



Creative entrepreneurs and embeddedness in non-urban places: a resource exchange and network embeddedness logic

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Creative entrepreneurs and embeddedness in non-urban places: a resource exchange and network embeddedness logic

Structured abstract

Purpose: Drawing from resource-based theorising, the concept of network embeddedness and a process perspective on entrepreneurship, this paper establishes a conceptual framework to explain a multi-level and multi-locational network embeddedness of creative entrepreneurs in non-urban places. It challenges stylised facts about creative entrepreneurship as a predominantly urban phenomenon.

Design/methodology/approach: Based upon the conceptual framework for creative entrepreneurship in a non-urban place, an illustrative case study of small-scale creative-design entrepreneurs on the Lofoten Islands in Norway (2019) is utilised to discuss the framework.

Findings: The conceptual paper derives a fine-grained understanding about how creative entrepreneurship emerges and develops in non-urban places and contributes to a better understanding of how such places can nurture such entrepreneurship through multiple network embeddedness and resource-exchange configurations.

Originality: The paper uses an original conceptual framework.

Research limitations/implications: The article will enable further empirical research that tests, validates and, if necessary, refines the framework established.

Practical and social implications: Creative entrepreneurs should use various resource-exchange combinations with diverse networks to become locally embedded in non-urban places. Public-policy managers need to be aware of this variety that may exist with the network embeddedness of such entrepreneurs to support them and develop the location through resource provisions.

Keywords

Creative entrepreneurship, multi-level network embeddedness, multi-locational network embeddedness, resource exchanges, nascent entrepreneurship, incumbent entrepreneurship, non-urban places, illustrative case study.

Article classification: Conceptual paper

Introduction

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5 Following recent voices that emphasise the importance of context for entrepreneurship research
6 (Baker and Welter, 2020; Zahra *et al.*, 2014; Autio *et al.*, 2014), this paper explores creative
7 entrepreneurship as a contextualised phenomenon in non-urban locations (Müller and
8 Korsgaard, 2018; Huggins *et al.*, 2015; Westlund *et al.*, 2014). *Creative entrepreneurship* is
9 defined in this paper as entrepreneurial processes by small-scale creative-design and creative-
10 artistic entrepreneurs, who are aligned to the wider field of the creative economy (Howkins,
11 2002; *cf.*, Werthes *et al.*, 2017). The creative economy can be associated with a broad range of
12 “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a
13 potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual
14 property” (DCMS, 2001). According to the European Commission (2018, Article 2 (2)),
15 “[c]ultural and creative sectors are comprised of all sectors whose activities are based on
16 cultural values, or other artistic individual or collective creative expressions”. In the literature,
17 a further distinction is made between core sectors of the creative-cultural economies, consisting
18 of art-related and artistic professions, and surrounding sectors accompanying the core service
19 sectors, *e.g.*, advertising, media, IT-related professions (O’Connor, 2007, p.47). Departing from
20 these definitions and concepts, in the context of this paper, creative entrepreneurship is
21 understood as the manufacturing of creative-design and creative-artistic products and services
22 which embody, at least partly, a non-material cultural, *i.e.*, aesthetic value (*cf.*, Smit, 2001).¹
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38 Moreover, this type of entrepreneurship is explored in this paper as a phenomenon associated
39 with non-urban places², such as rural, peripheral and remote regions, which provide specific
40 contextual conditions for entrepreneurship (Leick *et al.*, 2022; Stephens and Partridge, 2011).
41 Although these contextual conditions have recently been considered as being conducive to
42 entrepreneurship (Pato and Teixeira, 2016), for instance, due to natural amenities (Schaeffer
43 and Dissart, 2018), non-urban places are notwithstanding often portrayed as being “*less dense,*
44 *less dynamic and... lacking innovation capabilities*”, and thus as disadvantaged regarding “*a*
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51 ¹ Importantly, the entrepreneurs addressed in this paper cannot be clearly assigned to the various
52 subsectors within the creative economy, which may result in richly layered motivations for their
53 entrepreneurship (*e.g.*, Faggian *et al.*, 2013 ; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007) that cannot be properly
54 internalised with the perspective applied here. Indeed, the present paper overall utilises an outsider
55 perspective (Sanchez-Burks *et al.*, 2015) on creativity and entrepreneurship through business
56 processes as it does not investigate the internal motivations of the creative enterprising individuals.

57 ² Rural, peripheral and remote locations are commonly grouped as one category labelled lagging or
58 non-core places (Stephens and Partridge, 2001; Leick and Lang, 2018). For the purpose of this paper,
59 the common denominator of these locations is that they do not classify as urban places regarding the
60 resources provided to creative individuals, as compared to urban places, such as large capital cities.

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3 *number of interrelated aspects such as distance, density, networks and resources*”
4 (Graffenberger and Vonnahme, 2019, p.532).
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8 The present paper aims to challenge such connotations of non-urban places in relation to the
9 argument that creative entrepreneurs as such depend upon an urban *milieu* with its abundance
10 (*i.e.*, quantity) of resources (*cf.*, Duxbury, 2021; Balfour *et al.*, 2018; Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a;
11 Freire-Gibb and Nielsen, 2014; McGranahan *et al.*, 2011; Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001) in order
12 to exploit opportunities and transform creativity into marketable products (de Bruin, 2005;
13 Drake, 2003). Conceptually, this argument revolves around Richard Florida’s (2019, 2005)
14 work on the creative class and its observed preference for urban lifestyles. Evidently, creative
15 entrepreneurs might depend upon a critical mass of consumers, who, by nature, are more
16 numerous in cities (Todeschini *et al.*, 2017; Mills, 2011) than in non-urban places. In addition,
17 some creative entrepreneurs will have their upstream- and downstream networks located in
18 large cities (Stahl, 2008).
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29 This paper does not focus on urban creative entrepreneurs, but devotes its attention to those
30 creative entrepreneurs, who choose to locate in non-urban places. One important, yet under-
31 studied question about them is how they utilise resources from various networks that span
32 across different locations in order to start and develop a creative business outside cities (*cf.*,
33 Lazzeretti and Vecco, 2018; Wenting *et al.*, 2011; McGranahan *et al.*, 2011). For the
34 conceptualisation of this under-studied question, it is assumed that creative entrepreneurs in
35 non-urban places operate a small-scale manufacturing firm of creative products (Bakas *et al.*,
36 2019) that can be performed outside urban places. This renders the entrepreneurs less dependent
37 upon resources provided through proximity-based global supply-networks, notably when the
38 entrepreneurs do not depend upon a localised (mass) consumption of their goods or services
39 (*cf.*, Solomon and Mathias, 2020; Trip and Romein, 2014). Hence, they may take advantage of
40 the arbitrage of locational benefits according to their personal preferences and needs.³
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51 Against this backdrop, a conceptual framework will be established that draws from a networked
52 resource-based perspective (Lavie, 2006; Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001), the notion of socio-
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57 ³ This conceptualisation overlaps to some extent with the stylised facts about lifestyle entrepreneurship.
58 Commonalities lie in the value-based and passion-driven act of enterprising (Tomassini *et al.*, 2021) that does
59 not always correspond to economic principles (Reid, 2021). However, creative entrepreneurship embraces the
60 creative economy, whereas lifestyle entrepreneurship may be situated in a variety of (creative or non-creative)
contexts, such as sports and leisure sectors, tourism and agriculture.

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3 spatial embeddedness (Uzzi 1997; Hess, 2004; *cf.* Simsek *et al.*, 2003), and a process
4 perspective on entrepreneurship (Hite, 2005; Hite and Hesterly, 2001; *cf.*, Langley *et al.*, 2013).
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6 It proposes that creative entrepreneurship in non-urban places can be understood as ***a mutually***
7 ***resource-dependent and resource-providing entrepreneurial process*** (Alvarez and Busenitz,
8 2001), leading to a ***complex multi-level and multi-locational network embeddedness*** of the
9 entrepreneur. Because creative entrepreneurs retrieve valuable resource sets from networks
10 both in the non-urban location and elsewhere, and also provide such resource bundles to
11 networks in the non-urban location and in other places, their multi-locational and multi-level
12 resource exchanges shape a socio-spatial network embeddedness in the non-urban place.
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14 Thereby, an answer will be provided to the unresolved question about the interplay of resource
15 exchanges taking place in various networks with which the entrepreneurs are aligned by
16 pointing to a variety of possible network-embeddedness configurations (*cf.*, Hoang and
17 Antoncic, 2003). The framework also hypothesises that, irrespective of the specific network-
18 embeddedness configuration, a minimal level of local network embeddedness is a prerequisite
19 to sustain creative entrepreneurship in the non-urban place. An illustrative case study is used
20 to demonstrate the logic of the framework through portraits of five creative entrepreneurs from
21 the Lofoten Islands, a rural and remote Norwegian creativity hub.
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34 The paper makes the following contributions to the literature: firstly, although the literature
35 addresses specific creative entrepreneurs (*e.g.*, in tourism or cultural fields) located outside
36 urban locations (for instance, Duxbury, 2021; Mahon *et al.*, 2018), only very few studies
37 demonstrate how creative individuals, such as small-scale design (Gu, 2014; Jansson and Power
38 2010; Masson *et al.*, 2007), artistic (Sasaki, 2010) or artisanal entrepreneurs (Bakas *et al.*,
39 2019), establish themselves based upon resource-exchanges and networking outside globally-
40 operating, urbanised industries. Both Chen and Tseng (2021) and Chang and Chen (2020)
41 address network exchanges of creative entrepreneurs, however, without including non-urban
42 locations in their analysis. This results in a lack of empirical research about counter-urban
43 entrepreneurs and the role of their networking and resource exchanges in this sector that could
44 motivate theory-building. Hence, this paper contributes to a better understanding of such
45 network-based regional entrepreneurship in the studied segment of the creative economy.
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47 Secondly, the paper demonstrates on a conceptual level the intertwining of network-based
48 resource exchanges (Lavie, 2006) and the resulting network-embeddedness configurations
49 during the entrepreneurial process (Hite and Hesterly, 2001). Notably, the distinction between
50 spatially-organised resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in networks during
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nascent *versus* incumbent entrepreneurship offers explanatory value because it conceptualises how entrepreneurs become locally embedded through the twofold interaction mechanisms of resource-dependency and resource-provision, without becoming locked-in a given network structure (Grillitsch, 2019). This distinction furthermore enables an initial theoretical description of how creative (and other) entrepreneurs turn into potential role models in non-urban locations (Berglund *et al.*, 2016). Thirdly, the conceptualisation of various network-embedded configurations enhances the understanding of how the social embeddedness (Jack and Anderson, 2002) and spatial embeddedness (Kalantaridis and Bika, 2006) of entrepreneurs in networks interact during the entrepreneurial journey. Although this intertwining through resource exchanges will be presented as a complex phenomenon, the framework reduces this complexity by offering a fine-grained description of how local network embeddedness can be generated and sustained (Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a).

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: the next section will present the related literature, which is followed by a section introducing the conceptual framework. Subsequently, we will present the illustrative case study before the conceptual framework will be discussed in the light of the example. The final section will provide the conclusion, the theoretical and empirical implications.

Related literature

Creative entrepreneurship

Policy-oriented definitions (*e.g.*, European Commission, DCMS, 2001) associate a broad range of heterogeneous sectors with the creative economy, in general, and creative entrepreneurship, in particular, as part of this wide domain. Indeed, the notion of creative entrepreneurship is not anchored in a clearly denominated definition (Hausmann and Heinze, 2016). Smit (2001, p.169) define creative entrepreneurs as follows: “*they all concentrate on economic activities dedicated to producing goods and services with mainly aesthetic and symbolic value*”. For this production, creativity represents an important, yet rather indeterminate, input factor (Belitski and Desai, 2016). As Freire-Gibb and Nielsen (2014) claim, creative persons have specific personality traits that are conducive for entrepreneurial ventures, such as independence, achievement needs, high risk-taking, an intrinsic motivation derived from the work itself, a rather low extrinsic motivation from money and prestige alone, and self-confidence. Another defining characteristic

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3 of creative entrepreneurs is that these individuals tend to work under precarious conditions
4 (Gurova and Morozova, 2018).
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8 For the purpose of this paper, it is assumed that creative entrepreneurs unite two different
9 characteristics: they are, to some extent, at least, creative-artistic individuals, who have no
10 principal interest in commercialisation, on the one hand, and they are also businesspeople, who
11 market and sell commercialisable pieces of art, or related “output” of creative work, on the
12 other (Mazzoni and Lazzaretti, 2018; de Bruin, 2005). In addition, their professional choices
13 are often driven by lifestyle decisions (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006). Because of their hybrid
14 nature, these entrepreneurs might find it difficult to earn sufficient money and sustain a certain
15 standard of living (Oakley, 2013), particularly because not all their creative activities respond
16 to the economic principles of markets (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007).
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25 Accordingly, the understanding of creative entrepreneurs in this paper relates to creative
26 enterprising individuals, such as designers, artists, or small-scale artistic-artisan manufacturers
27 and providers of creative-artistic content, who manage to transform, at least to a large extent,
28 their artistic, design, and/or artisanal production into a marketable and commercial solution that
29 meets a certain demand in the market – through a combination of a physical product or
30 intangible service with an aesthetic-symbolic value (*cf.*, Aakko and Niinimäki, 2018; Mazzoni
31 and Lazzaretti, 2018; Overdiek, 2016). This understanding is in line with the general
32 determinants and behavioural traits of entrepreneurs (Cuervo *et al.*, 2007; Reynolds, 2005).
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41 ***The locational choices of creative entrepreneurs***

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44 Undoubtedly, creative entrepreneurship is contingent upon a creative *milieu* as a necessary
45 field-level condition, including the individual entrepreneur’s social capital in this *milieu* (Scott,
46 2006; Drake, 2003). Therefore, this type of entrepreneurship has commonly been considered as
47 a prototypical urban phenomenon, which resonates with Richard Florida’s (2019, 2005) theory
48 of the urban creative class that needs the abundance of resources in such places, such as
49 tolerance for creative lifestyles, technology, and a diversity of social networks. In fact, the
50 empirical literature addressing this theory focuses mainly on urban regions (Konrad and Höllen,
51 2021; Haisch and Klöpper, 2015; Faggian *et al.*, 2013). According to the logic of Florida’s
52 theory, non-urban places are seemingly less resource-providing for creative entrepreneurs (*cf.*
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Anderson, 2000), which is confirmed by several studies (Wijngaarden *et al.*, 2019; Wenting *et al.*, 2011; Smit, 2011).

Notwithstanding this, recent voices have criticised the lack of attention for non-urban places when it comes to the creative economy (for instance, policy targeting this sector; Duxbury, 2021). In addition, other empirical studies show how such entrepreneurs choose to locate outside cities, for example, Brydges and Hracs (2019), who describe how independent fashion entrepreneurs establish an alternative home base in peripheral locations. Therefore, based upon the ambiguous evidence from the recent literature, Florida's hypothesis can be criticised for its lack of attention to creative professions that have been observed in non-urban places, as McGranahan *et al.* (2011, p.530) state: "*some creative workers may choose to forego higher urban earnings in exchange for the quality of life found in places endowed with natural amenities and that were this occurs, it may lead to business formation and economic growth, facilitated in part by the attraction of more creative class members.*" Quite clearly, creative entrepreneurs *do* operate in various regional contexts (Cuervo, 2005), including non-urban places.

