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EDITORIAL

Ownership Beyond Venture Creation

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Artificial intelligence has accelerated one of the most profound transformations in contemporary business by fundamentally changing how organizations create, coordinate, and appropriate value. Rather than serving merely as an automation technology, AI increasingly functions as an organizational infrastructure that enables firms to redesign business models, orchestrate distributed knowledge, integrate data-driven decision making, and continuously reconfigure capabilities across complex ecosystems (Nambisan et al., 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). As digital technologies become deeply embedded in organizational processes, value creation depends less on isolated entrepreneurial actions and more on interconnected systems that facilitate learning, coordination, adaptation, and scalable resource deployment. These developments have broadened the strategic role of organizational architectures, positioning them as critical mechanisms through which entrepreneurial opportunities are generated, capabilities are accumulated, and competitive advantage is sustained.

Despite these transformations, entrepreneurship research continues to be largely anchored in a venture-centered paradigm that conceptualizes entrepreneurial participation primarily as the creation of independent organizations through opportunity discovery or opportunity creation (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Although this perspective has substantially enriched understanding of entrepreneurial intentions, opportunity recognition, venture emergence, and firm growth, it provides only a partial explanation of entrepreneurial participation in increasingly structured organizational environments. Across many industries, entrepreneurial engagement now occurs through organizational arrangements that reduce entry barriers, transfer capabilities, establish legitimacy, and enable individuals to assume ownership without necessarily creating entirely new organizational systems. Collectively, the studies published in this volume challenge the traditional venture-creation bias by demonstrating that entrepreneurial ownership can emerge through structured organizational mechanisms that intentionally facilitate ownership acquisition, capability development, organizational replication, and long-term ownership expansion. Rather than treating ownership as a by-product of entrepreneurship, these contributions elevate ownership itself as a central theoretical construct that deserves explicit conceptual attention.

Beyond Venture Creation

The intellectual foundations of entrepreneurship have long been shaped by the assumption that entrepreneurial activity begins with the establishment of a new venture. From opportunity recognition and effectuation to resource mobilization and venture growth, the dominant theories of entrepreneurship have largely focused on explaining how individuals create organizations under conditions of uncertainty. Consequently, venture creation has become the primary lens through which entrepreneurial success is interpreted, while ownership has often been viewed as an implicit outcome rather than an independent phenomenon. This orientation has generated a rich body of scholarship, yet it has also constrained the conceptual boundaries of entrepreneurship by overlooking organizational pathways through which individuals become entrepreneurs without establishing entirely new firms (Davidsson, 2015; Shepherd & Gruber, 2021).

The conceptual articles brought together in this volume collectively suggest that entrepreneurship is undergoing an important theoretical transition. Rather than asking exclusively how entrepreneurs create organizations, these studies examine how organizational systems create entrepreneurs. Structured organizational arrangements provide access to established business models, operational routines, capability-development mechanisms, legitimacy structures, and managerial support that substantially reduce uncertainty while preserving entrepreneurial agency. Within this perspective, entrepreneurial participation is no longer restricted to independent venture founders but includes individuals whose ownership trajectories are enabled through organizational infrastructures intentionally designed to facilitate entrepreneurial development. Entrepreneurship therefore becomes not only a process of organizational creation but also a process of ownership creation.

Organizational Systems as Entrepreneurial Capability Infrastructures

A second contribution emerging from the articles in this volume concerns the reconceptualization of entrepreneurial capability development. Conventional entrepreneurship literature has consistently portrayed entrepreneurial competence as the cumulative outcome of individual learning, experiential experimentation, and repeated interaction with uncertain market environments (Cope, 2005; Politis, 2005). Within this tradition, entrepreneurs develop opportunity recognition, strategic judgment, resource mobilization, and adaptive decision-making capabilities primarily through experience. Although this perspective has substantially advanced entrepreneurship theory, it tends to assume that entrepreneurial competence is largely self-generated through individual action.

