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## “Strategic Entrepreneurship and Ambidexterity”

Strategic entrepreneurship (SE) is a recent but dynamic field of research shared by scholars in economics, strategy and entrepreneurship. According to Kuratko and Audretsch (2009), SE may be defined as “organizationally consequential innovations that are adopted in the pursuit of competitive advantage”. It can take one of five forms: strategic renewal, sustained regeneration, domain redefinition, organizational rejuvenation, and business model reconstruction. (Covin & Miles, 1999):

- Strategic renewal. It consists on changing the way the firm competes against competitors. Entrepreneurs reposition their actions to obtain a competitive advantage.
- Sustained regeneration. Entrepreneurs involved in sustained regeneration are those who introduce new products or services or enter new markets continuously. It implies mostly incremental innovation.
- Domain redefinition. This is the entrepreneurs’ ability to identify and to create a new market. They redefine where and how the competitive game is played by “creating product-market arenas in which new product categories are represented” (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009).
- Organizational rejuvenation. This mainly concerns the reconfiguration of value chain or the modification of pattern of internal resource allocation. Here, innovation is about enterprise’s internal operations.
- Business model reconstruction. It is the reconfiguration of an enterprise’s business model in order to improve operational efficiencies or differentiate from main competitors (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009)

According to Kuratko and Audretsch (2009) innovation is at the center of the SE process. Simultaneously, SE focuses on the opportunity-seeking process and on the competitive advantage seeking process (Ireland *et al.*, 2003). This double objective is linked to the concept of ambidexterity. Firm's ambidexterity is the ability to combine exploitation and exploration processes (Benner & Tushman, 2003).

According to March (1991), "the essence of exploitation is the refinement and extension of existing competencies, technologies, and paradigms [...]. The essence of exploration is experimentation with new alternatives." For March (1991) exploration and exploitation do exclude each other. Conversely, other authors show, that enterprises may develop more complex organizational behavior, combining both exploration and exploitation processes (*i.e.* Foss, 2003; Volderba, 1996; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Benner & Tushman, 2003). In accordance to these authors, we consider that exploration and exploitation are not exclusive and may take place in a same enterprise.

The SE perspective is a valuable frame to understand how entrepreneurs can be ambidextrous; this means how they can manage at the same time exploitation and exploration. According to Tushman *et al.* (2011), ambidextrous CEOs could help firms to improve their core businesses and be much more innovative. They identified three leadership principles to stimulate firm's ambidexterity: "1. Engage the senior team around a forward-looking strategic aspiration. 2. Explicitly hold the tension between the demands of innovation units and the core business at the top of the organization. 3. Embrace inconsistency by maintaining multiple and often conflicting strategic agendas" (Tushman *et al.* 2011, p.76).

As SE is an emergent concept, it seems to be important to propose theoretical and practical implications to understand how SE can lead to ambidexterity. In this special issue, we would like to deepen and focus especially on the relation between SE and the exploitation/exploration process(es).

We propose several, non exclusive research propositions:

- A conceptual approach of SE and exploration/exploitation strategies.
- The management of exploitation and exploration in small businesses.
- What kind of entrepreneurial design for exploration/exploitation?
- Entrepreneurial alliances and ambidexterity.
- Social capital, entrepreneurs and ambidexterity.
- Business ecosystems, entrepreneurs and ambidexterity.
- SE and ambidexterity in emerging countries.
- What type of leadership to generate ambidexterity in small businesses?
- etc.

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