Entrepreneurship and the notion of socio-spatial embeddedness

Recent theoretical accounts have emphasised socio-spatial embeddedness as an important driver of entrepreneurship, both during the start-up stage and in the subsequent business development (Wigren-Kristofersen *et al.*, 2019; Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a; Jack and Anderson, 2002). Scott (2006, p.4) defines the socio-spatial embeddedness of an entrepreneur as follows: "*...the entrepreneur is not just a lonely individual pursuing a personal vision, but also a social agent situated within a wider system of production that can be represented as an actual and latent grid of interactions and opportunities in organizational and geographical space.*" Departing from this definition, the socio-spatial embeddedness of an entrepreneur has two dimensions.

Social embeddedness

Socio-spatial embeddedness is deeply entrenched with the social capital of an entrepreneur that resides in the social relationships and networks of these relationships with others (McKeever *et al.*, 2014; Granovetter, 1985). This ***social embeddedness*** is defined as "*the degree to which*

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3 *commercial transactions take place through social relations and networks of relations”* (Uzzi,
4 1999, p.482). The social relationships of entrepreneurs include both ego-networks, such as
5 private relationships with family members, friends, and colleagues, and professional, business-
6 oriented networks with other entrepreneurs, business partners, and/or public-policy actors
7 (Greve and Salaff, 2003). It can be argued that the social embeddedness denotes the belonging
8 of an entrepreneur to communities of like-minded people, both privately and professionally
9 (Anderson and Jack, 2002; Uzzi, 1997), and it builds the basis of an entrepreneur’s commitment
10 to provide resources to networks (Håkansson and Snehota, 2017).
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19 As the transactions that are exchanged in such networks are typically inter-dependent and often
20 reciprocal, entrepreneurs become inter-connected with other actors through such transactions
21 taking place in various networks (Håkansson and Snehota, 2017). Thus, from the perspective
22 of entrepreneurship theories, it has been stated that social embeddedness through networks
23 represents a core resource for entrepreneurs, notably in the initial stages of the entrepreneurial
24 process (Franco and Haase, 2013; Witt, 2004), which has a positive effect on the potential for
25 opportunity-creation and growth (Anderson and Jack, 2002).
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32 *Spatial embeddedness*

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36 According to Hess (2004), embeddedness bears a spatially defined notion. However, what
37 precisely the *spatial (or territorial) embeddedness* of an entrepreneur (McKeever *et al.*, 2015,
38 Knoblen and Oerlemans, 2006) means is harder to define. Since entrepreneurship often
39 constitutes a local or regional phenomenon (Feldman, 2001), this paper relates to the local-
40 regional scale, such as a village, a city, or a sub-national region, *e.g.*, a county. This scale is
41 often decisive for the shaping of both the place-specific advantages for entrepreneurs (for
42 instance, natural amenities, Schaeffer and Dissart, 2018) and the potential limitations (*e.g.*, a
43 lack of public-policy support, Huggins and Thompson, 2015; Hite, 2005). In the literature
44 (Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a; Kalantaridis and Bika, 2007), the local embeddedness of an
45 entrepreneur is commonly associated with manifold benefits accruing to both the entrepreneur
46 and the location, which may result in a symbiosis of the entrepreneur and the location. Such a
47 symbiosis will probably be the outcome of entrepreneurial processes when local (spatial)
48 embeddedness strongly overlaps with social embeddedness and an integration of social with
49 local networks of the entrepreneur takes place. In the literature on creativity and
50 entrepreneurship, creative clusters are often referred to as hubs in which spatial embeddedness
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(commonly as local embeddedness) materialises (Picone and Komorowski, 2020; Chapain and Comunian, 2010).

However, the exact relationship between social embeddedness, on the one hand, and local (spatial) embeddedness, on the other, is not fully clear. In this paper, the embeddedness of entrepreneurs is related to transactions in networks. From this perspective, Dahl and Sorensen (2009) show that Danish entrepreneurs value social networks and spatial proximity to social networks higher than purely regional factors, which points to a greater importance of *social* embeddedness, as compared to *local* embeddedness. In a similar vein, McKeever *et al.* (2015) find that a mix of social and spatial factors, to wit, socio-spatial embeddedness, leads to a commitment on the part of entrepreneurs to their location, one which goes beyond mere business-related activities (Bürcher, 2017). Ultimately, the lack of clear-cut empirical evidence renders it necessary to develop a theory-based framework to study the relationship of local network embeddedness and social factors supporting embeddedness.

A conceptual framework of the resource-dependent and resource-providing multi-level network embeddedness of creative entrepreneurs

To this aim, a conceptual framework is established, which combines arguments from resource-based theorising about resource-exchange mechanisms of creative entrepreneurs with a network-embeddedness perspective.

Resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in entrepreneurial networks:

Nascent versus incumbent entrepreneurs

As a matter-of-fact, resources are vital to all entrepreneurs, including creative entrepreneurs (Chang and Chen, 2020), as they enable entrepreneurs to exploit initial opportunities and/or to develop new opportunities emerging during the entrepreneurial process (Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001). From a network-embeddedness perspective, creative entrepreneurs – like any other entrepreneurs – are both resource-dependent upon the network (in that they retrieve valuable resource bundles from networks) and resource-providing to the network (in that they provide resource bundles to networks). This assumption reflects an explanation that draws from social capital theory (Uzzi, 1997; Granovetter, 1985): social networks constitute a source of resource bundles for entrepreneurs (Lavie, 2006) and represent complementary value-creating settings

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3 for them (Hite, 2005), which can provide relational rents for individual entrepreneurs based
4 upon network relationships. Resource bundles consist of distinct sets of physical (land, office,
5 production space, human capital) and intangible assets (information, attitudes, skills) or
6 knowledge, inspiration and contacts (Lavie, 2006; Jarillo, 1989), including the social relations
7 themselves (Uzunidis *et al.*, 2014). As creative entrepreneurs might depend upon amenities in
8 the specific location, place-specific amenities, such as the recreational and inspirational value
9 of the natural environment, represents a resource in itself in non-urban places (Korsgaard *et al.*,
10 2015b; McKeever *et al.*, 2015). According to sociological accounts (Granovetter, 1985; Uzzi,
11 1997), it is vital to understand that the resource bundles available through networks are
12 accessible for entrepreneurs who are embedded in the networks.
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22 How do entrepreneurs become embedded? This actually happens when they withdraw resources
23 or resource bundles from, or provide resources for, other actors (individuals or firms) aligned
24 to social networks, and hence interact with them (*cf.*, Greenberg *et al.*, 2018; Wincent and
25 Westerberg, 2006). A resource-dependent exchange is when the social-network relations of an
26 entrepreneur provide important resource bundles to the entrepreneur.⁴ Moreover, a resource-
27 providing exchange takes place when entrepreneurs transfer resources to the networks that other
28 network actors may access through the social relationships occurring in the networks. Hence,
29 resource-dependent and resource-providing network transactions are paramount to understand
30 how the network embeddedness of creative entrepreneurs is generated in a location, both in
31 non-urban places and anywhere else.
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41 Furthermore, different stages in the entrepreneurial process of creative individuals are
42 considered by differentiating between individuals who are intending to start a self-employed
43 business in the near future, or who have freshly started up (defined as ‘nascent entrepreneurs’),
44 and individuals who are already operational on a self-employed basis (‘incumbent
45 entrepreneurs’) [*cf.*, Fritsch and Sorgner, 2014; Tello *et al.*, 2012]. The different stages that can
46 be conceptually outlined are in line with the process model proposed by Wright and Stigliani
47 (2013), in which the access to resources and their orchestration facilitates entrepreneurial
48 growth. Hence, nascent entrepreneurs in the initial stages of their entrepreneurial journey are
49 more resource-dependent than incumbent entrepreneurs in later operational stages of business
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60 ⁴ It is acknowledged that value creation through relationships, *e.g.*, in networks will not happen automatically,
and value appropriation and value sharing issues might arise, which can obstruct network-based value creation
(Lepak *et al.*, 2007). However, this perspective is not explicitly considered in the present paper.

development, because the liabilities of newness and smallness (Aldrich and Auster, 1986; Stinchcombe, 1965) affect them differently in the early stage, as compared to later stages (Hite, 2005; *cf.*, Sullivan and Ford, 2014; Newbert and Tornikoski, 2013). As incumbent entrepreneurs, creative entrepreneurs typically become more resource-endowed and thereby empowered to exploit new market opportunities (Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001).⁵ It then becomes more likely that incumbent entrepreneurs provide resources or resource bundles to networks and depend upon them to a lesser extent. In particular, creative entrepreneurs can provide important resources by shaping creative identities in non-urban places, which might compensate for a lack of critical mass of creative individuals (Berglund *et al.*, 2016). By this token, entrepreneurs may form part of a resource-providing infrastructure in a non-urban place.

***Resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in entrepreneurial networks:
Multiple configurations of socio-spatial embeddedness***

Network embeddedness, derived from resource exchanges in networks, is another vital aspect for entrepreneurs to succeed (Huggins and Thompson, 2015). During their entrepreneurial process, the social networks in which entrepreneurs are embedded and exchange resources vary, as Hite and Hesterly (2001) describe: during nascent entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs become socially-embedded mainly through identity-based ego-networks (personal contact networks). However, during later stages of incumbent entrepreneurship, these networks may become less important and/or be supplemented by professional and calculative networks (Hite and Hesterly, 2001). Hence, the social embeddedness of entrepreneurs is associated with different types of social networks at play over time.

Concerning the spatial embeddedness of entrepreneurs (Huggins and Thompson, 2015), a high degree of local embeddedness is usually considered as being supportive of successful entrepreneurship in a location because entrepreneurs benefit from the overlap of their social and local network embeddedness (Farinha *et al.*, 2018; Greenberg *et al.*, 2018; Kalantaridis and Bika, 2006). Notwithstanding this, entrepreneurs can become too strongly embedded in the local social networks (Huggins and Thompson, 2015); as a result, they might be confronted with limitations regarding the access of social capital, for example, because of rigid norms or conformity pressures (Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a). Furthermore, a strong local embeddedness may

⁵ It is important to mention that this paper does not explicitly conceptualise the network quality and structure during the entrepreneurial journey, as, for instance, Sullivan and Ford (2014) investigate.

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3 not suffice for entrepreneurs to become socially embedded, and they may need to combine local
4 and external social networks to acquire all the resources that are necessary for their
5 entrepreneurship (Tuitjer and Küpper, 2020; Greenberg *et al.*, 2018; Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a).
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7 An example of this can be found in the fact that, during later stages of the entrepreneurial
8 process, entrepreneurs might need to buy-in specific competencies or knowledge to develop
9 their business further. Concerning creative entrepreneurs, Hauge *et al.* (2009) demonstrate that
10 the spatial embeddedness of fashion entrepreneurs in Sweden is determined by both local and
11 global networks. Hermanson *et al.* (2018) and Gu (2014), however, still find a higher relevance
12 of local embeddedness for creative professions, especially when local and social networks are
13 overlapping.
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22 Hence, the existing literature on the network embeddedness of creative entrepreneurs highlights
23 that such entrepreneurs can retrieve resources or resource bundles from and provide resources
24 for networks aligned with different places⁶, which is associated with various configurations of
25 their socio-spatial embeddedness throughout their entrepreneurial process. This leads to the
26 assumption that multiple embeddedness constellations exist for nascent *versus* incumbent
27 entrepreneurs.
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34 **Setting the context**

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38 To exemplify the conceptual framework for the context studied, an illustrative case study is
39 used, which will exemplify the key mechanisms described and enable subsequent empirical
40 research. The embedding of an illustrative case in a conceptual paper is in line with Lindgreen
41 *et al.* (2021), who suggest that, while empirical information plays a minor role when conceptual
42 frameworks are derived from theory, the context of the phenomena studied should be
43 empirically illustrated. Hence, for the framework presented, theory is the point of departure,
44 and context information retrieved from a real-world example is utilised to broaden the
45 perspective, thereby aligning the concept with its purpose (Lindgreen *et al.*, 2021).
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59 ⁶ Resource exchanges take place in a digitised world nowadays, which renders the spatial distance less relevant.
60 This paper will, however, not focus on this condition because it is not critical to the understanding of this paper.

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3 The journeys of five selected creative entrepreneurs⁷ from the Lofoten Islands in Northern
4 Norway are traced retrospectively through narrative interviews (Johansson, 2004); this non-
5 urban location is considered as a rural and remote locality with seasonal tourism activities and
6 otherwise traditional fishery-based local industries, and it was selected for several reasons:
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8 firstly, this non-urban place has recently attracted Norwegian creative individuals because of
9 the abundant natural amenities (wild nature, rough sea climate, open sea) and place-based
10 opportunities (including economic advantages, such as available cheap housing and affordable
11 workshop space). Secondly, the local communities are said to show an open-mindedness to
12 strangers and a strong will to collaborate at local level, which forms part of the local mindset.
13 Thirdly, this place was selected due to its remoteness because Norway has traditionally
14 incorporated a mentality of supporting remote areas as a social value for communities, including
15 entrepreneurs (Knudsen, 2018), which is reflected, for instance, in national-regional policy
16 schemes.
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27 The five entrepreneurs (Table 1) can be classified as remigrated locals or are other Norwegians
28 who had moved to the Lofoten Islands from, *e.g.*, the capital city of Oslo, or other European
29 metropolitan regions. One of the entrepreneurs did not permanently move to the non-urban
30 place, but commutes to it from another Scandinavian location. Hence, the family and
31 community ties of the five entrepreneurs are presumed of different intensities. The
32 entrepreneurs also have diverse educational and professional backgrounds, but a common
33 denominator with all five is that they had shown a strong preference for creative-design and
34 creative-artistic work early on in their professional lives. They operate in jewellery, art, pottery,
35 fashion and accessory design/manufacturing, and one runs an event hotel with an emphasis on
36 cultural-creative values, such as art-design exhibitions, art courses, musical concerts and events,
37 *etc.* When the interviews were conducted, the entrepreneurs were incumbent entrepreneurs and
38 had their businesses in operation on the Lofoten Islands.⁸
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50 Table 1 about here
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54 ⁷ The five entrepreneurs were selected through initial contacts made by the authors and subsequent snowballing
55 searches in line with a purposive-sampling strategy (Miles *et al.*, 2013); this strategy, ultimately, served the
56 purpose of providing a "sample of convenience" for the sake of the illustrative case study used. From a total of
57 twelve entrepreneurs contacted initially, five entrepreneurs agreed to take part in personal interviews, which
58 took place in 2019. Three additional interviews were held in 2022 with Lofoten residents living outside these
59 islands in order to verify the contextual description of the non-urban place.

60 ⁸ Although explicit growth and development indicators were not asked for, it became clear from the interviews
that all four entrepreneurs hold an established, and supposedly, growing business in the location.