The conceptual perspectives advanced in this volume broaden this understanding by positioning organizations as active infrastructures for entrepreneurial capability formation. Entrepreneurial competence is shown to emerge not only from individual experience but also from organizational systems deliberately designed to transfer knowledge, codify routines, facilitate learning, and support managerial development. Standardized operating procedures, training systems, mentoring structures, codified organizational knowledge, and continuous performance feedback collectively reduce learning costs while accelerating entrepreneurial readiness. Consequently, capability development becomes an organizationally orchestrated process in which entrepreneurial competencies are progressively transferred, absorbed, internalized, and transformed into effective entrepreneurial action rather than being acquired solely through trial-and-error learning.

This perspective extends several influential streams within management research. Organizational learning theory has long argued that knowledge can be accumulated, codified, transferred, and reproduced across organizational boundaries (Argote & Ingram, 2000). Similarly, absorptive capacity research demonstrates that organizations create value by enabling individuals to acquire, assimilate, transform, and exploit external knowledge (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Zahra & George, 2002). Dynamic capability theory further emphasizes that sustained competitive advantage depends on organizations' abilities to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources in response to environmental change (Teece, 2007). Viewed collectively, these perspectives suggest that entrepreneurial capability should not be interpreted exclusively as an individual characteristic but rather as an outcome of interactions between individuals and organizational systems that intentionally facilitate entrepreneurial development.

The articles synthesized in this volume extend these theoretical traditions by proposing that organizations perform a developmental function that reaches beyond coordinating productive activities. Organizational systems become entrepreneurial capability infrastructures that systematically create conditions under which novice owners acquire operational knowledge, strategic competencies, managerial confidence, and entrepreneurial legitimacy. Entrepreneurial development therefore becomes increasingly embedded within organizational architectures capable of reproducing knowledge across multiple participants while maintaining learning consistency. Such an interpretation significantly expands the role of organizations within entrepreneurship research, positioning them not merely as contexts in which entrepreneurship occurs but as mechanisms through which entrepreneurship itself is cultivated.

Replication and Ownership Scaling as Alternative Logics of Growth

Growth has traditionally occupied a central position within entrepreneurship and strategic management scholarship. Most theoretical explanations associate entrepreneurial growth with organizational expansion, innovation, market penetration, business model transformation, or increases in organizational performance indicators such as revenue, employment, and market share (Gilbert et al., 2006; McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). While these perspectives remain fundamental, they predominantly conceptualize growth as the expansion of organizations. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding growth as the systematic expansion of entrepreneurial ownership itself.

An important intellectual contribution emerging from this volume lies in shifting the analytical focus from organizational growth toward ownership growth. Rather than viewing entrepreneurial expansion solely through larger firms or rapidly growing ventures, the conceptual frameworks presented here demonstrate that entrepreneurs frequently expand through the coordinated replication of proven organizational systems. Replication therefore becomes considerably more than an operational mechanism for maintaining consistency across geographically dispersed units. It functions as a strategic capability through which organizations reproduce successful organizational templates, transfer established routines, maintain quality standards, and create additional opportunities for entrepreneurial ownership. Under this perspective, scalability depends less on continuous innovation than on the organizational capacity to reproduce reliable systems that repeatedly generate entrepreneurial participation.
Importantly, this interpretation complements rather than contradicts existing theories of innovation and dynamic capabilities. Innovation remains essential for generating new sources of value, whereas replication explains how proven organizational knowledge is transformed into scalable organizational architectures capable of sustaining long-term expansion. Dynamic capabilities enable organizations to adapt and renew themselves, while replication capabilities enable organizations to reproduce effective routines efficiently across multiple ownership contexts. Together, these complementary mechanisms provide a richer understanding of entrepreneurial growth by integrating exploration with exploitation, innovation with standardization, and organizational expansion with ownership expansion. In doing so, the studies presented in this volume suggest that entrepreneurial success should increasingly be evaluated not only by the growth of organizations but also by the organizational capacity to create, coordinate, and sustain expanding portfolios of entrepreneurial ownership.

