

Building Entrepreneurial Cities: Beyond infrastructures

Learning from the comparative cases of Lisbon and Stockholm

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Abstract: In the contemporary societies, metropolitan areas are being increasingly pushed into a highly competitive economic dynamics, providing thus a shift from mere investment in technological physical infrastructure, to attracting intangible assets such as skills, knowledge and experience to the city. The concept of infrastructure entails now all the resources able to provide either tangible inputs to production or, shape the knowledge background to production. Thus, it is central to know how can cities lure (or create) high-tech entrepreneurs, creative businesspersons and knowledge workers, fostering economic growth without neglecting social cohesion

This paper proposes some central elements for understanding the causal processes and conditions under which cities can attract new technology based firms into their urban centres. Research will be conducted in two complementary dimensions: a Meso Approach, by using a multiple-case study of two cities: Lisbon and Stockholm and a Micro Approach, by studying three companies in each of the referred countries (Covering the ICT/Media and Biotech Sectors), in order to understand the standpoint of entrepreneurs. The case-studies draw on both qualitative and quantitative data about urban form, firms' strategies towards spatial location / agglomeration, necessary and sufficient conditions for local innovation and city attractiveness for nurturing entrepreneurial activity.

The central argument to be explored is that beyond Infrastructure, cities must design a set of Incentives and promote a balanced interplay between the enrolled Institutions, in order to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship within the city. Hence, through international / inter-firm comparisons, this approach will shed some light and foster discussion on the contemporary critical issues to build an effective metropolitan innovation system.

Key words: Entrepreneurship; Metropolitan Innovation Systems; Urban Form; New Technology Based Firms (NTBFs)

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