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5 Notwithstanding the theoretical focus of the illustrative case study, the standards for qualitative
6 research were abided to: the interviews with a duration of between 50 and 120 minutes were
7 conducted during on-site field research in personal meetings with the entrepreneurs on their
8 premises. All interviews were tape-recorded, summarised during the fieldwork and
9 subsequently transcribed. The initial questions relate to the background of the entrepreneur, the
10 business idea and the entrepreneurial process, including the role of the location. Further
11 questions addressed the embeddedness categories which were operationalised through the
12 notion of a network, more specifically, the types of networks and interaction within the
13 networks reported by the interviewees.⁹ The data analysis followed traditional coding principles
14 by an initial search for overarching first-level categories and subsequent
15 modifications/refinements of these categories (Miles *et al.*, 2013; Saldaña, 2013). The four
16 research propositions provided guidance during the data analysis, and the team of authors held
17 several meetings to discuss the data analysis and validate all findings against the backdrop of
18 the conceptual framework.
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31 Discussion

32 33 34 *Resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in entrepreneurial networks:* 35 *Nascent versus incumbent entrepreneurs* 36 37 38

39 The five creative entrepreneurs have become embedded through resource-dependent and
40 resource-providing network exchanges (Table 2). All of them have been dependent upon local
41 resource bundles as nascent entrepreneurs: they were able to afford a house and/or physical
42 workshop in the non-urban place to start their profession, they used regional start-up funding,
43 other local financial support or the paid or unpaid work taken over by friends, family members
44 or colleagues. Not least, the abundant natural amenities inspired their creativity and attracted
45 visitors to the place and their workshops, which they were also dependent upon (and still are).
46 In a similar vein, the entrepreneurs benefited from the existence of like-minded creative
47 individuals in the area (through the exchange of information and contacts) in order to become
48 established locally. Notably, the local and regional networks represented an important resource
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58 ⁹ To comply with robust definitional criteria, the interviewers took consistently care during the interview
59 situations to re-explain and relate the embeddedness notion to the network concept introduced, so that both
60 interviewer and informant had the same understanding of the category in the interview setting.

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3 during their start-up stage. For some entrepreneurs, the attraction of visitors and tourists to the
4 region was a key resource which they continued to use during their incumbent entrepreneurship.
5 Hence, the entrepreneurs depended upon various resource categories, including location-
6 specific financial-economic and amenity-based inspirational resources.
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11 While entrepreneurs A and B mainly used local resources at the beginning of their
12 entrepreneurial journey, the nascent entrepreneurs C, D and E combined *local* and *external*
13 resources from national or international networks to resource bundles. Notwithstanding this,
14 the natural amenities in the non-urban place represent a key local resource for all five
15 entrepreneurs both during their nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship: the creative-artistic
16 *milieu* in the Lofoten region, the short distances to the local communities, easy opportunities to
17 connect with other creative individuals in the area and the unfinished nature, as compared to,
18 *e.g.*, urban areas, which provides them with inspiration for their work.
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27 Table 2 about here
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31 As incumbent entrepreneurs, the provision of resources and resource bundles to local networks
32 became part of their resource exchanges in networks, albeit to varying degrees for the five
33 entrepreneurs portrayed. Entrepreneur A provided courses about sustainable consumption and
34 environmental protection to the local residents, and, moreover, collaborated closely with other
35 creative individuals on new events and festivals, as well as local associations. However, this
36 entrepreneur is involved in networks through resource provisions to a lesser extent given the
37 self-employed status without any employees and a preference for solo work as an artist. By
38 contrast, entrepreneur B is more strongly resource-providing to the location with investments
39 both in the place and in the local creative community, *e.g.*, as the founder and organiser of a
40 local cultural event and through voluntary service on company boards in local-regional business
41 associations. Entrepreneurs C and D, in turn, seem to be less place-dependent in comparison
42 with A and B. However, they deliberately provide resources to the place, for example, to local
43 networks by organising new cultural events that attract both more and different types of visitors.
44 Entrepreneur E has not been directly providing resources to the local communities but engages
45 in local networking rather passively and indirectly. Irrespective of this variety, the strong
46 collaboration on local networking and cultural-creative events exemplifies resource-providing
47 exchanges to local networks that matter for all five entrepreneurs. Hence, the resource-
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3 providing exchanges relate largely to social resources which support the development of a
4 place-based creative community.
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8 ***Resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in entrepreneurial networks:***

9 ***Multiple configurations of socio-spatial embeddedness***

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13 Different resource exchanges can be identified with the five creative entrepreneurs (Table 2),
14 which reflects various network-embeddedness configurations.
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18 *Social network embeddedness dimension*

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22 In line with Hite (2005) and Hite and Hesterly (2001), the former nascent entrepreneurs strongly
23 relied upon their private social networks (families, friends, colleagues, *etc.*), whereas they later
24 expanded these networks during their incumbent entrepreneurship by including more
25 professional, market-based network relationships (for instance, with external suppliers).
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27 However, the private and professional social networks do also overlap to a large extent for the
28 creative entrepreneurs. Hence, with regard to their embeddedness through resource exchanges
29 in social networks, a combination of private and professional networks is at work which
30 supports the embeddedness of the entrepreneurs during their entrepreneurial journey.
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37 *Spatial network embeddedness dimension*

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41 The pattern of the spatial network embeddedness observed shows more variety: entrepreneurs
42 A and B have mainly used local private and professional networks to become embedded in the
43 location both during their nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship. In these cases, the social
44 and spatial (local) network dimensions overlap strongly, while external social networks play
45 only a minor role for resource exchanges. Entrepreneurs C and D, by contrast, have been
46 retrieving resources from local *and* external social networks. For them, the social-network
47 embeddedness and the local-network embeddedness dimensions do not fully overlap, and these
48 entrepreneurs become embedded in social networks in the locality and outside the location. For
49 entrepreneur E, the local social networks are of limited importance because this entrepreneur is
50 embedded mostly in international networks through resource exchanges.
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3 *Towards specifying different configurations of network embeddedness through resource-*
4 *exchanges*
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8 Based upon these various embeddedness configurations observed, the following configurations
9 of network embeddedness can be specified: firstly, while the private networks of the creative
10 entrepreneurs are deeply intertwined with their professional networks, their local and external
11 social networks may, but do not necessarily have to, overlap. Secondly, not all resource
12 exchanges are thus organised in networks in the non-urban place; instead, different spatial
13 configurations of resource exchanges in social networks emerge, which lead to a local network
14 embeddedness in combination with a (potential or actual) embeddedness in external networks,
15 *i.e.*, outside of the locality. Thirdly, there is variation in the configurations of socially and
16 locally embedded creative entrepreneurs through network-based resource exchanges that are
17 associated with a non-urban place.
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27 Hence, the network embeddedness of creative entrepreneurs over time in non-urban places
28 should be understood as a multi-level process in which different combinations of networked
29 resource exchanges occur across different spatial scales, rendering these exchanges multi-
30 locational (Table 3). This gives rise to consider network-embeddedness levels in terms of a
31 lower or higher embeddedness along the two dimensions of social *versus* local (spatial) network
32 embeddedness. However, within the framework of this study, it is not possible to identify the
33 specific level of embeddedness, as it only aims to point to the – hitherto under-studied – variety
34 of combinations that achieve network embeddedness through resource exchanges during the
35 entrepreneurial journey – and not to operationalise this variety. What can be derived from the
36 illustrative case study is that a high degree of local network embeddedness that overlaps with
37 social network embeddedness in the locality (here, entrepreneurs A and B) may reduce the
38 dependency of nascent creative entrepreneurs upon a necessary quantity of amenities (such as
39 a high number of like-minded creative individuals). Moreover, even in cases of a lower degree
40 of network embeddedness with creative entrepreneurs in non-urban places (because their key
41 networks reside elsewhere), these entrepreneurs may still benefit from local resource exchanges
42 because they can become crucial resource-providing actors, particularly during their incumbent
43 entrepreneurship, and contribute to the attractiveness of the place for other creative individuals.
44 Hence, there may exist a *minimal degree of local network embeddedness* without which no
45 creative entrepreneur would sustain a business in a non-urban place after the nascent
46 entrepreneurship phase. The illustrative case study has, moreover, brought to the fore that
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3 different resource types are at play in shaping the network embeddedness: economic-financial
4 resources, natural amenities as inspirational resources, and social community-based resources.
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6 This latter finding provides a useful point of departure for expanding the framework, including
7 a specification of how the minimal degree of local network embeddedness might be understood
8 and materialised.
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13 Table 3 about here
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17 **Conclusion and implications**

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20 Wigren-Kristofersen *et al.* (2019) have recently criticised static, one-dimensional or binary
21 notions of embeddedness in entrepreneurship research that fail to advance theoretical debates.
22 Indeed, for creative entrepreneurship, a broader conceptualisation is needed that will not only
23 capture a processual perspective on the entrepreneurial journey but also incorporate the nature
24 of creative professions by means of sketching the relevant resource exchanges in relation to the
25 variety of networks in which creative entrepreneurs become embedded. To this aim, a
26 conceptual framework is presented which is informed by three theoretical perspectives: a
27 networked resource-based theory (Lavie, 2006); the two-dimensional notion of socio-spatial
28 embeddedness (Uzzi 1997; Hess, 2004); and a processual view on entrepreneurship (Hite, 2005)
29 as a sequence of nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship.
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39 Hence, this paper departs from the tenet that creative entrepreneurs, like any other
40 entrepreneurs, are committed to both resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in
41 various networks (Lavie, 2006) during their entrepreneurial process. Based upon both the
42 conceptual framework established and the illustration provided, which sketched the
43 entrepreneurial journey of creative entrepreneurs in a non-urban place, the following
44 conclusions can be drawn: the resource exchanges of the creative entrepreneurs taking place in
45 different networks during their entrepreneurial journey are associated with multiple network-
46 embeddedness configurations, which result in a given spatial (*i.e.*, local) embeddedness in the
47 non-urban place. Specifying this socio-spatial embeddedness of creative entrepreneurship
48 through resource exchanges means to point to the variety of possible resource-exchange
49 combinations anchored in various networks: private *versus* professional networks (multi-level),
50 and local networks in the non-urban place *versus* external networks that are located elsewhere
51 (multi-locational).
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5 With regard to the prevalent assumption that creative professions commonly represent an urban
6 phenomenon (Florida, 2019, 2005), it can be concluded that, while creative individuals will not
7 necessarily and/or automatically be attracted to urban places, their dependence upon local
8 resources that spur and maintain their creativity (*e.g.*, inspiration from local amenities) renders
9 it necessary to generate a minimal level of local network embeddedness, independently of
10 whether it be an urban or a non-urban location. Without the networked-based resource
11 exchanges that take place locally, here, in the non-urban place and lead to a minimal
12 embeddedness, the persistence of creative entrepreneurs who purposively start and develop a
13 business in such a place cannot be explained convincingly. However, and conversely, it is also
14 evident that a high degree of local network embeddedness is not always a pre-requisite for
15 creative entrepreneurs to sustain a business outside urban hubs. Instead, various configurations
16 of socio-spatial network embeddedness support their entrepreneurial journey, which allows
17 these entrepreneurs to adjust the degree of their local embeddedness to the nature of their
18 creative work. Altogether, this key finding resonates with Andersen (2013, p. 147), who stated
19 that “*the value of being embedded depends on goals*”, which translates, for creative
20 entrepreneurs, to affirm that there is ample room for different resource-exchange combinations
21 across multiple network dimensions.
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36 With these propositions, the paper contributes as follows to contemporary debates about
37 entrepreneurship, embeddedness and creative professions (Wigren-Kristofersen *et al.*, 2019;
38 Werthes *et al.*, 2017; Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a,b): firstly, a combination of a two-dimensional
39 embeddedness notion and a processual model of network embeddedness throughout the
40 entrepreneurial journey and beyond is proposed, which extends the previous literature that does
41 not apply this combination. Secondly, with regard to non-urban places, which are commonly
42 portrayed as less resource-rich than urban places (Graffenberger and Vonnahme, 2019), the
43 paper conceptualises how creative entrepreneurs use and depend upon natural amenities as an
44 inspirational resource from these places to transform their creativity into a start-up business that
45 can be developed further. While notably Florida (2019, 2005) stresses only the quantity of the
46 resources that are concentrated in a location for creative entrepreneurs, this paper
47 conceptualises both the quantity and quality of resources retrieved by entrepreneurs. Even
48 though non-urban places might not provide the same quantity of resources as their urban
49 counter-parts, this might be compensated by a higher quality in terms of a higher degree of
50 network embeddedness in the non-urban place. The combinations of local and external resource
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3 exchanges furthermore allows creative entrepreneurs to draw from the resources that they need
4 according to the creative nature of their work.
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8 The theoretical implications lead over to the limitations of the conceptual framework presented,
9 and to a research outlook. Firstly, although the findings derived from the conceptual framework
10 on network embeddedness and resource exchanges seem to be meaningful and evident, they
11 should be thoroughly tested based upon a robust set of empirical data (*e.g.*, large samples of
12 qualitative interviews with entrepreneurs) and by including several non-urban/urban places (in
13 order to have a comparison of different regional contexts). In addition, the context chosen, to
14 wit, the Lofoten Islands, represents a particular cultural *milieu* that facilitates local networking
15 and resource exchanges through open-mindedness, inclusion, and a focus on local
16 collaboration. Further research should validate the observations made for this specific regional
17 case against the background of other, and rather atypical, non-urban case regions for creative
18 individuals (*e.g.*, remote regions, formerly industrialised regions, or rural places in economic
19 decline). Secondly, the framework does not include a dynamic perspective that scrutinises the
20 changing needs of entrepreneurs during business growth and internationalisation. One open
21 question which cannot be answered in this framework is how the resource-exchange
22 combinations in relation to network-embeddedness configurations, including the minimal
23 degree of local embeddedness, would change when creative entrepreneurs in non-urban places
24 started to internationalise. A further exploration of the growth-orientation of creative
25 entrepreneurs in relation to the place embeddedness through a longitudinal sample (for instance,
26 follow-up interviews with the five entrepreneurs portrayed) will allow a more precise
27 conceptualisation of this aspect. Thirdly, the specific combinations of the embeddedness
28 categories within the two dimensions and two “items” each (such as social network
29 embeddedness with private/professional networks; and spatial network embeddedness with
30 local/external networks) should be further scrutinised for other entrepreneurship contexts,
31 which was not possible in the context of this study. In a similar vein, the possible resource
32 categories, such as natural amenities, financial-economic resources, inspirational resources,
33 social resources, *etc.*, should be specified further. Fourthly, it might be possible to extend the
34 framework proposed by including an operationalisation of the degree of embeddedness
35 achieved, including the assumed threshold of a minimal level of embeddedness in a non-urban
36 place. Finally, the conceptual framework will also need to be reviewed for other creative
37 professions that engage entrepreneurially outside urban places (*e.g.*, musicians, actors, writers,
38 or graphic designers, and other creative IT entrepreneurs). In particular, follow-up research
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3 should scrutinise the underlying concept of creative entrepreneurship by including motivational
4 factors of creative individuals (*cf.*, De Klerk, 2015; Valliere and Gegenhuber, 2014; Amabile
5 and Pillemer, 2012).
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10 This final validation will carry this conceptual framework further so that it will hopefully inform
11 public policy-makers in non-urban places and increase their awareness of the various network-
12 embeddedness configurations that matter for place development through entrepreneurship. As
13 the wider practical and societal implications of this paper, relevant actors, notably private- and
14 public-sector managers, in non-urban places should safeguard that creative individuals with
15 entrepreneurial aspirations and incumbent creative entrepreneurs have access to various local
16 networks to enable them various combinations of resource bundles for their creative work and
17 achieve a high degree of embeddedness.
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Creative entrepreneurs and embeddedness in non-urban places: a resource exchange and network embeddedness logic

Structured abstract

Purpose: Drawing from resource-based theorising, the concept of network embeddedness and a process perspective on entrepreneurship, this paper establishes a conceptual framework to explain a multi-level and multi-locational network embeddedness of **creative** entrepreneurs in non-urban places. It challenges stylised facts about **creative** entrepreneurship as a predominantly urban phenomenon.

