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Social Entrepreneurship, Social Enterprise, Critical Discourse Analysis, Deconstructionist perspectives, Capabilities Theory, Communitarianism

Objectives: The objective of this critical review is to extend the perspectives which view entrepreneurship as a movement for social change. Our second objective is to better situate social enterprise within the wider field of entrepreneurship studies and to develop a new conceptual framework.

Prior Work: Two broad perspectives reconceptualise entrepreneurship as social change, namely the movements spearheaded by Hjorth and Steyaert (2003, 2004, 2006, 2009), and the feminist perspectives of Calás et al., (2009). In the former case, empirical examples have been cited to illustrate the activity of ‘public entrepreneurship’ and the ways in which individual citizens have created new civic spaces of sociality (Hjorth and Bjerke in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2006). In the latter case, feminist perspectives, have demonstrated how entrepreneurship can counter gender inequality (Blake and Hanson, 2005). In reviewing these empirical studies we affirm a growing body highlighting the positive social outcomes (e.g., social capital enhancement, empowerment, raised aspirations) of entrepreneurship.

Approach: In addressing the emergence of social enterprise over the past 10-15 years, we view such organisational configurations as explicit manifestations of the social mission inherent in entrepreneurship as social change. As a fruitful setting for research, we view discursive and narrative-based analytical methods (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) as being particularly suited to capturing fresh insights at the practitioner level of social enterprise.

Results: Our paper suggests further research avenues in social enterprise, informed by the narrative and discursive approaches emphasised by Hjorth and Steyaert (2004). In order to extend the boundaries of entrepreneurship research we develop a framework inspired by the communitarian values of Etzioni (1993) and capabilities theory of Nussbaum (1999). In charting further research directions underpinned by this framework, we argue that fresh insights will emerge regarding the potential of entrepreneurship to aid human development, to ‘fully function and flourish’ (Cornelius et al., 2008) as social and public entrepreneurs acknowledge their responsibilities as active citizens (Etzioni, 1993).

Implications: The implications of our review are that new research avenues and perspectives can inform entrepreneurship studies, over and above the economic perspectives dominating the field.

Value: Our paper reaffirms the perspective of entrepreneurship as social change, as well as the broadening of this field to include social enterprise, and finally yields the development of a new theoretical framework to aid this endeavour.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Social Enterprise, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Analysis, Deconstructionist perspectives, Feminism, Capabilities Theory, Communitarianism
Introduction

In this paper we contend that there is great value in entrepreneurship studies incorporating alternative perspectives in addition to the predominant economic discourse prevailing in the literature. First we situate entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and social enterprise within the recent political and economic climate. Here we identify how government papers and pronouncements have emphasised the economic benefits of social enterprise as a partial response and solution to the recession. Secondly, we clarify how the terms entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and social enterprise are related but distinct. We then progress to identify a debate in the literature concerning the similarities and differences between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. Central here will be the question ‘what makes social entrepreneurship ‘social’?’ In light of this debate we argue that current theorising that the key distinction about social entrepreneurship (from traditional entrepreneurship), is its underlying social mission falls short of a more holistic appreciation of the sociality of entrepreneurship. We then identify alternative (Hjorth and Steyaert 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2009) and feminist (Ahl, 2006; Calás et al., 2009) perspectives which emphasise how entrepreneurship is a source for positive social change. Linked to this will be the identification of related studies informed by the perspectives that entrepreneurship is a source of social change (Zhou and Cho, 2010; Blake and Hanson, 2005).

The central contribution of the paper will be our identification of further avenues for research underpinned by alternative perspectives capturing entrepreneurship as social change. Crucially, we develop a conceptual framework informed by the marriage of communitarian involvement (Etzioni, 1993; Avineri and de Shalit, 1992; Ridley-Duff, 2007) and capabilities theory (Sen, 1992, 1999; Nussbaum, 1999). We conclude that entrepreneurship has always been a social activity, and we hope that this broader conceptualisation will also be recognised by governments, academics and researchers, over and above traditional (and restrictive) economic perspectives.

