

5 APPLICATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL CAPITAL-CREATING ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

by Anna Waligóra

Abstract

Social entrepreneurship as the subject of research is increasingly referred as the socio-economic phenomenon and although economics is part of social phenomena, it clearly distinguishes the activities of social entrepreneurs from entities operating in the area of social policy and enterprises operating on the free market. Operating of social enterprises on the market is also associated with combining these activities, which belong to the state's protection policy and striving for economic self-sufficiency of people and entities that do not find themselves in a free market game or are not able to compete on the terms offered by the modern free market. Social entrepreneurship is also a new opening for corporate social responsibility, due to its ability to improve the quality of social capital understood as incorporating business into local social resources.

The paper presents an analysis of the ability of social enterprises to create and thicken social (and economic) relationships on the example of the Polish experience of social entrepreneurship. Its purpose is to synthesize knowledge about the capital-generating function of social enterprises and to formulate applications on how social entrepreneurship can affect the improvement of social capital.

Based on the research, 5 applications for the capital-creating role of social entrepreneurship were formulated. The added value of the paper lies in including social entrepreneurship in the light of social capital context in the scientific discussion and the synthesis of its most important factors. The conclusions also contain recommendations for actions in the area of social policy and building market relations of social enterprises and enterprises operating on the open market.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship; Social Capital; Social Enterprises; Social Cooperatives; Social Network; Common Good

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1. Introduction

From the very beginning, social enterprises have been a solution – a response to strengthening economic activity in the local context. As a way of establishing basic economic unions, it can be properly stated that it is from these entities that the creation of business organizations begins. In the past, the basis for their creation was the workforce and resource capital of individuals in relation to the diagnosed social needs and economic possibilities. Currently, social enterprises are discussed in the context of uncomplicated business models – economic “prostheses” to include inadequately efficient units on the labor market and to economically effective activities.

Social entrepreneurship in Poland is at an interesting and, seemingly, breakthrough stage of development. On the one hand, it is freed from the framework of social economy. In Poland, social entrepreneurship begins to be discussed not only in relation to social policy issues, but also in the context of innovation and the possibility of using social enterprises in corporate social responsibility. On the other hand, in the local discourse, social entrepreneurship is not only what gains the possibility of EU funding. Social enterprises can fill market niches and operate in the market for a long time on socio-business rather than business-social “principles”.

Literature review include analyzes papers, books and other publications from recent decades devoted to the issues of social entrepreneurship in the perspective of the issues of social capital. It was found that there was a lack of coherent, transnational studies in this area, taking into account the specificity of social entrepreneurship and its impact on the density of social relations networks. Research methodology section presents a description of research studies undertaken for the purposes of the paper. Difficulties in analyzing the research problem were also described. Results indicated 5 applications for the capital-creating role of social entrepreneurship. Research limitations pointed to the multidimensionality of the undertaken research topic and its consequences. Conclusions discuss the importance of research on social entrepreneurship in the light of social capital.

2. Literature review

Scientific literature related to the issues of social entrepreneurship has been developing dynamically since the phenomenon was annexed by the evolving theory of social economy (Leś, 2008; Abramowski, 2009; Mielczarski, 2010). In the area of social economy and also beyond, social capital is treated as an indispensable factor in the creation and duration of social enterprises. Social capital is spoken of in the category of interpersonal substance. The quality of both economic and social life of citizens

depends on the density of social capital (Sztompka, 2016). The concept of social capital, both in economic practice and in the theory of social sciences, appeared later (just as later social enterprise models appeared). It is used to determine the density of interpersonal relations in social space in the context of the geographically determined ability of people to cooperate and multiply the common good (Wong, Reevany, 2019). The common good is, in turn, the weakest, and at the same time the most widely described in science theory category of the goals of cooperation between individuals in social space. The common good described in philosophy, sociology and economics also outlines the motivation that should follow activities carried out in social space. The common good is rarely discussed in relation to the implementation of the economic goals of cooperation between individuals. It is treated as an additional goal of business activity than an indispensable goal itself (Bollier, Helfrich, 2012). The table presents the evolution of thinking about the relationship between social entrepreneurship, the common good and social capital over the 20th and 21st centuries. It seems that the concept of the common good in the context of social entrepreneurship is currently being replaced by social capital. The change in the economic forms of social enterprises seems to illustrate the professionalization of this sector.

