

Entrepreneurship in China

Guest Editors

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China has grown to become the world's second largest economy in merely three decades and entrepreneurship has been identified as a key driver of China's fast growth (Huang, 2010). The China Surveys of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in the last fifteen years consistently indicate the country's high rate of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, China has been in transition from the predominance of necessity-based entrepreneurship to that of opportunity-based entrepreneurship since the mid-2000s. In the meantime, more Chinese entrepreneurs have started setting their sights on business internationalisation. Against the backdrop of a thriving entrepreneurial economy, China has also been experiencing economic slowdown, increase in inequality and worsening environmental problems since the turn of the century. While entrepreneurship has certainly offered solutions to the economic, social and environmental challenges the country is facing, entrepreneurship may also arguably be part and parcel of those problems in the first place.

A recent bibliometric review of Chinese entrepreneurship research using the Social Science Citation Index and Chinese Social Science Citation Index databases over the past 10 years finds that scholars of Chinese entrepreneurship research often use similar theories (for example, institutional theory and resource-based view of the firm) and follow similar quantitative methods and approaches (Su, Zhai, and Landström 2015). Moreover, Chinese management research is found to often focus more on 'general theories' and pay less attention to contextual variables (Meyer, 2007). Yet, the Chinese context for entrepreneurship is unique and current theories arguably do not fully account for what appears to us to be a fascinating context. For example, institutions and business environment are not viewed as "friendly" to private entrepreneurs and businesses (Huang, 2010). The 're-emergence' of entrepreneurship is 'a history of struggle to overcome opposition and obstruction, to survive and grow' (Huang, 2003: 101), including "rule ambiguities" (Atherton and Newman, 2016), rent-seeking (Dong, Wei and Zhang, 2016), subsidies (Du and Mickiewicz, 2016), and institutional constraints such as industrial barriers, difficulties in getting access to critical resources and weak property rights (Zhou, 2011). Unpacking how entrepreneurs remove such institutional barriers is essential to understanding entrepreneurship in China (Ahlstrom and Ding, 2014). Furthermore, cultural and institutional forces can moderate the behaviour of entrepreneurs in emerging economies like China from social psychological and organizational behaviour perspectives (Bruton, Ahlstrom and Obloj, 2008). However, while

national culture and nation-wide institutions matter, entrepreneurship is ultimately a local phenomenon. Local conditions may mitigate institutional void as a result of better-developed social networks (Zhang, 2015), economic openness (Anwar and Sun, 2015), and policy entrepreneurship (Zhu, 2013).

Clearly, the rapid development of entrepreneurship in China presents a lot of ‘puzzling’ questions that the growing literature of Chinese entrepreneurship still has no answer (Huang, 2010; Zhou, 2011). In addition to the above mentioned paradox of national versus local environment, other puzzles and new development provide excellent opportunities for scholarship. For example, how are entrepreneurs in China able to thrive in an environment in which institutional void and ‘rule ambiguities’ persist? How has entrepreneurship developed and what mechanisms have supported its progress, especially since the Chinese government called for a new wave of “mass entrepreneurship and grassroots entrepreneurship”? In a highly unequal society, is inequality the cause or effect of entrepreneurship in China? And, what role has the locale (for example, local government) played in the development of entrepreneurship and what processes might impact on the progress of the move towards an entrepreneurial society? These are just some of the questions which might help us to understand the complexity of entrepreneurship in the China context.

In summary, more systematic and in-depth research is needed for a better understanding of entrepreneurship in China, in particular by taking more account of China context (Meyer, 2007; Su et al., 2015). Taking “context” seriously (Johns, 2006) may significantly advance the theoretical development of entrepreneurship (Zahra, 2007). Therefore, the special issue aims to seek original research that will help build a more informed theoretical account of entrepreneurship in the context of China. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

The impact of formal and informal institutions on entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial interactions between entrepreneurs

Social capital/guanxi and entrepreneurship

Small firm problems and solutions/growth and contractions

Regional differences and consequences of entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial competition and collaboration

Internet entrepreneurship

Internationalisation of small and medium sized firms

Formal and informal finance for small firms

Entrepreneurial growth and entrepreneurial exit

Extended abstracts and full papers should be submitted by email Word attachment to one of the Guest Editors of the special issue (see contacts below). The first page must contain the title, author(s) and contact information of the corresponding author.

For additional guidelines, please see 'Instructions for Authors':

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/tepnauth.asp>. or a recent issue of *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*. Papers suitable for publication in the special issue will be double-blind reviewed, following the ER&D's review process guidelines.

Please email any of the Guest Editors if you have any queries about the special issue:

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The guest editors of this special issue are planning to hold a manuscript development workshop in April 2017 in China, if successfully sponsored. Authors whose extended abstracts are accepted will be invited to submit full papers and react to their colleague's papers during the workshop. It is noted that presentation at the workshop does not guarantee acceptance of the paper for publication in *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*. Attending the workshop is not a precondition for acceptance into the Special Issue.

Tentative Publication Schedule:

INFORMATION	DEADLINE
Extended abstract submission (1,000 words excluding references)	15 November, 2016
Notification of abstract acceptance	15 December, 2016
Full manuscript submission	1 March, 2017
Notification of full paper acceptance	15 March 2017
Paper development workshop	April, 2017
Submission to the special issue	30 June, 2017

The special issue aims to be published in 2018

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