Social entrepreneurship and social enterprise in political context

The global financial crisis of 2008, caused by irresponsible lending practices in the sub-prime mortgage markets in the USA and poorly regulated banking sectors led to the ‘credit crunch’ and increases in national deficits as governments intervened to bail out banks. In the UK, this financial crisis led the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government to conduct an annual spending review and proclaim an ‘age of austerity’. More recently, the UK government white papers explicitly identified social entrepreneurship and social enterprise as one solution contributing to economic development. Evident within these white papers is the explicit emphasis placed on the economic benefits afforded by social entrepreneurship and social enterprise.

In the UK, Prime Minister Tony Blair’s Labour government founded the ‘Social Enterprise Unit’ in 2001 as part of the Department for Trade and Industry (now the ‘Department for Innovation, Business and Skills’). Recent pronouncements from the current Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government have hailed the ‘Big Society’ policy (characterised by social action, public sector reform, and community action) as one of the key solutions for public service provision in an age of austerity (Grint and Holt, 2011). It is here that voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises have been identified as key stakeholders. This is most evident in the government publication titled ‘The Coalition: Our Programme for Government’ (May 2010:29-35) which explicitly states “we will support the creation of mutuals, cooperatives, charities and social enterprises, and enable these groups to have much greater involvement in the running of public services”. The publication does however conclude with the clear prioritisation of cost-cutting whereby “the deficit reduction programme takes precedence over any of the other measures in this agreement”. Considering these statements together, it could be argued that social enterprises have been identified as a means for taking over the provision of public services, thus contributing to the coalition government’s drive to reduce their deficit.

Moreover, a UK Coalition government white paper titled ‘Growing the Social Investment Market: A Vision and a Strategy’ (February 2011) has outlined the importance of supporting social investment through the formation and partial funding of a ‘Big Society Bank’ responsible for providing advice and bonds for social enterprises. The initial funding has been collected through dormant UK bank accounts and £200 million from UK banks. More recently, a Cabinet Office publication titled the ‘Giving White Paper’ (May 2011: 39) identifies social enterprises as having a “crucial role to play in generating jobs and providing innovative public services, often to communities which are badly underserved”.

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Hoogendoorn et al., (2010) observe the continued emergence of social entrepreneurship in wider society, citing examples of recent developments, like the foundation of associated support organisations like the Schwab (1998) and Skoll (2003) foundations as well as academic programmes at prestigious institutions such as Harvard University Business School (‘The Harvard Initiative’) and Oxford (‘The Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship’ at the Said Business School). The authors also draw attention to the foundation of academic journals such as the International Journal of Entrepreneurship Education (2003), The Journal of World Business (2006), and the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research (2008), each of which have published articles and special issues devoted to social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the Social Enterprise Journal was established in 2006 specifically as the means for publishing academic and practitioner papers addressing theoretical and empirical studies of social enterprise. Despite the widespread recognition and celebration of the economic benefits afforded by social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, academics observe that there is little clarity regarding what the ‘social’ in social entrepreneurship and social enterprise actually entails (Nicholls and Cho, 2006). Linked to this is the more recent recognition that practitioners actively re-write government discourses on social enterprise to articulate their identities (Parkinson and Howorth, 2008). In other words, different stakeholder groups will articulate different meanings and priorities and this needs to be more closely addressed by new research.

The extant academic literature has also (like the government white papers identified above) highlighted the economic features and benefits afforded by entrepreneurial activities characterised by innovation (new product lines and/or services) and new business start-up activities that also create new employment. Prior to considering the debate concerning the similarities and differences between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, we first briefly consider some working definitions and features of these respective terms.

**Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Social Enterprise: Related but Distinct**

Schumpeter (1934) is recognised as the first to explicitly outline a process view of entrepreneurship, where individual entrepreneurs operate as economic agents identifying new business opportunities, introducing a new method of production and/or opening up a new market. Entrepreneurs in a Schumpeterian sense act by “exploiting an invention or, more generally an untried possibility or producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way by opening up a new source of supply of materials or a new outlet for products by reorganising an industry” (Dees, 1998: 49). Similarly, for Thompson (2008: 153) entrepreneurship is “a way of thinking and behaving that has opportunity at its heart. Creativity and innovation are typically in evidence. Entrepreneurs…recognise, create, engage, and exploit opportunities”.

