



Ca' Foscari  
University  
of Venice  
Department  
of Management

## Final Call for Papers

### iBEGIN Conference - International Business, Economic Geography and Innovation

Sponsored by CIBER, Fox School of Business, Temple University & the Department of Management, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

## Time and Co-location

### The role of organized and serendipitous temporary proximity in value creation

Department of Management, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

December 18-19, 2017

#### Co-organizers:

Ram Mudambi, Fox School of Business at Temple University  
Alessandra Perri, Department of Management, Ca' Foscari University Venice  
Vittoria G. Scalera, Amsterdam Business School, University of Amsterdam

#### Panelists:

##### Opening Plenary Panel

Prof. Grazia Santangelo, University of Catania (Chair)  
Prof. Sjoerd Beugelsdijk, University of Groningen  
Prof. Stefano Breschi, Bocconi University  
Prof. Myriam Mariani, Bocconi University

##### Closing Plenary Panel

Prof. John Cantwell, Rutgers Business School (Chair)  
Prof. Andrea Filippetti, Italian National Research Council & LSE  
Prof. Gary Gereffi, Duke University  
Prof. Francesco Lissoni, University of Bordeaux

#### Call for Papers

All papers that address research questions at the intersection between International Business, Economic Geography and Innovation, both theoretical and empirical, are welcome, even if not related to the conference theme.

#### Conference Theme: Time and Co-location – The Role of Organized and Serendipitous Temporary Proximity in Value Creation

Knowledge generation activities are increasingly global. Individuals, teams and organizations have learned to collaborate with faraway partners in order to take advantage of specialized skills that are distributed worldwide (Tzabbar and Vestal, 2015; Forbes, 2016). The development of information and communication technologies has facilitated the connection among these actors, who may now more easily coordinate their activities from a distance (Amin and Cohendet, 2004; Jarvenpaa, Shaw, and Staples, 2004). Yet, anecdotal evidence suggests that temporarily sharing face-to-face time, even irregularly, is conducive to a heightened level of knowledge sharing and leads to superior final outcomes (McNulty, 2016).

One of the first conceptualizations of this phenomenon goes back to the idea of “temporary clusters”, proposed by Maskell, Bathelt and Malmberg (2006). These have been defined as gatherings – i.e., trade fairs, conferences, exhibitions, international expositions - where professionals from different locations have the opportunity to meet in person and share knowledge in a time-constrained, yet powerful manner. Subsequent works in the Regional Studies tradition have supported the importance of this particular organizational arrangement for information exchange and innovation. This research suggests that while long-term geographical proximity has not become unnecessary, its benefits can be reaped

even though co-location is limited to specific stages of the interaction process through which new knowledge is developed (Torre, 2008).

The advantages of temporary co-location have also been documented in the economics literature. Empirical evidence shows that the temporary transfer of Italian managers in US firms as part of a management-training program funded by the US administration in the 1950s generated beneficial effects on firm performance, and that these effects were more persistent than those arising from the access to embodied technology granted within the same program (Giorcelli, 2016).

While temporary proximity and the resulting benefits in terms of knowledge exchange, innovation generation and overall firm performance is not a novel phenomenon, it is currently gaining renewed importance as the dispersal of innovative activities has become a widespread reality. For instance, the London Global Leadership Summit indicates that more than one third of executive managers anticipate that over half of their full-time employees will be carrying out their job-related tasks remotely by 2020 (LBS, 2014). In the context of MNEs, temporary co-location through business trips to the headquarters has been found to facilitate the contact between remote inventors based in the firm subsidiaries and middle managers who allocate resources to innovative activities, thus offering the former the opportunity to demonstrate the value of their ideas by reducing information asymmetries and building relational capital (Choudhury, 2017). Recent literature has highlighted the fact that in addition to organizationally orchestrated networks (e.g., by MNEs), individually motivated knowledge networks have also become global (Perri, Scalera and Mudambi, 2017). The former is propelled by the geographical “fine slicing” of global value chains (Mudambi, 2008), the latter driven by “brain circulation” processes and the mobility of scientists (Saxenian, 2005). In such contexts, temporary co-location may help substantiate virtual relationships. Temporary co-location can either take established remote online relationships to a higher level (moving from the exchange of codified to tacit knowledge) or set up new relationships that later can be enhanced through online communications. It can be either planned or serendipitous. The time constraints inherent to these types of organizational arrangements for learning and interacting are likely to increase the perceived value of the resulting face-to-face meetings. In turn, they increase the level of attention and commitment deployed by participating actors, thus emphasizing the opportunities to establish long-term relationships and the discovery of new avenues for knowledge and information exchange. Temporary co-location may also stimulate knowledge connectivity (Cano-Kollmann, Cantwell, Hannigan, Mudambi and Song, 2016) by enabling actors who usually work in faraway locations to start networks that last over time, thus favoring the co-evolution among mobile (inventors, MNEs) and immobile (locations) elements.

