Small Bus Econ (2024) 62:607–628
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-023-00772-4

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Trans-contextual work: doing entrepreneurial contexts in the periphery

Pablo Muñoz · Jonathan Kimmitt · Ben Spigel

Accepted: 12 April 2023 / Published online: 29 April 2023

Abstract This study explores how entrepreneurs "do" contexts in peripheral areas. Through the examination of changes in roles, practices, and relationships across peripheral areas in Chile, we found that substantive transformations result from the momentary repurposing of systems of provision, types of interdependencies, and sources of reliance within public, community, and family contexts. Drawing from the perspective of interstitial spaces and extensive data, this is done through three interwoven interaction rituals: support seeking, neighboring, and nesting. We abductively theorize the connection between these rituals as *trans-contextual work*. As entrepreneurs do contexts through *trans-contextual work* new entrepreneurial ideas, practices and artifacts begin to reorganize community resources and transform the commune's social into an entrepreneurial life. Our research expands the current understanding of contextual change in peripheral areas and contextualization in entrepreneurship more broadly.

Plain English Summary How does a supportive context for entrepreneurship emerge in peripheral areas? While prior literature in this domain has focused on key drivers for supporting entrepreneurship there is typically a high growth and high innovation focus which may be less relevant when considering the diverse features of peripheral areas. Through detailed qualitative analysis, findings indicate how traditional community resources are re-purposed to support entrepreneurial activities. This transformation of communities is described as "trans-contextual work" involving support seeking, neighboring, and nesting which occurs in often informal and temporary settings (e.g., community football clubs) known as "interstitial spaces." Consequently, we see that supportive environments for entrepreneurship emerge through this process, occurring across public, community, and family contexts. This has important theoretical implications for understanding how entrepreneurs enact their contexts. Practically, the findings imply that many peripheral areas are actually rich in supportive mechanisms for entrepreneurship, but that may not be observed through traditional lenses.

Keywords Entrepreneurial context · Contextualization · Interstitial spaces · Periphery · Chile

P. Muñoz (✉) · J. Kimmitt
Business School, Durham University, Durham, UK
e-mail: pablo.munoz-roman@durham.ac.uk

J. Kimmitt
e-mail: jonathan.kimmitt@durham.ac.uk

P. Muñoz
School of Business and Economics, Universidad del Desarrollo, Santiago, Chile

B. Spigel
Business School, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
e-mail: Ben.Spigel@ed.ac.uk

JEL Classification O54 · L26 · O18

1 Introduction

The contextualization of entrepreneurship research has received growing attention over the last decade (Welter, 2011). Most notably, scholars have assessed institutional contexts by showing how various institutional arrangements influence entrepreneurial activity (Levie & Autio, 2011; Williams & Vorley, 2015); the effects of socio-spatial contexts using approaches such as network perspectives (Roos, 2019) or a place-based lens (Lang et al., 2014; Muñoz et al., 2019); or the role of temporal and/or cultural forces (Kimmitt & Dimov, 2021). While most of this earlier context research focused on exploring these elements of contexts separately, more recently research has started to emphasize the more subjective elements of contexts and to attend more closely to entrepreneurs' active involvement in the construction of contexts (Welter et al., 2019).

Most notably, the notion of "doing context" has been described as a way of developing our understanding as to how different places and sites emerge, persist, or even disappear (Baker & Welter, 2020; Welter & Baker, 2021). On the one hand, we may see contexts change because of macro-level institutional shifts instigated by powerful entrepreneurial actors. On the other hand, entrepreneurs are molded by the immediate micro-environmental context (e.g., Baker & Nelson, 2005). Yet, we know very little about what bridges this micro-level behavior with the entrepreneurial enactment of contextual change. This issue is particularly acute within non-urban settings because of the inevitable commercial counter-urbanization that is transforming peripheral areas (Bosworth & Bat Finke, 2020), where the drivers of entrepreneurship are less likely to resemble those seen in urban regions (e.g., incubators, specialist support, physical infrastructure).

As such, in this paper, we address this tension by asking: *how do entrepreneurs "do context" in the periphery?* To bridge the tension and answer this, we highlight that contextual change is driven by meso-level interstitial spaces (Furnari, 2014). Such spaces refer to small-scale settings where individuals from different perspectives gather around common activities for a limited time (e.g., neighborhood clubs). Through these "micro-interaction" activities, new ideas and practices can emerge to shape the emergence of the context enabled by social catalysts and ritualistic interactions. To explore this further, between, we interviewed a sample of 97 entrepreneurs, members of civil society organizations, and local government representatives across peripheral areas in Chile.

Our findings show that peripheral entrepreneurship contexts emerge contingently through the momentary repurposing of systems of provision, community inter-dependencies, and sources of reliance across public, community, and family contexts. This is done through three interconnected interaction rituals: support seeking, neighboring, and nesting. Leveraging trans-contextuality (Bateson, 2016), we explain "doing contexts" and emerging outcomes in the periphery as *trans-contextual work*. As entrepreneurs engage in *trans-contextual work*, new entrepreneurial ideas, practices, and artifacts begin to reorganize community resources and transform the commune's social into an entrepreneurial life. In this sense, context-doing can be explained by work across dimensions of the social life, which are de-emphasized and gradually replaced by new ways of entrepreneurial living through enacted interstitial entrepreneurial spaces. Our findings contribute to the literature on entrepreneurship and context in several ways. First, we introduce the process *of trans-contextual work* in peripheral areas, providing empirical insight into the mechanisms which underlie how contexts change and "are done" by actors in these settings. In doing so, we expand the theoretical base and frameworks in the contextualization of entrepreneurship. Second, we contribute to entrepreneurial context research more broadly by providing a fine-grained meso-level understanding of entrepreneurship in the periphery as momentary structures and how social life can be momentarily replaced by entrepreneurial life. Finally, we contribute to the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship in peripheral areas more generally.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Context and entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is not a homogeneous economic phenomenon emerging from a universal notion of modern capitalism (Baker & Welter, 2021). Indeed, attempts to develop general laws or grand theories of

entrepreneurship (or indeed, any business phenomenon) that apply around the world regardless of place, time, industry, or background have been roundly critiqued in recent years (Johns, 2006; Welter, 2011; Zahra Wright & Abelgawad, 2014). Instead, the notion of context has been advanced to help explain how and why the entrepreneurship process differs between places, sectors, and people (Baker & Welter, 2018).

Context represents the social, economic, cultural, and other forces that surround a focal phenomenon and influence its nature, processes, and eventual outcomes (Johns, 2001). These forces are not the residual of a general model but rather intimately bound up in the existence of a central phenomenon like the creation and growth of a new business (Staber, 2007). As a complex, socially embedded phenomenon carried out by a variety of actors with often competing goals and interests, the entrepreneurial process is influenced by numerous contexts. Autio et al. (2014) identify four main overlapping contexts that affect entrepreneurial behavior: organizational, industry/technology, institutional, and social. These contexts in turn are heavily influenced by the larger regional contexts of where they occur in and the temporal context of when they occur. These broader omnibus contexts affect the more specific discreet contexts, which shape entrepreneurial and organizational behavior (Johns, 2006). This makes "where" and "when" contexts important for understanding instances of entrepreneurship because they affect so much of what surrounds the process of starting, growing, and exiting firms.

Indeed, spatial context—the "where" of entrepreneurship—has become one of the most studied contextual factors in the entrepreneurship domain. Beginning with investigations into the geography of entrepreneurship which showed vastly different rates of entrepreneurship between and within countries (Spilling, 1996), the field has matured into a large literature spanning global studies of national variation in firm formation rates (GEM, 2022) to nuanced qualitative examinations of regional entrepreneurial ecosystems (Goswami et al., 2018; Shi & Shi, 2021). No matter the approach or specific geography, these works seek to tease apart the ways in which the history, culture, resources, and institutions of a place affect entrepreneurial actors and how they, in turn, affect these place-based factors (Spigel, 2013).

These works have found several place-based contextual factors that constantly influence the entrepreneurial process. A place's institutional structure, such as the strength of rule of law, and the ability to defend contractual rights affect not just the levels of entrepreneurship found but also the way in which entrepreneurs go about building their firms (Agostino et al., 2020; Levie & Autio, 2011). Similarly, organizations such as universities, large anchor firms, or government laboratories can spur entrepreneurship by encouraging knowledge spillovers that allow entrepreneurs to identify and exploit new opportunities (Feldman et al., 2019). But just as important is the informal institutional norms of a place, such as the cultural outlook of the population and the accepted business norms, because they influence the desirability of entrepreneurship as a career and the risk that entrepreneurs and other actors are willing to absorb (Aoyama, 2009; Fritsch & Storey, 2014; Vaillant & Lafuente, 2007).

However, this research tends to focus on urban contexts, in which the density of entrepreneurs, customers, investors, and advisors can create supportive ecosystems that drive growth (Nylund & Cohen, 2017). A different contextual factor, that of peripherality, can alter entrepreneurial behavior. Peripheral areas are both physically and socially distant from the urbanized cores that make up national or global economic centers. Peripheral is a fuzzy term that can incorporate entire nations that are seen as peripheral from the global economy despite having dense urban populations (such as Nigeria or Argentina) or it can refer to peripheral areas with small populations and agrarian or extractive economies (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2019). They often have weaker institutional frameworks and less robust economies than more central regions and as a result local cultural outlooks may be more risk adverse (Vorley & Williams, 2016). Both factors can make entrepreneurship, particularly high-ambition entrepreneurship, less attractive and more difficult (Lang et al., 2014). However, peripheral places often have strong social connections between residents which can aid resource acquisition (Korsgaard et al., 2015).

