

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

BUSINESS AND SOCIETY 360

Series Editors: David M. Wasieleski and James Weber

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The *Business and Society (BAS) 360* book series is an annual publication targeting cutting-edge developments in the broad business and society field, such as stakeholder management, corporate social responsibility and citizenship, business ethics, sustainability, corporate governance and others. Each volume will feature a comprehensive discussion and review of the current 'state' of the research and theoretical developments in a specific business and society area. As business and society is an inherently multi-disciplinary scholarly area, the book series will draw from work in areas outside of business and management, such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, religious studies, economics and other related fields, as well as the natural sciences, education and other professional areas of study.

This volume presents insightful case studies and adds important new knowledge to the social entrepreneurship conversation. It is well worth reading.

–Tom Lumpkin, Michael F. Price Chair and Professor of Entrepreneurship, University of Oklahoma

The chapters in this volume on social entrepreneurship offer readers an insightful and complex reflection on an emerging and increasingly important area of research to academics and practitioners. Various and unique insights are provided by expert international scholars and lay out intriguing pathways for future work that address gaps in the academic literature providing insights to business executives and academics.

–Gideon D. Markman, PhD, Professor of Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Enterprise, Colorado State University

This year's *Business and Society 360* book series by Drs. Wasieleski and Weber are very timely. Their focus on social entrepreneurship is needed now more than ever. Not only is there a growing gap between the rich and the poor, but also the middle class continues to shrink. Traditional business models aren't effectively addressing these complex problems. In far too many instances they are making them worse. Successful social entrepreneurship models and paradigms can help bridge those gaps.

–William Generett Jr., Esq., Senior Vice President, Duquesne University, Entrepreneur in Residence Duquesne School of Business and Social Entrepreneur

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BUSINESS AND SOCIETY 360 VOLUME 5

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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PREFACE

Sophie Bacq, David M. Wasieleski and
James Weber

BUSINESS AND SOCIETY 360 BOOK SERIES OVERVIEW

Where are we? How did we get here? Which way should we go now?

Sound familiar? Have you ever considered the answers to these questions related to the work you do? Existential moments are common in the maturation of any academic discipline. They are the product of a passionate, caring constituency that is driven to make meaningful contributions that can propel future research and provide illusory discoveries that are conceptually powerful, empirically sound, and practically useful.

It is in the desire for academic progress that we proudly continue the *Business and Society 360 (BAS 360)* annual book series. *BAS 360* is an annual book series targeting cutting-edge developments in the broad business and society field. Each volume features a comprehensive 360-degree discussion and review of the current state of the research and theoretical developments in a specific area of business and society scholarship. Our series began five years ago with Volume 1 on “Stakeholder Management.” Volume 2 was published a year later on “Corporate Social Responsibility.” In 2019, we focused Volume 3 on “Business Ethics” and last year we assembled Volume 4 focusing on “Sustainability.” The goal of this series is to shape future work in the field around our many disciplines and topics of interest, to enlighten scholars in the area about the most productive roads forward. Essentially, at this crossroad, which way do we proceed?

The 360-degree view is intended to reflect on a theory’s cross-discipline research, empirical explorations, cross-cultural studies, literature critiques, and meta-analysis projects. Given our multidisciplinary identity, each volume draws from work in areas both inside and outside of business and management.

Social Entrepreneurship: Origins, Trends, and Future Directions

In 1972, Bill Drayton, founder of the international nonprofit Ashoka, coined the term social entrepreneurship to describe a then growing trend of entrepreneurs pursuing market-based opportunities in an attempt to address unresolved yet pressing social and environmental issues. These entrepreneurs noted that

traditional state-led and charity efforts often struggle to tackle these challenges, in part because their top-down, bureaucratic, and somewhat arm-length structures and approaches often yield slow and suboptimal solutions. However, they also acknowledged that traditional profit-driven entrepreneurs, whose nimbler and more adaptable structures and approaches might yield superior solutions, tend to veer away from these sorts of issues because they do not see enough potential for financial gain in attempting to solve them. Social entrepreneurs aimed to address these actors' apparent shortcomings, respectively known as government and market failures, by applying traditional entrepreneurial structures and processes, while adopting state and nonprofit actors' focus on meeting others' needs over making profits – albeit while still striving to achieve economic sustainability as market-based ventures.