Carland et al., (cited in Gartner 1988: 60) emphasise the central role played by innovation whereby entrepreneurs act through applying one of five innovative strategic postures, namely introduction of new goods, introduction of new methods of production, opening of new markets, opening of new sources of supply, and industrial reorganization. Westhead et al., (2005) also emphasise the diverse scope and nature of entrepreneurship through their distinction between novice, serial, and portfolio entrepreneurs. The former refer to those with little prior experience, but who own a stake in an independent business, whilst serial entrepreneurs include those who have owned and sold/closed a business and who currently own a stake in a single business. Finally portfolio entrepreneurs include those who own stakes in two or more independent businesses.

Thompson (2008) observes that entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and social enterprise are related but distinct terms. Social entrepreneurship can be seen as the study of the social aspects and activities performed by individuals and organisations, whilst social enterprise concerns the study of organisational performance and management issues amongst social enterprises. Social entrepreneurship is understood as “the discovery of novel means to achieve constructive social change...[without maximising stockholder] economic value” (Murphy & Coombes, 2009: 328). Social enterprise is similarly recognised as “a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners” (Department for Trade and Industry, 2002 in Todres et al., 2006: 62).

These definitions therefore highlight similarities (innovation, new venture creation, and revenue generation) and differences (an emphasis on generating social value, but not shareholder dividends), when compared to conventional entrepreneurship. Inherent within the above definitions is the recognition of both economic and social features, where the former serve to support the realisation of the latter.
What makes social entrepreneurship ‘social’?

An emergent and unresolved question in the literature concerns the extent to which the concept is similar and different to traditional entrepreneurship (Dacin et al., 2010). Debate ranges from those arguing that all forms of entrepreneurship are social (Mair, 2006), to those asserting that social entrepreneurship has similarities with traditional entrepreneurship (innovation, risk-taking, and identification of new possibilities), but sees profitability as a means to a social end (Chell, 2007); to those attesting to the unique features of social entrepreneurship (Austin et al., 2006; Hockerts, 2006; Murphy and Coombes, 2009 and Weerawardena and Mort, 2006).

Chell (2007: 18) identifies clear similarities between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship in that both involve the process of “recognising and pursuing opportunities with regard to the...resources currently controlled with a view to value creation. In other words, entrepreneurs (both social and economic) consciously garner alienable resources (e.g. through networking and other processes) and use their personal or human ‘capital’...to achieve their espoused mission of wealth and social value creation”.

Other work in the literature has attempted to identify the distinguishing features of social entrepreneurship. Weerawardena and Mort (2006) develop a multidimensional model (fig. 1) of social entrepreneurship that is rooted in an organisation's social mission (underpinned by innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk management), its drive for sustainability, which is shaped by environmental dynamics (e.g., government policy, availability of financial and human resources). Social entrepreneurship is distinct in that its practice is tempered by risk management and a balancing between scarce (human and financial) resources with the need to address social mission and sustainability. With this in mind, Weerawardena and Mort (2006) propose social entrepreneurial activities, which occur within a wider environmental context, the underlying social mission, and the focus on continued sustainability (Fig. 1).

For Weerawardena and Mort (2006: 33), social entrepreneurship contrasts to entrepreneurship, in that it is the outcome of a constrained optimisation problem. In other words, social entrepreneurs operate through addressing their social mission with not only constrained financial but also human resources – since social enterprises are less likely to attract suitably qualified employees with the same level of financial incentives more commonly associated with the private sector.

For Austin et al., (2006), a traditional performance indicator for entrepreneurial ventures is profitability, liquidity, market share and shareholder dividends, whilst for activities with an underlying social mission, other performance measures (such as stakeholder impact and social change) exist. Through the above distinctions, Austin et al., (2006) thus develop a social entrepreneurship model (Fig. 2) which views commercial entrepreneurship as the interplay between people (entrepreneurs and employees), the context (the macro economy, policies and political structures), the deal (the substance of the bargain) and opportunity (a positive and alternative vision of the future). The authors observe that whilst it is more challenging to identify market opportunities for traditional entrepreneurial activities, the opportunity for social entrepreneurs already exists and far outstrips the resources available to address them.

A further distinguishing difference between commercial and social entrepreneurship is that whilst the former is concerned with expanding market share, the latter is rather more concerned with enhancing societal wellbeing – potentially achieved through encouraging other competitor organisations to share in the task of meeting social objectives (Austin et al., 2006).

