

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **Special Issue on Economic Complexity**

#### *Research Policy*

#### **Guest editors**

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#### **Background**

Economic complexity has emerged as a powerful paradigm to understand key issues in economics, geography, innovation studies, and other social sciences. Owing its popularity, in part, to its cross-disciplinary reach, the concept has shed new light on the variation in standards of living across nations (Hidalgo and Hausmann, 2009), differences in sophistication of technologies (Fleming and Sorenson, 2001), and the heterogeneous distribution of knowledge in space (Balland and Rigby, 2017). This excitement is not limited to academia. A host of policy institutions, ranging from international organizations such as the World Bank, World Economic Forum, European Commission, and OECD to national and local actors, have embedded both the methodology and conceptual framework of complexity into their core toolbox. Hence, as economic complexity moves from the periphery to the core of economic thinking and development policy, this special issue attempts to both reflect on past success and look forward to new research frontiers.

The complexity perspective posits that the knowledge content of a country or a city cannot be found at the intensive margin: knowledge grows not by accumulating more of the same, but by adding new and different elements to existing capabilities. It is this evolutionary, combinatorial process that drives many economic phenomena. While this description of knowledge accumulation is often in direct contrast with leading models of economic growth and development - where technology is typically a homogenous good – the theoretical roots of complexity can be found in both traditional and heterodox economics, from Smith's division of labor (Hausmann et al, 2011) to information theory (Antonelli, 2011), from Jacob's externalities (Jacobs, 1969) to urban scaling (Bettencourt et al. 2007, Balland et al., 2018), from agglomeration effects (Glaeser et al. 1992) to network theory (Hidalgo et al., 2007).

Important questions to address include the micro-foundations of economic complexity (how and at what scale is it created? What are its ingredients and where do they reside?), and its relation to traditional concepts such as tacit knowledge, radical innovation, agglomeration, and production networks?

The special issue is organized around four main themes:

- Micro/theoretical foundations of complexity theory, possibly connecting it to established schools of economic thought or other kinds of literature such as biology or physics

- New empirical applications of complexity to key issues in economics, geography, and human development
- Novel approaches to measuring complexity, and studying its evolution over time, organizations and space
- Implications for policy and firm strategy

### **Submission process**

We welcome full manuscripts of up to 8,000 words maximum (excluding references and appendices). Articles should be submitted online via the Research Policy web-portal. Each paper will be reviewed by two or three referees. We aim to complete the review process with a maximum of two drafts (i.e., a single 'revise and resubmit') before a final decision is made -- unless special circumstances call for an additional revision round.

### **Timeline**

March 1, 2019: extended submission deadline for full manuscript

June 1, 2019: decisions and comments sent to authors

October 1, 2019: deadline for final draft

Feb 1, 2020: expected publication

### **Contact information**

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