potential research directions and implications for policymakers aiming to support and enhance entrepreneurial endeavors in these urban centers.*

**Keywords:** *entrepreneurial development, government policies, rural metropolitan areas, policy makers.*

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of entrepreneurship is distinguished by great scope and ambivalence. The reason for this ambiguity are various. They range from the lack of systemic theories and the marginality that the issue experienced for a long time even in the economic literature, through the pluralism of approaches and interpretations, to the strong ideology underpinning its discourse. [1]. Entrepreneurship is an important element of regional economics development. The modalities by which entrepreneurship and the creation of new business ( or the contrary, their discontinuation) generate or not economic growth at regional level continue to be the topics of interest, intensely debated by scholars, policymakers, the media or the general public, due to the various factors that influence this process. [2]

Past studies have comprehensively demonstrated that entrepreneurial activity and economic development are recursively linked, scholars agree that the creation of new ventures and small businesses not only affect economic activity at both country and regional level, but affect social outcomes as well. When certain institutions exist and operate properly, entrepreneurship may be more beneficial for growth and development in certain situations.[3]

Also compelling literature has found that not only do regions matter for entrepreneurship but also, perhaps more important, entrepreneurship matters for regions. Systematic empirical evidence across a broad spectrum of national and temporal contexts suggests that those regions exhibiting a greater degree of entrepreneurial activity enjoys a superior economic performance. However this is a considerable disparity between the conceptualization of entrepreneurship in the literature and how it is actually operationalized and measured in virtually every study providing an empirical link between entrepreneurship activity and growth. [4]

Economists working in the Schumpeterian vein have developed theories of entrepreneurship to empirically examine the connections between entrepreneurship and innovative activity and economic growth and development. They have noted that entrepreneurial activity and innovative activity more generally are conditioned by mechanisms related to urban density and economic diversity. Also there is the construct that agglomeration economies are basically economies of scale associated with specialization and co location. In terms of mechanisms, this scale works to organise and bring together the broad talent base, the wide array of firms that function as customers, end-users and suppliers. From the standpoint of an innovative firm in a new industry, a large city-region, represents a more hospitable environment for

innovation because it is more likely to have a wider range of inputs – people, ideas, suppliers – that can be recombined to achieve breakthrough innovations. [5]

This article reviews the various entrepreneurial researches on metropolitan areas, in particular it examines the impact of the entrepreneurship has on the development of the regions, at the level of the European metropolitan areas. The structure of this paper is as follows: after this introduction, will present an overview regarding entrepreneurship and regional development found in the specialized literature. The third part is dedicated to results and discussions of the entrepreneurial growth found. The paper ends with conclusions, main limitations and policy implications.

## EXPERIMENTAL

Entrepreneurship often energizes positive change in society providing breakthrough commercial or social innovations that contribute to social well-being. Entrepreneurship is also a potential source of personal development, growth and well-being. Unlike most traditional occupations, entrepreneurs enjoy a level of freedom and control that can enable them to derive more meaning from their work, fulfill their innate talents and skill, and engage in purposeful activities through self-directed tasks. [6]

After decades of being organized in office parks and suburban, entrepreneurship has returned to cities. The city has emerged, or more accurately put, it has reemerged as the central organizing unit or platform for entrepreneurial activity. There is a long tradition that suggests that innovative and entrepreneurial activity tends to cluster geographically, firms can do better by locating near their competitors. The central argument here suggests that cities are analytically central to modern innovation. Cities reflect and shape entrepreneurial activity at two key scales. At a micro scale, entrepreneurial startup activity would be increasingly based in a small roster of global cities. But it is further concentrated by distinct neighbourhood-level micro within those large metros.[7]

Starting from these premises in the last paragraphs, researchers have measured entrepreneurship using various indicators such as knowledge attitude, qualified human capital, urban policies, infrastructure and local and national policies, also linked them to a greater scope such as regional development. As previously stated this article aims to review the latest findings in entrepreneurship development correlated with metropolitan growth. In order for this article to be relevant from a geographical point of view, I have chosen the metropolitan areas of Europe with an emphasis on those in the eastern area where the transition to a market economy took place after the fall of the Iron Curtain, of course taking into account those more developed western European metropolises where entrepreneurship plays an important role in development.