Design/methodology/approach: Based upon the conceptual framework for **creative** entrepreneurship in a non-urban place, **an illustrative case study of small-scale creative-design entrepreneurs on the Lofoten Islands in Norway (2019) is utilised to discuss the framework.**

Findings: The conceptual paper derives a fine-grained understanding about how **creative** entrepreneurship emerges and develops in non-urban places and contributes to a better understanding of how such places can nurture such entrepreneurship through multiple network embeddedness and resource-exchange configurations.

Originality: The paper uses **an original conceptual framework.**

Research limitations/implications: The article will enable further empirical research that tests, validates and, if necessary, refines the framework established.

Practical and social implications: **Creative** entrepreneurs should use various resource-exchange combinations with diverse networks to become locally embedded in non-urban places. Public-policy managers need to be aware of this variety that may exist with the network embeddedness of such entrepreneurs to support them and develop the location through resource provisions.

Keywords

Creative entrepreneurship, multi-level network embeddedness, multi-locational network embeddedness, resource exchanges, nascent entrepreneurship, incumbent entrepreneurship, non-urban places, illustrative case study.

Article classification: Conceptual paper

Introduction

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5 Following recent voices that emphasise the importance of context for entrepreneurship research
6 (Baker and Welter, 2020; Zahra *et al.*, 2014; Autio *et al.*, 2014), this paper explores **creative**
7 entrepreneurship as a contextualised phenomenon in non-urban locations (Müller and
8 Korsgaard, 2018; Huggins *et al.*, 2015; Westlund *et al.*, 2014). **Creative entrepreneurship** is
9 defined in this paper as entrepreneurial processes by small-scale creative-design **and creative-**
10 **artistic** entrepreneurs, who are aligned to the wider field of the creative economy (Howkins,
11 2002; *cf.*, Werthes *et al.*, 2017). The creative economy can be associated with a broad range of
12 “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a
13 potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual
14 property” (DCMS, 2001). According to the European Commission (2018, Article 2 (2)),
15 “[c]ultural and creative sectors are comprised of all sectors whose activities are based on
16 cultural values, or other artistic individual or collective creative expressions”. **In the literature,**
17 **a further distinction is made between core sectors of the creative-cultural economies, consisting**
18 **of art-related and artistic professions, and surrounding sectors accompanying the core service**
19 **sectors, e.g., advertising, media, IT-related professions (O’Connor, 2007, p.47). Departing from**
20 **these definitions and concepts,** in the context of this paper, **creative** entrepreneurship is
21 understood as the manufacturing of creative-design **and creative-artistic** products and services
22 which embody, at least partly, a non-material cultural, *i.e.*, aesthetic value (*cf.*, Smit, 2001).¹
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37 Moreover, this type of entrepreneurship is explored in this paper as a phenomenon associated
38 with non-urban places², such as rural, peripheral and remote regions, which provide specific
39 contextual conditions for entrepreneurship (Leick *et al.*, 2022; Stephens and Partridge, 2011).
40 Although these contextual conditions have recently been considered as being conducive to
41 entrepreneurship (Pato and Teixeira, 2016), for instance, due to natural amenities (Schaeffer
42 and Dissart, 2018), non-urban places are notwithstanding often portrayed as being “*less dense,*
43 *less dynamic and... lacking innovation capabilities*”, and thus as disadvantaged regarding “*a*
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51 ¹ Importantly, the entrepreneurs addressed in this paper cannot be clearly assigned to the various
52 subsectors within the creative economy, which may result in richly layered motivations for their
53 entrepreneurship (*e.g.*, Faggian *et al.*, 2013 ; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007) that cannot be properly
54 internalised with the perspective applied here. Indeed, the present paper overall utilises an outsider
55 perspective (Sanchez-Burks *et al.*, 2015) on creativity and entrepreneurship through business
56 processes as it does not investigate the internal motivations of the creative enterprising individuals.

57 ² Rural, peripheral and remote locations are commonly grouped as one category labelled lagging or
58 non-core places (Stephens and Partridge, 2001; Leick and Lang, 2018). For the purpose of this paper,
59 the common denominator of these locations is that they do not classify as urban places regarding the
60 resources provided to creative individuals, as compared to urban places, such as large capital cities.

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3 *number of interrelated aspects such as distance, density, networks and resources”*
4 (Graffenberger and Vonnahme, 2019, p.532).
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8 The present paper aims to challenge such connotations of non-urban places in relation to the
9 argument that **creative** entrepreneurs as such depend upon an urban *milieu* with its abundance
10 (*i.e.*, quantity) of resources (*cf.*, Duxbury, 2021; Balfour *et al.*, 2018; Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a;
11 Freire-Gibb and Nielsen, 2014; McGranahan *et al.*, 2011; Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001) in order
12 to exploit opportunities and transform creativity into marketable products (de Bruin, 2005;
13 Drake, 2003). Conceptually, this argument revolves around Richard Florida’s (2019, 2005)
14 work on the creative class and its observed preference for urban lifestyles. Evidently, **creative**
15 entrepreneurs might depend upon a critical mass of consumers, who, by nature, are more
16 numerous in cities (Todeschini *et al.*, 2017; Mills, 2011) than in non-urban places. In addition,
17 some **creative** entrepreneurs will have their upstream- and downstream networks located in
18 large cities (Stahl, 2008).
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29 This paper does not focus on urban **creative** entrepreneurs, but devotes its attention to those
30 **creative** entrepreneurs, who choose to locate in non-urban places. One important, yet under-
31 studied question about them is how they utilise resources from various networks that span
32 across different locations in order to start and develop a creative business outside cities (*cf.*,
33 Lazzeretti and Vecco, 2018; Wenting *et al.*, 2011; McGranahan *et al.*, 2011). For the
34 conceptualisation of this under-studied **question**, it is assumed that **creative** entrepreneurs in
35 non-urban places operate a small-scale manufacturing firm of **creative** products (Bakas *et al.*,
36 2019) that can be performed outside urban places. This renders the entrepreneurs less dependent
37 upon resources provided through proximity-based global supply-networks, notably when the
38 entrepreneurs do not depend upon a localised (mass) consumption of their goods or services
39 (*cf.*, Solomon and Mathias, 2020; Trip and Romein, 2014). Hence, they may take advantage of
40 the arbitrage of locational benefits according to their personal preferences and needs.³
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51 Against this backdrop, a conceptual framework will be established that draws from a networked
52 resource-based perspective (Lavie, 2006; Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001), the notion of socio-
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57 ³ This conceptualisation overlaps to some extent with the stylised facts about lifestyle entrepreneurship.
58 Commonalities lie in the value-based and passion-driven act of enterprising (Tomassini *et al.*, 2021) that does
59 not always correspond to economic principles (Reid, 2021). However, **creative** entrepreneurship embraces the
60 creative economy, whereas lifestyle entrepreneurship may be situated in a variety of (**creative** or non-creative)
contexts, such as sports and leisure sectors, tourism and agriculture.

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3 spatial embeddedness (Uzzi 1997; Hess, 2004; *cf.* Simsek *et al.*, 2003), and a process
4 perspective on entrepreneurship (Hite, 2005; Hite and Hesterly, 2001; *cf.*, Langley *et al.*, 2013).
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6 It proposes that **creative** entrepreneurship in non-urban places can be understood as **a mutually**
7 **resource-dependent and resource-providing entrepreneurial process** (Alvarez and Busenitz,
8 2001), leading to a **complex multi-level and multi-locational network embeddedness** of the
9 entrepreneur. Because **creative** entrepreneurs retrieve valuable resource sets from networks
10 both in the non-urban location and elsewhere, and also provide such resource bundles to
11 networks in the non-urban location and in other places, their multi-locational and multi-level
12 resource exchanges shape a socio-spatial network embeddedness in the non-urban place.
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14 Thereby, an answer will be provided to the unresolved question about the interplay of resource
15 exchanges taking place in various networks with which the entrepreneurs are aligned by
16 pointing to a variety of possible network-embeddedness configurations (*cf.*, Hoang and
17 Antoncic, 2003). The framework also hypothesises that, irrespective of the specific network-
18 embeddedness configuration, a minimal level of local network embeddedness is a prerequisite
19 to sustain **creative** entrepreneurship in the non-urban place. An illustrative case study is used to
20 demonstrate the logic of the **framework through** portraits of five **creative** entrepreneurs from
21 the Lofoten Islands, a rural and remote Norwegian creativity hub.
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34 The paper makes the following contributions to the literature: firstly, although the literature
35 addresses specific creative entrepreneurs (*e.g.*, in tourism or cultural fields) located outside
36 urban locations (for instance, Duxbury, 2021; Mahon *et al.*, 2018), only very few studies
37 demonstrate how creative individuals, such as **small-scale design** (Gu, 2014; Jansson and Power
38 2010; Masson *et al.*, 2007), **artistic** (Sasaki, 2010) or artisanal entrepreneurs (Bakas *et al.*,
39 2019), establish themselves based upon resource-exchanges and networking outside globally-
40 operating, urbanised industries. Both Chen and Tseng (2021) and Chang and Chen (2020)
41 address network exchanges of creative entrepreneurs, however, without including non-urban
42 locations in their analysis. This results in a lack of empirical research about counter-urban
43 entrepreneurs and the role of their networking and resource exchanges in this sector that could
44 motivate theory-building. Hence, this paper contributes to a better understanding of such
45 network-based regional entrepreneurship in the studied segment of the creative economy.
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47 Secondly, the paper demonstrates on a conceptual level the intertwinement of network-based
48 resource exchanges (Lavie, 2006) and the resulting network-embeddedness configurations
49 during the entrepreneurial process (Hite and Hesterly, 2001). Notably, the distinction between
50 spatially-organised resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in networks during
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nascent *versus* incumbent entrepreneurship offers explanatory value because it conceptualises how entrepreneurs become locally embedded through the twofold interaction mechanisms of resource-dependency and resource-provision, without becoming locked-in a given network structure (Grillitsch, 2019). This distinction furthermore enables an initial theoretical description of how **creative** (and other) entrepreneurs turn into potential role models in non-urban locations (Berglund *et al.*, 2016). Thirdly, the conceptualisation of various network-embedded configurations enhances the understanding of how the social embeddedness (Jack and Anderson, 2002) and spatial embeddedness (Kalantaridis and Bika, 2006) of entrepreneurs in networks interact during the entrepreneurial journey. Although this intertwining through resource exchanges will be presented as a complex phenomenon, the framework reduces this complexity by offering a fine-grained description of how local network embeddedness can be generated and sustained (Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a).

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: the next section will present the related literature, which is followed by a section introducing the conceptual framework. Subsequently, we will present the illustrative case study before the conceptual framework will be discussed in the light of the example. The final section will provide the conclusion, the theoretical and empirical implications.

Related literature

Creative entrepreneurship

Policy-oriented definitions (*e.g.*, European Commission, DCMS, 2001) associate a broad range of heterogeneous sectors with the creative economy, in general, and creative entrepreneurship, in particular, as part of this wide domain. Indeed, the notion of creative entrepreneurship is not anchored in a clearly denominated definition (Hausmann and Heinze, 2016). Smit (2001, p.169) define creative entrepreneurs as follows: “*they all concentrate on economic activities dedicated to producing goods and services with mainly aesthetic and symbolic value*”. For this production, creativity represents an important, yet rather indeterminate, input factor (Belitski and Desai, 2016). As Freire-Gibb and Nielsen (2014) claim, creative persons have specific personality traits that are conducive for entrepreneurial ventures, such as independence, achievement needs, high risk-taking, an intrinsic motivation derived from the work itself, a rather low extrinsic motivation from money and prestige alone, and self-confidence. Another defining characteristic

of creative entrepreneurs is that these individuals tend to work under precarious conditions (Gurova and Morozova, 2018).

For the purpose of this paper, it is assumed that **creative** entrepreneurs unite two different characteristics: they are, **to some extent, at least, creative-artistic individuals**, who have no principal interest in commercialisation, on the one hand, and they are also businesspeople, who market and sell commercialisable pieces of art, **or related “output” of creative work**, on the other (Mazzoni and Lazzaretti, 2018; de Bruin, 2005). In addition, their professional choices are often driven by lifestyle decisions (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006). Because of their hybrid nature, these entrepreneurs might find it difficult to earn sufficient money and sustain a certain standard of living (Oakley, 2013), particularly because not all their **creative** activities respond to the economic principles of markets (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007).

Accordingly, the understanding of **creative** entrepreneurs in this paper relates to creative enterprising individuals, such as designers, artists, or small-scale artistic-artisan manufacturers and providers of creative-artistic content, who manage to transform, at least to a large extent, their artistic, design, and/or artisanal production into a marketable and commercial solution that meets a certain demand in the market – through a combination of a physical product or intangible service with an aesthetic-symbolic value (*cf.*, Aakko and Niinimäki, 2018; Mazzoni and Lazzaretti, 2018; Overdiek, 2016). This understanding is in line with the general determinants and behavioural traits of entrepreneurs (Cuervo *et al.*, 2007; Reynolds, 2005).

The locational choices of creative entrepreneurs

Undoubtedly, creative entrepreneurship is contingent upon a creative *milieu* as a necessary field-level condition, including the individual entrepreneur’s social capital in this *milieu* (Scott, 2006; Drake, 2003). **Therefore, this type of** entrepreneurship has commonly been considered as a prototypical urban phenomenon, which resonates with Richard Florida’s (2019, 2005) theory of the urban creative class that needs the abundance of resources in such places, such as tolerance for creative lifestyles, technology, and a diversity of social networks. In fact, the empirical literature addressing this theory focuses mainly on urban regions (Konrad and Höllen, 2021; Haisch and Klöpper, 2015; **Faggian *et al.*, 2013**). According to the logic of Florida’s theory, non-urban places are seemingly less resource-providing for **creative** entrepreneurs (*cf.*

Anderson, 2000), which is confirmed by several studies (Wijngaarden *et al.*, 2019; Wenting *et al.*, 2011; Smit, 2011).