2.2 Doing context in peripheral areas

An important development in the study of entrepreneurial context is the distinction between *environment* and *context* (Baker & Welter, 2021). Environment represents the totality of factors affecting the entrepreneurial process. But this is inherently a passive process. Entrepreneurs are affected by their environment, which potentially constrains some actions (such as raising investment in peripheral areas) while enabling others (such as using networks to gain critical resources in peripheral areas). Context, on the other hand, is actively constructed by the entrepreneur based on their environment. This means that entrepreneurs are not passive social objects that are affected by the vagaries of their environment but rather they are active participants in their surroundings, attempting to use their own social and economic agency to create the conditions they require to succeed. This perspective keeps context from being a deterministic factor controlling entrepreneurial behavior and outcomes, and instead positions context as a way to understand the socially embedded nature of entrepreneurship within contemporary societies.

Entrepreneurial context is therefore constructed from entrepreneurs' reactions to their environment. This highlights the processes through which entrepreneurs "do" context. This perspective is particularly important for understanding entrepreneurship in peripheral places, where entrepreneurs must actively and creatively overcome challenges in their environment such as a lack of resources and thin institutional structures (Welter & Baker, 2021). This is a reaction to the resource constraints found in peripheral places but also requires leveraging their existing skills, relationships, and positions—which are embedded in their environment—in order to create value. Other actions, such as how entrepreneurs draw on ties with other actors or build new connections with others who have similar goals, help transform the resources lying dormant in the environment into an actionable context that helps entrepreneurs grow and overcome challenges.

Examining how entrepreneurs "do" peripheral contexts provides a more nuanced way to understand not just how entrepreneurship occurs in resource-constrained, peripheral areas. It also provides us a broader perspective to understand entrepreneurship more generally, even outside of peripheral contexts (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2019). Entrepreneurship in peripheral areas requires recombining on-hand resources and creation of new institutions and organizations that are often not necessary in better resourced places. This points to the role of entrepreneurs in not just building their firm but also contributing towards a better entrepreneurial environment for their whole community.

2.3 *Doing context through interstitial spaces*

This "doing" of context raises the question as to how entrepreneurs do this. As highlighted previously, prior literature points to resource constraints and bricolage in peripheral places. While bricolage processes may be important in the start-up process (e.g., Baker & Nelson, 2005), less is known regarding what entrepreneurs do to better their entrepreneurial environment. Yet, prior literature on peripheral places is clear that entrepreneurial contingency is important, primarily through the bricolage lens (Korsgaard et al., 2021).

This brings our attention to how entrepreneurs "do" context to enable environmental changes in such situations of entrepreneurial contingency. In this paper, we argue that these bricolage behaviors occur in "interstitial entrepreneurial spaces." Interstitial spaces are understood as "small scale settings where individuals in different fields interact occasionally and informally around common activities to which they devote limited time" (Furnari, 2014: 443). Interstitial spaces emerge through unique changes. They involve interactions between individuals from different fields; these interactions are occasional and informal and only occur for a limited period (Furnari, 2014). Thus, they are enacted around the development of a common activity, which may manifest through distinct events—e.g., festivals or local fairs and across contexts (Hjalager & Kwiatkowski, 2018; Vestrum, 2014) and other relevant community members to reconstruct and reimagine the role of ventures, individuals, and their networks within the community. In this respect, the emergence of the interstitial entrepreneurial space allows us to understand how entrepreneurs in these peripheral areas obtain the necessary assistance such as skills, knowledge, and finance to develop and grow their new ventures. As well as helping our understanding about the emergence of the context itself.

Interstitial spaces are understood through two micro-level dimensions: interaction rituals and catalysts. The former refers to "social interactions that produce high levels of mutual attention and emotional energy" (Furnari, 2014, 441). For example, festivals or other informal settings to incubate new businesses could provide the platform for new business development. The latter refers to "actors who sustain others' interactions over time and assist the construction of shared meaning" (Furnari, 2014, 441). Thus, to facilitate environmental change in peripheral places would require actors at community level to bring together relevant persons to catalyze this change. This could be community leaders, senior business leaders, government persons, leaders of civil society organizations, or other influential persons.

In summary, prior research indicates that "doing" context in peripheral places requires a view of entrepreneurial contingency, often operationalized through the lens of bricolage. At a micro-level, we argue that because of this contingency, interstitial entrepreneurial spaces provide a key mechanism for the emergence of environmental change. Furnari (2014) posits that when interstitial spaces are facilitated through a joint combination of interaction rituals and catalysts combine then new practices (i.e., environmental change) can emerge. In this paper, we aim to explore the role of interstitial spaces in facilitating the emergence of context in peripheral places.

3 Research methods

3.1 Methodological approach

To elicit an understanding of entrepreneurship and contextual change, we adopted a practice-based and context-sensitive view of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial practices are the micro-actions entrepreneurs employ as part of their daily activities (Johannisson, 2011). These include strategic practices used to access resources to create value (de Clercq & Voronov, 2009b) as well as less conscious practices tied to creating and reproducing their identity as entrepreneurs (Pret & Carter, 2017). While entrepreneurs have the freedom to improvise new practices in response to their particular situation, such choices are constructed within local cultural norms and traditions (de Clercq & Voronov, 2009a). Different contextual environments enable and constrain different potential practices, creating a heterogeneous landscape of practices between different communities. These contextual influences include the culture of a place that defines what types of actions are seen as acceptable, the political context which defines the types of support options available to entrepreneurs, and the economic context which determines the types of opportunities available (Levenda & Tretter, 2019).

3.2 Research context and sampling

The study was conducted in Chile in 2016 and 2017. Chile offers a unique empirical site for the study of entrepreneurship in the periphery (Espinosa et al., 2019; Värlander et al., 2020). Its distinct geographical features create regional and economic diversity (Amorós, et al., 2013). It is also seen as one of the most advanced economies in Latin America, offering a dynamic environment for entrepreneurship (Cao & Shi, 2021). This is explained largely by the role played by political decisions and ad hoc policy (Harima et al., 2020), with 20 years of new programs, policies, and initiatives aimed at cutting red tape, improving the legitimacy of entrepreneurship, and increasing funding available for new activity (Muñoz et al., 2020).

Following our interest in peripheral areas, we focused on geographically remote, yet commercially active towns. These areas are characterized by a low population density (< 150 hab/km^2) and with a maximum of 50,000 residents. Periphery has social and geographical demarcations, involving social marginalization and exclusion as well as isolation and disconnection (Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019). In this sense, we focused on areas that are either geographically, socially, or economically disconnected from the main urban areas (Anderson, 2000). They also tend to exhibit low-order economic activities (Felzensztein et al., 2012) and the basic unit of organization and reference is the commune itself.

We first utilized publicly available information to identify peripheral areas which have developed or hosted entrepreneurship programs between 2013 or 2015 and that by the time of the study had still a network of at least 200 active entrepreneurs. The average coverage for these programs was 82 beneficiaries, who received specialized training and seed funding. This procedure yielded 60 peripheral areas.

Following, using secondary data on socio-demographics, entrepreneurship programs, support institutions, and partnerships, we further distilled our sample for a final set of 14 peripheral areas. We used three criteria in this procedure: national distribution, entrepreneurial activity, and data access.

Tocopilla, for example, is a 27,000 people town in the north of Chile, covering an area of 4038 km^2 in the coast of the Atacama Desert.[1] It has a very low population density (< 7 hab/km^2) and one of the highest poverty levels in the country, measured by both income (11.1%) and multi-dimensional poverty (18.9%). The closest city is located 160 km away. In 2014, the municipality, in collaboration with the National Training Service, began to promote entrepreneurship in town through the "Strengthening Business Neighborhoods" program, aimed at supporting and promoting new business in the retail sector, while encouraging the creation of business associations. It worked along the new urban development strategy, an entrepreneurship school tournament and a seed funding program, offering training, support for market scoping, marketing and sales, and the acquisition of assets to open and operate small shops.

Across 14 areas, we purposively interviewed 97 people (Table 1), including 56 entrepreneurs, 27 members of civil society organizations, and 14 local government representatives who have been involved in doing or supporting entrepreneurial activities. By asking experts, we corroborated that these contexts cannot be tracked back to a single point of origin, e.g., design, stimulus, or trigger. On the contrary, they all emerged through many actions and interactions happening over time. This was particularly relevant, since part of our sample selection process relied on the presence of entrepreneurship programs, which could have played a central role in the surge of entrepreneurial life and the transformation of contexts. Our experts helped us corroborate that these programs were only part of a larger whole.

3.3 Data collection

Developing an understanding of the context itself is central to examining how entrepreneurs do contexts. We thus collected data from each context deemed relevant to entrepreneurial action. We used a variety of sources: councils' annual reports, policy briefs, government programs, census data, deprivation index, among others. Data included socio-demographics of the area, description of the main entrepreneurship support programs available in the 2013–2016 period, relevant support organizations, public–private partnerships, and civil society organizations. The evidence on support programs included target audience, scope, and economic impact, e.g., sales, growth, and visitors. This helped with the search and selection of relevant actors for our interviews and was central to contextualize the data collected. We organize these data in structured case files.