Considering the dimension of people and resources, and echoing Weerawardena and Mort (2006), unlike commercial entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs are less able to recruit and retain talent, given that they cannot pay market rates or stock incentives for potential employees (Austin et al., 2006). Rather, social entrepreneurs will rely on building a team comprised of both paid and voluntary employees. Social entrepreneurs may also rely on a wider range of funding sources, such as foundation grants, members’ dues, user fees, and government payments (Austin et al., 2006). Moreover, social entrepreneurs cannot switch markets or products as easily as commercial entrepreneurs, since the former is bound by their social mission.

Concerning the final dimension, the terms of the deals (the value transactions) between commercial and social entrepreneurs differ greatly in terms of kind, consumers, timing, flexibility, and measurability. In terms of kind, social entrepreneurs need to rely more on emphasising non-pecuniary benefits to employees and funders. Considering consumers, social entrepreneurs cater to consumer groups who have little or no economic capability, and as a result “the market mechanism through
which consumers vote with their dollars is virtually absent for social entrepreneurs” (Austin et al., 2006: 14). There is also less flexibility regarding how the funds are spent, since social entrepreneurs are subject to varied levels of accountability from the different funders. The framework presented below (fig.2) places social value proposition (SVP) at the core of people, capital and opportunity (Internal components of the framework) and it is this central feature which is recognised as distinguishing social from commercial enterprises.

The above models (Werawadeena and Mort, 2006 and Austin et al., 2006) were presented as a means to develop the theoretical features underpinning social entrepreneurship. An outcome of these formulations has been the identification of the specific features that make social entrepreneurship distinct from commercial entrepreneurship. To address the question concerning the potential uniqueness of social entrepreneurship, other authors have directly sought to address what it means to be ‘social’ (Peredo and McClean, 2006).

In explicitly asking ‘what makes social entrepreneurship ‘social’?, Peredo and McLean (2006) state that the underlying mission (generating social value) as a defining characteristic. The authors do however acknowledge that debate concerning where social goals are/should be placed and highlight a continuum with some organisations merely incorporating social value as an add-on outcome (e.g. Ben and Jerry’s ice cream) to those fusing social and financial outcomes as part of a hybridised business model (e.g. the ‘Big Issue’ and Grameen Bank). Overall, for Peredo and McLean (2006) it is the focus on generating social value which forms the defining characteristic of social entrepreneurship.

Whilst it is encouraging to note a recognition in the literature concerning the importance of critically distinguishing between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, we contend that perspectives that emphasise the ‘social mission’ (Weerawadena and Mort, 2006) and ‘social value proposition’ (Austin et al., 2006) of the latter term, fall short of a more holistic appreciation of the ‘social’ in entrepreneurship. It is here that alternative perspectives in the form of postmodern (Hjorth and Stayaert (2003, 2004, 2006, and 2009) and feminist perspectives (Ahl, 2006 and Calás et al., 2009) is particularly illuminating, in that they help recast social entrepreneurship as more than economic activities underpinned by social values and missions.

Our approach: Reconceptualising entrepreneurship

Whilst traditional accounts and studies of entrepreneurship have stressed its economic aspects and benefits, a recent set of ideas spearheaded by Hjorth and Stayaert (2003, 2004, 2006, and 2009) in four edited writings, have sought to liberate entrepreneurship from the restrictive domain of economics. The authors argue that entrepreneurship should be examined as a social phenomenon and as a force for wider societal change (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2006). In order to liberate entrepreneurship from ‘the clutches of economic calculation’ (Dey in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2006: 142), the above outlook is underpinned by a deconstructionist perspective pioneered by Derrida’s (1976) ‘logocentrism’ which concerns the critical appraisal of ‘what words and concepts really mean’ as well as Lyotard’s (1984) ‘paralogy’ which entails the focus on multiple interpretations and a move away from grand meta-narratives. Economic conceptualisations may thus be seen as a meta-narrative dominating entrepreneurship research, whilst newer movements (appreciating entrepreneurship as comprising a multiplicity of meanings), may be recognised as small narratives. Central to this latter project to reclaim entrepreneurship as a social, public phenomenon, is the research focus on identifying the multiple narratives and discourses long obscured by economic meta-narratives (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004). In carrying out research informed by such perspectives, Dey (cited in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2006: 142) concludes with the hope that “the ‘social’ of social entrepreneurship shall be elevated above the level of a ‘supplement’…or nice little ‘extra’ of entrepreneurship through which entrepreneurs (retroactively) legitimise their practices, to become an unconditional hailing of difference, regardless of potentially negative consequences that might derive there from”.

