

Call for papers:

From startup to scale-up
– Entrepreneurship, human capital, innovation and scaling up new businesses

Time: October 29-30, 2018

Venue: Stockholm, Swedish Entrepreneurship Forum

During the last decade, 'Scale-Ups' have increasingly become an established feature of the business policy landscape (Anyadike-Danes and Hart, 2015). In Europe, within policies supporting innovation as a driver of firm growth and job creation, much attention has been given to new companies that aim to grow.

Leveraging new technologies, digital platforms and large distributed networks, small start-up firms are implicitly and sometimes explicitly anticipated to drive the digital transformation of the economy. While start-ups are a critical source of regional economic growth (Audretsch et al. 2006; Delgado et al. 2010; Qian et al. 2013) many of them fail to sustainably grow (Shane, 2008) and survive (Geroski, 1995). This has, in turn, spurred numerous policy initiatives that help start-ups to succeed and intensive research into the ways start-ups organize in start-up communities, start-up ecosystems or innovation districts (e.g. Audretsch and Belitski 2017, Katz and Bradley 2013, Feld 2012; Stam, 2015; Spigel, 2017).

At the same time, data-driven and technology- or knowledge-intensive start-ups came to the forefront of economic success. Digitalization, understood as the introduction of a new general-purpose technology, akin to steam power or electricity, brings the promise of both new innovations and disruptive technologies, as well as new firms that are born digital and born global. Hal Varian (2010), among others, stresses the importance of "micro-multinationals", i.e. small new firms that have early or instant access to an international market.

While small data-driven and technology- or knowledge-intensive firms may be potentially born global, they have to start somewhere in order to grow. Their growth strategies are remarkably diverse. Some opt to relocate to specific regions, like Silicon Valley. Others attempt to grow by expanding to large cities across national markets. Yet others try to grow in a specific subculture of consumers across several markets. What this illustrates is that digital technologies combined with potentially global reach have not made new firms instantly connected to every market but have changed the basic conditions for growing a business and expanding internationally.

The heterogeneity of these conditions and of their effects on the scale-up prospects of the start-up firms calls for more research into this complex phenomenon. A comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted, uneven trajectories from start-up to scale-up is also central to the evaluation of these ventures' economic impact on regional growth in terms of jobs, exports and future innovation. It is not only of relevance to management practitioners and policy makers, but also an important frontier for management, entrepreneurship and economic geography research.

Despite the importance of the issue, research in entrepreneurship and management provides limited insight into the factors that enable successful transitions from start-ups to scale-ups. This specialized workshop seeks to fill this gap. It features research on factors crucial to start-ups' ability to grow within and beyond their established markets, such as entrepreneurship, human capital, formal and informal institutions, culture and regional entrepreneurial ecosystems. The workshop provides ample networking and idea exchange opportunities together with a space for sharing knowledge from research and practice in a comprehensive program of paper presentations, active learning and panel discussions with world-leading experts on start-up growth.

The topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Are successful start-ups also successful at scaling up?**

Which firms are successful at scaling up their business, what characteristics are decisive for their success? What are differences, similarities and key factors across sectors, business models or markets? What firm characteristics are important for successful scaling up of new businesses to new consumer groups, sectors or markets? How do businesses based on platform economies differ from other business models?

- **How do small data-driven and tech- or knowledge-intensive firms scale up?**

How does the scaling up of business and its associated impact on the economy differ between different types of start-ups or between start-ups in “new” and traditional industries?

- **What are the human capital needs associated with scaling up?**

What are the differences in and impact of human capital in the start-up phase compared to scaling up and growing the business? How does the demand for human capital shift, and what human capital factors impact the success of scaling up a start-up?

- **How do the conditions for scaling up a business differ between geographies, markets and countries?**

How do rural and urban start-ups and their scaling up compare? What role do cities play in enabling new business models to scale? Do strategies for scaling up differ between small and large countries? How are firms' location decisions related to and affected by their attempt to scale up?

- **How does the interplay between small and large firms affect scale-ups?**

How do interactions between small and large firms contribute to or inhibit scale-ups? What role do potential buy-ups play in businesses trying to scale-up vis-à-vis start-ups? How does the industrial geography, e.g. being located in a specialized or diversified industrial setting, affect the transition from start-up to scale-up and the conditions for scaling up?

- **How do institutional settings affect the ability to scale up new business models?**

What support do start-ups need to scale up and how can scaling up be promoted by policy measures? How does the impact of policy measures differ between geographies or sectors?

- **How do successful scale-ups affect future entrepreneurship?**

How does the spread and scaling up of new digital technologies and related services and products affect innovation and entrepreneurship in related sectors of the economy?

What role do entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems play in enabling start-up to scale-up transition?

What role do cluster organizations, localized competences and resources, incubators and policy initiatives (Andersson and Larsson, 2014) play vis-à-vis unorganized or self-organized factors such as informal networks, employment density, access to human capital and entrepreneurial ecosystems (Feld, 2012)?

This workshop is distinct in its unique match between the theme and the local setting, Sweden is known as the Scandinavian technology powerhouse. Its dynamic ecosystem produces world-beating companies, while the country enjoys one of the highest rates of tech start-ups in Europe and the world.

Submission:

Extended abstracts of no more than five pages should be submitted by **September 21, 2018**. The authors of accepted papers will be notified by **September 28, 2018**.

Submissions and contact: marcus.larsson@entreprenorskapforum.se

Organizing committee:

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Special issue:

Special issue in *Small Business Economics* will be published conditional upon sufficient number of high quality papers.

References

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