

Sustainable cities through entrepreneurial ecosystems – exploring the role of community leadership, public administration, and social finance

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Project description:

The sustainable development goals are the grand challenge of our times (George et al., 2016). Addressing them depends on the governance of cities where 60% of the population is expected to live by 2030 (Acuto, 2016; United Nations, 2016). However, cities as a platform for economic and societal action challenge traditional management, public administration, and entrepreneurship studies, requiring a systemic approach (Mazzucato, 2015) to understand the heterogeneous nature of ecosystems (Brown and Mason, 2017: 11). In fact, cities generate specific entrepreneurial ecosystems, i.e., a community of agents, social structures, institutions, and cultural values that produce entrepreneurial activity (Roundy, Brockman, and Bradshaw, 2017).

This research project aims to investigating the role of entrepreneurial ecosystems in generating public value and social impact in European cities, with an emphasis on the ecosystem's role with respect to community leadership, public administration and availability of social finance. We are interested in proposals that seek to analyse the nature, structure and effects of entrepreneurial ecosystems particularly with respect to community leadership and social finance. We are also interested in proposals that seek to investigate how to deliver public services and how these generate social impact.

The successful candidate will demonstrate interest and knowledge about the public sector (including non-profit organizations) and social finance options, particularly in Europe. We encourage both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the topic of interest that will be chosen based on the research question and the data available.

About the supervisors:

Alessandro Sancino is Director of Research in Citizenship & Governance at The Open University where he also acts as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Public Leadership & Social Enterprise. He is an international scholar with research and teaching experiences in several continents (Europe and South America) and active in the areas of public management and governance, third sector and critical management studies. He has published in top journals in these fields including *Public Administration Review*, *Public Administration*, *Public Management Review*, *Regional Studies* and *Voluntas*.

Mariarosa Scarlata is Senior Lecturer in Strategy at the Open University. Her research focuses on social investing and hybrid firms, particularly on how to combine social and economic objectives. She teaches entrepreneurship-related courses at the undergraduate, postgraduate, and executive level and helps social enterprises in building viable business models. Mariarosa has published on leading academic journals including *Journal of Business Ethics* and *International Small Business Journal*, among others.

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