

SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The ISBE-Emerald Book Series aims to provide a platform for leading edge research that reflects themes of interest to contemporary entrepreneurship scholars. The volumes within the series are proposed and edited by established scholars within the international ISBE membership, and contributions are peer reviewed by experts in their respective fields.

The fifth volume in the series, *Exploring Criminal and Illegal Enterprise: New Perspectives on Research, Policy & Practice* edited by Gerard McElwee and Robert Smith draws together contemporary research contributions that seek to critically explore a range of issues relating to criminal and illegal enterprise. This theme has not received a significant degree of attention thus far in the entrepreneurship discipline, not least because it is such a difficult terrain to map and generate empirical data.

Irrespective of lens, practical, theoretical and/or policy, there is widespread appreciation that entrepreneurs create and/or identify, evaluate, pursue and exploit business opportunities often irrespective of whether or not the opportunity is legal or not. A broad view of entrepreneurship including the criminal is discussed in this collection.

William Baumol (1990) defined criminal entrepreneurship as the imaginative pursuit of profit without regard to the means used. The chapters, compiled by a multidisciplinary group of scholars demonstrate several dimensions of the entrepreneurial processes, such as imagination, creativity, innovation, calculated risk taking, alertness to opportunities, opportunity identification as well as resource assemblage and leverage to exploit an opportunity – all in a criminal context. Illegal methods used by entrepreneurs to identify solutions to problems which lead to the generation of business opportunities are illustrated.

The book illustrates the dynamics of illegal entrepreneurship and of the practices of criminal entrepreneurs. This collection highlights that the 'entrepreneur' as well as the 'organization' should be the unit of academic and policy analysis even in criminal contexts. The examination of the illegal behaviour of entrepreneurs and how criminal entrepreneurs acquire information, how they learn from their entrepreneurial experiences and how they utilize acquired knowledge to develop their organizations is a rich

mine to research and hopefully the contributions in the book will encourage other scholars to engage with some of the challenges which the contributors place before us.

I am immensely grateful to Rob Smith for engaging with the challenge of compiling this book and for all those who contributed to this exciting fifth volume. I also appreciate the support provided by Patti O. Davis at Emerald Publishing and ISBE's London office in helping to promote this important series. In keeping with the objectives of series, this volume constitutes a body of peer reviewed contemporary research chapters that will engage our growing ISBE community globally.

Gerard McElwee
(*Editor – ISBE-Emerald Book Series*)