Notwithstanding this, recent voices have criticised the lack of attention for non-urban places when it comes to the creative economy (for instance, policy targeting this sector; Duxbury, 2021). In addition, other empirical studies show how such entrepreneurs choose to locate outside cities, for example, Brydges and Hracs (2019), who describe how independent fashion entrepreneurs establish an alternative home base in peripheral locations. Therefore, based upon the ambiguous evidence from the recent literature, Florida's hypothesis can be criticised for its lack of attention to creative professions that have been observed in non-urban places, as McGranahan *et al.* (2011, p.530) state: "*some creative workers may choose to forego higher urban earnings in exchange for the quality of life found in places endowed with natural amenities and that were this occurs, it may lead to business formation and economic growth, facilitated in part by the attraction of more creative class members.*" Quite clearly, creative entrepreneurs do operate in various regional contexts (Cuervo, 2005), including non-urban places.

Entrepreneurship and the notion of socio-spatial embeddedness

Recent theoretical accounts have emphasised socio-spatial embeddedness as an important driver of entrepreneurship, both during the start-up stage and in the subsequent business development (Wigren-Kristofersen *et al.*, 2019; Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a; Jack and Anderson, 2002). Scott (2006, p.4) defines the socio-spatial embeddedness of an entrepreneur as follows: "*...the entrepreneur is not just a lonely individual pursuing a personal vision, but also a social agent situated within a wider system of production that can be represented as an actual and latent grid of interactions and opportunities in organizational and geographical space.*" Departing from this definition, the socio-spatial embeddedness of an entrepreneur has two dimensions.

Social embeddedness

Socio-spatial embeddedness is deeply entrenched with the social capital of an entrepreneur that resides in the social relationships and networks of these relationships with others (McKeever *et al.*, 2014; Granovetter, 1985). This ***social embeddedness*** is defined as "*the degree to which*

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3 *commercial transactions take place through social relations and networks of relations*” (Uzzi,
4 1999, p.482). The social relationships of entrepreneurs include both ego-networks, such as
5 private relationships with family members, friends, and colleagues, and professional, business-
6 oriented networks with other entrepreneurs, business partners, and/or public-policy actors
7 (Greve and Salaff, 2003). It can be argued that the social embeddedness denotes the belonging
8 of an entrepreneur to communities of like-minded people, both privately and professionally
9 (Anderson and Jack, 2002; Uzzi, 1997), and it builds the basis of an entrepreneur’s commitment
10 to provide resources to networks (Håkansson and Snehota, 2017).
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19 As the transactions that are exchanged in such networks are typically inter-dependent and often
20 reciprocal, entrepreneurs become inter-connected with other actors through such transactions
21 taking place in various networks (Håkansson and Snehota, 2017). Thus, from the perspective
22 of entrepreneurship theories, it has been stated that social embeddedness through networks
23 represents a core resource for entrepreneurs, notably in the initial stages of the entrepreneurial
24 process (Franco and Haase, 2013; Witt, 2004), which has a positive effect on the potential for
25 opportunity-creation and growth (Anderson and Jack, 2002).
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33 *Spatial embeddedness*

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35 According to Hess (2004), **embeddedness bears** a spatially defined notion. However, what
36 precisely the *spatial (or territorial) embeddedness* of an entrepreneur (McKeever *et al.*, 2015,
37 Knoblen and Oerlemans, 2006) means is harder to define. Since entrepreneurship often
38 constitutes a local or regional phenomenon (Feldman, 2001), this paper relates to the local-
39 regional scale, such as a village, a city, or a sub-national region, *e.g.*, a county. This scale is
40 often decisive for the shaping of both the place-specific advantages for entrepreneurs (for
41 instance, natural amenities, Schaeffer and Dissart, 2018) and the potential limitations (*e.g.*, a
42 lack of public-policy support, Huggins and Thompson, 2015; Hite, 2005). In the literature
43 (Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a; Kalantaridis and Bika, 2007), the local embeddedness of an
44 entrepreneur is commonly associated with manifold benefits accruing to both the entrepreneur
45 and the location, which may result in a symbiosis of the entrepreneur and the location. Such a
46 symbiosis will probably be the outcome of entrepreneurial processes when local (spatial)
47 embeddedness strongly overlaps with social embeddedness and an integration of social with
48 local networks of the entrepreneur takes place. In the literature on creativity and
49 entrepreneurship, creative clusters are often referred to as hubs in which spatial embeddedness
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(commonly as local embeddedness) materialises (Picone and Komorowski, 2020; Chapain and Comunian, 2010).

However, the exact relationship between social embeddedness, on the one hand, and local (spatial) embeddedness, on the other, is not fully clear. In this paper, the embeddedness of entrepreneurs is related to transactions in networks. From this perspective, Dahl and Sorensen (2009) show that Danish entrepreneurs value social networks and spatial proximity to social networks higher than purely regional factors, which points to a greater importance of *social* embeddedness, as compared to *local* embeddedness. In a similar vein, McKeever *et al.* (2015) find that a mix of social and spatial factors, to wit, socio-spatial embeddedness, leads to a commitment on the part of entrepreneurs to their location, one which goes beyond mere business-related activities (Bürcher, 2017). Ultimately, the lack of clear-cut empirical evidence renders it necessary to develop a theory-based framework to study the relationship of local network embeddedness and social factors supporting embeddedness.

A conceptual framework of the resource-dependent and resource-providing multi-level network embeddedness of creative entrepreneurs

To this aim, a conceptual framework is established, which combines arguments from resource-based theorising about resource-exchange mechanisms of creative entrepreneurs with a network-embeddedness perspective.

Resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in entrepreneurial networks: Nascent versus incumbent entrepreneurs

As a matter-of-fact, resources are vital to all entrepreneurs, including creative entrepreneurs (Chang and Chen, 2020), as they enable entrepreneurs to exploit initial opportunities and/or to develop new opportunities emerging during the entrepreneurial process (Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001). From a network-embeddedness perspective, creative entrepreneurs – like any other entrepreneurs – are both resource-dependent upon the network (in that they retrieve valuable resource bundles from networks) and resource-providing to the network (in that they provide resource bundles to networks). This assumption reflects an explanation that draws from social capital theory (Uzzi, 1997; Granovetter, 1985): social networks constitute a source of resource bundles for entrepreneurs (Lavie, 2006) and represent complementary value-creating settings

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3 for them (Hite, 2005), which can provide relational rents for individual entrepreneurs based
4 upon network relationships. Resource bundles consist of distinct sets of physical (land, office,
5 production space, human capital) and intangible assets (information, attitudes, skills) or
6 knowledge, inspiration and contacts (Lavie, 2006; Jarillo, 1989), including the social relations
7 themselves (Uzunidis *et al.*, 2014). As **creative** entrepreneurs might depend upon amenities in
8 the specific location, place-specific amenities, such as the recreational and inspirational value
9 of the natural environment, represents a resource in itself in non-urban places (Korsgaard *et al.*,
10 2015b; McKeever *et al.*, 2015). According to sociological accounts (Granovetter, 1985; Uzzi,
11 1997), it is vital to understand that the resource bundles available through networks are
12 accessible for entrepreneurs who are embedded in the networks.
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22 How do entrepreneurs become embedded? This actually happens when they withdraw resources
23 or resource bundles from, or provide resources for, other actors (individuals or firms) aligned
24 to social networks, and hence interact with them (*cf.*, Greenberg *et al.*, 2018; Wincent and
25 Westerberg, 2006). A resource-dependent exchange is when the social-network relations of an
26 entrepreneur provide important resource bundles to the entrepreneur.⁴ Moreover, a resource-
27 providing exchange takes place when entrepreneurs transfer resources to the networks that other
28 network actors may access through the social relationships occurring in the networks. Hence,
29 resource-dependent and resource-providing network transactions are **paramount** to understand
30 how the network embeddedness of **creative** entrepreneurs is generated in a location, both in
31 non-urban places and anywhere **else**.
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41 Furthermore, different stages in the entrepreneurial process of **creative** individuals are
42 considered by differentiating between individuals who are intending to start a self-employed
43 business in the near future, or who have freshly started up (defined as ‘nascent entrepreneurs’),
44 and individuals who are already operational on a self-employed basis (‘incumbent
45 entrepreneurs’) [*cf.*, Fritsch and Sorgner, 2014; Tello *et al.*, 2012]. The different stages that can
46 be conceptually outlined are in line with the process model proposed by Wright and Stigliani
47 (2013), in which the access to resources and their orchestration facilitates entrepreneurial
48 growth. Hence, nascent entrepreneurs in the initial stages of their entrepreneurial journey are
49 more resource-dependent than incumbent entrepreneurs in later operational stages of business
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58 ⁴ It is acknowledged that value creation through relationships, *e.g.*, in networks will not happen automatically,
59 and value appropriation and value sharing issues might arise, which can obstruct network-based value creation
60 (Lepak *et al.*, 2007). However, this perspective is not explicitly considered in the present paper.

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3 development, because the liabilities of newness and smallness (Aldrich and Auster, 1986;
4 Stinchcombe, 1965) affect them differently in the early stage, as compared to later stages (Hite,
5 2005; *cf.*, Sullivan and Ford, 2014; Newbert and Tornikoski, 2013). As incumbent
6 entrepreneurs, **creative** entrepreneurs typically become more resource-endowed and thereby
7 empowered to exploit new market opportunities (Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001).⁵ It then becomes
8 more likely that incumbent entrepreneurs provide resources or resource bundles to networks
9 and depend upon them to a lesser extent. In particular, **creative** entrepreneurs can provide
10 important resources by shaping creative identities in non-urban places, which might
11 compensate for a lack of critical mass of creative individuals (Berglund *et al.*, 2016). By this
12 token, entrepreneurs may form part of a resource-providing infrastructure in a non-urban place.

Resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in entrepreneurial networks:

Multiple configurations of socio-spatial embeddedness

27 Network embeddedness, derived from resource exchanges in networks, is another vital aspect
28 for entrepreneurs to succeed (Huggins and Thompson, 2015). During their entrepreneurial
29 process, the social networks in which entrepreneurs are embedded and exchange resources vary,
30 as Hite and Hesterly (2001) describe: during nascent entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs become
31 socially-embedded mainly through identity-based ego-networks (personal contact networks).
32 However, during later stages of incumbent entrepreneurship, these networks may become less
33 important and/or be supplemented by professional and calculative networks (Hite and Hesterly,
34 2001). Hence, the social embeddedness of entrepreneurs is associated with different types of
35 social networks at play over time.

44 Concerning the spatial embeddedness of entrepreneurs (Huggins and Thompson, 2015), a high
45 degree of local embeddedness is usually considered as being supportive of successful
46 entrepreneurship in a location because entrepreneurs benefit from the overlap of their social
47 and local network embeddedness (Farinha *et al.*, 2018; Greenberg *et al.*, 2018; Kalantaridis and
48 Bika, 2006). Notwithstanding this, entrepreneurs can become too strongly embedded in the
49 local social networks (Huggins and Thompson, 2015); as a result, they might be confronted
50 with limitations regarding the access of social capital, for example, because of rigid norms or
51 conformity pressures (Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a). Furthermore, a strong local embeddedness may

⁵ It is important to mention that this paper does not explicitly conceptualise the network quality and structure during the entrepreneurial journey, as, for instance, Sullivan and Ford (2014) investigate.

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3 not suffice for entrepreneurs to become socially embedded, and they may need to combine local
4 and external social networks to acquire all the resources that are necessary for their
5 entrepreneurship (Tuitjer and Küpper, 2020; Greenberg *et al.*, 2018; Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a).
6 An example of this can be found in the fact that, during later stages of the entrepreneurial
7 process, entrepreneurs might need to buy-in specific competencies or knowledge to develop
8 their business further. Concerning **creative** entrepreneurs, Hauge *et al.* (2009) demonstrate that
9 the spatial embeddedness of fashion entrepreneurs in Sweden is determined by both local and
10 global networks. Hermanson *et al.* (2018) and Gu (2014), however, still find a higher relevance
11 of local embeddedness for **creative** professions, especially when local and social networks are
12 overlapping.
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22 Hence, the existing literature on the network embeddedness of **creative** entrepreneurs highlights
23 that **such** entrepreneurs can retrieve resources or resource bundles from and provide resources
24 for networks aligned with different places⁶, which is associated with various configurations of
25 their socio-spatial embeddedness throughout their entrepreneurial process. This leads to the
26 assumption that **multiple embeddedness constellations exist** for nascent *versus* incumbent
27 entrepreneurs.
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34 **Setting the context**

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38 To exemplify the conceptual **framework for** the context studied, an illustrative case study is
39 used, which **will exemplify the key mechanisms described and enable** subsequent empirical
40 research. The embedding of an illustrative case in a conceptual paper is in line with Lindgreen
41 *et al.* (2021), who suggest that, while empirical information plays a minor role when conceptual
42 frameworks are derived from theory, the context of the phenomena studied should be
43 empirically illustrated. Hence, for the framework presented, theory is the point of departure,
44 and context information retrieved from a real-world example is utilised to broaden the
45 perspective, thereby aligning the concept with its purpose (Lindgreen *et al.*, 2021).
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59 ⁶ Resource exchanges take place in a digitised world nowadays, which renders the spatial distance less relevant.
60 This paper will, however, not focus on this condition because it is not critical to the understanding of this paper.

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3 The journeys of five selected **creative** entrepreneurs⁷ from the Lofoten Islands in Northern
4 Norway are traced retrospectively through narrative interviews (Johansson, 2004); this non-
5 urban location is considered as a rural and remote locality with seasonal tourism activities and
6 otherwise traditional fishery-based local industries, and it was selected for several reasons:
7 firstly, this non-urban place has recently attracted Norwegian **creative** individuals because of
8 the abundant natural amenities (wild nature, rough sea climate, open sea) and place-based
9 opportunities (including economic advantages, such as available cheap housing and affordable
10 workshop space). Secondly, the local communities are said to show an open-mindedness to
11 strangers and a strong will to collaborate at local level, which forms part of the local **mindset**.
12 Thirdly, this place was selected due to its remoteness because Norway has traditionally
13 incorporated a mentality of supporting remote areas as a social value for communities, including
14 entrepreneurs (Knudsen, 2018), which is reflected, for instance, in national-regional policy
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27 The five entrepreneurs (**Table 1**) can be classified as remigrated locals or are other Norwegians
28 who had moved to the Lofoten Islands from, *e.g.*, the capital city of Oslo, or other **European**
29 metropolitan **regions**. One of the entrepreneurs did not permanently **move** to the non-urban
30 place, but commutes to it from **another Scandinavian location**. Hence, the family and
31 community ties of the five entrepreneurs are presumed of different intensities. The
32 entrepreneurs **also** have diverse educational and professional backgrounds, but a common
33 denominator with all five is that they had shown a strong preference for creative-**design and**
34 **creative**-artistic work early on in their professional lives. They operate in jewellery, art, pottery,
35 fashion and accessory design/manufacturing, and one runs an event hotel with an emphasis on
36 cultural-creative values, such as art-design exhibitions, art courses, musical concerts and events,
37 *etc.* When the interviews were conducted, the entrepreneurs were incumbent entrepreneurs and
38 had their businesses in operation on the Lofoten Islands.⁸
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Table 1 about here

54 ⁷ The five entrepreneurs were selected through initial contacts made by the authors **and subsequent** snowballing
55 **searches in line** with a purposive-sampling strategy (Miles *et al.*, 2013); **this strategy, ultimately, served** the
56 purpose of providing a **"sample of convenience" for the sake of the** illustrative case study **used**. From a total of
57 twelve entrepreneurs contacted initially, five entrepreneurs agreed to take part in personal interviews, which
58 took place in 2019. Three additional interviews were held in 2022 with Lofoten residents living outside these
59 islands in order to verify the contextual description of the non-urban place.

