
Editorial

Irène Bernhard

School of Business, Economics and IT,
University West,
Gustava Melins gata 2,
Trollhättan SE-461 86, Sweden
Email: irene.bernhard@hv.se

1 Introduction

While theories of regional development and regional economics and growth have been around for many years (e.g., Capello, 2009), more recently, researchers have begun to take an interest in the relationship between innovation, entrepreneurship and tourism for regional development and growth (Svensson et al., 2005; Halkier et al., 2015; Bernhard, in press). Recent examples of the impact of innovation on regional development within public services are found in the literature (Bernhard and Wihlborg, 2014). According to research, it is the particular attributes of places that shape whether, how, and to what degree specific regional development definitions and varieties take root and flourish or fail and wither over time (Pike et al., 2007). This may be viewed in relation to research arguing that the impact of structural transformation processes varies in different parts of the world, implying the importance of discussing various regional conditions for economically sustainable development (e.g., von Friedrichs and Boter, 2009). The economic dynamism and change processes induced by entrepreneurship and innovation behaviour in the Schumpeterian sense are put forth as important drivers of long-term growth and well-being of regions. In some regions, processes of entrepreneurship and innovation thrive over long periods of time, whereas other regions persistently show modest levels of innovation dynamics and firm dynamics (Ejerme, 2009). Similarly, recent research indicates that the effect of entrepreneurship and innovation differs substantially across different types of regions (e.g., Audretsch et al., 2012; McCann and Ortega-Argilés, 2013). Furthermore, recent research stresses that tourism and destination developments have been viewed as key elements in local and regional development (Svensson et al., 2005). One explanation is the ongoing transition from resource dependence to an innovation-driven, knowledge-based economy and service production (Backman and Lööf, 2015). Another explanation, stressed by Halkier et al. (2015), is that due to an increasing number of tourism destinations to choose from, tourist destinations are under pressure to be innovative to increase their attractiveness in the globalising visitor economy (Halkier et al., 2015).

It is claimed that regional development and regional policies are currently under the influence of both international factors and sectoral policies, and for some border regions (BR) of cross-border cooperation initiatives. Recent research stresses that cross-border collaboration provides opportunities for regional development and social wealth creation (Dana et al., 2014). Some cross-border activity has led to partnerships that involve

arrangements in sharing economic, social and environmental resources in order to spur innovation (Ratten et al., 2007). Despite these results, we still know little about the transnational entrepreneurship, industry clusters and business economic activities in cross-border regions.

The research questions launched in this special issue are associated with these and a number of other policy issues. The most apparent concerns conditions conducive for regional development focusing on regional development, cross-border development, entrepreneurship and tourism. They are also related to issues regarding relevant policies as regards sustainable tourism. Improved knowledge of these questions is crucial for our understanding of the overall geography of growth. However, we still know very little about the sources of these kinds of spatial heterogeneities. For example, what are the current research approaches on cross-border clusters? This is one of the questions dealt with in this special issue.

This introduction to the special issue '17th Uddevalla Symposium, Regional Development and Growth: Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Tourism' in the *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business* surveys a collection of ten papers, a first version of each of which was presented at the 17th Uddevalla Symposium, June 2014, Uddevalla, Sweden. The symposium was arranged by University West, Trollhättan, Sweden in cooperation with Jönköping International Business School, Sweden and George Mason University, School of Public Policy, USA.

2 The articles in this special issue

The ten articles collected in this special issue bring up many important issues with regard to the role of innovation, entrepreneurship and tourism for regional development.

Leading off, I. Bernhard and K. Grundén discuss experiences gained by entrepreneurs in small enterprises located in a Swedish region undergoing structural change, with focus on networking and e-government for local development. Their study is based on a theoretical discussion of networking, e-government and social media marketing and the results indicate that networks and strategic networking are important in order to develop their enterprises, which also contributed to local development. The importance of initial face-to-face contacts in order to build business relationships in networks was highlighted. In the next phase, when such relationships were established, digital networking was more fruitful. E-government was so far used to a limited extent. The use of social media marketing was also limited due to lack of time, competence and motivation for most of the entrepreneurs, although the potential of social media marketing was seen as extensive.

