COLLECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: BEYOND DICHOTOMIES (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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INTERACTIVE PAPER

COLLECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: BEYOND DICHOTOMIES

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Principal Topic
Until the last decade, scholars of entrepreneurship focused on the for-profit or commercial model of entrepreneurship, providing a framework for analysis of the process of entrepreneurial development. More recently, entrepreneurship researchers have recognized another form of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and have begun to turn attention to theory development and comparative study. This paper proposes that there is at least one other form of entrepreneurship—collective entrepreneurship, combining elements of the other forms, and provides insight into culturally motivated economic behavior.

Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern (2006) offer an informative comparative analysis of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, highlighting key similarities and differences demonstrating the dynamic fit between people, context, deal, and opportunity. However, past models of entrepreneurship have almost exclusively been built on samples from developed economies, almost completely ignoring models of entrepreneurship from the developing world and sub-populations in the developed world.

Past comparisons of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship have specified the differences in value creation, economic versus social value respectively. In addition entrepreneurship research has focused on the action of individuals or venture teams and has assumed profit-maximization and self-interest maximization (Bruton, Ahlstrom & Obloj, 2008), which may not be universally held in all cultures. For example, many Native American groups hold higher esteem for the welfare of the group and enterprise development that recognizes the importance of retaining traditional culture. West, Bamford and Marsden (2008) touch on this in their examination of comparative Latin American economies, using case study data gleaned in part from ethnographic studies by Earle and Simonelli (2005). Though this analysis highlights what they call ‘the primacy of intangible resources, it does not examine the area of tangible enterprise collectively created.

Method
The paper employs a qualitative research design, combining ethnographic and participatory action methods from case studies of collective entrepreneurship from Mexico, Africa and Nicaragua.

Results and Implications
This model removes the dichotomy between for-profit and non-profit, and between economic and social value. This model also shifts attention from the action of one or a few to community. In each instance a merged goal of income and social capital drive the overall initiative. We also provide an emerging example of the intersection and integration of social, political and economic factors driving diverse approaches to entrepreneurship.

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