Lara Penco et al (2020) argues that a knowledge city environment stimulates entrepreneurship and made an analysis based on 28 EU metropolitan cities plus another 32 big cities non-capital that are considered important knowledge hubs. They used different multidimensional identifications such as Knowledge Based City Developing Entrepreneurship, Social and Talent-cultural perspective and Environmental, Urban innovation system perspectives and infrastructural ones to measure the city rankings. Findings demonstrate that a knowledge-based urban environment along with a good social and educational society drive new entrepreneurship development, moreover the paper helps explain to policy makers/city managers the importance of a knowledge-based context and the most important drivers for the creation of an attractive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Therefore, the level of entrepreneurial results from a good social environment and effective policies to create an urban-level innovation system. [8]

Taken individually, the big capitals, implicitly metropolitan areas in Europe, each have their own characteristics and the in-depth studies made on the entrepreneurial environment on them concluded as follows:

Entrepreneurship in Rome and its metropolitan surrounding area was measured based on the mobility policy on the start-up manufacturing sector by Stefania Fiorentino (2018). The findings were that the conception of innovation has changed and it is not anymore about big, corporate-led, technological shifts happening in big science parks or technopoles, but it is rather about new ways of proposing old ideas and services, about making easier everyday life or implementing quite big sunk costs. The development of the entrepreneurship offers a good window of observations over these macro changes in the innovation field. Cities and once again having central role in these small-scale innovation processes. In this particularly case of Rome that experienced downturns or being exposed to political and economical struggles are more likely to facilitate those creative processes for their ability of spaces but also for the necessity and capacity of an economic restructuring over the lack of jobs. These things also apply to big multinational corporations that benefit from working with small emerging firms. Fiorentino argues that there is a lot of similarities in the start-up urbanism interventions and measures around the world and their seeds can be observed since the past creative cluster experience from which ultimately, planning policies have so far followed a copy-paste approach. Therefore, the metropolitan area of Rome is facing a much bigger conundrum the emergence of a new urban economy and the way to tackle its actors and shape its structure. It concludes that both planning and economic policies are still lagging in delivering tailor made propositions and measures, but this opens the path to a new dimension of urban regeneration strategies. [9]

Instead, in the metropolitan area of Paris, a digital entrepreneurship indicator was used to measure the vitality of the metropolis in terms of digital entrepreneurship on a suburban scale. (Cornet, 2022). The authors started from the premise that large cities in Europe have a high degree in terms of digital and measured the entrepreneurial phenomenon in terms of digital ecosystems. They argued that appropriate working spaces and meeting points in the locality, combined with an attractive ambience of the area and the presence of infrastructures devoted to ICTs, serve as facilitators of ICT startups. Also, some specialization or labeling of areas in high-technology or highly specialized jobs in services may serve as an aggregator mechanism, sometimes because of successful public policies. [9] The authors explain that large cities offer more direct interaction opportunities, but they also make face-to-face meetings more expensive due to negative externalities, such as congestion costs. In terms of time, the opportunity cost is actually higher for employees in large cities because of the longer transport time compared with that for employees in less urbanized locations. Thus, even if there are more opportunities in large cities, the quality face to face interactions may decline, increasing the need for effective networks. Therefore, this sub-component aggregates two proxies measuring the technical, strategic, and digital resources that can be mobilized by startups. [10] Also in areas where the location of ICTs is strong, entrepreneurs serve as role models, and the localization of the potential entrepreneurs coming from an existing firm from these areas is also driven by the proximity of their relatives and friends if they live there and/or their work and social relationships. [11]. In the end, the authors conclude that the presence of universities or prestigious engineering and business colleges and mainly large establishments favors the installation of small specialized establishments, working in collaboration with the largest ones, which constitutes a specialized entrepreneurial ICT culture. Also, public authorities must contribute to this economical entrepreneurship ecosystems by implementing various and stimulating policies at the suburban level to overcome local bottleneck and stimulate business.