60 ⁸ Although explicit growth and development indicators were not asked for, it became clear from the interviews
that all four entrepreneurs hold an established, and supposedly, growing business in the location.

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5 Notwithstanding the theoretical focus of the illustrative case study, the standards for qualitative
6 research were abided to: the interviews with a duration of between 50 and 120 minutes were
7 conducted during on-site field research in personal meetings with the entrepreneurs on their
8 premises. All interviews were tape-recorded, summarised during the fieldwork and
9 subsequently transcribed. The initial questions relate to the background of the entrepreneur, the
10 business idea and the entrepreneurial process, including the role of the location. Further
11 questions addressed the embeddedness categories which were operationalised through the
12 notion of a network, more specifically, the types of networks and interaction within the
13 networks reported by the interviewees.⁹ The data analysis followed traditional coding principles
14 by an initial search for overarching first-level categories and subsequent
15 modifications/refinements of these categories (Miles *et al.*, 2013; Saldaña, 2013). The four
16 research propositions provided guidance during the data analysis, and the team of authors held
17 several meetings to discuss the data analysis and validate all findings against the backdrop of
18 the conceptual framework.
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31 Discussion

32 *Resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in entrepreneurial networks:* 33 *Nascent versus incumbent entrepreneurs* 34 35 36 37 38

39 The five creative entrepreneurs have become embedded through resource-dependent and
40 resource-providing network exchanges (Table 2). All of them have been dependent upon local
41 resource bundles as nascent entrepreneurs: they were able to afford a house and/or physical
42 workshop in the non-urban place to start their profession, they used regional start-up funding,
43 other local financial support or the paid or unpaid work taken over by friends, family members
44 or colleagues. Not least, the abundant natural amenities inspired their creativity and attracted
45 visitors to the place and their workshops, which they were also dependent upon (and still are).
46 In a similar vein, the entrepreneurs benefited from the existence of like-minded creative
47 individuals in the area (through the exchange of information and contacts) in order to become
48 established locally. Notably, the local and regional networks represented an important resource
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58 ⁹ To comply with robust definitional criteria, the interviewers took consistently care during the interview
59 situations to re-explain and relate the embeddedness notion to the network concept introduced, so that both
60 interviewer and informant had the same understanding of the category in the interview setting.

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3 during their start-up stage. For some entrepreneurs, the attraction of visitors and tourists to the
4 region was a key resource which they continued to use during their incumbent entrepreneurship.
5 Hence, the entrepreneurs depended upon various resource categories, including location-
6 specific financial-economic and amenity-based inspirational resources.
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11 While entrepreneurs A and B mainly used local resources at the beginning of their
12 entrepreneurial journey, the nascent entrepreneurs C, D and E combined *local* and *external*
13 resources from national or international networks to resource bundles. Notwithstanding this,
14 the natural amenities in the non-urban place represent a key local resource for all five
15 entrepreneurs both during their nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship: the creative-artistic
16 milieu in the Lofoten region, the short distances to the local communities, easy opportunities to
17 connect with other creative individuals in the area and the unfinished nature, as compared to,
18 e.g., urban areas, which provides them with inspiration for their work.
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27 Table 2 about here
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31 As incumbent entrepreneurs, the provision of resources and resource bundles to local networks
32 became part of their resource exchanges in networks, albeit to varying degrees for the five
33 entrepreneurs portrayed. Entrepreneur A provided courses about sustainable consumption and
34 environmental protection to the local residents, and, moreover, collaborated closely with other
35 creative individuals on new events and festivals, as well as local associations. However, this
36 entrepreneur is involved in networks through resource provisions to a lesser extent given the
37 self-employed status without any employees and a preference for solo work as an artist. By
38 contrast, entrepreneur B is more strongly resource-providing to the location with investments
39 both in the place and in the local creative community, e.g., as the founder and organiser of a
40 local cultural event and through voluntary service on company boards in local-regional business
41 associations. Entrepreneurs C and D, in turn, seem to be less place-dependent in comparison
42 with A and B. However, they deliberately provide resources to the place, for example, to local
43 networks by organising new cultural events that attract both more and different types of visitors.
44 Entrepreneur E has not been directly providing resources to the local communities but engages
45 in local networking rather passively and indirectly. Irrespective of this variety, the strong
46 collaboration on local networking and cultural-creative events exemplifies resource-providing
47 exchanges to local networks that matter for all five entrepreneurs. Hence, the resource-
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3 providing exchanges relate largely to social resources which support the development of a
4 place-based creative community.
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8 ***Resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in entrepreneurial networks:***

9 ***Multiple configurations of socio-spatial embeddedness***

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13 Different resource exchanges can be identified with the five **creative** entrepreneurs (Table 2),
14 **which reflects various network-embeddedness configurations.**
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18 *Social network embeddedness dimension*

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22 In line with Hite (2005) and Hite and Hesterly (2001), the former nascent entrepreneurs strongly
23 relied upon their private social networks (families, friends, colleagues, *etc.*), whereas they later
24 expanded these networks during their incumbent entrepreneurship by including more
25 professional, market-based network relationships (for instance, with external suppliers).
26 However, the private and professional social networks do also overlap to a large extent for the
27 **creative** entrepreneurs. Hence, with regard to their embeddedness through resource exchanges
28 in social networks, a combination of private and professional networks is at work which
29 supports the embeddedness of the entrepreneurs during their entrepreneurial journey.
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37 *Spatial network embeddedness dimension*

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41 The pattern of the spatial network embeddedness observed shows more variety: entrepreneurs
42 A and B have mainly used local private and professional networks to become embedded in the
43 location both during their nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship. In these cases, the social
44 and spatial (local) network dimensions overlap strongly, while external social networks play
45 only a minor role for resource exchanges. Entrepreneurs C and D, by contrast, have been
46 retrieving resources from local *and* external social networks. For them, the social-network
47 embeddedness and the local-network embeddedness dimensions do not fully overlap, and these
48 entrepreneurs become embedded in social networks in the locality and outside the location. For
49 entrepreneur E, the local social networks are of limited importance because this entrepreneur is
50 embedded mostly in international networks through resource exchanges.
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3 *Towards specifying different configurations of network embeddedness through resource-*
4 *exchanges*
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8 Based upon these various embeddedness configurations observed, the following configurations
9 of network embeddedness can be specified: firstly, while the private networks of the creative
10 entrepreneurs are deeply intertwined with their professional networks, their local and external
11 social networks may, but do not necessarily have to, overlap. Secondly, not all resource
12 exchanges are thus organised in networks in the non-urban place; instead, different spatial
13 configurations of resource exchanges in social networks emerge, which lead to a local network
14 embeddedness in combination with a (potential or actual) embeddedness in external networks,
15 *i.e.*, outside of the locality. Thirdly, there is variation in the configurations of socially and
16 locally embedded creative entrepreneurs through network-based resource exchanges that are
17 associated with a non-urban place.
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27 Hence, the network embeddedness of creative entrepreneurs over time in non-urban places
28 should be understood as a multi-level process in which different combinations of networked
29 resource exchanges occur across different spatial scales, rendering these exchanges multi-
30 locational (Table 3). This gives rise to consider network-embeddedness levels in terms of a
31 lower or higher embeddedness along the two dimensions of social versus local (spatial) network
32 embeddedness. However, within the framework of this study, it is not possible to identify the
33 specific level of embeddedness, as it only aims to point to the – hitherto under-studied – variety
34 of combinations that achieve network embeddedness through resource exchanges during the
35 entrepreneurial journey – and not to operationalise this variety. What can be derived from the
36 illustrative case study is that a high degree of local network embeddedness that overlaps with
37 social network embeddedness in the locality (here, entrepreneurs A and B) may reduce the
38 dependency of nascent creative entrepreneurs upon a necessary quantity of amenities (such as
39 a high number of like-minded creative individuals). Moreover, even in cases of a lower degree
40 of network embeddedness with creative entrepreneurs in non-urban places (because their key
41 networks reside elsewhere), these entrepreneurs may still benefit from local resource exchanges
42 because they can become crucial resource-providing actors, particularly during their incumbent
43 entrepreneurship, and contribute to the attractiveness of the place for other creative individuals.
44 Hence, there may exist a minimal degree of local network embeddedness without which no
45 creative entrepreneur would sustain a business in a non-urban place after the nascent
46 entrepreneurship phase. The illustrative case study has, moreover, brought to the fore that
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3 different resource types are at play in shaping the network embeddedness: economic-financial
4 resources, natural amenities as inspirational resources, and social community-based resources.
5 This latter finding provides a useful point of departure for expanding the framework, including
6 a specification of how the minimal degree of local network embeddedness might be understood
7 and materialised.
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13 **Table 3 about here**

17 **Conclusion and implications**

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20 **Wigren-Kristofersen et al.** (2019) have recently criticised static, one-dimensional or binary
21 notions of embeddedness in entrepreneurship research that fail to advance theoretical debates.
22 Indeed, for **creative** entrepreneurship, a broader conceptualisation is needed that will not only
23 capture a processual perspective on the entrepreneurial journey but also incorporate the nature
24 of creative professions by means of sketching the relevant resource exchanges in relation to the
25 variety of networks in which **creative** entrepreneurs become embedded. To this aim, a
26 conceptual framework is presented which is informed by three theoretical perspectives: a
27 networked resource-based theory (Lavie, 2006); the two-dimensional notion of socio-spatial
28 embeddedness (Uzzi 1997; Hess, 2004); and a processual view on entrepreneurship (Hite, 2005)
29 as a sequence of nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship.
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39 **Hence, this paper departs from** the tenet that **creative** entrepreneurs, like any other
40 entrepreneurs, are committed to both resource-dependent and resource-providing exchanges in
41 **various** networks (Lavie, 2006) during their entrepreneurial process. **Based upon both the**
42 **conceptual framework established and the illustration provided, which sketched the**
43 **entrepreneurial journey of creative entrepreneurs in a non-urban place, the following**
44 **conclusions can be drawn: the** resource exchanges of **the creative** entrepreneurs taking place in
45 different networks during their entrepreneurial **journey are** associated with multiple network-
46 embeddedness configurations, which result in a given spatial (*i.e.*, local) embeddedness in the
47 non-urban place. **Specifying this socio-spatial embeddedness of creative entrepreneurship**
48 **through resource exchanges means to point to the variety of possible resource-exchange**
49 **combinations anchored in various networks: private versus professional networks (multi-level),**
50 **and local networks in the non-urban place versus external networks that are located elsewhere**
51 **(multi-locational).**
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5 With regard to the prevalent assumption that creative professions commonly represent an urban
6 phenomenon (Florida, 2019, 2005), it can be concluded that, while creative individuals will not
7 necessarily and/or automatically be attracted to urban places, their dependence upon local
8 resources that spur and maintain their creativity (e.g., inspiration from local amenities) renders
9 it necessary to generate a minimal level of local network embeddedness, independently of
10 whether it be an urban or a non-urban location. Without the networked-based resource
11 exchanges that take place locally, here, in the non-urban place and lead to a minimal
12 embeddedness, the persistence of creative entrepreneurs who purposively start and develop a
13 business in such a place cannot be explained convincingly. However, and conversely, it is also
14 evident that a high degree of local network embeddedness is not always a pre-requisite for
15 creative entrepreneurs to sustain a business outside urban hubs. Instead, various configurations
16 of socio-spatial network embeddedness support their entrepreneurial journey, which allows
17 these entrepreneurs to adjust the degree of their local embeddedness to the nature of their
18 creative work. Altogether, this key finding resonates with Andersen (2013, p. 147), who stated
19 that “*the value of being embedded depends on goals*”, which translates, for creative
20 entrepreneurs, to affirm that there is ample room for different resource-exchange combinations
21 across multiple network dimensions.
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36 With these propositions, the paper contributes as follows to contemporary debates about
37 entrepreneurship, embeddedness and creative professions (Wigren-Kristofersen *et al.*, 2019;
38 Werthes *et al.*, 2017; Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015a,b): firstly, a combination of a two-dimensional
39 embeddedness notion and a processual model of network embeddedness throughout the
40 entrepreneurial journey and beyond is proposed, which extends the previous literature that does
41 not apply this combination. Secondly, with regard to non-urban places, which are commonly
42 portrayed as less resource-rich than urban places (Graffenberger and Vonnahme, 2019), the
43 paper conceptualises how creative entrepreneurs use and depend upon natural amenities as an
44 inspirational resource from these places to transform their creativity into a start-up business that
45 can be developed further. While notably Florida (2019, 2005) stresses only the quantity of the
46 resources that are concentrated in a location for creative entrepreneurs, this paper
47 conceptualises both the quantity and quality of resources retrieved by entrepreneurs. Even
48 though non-urban places might not provide the same quantity of resources as their urban
49 counter-parts, this might be compensated by a higher quality in terms of a higher degree of
50 network embeddedness in the non-urban place. The combinations of local and external resource
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3 exchanges furthermore allows **creative** entrepreneurs to draw from the resources that they need
4 according to the creative nature of their work.
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8 The theoretical implications lead over to the limitations of the conceptual framework presented,
9 and to a research outlook. Firstly, although the findings derived from the conceptual framework
10 on network embeddedness and resource exchanges seem to be meaningful and evident, they
11 should be thoroughly tested based upon a robust set of empirical data (*e.g.*, large samples of
12 qualitative interviews with entrepreneurs) and by including several non-urban/urban places (in
13 order to have a comparison of different regional contexts). In addition, the context chosen, to
14 wit, the Lofoten Islands, represents a particular cultural *milieu* that facilitates local networking
15 and resource exchanges through open-mindedness, inclusion, and a focus on local
16 collaboration. Further research should validate the observations made for this specific regional
17 case against the background of other, and rather atypical, non-urban case regions for creative
18 individuals (*e.g.*, remote regions, formerly industrialised regions, or rural places in economic
19 decline). Secondly, the framework does not include a dynamic perspective that scrutinises the
20 changing needs of entrepreneurs during business growth and internationalisation. One open
21 question which cannot be answered in this framework is how the resource-exchange
22 combinations in relation to network-embeddedness configurations, including the minimal
23 degree of local embeddedness, would change when **creative** entrepreneurs in non-urban places
24 started to internationalise. A further exploration of the growth-orientation of **creative**
25 entrepreneurs in relation to the place embeddedness through a longitudinal sample (for instance,
26 follow-up interviews with the five entrepreneurs portrayed) will allow a more precise
27 conceptualisation of this aspect. Thirdly, the specific combinations of the embeddedness
28 categories within the two dimensions and two “items” each (such as social network
29 embeddedness with private/professional networks; and spatial network embeddedness with
30 local/external networks) should be further scrutinised for other entrepreneurship contexts,
31 which was not possible in the context of this study. In a similar vein, the possible resource
32 categories, such as natural amenities, financial-economic resources, inspirational resources,
33 social resources, *etc.*, should be specified further. Fourthly, it might be possible to extend the
34 framework proposed by including an operationalisation of the degree of embeddedness
35 achieved, including the assumed threshold of a minimal level of embeddedness in a non-urban
36 place. Finally, the conceptual framework will also need to be reviewed for other creative
37 professions that engage entrepreneurially outside urban places (*e.g.*, musicians, actors, writers,
38 or graphic designers, and other creative IT entrepreneurs). **In particular, follow-up research**
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3 should scrutinise the underlying concept of creative entrepreneurship by including motivational
4 factors of creative individuals (cf., De Klerk, 2015; Valliere and Gegenhuber, 2014; Amabile
5 and Pillemer, 2012).
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10 This final validation will carry this conceptual framework further so that it will hopefully inform
11 public policy-makers in non-urban places and increase their awareness of the various network-
12 embeddedness configurations that matter for place development through entrepreneurship. As
13 the wider practical and societal implications of this paper, relevant actors, notably private- and
14 public-sector managers, in non-urban places should safeguard that creative individuals with
15 entrepreneurial aspirations and incumbent creative entrepreneurs have access to various local
16 networks to enable them various combinations of resource bundles for their creative work and
17 achieve a high degree of embeddedness.
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Table 1: The five creative entrepreneurs