Empirical examples

This view is particularly encapsulated in Hjorth and Bjerke’s argument (cited in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2006) that entrepreneurship should be located in the public (and not only the economic) domain. The authors challenge the prevailing ‘social entrepreneurship discourse’ which entails how the problems of a withering social welfare state are addressed by new organisations, and rather, propose a new framework that views individuals not as consumers but as citizens. The latter emphasises a more active role where citizens act to create spaces of ‘sociality’ in civic places or in state-institutional places. Here the authors discuss several case studies of such movements and cooperatives that exist
not simply to redress the imbalance of a retreating welfare state, but rather which offer marginalised social groups raised self-esteem, new social contacts, and skills.

The case study examples of ‘public entrepreneurship’ initiatives cited by the authors include a homelessness journal (i.e., Aluma), designed to offer homeless people an income and self-worth, an old shipyard park restored to provide a new public space (hosting an outdoor skating arena), and a home service cooperative project (established by local actors to assist unemployed immigrants to function as self-employed entrepreneurs). In considering these and other examples, Hjorth and Bjerke (2006: 115) view these local actors as “public entrepreneurs [who] do not change reality primarily through products/services but [rather] by creating the organisational possibilities for people to take up new practices”. Most striking are the authors’ distinction between public and social entrepreneurship, where the latter “produces the ‘social’ as something needing to be fixed…[whilst the former]…creates sociality as something missing…in local communities as part of public space” (Hjorth and Bjerke, 2006: 117). For these authors social entrepreneurship thus normalises social problems as economic problems in need of better management.

Berglund and Johansson (2007) provide an example of research conducted within the same perspective through their exploration of the contested meaning of entrepreneurship in the context of regional economic development in the Swedish municipalities of Katrineholm, Flen and Vingaker. Berglund and Johansson (2007) identified how regional development employees’ existing notions of entrepreneurship initially contributed to a dominant view of entrepreneurship at odds with that of recent immigrants. A key event highlighted by the authors was an incident whereby youth leaders of a refugee community proposed setting up a summer camp to host activities not usually available during this season. Initially the developers were sceptical and could not see how this proposal was ‘entrepreneurial’.

Using a Freirean perspective of critical pedagogy, the authors charted how traditional notions of entrepreneurship shifted after a process of ‘conscientization’ to incorporate the alternative perspectives held by immigrants. Berglund and Johansson (2007) highlight how the regional developers experienced ‘conscientization’, starting with the first stage ‘prise de conscience’ which emerged with the initial rejection of the summer camp idea, through to ‘dialogue’, in which the developers engaged in critical discussion about the nature of entrepreneurship and the potential value of the summer camp proposition. This then led to the use of ‘true words’, in which the developers shifted their position and use of language to that of a liberating discourse. The final stage, ‘transformation’, was characterised by action to organise new collective action in support of the summer school proposal. Thus once regional developers critically reflected and evaluated on their previously unexplored assumptions and notions about what it means to be ‘entrepreneurial’, they moved to a more accommodating position. Thus, according to Berglund and Johansson (2007: 513) “When the team leader talks about entrepreneurship he addresses the potential for the youths from the refugee camp to make something of their ideas, and make connections with other people in the community, which could eventually lead to business activity, although not necessarily”. More recent work also contributes to the view that entrepreneurship should be reframed from a restrictive economic view to wider societal perspectives.

In their case study analysis of the Los Angeles ‘ethnoburbs’ of China and Korea Towns, Zhou and Cho (2010) recognise that ethnic entrepreneurship creates job opportunities, provides significant earnings over other forms of employment; provides a buffer against direct competition with native-born workers and provides role models and training opportunities amongst co-ethnic members. More strikingly though, the authors argue that ethnic entrepreneurship is characterised by a ‘social embeddedness’ which contributes to the positive outcomes outlined above. Zhou and Cho (2010) outline how the formation of Korean and Chinese businesses, Chinese temples, and Korean Protestant churches, as well as supplementary language schools serves to enhance co-ethnic ‘bonding social capital’ (Putnam, 2000). Moreover, restaurants and other Korean and Chinese businesses hosting functions serve as meeting points to share and establish business contacts. Ethnic institutions thus formed through the start-up and ownership of ethnic businesses provides the context for individual interactions that foster networking (friendship, career, and business) opportunities. Zhou and Cho (2010) thus explicitly outline how new venture creation is more than economic in nature, and how ethnic businesses contribute to the ‘social embeddedness’ of recent immigrant communities. The authors conclude with the recommendation that further research involve the investigation of social embeddedness in other ethnic minority groups.
Feminist perspectives and empirical examples

