

Call for Papers for a Special Issue

REFRAMING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH: EMBRACING A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

Submission Deadline: February 5, 2021

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Social entrepreneurship is a distinct form of entrepreneurial endeavor that places an explicit focus on creating social value for key stakeholders. The creation of well-known firms (e.g., Tom's Shoes, Warby Parker, Seventh Generation) as well as organizations supporting marginalized entrepreneurs (e.g., Grameen Bank, Kiva) reflects the growing interest in social entrepreneurship. Once considered incongruous with firms' economic imperatives, elements of social value have increasingly become core to a wide variety of business models (Nason et al., 2018). The groundswell of interest in social entrepreneurship worldwide has led to innovative funding opportunities for socially oriented ventures and has provided more than \$7.5 billion in loans to low-income entrepreneurs (Armstrong, Ahsan, & Sundaramurthy, 2018). Global crises such as the spread of Covid-19 make social entrepreneurship more relevant than ever, creating a pressing need for innovative business models that address corresponding social and financial emergencies.

The academic literature on social entrepreneurship is expanding rapidly along with the phenomenon itself. More than a decade ago, scholars noted a lack of rigorous and theory-based scholarship in social entrepreneurship (Short et al., 2009). The subsequent rise in the prevalence and prominence of social entrepreneurship research has certainly brought increased scholarly rigor, but has also created new concerns in this burgeoning area of inquiry. In fact, there is little consensus regarding what actually constitutes social entrepreneurship—there is currently no shared definition of the concept. A strikingly broad array of phenomena intersects with social entrepreneurship, including strategic calibrations of “socialness” for any contemporary start-ups or established organizations (Shepherd et al., 2019), hybrid social enterprises as a new organizational form, and subsistence entrepreneurs operating at the margins of society. As the phenomenological and theoretical territory under the social entrepreneurship umbrella expands, there is serious risk of fragmenting knowledge accumulation on the topic and diluting its theoretical integrity.

The purpose of this special issue is to study social entrepreneurship at a critical junction in the development of this area of inquiry. To accomplish this purpose, we seek to attract research on social entrepreneurship that extends, develops, and/or tests theory in ways that will help frame ongoing research and serve as a critical input for practical and policy implications. Specifically, we intend to attract submissions that: (1) clarify and inform ongoing conversations regarding the nature and scope of social entrepreneurship; and (2) explicitly assess the strategy of social entrepreneurship in terms of intended and unintended social/economic outcomes.

To help orient scholars seeking to respond to this call for research, we offer a number of topics and associated questions. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- How can theory from the field of strategic management inform our understanding of how we define and measure social entrepreneurship antecedents, processes, and outcomes?
- Do some social venture strategies have a ‘dark side’ that might negatively impact other key stakeholders, including beneficiaries?
- How do social venture leaders assess ‘success,’ and what are the specific factors that influence what levels of social and economic rewards are deemed as successful? How durable is this success over time?
- What is the social equivalent to ‘sustainable competitive advantage,’ and how does sustainable social value creation relate to/interact with sustainable economic advantage?
- How does inter-firm competition influence social entrepreneurship—is it less prevalent (i.e., are social ventures more collaborative in pursuing shared social outcomes), more prevalent, or neither?
- Given the increasing commercial appeal of socially responsible activities, how is the authenticity of social enterprises assessed? What are the consequences of inauthentic social entrepreneurship—a different form of ‘green washing’ (i.e., ‘virtue-signaling’)?
- How do social ventures effectively co-create solutions to intractable problems with local stakeholders?
- How do social ventures intersect and engage with social movements? How do governance practices associated with success (or failure) in the corporate setting operate in the context of social ventures?
- What balance of idiosyncratic versus traditional resources leads to social venture success? Are there specific resources that could be more or less important with regard to their influence on social versus traditional ventures?
- How might social entrepreneurship vary across geographic, national, and cultural contexts?
- How do we differentiate social value creation from traditional economic firms (e.g., providing individuals with employment, wages, and associated well-being) from the mission-centric social value creation created by “social entrepreneurs?”
- Are there specific strategic advantages and/or disadvantages uniquely associated with social ventures that are less common among more traditional start-ups?

Submission Guidelines

Submissions to this special issue should be prepared in accordance with SEJ’s submission process described at <http://sej.strategicmanagement.net> and are to be made via the SEJ website at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sej> from January 1, 2021 to February 5, 2021. Please make sure to indicate that your submission is for the special issue on Reframing Social Entrepreneurship Research: Embracing a Strategic Perspective.

Further Information

For questions regarding the content of this special issue, please contact the guest editors:

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