Tab. 1. Relations of social entrepreneurship to the common good and social capital

Historical period	Source of economic initiative	Aim/ space of creation	Examples of forms of economic organization
Until World War II	Mainly bottom-up initiatives	Common good	Credit unions, industry associations, agricultural cooperatives
After World War II to today	Mainly top-down initiatives (so-called models)	Social capital	Social cooperatives, private limited non-profit companies, corporate foundations

Source: own elaboration.

Social entrepreneurship based historically and today on direct relations between individuals use the concept of the common good leading to the concentration of social capital. Social enterprises that doesn't respond to locally diagnosed social needs do not function for long. Successes are noted by those entities that use a resource approach based on the knowledge of what human capital, and in what social capital they operate. A characteristic feature of social enterprises, both historically rooted and based on modern models described in social economy, is the most democratic management structure possible. It forces at least listening to all members of, e.g., the co-

operative or even taking into account their individual needs and the possibilities of providing work, the “philosophy” of functioning on the labor market and, among others, orientation to the own needs and the personal and social environment of employees of social enterprises (Blanke, Milligan, 2016; Borzaga, Defourny, 2004). This approach to management forces more attention to employees than in free market entities, but also allows to offer more personalized products and services (Daneš, Škrabal, Zívala *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, social entrepreneurship creates special conditions for the development of social capital through the space it creates in business reality. It is part of economic activity, which is a kind of litmus test of the extent to which business as a sphere of social activity is socially responsible (Hopkins, 2014; Blanke, Milligan, 2016). Social entrepreneurship is defined as “types of organized business practices, also going beyond the existing legal framework for social responsibility, positively evaluated in relation to social and symbolic values, meeting the requirement of economic rationality. Social enterprises are therefore both old and new social economy entities, and other types of entities in an open market that balance their economic and social goals” (Waligóra, 2017). The relationship between social entrepreneurship and social capital (and the common good) has not been precisely discussed before. Social capital in relation to social entrepreneurship is treated rather postulatively as a desirable optics of social entrepreneurship. In numerous studies on social entrepreneurship, it is declared the need to combine these two social phenomena in a cause-and-effect relationship (social entrepreneurship develops in dense social capital) (Spear 2004; Paczyński, Pacut, Potkanska and Pazderski, 2014; Praszkiec, Zabłocka-Bursa and Jóźwik, 2014). However, it is worth noting that historically, social capital was built up and developed on social entrepreneurship (Piechowski, 2008; Ciepielewska-Kowalik, Pielniński, Starnawska and Szymańska, 2015). Social entrepreneurship as a concept associated with the common good is also described as a tool of social resourcefulness (Hopkins, 2014) understood as overcoming the tragedy of a common pasture by free market entities as well as (or through) social enterprises. This opens up the space for the development and formal and legal complexity of social enterprises. It is also the entry to a higher level of business unavailable to social entrepreneurs until building a relation with a free market business understood as building and using social capital to establish market relations (Paczyński, Pacut, Potkanska *et al.* 2014).

Nowadays, various forms of social enterprises are emerging based on the assumption of the capital-creating function of entrepreneurship as such (Grewiński, 2009; Jegorow, 2010) and social entrepreneurship. Some of them, like historical social enterprises, strive to establish market unions (Kerlin, 2008; Piechowski, 2008). Some are oriented to project activities, no less important than economic unions, but less durable (Waligóra, 2019).

The table below summarizes the review of main research related to capital-creating role of social entrepreneurship (and the common good) and benefits for applications for the social capital-creating role of social entrepreneurship.

Tab. 2. Review of main research related to capital-creating role of social entrepreneurship (and the common good) and benefits for applications for the social capital-creating role of social entrepreneurship

Main papers and authors	Main results	Methods	Benefits for applications for the social capital-creating role of social entrepreneurship
<p>Local Social Capital and Entrepreneurship (Westlund & Bolton, 2003)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social capital can be analyzed in the same way as other capital but it has some important special attributes, - outline model of how the spatially-defined producer surplus and consumer surplus form a place surplus, and of the role played by social capital in the creation of the producer surplus, - discuss formal economic modeling approaches to the theoretical relationship between social capital and entrepreneurship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature studies, - critical analysis, - comparative analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social capital is analyzed in economic terms, - social capital is treated on an equal footing with the other types of capital analyzed, especially in relation to its location, - reference to the "timeliness" of Schumpeter's findings.
<p>Framing a Theory of Social Entrepreneurship: Building on Two Schools of Practice and Thought (Dees & Anderson, 2006)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academics should focus on social entrepreneurship that combines elements of the two main schools that make up the field today - Social Enterprise and Social Innovation (cross-sector focus), - further research and tracking of cross-sector focus development processes are required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and comparative analysis of literature, - case studies review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasizing the importance of innovation in social entrepreneurship, - discussion of the combination of market activity and the social mission of social enterprises, - showing the relationship between social revitalization, philanthropy, third sector activity, entrepreneurship and innovation.

