

Special Session Proposal

Historical Roots of Regional Entrepreneurship and Innovation

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Abstract

Extensive research has confirmed that regional activities that are conducive for regional performance such as entrepreneurship and innovation can have rather deep historical roots. Such historical roots include old industrial specializations and urbanization economies, knowledge production and dissemination, regional cultures, including entrepreneurial culture, formal institutions and political regimes, as well as a region's 'first nature' conditions (e.g., its location fundamentals, access to transport routes, the quality of the soil, natural resources, etc.). Such historical roots can lead to both, the flourishing of entrepreneurship and innovation in areas with favorable conditions and the negative lock-in of other areas on the old development path, causing inefficiencies in the policies pursued there. Hence, understanding such historical roots is highly important for any policy that aims at improving regional entrepreneurship and innovation.

We invite papers that analyze the role of both short-term and long-term historical factors affecting entrepreneurship and innovation. The main research questions to be addressed are:

- What are the historical factors that determine a region's level of entrepreneurship and innovation today?
- What is the role of natural conditions and location fundamentals (a region's 'first nature') for entrepreneurship and innovation?
- How pronounced is the effect of different types of historical roots? To what extent do various historical factors pre-determine current conditions for entrepreneurship and innovation?
- To what extent do historical shocks and institutional shifts affect the level of entrepreneurship and innovation? Trigger these shocks and changes the impact of historical roots on development?
- What is the role of policy in the presence of historical roots? What are appropriate policy strategies?
- How to overcome deeply rooted regional cultures and mentalities that work as impediments for regional entrepreneurship and innovation?
- Inasmuch do historically-determined entrepreneurship and innovation levels affect regional prosperity?