Following this, we conducted semi-structured interviews with all 97 participants. We used three types of interview guides, one for each type of participant. Each guide contained pre-defined thematic areas, including descriptions of the organizations or venture, development processes, as well as the perceptions of and relationships with the other actors of the context. By looking at practices through the lens of different actors (entrepreneurs, members of civil society organizations, and local government representatives), we were able to capture relationships across domains and triangulate our evidence—practices and perceptions—as reported by the participants. We started with the entrepreneurs' account, which we then cross-checked with the views of local organizations and public officials from the same area. Interviews lasted between 45–60 min and were recorded and transcribed in Spanish and then translated into English by one of the authors of this study.

3.4 Abductive data analysis

Our abductive data analysis was divided into three parts. The first part focused on exploring perceived changes in the local contexts in an inductive manner. We observed roles, practices, and relationships before and after starting their businesses and connecting to others within the local community, including entrepreneurs, civil society, local government, and support organizations. We discovered fundamental changes in roles, practices, and relationships that did not involve the emergence of new infrastructure, rather a repurposing of meso-level elements across public, community, and family contexts. Together, entrepreneurs and local authorities were momentarily changing

[1] https://goo.gl/maps/AmuxiiJ7Ty3wZavu7

Table 1 Participants

Town and population	Support program	Entrepreneurs	Government and support organizations
Tocopilla 24,000; 6 hab/km^2	Strengthening Business Neighborhoods	Agriculture (2) Leisure (2)	Tocopilla Productive Development Office (1) Local Development Program Tocopilla (2)
Taltal 13,700; 0.7 hab/km^2	Development Taltal	Seafood (4)	Taltal Productive Development Office (1) Small farmers trading association (2)
Machalí 47,000;	Entrepreneurship Toolkit	Agriculture (1) Garage service (1) Handicrafts (2)	Machalí Productive Development Office (1) Committee of neighbors (1) Women support program (1)
Paine 50,000; 60 hab/km^2	Business and Entrepreneurship Network	Sewing (1) Catering (1) Restaurant (2)	Paine Community Development Office (1) Neighboring committee (1) Ecological Community (1)
Pichilemu 13,900; 22 hab/km^2	Pichilemu Thinking Big	Agriculture (1) Sawmill (1) Salter (1) Tourism (1)	Pichilemu Healthy Living (1) Neighboring committee (1)
Malloa 12,300; 110 hab/km^2	Malloa Entrepreneurship	Agriculture (2) Handicrafts (2)	Malloa Community development (1) Artisans Association (1) Social Investment Fund (1)
Constitucion 41,200; 30 hab/km^2	Fishing Cove Network	Agriculture (2) Tourism (2)	Constitucion Economic Development Office (1) Hope Social Fund (1) Closer networks (1)
Hualqui town 24,300; 39 hab/km^2	Start-up Hualqui	Furniture (1) Liquor (1) Restaurant (1) Tourism (1)	Hualqui Local Economic Development (1) Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (1) Local Chamber of Commerce and Tourism (1)
Curanilahue 32,000; 32.4 hab/km^2	Active Arauco	Retail sales (1) Restaurant (1) Agriculture (2)	Curanilahue Local Development Unit (1) Artisans association (1) Horticultural Committee (1)
Puerto Saavedra 11,400; 28 hab/hm^2	Meetup Trawün Network	Agriculture (2) Tourism (2)	Puerto Saavedra Tourism Office (1) Puerto Saavedra Local Development Unit (1) Production and Development Corporation (1)
Pucón 29,000; 23.17 hab/km^2	A Good Idea	Restaurant (2) Telecommunications (1) IT (1)	Pucón Entrepreneurship Support Program Rural Development Association (1) Local Chamber of Tourism (1)
Cochamó4,000; 1.03 hab/km^2	Start-up Fosis-Seed Cochamó	Agriculture (2) Tourism (2)	Cochamó Department of Tourism (1) Tourism Guild (1) Local Development Program Cochamó (1)
Castro 32,800; 328 hab/km^2	Local Start-up Castro: Tourism, Services and Stilts	Agriculture (2) Retail (2)	Castro Productive development Office (1) Small producer association (2)
Coyhaique 48,000; 6.9 hab/km^2	Patagonia Entrepreneurial Spirit	Agriculture (1) Tourism (2) Gardening (1)	Coyhaique Productive Development Office (1) Business development center (1) Community trading (1)

the nature of public services. Or community football clubs used as incubation spaces. Here, entrepreneurs and community organizations were momentarily changing the nature of social relations.

In a second stage, we returned to the data to explore patterns across individual and meso-level practices, which can eventually help us explain what catalyzes contextual change, and by whom, beyond the necessary frugality required due to the evident lack of resources. Within each of these spaces, we observed contrasting views regarding the essential role of roles, practices, and relationships, for example, subsidies versus seed funding or family dependencies versus venture autonomy. On closer inspection, it became evident that we were capturing elements occurring in different temporal spaces, which at the same time were transforming aspects of each of the contexts. We could therefore naturally decompose the way they were doing public, community, and family contexts using a "bracketing" analytical strategy (Langley, 1999). This is captured in the data structure shown in Table 2 and summarized in Fig. 1.

In a final deductive stage, the inferred elements (Fig. 1) and existing literature were considered in tandem. We combined insights and extant theory to advance the explanation of "doing context" in peripheral areas. In our effort to systematically combine insights with theory, we returned to Furnari's theory of interstitial spaces. We paid attention to how different groups of catalysts were doing contexts, i.e., what new ideas were being tested, through which practices and where interactions were taking place. We moved back and forth between the notions of catalysts (i.e., *who* is catalyzing contextual emergence), interaction rituals (*how* is contextual emergence occurring), and the interstitial space (*where* interactions occur to facilitate contextual emergence). This gives a developed understanding of "doing context" alongside the conceptual dimensions of interstitial spaces.

4 Research findings

By looking at what actors do in-context, we discovered what was being momentarily transformed by catalysts, i.e., where most interactions were taking place: systems of provision, inter-dependencies, and sources of reliance. Within these catalyzed spaces, we discover three interaction rituals through which new ideas were being tested and new practices were emerging. We label them as follows: support seeking, neighboring, and nesting. We explain this in detail in the following sections.

4.1 Spaces of change

Our findings show that entrepreneurial contexts are largely contingent in nature. We discover changes across public, community, and family contexts, which were originally dominated by a type of social life with limited entrepreneurial interactions and a focus on public provision for communities, community relationships, and the associated co-dependencies. With entrepreneurship setting roots, these aspects of the social life appear to change. Changes in roles, practices, and relationships lead to the repurposing of certain elements across public, community, and family spaces. Here, we observed that life in these peripheral areas cumulatively shifts from a largely social purpose to an entrepreneurial function. As entrepreneurs and relevant actors do context, aspects of social life take on new meanings, potentially ready to rematerialize as a new entrepreneurial space.

Contingency and repurposing across contexts do not lead to structural changes, rather to the enactment of a momentary setting. This points towards the surge of spaces in-between spaces that are enacted through practice and that are neither structural nor permanent. We noticed that these spaces are constructed through practices enacted during unique instances—interaction rituals—in which new values and meanings materialize momentarily, bringing to the fore venture resources, venture connectivity, and autonomy. The interaction between entrepreneurs remains occasional and informal but not entirely disembedded from the community's characteristics. At the same time, other values and meanings are de-emphasized as entrepreneurs do context, putting social security, social relations, and co-dependence momentarily in the background.

Our analyses led us to identify three of such spaces, where entrepreneurs do context: systems of provision, community inter-dependencies, and source of reliance. Systems of provision refer to financial and non-financial resources and services made available by the local government to support local development. As a space, it involves interactions between public sector agents and community actors, including

Table 2 Illustrative evidence

Illustrative quotes	First-order research insights	Second-order themes
[In reference to Festival costumbrista, which is meant to celebrate ancient traditions] I won the start-up prize here in the tenth region and went to receive it in Santiago. Then the innovation venture granted by the Municipality of Castro in the festival costumbrista, which is one of the largest festivals, costumbristas, of southern Chile, of southern America in reality (Beeking entrepreneur, Castro)	Council focuses on investment and seed funding, channeling public resources toward new businesses and growth	Support seeking Through it, venture development becomes the center of the system of provision
Prodesal belongs to the municipality, but works jointly with Indap. And from there, well, as I say, the boys, the technicians [council workers] of that time, came to see what we had, what we were doing and they were surprised because in such a short time we had done so many things. People who have sometimes been, I don't know, many years in a public institution, with support and are still there, then they saw that we had this desire to move forward and this need, so to speak, to move forward (Agriculture entrepreneur, Castro)	Council workers provide business advice, on business ideas, business plans, funding forms, and investment opportunities	
For Entrepreneurship, here in Constitution we don't have public services that work here. But, there are two social workers here who are in charge of presenting the [entrepreneurs' projects], helping them with the other institutions, orienting them and telling them how to apply to government programs, things that people still don't have mastered (Municipal Manager, Constitution)		
Look, from the local municipality I had a lot of support, because when in 2013 I went to Puerto Varas I didn't know anything, Don Carlos Valenzuela who is the mayor of that time, gave me a lot of support to buy a pick-up truck. Eric Valenzuela [public official] was the person who advised me on the commercialization part and how to get my products to fairs (Agriculture entrepreneur, Constitución)	Public money is allocated to business incubation activities: ideation, product testing and opening new markets	
It's just that we do training courses, most of them. For example, Sercotec courses give you everything [entrepreneurs need], that is business ideas, leadership, [they] teach you a little bit of everything, then these courses help a lot to learn and also, to create networks, because it is very difficult in a free fair to get along well with everyone. So that's what we've achieved in La Minga [entrepreneurship center], it's the most beautiful thing that's ever been achieved, from the free fair (Public official, Castro)	Public money is allocated to entrepreneurship centers and entrepreneurship education	

