WHY BOTHER ABOUT CULTURE IN SMEs AND MICRO FIRMS? INNOVATION, CULTURE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DYNAMICS IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organizers

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Background

Culture is considered an important asset for firm innovation. Values, rules, norms, and cognitive frameworks may shape the disposition and the ability of firms to introduce new products and services into the market, as well as the use of innovative organizational arrangements and marketing strategies in order to compete in the global economy.

Cultural dimensions are also becoming essential components of regional and local innovation systems. Sometimes cultural traits function as an asset since they may prompt creativity and learning, and help to translate knowledge into organizational capacities. In some other contexts culture may be a barrier for innovation, especially when dominant values and institutions do not help to develop new ideas, build useful networks, and explore alternative activities.

In particular, cultural dynamics affect specially innovation in Small and Medium-Sized Firms (SME) and micro firms employing a small group of workers that are common in many regional contexts. From a regional innovation system perspective, SMEs are specially rooted in the territory. The dominant culture in the surrounding environment may influence the possibilities of firms to innovate when they try to use the cultural scripts available in the territory to ground their innovative activities. The predominant rules and norms in a regional innovation system, some times legitimized as institutions, are also a conditioning factor for firm innovation. From a micro level perspective, inner cultural dynamics of firms may be especially influential in their innovation performance. Since SMEs do not have complex organizational arrangements and lack corporate cultures, the values and norms shared by entrepreneurs and workers are closely intertwined with their disposition to innovate.

SMEs and micro firms are relevant actors in many regional and local contexts. Nevertheless, there are still important gaps in understanding the innovation processes in these firms in relation to culture. There are difficulties for grasping the different meanings of culture and its connections to firm innovation in the specific case of SMEs, and also for developing systemic observations to study the relationships between innovation and the broader cultural dynamics.

Goals of the Track Session

This track session will put together theoretical discussions, empirical research and theoretically informed case studies on the different aspects of culture and innovation in SMEs, with a special
attention to the dynamics in micro firms, and from the perspective of regional and local development. The goal of the session is directed to obtain state-of-the-art contributions in order to inform management and policy making related to the promotion of innovation, especially in regional and local environments where SMEs are predominant in the industrial tissue.

The track session will be used as a first round to discuss manuscripts for a Special Issue of the journal *European Planning Studies*. Other publications opportunities are available from the arrangements made by IFKAD organizers with other journals.

The track session, and afterwards the EPS Special Issue, will welcome proposals on the following sub-themes, and other topics related to innovation and culture in SMEs and micro firms:

- The meanings of culture and innovation in SMEs and micro firms (conceptual discussion on values, rules, norms, and institutions, and its relationship with innovation)
- Methodological approaches adapted to SMEs and micro firms: how to measure culture and innovation. Qualitative methodologies
- The influence of firm's cultural traits in the innovation performance of SMEs and micro firms
- Culture and entrepreneurship in SMEs and micro firms
- The influence of regional and local cultures on innovation processes. Regional and local institutions, industrial cultures, learning practices…
- Management strategies on how to develop a strong innovation culture in SMEs and micro firms
- Policy strategies related to reinforcing innovation capacities through cultural value setting in regional innovation systems

**Keywords**

Culture of innovation; regional innovation systems; SMEs; micro firms; entrepreneurship; regional development; sociology of innovation; knowledge regions; learning regions; innovation policy

**Guidelines**

Researchers wishing to contribute are invited to submit an extended abstract (in Word format) of 1000-1500 words by January 25, 2015. The abstract should address theoretical background, research objective, methodology, and results in terms of expected contribution to Knowledge Management theory and practice. Authors are encouraged to follow the guidelines for both extended abstracts as well as full papers that are available on IFKAD site [http://www.ifkad.org/](http://www.ifkad.org/) / [http://www.ifkad.org/Submission/](http://www.ifkad.org/Submission/).

**IFKAD Deadlines**

- 25 January 2015 - Abstracts Submission Deadline
- 28 February 2015 - Acceptance notification to authors
- 25 March 2015 - Early-Bird registration deadline
• 20 April 2015 - Full paper submission deadline
• 20 May 2015 - Registration deadline
• 10-12 June 2015 - Conference sessions

**Submission process for the Special Issue of European Planning Studies**

For authors wishing to participate in the Special Issue: Papers selected for review will receive a double-blind review following the journal’s standard review process for special issues. All the articles submitted will be reviewed by the guest editors, and two external referees.

Authors can receive valuable feedback for their work at the IFKAD conference, but participation is not a requirement for inclusion in the special issue.

All previous questions should be directed to Manuel Fernández (mfernandez@iesa.csic.es)

Manuscripts should be submitted to **European Planning Studies** through the ScholarOne manuscript online submission site at: [http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ceps](http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ceps). Please, see the “Instructions for Authors” tab on the journal’s website (www.tandfonline/ceps) for details on how the manuscript should be presented.

**Special Issue Deadlines:**

• 30 June 2015 – Full papers submission deadline
• 30 November 2015 – Final manuscripts
• March 2016 – Expected publication