Researchers and authors writing from feminist perspectives (Ahl, 2006 and Calás et al., 2009) also forward strong and convincing cases calling for new ways of investigating social processes in entrepreneurship. From a poststructuralist perspective and via an extensive review of over 80 academic entrepreneurship journal papers, Ahl (2006) demonstrated how academia has produced works emphasising entrepreneurship as a male activity, with predominantly male nouns and pronouns used to encapsulate entrepreneurship. The reviewed studies also expressed the assumption that entrepreneurship needs to be scaled up as opposed to exploring the barriers to female entrepreneurship (for example in securing start-up capital from banks).

One such investigation that exposes this very challenge is Blake’s (2007) study investigating how the loan making criteria employed by bank loan representatives unwittingly applied gender stereotypes to applications which disadvantaged and hindered female applicants’ access to start-up capital. Even when female entrepreneurs successfully start and manage new businesses, they look to downplay their female identity and rather emphasise entrepreneurship as a supposedly gender-neutral activity (Lewis, 2006). These two latter findings underscore the need to investigate the processes surrounding entrepreneurship – processes that may either support, shape or prevent entrepreneurship and innovation.

Calás et al., (2009) also present a strong argument for extending the boundaries of entrepreneurship, via feminist perspectives. The authors challenge the existing realist ontologies and positivistic epistemological bases of mainstream entrepreneurship research that frames entrepreneurship within the logic of economic rationality. Taking their cue from Hjorth and Steyaert (2004); Stayaert, (1997, 2005); Steyaert and Hjorth (2007), and Stayaert and Katz (2004), the authors ask “what would happen, theoretically and analytically if the focus of the literature were reframed from entrepreneurship as an economic activity with possible social change outcomes, to entrepreneurship as a social change activity with a variety of possible outcomes?” (Calás et al., 2009: 553). The authors then progress to identify two broad groups of feminist theorising potentially underpinning entrepreneurship research as social change, namely liberal, psychoanalytic and radical feminist, and socialist, poststructuralist and transnational feminist theorising.

For Calás et al., (2009: 556) research informed by “liberal feminist perspectives would start from the assumption that lasting opportunities for women in entrepreneurship must emerge from social structural reforms to eliminate discrimination”. Research from this perspective would need to examine entrepreneurship as a means to hinder (Blake, 2007) or promote (Blake and Hanson, 2005) positive social change for women in a masculine-dominated society.

The latter perspective (i.e., socialist, poststructuralist and transnational feminist theorising) posit that in societies structured through sex differences, all actions are gendered. Here the authors identify research on female entrepreneurs (Blake and Hanson, 2005) operating in gender-atypical businesses (computer consultancies, trucking, engineering, and manufacturing), that highlights how gender stereotypes are actively employed and upheld as a resource for communicating a unique selling position and service. Blake and Hanson (2005) reported how the two female owners of an auto repair shop actively sought to locate their business in an area concentrated with female professionals and advertised their shop with a pink sign ‘with a woman’s touch’. The combination of colour and wording emphasised reliability and trust. Calás et al., (2009: 560) highlight how this research is an explicit example of how feminist researchers can investigate social actions and business activities close to the ground “focusing on gendering processes and their context specificity”, concluding that “it is an optimistic example about changes in a gendered society achievable by entrepreneurial activity, emphasising both what entrepreneurs do while entrepreneuring and…what researchers do when observing and portraying entrepreneurs’ actions”. The authors then progress to chart further research recommendations underpinned by the two feminist groupings identified above.