The article by G. Solano proposes to use the concept of multifocality, defined as the structural and relational embeddedness of immigrants in places and groups. A scheme adapting a mixed embeddedness approach to the case of transnational entrepreneurship is introduced. Empirically, the article presents the case of Moroccan import/export businesses in Milan, investigating the role of multifocality and structural embeddedness in shaping the internationalisation process. The study shows that Moroccan entrepreneurial activities are connected with several countries simultaneously, not only with the countries of immigration and origin. In particular, Moroccan entrepreneurs use their personal multifocality and structural embeddedness to identify and take advantage of business opportunities for internationalising the business.

In the third article, Y. von Friedrichs and O. Wahlberg identify social entrepreneurs as change agents in rural settings. They have studied a small, peripheral area with an exploratory investigation of a sports club that has taken over common public responsibilities and become a change agent for community development. The aim is to contribute to knowledge about the conditions and challenges of social entrepreneurship when the voluntary sector in the form of a sports club takes over traditional public commitments in small, rural societies. This article identifies a club's social embeddedness as having given it credibility in the local society, and its geographical proximity has turned it into a source of all kinds of services while its ability to mobilise critical resources has been key to its success as a social entrepreneur. The empirical evidence on how volunteers can serve as important change agents in rural local societies contributes to the research on the growing field of social entrepreneurship.

Destination development is discussed by A.K. Olsson. The aim of her study is to analyse selected Nordic destinations focusing on strategic use of inland water areas as 'experiencescapes' to promote destination development. It is argued that there is an increasing interest in exploration of waterways surrounded by areas used for tourism, recreation and leisure. The author identifies that competition among destinations has escalated, hence also the need for well-coordinated tourism offerings. According to previous research, various stakeholders from private, public and voluntary sectors often interact at destinations and coordination of networks is crucial. This article discusses the variety of applied approaches for coordination of offerings, collaboration and management of destination stakeholders in inland water areas. Results show a varied mix of elements and dimensions related to physical, social and sensory settings in the studied experiencescapes.

J-E. Andreassen focuses on innovation management in a cross-border region context and how the uncertainty in innovation processes created by intertwined technological and commercial forces is managed in BR firms. The purpose of the article is to study firms' capability to innovate, and to investigate the firms' innovative status within a framework of high-involvement innovation. In the three cases in the study, the managers of the firms focus on the need for innovation management and organisational change to thrive in the manufacturing industry in the Østfold (Norway) and Västra Götaland (Sweden) regions characterised by global competition and advanced technology. The key findings describe the innovative status of the analysed firms, and provide analysis of and discuss the firms' capabilities to involve employees in innovation. Based upon the firms' level of high involvement innovation and organisational culture, the framework applied provides insight into how to identify capabilities, or clusters of behaviour, required to develop the investigated organisations.

The article by P. Jelfs identifies a substantial gap in the literature on studies of financial performance of UK university spin-off companies (USOs). This important research contributes by adding the technique of the construction of a rigorous dataset of USOs for a university using a variety of publicly available sources, to the literature on USOs. Further, it adds research on measures that are particularly under-represented in the analyses to date, including how to investigate key performance indicators such as survival history of the USOs and amounts of money raised from third parties by USOs.

The seventh article by J. Simonen, T. Koivumäki, V. Seppänen, S. Sohlo and R. Svento concerns regional development, innovation networks and policy. The purpose is to provide a multidisciplinary view of regional development by combining not only the

various views of the traditional agglomeration and regional innovation network literature but also the views about changing business strategies. Their research addresses how regional high-technology industrial structures and increased globalisation in business strategies combined with structures of knowledge and innovation networks and regional innovation policy can have a substantial effect on a region's ability to react to changes in the global economic and technological environment. This contribution shows how the very specialised industrial and highly centralised structure of the innovation network together with regional policy choices may hinder a region's ability to cope with sudden changes in the global economic and technological environment.

A. Sörensson and Y. von Friedrichs engage in sustainable tourism and assume previous statements arguing that politicians, tourism service providers and researchers all agree that the tourism industry should be sustainable. The research objective of their study is to investigate and analyse how Swedish tourism service providers (48 of which were randomly selected) present their work with sustainability. This research shows that issues of sustainable tourism currently exist although the scope is fairly small, focussing mainly on economic sustainability with maximising profit. However, there are some micro-tourism service providers that are strongly focused on all three dimensions of sustainability, often offering some kind of nature-based tourism attraction. The medium-sized and small tourism service providers address the issues of environmental sustainability but in reality there is little action; sustainable tourism is more of a buzzword for Swedish tourism service providers than concrete action. They conclude by stressing that while there is agreement that sustainable tourism is an important issue, it is far from large-scale among Swedish tourism service providers.

