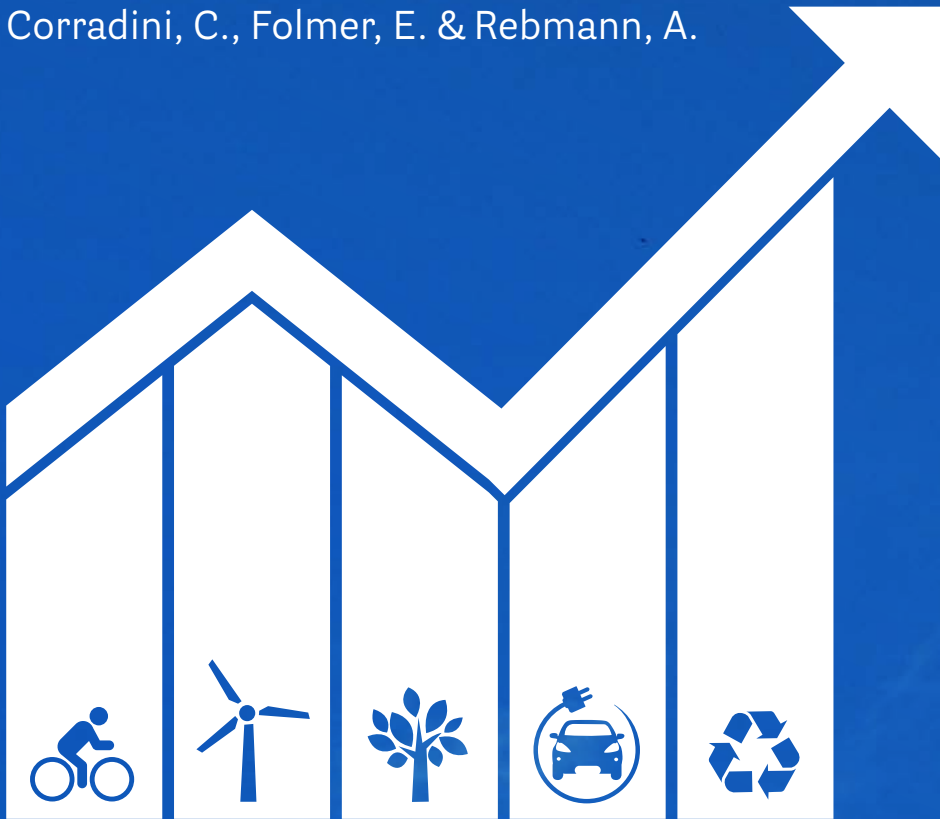




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LISTENING TO THE BUZZ: EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN FIRM CREATION AND
REGIONAL RELATIONAL STRUCTURES AS REFLECTED BY SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we explore how to expand our knowledge of regional relational structures and how they influence entrepreneurship by analysing big data to listen to the 'buzz' – the vibrancy and nature of localised informal communication flows. In particular, we propose a novel approach to capture the intangible element of learning regions, reminiscent of the 'industrial atmosphere' discussed by Marshall, within the framework of the knowledge spillover theory of entrepreneurship. Using all geo-tagged Tweets across 168 NUTS3 regions in the UK for the year 2014, our results offer evidence, robust to different model specifications, that regions characterised by a relatively higher intensity of discussion and vibrancy around topics related to innovation and new firm creation may provide a more effective set of informal relational resources that underpin sharing and recombination of ideas defining regional capabilities to support and facilitate entrepreneurial processes.

KEYWORDS: Big data; Entrepreneurship, Firm creation, Twitter, Social structures, Knowledge spillovers