Special Issue Call for Papers

Entrepreneurial activity as a conduit of knowledge spillovers

Guest Editors:
David B. Audretsch, Indiana University Bloomington, USA
Maksim Belitski, Henley Business School, UK
Rosa Caiazza, Parthenope University of Naples, Italy
Phillip Phan, Johns Hopkins Carey Business School

Journal editors:
Alberto De Minin, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (Pisa, Italy)

Background
It is generally accepted that creating new knowledge is an important driver of firm innovation and productivity. However, the mechanisms through which new knowledge gives rise to firm innovation and productivity, including economic growth, are not well understood. For example, why have large investments in research and development (R&D), such as in Japan and Sweden, not always resulted in high economic growth in the last two decades? The underlying question of this special issue is: why doesn't new knowledge created within firms and in open innovation always lead to innovation and economic growth (Enkel et al. 2009)?

In a series of papers (Chiesa & Piccaluga, 2000; Leyden & Link, 2015; Di Minin et al. 2021; Audretsch & Belitski, 2022a, 2022b), scholars have developed models that distinguish between internal and external sources of knowledge (Audretsch et al. 2021) by introducing the notion of a knowledge spillover of entrepreneurship (Acs et al. 2013), that bolster entrepreneurial activity by facilitating knowledge flows to/from firms and among firms. Prior research has also identified entrepreneurship as a mechanism that enables (in addition to incumbent firms) the transformation of knowledge into economic knowledge, innovation, and growth.

However, an important challenge that has not been well developed in the extant literature is how to combine the firm's internal and external knowledge flows (Cassiman & Veugelers, 2006; Caiazza et al. 2020; Audretsch & Belitski, 2022a) that facilitates a higher quality of innovation and economic growth (Audretsch & Keilbach, 2005). A combination of internal knowledge, such as investment in R&D, human capital and digitalisation on the one hand, and external knowledge (e.f. created in collaboration with customers, suppliers, competitors, universities and government) on the other hand could explain why some individuals transition into entrepreneurship and others do not (Caiazza et al. 2020).

There are two main sources of knowledge spillovers: academic and industrial. The former is primarily basic and is carried out in universities or research institutes (Lang & Wirtz, 2021; Belitski et al. 2019; Iacobucci, Micozzi & Piccaluga, 2021), while industrial R&D primarily involves applied research or development work and is carried out in industrial firms or government laboratories, with customers and competitors in the industry (Ritala et al. 2017; Audretsch & Belitski, 2020). A large part of academic research and a substantial part of R&D may have no or little direct commercial value.
In this respect, significant research is needed to understand how new ventures, spin-outs, and latent/emergent entrepreneurship become a conduit of knowledge spillover for innovation and productivity.

**The main goal of this special issue**

Therefore, the purpose of this call for papers is to explore the locus and content of internal knowledge (within a firm, enterprise group) and external knowledge, in order to explain how knowledge spillovers influence firm innovation, productivity and economic growth.

To achieve this objective, we welcome submissions that address the debate at the intersection of internal and external knowledge, including academic and industrial knowledge. Academic knowledge flows are facilitated by university spin-offs and new ventures (Grimaldi, Kenney & Piccaluga, 2021). However, the basic knowledge produced in academia may be in areas (such as the humanities) with little or no economic value (even though it may have significant human value). The research may not be advanced enough to be on the knowledge frontier, or it may not be sufficiently broad or deep to be commercialised. In this instance, papers that explain how different academic fields may contribute to knowledge commercialization and the role of the spin-off and new ventures in this relationship will advance our understanding of the mechanisms (spatial, sectoral, temporal) of knowledge spillover. Successful papers will explain the role of the context for knowledge creation and commercialization (Audrestch & Belitski, 2013; Caiazza et al. 2015; Welter et al. 2016, 2019).

Because R&D management is an important platform for advancing studies on knowledge creation, entrepreneurship, and growth, it provides a compelling outlet for this research. The contributions to the subject will yield seminal findings, which will have profound implications for a wide range of stakeholders, including latent and emergent entrepreneurs themselves, scholars, R&D managers, policymakers, and society.

**Relevance**

**Potential research questions:**

- How do knowledge spillovers within and between firms and regions facilitate new ventures, spin-outs, and latent/emergent entrepreneurship?.
- What types of new ventures and at what growth stages perform a conduit function of the knowledge spillover of innovation?
- What combinations of internal knowledge (ICT and digitalisation, R&D, training) and external knowledge (knowledge spillovers and open innovation) (Enkel et al. 2009; Ritala, 2012) attract entrepreneurs and incumbent firms?
- Why are knowledge investments inherently unbalanced, so that the firm competitiveness and growth ensuing from knowledge are not equally spread across individuals, firms and regions?
- Why does entrepreneurial activity play a more important role in economic growth and firm performance in some countries (e.g. the United States) than in others (Europe)?
- How and why does investment in R&D and collaboration with external partners within open innovation models (Audrestch et al. 2021a) facilitate a firm's innovation and productivity?
- What is the role of context e.g. formal and informal institutions, as well as physical infrastructure and digitalisation (Audretsch et al. (2022)) as factors enabling entrepreneurs to generate economic knowledge and commercialize it in the market?
• What new business models of knowledge transfer and collaboration across regions, industries and countries are emerging?
• What are the instruments to appropriate and protect knowledge by entrepreneurial firms (Tidström, Ritala & Lainema, 2018) when engaging in knowledge flows?

To expand our understanding of the links between internal and external knowledge flows within and between firms, multiple levels of analysis (micro, meso, macro) could be adopted. We welcome studies approaching these themes from multi-disciplinary perspectives and theoretical lenses, using qualitative and/or quantitative methods.