Table 2 (continued)

Illustrative quotes	First-order research insights	Second-order themes
Neighborhood councils, yes, most people are members of the neighborhood council. Sports clubs just like that. [In relation to business creation] they ask for equal participation. They're organized and everything. They're all organized. We get a lot of benefits (Agriculture entrepreneur, Cochamó)	Community organizations become business incubators, allowing local entrepreneurs to access facilities, advice and resources	Neighboring Through it, Venture development becomes the focal point of social relations
Well, in our community it is organized through neighborhood councils, which are territorial groups and functional organizations that are tourism groups where we have a head, which is the tourism guild, followed by other tourism organizations that are separate, but at the same time networked in each of the sectors, in Pocoihuén, Cochamó, in Puelo, in Llanada, then they develop from these organizations that end up being directed by a representative or a directive, and they are the ones who seek to generate networks with the guild and with the municipality that is finally where all ideas converge and finally where financing is sought (Public official, Cochamó)		
They [Neighbors] are also a vital part of process because they see what we do and like it. Now if they see something strange that they don't like, tell us. They're honest enough to tell us. People, I think, have been learning to say things the way they are. So here we are gathering their opinions in order to put them into practice as well (Retail entrepreneur, Colina)	Neighbors offer entrepreneurs the opportunity to test new products and give them rapid access to markets	
[In reference to other tourism entrepreneurs outside Coyhaique] we support each other, if there is someone, say a tourist, who wants to go somewhere else, then one says: look over there in 'El Gato' there is good fishing, handicrafts, a good place to stay and they will give them the telephone number of another one and so on. Here I am, if there is a tourist who wants to go to Lago Verde, I tell him already, there in Lago Verde I have Mrs. Hilda's phone number, I can call her, you who lodging, or want a cabin, or want camping, then you contact each other immediately to make your reservation (Tourism entrepreneur, Coyhaique)	Relationships with entrepreneurs living in other localities become frequent, increasing the sense of connectivity despite remoteness	

Table 2 (continued)

Illustrative quotes	First-order research insights	Second-order themes
It all started with my eldest son. He wanted to work independently and started buying tools, things like that, because I had tools but they were very old, then he started buying more tools and started working in a shed of his father-in-law. Then, well, he had more clients, but he was not in a place of its own, right, with the inconveniences that causes […] with time I was seeing that there could be the opportunity of a project, a family business, then we talked about options and decided to rent a place and being able to work at it. Because there was already a bit of infrastructure (Tools entrepreneur, Machali)	People reorient efforts toward entrepreneurship and starting a new business. Progress relies on individual venturing	Nesting Through it, progress is now meant to be supported by self-reliance
[In relation to the main achievements of this business] Achievements are personal because there is family unity, because we all participate. If we have to go to two fairs in the same weekend, I take one and my son goes to the other one […] it has worked super well. Look, maybe if we are more ambitious, because there are many, many people who buy wheat coffee, I could formulate some kind of project in order to be able to do it in a more industrial way, but so far I am very satisfied with what they [family] have given me (Coffee entrepreneur, Hualqui)	People reorient family relationships toward starting a new business, based on a new, self-reliant, understanding of family progress	

entrepreneurs. Community inter-dependencies refer to the distal networks of actors supporting community development, which articulate distinct relationships between community actors and entrepreneurs. Sources of reliance refer to the mechanisms, and relationships between them, that are understood to enable progress within families.

4.2 Doing entrepreneurial contexts through interaction rituals

Within these spaces for catalytic action, we discover three interaction rituals, through which new ideas are tested and new practices emerge: support seeking, neighboring, and nesting.

Support seeking operates within the public space at the level of system of provision and involves interactions between public entities and members of the community, in the request and provision of financial and non-financial resources. Doing context through support seeking revolves around the role the local municipality, social workers, and public funds play as part of the broader system of provision, which normally focuses on local social needs. This system, and hence the relationships it enables, tends to favor subsidies across a wider set of domains, where labor productivity, work-related skills and knowledge, and even business acumen are understood as part of broader social welfare programs, e.g., housing, population health, and education, which collectively contribute to the welfare and development of the community.

Support seeking is a ritual for doing context because it allows entrepreneurs and public officials (e.g., social workers), both catalysts, to experiment with the nature and function of the systems of provision. As this happens, we observe a transition in the public space marked by a fundamental reorientation of the role of the council, social workers, and public funds in relation to community development. They continue to play a major role in community development, but their impact on the community is now seen as mediated by venture development, productivity, and growth. Figure 2a provides an overview of these changes.

As shown in Fig. 2a, we observed two micro-interaction rituals where the system of provision was being redone through support seeking: funding, support, and advice. We first observed a rapid interest

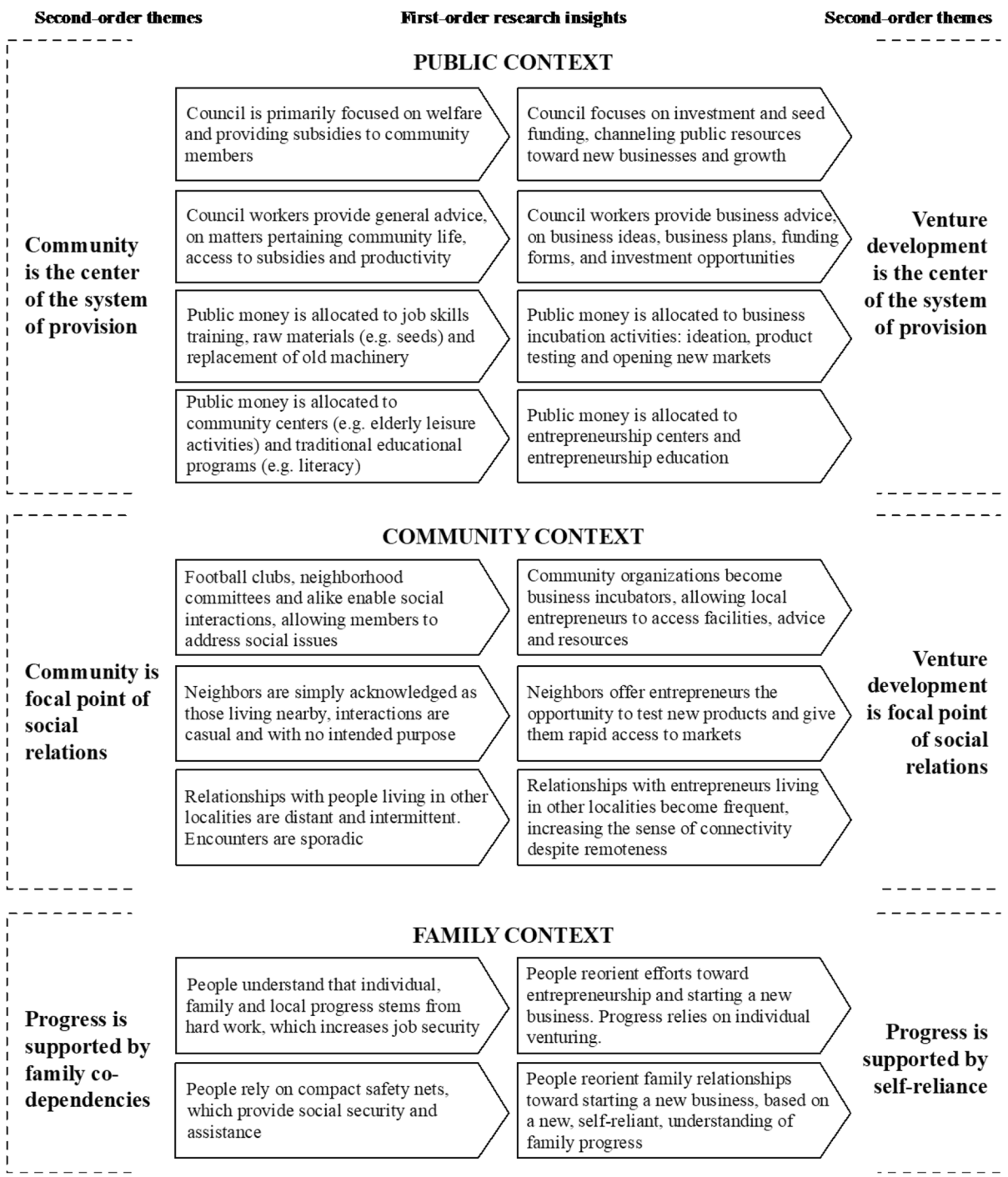

Fig. 1 Data structure

in offering and having access to business support, instead of traditional community development mechanisms. Here, existing public funds are reoriented and relabeled as "start-up," "seed," and "business growth" funding. Public money is redirected and allocated to business incubation activities: mostly activities