M. Hirano's contribution reports on a certain entrepreneur in the processed food industry in Japan with strong affection for the regional community and analyses his role for innovating regional agriculture. The entrepreneur's work led to farmers in the region increasing their business development. By collaborating with the entrepreneur, the farmers have been revitalised and changed regional agriculture. As a result, the existence of a capable entrepreneur with strong hometown feeling and solidarity for the regional community changed regional agriculture to grow competitive competence. The detailed observation on the process of growth of the entrepreneur and his business history indicates mutual influence between entrepreneur and regional community. The case infers positive circulation of social capital between entrepreneur and regional community.

Finally, the article by S. Rohde concerns cross-border development and contributes a review of relevant literature. This piece of research is based on the knowledge that many initiatives try to strengthen BRs – frequently described as economically weak areas – by fostering clusters across national borders. These clusters are supposed to generate an added value for BRs, although various factors might hinder cluster development and limit its potential added value. In this article, existing research approaches on cross-border clusters are pointed out and added by literature about cross-border regional innovation systems. Furthermore, research deficiencies and suggestions for further investigations are identified. The review indicates that there is still insufficient literature regarding cross-border clusters. It is suggested that this topic deserves further study in order to foster the economic development of BRs effectively. Consequently, this research serves as a fruitful starting point for future investigations of cross-border clusters.

References

- Audretsch, D.B., Falck, O., Feldman, M.P. and Heblich, S. (2012) 'Local entrepreneurship in context', *Regional Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp.379–389.
- Backman, M. and Lööf, H. (2015) 'The geography of innovation and entrepreneurship', *Annals of Regional Science*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp.1–6, DOI: 10.1007/s00168-015-0713-x.
- Bernhard, I. (in press) 'Innovation focusing on regional development in a European context – towards a new research agenda', *International Journal of Innovation and Regional Development*, accepted December 2015 [online] <http://www.inderscience.com/info/ingeneral/forthcoming.php?jcode=ijird>.
- Bernhard, I. and Wihlborg, E. (2014) 'Regional e-governance: promoting entrepreneurial behavior in public administration', in Karlsson, C. et al. (Eds.): *Agglomeration, Clusters and Entrepreneurship. Studies in Regional Economic Development*, pp.199–220, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK & Northampton, MA, USA.
- Capello, R. (2009) 'Regional growth and local development theories: conceptual evolution over fifty years of regional science', *Géographie, économie, société*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp.9–21 [online] <http://www.cairn.info/revue-geographie-economie-societe-2009-1-page-9.htm>.
- Dana, L.P., Gurau, C. and Lasch, F. (2014) 'Entrepreneurship, tourism and regional development: a tale of two villages', *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, Vol. 26, Nos. 3–4, pp.357–374.
- Ejermo, O. (2009) 'Regional innovation measured by patent data – does quality matter?', *Industry and Innovation*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp.141–165.
- Halkier, H., Kozak, M. and Svensson, B. (Eds.) (2015) *Innovation and Tourism Destination Development*, Routledge, London.
- McCann, P. and Ortega-Argilés, R. (2013) 'Modern regional innovation policy', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp.187–216, DOI: 10.1093/cjres/rst007.
- Pike, A., Rodríguez-Pose, A. and Tomaney, J. (2007) 'What kind of local and regional development and for whom?', *Regional Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 9, pp.1253–1269.
- Ratten, V., Dana, L.P., Han, M. and Welpe, I. (2007) 'Internationalisation of SMEs: European comparative studies', *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp.361–379.
- Svensson, B., Nordin, S. and Flagestad, A. (2005) 'A governance perspective on destination development – exploring partnerships, clusters and innovation systems', *Tourism Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2, pp.32–37.
- von Friedrichs, Y. and Boter, H. (2009) 'Meeting radical change and regional transition: regional closedowns and the role of entrepreneurship', *Managing Global Transitions*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp.99–122.