Moving forward to Catalonia region, Martinez (2018), show that the most studies in this field highlight the importance of the agglomeration economies, but there are also other important determinants that must be taken into account, such as transport infrastructures. Also, several empirical studies have supported the hypothesis that better accessibility to transport infrastructure has a positive impact on firm's location decisions, but this effect will be different for each economic activity. Other factors are population density and human capital characteristics. Many studies have shown that knowledge-intensive industries benefit from being located in larger agglomerations. Concerning human capital characteristics, main findings suggest that firms generally prefer locations with a more educated and less well-paid workforce, although it will depend on the characteristics of the firm. Other determinations are taxes, even their effect is ambiguous, there is a balance between taxes and the provision of public goods and services. Usually, larger firms are primarily guided by objective factors such as market characteristics, while small businesses seem to be mainly guided by entrepreneur's preferences (reside location, family problems). [12]

Martinez argues that municipalities close to Barcelona and those belonging to its metropolitan area are the ones that register more patents since they are municipalities that coexists with different universities and technology and research centers, consequently the direct interactions with science and technology is more accessible and this facilitates innovation in municipality. [13] Therefore, the study aims to highlight the important role of agglomeration economies and suggest that municipalities should place more interest in attracting population by investing in social and artistic elements that keeps the interaction between individuals also creates a mechanism of innovations in the terms of creativity and a clear entrepreneurial dynamism. Also, policy-makers should focus their strategies in terms of facilitating and promoting accessibility to networking and cultural experiences. [14]

The great city of Bremen has its own entrepreneurial study that examines how the Kraftwerk City Accelerator (KCAB) supports the development process of the startup ecosystem. It is known that a sustainable ecosystem will create thousands of jobs and will contribute to the innovation process particularly in the region where it is located. While gaining sustainability, the ecosystem will generate an enormous amount of economic and social benefit. This positive impact encourages the global interest in establishing a sustainable startup ecosystem. [15]

Blischke (2019) in his research used interviews, focus groups and data observations to see how the roll of KCAB by using the eight pillars of an entrepreneurial ecosystem: human capital and workforce; funding and finance; mentors, advisors and support systems; regulatory framework and infrastructure; education and training; major universities as catalysts; and cultural support. The findings of the study, even if it is limited to this area, provides a deeper understanding on entrepreneurial ecosystems (EE's) and also evaluates how the KCAB contributes to the development of a startup ecosystem as follows:

KCAB has an impact on all presented capitals. According to infrastructural capital and, in this way, the support infrastructure, the KCAB is one of two major supporting programs or institutions due to their efforts of supporting startups with workshops, mentorship, co-working, financial support, network and office space. This provides a substantial contribution to infrastructure capital. Concerning financial capital, funding opportunities are barely available. As Bremen lacks in activated venture capitalist and business angels, the accelerator itself provides funding for startups. Further findings suggest a distinct industry within Bremen. As the KCAB is directly connected with swb AG, Mercedes-Benz and EWE, startups benefit from knowledge, technologies and an access to customer bases companies offer. Based on industry, the KCAB may be the juncture within the emerging startup ecosystem Bremen. In terms of political capital, regular meetings with policies and government officials together with KCAB managers imply an exchange of information to foster the development of favorable conditions for startups. According to the literature,

government and policies can either accelerate or decelerate the growth of startup ecosystems. Summarizing social capital, networks seem to be an important aspect in terms of the contribution to the KCAB. More precisely, the KCAB is connected to universities as well as universities of applied science, established firms, public organizations and policies.[16]

Blishcke argues that over time the accelerator gains in experience and improves its program and supporting activities. It is concluded that the KCAB has effect on social capital in terms of yielding advisors and successful businessmen, which may support startups in the future. [17]