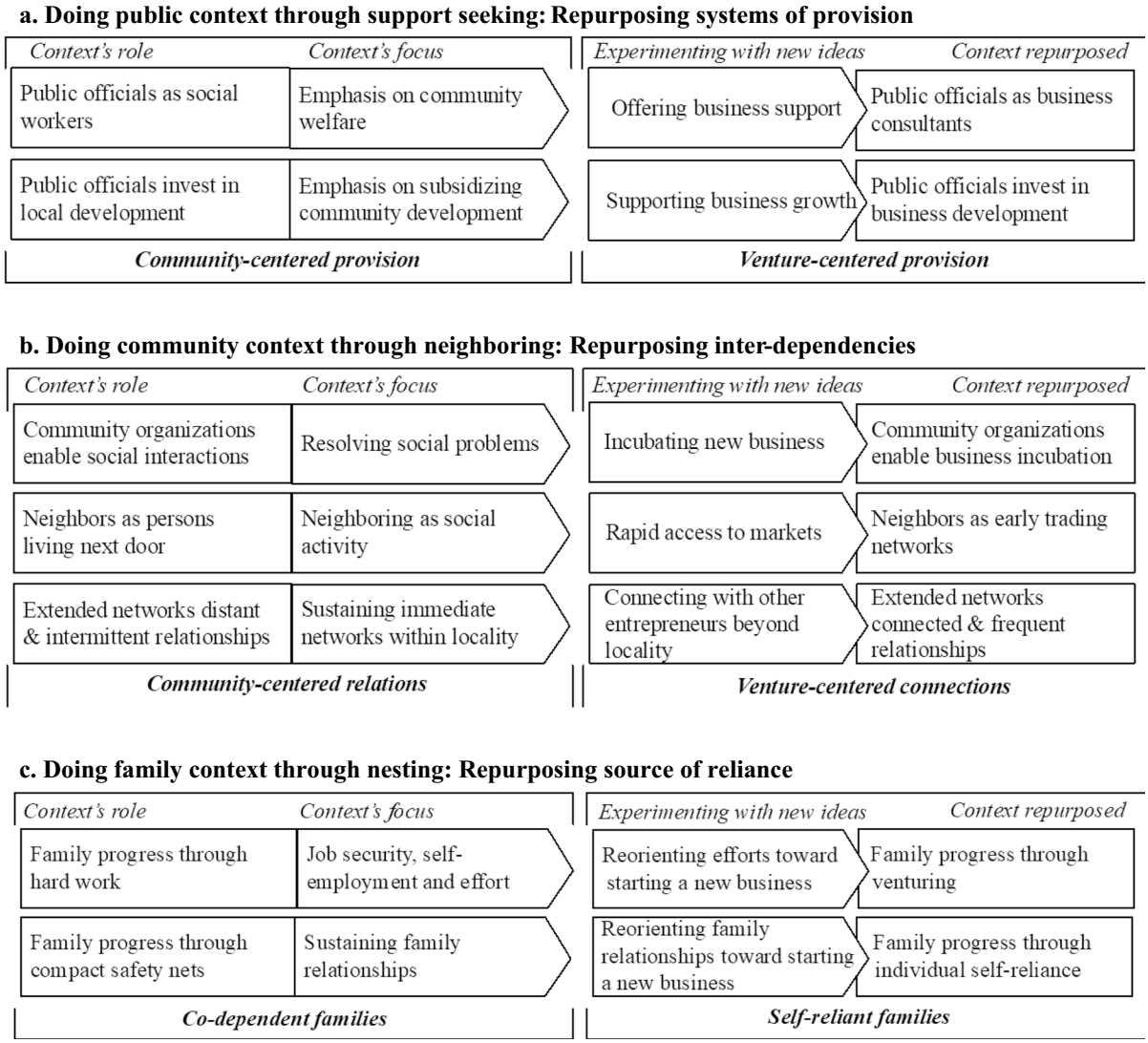

Fig. 2 Doing contexts **a**. Doing public context through support seeking: Repurposing systems of provision. **b**. Doing community context through neighboring: Repurposing inter-dependencies. **c**. Doing family context through nesting: Repurposing source of reliance

thought relevant to facilitate entrepreneurial action and expansion: ideation, product testing, and expansion to new markets:

> Pichilemu (municipality) has been doing quite a few things [to promote] tourism entrepreneurship. There is a lot of entrepreneurship, because people here are realizing that it's a good thing (*Pichilemu, Tourism 1*)

Public officials change investment priorities from community development to business development, supporting independent new businesses as they set roots and grow. This involves experimentation in what the council has to offer and how, where the idea of subsidy, and with it the idea of a subsidiary local state, gradually lose ground. A Paine entrepreneur working in agriculture reflects on the changes in orientation in the use of public funding, now seen as investment in business development:

> I have friends in Paine, Buin and Isla de Maipo [nearby localities]. In this area, all local govern-

ments are emphasizing and investing in entrepreneurship *(Agriculture Paine Farm Eggs).*

Second, we observed a change in the role public officials were playing in relation to community development. With the council progressively focused on investing in venture development, we noticed council workers—social workers and public administrators—acting as business consultants, far from the roles and area of expertise. We observed council workers providing business advice relating to business ideas, business plans, funding forms, and investment opportunities. Such a change in emphasis on offering business support started to affect the context and logic of system of provision replacing the traditional emphasis on community welfare. In the quote below, the same entrepreneur from Paine reflects on the role public officials began to play as business consultants:

> They (municipality) called me for the *female household leader program.* I wanted to bake pastry, but my instructors told me that there were a lot of people doing that. I have lived in this farm for 15 years and have had chickens since the beginning. They told me that the baking was not a good business idea and to focus on the chicken instead. I fixed the chicken coop, bought more chickens, more food and I now have about 80 chickens that I am producing eggs, but farm eggs, mine have different colors because I have different kinds of local chicken *(Agriculture Paine Farm Eggs).*

Through the above interaction rituals, the role actors play—entrepreneurs and social workers—as well as the relationship and practices they enable are fundamentally different, changing the public context from one focused on community-centered provision to venture-centered type of provision. Here, entrepreneurship becomes the dominant method to channel public support towards community progress. As a result, they de-emphasize social security, and gradually emphasize venture resources. In doing context through support seeking, entrepreneurship triggers a fundamental shift in the role of public institutions in fostering social and economic welfare. Entrepreneurship has typically been considered an important tool for development in urban and perceived high-growth settings, but in our context of interest, it is being utilized by public institutions as a path toward socio-economic development. In the quote below, a public official from Curanilahue's Local Development Unit reflects on changes toward venture-centered provision:

> We, as a council, created this year a school for entrepreneurs here in Curanilahue. We want to promote entrepreneurship from the early days, so we have partnerships with schools and currently we have 20 children addressing social problems using entrepreneurial tools and language…the council is taking the lead role in this *(Curanilahue Local Development Unit)*

Neighboring operates within the distal social space at the level of community inter-dependencies and is characterized by the role and density of networks beyond the core family. Doing context through neighboring revolves around the role played by people living nearby whose interactions are mostly part of the social life and mediated by community organizations. Given geographical restrictions, social networks remain distant and the relationships between actors are intermittent at best. As for traders and entrepreneurs, networks are thin and sparse, with dispersed and intermittent relationships with other traders and entrepreneurs outside their towns or villages. In doing context, we observe communities adopting new roles by incubating new firms, facilitating trading networks and connections to non-local markets. It is a ritual for doing context because through this process, social spaces—characterized by neighborhood and communal relationships—are transformed into facilitators of connections vital to entrepreneurial progress. Catalysts—entrepreneurs and neighbors—experiment with social relations and how these can be repurposed to improve venture connectivity. Figure 2b provides an overview of these changes.

As Fig. 2b shows, through neighboring, we observe changes in roles and practices across three distal networks: community organizations (e.g., football clubs), neighborhoods, and extended networks beyond their locality; constituting three micro-interaction rituals where the inter-dependencies were being redone through neighboring.

We first noticed changes in the role and practices of community-based and civil society organizations. Alongside the traditional social roles, e.g., encouraging participation at the community level and supporting community activities, we noticed local

organizations accommodating their facilities and activities, so that local entrepreneurs can develop business ideas, seek investment, and connect with networks, suppliers, buyers, and institutional actors. For instance, community football clubs and community social clubs were momentarily transformed to accommodate business incubation activities and local fairs so that entrepreneurs have a place to show and sell their products. Some primary schools were also repurposed to accommodate entrepreneurial activities. The quote below from a Cochamó entrepreneur illustrates these changes, regarding the swift in community organizations toward providing business support and organizing business incubation:

> We (entrepreneurs) are organized in several community organizations. There is the neighborhood committee that now works directly with Prodesal (business development), and a group of small farmers in the sector. This works quite well and they now work hand in hand. They have applied together to several funds… *(Cochamo Agriculture 2)*

Local authorities make similar observations. The quote below is from the head of Cochamó Department of Tourism. It is revealing as it shows how new forms of organizing at the community level have been reshaped around business incubation and business support. Roles that are normally played by chambers of commerce are now played by neighborhood committees:

> [In relation to community organizations and business incubation] Our community is organized through neighborhood committees. Some are focused on supporting local industries, so they get together with the chambers of commerce and the council, where business ideas finally converge and we search for investment together (*Cochamó Department of Tourism)*

The second interaction rituals revolve around neighborhoods. In peripheral areas, neighborhoods constitute extended families, which begin to play two alternative roles: as trading networks and as a reciprocal additional support mechanism, forming relationships with the entrepreneurs beyond, and sometimes replacing, social activities. Neighbors, in this sense, evolve from being first customers to become trading partners as local businesses grow, as either suppliers or distributors. This gives entrepreneurs rapid access to informal markets, for example, access to showcasing and trading products in other local and regional fairs.

