

Abstract

Based on research conducted in and with several regional start-up centres and business accelerators, emerging empirical and theoretical insights will be presented. First, an overview of a regional and developing entrepreneurial ecosystem in northern Germany will be presented, highlighting the idiosyncrasies of its institutional environment and regional identity. Second, attention will be drawn to two empirical studies emerging from this research project (both work in progress). The first study explores the situated enactment and experience of acceleration. Through a narrative study of a regional entrepreneurship ecosystem drawing on interviews, participant observation, and archival material, the authors explore how organizations performed acceleration during the COVID-19 pandemic. The second study explores how heterogeneous actors collaborate to perform what we call a “startup scene” on different stages. In a play of three acts, the authors explore the staging practices that perform this startup scene: policymakers prepare the scene; accelerators organize the stage for entrepreneurs; and entrepreneurs perform new ventures through pitching events. As such, this paper focuses on the role of conventions in the collective effort that stages entrepreneurship locally. Finally, a broader discussion regarding the empirical and theoretical insights from the research project, as well as a shared reflection on the challenges of conducting fieldwork in distributed entrepreneurial settings, will be developed.