



## **SPECIAL ISSUE: *Entrepreneurial Agency in Constrained Contexts***

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### **Introduction Background and Focus of the Special Issue:**

This Call for Papers (CfP) aims to explore the role of entrepreneurial agency in enabling entrepreneurs to overcome the challenges of entrepreneurship and achieve structural changes when their actions are conditioned by those same structures they seek to overcome (Edwards et al., 2016). Agency refers to knowledgeable individuals who are capable of acting decisively – knowing what they are doing and why (Feeney and Pierce 2016). Agency is a reflection of an individual's ability to contemplate daily life conditions and act to change the circumstances (McMullen et al., 2020). In the context of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial agency is seen as a transformation of social structures through entrepreneurial action to gain upward social mobility (McMullen et al., 2021; Refai and McElwee, 2022; Villares-Varela et al., 2022). This becomes more challenging within constrained contexts, whereby agents' actions are significantly limited by challenging structures (Refai and McElwee, 2022).

Nevertheless, 'everyday entrepreneurship' continues to offer examples of overcoming various types of challenges within the under-researched constrained contexts, which represent a significant part of the diverse phenomenon of entrepreneurship, yet still demand further theoretical grounding, particularly with regards to value and value for whom (Welter et al., 2017). Examples of constrained entrepreneurship can be evidenced in contexts that present with all sorts of challenging structures that constrain entrepreneurs ability to act, such as refugee entrepreneurship (Harima, 2022; de la Chaux and Haugh, 2020; Refai et al., 2018), rural entrepreneurship (Korsgaard et al. 2015; Müller and Korsgaard, 2018; Elkafrawi et al., 2022; Gittins et al., 2022), women entrepreneurship (Owalla, 2021; Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2010), ethnic minority entrepreneurship (Villares-Varela et al., 2022; Collins et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2016), necessity entrepreneurship (Garcia-Lorenze et al., 2018, O'Donnell et al., 2021), poverty entrepreneurship (Anderson et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2018), entrepreneurship in

developing/ emerging countries (Abuhussein and Koburtay, 2021, Zayadin et al., 2022), entrepreneurship in political conflict zones (Althalathini et al., 2020; Haloub et al., 2022), entrepreneurship in times of crisis (William and Vorley, 2017; Doern et al., 2019), prison entrepreneurship (Patzelt et al., 2014; Hwang et al., 2022), and others.

### **Themes to be Addressed and Research Questions**

Despite the growing interest in research into these contexts, this research remains largely focused on exploring structures and resources in which entrepreneurs operate, the various intersections in which entrepreneurs are embedded, and how those hinder or promote entrepreneurship, rather than stressing how agency is operationalised in these contexts and what role it plays in effecting change and growth (Ram et al., 2017; Harima, 2022; Elkafrawi et al., 2022; Refai and McElwee, 2022, Villares-Varela et al., 2022). This gap signifies the importance of this CfP through exploring entrepreneurial agency and its role in countering the less-than-optimal interest in constrained contexts (Korsgaard, 2020).

A non-exhaustive list of exemplary questions that would meet the objective of the special issue are:

- How can the role of entrepreneurial agency in value extraction and value creation be better understood?
- How can agency promote sustainable entrepreneurial outcomes within constrained contexts?
- What is the role of agency in the formation of entrepreneurial aspirations in constrained contexts?
- How can a focus on entrepreneurial agency support novel philosophical and methodological approaches that move beyond the ‘taken for granted’ approaches in the field?
- When studying constrained contexts, can we reconcile theoretical debates between structuration and critical realism in entrepreneurship?
- What role do collective community efforts play in promoting agency through iterative multilevel dynamics of entrepreneurship?
- How can identities, value perceptions and meanings promote or hinder entrepreneurial agency and regional development?
- How can entrepreneurial agency impact regional, community and personal developments and the promotion of social innovations?
- How can various specific contextual elements ‘filter’ entrepreneurial agency in various specific ways?
- How do different social positions in terms of, for example, social-class, ethnicity, dis/ability and gender, condition the agentic properties of entrepreneurs in constrained contexts?
- How can entrepreneurial agency rework and resist constrained contexts for vulnerable entrepreneurs?

### **Key dates:**

The deadline for submission of papers is February 19, 2024. The journal submission site will be open for submissions from February 5, 2024. The Special Issue is scheduled to be published in August 2025. Papers must be original and comply with ISBJ submission guidelines. Please refer <http://isb.sagepub.com/> for submission guidelines and a link to the on-line submission system. In the online system please ensure you submit your paper within Manuscript Type: ‘Special Issue: Entrepreneurial Agency in Constrained Contexts’.

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