Here, we observed a form of reciprocal network support emerging, which is slightly more complex than traditional complementarities observed in business networks. Neighbors' businesses grow alongside the products and services offered by some important entrepreneurs in the area, but also provide extra coverage in times of over-demand or when more value can momentarily be extracted from extant customers. The quote below is from a Cochamó entrepreneur, operating in tourism. This entrepreneur reflects on the new roles played by neighbors, as early trading networks and their importance in building new relationships and complementarities:

> That is important (connections and frequent trading relationships with neighbors). Out of all groups, it is always important to have your neighbor, because you need other activities for tourists, put them in contact with one that offers horseback riding or with the one who offers boat trips, or those who sell cheese. Any of that, it is always important *(Cochamo Tourism 1)*

The final interaction ritual involves intermittent relationships formed with rather distant extended networks. Even in munificent contexts, entrepreneurs depend on their close personal networks to identify opportunities and find resources such as financing (Arenius & de Clercq, 2005). These networks are even more important in resource-constrained contexts where strong networks and social capital help overcome the absence of more formal ways of acquiring resources. The quote below illustrates this situation:

> Well, many years ago, it must have been 18 years ago, when this was a dirt road, there was no light, there was no water, there was nothing. I had this property here…I came in summer time and I realized that there was a lot of traffic here and that there was nothing to buy, nothing, absolutely nothing, so I started with a kiosk selling eggs, vegetables, remedies, everything. Well, that's how I started. Then I started selling bread since there was nothing, there was

> no water, there was no light, there was nothing here yet, it occurred to me to build a residential, with generator, everything worked with generator, there was no light *(Constitucion Tourism 2)*

Interestingly though, in the case of the peripheral areas analyzed, we observe that close networks do not grow thicker as catalysts activity engage in context development. Entrepreneurs extend their networks and connect frequently with other entrepreneurs in their industries or go through a similar process in other localities. In this sense, networking practices involve building and maintaining frequent connections within people outside their communities and beyond the entrepreneurs' connections. The quote below is from an entrepreneur living in remote areas. He is a beekeeper living in Castro, the main town in the Chiloé island, so far only reachable by ferry boats. Instead of connecting with local entrepreneurs, he has managed to extend their networks beyond the island connecting with other entrepreneurs in equally disconnected areas:

> I don't have a lot of information about it [local trading]. I am always in touch with beekeepers from other areas, who work more or less in the same circumstances, and other businesses closer to me are crafts, there is practically no such thing, there is no ecosystem here *(Beekeeper Castro).*

Through the above interaction rituals, the role actors play—entrepreneurs and distal networks—as well as the relationship and practices they enable are fundamentally different, changing the community context, from being focused on community-centered relations to being centered on venture-centered connections. In doing context, they transform interdependencies, gradually de-emphasizing the role and relevance of social relations, which give way to venture connectivity.

Nesting operates within the proximal social space at the level of sources of reliance and involves relationships and interactions between entrepreneurs and their immediate family members, and the ideas governing decisions regarding family progress. Relationships and interactions are thus tangled with understandings of amelioration mechanisms, upon which families construct and conduct their lives. Interviewees highlight the relevance of either job security or self-employment, mostly informal trading, for family development. It all seems to depend on sustaining hard work overtime, which relies on the stability of relatively compact safety nets. The compactness of the proximal social space and business needs lead entrepreneurs to prioritize close family members over other community members. The two quotes below illustrate the importance of the family and the value attributed to hard work as an amelioration mechanism:

> [Family relationships] The idea… this is a family tradition. My mom has been cooking mote con huesillo since I was five years old (Paine Restaurant 1)
> [Hard work and self-employment] We have worked in crafts forever from home, always in relation to tourism and we have always worked for other people *(Cochamó Tourism 1)*

Thus, doing context through nesting revolves around changes in family life and their views of progress. These are marked by a rapidly growing interest in reorienting family relationships, and meanings governing decision-making, toward starting a new business. Nesting appears as a ritual for doing context as the reliance on compact safety nets and family effort give way to self-reliance. Catalysts, entrepreneurs, and their families experiment with their safety nets and how can these be repurposed to foster autonomy, leading ultimately to self-reliant venturing families. Instead of looking outwards for the extended families and other systems of support within the community, entrepreneurs look inwards and reshape family relationships to gain independence from external support networks. As a result, entrepreneurship becomes the dominant method to tackle social needs. Figure 2c provides an overview of these changes.

As Fig. 2c shows, we observed two instances where sources of reliance are redone through nesting: a reorientation of family relationships, belief system and activities toward starting a new business, which involves a reframing of the meaning of family progress.

We first observed changes in family relationships. Our interviewees understand that family and local progress stems from hard work and compact safety nets, which improves the sense job security. This understanding changes and families end

up reorienting their efforts toward entrepreneurship and starting a new business, despite the desires for and value attributed to job security. In reference to its close environment, an entrepreneur from Malloa reflects on the tensions experienced during that process of change:

> It is good, because people are just as hard working, they like to work, they like to get involved. (Yet) I think there should have been more support, within the group. We all live in the same in a commune, there is a group of people who could have given us more support.

Relatedly, we also observed a change in the meaning of progress for local families, who rely more and more on individual venturing, thus loosening the co-dependencies and valuing more the idea of self-reliance. The following quote illustrates how a family is reorienting internal relationships to accommodate entrepreneurship and the idea of self-reliance:

> So, then my husband came with the idea of selling mote con huesillo (traditional local drink). He said we need to take advantage of the number of people visiting the area, there is a lot of tourism, and that the "mote con huesillo" is in our blood. I was afraid because I had never cooked it [but] my mom helped us, so we just jumped into this new business *(Paine Restaurant 1)*

In doing context, entrepreneurs transform sources of reliance from being focused on co-dependencies to being centered on autonomy, representing a transformative shift in family life with self-reliance prioritized as an alternative purpose. This is evident for local authorities. A member of *Curanilahue Local Development Unit* reflects on this change; on how local families rely more on venture-centered provision and how this changes the meaning of family progress:

> This (entrepreneurship) has grown significantly in the past two years, I dare to say. Families are now seeing entrepreneurship as a real alternative to economic development, something that years ago could not be seen, because people were used to waiting for the government's support for most things… programs or subsidies *(Curanilahue Local Development Unit)*

5 Trans-contextual work: the doing of multiple contexts

Changes across multiple contexts and the momentary repurposing of elements within them led us to reflect on the connections between them and how they act jointly as a mechanism for doing context in the periphery. To make sense of the latter, we engage with the notion of trans-contextuality (Bateson, 2016) and trans-contextual change. Bateson explains the term trans-contextual as the "ways in which multiple contexts come together to form complex systems." It conveys the idea that "complex systems do not exist in single contexts but rather are formed between multiple contexts that overlap in living communication. It thus focuses on interdependencies between contexts that create and change reality." The contexts in which entrepreneurs operate in and conduct their lives—social, economic, political, cultural—are inevitably interconnected. A trans-contextual interpretation of relationships allows for a more refined understanding of contextual overlaps and how such overlaps can either reinforce the status quo and how shifts are initiated.

Leveraging these ideas, we explain the mechanisms observed, through which entrepreneurs and other actors "do multiple contexts," as *trans-contextual work* in entrepreneurship. This mechanism explains how several aspects of the social life are de-emphasized and leading to a situation where they are gradually replaced by new entrepreneurial ideas and artifacts. By engaging in trans-contextual work, entrepreneurs create the context where "epistemologies and ways of perceiving shift," which can potentially lead to structural changes.

This mechanism is one that is understood to be enacted within entrepreneurial interstitial spaces, which transiently support contextual emergence through catalyzing relationships and ritualistic interactions. Interstitial entrepreneurial spaces offer insight to our understanding of context because it shows the relevance of "micro-interaction" settings (Furnari, 2014) that can connect the entrepreneur and the enactment of multiple contexts at the meso-level. It is through these meso-level interstitial spaces where we discover entrepreneurs "doing context." In Table 3, we offer a summary of trans-contextual work.

6 Discussion

In this paper, we ask: how do entrepreneurs "do context" in the periphery? Despite the proliferation of context-related entrepreneurship in recent years, we still have a limited understanding of "doing context" (Baker & Welter, 2021). Specifically, research is dominated by various perspectives of context including but not limited to the role of institutions, spatial, social, temporal, and industry contexts (Zahra et al., 2014). However, much less is known about the interplay between the entrepreneurs who are simultaneously shaped by their immediate environment and undertake actions to enable its emergence and new form. Based on extensive interview data from entrepreneurs in peripheral areas in Chile, we found that peripheral contexts emerge contingently through cumulative changes in roles, practices, and relationships and the repurposing of meso-level elements across public, community, and family contexts.