Toward an Ownership-Centered Research Agenda

Taken together, the conceptual contributions presented in this volume point toward an emerging research trajectory that may substantially broaden the intellectual boundaries of entrepreneurship scholarship. Rather than replacing established theories of opportunity recognition, venture creation, entrepreneurial intention, or firm growth, these studies complement them by introducing entrepreneurial ownership as an explicit theoretical construct. Ownership is no longer interpreted simply as a legal consequence of venture formation or a governance attribute associated with existing firms. Instead, it emerges as a developmental process shaped by organizational systems that facilitate access, transfer capabilities, establish legitimacy, enable replication, and sustain long-term entrepreneurial participation. Viewed collectively, these complementary perspectives suggest that entrepreneurship should increasingly be understood as the systematic creation, development, and expansion of entrepreneurial ownership through organizationally enabled mechanisms.

This ownership-centered perspective also provides a more comprehensive explanation of entrepreneurial participation in contemporary economies characterized by digitalization, platform ecosystems, artificial intelligence, and increasingly modular organizational architectures. AI-enabled organizations continuously generate, codify, and disseminate knowledge across distributed networks, thereby lowering information asymmetries, accelerating organizational learning, and supporting increasingly sophisticated coordination mechanisms (Nambisan et al., 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). Under these conditions, entrepreneurial participation becomes progressively embedded within organizational ecosystems capable of orchestrating resources, capabilities, and ownership opportunities simultaneously. Consequently, future entrepreneurship research may benefit from examining how intelligent organizational systems reshape entrepreneurial accessibility, ownership trajectories, capability accumulation, and long-term value appropriation.

Several promising research directions emerge from this perspective. First, future studies may investigate how organizational systems influence ownership accessibility across different institutional and industrial settings, extending existing work on entrepreneurial ecosystems and institutional entrepreneurship. Second, greater attention should be devoted to understanding how digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and data-driven organizational infrastructures transform capability transfer, entrepreneurial learning, and ownership development. Third, scholars may increasingly shift analytical attention from isolated entrepreneurial events toward longitudinal ownership trajectories, thereby explaining how entrepreneurs accumulate capabilities, coordinate portfolios, and generate sustained economic participation throughout their entrepreneurial careers. Finally, integrating ownership-centered perspectives with strategic management theories—including dynamic capabilities, resource orchestration, business model innovation, and ecosystem governance—offers considerable opportunities for developing more comprehensive explanations of value creation within increasingly interconnected organizational environments.

Perhaps the most significant implication of the studies presented in this volume is that they collectively challenge one of entrepreneurship's most enduring assumptions: that entrepreneurship is fundamentally defined by the creation of new ventures. Venture creation undoubtedly remains an important mechanism through which entrepreneurial activity occurs. Nevertheless, the contemporary entrepreneurial landscape increasingly demonstrates that entrepreneurial participation may also emerge through organizational systems intentionally designed to lower entry barriers, cultivate entrepreneurial competencies, coordinate organizational replication, and expand ownership opportunities. Entrepreneurship therefore encompasses not only the establishment of organizations but also the systematic development of ownership as a strategic and developmental process. Recognizing this broader interpretation allows entrepreneurship research to capture forms of entrepreneurial participation that have remained conceptually underrepresented despite their growing practical significance.

The intellectual contribution of this volume ultimately lies in demonstrating that structured organizational systems can simultaneously perform multiple entrepreneurial functions: they facilitate ownership transition, accelerate capability development, reproduce organizational knowledge, support scalable expansion, and sustain entrepreneurial ownership over time. While each article develops a distinct conceptual framework, together they form a coherent theoretical architecture that repositions ownership as a central analytical lens within entrepreneurship and business management research. Such integration moves the field beyond fragmented explanations of entrepreneurial entry, learning, growth, and governance by revealing their common foundation in organizational mechanisms that create and sustain entrepreneurial ownership. As entrepreneurship continues to evolve alongside artificial intelligence, digital ecosystems, and increasingly sophisticated organizational forms, an ownership-centered perspective offers a promising conceptual platform for understanding how organizations become enduring engines of entrepreneurial participation, capability creation, and long-term value generation.

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