

Chapter 31

Entrepreneurship across Regions: Internationalization and/ or Contextualization?

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is an emerging research field that received an increased worldwide scholarly attention during the last few decades. Although the field is still dominated by scholars in the US and Europe, researchers in other parts of the world are exhibiting a growing interest. Based on the globalization of entrepreneurship research over the last decades, this book chapter aims to understand the international picture of entrepreneurship research by focusing on the US, Europe and emerging economies around East Asia. We attempt to address the following questions: What characterizes entrepreneurship research in different regions? What are the similarities and differences among entrepreneurship research in different regions? How can the similarities and differences be explained? To answer these questions, bibliometric analysis is utilized. The analysis of publications in Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) shows that: on the one hand, similarities exist in entrepreneurship research in different regions. Scholars have common interests in certain research topic, especially theoretical ones; on the other hand, there are also differences across regions. Different contextual environments still govern what issues to research.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Scientific knowledge has grown significantly over the last decades, and entrepreneurship is no exception. It could even be argued that, compared to many other research fields, entrepreneurship has been tremendously successful. Over recent decades we have witnessed a huge increase in the number of scholars, conferences, published articles and journals. This growth of the field has also included a regional expansion, and Aldrich (2012) expressed this internationalization of entrepreneurship research in the following way: “Since the late 1970s, the academic field of entrepreneurship research has grown from a group of isolated scholars doing research on small business to an international community of departments, institutes, and foundations promoting research in new and high-growth firms.” (p. 1240) The globalization of entrepreneurship as a research field could be exemplified in many ways, for example, as many as one third of the members of the (American) Academy of Management are international, entrepreneurship education has achieved international spread (Fayolle, 2010) and many new entrepreneurship journals have “international” in their title or their mission statement (Aldrich, 2012).

Along with internationalization of the field, entrepreneurship has increasingly attracted interest of scholars all over the world. While the field is dominated by scholars in the US and Europe (Meyer et al., 2012; Davidsson, 2013; Terjesen et al., 2013), their counterparts in emerging economies have started to make contribution to entrepreneurship research by establishing a presence in international journals and conferences. The increasing internationalization of the field also raises some important questions: (1) What characterizes entrepreneurship research in different regions such as the US, Europe and emerging economies in East Asia? (2) What are the similarities and differences among entrepreneurship research in different regions? (3) How can the similarities and differences be explained?

To address these questions, several attempts have been made and have contributed to our understanding of entrepreneurship research in different regions (Huse & Landström, 1997; Aldrich, 2000; Landström, 2005; Brush et al., 2008). However, existing studies have mainly been focused on the US and European research sites. It is surprising to find how little is known about entrepreneurship research in emerging economies although a number of studies have highlighted the importance of understanding entrepreneurship in such economies (Yang & Li, 2008; Terjesen et al., 2013; Zhai et al., 2013; Su et al., 2014). In this study we are adding to this knowledge by providing a bibliometric analysis utilizing the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and comparing entrepreneurship research in the US, Europe and emerging economies in East Asia (including Mainland China, Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea) over the past ten years (2004-2013). We could argue that these three regions adequately represent entrepreneurship research in developed as well as emerging economies, thus constituting an appropriate sample for our analysis.

This chapter contributes to the literature in at least three ways: First, this is one of the first attempts to include emerging economies in a regional comparison of entrepreneurship research. Given the apparent differences in academic tradition and institutional environment where entrepreneurship activities are embedded, we can expect an examination of these emerging economies would help capture the international picture more comprehensively. Second, studies on the evolution of new research field, for example, entrepreneurship research, are often based on idiosyncratic observations. Based on bibliometric methods, we go beyond such historical reviews and provide systematic and empirical evidence of the evolution of entrepreneurship research in the US, Europe and emerging economies in East Asia. Third, with the period of focus ranging from 2004 to 2013, this study provides an up-to-date analysis that can shed light on recent development of the field.

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