<p>What do we know about social entrepreneurship: an analysis of empirical research (Hoogendoorn & Pennings, Thurik 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present body of empirical knowledge on social entrepreneurship covers a broad spectrum of subjects, - most of the themes are addressed by only a few studies that use very different samples, - current state of empirical research offers a modest basis for further theory building and testing purposes, - young field of study such as social entrepreneurship needs rigorous empirical assessments to evolve, while this necessity suggests an abundance of research opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceptual overview with four different schools of thought on social entrepreneurship, - reviewing 31 empirical research studies on social entrepreneurship, classifying them along four dimensions and summarising research findings for each of these dimensions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social entrepreneurs revitalize social tissue and renew its resources, - social enterprises create and operate networks, - "internal communal social capital" and "external collaborative social capital" require effective leadership in the community.
<p>Social entrepreneurship: a content analysis (Cukier & Trenholm, 2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening the precision of definitions, exploring measures of success, increasing the rigor of empirical research, and drawing on related disciplines would strengthen the field of social entrepreneurship overall, - further research should focus on clarifying definitions and boundaries in order to clearly explain why only some are identified as examples of successful social entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis of the literature on social entrepreneurship, with particular emphasis on case studies - citation analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social entrepreneurship has capital-generating "driving force" - creates prosperity and stimulates economic development, - social entrepreneurship case studies are diverse and the way they are classified is inconsistent (which makes this area interesting for other studies).

<p>Social capital and entrepreneurship: An exploratory analysis (Doh & Zolnik, 2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Results from an empirical model which simultaneously controls for factors which are theorized to affect entrepreneurship at both individual and country-levels indicate that a positive relationship exists between social capital and entrepreneurship”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviews the literature concerning the definition and measurements of social capital, the relationship between entrepreneurship and social capital, and explanations on how the different dimensions of social capital affect entrepreneurship, - testing of empirical model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is evidence in empirical studies and literature studies of the “creative” relationship between social entrepreneurship and social capital.
<p>Building Social Capital For Social Entrepreneurship (Westlund & Gawell, 2012)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “... to investigate how Fryshuset has managed to build social capital through, and for entrepreneurial efforts aiming to facilitate young peoples’ development” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case study (study of social entrepreneurship based on analyses of written material, interviews and observations), - interpretative approach related to theories on entrepreneurship and social capital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research has shown that the social enterprise established in 1984 has created social capital around itself, which was and is (along with other capital) used in long-term functioning.
<p>Institutions and social entrepreneurship: The role of institutional voids, institutional support, and institutional configurations (Stephan, Uhlaner, & Stride, 2015)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human behavior is jointly shaped by formal and informal institutions, a proposition often discussed but rarely empirically tested, - there is a “scientific need” to integrate the largely separate research streams on informal institutions/ culture and formal institutions by considering configurations of both types of institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multilevel statistical analysis, - model testing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development of social entrepreneurship is conditioned by the level of institutional and social development of countries, - social conditions, including institutional and cultural context determine social entrepreneurship.
<p>Social capital and social entrepreneurship and innovation culture (Oskooii & Ajali, 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature discussion of social capital and importance of social interactions in entrepreneurial activities, - description of the relation between social capital and social entrepreneurship, and their cultural context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature review of papers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entrepreneurship education is linked to economic growth (“The experts of entrepreneurship call it as a new lifestyle which is the origin of changes in all aspects of life”).

5 applications for the social capital-creating role of social entrepreneurship
by Anna Waligóra

<p>Towards a framework for assessing the sustainability of local economic development based on natural resources: Honeybush tea in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa (Polak & Snowball, 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry offers many opportunities for development, including job creation in poorer, rural households; sustainable wild harvesting using a permit system; commercial cultivation; potential to develop social capital; potential for community-based LED; and product diversification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case study analysis, - sustainable development mapping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social entrepreneurs strengthen social capital through market activity, among others job creation.
<p>Social Entrepreneurship Research: Past Achievements and Future Promises (Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2019)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social entrepreneurship is still an unclear and contested concept, - it is related to a multi-level and multi-stage phenomenon, - this phenomenon has been scrutinized at different levels of analysis, but not in an explicit multi-level setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of 395 articles published in top-tier academic journals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social entrepreneurship is a multidisciplinary research area with the potential to create a scientific theory.
<p>Social entrepreneurship as a path for social change and driver of sustainable development: A systematic review and research agenda (Bansal, Garg, & Sharma, 2019)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlighting the role of social entrepreneurship in triggering social change and attaining sustainable development, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyzed and reviewed 173 research papers from the Web of Science database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indication of barriers to the development of social entrepreneurship described in the literature.