Seeking further into literature, we come across the study made by Musolino in 2019, this time on the entire territory of Italy, segmented by development regions, in which the factors that ensure a good development of entrepreneurship, which we highlighted above, are found to play an important role. Here we include, again, the agglomeration effect, access to supply chains and the market, transport infrastructure, but also the proximity to a business core. Musolino supports previous theories that areas with higher transport accessibility, firm density and openness are perceived more attractive for entrepreneurs. Transport accessibility is one of the most location factors, as also underlined by the literature. This means that the more accessible and well connected a province is to a global market (that is to say the better the endowment of transport infrastructure and the quality of transport services), the higher the rating it will receive as a potential location for investments, The firm density proxies agglomeration economies, while the province district intensity corresponds to localization economies. This finding implies that provinces with a high presence of external economies (related to the proximity both with other firms and people and in particular with firms belonging to the same sector) are seen by the entrepreneurs as being more attractive to others.[18]

Moving forward, as previous stated in the introduction area, to the eastern part of the Europe, came across a study that measures entrepreneurial ecosystems in Poland. This case represents how the entrepreneurial ecosystems approach is being used as a hook for broader projects related to smart specialization and regional diversification that give at important access to EU fundings. The research is made withing three cities located in the north, center and south of the country and provides an insight how the search for entrepreneurship-led growth is being adopted and the challenges which are face by this approach.

Facts are clear and well presented by Brooks (2019, the research demonstrates that entrepreneurs require support for financial, networking and resource needs, but these cannot be met by regional governments alone. In the three regions surveyed, the regional governments found it difficult to integrate the needs of startups, the activities of large foreign-owned multinationals and a burgeoning graduate population. The paper actions areas for the attention of policy makers. First, the findings show that there is a tendency for people to see themselves as employees rather than as entrepreneurs, and this does not necessarily mean new venture creation. Upskilling the workforce to promote entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth is an important policy goal in this regard and a means to reroute jobs to more value creating sectors. Also, regional governments must line up interests between current strategy, business imperative and regional vision. Developing the mart specialization strategy requires alignment with market demands to sustain a regional competitive advantage. Part of this is creating a clear vision for the strategic economic growth policies that marries and aligns multi-level perspectives into a coherent regional narrative bringing together both metropolitan and rural space.[19]

Staying in the area of Poland, we find a study from 2022 on the Krakow metropolitan area with an emphasis on the communes around the large urban center. These communes, as local administration units at the basic level, have the greatest competence in shaping local development conditions. Their size, wealth and the way they are managed largely determine the preferred directions of development, the perceptions and the role of local entrepreneurs in that process. One of the manifestations of economic globalization is the growing importance of metropolitan areas. The largest cities and functionally linked areas become centers of the modern economy dominated by the service sector and innovative industries. As part of the study carried out, the following elements were evaluated: the local infrastructure resources, the job offer, including specialized personnel and the institutions of the business environment. Barczyk-Ciula argues that economic activity is based on the use of available resources, therefore access to them can determine the choice of company location. In the initial stages of development of business entities, the key stimulus is the availability of geographic space, but business people may face the lack of utilities where the land is more accessible. Another factor found by the author was the lack of finding potential employees, the population outside the urban center tends to be older. It is concluded that there is a different perception on entrepreneurial issues, in the communes located relatively close to Krakow, a positive impact of the creation of new companies was noted compared to the more distant ones. At the same time, in these municipalities, the negative consequences that were mainly focused on the deterioration of spatial order and the excessive burden on local budgets with the need for new investments in the development of technical and social infrastructure that serve both companies and residents.[20]

In the continuation of this article, we go to the neighbors of the Poles, the Czech Republic, where we find a study about entrepreneurial ecosystems. The entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Czech Republic is booming, especially in large cities with highly educated populations such as Prague or Brno, which offer a combination of supporting institutions such as university-linked business incubators, investor-led accelerators, business angel networks or privately established co-working centers. The result of this study is not at all encouraging, the relatively low value of assets compared to non-incubated companies means a smaller company size which is also reflected in lower personnel costs. Unlike sales

revenue, whose growth can have an effect over a longer period, assets are usually expected to grow in a short period of time, because innovation activity requires substantial investment from the start. Furthermore, and from a political perspective, Czech business incubators are not delivering the expected results related to employment growth. While we did not explicitly measure employment growth, lower labor costs indicate fewer jobs, the high prevalence of low-paying jobs, or both. [21]