Over the following two decades, the social entrepreneurship ecosystem strengthened, as evidenced by the creation of other organizations promoting social entrepreneurs, including Echoing Green (est. 1987), the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship (est. 1998), the Skoll Foundation (est. 1999), to name just a few. As social entrepreneurship gained visibility and traction among practitioners, it triggered a wave of academic analyses of the concept, marked by a sharp increase in research and publications over the last decade. Initially, researchers examined the individual motives that appeared to lead some entrepreneurs down a social, and others down a more traditional, path (e.g., Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Dees, 1998; Mair & Marti, 2006). They then shifted their focus to the strategies social entrepreneurs use to balance the tensions between their economic and noneconomic goals in their organizations (e.g., Battilana & Lee, 2014), largely in response to external institutional and resource provider pressures (Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2019). In contrast to individual motives and organizational processes, to date, few researchers have examined the outcomes of social entrepreneurship – that is, which social entrepreneurial solutions appear to work in a given context and which do not. As a result, extant research has yet to inform researchers or practitioners of whether or under which conditions social entrepreneurship actually yields more or more meaningful social benefits than traditional state, NGO, or entrepreneurial initiatives (Bacq & Lumpkin, 2021).

This research gap stems at least in part from the reality that social entrepreneurship outcomes are uniquely difficult to measure. While traditional ventures usually evaluate success by means of one metric – typically net profits – social enterprises by nature often monitor multiple metrics simultaneously, many of which are far less tangible or precise than financial capital. In fact, many develop dashboards showing dozens of metrics to assess their success, and practitioners and funders have developed hundreds of tools and frameworks for measuring and presenting them (IssueLab, 2021).¹ Specific metrics of interest also frequently vary from one context to another, over time, and even between two ventures operating in the same general space, based upon their individual missions and/or approaches (Hertel, Bacq, & Lumpkin, Forthcoming).

¹This observation is drawn from the records of conversations between the first author and multiple social enterprises.

As social entrepreneurship often attempts to create value for distinct local communities (Lumpkin, Bacq, & Pidduck, 2018), recent research has attempted to measure a given venture's outcomes from the perspective of the specific group or groups it seeks to serve. This approach has led researchers to conceptualize new overarching and fungible metrics, including but not limited to civic wealth (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019); community resilience (Dutta, 2017; Gray, Duncan, Kirkwood, & Walton, 2014; Williams & Shepherd, 2016); community development, regeneration, and renewal (Haugh, 2007; Jain & Koch, 2020); and community well-being (Gordon, Wilson, Tonner, & Shaw, 2018; Vestrum, 2014). Adopting a broader conceptualization of wealth, beyond economic terms, and examining social entrepreneurship outcomes in terms of stocks and flows of capital, offers avenues for future research that complements the currently heavy focus on inputs and organizational processes.

Most social enterprises form with the goal of eventually expanding their operations beyond an initial community of focus, as the issues they aim to address are ultimately global concerns. As such, social entrepreneurs and their supporters – like traditional entrepreneurs – also tend to measure their success in terms of their ability to scale up their solutions. Indeed, as any entrepreneurial ventures, social enterprises start small, yet the problems they intend to solve are large, from poverty to climate change to biodiversity loss. Understandingly, scale has been the center of attention for many social entrepreneurs and their supporters, and we are witnessing a social entrepreneurship ecosystem built on expectations of scale. But while traditional ventures often measure this facet of success in terms of organizational size, organizational scaling does not guarantee scaling of social impact. Rather, and reminiscent of the multidimensionality of impact, scale can take many forms. Social enterprises can scale their impact, either by increasing the number of people they serve – such “scale breadth” strategy has been adopted by many microfinance organizations that have made their purpose to increase the number of borrowers they serve – or by improving their services to beneficiaries, known as “scale depth” (Desa & Koch, 2014).