Source: own elaboration.

Results of the prior studies on social capital of social enterprises and the free market show that this issue requires further research related to a multidimensional view of the problem. As shown in the presented research (and many others), social entrepreneurship functions in economic and social contexts that are complex but also ephemeral that it is difficult to demonstrate its impact, just as it is difficult to reliably measure social capital and conclude unambiguously about the studied phenomenon.

3. Research methodology

The study analyzes existing materials on the relationship between social entrepreneurship and social capital at the background of economic activity. First, available scientific literature in this field was analyzed. Examples of activities as well as social and market relations of social enterprises operating in the socio-economic environment in Poland were used to illustrate the relationship between social entrepreneurship and social capital. The paper contains elements of historical analysis based on an analysis of papers and other documents describing the development of social entrepreneurship in Poland, but above all refers to the currently analyzed and observed phenomena. Analysis mainly took into account publications in English, although it was undoubtedly influenced by earlier studies on social entrepreneurship as a culturally determined problem. Theoretical and review papers as well as those describing case studies were analyzed. Framework and review documents that were not considered scientific papers but based on reliable data sources were also analyzed (Denzin, Lincoln, 2009). The paper presents an analysis of the ability of social enterprises to create and thicken social (and economic) relationships on the example of the Polish experience of social entrepreneurship. Its purpose is to synthesize knowledge about the capital-generating function of social enterprises and to formulate applications on how social entrepreneurship can affect the improvement of social capital. The strengths of the adopted methodological approach include the innovative approach to the topic of social entrepreneurship as a factor thickening social capital. The inference made in the paper was mainly based on qualitative analyzes (Yin, 2009). They were complemented by quantitative analyzes illustrating the problem. The methodological approach and results obtained should be verified in the future for mixed studies with a predominance of quantitative methods.

4. Results

Studies on the issue of social entrepreneurship and the impact on the density of social capital have led to qualitative results. They were formulated with reference to the assumption that social entrepreneurship is a broader socio-economic concept and phenomenon than the social economy. Such an approach, although logical and rational (especially taking into account the diversity of social entrepreneurship), makes it difficult to make quantitative conclusions.

Based on the research, the following results have been achieved, which are also partly recommendations for research and practice of social entrepreneurship in the socio-economic environment.

4.1 Social entrepreneurship is rebuilding itself from subcutaneous traditions in the supply of social capital thickening

As discussed in the literature review of this paper, social entrepreneurship covers areas larger than those determined by social economy. It continues and develops where awareness of the importance of social and economic relations for their functioning is high. This does not mean that it is characteristic of rich or highly developed countries and regions. Social entrepreneurship associated with social resourcefulness develops everywhere where the consciousness of establishing lasting, thickening relationships is a conscious common good. The model approach to social entrepreneurship, although important today, even because of external financing of this type of economic activity is one of the possible options for its development. This means that there may be spheres of economic activity that are not widely recognized as social entrepreneurship, although in essence they are. These may be grassroots activities, like before World War II. They can also be advanced CSR activities supporting the creation of social enterprises.

4.2 (Social) enterprises generate social enterprises – networks

An important factor in the development of social entrepreneurship is the attitude of entities operating on the free market to them. “Traditional” enterprises are important actors here as they activate socially responsible business opportunities. They develop when they are based on social networks and fulfill socially diagnosed needs. An example of social entrepreneurship of enterprises operating on the open market can be corporate foundations as an organizational form based on knowledge “acquired” from social capital. Private limited non-profit companies, based on the social union of enterprises, public institutions and third-sector organizations

operating and trying to interact locally, are another example of social enterprises created thanks to the awareness of market players of the condition of social capital.

4.3 The denser the social capital, the better social entrepreneurship develops

Social enterprises not only rely on social capital, but also develop it. Entrepreneurship is a peculiar language of communication combining what is socially available with what is economically needed and desired. The availability of capital is a special structure of this language. In social entrepreneurship, economic categories are less alienated and thus more understood by citizens, communities and society. Where social capital is stabilized and conscious, universal well-being (pursuit of economically understood ownership) will be considered a common good and understood as the “natural” need of man functioning in the social world.