The implication of the perspectives identified above, is that entrepreneurship studies needs to adopt a broader appreciation for the social features of entrepreneurship. A relatively new area is that of social enterprise, where investigation in this area is another means for identifying the additional (non-economic) features in entrepreneurial activities and outcomes.
Future research recommendations and a suggested theoretical framework

The above debate highlights that research needs to better explicate the social features of social entrepreneurship. Social enterprise is an explicit example of the social dynamics of entrepreneurship in organisational settings. These settings thus form a new field in which the social features of entrepreneurship may be studied. The Social Enterprise Journal was established in 2005 to address practical and conceptual issues in social enterprise, and three striking areas that have predominantly been covered over the last seven years include mapping social enterprise (Lyon and Sepulveda, 2009; Dart et al., 2010); strategies for supporting and scaling social enterprise (Lyon and Ramsden, 2006; Todres et al., 2006; Royce, 2007; Conway, 2008; Hynes, 2009; Lyon and Fernandez, 2012); and performance measurement (Flockhart, 2005; Somers, 2005; Bull, 2007; McLoughlin et al., 2008; Ruebottom, 2009). Whilst arguably these initiatives may be seen as extensions of the perspectives of social entrepreneurship to organisational settings, the social features, benefits and outcomes associated with social enterprise activities have not been explicitly investigated nor communicated. In addition, writing in the vein of Hjorth and Bjerke (2006), how can we study social enterprise as more than organisational responses to social problems and rather as organisational response to restoring sociality to particular areas of public life?

Similarly in what ways do social enterprises contribute to ‘social embeddedness’ (Zhou and Cho, 2010) and help foster social capital? Similar to the ‘ethno burbs’ of China and Korea Town in Los Angeles, social enterprises could operate at institutional levels generating resources, and at the individual level which entails ‘how patterned interpersonal relationships are structured by institutional participation’ (Zhou and Cho, 2010: 87). Here the concept of ‘institutional completeness’ (Breton, cited in Zhou and Cho, 2010), which concerns how social enterprises help foster a social context for networking is particularly relevant. The research focus therefore should shift from purely economic and internal organisational concerns (revenue generation, performance measurement, and scaling), to the impact of social enterprise initiatives on its end-user stakeholders (e.g., social networking, raised aspirations, inclusion and/or community regeneration). The voices of the disenfranchised and socially excluded can best be voiced through the application of narrative-based and discursive research methods (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) which capture and express how entrepreneurial activities enact social change. Foss (cited in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) for example explores how entrepreneurial identity is constructed through life stories via narrative interviewing techniques. Similarly Pettersson (cited in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) outlines how the discursive analysis of entrepreneurship texts reveals implicit social assumptions of entrepreneurship and (male) gender, and how such a finding implies a shift away from a restrictive masculine discourse.

The capabilities approach, a theory of human development inspired by Aristotelian ethics and developed by Sen (1992, 1999) and Nussbaum (1992) has been identified as a useful perspective in helping fledgling social enterprises to develop their internal corporate social responsibility practices (Cornelius et al., 2008). The Capabilities approach is complementary to the alternative (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2009) and feminist perspectives (Calás et al., 2009) identified above, in that all perspectives address positive social change. Central features of the capabilities approach include “the right to fully function and flourish, to develop the capacity of individuals and communities – built on explicit ethical principles that promote dignity and quality of life” (Cornelius et al, 2008: 363). In the case of disenfranchised, excluded, and marginalised communities, institutional frameworks have been cited as the means for contributing to the development of capabilities (Hill, cited in Cornelius et al., 2008). The ways in which social enterprises as organisational entities contribute to the capabilities development of local communities therefore could prove to be a fruitful area for future research. Such research could thus be seen as an extension and development of the work of Bies et al., (2007) who draw attention to how private corporations act as agents for positive social change. Institutional frameworks can best be voiced through the application of narrative-based and discursive research methods (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) which capture and express how entrepreneurial activities enact social change. The Social Enterprise Journal was established in 2005 to address practical and conceptual issues in social enterprise, and three striking areas that have predominantly been covered over the last seven years include mapping social enterprise (Lyon and Sepulveda, 2009; Dart et al., 2010); strategies for supporting and scaling social enterprise (Lyon and Ramsden, 2006; Todres et al., 2006; Royce, 2007; Conway, 2008; Hynes, 2009; Lyon and Fernandez, 2012); and performance measurement (Flockhart, 2005; Somers, 2005; Bull, 2007; McLoughlin et al., 2008; Ruebottom, 2009). Whilst arguably these initiatives may be seen as extensions of the perspectives of social entrepreneurship to organisational settings, the social features, benefits and outcomes associated with social enterprise activities have not been explicitly investigated nor communicated. In addition, writing in the vein of Hjorth and Bjerke (2006), how can we study social enterprise as more than organisational responses to social problems and rather as organisational response to restoring sociality to particular areas of public life?

