

ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS AND THE EMERGENCE OF KNOWLEDGE-INTENSIVE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EVIDENCE FROM BRAZIL

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Introdução

One recent trend regarding Social Enterprises comprises the combination of their traditional behaviour with technological upgrading and generation of innovative ventures. In this perspective, there is a need to rethink the main current theoretical constructs of entrepreneurial ecosystems to create contextual features that trigger the interplay between societal, environmental and technological components of this process (Gerli et al., 2021). However, despite its importance, the technology dimension has received scant attention in the SE literature.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

Our purpose is to identify the causal mechanisms between ecosystem features and KISE events in a developing country context and identify whether and to what extent the dynamics of 'traditional' entrepreneurial ecosystems can also apply to triggering the emergence of KISE events. Our guiding research question is: Are the local drivers of KISE in developing countries aligned with the dimensions of mainstream entrepreneurial ecosystems? We expect to generating inputs for research, policy and management vis-à-vis the urgent need to foster sustainable transitions.

Fundamentação Teórica

Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship (KIE) encompasses relationships between the entrepreneur, the organization, knowledge, and the broader social and economic context. Meanwhile, Social Entrepreneurship is often viewed as hybrid organizations in the sense of combining different institutional logics inside their business practices. Although some authors include SE inside the KIE scope, the analytical literature does not pay specific attention to this combination. We followed the main attributes of Spigel's (2017) entrepreneurial ecosystems framework in light of KISEE recent contributions.

Metodologia

Our methodological approach relies on the estimation of entrepreneurial propensity functions that assesses the statistical associations between ecosystem-level features and the generation of Knowledge-Intensive Social Entrepreneurship (KISE). The sample comprises of panel information for 629 cities in the State of São Paulo, Brazil, over the period 2005-2017 (contextual features) and 2006-2018 (entrepreneurial events). The analyzed database was extracted from the PIPE Program (a Portuguese acronym for Innovative Research in Small Business) managed by FAPESP (The São Paulo Research Foundation).

Análise dos Resultados

Findings indicate strong similarities on the underlying ecosystem drivers of KIE and KISE. However, some differences arise, mainly related to the effects of local Technological Activity and Connections to Global Markets. As it turns out, the transition towards more sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems can benefit from already existing conditions that nurture other forms of entrepreneurial activity. As it turns out, the transition towards more sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems can benefit from already existing conditions that nurture other forms of entrepreneurial activity.

Conclusão

A substantial overlap emerges between the configurations of traditional entrepreneurial ecosystems and KISEE. Considering this, there seems to be room for initiatives that look for both knowledge-

intensive and social orientation in their entrepreneurial activities, aligning social and environmental positive impact with innovation towards economic development. Although entrepreneurship is based on bottom-up activities, we are facing, as a society, an unprecedented historical moment that requires orchestrated transition processes to an “impact-oriented entrepreneurship”.

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