6.1 Contributions

This study makes three key contributions. First, we introduce the process *of trans-contextual work* in peripheral areas, providing empirical insight into the mechanisms which underlie how contexts change and "are done" by actors in these settings. In peripheral areas, the emergence of a supportive context represents a compelling way of considering the necessary institutional pillars and development needed to allow entrepreneurs to thrive, enabling a form of "commercial counter-urbanization" (Bosworth & Bat Finke, 2020). In this paper, we demonstrate how entrepreneurs are constructing entrepreneurial contexts in peripheral areas.

Theorizing the role of context in entrepreneurship, we show how peripheral contexts are a rich tapestry of public, community, and social spheres that change and operate through interstitial entrepreneurial spaces. These changes through the repurposing of place and the roles of individuals and relationships within that context. Thus, contextual emergence appears to be less about just enabling institutional pillars to support entrepreneurship but concerning more about the momentary transformation of meso-level elements that are spatially determined (Milbourne, 2014). *Trans-contextual work* is therefore a good example of entrepreneurs "doing" context but in a more deprived setting (Welter et al., 2019); in which they take elements of their pre-existing geographic, economic, and social environment and enact them as their ecosystem context.

Trans-contextual work is a particularly useful mechanism to understand how entrepreneurs and other actors "do contexts" in the periphery because it allows actors to (re)create entrepreneurial resources out of previously un-valued or under-valued aspects of their environment and community. Indeed, our findings suggest that contextual emergence is anchored in the same aspects of the community and thus its emergence does not involve a new economic or institutional infrastructure. The latter challenges widespread assumptions regarding necessary institutional recipes for entrepreneurial development, suggesting instead the need for looking deeper into local realities (Kimmitt & Muñoz, 2018).

Trans-contextual work also sheds light on how entrepreneurs in peripheral areas access the

Table 3 Trans-contextual work

Interstitial elements for doing context	Contexts		
	Public	Community	Social
Catalysts	Entrepreneurs with social workers	Entrepreneurs with neighbors	Entrepreneurs with families
Catalyzed space	Public entities	Social relations	Family support
Interaction rituals	Support seeking and the doing of system of provision	Neighboring and the doing of inter-dependencies	Nesting and the doing of sources of reliance
New ideas and collective experimentation	How can social security be repurposed to support venture development and investment	How can social relations be repurposed to improve venture connectivity	How can safety nets be repurposed to foster venture autonomy
New practice outcomes	Venture-oriented provision	Venture-centered connections	Self-reliance

resources they need to start, develop, and grow their ventures. So far, literature explains that in resource-constrained contexts entrepreneurs can create something from nothing by exploiting physical, social, or institutional inputs that other firms rejected or ignored (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Björklund and Krueger (2016) suggest that to successfully do so entrepreneurs observe and access various resources in the ecosystem, which allows them to identify seemingly small opportunities and exploit them by experimenting with new combinations of skills, resources, and connections.

Our findings suggest that the current bricolage-based explanation places too much emphasis on the individual agent, neglecting changes at the meso-level. Bricolage has been previously applied to broader entrepreneurship contexts (Korsgaard et al., 2021), but as a form of institutional entrepreneurship or as a mechanism to compensate for the absence of other types of support. This again, places too much emphasis on the macro-institutional side of the spectrum, disregarding the formation of an interstitial space in between the agent and the institution. For example, Gaddefors et al. (2020) explain that regional development trajectories in rural areas are not determined by resources, rather enacted through exaptation.

This is close to our findings. Yet, these inferences remain at a macro-level, delineating stages of development, which do not provide an explanation of how exaptation—as a process that involves creative re-interpretation of resources—is done and leading to changes in place. *Trans-contextual work* can be understood as a meso-level bricolage, where many entities repurpose their roles and relationships, which work alongside the practices of those who skillfully use under-utilized resources in a creative way and macro-institutional conditions. Thus, it allows us to better understand how the micro-processes and foundations of entrepreneurship interact with aspects of the context in an emerging economy (Bruton et al., 2013).

Second, our perspective on context also offers a contribution to the burgeoning literature on entrepreneurial contexts more broadly. For the entrepreneur, their context is simply the supportive environment collectively enacted. However, the bulk of research in this domain has focused principally on macro-level attributes in detail, rather than the actions and practices of individual entrepreneurs. To understand lesser-known peripheral entrepreneurial areas, our "doing context" approach bridges the macro–micro distinction with a meso-level understanding. Such an approach brings the micro-level practices of entrepreneurs to the fore but as seen within the context broader macro-level influences. Our meso-level understanding also demonstrates that contexts are not necessarily persistently present features of entrepreneurial life.

Our paper goes beyond the deterministic approach to context and explains how variations in systems of support, community inter-dependencies, and close networks accumulate triggering changes in social life, and that those changes materialize as a repurposing of the roles people, places, and relationships play in social life. That creates a temporary interstitial entrepreneurial space that transforms the context and therefore likely the many systems of support and resources entrepreneurs rely on. Thus, through our fine-grained understanding, entrepreneurial contexts appear to be momentary structures, enabled by *trans-contextual work*, where social life is seemingly replaced by "entrepreneurial" social life.

Our final contribution is to the literature on entrepreneurship in the periphery. We offer an alternative explanation of how contexts change in emerging economies, where the discussion has so far paid excessive attention to urban development. As Bruton et al. (2013) explain, understanding entrepreneurship in emerging economies requires accounting for spatial variations in entrepreneurial behavior. Despite this, a paucity of research exists on peripheral entrepreneurship in emerging economies with some notable exceptions (e.g., Lang et al., 2014). We contribute to this discussion by offering one of the first articulations of how entrepreneurial contexts in peripheral areas may emerge. Outside current frameworks, this complies with the idea that peripheral contexts are rich in supportive mechanisms for productive entrepreneurship but such a holistic picture for this has been hitherto unaddressed.

6.2 Boundary conditions and future research

Our study examined the practices, roles, and relationships across peripheral areas with activities communities of entrepreneurs in Chile. These areas can be

seen as an outlier in comparison to how entrepreneurial settings and support infrastructure are constructed. The observations made might be infrequent in a broader set of peripheral regions. These rather unique cases offered us a chance to observe equally unique practices and engage in rich theorizing. However, future research must interrogate our inferences across a wider sample.

One important boundary condition is the extrapolation of inferences to a wider set of peripheral areas and entrepreneurship in emerging economies more broadly. In the world of entrepreneurship, Chile is largely seen as an outlier, with an unusually active and vibrant entrepreneurial community, which permeates both urban and peripheral areas. The activity observed across towns is likely influenced by a national culture supportive of entrepreneurship. In this sense, our inferences regarding trans-contextual work need to be revisit in contexts with different sets of social norms.

In this respect, future research would benefit from examining the different configurations of catalyzing entities and interaction rituals alongside the types of emergent contexts. It would be interesting to see how these ideas are mirrored in urban areas (and in Western contexts) and what micro-interaction spaces are crucial here. Second, while we contribute to the literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems as one approach to contextualization, it would be valuable to understand the role that interstitial spaces have on facilitating the ecosystems and the various inter-dependencies.

7 Conclusions

In this paper, we explored the "doing" of context in peripheral areas. Most notably, we discovered a meso-level phenomena of entrepreneurial interstitial spaces that facilitate the emergence of the context based on extensive interview data from Chile. Context-related entrepreneurship research has blossomed in recent years, yet we have a more limited understanding as to how different places and sites emerge, persist, or even disappear through this "doing" of context. Through entrepreneurial interstitial spaces, our paper offers one potential avenue for understanding this phenomenon.

Funding This study was funded by the Production Development Corporation (CORFO—Chile) with grant number (15PES-44401).

References

Agostino, M., Nifo, A., Trivieri, F., & Vecchione, G. (2020). Rule of law and regulatory quality as drivers of entrepreneurship. *Regional Studies, 54*(6), 814–826. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2019.1648785

Aldrich, H. E., & Yang, T. (2014). How do entrepreneurs know what to do? Learning and organizing in new ventures. *Journal of Evolutionary Economics, 24*(1), 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00191-013-0320-x

Amorós, J. E., Felzensztein, C., & Gimmon, E. (2013). Entrepreneurial opportunities in peripheral versus core regions in Chile. *Small Business Economics, 40*(1), 119–139. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-011-9349-0

Anderson, A. (2000). Paradox in the periphery: An entrepreneurial reconstruction? *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 12*(2), 91–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/089856200283027

Aoyama, Y. (2009). Entrepreneurship and regional culture: The case of Hamamatsu and Kyoto. *Japan. Regional Studies, 43*(3), 495–512. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400090å2777042

Arenius, P., & de Clercq, D. (2005). A network-based approach on opportunity recognition. *Small Business Economics, 24*, 249–265. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-005-1988-6

Autio, E., Kenney, M., Mustar, P., Siegel, D., & Wright, M. (2014). Entrepreneurial innovation: The importance of context. *Research Policy, 43*(7), 1097–1108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2014.01.015

Baker, T., & Nelson, R. E. (2005). Creating something from nothing: Resource construction through entrepreneurial bricolage. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 50*(3), 329–366. https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2005.50.3.329

Baker, T., & Welter, F. (2018). Contextual entrepreneurship: An interdisciplinary perspective. *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship, 14*(4), 357–426. https://doi.org/10.1561/0300000078

Baker, T., & Welter, F. (2020). *Contextualizing entrepreneurship theory*. Routledge.