Similarly in what ways do social enterprises contribute to ‘social embeddedness’ (Zhou and Cho, 2010) and help foster social capital? Similar to the ‘ethno burbs’ of China and Korea Town in Los Angeles, social enterprises could operate at institutional levels generating resources, and at the individual level which entails ‘how patterned interpersonal relationships are structured by institutional participation’ (Zhou and Cho, 2010: 87). Here the concept of ‘institutional completeness’ (Breton, cited in Zhou and Cho, 2010), which concerns how social enterprises help foster a social context for networking is particularly relevant. The research focus therefore should shift from purely economic and internal organisational concerns (revenue generation, performance measurement, and scaling), to the impact of social enterprise initiatives on its end-user stakeholders (e.g., social networking, raised aspirations, inclusion and/or community regeneration). The voices of the disenfranchised and socially excluded can best be voiced through the application of narrative-based and discursive research methods (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) which capture and express how entrepreneurial activities enact social change. Foss (cited in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) for example explores how entrepreneurial identity is constructed through life stories via narrative interviewing techniques. Similarly Pettersson (cited in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) outlines how the discursive analysis of entrepreneurship texts reveals implicit social assumptions of entrepreneurship and (male) gender, and how such a finding implies a shift away from a restrictive masculine discourse.

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A potentially fruitful approach would be the application of a framework that incorporates participatory, communitarian perspectives with that of capabilities theory to social entrepreneurship and social enterprises. Communitarianism, a perspective that recognises that individuals are not detached from their societies and therefore have not only rights but also responsibilities to contribute to their communities (Etzioni, 1993; Avineri and de-Shalit, 1992), is a complementary perspective in the context of social enterprise (Ridley-Duff, 2007). Considering the organisational governance of social enterprises, Ridley-Duff (2007) forwards a theoretical framework encapsulating the diverse ethical ideals (i.e., unitarism vs. pluralism and individualism vs. communitarianism) underpinning governance of these enterprises, suggesting that communitarianism invites participation in governance structures from excluded, marginalised groups. Arguably, participation marks the prerequisite for these groups to fully function and flourish (Sen, 1992, 1999; Nussbaum, 1999) as active citizens with voices. Future research therefore could focus on identifying the ways in which social enterprises potentially
encourage communitarian involvement and develop capabilities of traditionally marginalised communities. In deconstructing the economic discourse evident in entrepreneurship studies, it is hoped that the framework presented here, would help provide a clear ‘way forward’.

In this paper we have argued that entrepreneurship needs to be reconceptualised as more than positive economic activity. Starting from alternative (Hjorth and Stayaert 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2009) and feminist (Calás et al., 2009) perspectives we have highlighted how the concept of entrepreneurship can be broadened out and viewed as a process of positive social transformation. We then identified a recent area of investigation (social enterprise) as a new avenue where such perspectives could inform further research initiatives that build on earlier works (Berglund and Johannson, 2007; Zhou and Cho, 2010; Blake and Hanson, 2005) and which could benefit from the application of a conceptual framework informed by communitarianism (Etzioni, 1993) and capabilities theory (Nussbaum, 1992). In so doing, we can liberate social enterprise, and its older, more established cousin social entrepreneurship, from predominantly economic perspectives.

Entrepreneurship has always been a social process, and the identified research avenues and conceptual framework presented here could help to further explicate the ways in which entrepreneurship can, and does, transform society.

Fig 1. The Bounded multidimensional model (Weerawadena and Mort, 2006)

Fig. 2. Social Entrepreneurship Framework (Austin et al., 2006)

References


Hoogendoorn, B; Pennings, E and Thurik, R. What Do We Know about Social Entrepreneurship? An Analysis of Empirical Research International Review of Entrepreneurship 8(2)1-42.


Endnote

i The title of this paper was adapted from previous feminist writings (Pringle, 1989 and Nelson, 1993 cited in Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004) which observe how research on female entrepreneurship has simply ‘added women’ to existing (masculine) organisation and economics frameworks. Authors writing from these feminist perspectives have thus argued for a shift towards new frameworks embracing an alternative discourse of social change.