4.4 Social capital is generated from “entrepreneurial capital”

One of the factors densifying social capital is the ability of societies to build relationships. One of the basic factors in building relationships is the indispensable need to participate in market competition. Social entrepreneurship contains a multidimensional potential for innovation. Firstly, it has the ability to respond to locally diagnosed needs characteristic of smaller business entities. Secondly, it is based on democratic management that promotes the emergence of new business ideas. Thirdly, public confidence in entrepreneurs operating in the local context of social capital is greater than for anonymous market leaders.

4.5 Education (ecological, economic and civic) is the driving force of social entrepreneurship and social capital

Despite the fact that strengthening social relations through social entrepreneurship seems to be a self-renewable good, it requires continuous education resulting from the common-sense assumption that there is still a socially defined need to learn to appreciate what you have. Education for social entrepreneurship in a social environment should apply to at least three spheres of social life. In relation to ecology, education should be based on a deep awareness of available, often depleted resources. Ecology as a socially discussed topic is also an important issue in the CSR policy of free market enterprises. In relation to economics, it is worth focusing on implementing a deep understanding of market trading and its sense for citizens, local communities and societies. In relation to education, it seems important to emphasize the point of effect of individual activity, both in

the context of social development and (local) economics. The education in the ecological, economic and civic field should become an immanent element of the basic educational process involving children and youth. It should also be included in adult education, both at university and as part of all types of training projects designed for people already operating on the market. The prism of the consequences of this educational awareness seems to be an indispensable element in strengthening social capital.

Social entrepreneurship contributes to the development and stabilization of social capital, and although it is not its dominant element, its research and development contributes to a deep understanding of social processes. The development of social entrepreneurship also contributes to the development of entrepreneurship as such.

5. Research limitations

Studies on social entrepreneurship have their own traditions, but they have many limitations, especially in relation to the perspective of social capital. Social entrepreneurship as a socio-economic phenomenon affects various spheres of knowledge, both in the field of human sciences and social sciences. Numerous studies are conducted that examine the issues of social entrepreneurship in a fragmentary way and based on selected assumptions typical for modern science. Such studies undoubtedly build the image and history of knowledge about social entrepreneurship. However, they do not explain the essence of this phenomenon. In the author's belief, it is based on the conditions in which social entrepreneurship develops and on the quality of social life that social entrepreneurship co-creates. In summary, the optics of social capital changes should accompany studies on social entrepreneurship.

Secondly, research on social entrepreneurship is combined with the problems of social economy, although social entrepreneurship goes beyond the framework of social economy. This creates two types of research difficulty. On the one hand, social entrepreneurship is treated as an instrument of social policy, which means that activity motivated by other than economic factors escapes scientific analyzes. On the other hand, the recognition of social entrepreneurship in the field of "prosthetic" activities in the economy means that entrepreneurship is rarely seen as an opportunity to implement actions in the field of corporate social responsibility that could cooperate with e. g. social cooperatives.

Thirdly, the dynamics and diversity of phenomena in the area of social entrepreneurship make it difficult to develop a coherent conceptual apparatus and research tools for analysis. Available data, various theoretical approaches prove the complexity and phenomenon of social entrepre-

neurship. However, they are not able to demonstrate, in a way recognized in economics, that social entrepreneurship is important for the economy. This approach may clarify the recognition of social entrepreneurship through the prism of social capital.

6. Conclusions

The economic dimension of social entrepreneurship in the economy is not significant. It does not bring and probably will not become in the future the core of market trading. Without a doubt, due to the increasingly emphasized importance of social aspects in business, it will become (or at least should become) its indispensable element. An important aspect of social entrepreneurship is also that it has the ability to transfer economically inactive individuals from the sphere of professional inactivity to the labor market and as a tool of these changes should also be treated.

The paper shows how, in the current and historical perspective, individuals and social groups coped with establishing entities based on available resources. It also presents how civic activity and the ability to self-determination of individual social groups have changed along with economic activity. The role of education as a preparation for market participation was also pointed out. Both in the aspect of detailed knowledge on economics and management, as well as in the aspect of the social and business environment of social enterprises.

Social entrepreneurship changes the density of social capital. Studies in this area would be an important complement to the knowledge that strengthening individuals in economic independence and including new entities in the economy improves the quality of life of societies.

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