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RESOURCE ACQUISITION AND CO- PRODUCTION IN ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS (SUMMARY)

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

**RESOURCE ACQUISITION AND CO-PRODUCTION
IN ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS**

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Principal Topic

The concept of entrepreneurial ecosystems has seen a significant increase in attention from researchers, policy makers, and practitioners due to its promise of creating regional economic and social environments that support start-up creation, survival and growth. Initial work on the concept, drawing on previous work on clusters, innovation districts, and systems of innovation, have focused on defining the attributes that help create successful entrepreneurial ecosystems and the ways in which they develop. However, there has been less research on the internal dynamics of ecosystems and the ways in which entrepreneurs draw on the resources. As a result, researchers have adopted a fairly homogeneous view of ecosystems that does not account for entrepreneurs' diverse background, market orientations, or their stage of development.

Method

A pilot set of interviews ($n = 8$) was conducted with high growth entrepreneurs in Edinburgh, Scotland. Entrepreneurs were selected at random from participants in an investment training program and come from three different industries: Business to business digital technology, business to consumer digital products, and life science. Entrepreneurs were asked how they acquired resources such as knowledge, business advice, funding, access to markets, and leads to new employees along with which entrepreneurship support programs they had accessed.

Results and Implications

Results from the pilot interviews suggest a variegated use of resources within their ecosystem. Respondents reported participating in an average of 12 different support programs in the past 12 months, but this ranged from a minimum of 7 to a maximum of 22. There were substantial differences in how entrepreneurs engaged with their ecosystem based on both their stage of development and industry. Newer entrepreneurs reported attending much more networking and training events in order to develop their business skills and expand their network. More experienced entrepreneurs reported reducing the number of events they attended, focusing only on those that were specifically relevant to the needs of fast growing firms. Interviews suggest that the most important resource entrepreneurs draw from their ecosystem is knowledge about the entrepreneurship process itself rather than technical or market knowledge. The results suggest that entrepreneurs experience several 'ecosystems' depending on their background and stage of development.

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