Submission information
Full manuscript submissions should be made electronically through the Submission System: https://wiley.atyponrex.com/journal/RADM. Please refer to the Author Guidelines at https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14679310/homepage/forauthors.html before submission.

Please select the ‘Original Article’ as the article type on submission. On the Additional Information page during submission, select ‘Yes, this is for a Special Issue’ and the relevant Special Issue title from the dropdown list.

For questions about the submission system please contact the Editorial Office at radmedoffice@wiley.com.

Informal inquiries relating to the special issue, proposed topics and potential fit with the special issue objectives are welcome. Please direct any questions to the Guest Editors.

Submission window: May 1st – October 31st 2023

Marketing and author engagement:

Pre-submission webinars/panels/conferences
We will offer opportunities for authors to engage with the editorial team prior to submitting a manuscript. We will organize both an online paper development webinar before the R&D Management annual conference 2023 and face-to-face workshops in Berlin, Germany or Pisa, Italy to advertise the special issue and encourage submissions.

A paper development workshop will take place at the Academy of management in Boston, USA in August 2023 and the R&D Management conference in Seville, Spain in June in 2023.

The conferences and paper development workshops will be an opportunity for authors to meet guest editors and communicate further on this topic.

R&R workshop
We plan to organize an R&R workshop to help authors who receive the first round Revise and Resubmit further improve their papers. The workshop is planned to be organised at Scuola Sant'Anna in Pisa in Autumn 2023 or (and) Indiana University Europe Gateway March 2024 in Berlin (Germany) – an annual event by Indiana University Bloomington in Europe. The event brings together entrepreneurs, tech firms, and policymakers and scholars to share ideas and recommendations, including the one for country cases.
Post-publication panel
We will organize a post-publication panel at the AOM annual meeting 2024 to promote the selected papers in the special issue. We will also enable the special issue through online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and other social media.

References


**Editors Short Bio**

**David Audretsch** is a Distinguished Professor and the Ameritech Chair of Economic Development at Indiana University, where he also serves as Director of the Institute for
Development Strategies. He is an Honorary Professor of Industrial Economics and Entrepreneurship at the WHU-Otto Beisheim School of Management in Germany and a Research Fellow of the Centre for Economic Policy Research in London. His research has focused on the links between entrepreneurship, government policy, innovation, economic development, and global competitiveness. He is co-author of *The Seven Secrets of Germany*, published by Oxford University Press. He is co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Small Business Economics: An Entrepreneurship Journal*. He was awarded the Global Award for Entrepreneurship Research by the Swedish Entrepreneurship Forum (*Entreprenörskapsforum*). He has further received honorary doctorate degrees from the University of Augsburg in Germany and Jonköping University in Sweden. Audretsch was also awarded the Schumpeter Prize from the University of Wuppertal in Germany.

**Maksim Belitski** is a Professor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Henley Business School, University of Reading and a Research Fellow at the Institute for Development Strategies, Indiana University Bloomington (USA). Previously, he has held appointments at Loughborough University, University College London (UK), University of Leicester, University of Economics Bratislava, and Belarusian State University. During over ten years on the faculty, he has taught courses on entrepreneurship, managerial economics, research methods, quantitative methods for business and finance, econometrics at both undergraduate and graduate levels. He holds a PhD in Social Sciences from the University of Leicester, UK and another PhD in Economics from the University of Milan, Italy. He is a "Trusted" researcher of the Secure Data Service, UK Data Archive and Virtual Micro-data Lab, Office of National Statistics, UK. He is a fellow of Higher Education Academy since 2013. His research interests lie in the area of entrepreneurship, innovation and regional economics, with a focus on entrepreneurship as a spillover of knowledge and creativity.

**Rosa Caiazza** is PhD, Professor of Management at Parthenope University of Naples, Visiting professor at Wharton University of Philadelphia (USA). She has been included in the Top 100,000 Scientists worldwide across all knowledge areas, according to a study of Stanford University published in Plos Biology. She has been included in the ICSB’s Educator 300, the International Council for Small Business list of 300 of the world’s most well-renowned professors of small business and entrepreneurship. She serves as advisory board member to a number of top-tier academic journals, including Academy of Management Perspective, Journal of Management Studies, The Journal of Technology Transfer, Small Business Economics, Trends in Food Science & Technology, Management Decision, Journal of Small Business Management, British Food Journal: An international multi-disciplinary journal for the dissemination of food-related research, Journal of Management Development, Journal of Organizational Change Management, Corporate Governance: The international journal of business in society, The Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal, Thunderbird International Business Review, International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing. Her research and teaching activity is focused on Strategy, Corporate governance, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Operation Management. She has published 4 books and over 100 journal articles and book chapters. She was chairman of many international conferences and won several Literati Network Awards for Excellence - Outstanding Paper Award.

**Phillip H. Phan** is Alonzo and Virginia Decker Professor in the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School with a joint appointment as Professor in the Department of Medicine at Johns Hopkins Medicine. He is Robert Bosch Policy Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin. His
academic and professional work focuses on technology innovation and entrepreneurship. He and has published more than 200 peer reviewed research papers, abstracts, and conference proceedings and is author or editor of 10 books. He is Editor-in-Chief of the Academy of Management Perspectives, Academic Editor of Medicine® (health services research section), and Associate Editor for the Journal of Technology Transfer. He currently serves on review panels for the National Academies of Sciences, Hong Kong University Grants Council, and the National Science Foundation. He is co-founder of P4 Microbiome Inc., focused on antimicrobial therapies for the GI tract, and Pistevo, LLC, focused on AI-driven phenotyping of cancer patients from electronic medical records.