Bateson, N. (2016). *Small arcs of larger circles: Framing through other patterns* (2nd edn). Axminster: Triarchy Press.

Björklund, T. A., & Krueger, N. F. (2016). Generating resources through co-evolution of entrepreneurs and ecosystems. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy, 10*(4), 477–498. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEC-10-2016-063

Bosworth, G., & Bat Finke, H. (2020). Commercial counter-urbanisation: A driving force in rural economic development. *Environment and Planning A, 52*(3), 654–674. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X19881173

Bruton, G. D., Filatotchev, I., Si, S., & Wright, M. (2013). Entrepreneurship and strategy in emerging economies. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, 7*(3), 169–180. https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.1159

Cao, Z., & Shi, X. (2021). A systematic literature review of entrepreneurial ecosystems in advanced and emerging economies. *Small Business Economics, 57*, 75–110. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-020-00326-y

de Clercq, D., & Voronov, M. (2009a). The role of cultural and symbolic capital in entrepreneurs' ability to meet expectations about conformity and innovation. *Journal of Small Business Management, 47*, 398–420. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2009.00276.x

de Clercq, D., & Voronov, M. (2009b). Towards a practice perspective of entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial legitimacy as habitus. *International Small Business Journal, 27*, 395–419. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242609334971

Espinoza, C., Mardones, C., Sáez, K., & Catalán, P. (2019). Entrepreneurship and regional dynamics: The case of Chile. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 31*(9–10), 755–767. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2019.1565421

Feldman, M. P., Ozcan, S., & Reichstein, T. (2019). Falling not far from the tree: Entrepreneurs and organizational heritage. *Organization Science, 30*(2), 337–360. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2018.1222

Felzensztein, C., Gimmon, E., & Aqueveque, C. (2012). Entrepreneurship at the periphery: Exploring framework conditions in core and peripheral locations. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 37*(4), 815–835. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2012.00515.x

Fritsch, M., & Storey, D. J. (2014). Entrepreneurship in a regional context: Historical roots, recent developments and future challenges. *Regional Studies, 48*(6), 939–954. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2014.892574

Furnari, S. (2014). Interstitial spaces: Microinteraction settings and the genesis of new practices between institutional fields. *Academy of Management Review, 39*(4), 439–462. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2012.0045

Gaddefors, J., & Anderson, A. (2019). Romancing the rural: The rural as an entrepreneurial context; concept and engagements. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 20*(3), 159–169. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465750318785545

Gaddefors, J., Korsgaard, S., & Ingstrup, M. D. (2020). Regional development through entrepreneurial exaptation: Epistemological displacement, affordances, and collective agency in rural regions. *Journal of Rural Studies, 74*, 244–256. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2019.10.010

GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor). (2022). *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2021/2022Global Report: Opportunity Amid Disruption*. London: GEM.

Goswami, K., Mitchell, J. R., & Bhagavatula, S. (2018). Accelerator expertise: Understanding the intermediary role of accelerators in the development of the Bangalore entrepreneurial ecosystem. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal., 12*, 117–150. https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.1281

Harima, A., Harima, J., & Freiling, J. (2020). The injection of resources by transnational entrepreneurs: Towards a model of the early evolution of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 33*, 80–107. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2020.1734265

Hjalager, A. M., & Kwiatkowski, G. (2018). Entrepreneurial implications, prospects and dilemmas in rural festivals. *Journal of Rural Studies, 63*, 217–228.

Johannisson, B. (2011). Towards a practice theory of entrepreneuring. *Small Business Economics, 36*(2), 135–150. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.02.019

Johns, G. (2001). In praise of context. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 22*, 31–42. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.80

Johns, G. (2006). The essential impact of context on organizational behavior. *Academy of Management Review, 31*(2), 386–408. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.20208687

Kimmitt, J., & Dimov, D. (2021). The recursive interplay of capabilities and constraints amongst microfinance entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, 27*(3), 600–628. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-10-2018-0642/

Kimmitt, J., & Muñoz, P. (2018). Sensemaking the 'social' in social entrepreneurship. *International Small Business Journal, 36*(8), 859–886. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242618789230

Korsgaard, S., Ferguson, R., & Gaddefors, J. (2015). The best of both worlds: How rural entrepreneurs use placial embeddedness and strategic networks to create opportunities. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 27*(9–10), 574–598. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2015.1085100

Korsgaard, S., Müller, S., & Welter, F. (2021). It's right nearby: How entrepreneurs use spatial bricolage to overcome resource constraints. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 33*(1–2), 147–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2020.1855479

Lang, R., Fink, M., & Kibler, E. (2014). Understanding place-based entrepreneurship in rural Central Europe: A comparative institutional analysis. *International Small Business Journal, 32*(2), 204–227. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242613488614

Langley, A. (1999). Strategies for theorizing from process data. *Academy of Management Review, 24*(4), 691–710. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1999.2553248

Levenda, A. M., & Tretter, E. (2019). The environmentalization of urban entrepreneurialism: From technopolis to start-up city. *Environment and Planning A, 52*(3), 490–509. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X19889970

Levie, J., & Autio, E. (2011). Regulatory burden, rule of law, and entry of strategic entrepreneurs: An international panel study. *Journal of Management Studies, 48*(6), 1392–1419. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.01006.x

Milbourne, P. (2014). Poverty, place, and rurality: Material and sociocultural disconnections. *Environment and Planning A, 46*(3), 566–580. https://doi.org/10.1068/a45336

Muñoz, P., & Kimmitt, J. (2018). Entrepreneurship and the rest: The missing debate. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights., 9*, 100–106. https://doi.org/10.1016/jjbvi.2018.03.003

Muñoz, P., & Kimmitt, J. (2019). Rural entrepreneurship in place: An integrated framework. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 31*(9–10), 842–873. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2019.1609593

Muñoz, P., Kibler, E., Mandakovic, V., & Amorós, J. E. (2020). Local entrepreneurial ecosystems as configural narratives: A new way of seeing and evaluating antecedents and outcomes. *Research Policy*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104065

Nylund, P. A., & Cohen, B. (2017). Collision density: Driving growth in urban entrepreneurial ecosystems. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal, 13*(3), 757–776. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-016-0424-5

Pret, T., & Carter, S. (2017). The importance of "fitting in": Collaboration and social value creation in response to community norms and expectations. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 29*(7–8), 639–667. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2017.1328903

Reynolds, P., Storey, D. J., & Westhead, P. (1994). Cross-national comparisons of the variation in new firm formation rates. *Regional Studies, 28*(4), 443–456. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343409412331348386

Roos, A. (2019). Embeddedness in context: Understanding gender in a female entrepreneurship network. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 31*(3–4), 279–292. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2018.1551793

Shi, X., & Shi, Y. (2021). Unpacking the process of resource allocation within an entrepreneurial ecosystem. *Research Policy*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2021.104378

Spigel, B. (2013). Bourdieuian approaches to the geography of entrepreneurial cultures. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 25*(9–10), 804–818. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2013.862974

Spilling, O. R. (1996). Regional variation of new firm formation: The Norwegian case. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 8*(3), 217–244. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985629600000014

Staber, U. (2007). Contextualizing research on social capital in regional clusters. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 31*(3), 505–521. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2007.00742.x

Vaillant, Y., & Lafuente, E. (2007). Do different institutional frameworks condition the influence of local fear of failure and entrepreneurial examples over entrepreneurial activity? *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development, 19*(4), 313–337. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985620701440007

Värlander, S. W., Sölvell, I., & Klyver, K. (2020). Entrepreneurship as a vocational choice in contested entrepreneurship communities: The role of entrepreneurs' justification strategies. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *35*(3), 106006. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2020.106006

Vestrum, I. (2014). The embedding process of community ventures: Creating a music festival in a rural community. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 26*(7–8), 619–644. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2014.971076

Vorley, T., & Williams, N. (2016). Between petty corruption and criminal extortion: How entrepreneurs in Bulgaria and Romania operate within a devil's circle. *International Small Business Journal, 34*(6), 797–817. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242615590464

Welter, F. (2011). Contextualizing entrepreneurship — Conceptual challenges and ways forward. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 35*(1), 165–184.

Welter, F., & Baker, T. (2021). Moving contexts onto new roads: Clues from other disciplines. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 45*(5), 1154–1175. https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258720930996

Welter, F., Baker, T., & Wirsching, K. (2019). Three waves and counting: The rising tide of contextualization in entrepreneurship research. *Small Business Economics, 52*(2), 319–330. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-018-0094-5

Williams, N., & Vorley, T. (2017). Fostering productive entrepreneurship in post-conflict economies: The importance of institutional alignment. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development, 29*(5–6), 444–466. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2017.1297853

Williams, N., & Vorley, T. (2015). Institutional asymmetry: How formal and informal institutions affect entrepreneurship in Bulgaria. *International Small Business Journal, 33*(8), 840–861. https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258720930996

World Economic Forum (2014). *Entrepreneurial ecosystems around the globe and early-stage company dynamics — The entrepreneur's perspective*. World Economic Forum. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/reports/entrepreneurial-ecosystems-around-globe-and-early-stage-company-growth-dynamics

Zahra, S. A., Wright, M., & Abdelgawad, S. G. (2014). Contextualization and the advancement of entrepreneurship research. *International Small Business Journal, 32*(5), 479–500. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242613519807