Furthermore, many practitioners, and a small but growing body of researchers (e.g., Bansal, Grewatsch, & Sharma, 2021), recognize that the ability of social enterprises to scale in any meaningful respect is often a function of their ability to overcome systemic barriers to their efforts, and foster supportive ecosystems, through interactions with local activists, communities, corporations, governments, and other actors (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019) – a process often conceptualized as *systems change* (Papi-Thornton, 2019). Such a systems approach implies for social entrepreneurship researchers to acknowledge and (re)connect social entrepreneurs and organizations to the other actors in the system – not only supporters and communities but also governments, activists, and large corporations – when evaluating the outcomes of social entrepreneurship. A measure of success, in this case, would then be the extent of change (e.g., in power dynamics, in voice representation) brought to existing institutions following social entrepreneurial action.

These existing lines of research demonstrate the importance – and unique opportunity – for social entrepreneurship researchers to challenge assumptions

drawn from traditional entrepreneurship and management theories. Such opportunities abound. Let us illustrate with the case of stakeholder theory, an organizational management, and business ethics theory that accounts for multiple constituencies impacted by business entities like employees, suppliers, local communities, and funders can inform our understandings of this subject. Since it rose to prominence in the 1980s following R. Edward Freeman's publication of his landmark book "*Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*" in 1984, explorations of this theory have focused on how a given focal organization can improve its outcomes by accounting for the needs and views of multiple actors its activities affect. The centeredness of the focal organization has been the assumption since the theory became in vogue in the 1980s. However, the complexity of social and environmental issues invites us to consider how multiple distinct actors' actions can combine to create value and improve outcomes within a given space – drawing upon theories of commons (Ostrom, 1990) to conceptualize this complexity and address collaboration dilemma among multiple stakeholders. To wit, the concept of the commons itself has been revisited and reinterpreted in management, in recent special issues (e.g., Peredo, Haugh, Hudon, & Meyer, 2020) and theory pieces (e.g., Bridoux and Stoelhorst, 2020). As such, in a concerted effort to push scholarly understanding of impact, who gets what value, and on which basis value is allocated (Bacq & Aguilera, 2021; Klein, Mahoney, McGahan, & Pitelis, 2019), this volume brings the spirit of critical and multipolar thought forward by examining social entrepreneurship through the lenses of international collaboration, complexity, and scaling. This volume's coverage of both established and emerging topics, such as networks, crowdfunding, and teams, makes it a rich source of inspiration for anyone interested in researching social entrepreneurship.

Volume 5 is organized into three sections that represent the work included therein. The first part, Case Studies, features five chapters that utilize a case study methodology examining diverse aspects of social entrepreneurship and community issues. Chapter 1, "Generating Social Entrepreneurship Knowledge: International Research Collaboration on a Hemispheric Level" is presented by James E. Austin, Gabriel Berger, Rosa Amelia González, Roberto Gutiérrez, Ivan Lobo, and Alfred Vernis. In this unique piece, the co-authors examine social entrepreneurship knowledge created by universities to improve how a particular knowledge network can facilitate the transfer of knowledge. Looking back over 20 years, the research team provides a model for evaluating the impact of knowledge networks.

Chapter 2, "Social Venture Scaling in Distressed Communities," written by Peter T. Gianiodis, Malcolm Muhammad, and Wendy Chen, examines venturing in communities with limited economic potential. This chapter explores an important gap in the social entrepreneurship literature with its focus on the venture growth and expansion stages in distressed economic areas. Using a case study illustration, the authors present venture scaling challenges in these communities and offer ways economic development can occur in the face of limited economic opportunity.

In “Social Entrepreneurship and Nonprofit Management: Negotiating Institutional Complexity,” Michelle Ouimette, Imran Chowdhury, and Jill R. Kickul examine two nonprofit cases to understand how this type of organization pursues social entrepreneurial ventures while adhering to the parent firm’s social welfare logic. Their study reveals a divergence between parent nonprofit organizations and subsidiary social enterprise in terms of identity and legitimacy. They offer valuable implications on how nonprofits may deal with the dissonance of logic between the values and mission of the parent firm and their seeking of revenue-generating activities.