<i>The entrepreneur</i>	<i>Background of the entrepreneur</i>	<i>The entrepreneur and nascent/incumbent entrepreneurship</i>
A	As a trained silversmith with a degree from England in jewellery and graphic design, A had first started a career as a graphic designer with a media company in Oslo before deciding to move to the Lofoten Islands jointly with a partner. A bought a house that provides space for their creative work and artwork.	After some years of working in the media business, A decided to leave this profession behind and focus on the artistic profession, which is the re-use of objects. A firstly experimented with small objects and later worked on the re-use of baby clothing that were sold in order to test whether A should take a passion for the idea further in the form of a self-employed business. Based upon a regional grant, A started with a small shop and took some training, both in the creative profession itself and business courses. The business is to re-design clothes and accessories and create <i>objets d'art</i> from used textile materials, which A both sells and exhibits as art. Besides sales through an online shop, A lives on the incoming tourists during the tourism seasons.
B	B took pottery courses after high school and fell in love with the art of pottery. This motivated B to take a vocational apprenticeship and a master certificate in pottery. B studied and worked first in Oslo, but later decided to abandon the studies and devote all attention to pottery. When B had inherited a closed shop in the countryside, the entrepreneur began to work in the shop with other creative individuals from the region. After that B's partner was offered a job on the Lofoten Islands, B joined to enjoy another passion, which is the deep-sea fishing, in the High North. The couple first rented a house on the Lofoten Islands and later bought a building in the heart of a village.	As the entrepreneur fell in love, first and foremost, with both the place and the house that B had bought, B began to make a living from the sales of handmade pottery objects to tourists. After a few years, B was able to establish a business with a pottery shop, exhibitions of artworks, and a café. Since the premises have a central location in the village, tourists during the summer season are important for this entrepreneur.
C	C used to work as an employee in the travel industry in Norway but moved to Sweden because of a marriage. C has grown up close to the Lofoten Islands and came back to the region with the family for annual rock-climbing summer holidays. While living in Stockholm, C joined silversmith classes and began a self-education about how to be a silversmith. C was invited to exhibit some of the work at Stockholm's famous <i>DesignTorget</i> (a design art competition and exhibition) and started to sell jewellery on commission in Stockholm. A relative later offered C housing space for rent on the Lofoten Islands to display C's work in a small shop, which later became a workshop. Since that time, C has been commuting between	The entrepreneur's business is jewellery design with a focus on sustainable luxury jewels from re-cycled metals. Having started out as a commission-based local designer elsewhere, C began to develop an own business, including an own web-shop. C took over all tasks associated with the business herself, including the marketing, branding, and product development. Over the past years, C has gained fixed retailers as well as international and local customers, and selling takes place through a webshop and local sales to tourists.

	Stockholm and the summer-season location and workplace, the Lofoten Islands.	
D	The entrepreneurs are two pairs of siblings, who all have an engineering background from Norway. When they had spent their summers on the Lofoten Islands for the first time, they found an old factory building and decided to buy and restore it. They gradually invested money and time into the renovation of the building.	At the beginning, the entrepreneurs were committed to the renovation work of the building and the development of their business during their leisure time. After the initial months, they moved to the Lofoten Islands and took a more professional approach. By inviting volunteers, they managed to quickly launch their restaurant and hotel after that they had transformed a former factory building into an event restaurant and hotel which hosts conferences, seminars, yoga and spa retreats, and courses for individual and corporate travellers. Seasonal tourists are important for them, but D also attract business travellers and individuals who visit the cultural events which the entrepreneurs (co-)organise.
E	The entrepreneur's background is a degree in fashion design. After the studies, E first worked in a design studio in London, but later moved back to the home region, close to the Lofoten Islands. Initially, E took a full-time job in another profession to make a living, which allowed the entrepreneur gradually to establish and develop her business.	The entrepreneur had always dreamt of becoming a fashion designer. After that E had moved back to the region, E developed the business to launch a fashion-design product that conveys man's respect for nature and the spirit of Northern Norway. E investigated fish skin as a material and began to experiment with different skin and leather types, developed samples and gradually assembled a first collection of fish-skin leather bags and accessories. Through a regional-funding grant, E was able to attend courses in entrepreneurship and simultaneously started a local shop. Subsequently, E begun to internationalise the business. The entrepreneur is committed to the manufacturing of leather-based design bags and accessories that are sold through an online shop and specialised retailers.

Table 1: The five creative entrepreneurs

The entrepreneur	Background of the entrepreneur	The entrepreneur and nascent/incumbent entrepreneurship
A	As a trained silversmith with a degree from England in jewellery and graphic design, A had first started a career as a graphic designer with a media company in Oslo before deciding to move to the Lofoten Islands jointly with a partner. A bought a house that provides space for their creative work and artwork.	After some years of working in the media business, A decided to leave this profession behind and focus on the artistic profession, which is the re-use of objects. A firstly experimented with small objects and later worked on the re-use of baby clothing that were sold in order to test whether A should take a passion for the idea further in the form of a self-employed business. Based upon a regional grant, A started with a small shop and took some training, both in the creative profession itself and business courses. The business is to re-design clothes and accessories and create objets d'art from used textile materials, which A both sells and exhibits as art. Besides sales through an online shop, A lives on the incoming tourists during the tourism seasons.
B	B took pottery courses after high school and fell in love with the art of pottery. This motivated B to take a vocational apprenticeship and a master certificate in pottery. B studied and worked first in Oslo, but later decided to abandon the studies and devote all attention to pottery. When B had inherited a closed shop in the countryside, the entrepreneur began to work in the shop with other creative individuals from the region. After that B's partner was offered a job on the Lofoten Islands, B joined to enjoy another passion, which is the deep-sea fishing, in the High North. The couple first rented a house on the Lofoten Islands and later bought a building in the heart of a village.	As the entrepreneur fell in love, first and foremost, with both the place and the house that B had bought, B began to make a living from the sales of handmade pottery objects to tourists. After a few years, B was able to establish a business with a pottery shop, exhibitions of artworks, and a café. Since the premises have a central location in the village, tourists during the summer season are important for this entrepreneur.
C	C used to work as an employee in the travel industry in Norway but moved to Sweden because of a marriage. C has grown up close to the Lofoten Islands and came back to the region with the family for annual rock-climbing summer holidays. While living in Stockholm, C joined silversmith classes and began a self-education about how to be a silversmith. C was invited to exhibit some of the work at Stockholm's famous DesignTorget (a design art competition and exhibition) and started to sell jewellery on commission in Stockholm. A relative later offered C housing space for rent on the Lofoten Islands to display C's work in a small shop, which later became a workshop. Since that time, C has been commuting between	The entrepreneur's business is jewellery design with a focus on sustainable luxury jewels from re-cycled metals. Having started out as a commission-based local designer elsewhere, C began to develop an own business, including an own web-shop. C took over all tasks associated with the business herself, including the marketing, branding, and product development. Over the past years, C has gained fixed retailers as well as international and local customers, and selling takes place through a webshop and local sales to tourists.

	<p>Stockholm and the summer-season location and workplace, the Lofoten Islands.</p>	
D	<p>The entrepreneurs are two pairs of siblings, who all have an engineering background from Norway. When they had spent their summers on the Lofoten Islands for the first time, they found an old factory building and decided to buy and restore it. They gradually invested money and time into the renovation of the building.</p>	<p>At the beginning, the entrepreneurs were committed to the renovation work of the building and the development of their business during their leisure time. After the initial months, they moved to the Lofoten Islands and took a more professional approach. By inviting volunteers, they managed to quickly launch their restaurant and hotel after that they had transformed a former factory building into an event restaurant and hotel which hosts conferences, seminars, yoga and spa retreats, and courses for individual and corporate travellers. Seasonal tourists are important for them, but D also attract business travellers and individuals who visit the cultural events which the entrepreneurs (co-)organise.</p>
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Table 2: Resource-exchanges and network-embeddedness configurations during the entrepreneurial process

<i>The entrepreneur</i>	<i>Socio-spatial network embeddedness in the non-urban place</i>	<i>Socio-spatial network embeddedness outside the non-urban place</i>
A	As nascent entrepreneur, A was dependent upon financial resources, for instance, to buy a house with sufficient space for artistic work. A used a start-up grant from a regional funding agency which - as A stated – the entrepreneur would not have received in an urban environment. With a broad educational background, however, A also possessed many resources, such as specific competencies for starting a business. A mainly used local professional networks to develop the business as incumbent entrepreneur, supplemented by local private networks. One of A's key resources is the natural amenities of the place, which provide the entrepreneur with inspiration. A also stated that there are many individuals living on the Lofoten Islands that think in ecological terms and have alternative and artistic lifestyles, which represents another important resource for A during nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship. After having established oneself professionally in the location (through volunteering for leadership assignments in local associations and organisations), A turned into a provider of resources to the locality to a limited extent.	A made contacts with other creative and artistic people internationally, and the entrepreneur is exporting through a web shop. The development of external networks remains limited because of A's status as a sole self-employed entrepreneur.
B	B was initially very resource-dependent and remains resource-dependent today. The incoming tourists and networks with local professionals are key resources that B depends upon. At the beginning, B was able to buy a cheap, large house that the entrepreneur used both as a workshop and a shop and which B also rents out to other local and visiting artists. The location itself, including the harsh climate and the dark months in the winter times, represents an important resource that inspires B. As an incumbent entrepreneur, B also became resource-providing to the locality, for instance, through large investments of time, energy, and money in the local community (both through private and professional networks). B is the founder of a local seasonal event, a leader in many local-regional business associations, and on the board of a funding organisation that supports regional start-ups financially.	Except for international tourists visiting the place, resources from networks outside the location do not matter to B.
C	C was very resource-dependent as a nascent entrepreneur, but only partially, upon local resources. The key local resource that provide C with inspiration is nature and a passion for rock climbing on the Lofoten Islands. At the same time, C also relied heavily on own	During nascent entrepreneurship, C mostly depended upon resources from outside the location, as the entrepreneur was operating from Stockholm. Even as an incumbent entrepreneur, C used a broad network that includes international contacts because of the operating

	<p>competencies that the entrepreneur had acquired and developed through training. When C had been in the transition to incumbent entrepreneurship, C had searched for a new business concept, which was facilitated through the opportunity to open a shop on the Lofoten Islands where the entrepreneur became quickly integrated in local private and professional networks. Prior to this, C had operated from Stockholm, but lacked a physical workshop and a sales point. C's origins from Northern Norway opened many doors and constitute another important local resource during the nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship. C affirms that the local resources are paramount for the business concept, as it is based upon the locality as a value and brand. The stories that C has learned about the Lofoten Islands from talking to the local people inspire the entrepreneur, and, more recently, C has also employed staff during high seasons. The entrepreneur invests resources in the locality by promoting other businesses and creative people from the Lofoten Islands. C's key resources are professional networks, while private networks do not matter to C.</p>	<p>base outside the Lofoten Islands and the outsourcing of part of the manufacturing. As a commuter between Stockholm and the Lofoten Islands, the act of commuting, as such, is an external resource that provides this entrepreneur with inspiration. C furthermore states that the entrepreneur does not want to become overly dependent upon a specific location; thus, the professional networks outside of the location remain important.</p>
D	<p>The entrepreneurs D were dependent upon local resources at the beginning because they needed to get contacts with other creative people in the location. Moreover, they benefited from the openness of the locals and the diversity of the people attracted to the region when they started their business. They affirmed that they could access local resources quite easily because the small place facilitated acquaintances and contacts with a broader community of the people living in the village. Over time, they became even more dependent upon local resources when they took part in the organisation of local events and started to collaborate more closely with other local businesses and entrepreneurs. At the same time, as incumbent entrepreneurs, D also provide resources to the location by initiating a new annual music festival that attracts new visitors and creates additional value to the local community. Altogether, these entrepreneurs are both providing resources to and retrieving resources from local professional networks, but private networks in the location hardly matter to them.</p>	<p>At the beginning, D depended heavily upon external resources, such as funding from outside the location, the volunteers and paid work of, <i>e.g.</i>, talented craft and construction workers for the renovation of the building, external course teachers for courses and activities offered, or service staff for the sales shop, café, restaurant and hotel. Many of these external contacts were people that D had known from before, but they also acquired new contacts during their business establishment from outside the Lofoten Islands. As incumbent entrepreneurs, the resources obtained from external locations still matter for them because the business concept focuses on the temporary use of external creative individuals (artists, musicians, yoga teachers, <i>etc.</i>) together with local contacts (<i>e.g.</i>, local artists and musicians) during the high seasons and events. Again, it is the external professional networks that matter for D.</p>
E	<p>E was also very resource-dependent at the beginning because the entrepreneur had received regional funding, and, through the funding, E participated in business training programmes. Local resources provided E with both financial and practical benefits, as the</p>	<p>E was dependent upon a mix of local and international resources at the beginning. E expresses that the entrepreneur needs the buzz of bigger cities to find inspiration. Hence, external resources from professional networks outside of the location as well as private</p>