In Romania, Grigore (2020), claims that there is great diversity in the territorial distribution of enterprises. The emergence of a business venture is linked to markets and opportunities, but not only to them: entrepreneurial spirit and potential are implicit. From the beginning of the transition stage in the Romanian economy, it was obvious that the capital Bucharest offered the best conditions for stimulating start-ups and increasing the number of SMEs. Even now, Bucharest and its urban satellites offer the best conditions in Romania for SMEs, regardless of profile: infrastructure, market, human resources, etc. Bucharest's industrial and logistics space doubled between 2015 and 2020, making the Romanian capital the most dynamic market in Central and Eastern Europe and a regional logistics hub. The emergence of a business is related to opportunities and markets, but also to entrepreneurial spirit and potential. Since the beginning of the market economy in Romania, Bucharest (and later the peri-urban area) has offered optimal conditions for the development of SMEs: economic, demographic and social. Moreover, the capital offered, and continues to offer, the most suitable conditions for the development of these enterprises: space, infrastructure, market and workforce. [22]

The article concludes by suggesting policies that local and central administrative structures should implement to create a friendlier environment for value-added providers.

They should develop strategies that will focus on a win-win approach. Policymakers should foster EE density and growth: integrate it into community planning and facilitate investment, knowledge and information sharing to create long-term perspectives for sustainable development, both economically and environmental point of view. To do this, policy makers should identify specific vulnerabilities for EE in large cities. They should note some obvious aspects, such as a sharp dispersion of competitors, weak ties between economic players and the administration, the expected anonymity characteristic of large numbers, and limited and temporary ties between members, not to mention the high cost of manpower, work and property. [23]

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This article began by stating that the areas of large cities or metropolitan areas function as a key unit in the organization of entrepreneurial activity. These metropolitan areas do not work according to the entrepreneurial theories stated by Schumpeter, Marshall or Jacobs, rather they blend together harmoniously.

As we could see from the current studies, all the authors mentioned above agreed on some things. The first is the fact that the development of entrepreneurship attracts the development of the area/region, also the vice versa effect is the same. When a metropolitan area develops on several levels (infrastructure, social, education) it becomes more attractive from the point of view of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The more an economic agent can access and relies on, regional capabilities, the more likely this agent is to create economic activities that are related to existing activities in terms of capabilities they use. However, structural change requires that local economies develop activities that utilize new capabilities, that, in time, become accessible to other firms. [24]

Secondly, the authors argue that a productive entrepreneurial ecosystem is based on public policies made by local or national governments and in all the cases presented this is insufficient or incomplete. As we see the urbanized area in the metropolis, although it behaves like a real EE in which the factors determined in entrepreneurship are present (high urban density, developed infrastructure, good social and cultural connectivity) it is often suffocated by traffic which in turn gives the effect of delay on the supply chain. Moreover, the suburban part, practically attached to the big metropolises, behaves differently, we see how the location changes, the manufacturing industry is no longer organized in industrial parks but migrates to the urban center, giving way to the innovative and service industry.

Ultimately, the finding of this article suggests that entrepreneurship in metropolitan areas is one of the economic phenomena that is a combination of many activities, processes, conditions and influences of all the entities involved, both from the public and private spheres. This development of entrepreneurship in these areas will have to be intensively studied and measured, as we can see the conditions differ from area to area and replication cannot be applied, or if possible it will be much too small to have a big impact.

## **CONCLUSION**

The development of economic activities requires intense and permanent cooperation between entrepreneurs, authorities and support centers. Therefore, it is necessary to continue research in these areas to see a common pattern that can give a great boost in accelerating development and to eliminate those disparities that block this phenomenon.

Likewise, the development of entrepreneurship will have to be studied due to the distance from the core of the metropolis and especially to use the endogenous potential of the metropolis to the maximum.

Thus, we encourage further research to look in two directions of action: the urban center to encourage the elimination of disparities and inefficient factors from capitalism (traffic congestion and elements that are not used to their true potential: co-working spaces, etc.), and the second refers to a more adequate understanding of the areas adjacent to the big city and to propose solutions to find those mechanisms that work at the micro level with long-lasting effects.

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