In Chapter 4, Douglas Schuler, Reginald Young, Asiya Kari, and Jeffrey de Groot examine a case of social entrepreneurship in the food sector. In “Addressing the Interlinkages of Persistent Social Problems: Food for Change as Social Entrepreneurship,” the authors examine an innovating social program from the food bank in Houston, Texas. This fascinating example illustrates how food insecurity is influenced by multiple factors in society. They offer valuable lessons about clients and partners for addressing the causes of social problems.

The final chapter in this section is entitled “Community-based Social Enterprises and Social Innovation: The Case of Women’s Cooperatives in Turkey.” Burin Kalabay Hatipoglu takes us on a deep analysis of a new program associated with a social entrepreneurial organization in Turkey. Examining refugee women’s empowerment, the author finds ways the cooperative can be more inclusive and provide a greater community impact through social innovation. The chapter ends with important implications for society that can be generalized to other community-based social enterprises.

Part 2 focuses on the theoretical development of the field, a topic that is also highlighted in our Preface. Chapter 6, written by Tasneem Sadiq, Karen Maas, and Rob van Tulder, looks at challenges manifested from a hybrid model of an organization. In “The Impact of the Hybridization Movement on Organizations and Society,” the authors utilize a hybridization taxonomy to better understand what challenges to expect in a hybrid characterization of organization. They find that challenges differ by type of hybrid organization and offer suggestions for how each type can address those issues.

In “Scaling Social Impact: What Challenges and Opportunities Await Social Entrepreneurs,” Philippe Eiselein and Nikolai Dentchev examine the theoretical background of scaling challenges and opportunities for social entrepreneurs. They provide a detailed and thorough literature review to identify both challenges facing the entrepreneurs and different strategies that can be taken to address those scaling issues. The chapter offers many forward-looking avenues for future research in this area.

Chapter 8, by Cyrine Ben-Hafaiedh and Frederic Dufays, establishes a forward-seeking agenda for social entrepreneurial teams’ research. In “Social Entrepreneurial Teams: A Research Agenda,” they address a gap in entrepreneurial research by exploring work that has been done in collective dynamics of socially innovative teams. This underresearched area is an important component of social entrepreneurship scholarship. After their review, the author proffers six topic areas of study for future work in social entrepreneurial teams.

Finally, in Part 3, the remaining three chapters of the volume examine applied research in social entrepreneurship. In Chapter 9, Josefina Murillo-Luna, Esperanza Garcia-Uceda, and Jesus Asin-Lafuente introduce “Obstacles to Social Entrepreneurship.” The team presents a 360-degree view of the factors that inhibit social entrepreneurship as a business model. Their exploratory analysis identifies the key obstacles that hold back social entrepreneurship in this regard. Their chapter also features a set of recommendations from experts in social entrepreneurship to overcome these barriers.

Saheli Nath conceives social entrepreneurship in a different manner in his chapter, “Social Entrepreneurship as ‘Acts of Solidarity’ in Disasters.” In the context of global disasters, Nath proposes thinking of social enterprise as a function of solidarity in order to discover novel patterns of social interaction and to increase inclusivity. She argues that this new vision allows for more community resilience and cohesion in the wake of natural disasters.

Our volume concludes with Chapter 11 entitled “Helper Networks and Crowdfunding: Mobilizing Social Entrepreneurship.” Paulami Mitra, Jill R. Kickul, and Colleen Robb examine crowdfunding in the context of social entrepreneurship to understand what motivates a network of individuals to engage in this behavior. The authors provide insights into the characteristics of these individuals to see what makes these groups unique. Lessons for social entrepreneurs are offered on the formation of their networks as well as communication strategies for engaging in crowdfunding.

In the spirit of this book series, this ensemble of chapters captures the essence of some of the most important and cutting-edge research in social entrepreneurship. Our distinguished group of authors gives a critical examination of the work done in this area, identifies gaps in the extant literature, elucidates pathways for future research, and offers practical and theoretical implications for the field.

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