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## **Book Review**

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**Reviewed by George Lodorfos\* and  
Anastasia Konstantopoulou**

Email: G.Lodorfos@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Email: Anastasia.Konstantopoulou@edgehill.ac.uk

\*Corresponding author

**Entrepreneurship in Western Europe: A Contextual Perspective**

**by: L-P. Dana**

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Léo-Paul Dana is a Professor of Entrepreneurship at Montpellier Business School, France, and a Marie Curie Fellow at Princeton University, USA. Since the 1980s, Dana has been a leading figure in entrepreneurship research and his name will be familiar to many readers of this journal.

A sequel to his bestseller about entrepreneurship in Asia, the objective of his newest book is to provide an introduction to entrepreneurship in Western Europe. The volume was scheduled to appear a few years ago, but the earthquakes in Christchurch cost him his home and his office and left him in a wheelchair – explaining the delay writing this book.

In this new book, he explores entrepreneurship in Western Europe from the perspective of the sociological or cultural environment of each country. He does this while taking into account how each country's historical journey in the past century has shaped its attitude to innovation, its perception of opportunity, and its government policies, and how these have influenced its economic growth.

As we are told in the Foreword, by Professor *Emeritus* Sabine Urban of University of Strasbourg, "This book by Léo-Paul Dana invites the reader on an enticing journey across Western Europe to discover the fundamental elements of socio-economic life, their evolution and their capacity to ensure populations' well being over time. He did it with the talent of a humanist economist, fascinated by the history of peoples and the specific cultures of countries that, together, shape the context. That context is particularly rich and diverse in Europe, a place of brilliant civilisation for more than two thousand years (p.7)."

She further explains to the reader, "the implicit question inspired by Léo-Paul Dana is the following: does a Western European entrepreneurship model exist? The answer is not easy to deliver...Europe is a very diversified cultural and political area; it is not a homogeneous set making visible a clear relation between context and entrepreneurship

practices...One trend has been analysed by the author and his McGill University colleagues, calling it symbiotic entrepreneurship. Indeed, Europe today is rich with interdependence, rather than independence (p.11).”

The multi-chaptered volume is coherent and easy to navigate and read. In particular the exhibits as well as the examples make the dissemination of complex concepts easy to understand and remember.

The content and purpose are presented very clearly in the Introduction. In addition, the author provides an overview account of the definitions of entrepreneurship as used over the course of time by different subject specialists, highlighting how the definition and understanding of what entrepreneurship is depends on one’s cultural, ethnic and disciplinary backgrounds as well as changing over time.

Similarly, each of the following chapters provides an in-depth analysis of each country’s approach to entrepreneurship and its impact on economic growth. Each chapter’s inclusion of a country-focused historical overview provides a context-specific overview of the environment in which entrepreneurship is taking place, and concludes with a short epilogue considering the future.

The combination of the author’s writing style and clarity of expression, the use of examples and photographs, and the pan-European perspective, make this book appealing to a wide group of readers, including social scientists who study policy and social reform, human geographers, and business and marketing practitioners and scholars.

In the words of Professor *Emeritus* Sabine Urban, “Léo-Paul Dana demonstrates in every chapter of this book that people count. Human quality is the decisive factor of progress. We are grateful to the author for this message, anchored in the past, and key to having confidence in a worthwhile future (p.12).”