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	<p>entrepreneur states; for instance, the funding programme provided E with contacts to other local creatives during nascent entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the smallness of the location saves time and travel costs for E, and the tranquillity of nature is another important local resource. As an incumbent entrepreneur, E has become very independent of local resources, except for the fact that the brand relies heavily upon the local amenities. E also states that local businesses are very open to promoting the brand because they are proud of local products, and the local co-operative attitude is another resource that the entrepreneur is still relying upon. The networks that E uses locally are mainly professional ones.</p>	<p>meetings through travels matter to E. The entrepreneur also outsources the production to European countries and collaborates with national and international sales and promotion agencies. The resources from external professional networks were and are paramount to this entrepreneur.</p>
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	<p>competencies that the entrepreneur had acquired and developed through training. When C had been in the transition to incumbent entrepreneurship, C had searched for a new business concept, which was facilitated through the opportunity to open a shop on the Lofoten Islands where the entrepreneur became quickly integrated in local private and professional networks. Prior to this, C had operated from Stockholm, but lacked a physical workshop and a sales point. C's origins from Northern Norway opened many doors and constitute another important local resource during the nascent and incumbent entrepreneurship. C affirms that the local resources are paramount for the business concept, as it is based upon the locality as a value and brand. The stories that C has learned about the Lofoten Islands from talking to the local people inspire the entrepreneur, and, more recently, C has also employed staff during high seasons. The entrepreneur invests resources in the locality by promoting other businesses and creative people from the Lofoten Islands. C's key resources are professional networks, while private networks do not matter to C.</p>	<p>base outside the Lofoten Islands and the outsourcing of part of the manufacturing. As a commuter between Stockholm and the Lofoten Islands, the act of commuting, as such, is an external resource that provides this entrepreneur with inspiration. C furthermore states that the entrepreneur does not want to become overly dependent upon a specific location; thus, the professional networks outside of the location remain important.</p>
D	<p>The entrepreneurs D were dependent upon local resources at the beginning because they needed to get contacts with other creative people in the location. Moreover, they benefited from the openness of the locals and the diversity of the people attracted to the region when they started their business. They affirmed that they could access local resources quite easily because the small place facilitated acquaintances and contacts with a broader community of the people living in the village. Over time, they became even more dependent upon local resources when they took part in the organisation of local events and started to collaborate more closely with other local businesses and entrepreneurs. At the same time, as incumbent entrepreneurs, D also provide resources to the location by initiating a new annual music festival that attracts new visitors and creates additional value to the local community. Altogether, these entrepreneurs are both providing resources to and retrieving resources from local professional networks, but private networks in the location hardly matter to them.</p>	<p>At the beginning, D depended heavily upon external resources, such as funding from outside the location, the volunteers and paid work of, <i>e.g.</i>, talented craft and construction workers for the renovation of the building, external course teachers for courses and activities offered, or service staff for the sales shop, café, restaurant and hotel. Many of these external contacts were people that D had known from before, but they also acquired new contacts during their business establishment from outside the Lofoten Islands. As incumbent entrepreneurs, the resources obtained from external locations still matter for them because the business concept focuses on the temporary use of external creative individuals (artists, musicians, yoga teachers, <i>etc.</i>) together with local contacts (<i>e.g.</i>, local artists and musicians) during the high seasons and events. Again, it is the external professional networks that matter for D.</p>
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Table 3: The conceptual framework derived

Resource-exchange drivers	Multi-level network embeddedness dimension	
	Social embeddedness	Spatial embeddedness
Entrepreneurial process		
Nascent entrepreneurs: Resource-dependent mechanism more important than resource-providing mechanism	<i>Various configurations of network embeddedness through resource-exchanges</i>  <i>Minimal degree of spatial (local) network embeddedness</i>	
Established entrepreneurs: Resource-providing mechanism more important than resource-dependent mechanism		

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7 Dear editor, dear reviewers,

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9 Many thanks for the opportunity to revise our manuscript "*Creative-artistic entrepreneurs and embeddedness in non-urban places: a resource exchange and network embeddedness logic*". We herewith submit two versions for your convenience: a) reader-friendly clean version and b) a version with changes highlighted in red font. We gratefully acknowledge all comments, which we deemed helpful to develop our paper. Thus, we carefully paid attention to them and respond to the three reviewers as follows:
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Comments by editor & reviewer concerning	Our responses to the comments & our revisions	Where to find the revisions in the manuscript
Reviewer 1		
<p>14 15 16 17 18 <i>"...I note most of the points I raised on creative identity have not been considered, nor the distinctiveness of motivational related to these taken into account. Whilst this is disappointing because it may shed clearer light on your findings, through a greater depth of understanding, I accept that the sampling methodology batches them all together."</i></p> <p>19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 <i>"For the intended audience this is probably sufficient, though I would also note that a more critical creative industries audience would no doubt question the fact that this has not been taken onboard, primarily as a limitation of the study."</i></p> <p>32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 <i>"The responses still suggest an outsider perspective, as the creative industries</i></p>	<p>14 15 16 17 18 Thank you for your first comment.</p> <p>19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 About your second comment: We have included this new limitation now in the limitations paragraph in the final section, as follows: "In particular, follow-up research should scrutinise the underlying concept of creative entrepreneurship by including motivational factors of creative individuals (<i>cf.</i>, De Klerk, 2015; Valliere and Gegenhuber, 2014; Amabile and Pillemer, 2012), which might support refinements of the conceptual framework." See pp. 20-21.</p> <p>We have moreover explained in a new footnote on p. 2, which comes right in the initial pages of the introduction, how creative entrepreneurship is defined in the paper and have also included literature that points to the various, and distinctive, motivational factors leading to a creative business. Footnote on p. 2: "Importantly, the entrepreneurs addressed in this paper cannot be clearly assigned to the various subsectors within the creative economy, which may result in richly layered motivations for</p>	<p>14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 See "Introduction" (p. 2) and "Conclusion and limitations" (pp. 20f.).</p> <p>New literature included: see throughout the paper.</p>

<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36</p> <p><i>typologies have not been considered, nor the literature that discussions motivational constructs employed. Given the sample size, better argumentation for pulling some rather disparate types of creative businesses together would be helpful, and the associated limitations should be clearly expressed.”</i></p>	<p>their entrepreneurship (e.g., Faggian et al., 2013 ; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007) that cannot be properly internalised with the perspective applied here. Indeed, the present paper overall utilises an outsider perspective (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2015) on creativity and entrepreneurship through business processes as it does not investigate the internal motivations of the creative enterprising individuals.”</p> <p>Added literature throughout the text whenever it was appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amabile, T. M. and Pillemer, J. (2012), “Perspectives on the social psychology of creativity”, <i>The Journal of Creative Behavior</i>, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp.3-15. https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.001. • De Klerk, S. (2015), “The creative industries: an entrepreneurial bricolage perspective”, <i>Management Decision</i>, Vol. 53 No. 4, pp. 828-842. https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-03-2014-0169. • Eikhof, D. R. and Haunschild, A. (2007), “For art's sake! Artistic and economic logics in creative production”, <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior</i>, Vol. 28 No. 5, pp.523-538. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.462. • Faggian, A., Comunian, R., Jewell, S. and Kelly, U. (2013), “Bohemian graduates in the UK: Disciplines and location determinants of creative careers”, <i>Regional Studies</i>, Vol. 47 No. 2, pp.183-200. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2012.665990. 	
<p>37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46</p> <p><i>"Researchers in Europe tend to divide the definition into two categories - "core" creative (arts related activities) industries</i></p>	<p>We have specified this definitional issue in the introduction on p. 2:</p>	<p>See “Introduction” on p. 2.</p>

<p>and "partially" creative industries (advertising, architecture, and design as well as media industries) (O'Connor, Arts Council, 2007)."</p> <p>"This was my main criticism from outset, and a simple acknowledgement that the literature / insights employed come predominantly from a business research perspective, and not from an in-depth understanding of creative business typologies, will better enable readers such as myself to position the work and its findings."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New text added on p. 2: "In the literature, a further distinction is made between core sectors of the creative-cultural economies, consisting of art-related and artistic professions, and surrounding sectors accompanying the core service sectors, e.g., advertising, media, IT-related professions (O'Connor, 2007, p.47)." • Revised text on p. 2: "Departing from these definitions and concepts, in the context of this paper, creative entrepreneurship is understood as the manufacturing of creative-design and creative-artistic products and services which embody, at least partly, a non-material cultural, i.e., aesthetic value (cf., Smit, 2001)." <p>Moreover, as aforementioned, we have now defined clearly that we, indeed, apply a business perspective on the creative individuals but do not include their motivational factors, even though this is addressed to some extent in the literature review (see new footnote on p. 2).</p>	
<p>"The sampling 'of convenience' needs to be more clearly articulated, as for example, design businesses respond to the needs of clients or customers, whereas arts and crafts rely on customers who appreciate their work. The EUs Arts and Humanities Enterprise hub's literature review could be a useful reference in this regard."</p>	<p>Thank you, this is a valid point. We have clarified this in the footnote on p. 13, so hopefully this issue will be resolved in the revised version.</p> <p>About your comment regarding the "EU Arts and Humanities Enterprise hub's literature": We also tried to identify the literature that you point to and included several new references that <i>expressis verbis</i> address the internal, motivational factors and challenges that creative enterprising individuals face:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amabile, T. M. and Pillemer, J. (2012), "Perspectives on the social psychology of creativity", <i>The Journal of Creative Behavior</i>, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp.3-15. https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.001. 	<p>See "Setting the context" on p. 13.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De Klerk, S. (2015), "The creative industries: an entrepreneurial bricolage perspective", <i>Management Decision</i>, Vol. 53 No. 4, pp. 828-842. https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-03-2014-0169. • Eikhof, D. R. and Haunschild, A. (2007), "For art's sake! Artistic and economic logics in creative production", <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior</i>, Vol. 28 No. 5, pp.523-538. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.462. • Faggian, A., Comunian, R., Jewell, S. and Kelly, U. (2013), "Bohemian graduates in the UK: Disciplines and location determinants of creative careers", <i>Regional Studies</i>, Vol. 47 No. 2, pp.183-200. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2012.665990. 	
Reviewer 2		
<p><i>"Since this is described as a conceptual piece I feel that the results should be reworked to reflect the very exploratory nature of the work. In fact I would recommend removing RPI-4 as this reinforces the expectation that there are research questions/hypotheses being tested. Reinforcing the conceptual nature of the paper and reducing its research emphasis will help make it a more coherent piece."</i></p>	<p>This is a valid argument, and your suggestion improves the quality of the conceptual part. We have removed the research propositions. Parts of the sections "A conceptual framework..." (pp. 9 ff.) and "Setting the context" (p. 12) were thus rephrased. Table 1 was removed and replaced by a new table (numbered as Table 3 now) with some changes. The new Table 3 will illustrate the mechanisms studied in the conceptual framework and their refinement about a minimal embeddedness by means of the illustrative case study.</p>	<p>See "A conceptual framework..." (pp. 9 ff.) and "Setting the context" (p. 12). See renumbered Table 3.</p>
<p><i>"The implications include a limitations section which in many ways precisely outlines why the paper as it stands does not succeed in its attempt to support</i></p>	<p>We agree, see above.</p>	<p>---</p> <p>No changes necessary.</p>

<p>assertions through the data collected given the limited and highly unique nature of the subjects and geographic context.”</p>		
<p>“Reworking the paper as a thought-piece/conceptual work would strengthen the nature of the arguments and ideas presented.”</p> <p>“The paper is described as a conceptual piece and I feel that the research aspect of this work should play a reduced given the limitation of the study.”</p>	<p>As stated above, we have removed the research propositions and down-toned the originality of the fieldwork, which only serves as an illustrative example, but cannot be replaced by a proper qualitative research design.</p>	<p>See “A conceptual framework...” (pp. 9 ff.) and “Setting the context” (p. 12). See renumbered Table 3.</p>
Reviewer 3		
<p>“I agree with the revisions, in particular the revised methodology section, which more clearly positions the paper's conceptual nature, and the data used will only help illustrate the framework, as the paper does not contribute empirically and the data only contextualize the framework. And this positioning, with further clarifications on the creative industry in a non urban setting, resolves the main issues of the previous version.”</p>	<p>Thank you, we are happy to hear that.</p>	<p>---</p> <p>No changes necessary.</p>
<p>“The framing is called creative-artistic entrepreneurship, and the definition only refers to small scale creative design entrepreneurs. Instead of creative artistic entrepreneurship, I recommend using either entrepreneurship in creative industries or simply creative entrepreneurship. Later on in the</p>	<p>Thank you for this very valuable comment. Indeed, we had struggled with finding the appropriate umbrella term and initially, we were convinced that “creative-artistic entrepreneurship” matches those entrepreneurs that the paper basically addresses. However, we understood that using this term might have wider ramifications, as it alludes to the core sectors within the broad and fuzzily-defined “creative economy” (see the comments by reviewer 1 in particular). This is the reason why we</p>	<p>See throughout the entire manuscript.</p>

<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</p> <p><i>literature, the authors use creative entrepreneurship, for example on page 6. Please clarify if there is a difference between creative entrepreneurship and creative-artistic entrepreneurship, otherwise, use one term for consistency.”</i></p>	<p>ultimately decided to replace “creative-artistic entrepreneurship” by “creative entrepreneurship”.</p>	
<p>10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28</p> <p><i>“In the revised version, the authors used "outsider viewpoint." However, this has not been clarified in the paper-the outsider of creative and artistic literature?”</i></p>	<p>We have defined the “outsider perspective” in a new footnote on p.2: “Importantly, the entrepreneurs addressed in this paper cannot be clearly assigned to the various subsectors within the creative economy, which may result in richly layered motivations for their entrepreneurship (e.g., Faggian et al., 2013 ; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007) that cannot be properly internalised with the perspective applied here. Indeed, the present paper overall utilises an outsider perspective (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2015) on creativity and entrepreneurship through business processes as it does not investigate the internal motivations of the creative enterprising individuals.”.</p> <p>The “outsider perspective” is meant to distinguish the approach chosen in the paper from internal, motivational factors conducive to creativity and creative-economy entrepreneurs. It was included following a recommendation by reviewer 1.</p>	<p>See “Introducton”, p. 3.</p>
<p>29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46</p> <p><i>“Because the paper makes no empirical contributions and the data only contextualizes the framework, I would not emphasize fieldwork in terms of originality. Please refer to the abstract. In addition, there is relatively few information in the case study table- It appears superficial.”</i></p>	<p>Thank you, this is another valuable comment. We have changed the abstract accordingly:</p> <p>Design/methodology/approach: Based upon the conceptual framework for creative entrepreneurship in a non-urban place, an illustrative case study of small-scale creative-design entrepreneurs on the Lofoten Islands in Norway (2019) is utilised to discuss the framework.</p> <p>Originality: The paper uses an original conceptual framework.</p>	<p>See abstract.</p>

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6 We hope that these revisions improve our manuscript such that it can be accepted for publication. Again, we thank you for the valuable
7 comments on our paper and the opportunity to present it to the editor and reviewers of the journal “International Journal of Entrepreneurial
8 Behaviour & Research”.

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10 With best regards,
11 The authors
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