In spite of the salience of temporary co-location for today's innovative activities, we still know little about

- the mechanisms through which it may contribute to knowledge creation in firms, global value chains (GVCs) and regions,
- which forms of temporary proximity are more conducive to creative interaction, information exchange and long-term relationships,
- how and when MNEs use these arrangements, and the nature of knowledge they carry.

These are only a few of the many fruitful avenues for future research into this phenomenon.

In addition to the conference theme, all papers that address these issues and more general research questions related to the iBEGIN agenda, both theoretical and empirical, are welcome.

- **Papers can be submitted by email at the address:** 2017ibeginconference@gmail.com

- **For information on the conference, please write at** 2017ibeginconference@gmail.com or check out the conference website <http://www.unive.it/data/agenda/7/10601>

- **Submission format:** extended abstracts (“SMS-style” submissions – 5-7 pages)

- The conference will feature two special sessions:

**Special session 1: “The Nature of Innovation in Global Value Chains”**, is associated with a Special Issue on Journal of World Business (organizers and guest editors: Ari Van Assche, HEC Montréal; Kristin Brandl, University of Victoria; Alessandra Perri, Ca' Foscari University Venice; Vittoria G. Scalera, University of Amsterdam). Authors interested in submitting their works to the special session should specify it in the subject of the submission email. Papers accepted to the special session will not automatically be considered for the Special Issue.

**Special session 2: “Global innovation networks and regional variety: impact on transformation paths and innovation performance”** (organizers: Cristina Chaminade, Lund University; Monica Plechero, Ca' Foscari University Venice; Heidi Wiig Aslesen, BI Norwegian Business School). Authors interested in submitting their works to the special session should specify it in the subject of the submission email.

#### 1. Important deadlines

**July 30th, 2017:** paper submission deadline  
**September 10th, 2017:** notification of accepted papers  
**October 15th, 2017:** deadline for early bird fee  
**October 30th, 2017:** late registration deadline

#### 2. Registration fees:

**Until October 15th:**  
Early-bird standard rate: 70 euro  
Early-bird PhD rate: 45 euro  
**From October 16th to October 30th:**  
Late standard rate: 100 euro  
Late PhD rate: 75 euro

#### References

Amin, A., & Cohendet, P. (2004). *Architectures of knowledge: Firms, capabilities, and communities*. Oxford University Press on Demand.  
Cano-Kollmann, M., Cantwell, J., Hannigan, T. J., Mudambi, R., & Song, J. (2016). Knowledge connectivity: An agenda for innovation research in international business. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 47(3), 255-262.  
Choudhury, P. (2017). Innovation outcomes in a distributed organization: intrafirm mobility and access to resources. *Organization Science*, 28(2), pp. 339–354.  
Forbes (2016). “Remote Team Building in the Age of Virtual Collaboration”, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2016/06/23/remote-team-building-in-the-age-of-virtual-collaboration/>  
Giorcelli, M. (2016). The long-term effects of management and technology transfer: evidence from the U.S. productivity program. SIEPR Discussion Paper No. 16-010, *Stanford*

*Institute for Economic Policy Research.*

Jarvenpaa, S. L., Shaw, T. R., & Staples, D. S. (2004). Toward contextualized theories of trust: The role of trust in global virtual teams. *Information systems research*, 15(3), 250-267.

London Business School (2014) London Global Leadership Summit, <https://www.london.edu/news-and-events/global-leadership-summit#.WTmPCRSkwdc>

Maskell, P., Bathelt, H., & Malmberg, A. (2006). Building global knowledge pipelines: The role of temporary clusters. *European Planning Studies*, 14(8), 997-1013.

McNulty E. (2016). “Your People's Brains Need Face Time”, Strategy+Business Blog, <https://www.strategy-business.com/blog/Your-Peoples-Brains-Need-Face-Time>

Mudambi, R. (2008). Location, control and innovation in knowledge-intensive industries. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 8(5), 699-725.

Perri, A., Scalera, V. G., & Mudambi, R. (2017). What are the most promising conduits for foreign knowledge inflows? Innovation networks in the Chinese pharmaceutical industry. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 26(2), 333-355.

Saxenian, A. (2005). From brain drain to brain circulation: Transnational communities and regional upgrading in India and China. *Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID)*, 40(2), 35-61.

Torre, A. (2008). On the role played by temporary geographical proximity in knowledge transmission. *Regional Studies*, 42(6), 869-889.

Tzabbar, D., & Vestal, A. (2015). Bridging the social chasm in geographically distributed R&D teams: the moderating effects of relational strength and status asymmetry on the novelty of team innovation. *Organization Science*, 26(3), 811-829.