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Entrepreneurial dynamics within innovation ecosystems: Some insights from France

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Abstract:

Although the notion of the ecosystem has become very popular in the field of innovation management and entrepreneurship (for industrials, academics and government as well), it still encompasses a large variety of different perspectives. Following Spiegel (2017:50), we define an innovation ecosystem in relation to entrepreneurship as “the combination of social, political, economic, and cultural elements within a region that support the development and growth of innovative startups and encourage nascent entrepreneurs and other actors to take the risks of starting, funding, and otherwise assisting high-risk ventures”. Entrepreneurship is tightly linked to the notion of the ecosystem as the development, the success but also the failure of new ventures not only depend on the company’s assets but also on its external partners and networks. Entrepreneurial dynamics often involve a collective work, “created not by “an” entrepreneur but by a team of entrepreneurs” (Vieira Borges et al., 2003, p.13) and strongly rely on the interactions between the different actors of the ecosystem: from formal actors (political institutions, large firms, universities, research labs, innovation intermediaries, clusters) to informal ones (innovation communities). In return, entrepreneurial dynamics are at the heart of the renewal of innovation ecosystems. Entrepreneurial dynamics and innovation ecosystem are indeed two concepts closely linked. However, research on the topic is still underdeveloped, in particular in looking more precisely at the processes through which innovation ecosystems deliver benefits to entrepreneurs and start-ups: how they encourage the creation of high-quality ventures and give these firms some sort of competitive advantage that helps them grow and thrive (Spiegel & Harrison, 2018). The question of strategy then arises differently for entrepreneurs (Iansiti & Levien, 2004; Teece, 2007), and with it the question of finding the best sustainable environment for new venturing (Porter, 2003). It is not just about positioning oneself in a competitive environment to capture value, but also about acting on that environment, as an actor engaged in a process of value co-creation (Adner, 2006; Adner & Kapoor, 2010). If the central role of the interactions between the actors within an ecosystem led to the development of different works integrating the question of the geographical proximity of the actors, it also highlighted the territorial dimension of the entrepreneurial dynamics within ecosystems of innovation (Gertler et al. 2000).

Biography:

Anne Berthinier-Poncet holds a Ph.D. in Strategic Management and is currently an Associate Professor at the CNAM Paris, France, a lifelong learning university, where she teaches innovation management to professionals (evening classes at master’s level, MBA and corporate training seminars). Alongside her teaching activities, she undertakes academic research in management, in the field of innovation and territorial embeddedness. Her main research topics are focused on the management of collaborative innovation in innovation.