

# Living and working in the hothouses of innovation

A person-centred approach to studying hybrid research spaces at the intersections of academia and business in the Vienna life science region

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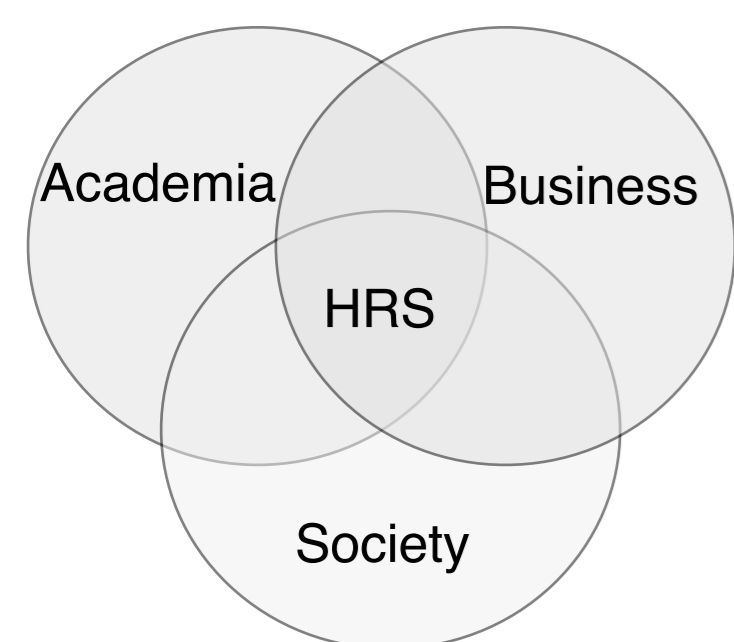
## Background

Recent policy discourse refers to scientific and technological **innovation** as the key force driving the future economic and social development of the European Union, its nation states and regions. **Regional clusters**, with their particular networks, policy structures, intellectual traditions and a specific genius loci are seen to be indispensable in fostering the knowledge perceived as crucial to secure economic and societal development – they are seen as the “hothouses of innovation”.



## Hybrid Research Spaces

In current debates about innovation, **hybrid research spaces** between academia and business, i.e. **start-ups and small and medium enterprises** in cooperation with academic partners are conceptualised as particular sources of entrepreneurial creativity and receive specific attention.



These new contexts of knowledge production open up a range of questions. How are they different from other contexts in which knowledge is produced? In which ways are they particularly supportive of (or inhibiting) certain forms of creativity? And what role does a specific regional context and its genius loci play in this?

## Main Project Aim

Fostering “**bright minds**”, hence attracting talented **people** to work in the production of innovative knowledge, is at the core of most policy agendas. However, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the perspectives of those living and working in these new hybrid spaces.



This project hence employs a **person-centred approach to explore how researchers live and work in hybrid research spaces at the intersections of academia and business** in the life sciences in the Vienna region, and how this specific regional context matters in how knowledge is produced.

## Research Site

The **Vienna life science region** is a particularly interesting site for a case study addressing these issues, as it is characterised by dense interactions between academia and business, and has received considerable regional policy and public attention over recent years.



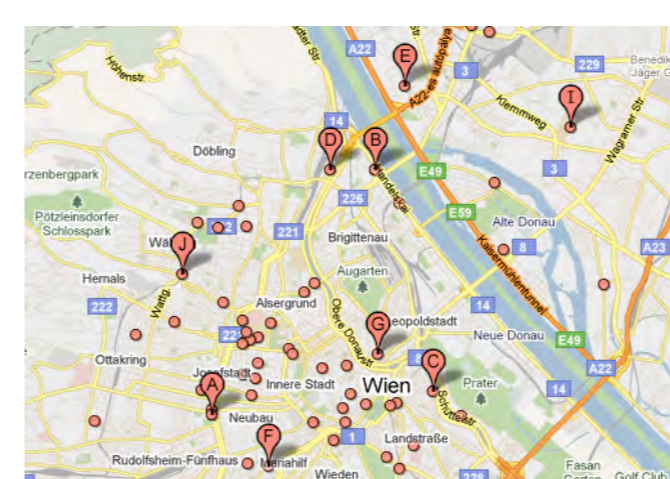
## Questions 1: People & Knowledge



**Aim:** Analyse researchers' perceptions of their professional lives and knowledge production practices in hybrid research spaces

- How do professional careers, and more generally biographies of “lives in research” develop at the interface of academia and business?
- How is knowledge produced in these hybrid settings? From which sources do researchers derive their inspiration in choosing epistemic approaches?
- What is the social and temporal organisation of research in these contexts?
- Which value structures guide researchers' work in these hybrid spaces?

## Questions 2: Place & Knowledge



**Aim:** Scrutinise how the regional context of Vienna matters in how knowledge is produced in hybrid research spaces

- How does the Vienna region feature in researchers' accounts, and which relations do they build to it?
- What role do specific institutional constellations such as funding regimes play in shaping this?
- How do researchers relate their work to regional and national societal discourses about innovation?

## Methods

The proposed study will employ a **case-study approach**. It will focus on three small or medium sized companies characterised by dense interaction with academia. **Narrative biographical interviews** will be the main method.

