



Luleå, Sweden,
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Building Entrepreneurship in Regions through Social Incubation and 'Engaged Universities': The Relevance of Learning and Context for Growth

Professor Sarah Jack, Lancaster University, UK

Abstract:

This keynote presentation will bring together successful examples which have engaged research with practice for the purpose of building entrepreneurship within regions. The starting point is that entrepreneurship is embedded in a social context which is activated for entrepreneurship through social networks. Indeed, entrepreneurship itself might be described as a social process with economic outcomes. This is the perspective we take and what we look to do is show how the socialisation of the entrepreneurial process can be facilitated for regional growth. What we do here is introduce context and learning into this mix as a dynamic capability, mechanism and moderating factor, to show how entrepreneurial ventures can grow over time through social factors so that learning for the business can take place. The examples we provide show that by building the social foundations for entrepreneurship and dealing with the “softer side” of entrepreneurship and social resource needs, entrepreneurs can take their ventures forward and grow. The research led examples show how learning can be effective in an ‘appropriate’ context when combined with social factors. As well as extending work on entrepreneurship and regional development, this work also speaks to discussions around the ‘engaged university’ and the relevance of knowledge transfer but also ways in which ‘universities’ can support regional needs.

Bio

Sarah Jack is the Jacob and Marcus Wallenberg Professor of Innovative and Sustainable Business Development at the Department of Management and Organisations, Stockholm School of Economics (SSE), Sweden. She is internationally recognised as a world-leading scholar in the area of entrepreneurship and social networks. Her work is of a theoretical, conceptual and policy nature. Sarah’s primary interests relate to social aspects of entrepreneurship, where she draws on social capital and social network theory to extend understanding about the relationship between the entrepreneur and the social context in which they are embedded, using qualitative techniques. Current interests also include social innovation and entrepreneurship within a historical context.

Sarah’s current research projects include SIMRA (Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas, a Euro5.5mn Horizon 2020 project led by Professor Maria Nijnik, James Hutton Institute) leading work on Innovation Actions through the delivery of social innovation on the ground, and Recirculate (a £7mn global challenge project aimed at building capacity within Africa to solve the continent’s water crisis, led by Professor Nigel Paul, Lancaster University). Previous projects include engagement with the Wave 2 Growth Hub project, a £32mn project



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funded through the UK's Regional Growth Fund aimed at developing growth hubs tailored to the needs of local SMEs.

Sarah's research outputs have been published in highly rated international journals such as the *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Journal of Management Studies* and *Academy of Management Learning and Education*. She serves as an Editor for *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Associate Editor for *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* and is an editorial board member for the *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*. She has also served as a member of the Academy of Management (AoM) Practice Theme Committee (PTC). In 2016, Sarah was a co-editor (with Fayolle, A., Lamine, W. and Chabaud, D.) of the book *Entrepreneurial Process and Social Networks: A Dynamic Perspective*. With Fayolle, Lamine and Chabaud. She also co-edited a Special Issue of *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* titled *One step beyond? Towards a process view of social networks in entrepreneurship*.