

Chapter 2

Social Value and Sociological Perspective on Social Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

The needs of communities are endless and unlimited like the needs of individuals. Societies have to meet their reasonable set of unlimited needs to sustain their continuity. Otherwise, social problems become unsolvable and these problems that become unsolvable can be sources of other problems. In this sense, social enterprises are the institutions that have emerged in order to meet the needs of the society and to solve the problems. The close relation of social enterprises with society and social structure and the “social” expression in the concept make it necessary to look at social entrepreneurship from a sociological perspective. In this direction, the aim of this chapter is intended to create a sociological perspective on social entrepreneurship that aims to contribute to social order and welfare rather than commercial entrepreneurship serving the purpose of individual or organizational interest in economic sense. In the context of sociological perspective, social problem, social benefit, social mission and vision, social value, social capital, and finally, social change and transformation concepts and their relation with social entrepreneurship are examined.

INTRODUCTION

Unlike an entrepreneur who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of an enterprise (Merriam-Webster, 2017), social entrepreneurs are seen as *people who have vision for social change and who have financial resources to support their ideas* (Schuyler, 1998). Social entrepreneurs have gained the trust of the society by acting in a sensitive and realistic way to remedy the problem realizing the problems of the society they are in and being disturbed by the situation (Betil, 2010). Compared to traditional entre-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-5687-9.ch002

preneurship, social entrepreneurship is based on the concept of social welfare and goodness, a concept that is more than individual welfare. Social entrepreneurship is a concept that needs to be emphasized due to it closely influences human life.

Social entrepreneurship resembles traditional entrepreneurship in terms of seeking opportunities for solutions creation, creating systems and new approaches (Williams & K'nife, 2012). However, the main difference between the two concepts is that in social entrepreneurship activities, the preoccupation of creating and maintaining social value is the forefront rather than financial concerns. In this context, Trivedi and Stokols (2011) have touched on four main differences in distinguishing social entrepreneurs from commercial entrepreneurs. The authors ranged these differences as 1) emphasis on social goals contrary to economic gains; 2) social activist role played by the social entrepreneur; 3) entrepreneurship and innovation elements; 4) the use of economic profits as a means of solving a social problem rather than a purpose. While financial outputs such as profitability are primarily considered in the preliminary plan in the success of commercial enterprises, social benefits are more in the preliminary plan in success criteria rather than financial gains in social enterprises. Even if financial profitability is included in targets in social entrepreneurship, the relevant return is transferred to the necessary points in line with social mission and targets rather than the use of business owners (Görün & Kara, 2010).

At this point, it is possible to express the mission from five different perspectives, which is put onto social entrepreneurship concept by the word “social” that is in the social entrepreneurship vocabulary group (Kümbül Güler, 2008): The expression “social” requires the initiatives, in the framework of the problems social entrepreneurship looks for solutions, firstly to be aimed at realizing social goals. Secondly, the phrase “Social” in the concept expresses that it should be given importance inasmuch as social capital is thought to bring along physical and financial capital. Thirdly, as a requirement of the “social” expression, instead the basic mission of the established organization is to be making profit, it needs to be for social benefit in the direction of a social purpose, it needs to be integrated to reinvestment for social benefit even if it gains profit. Fourthly, social entrepreneurs should use their energy and opportunities in the direction of community progress and development, acting with the awareness that they are entrepreneurs of the society. Finally, as a requirement of the word “social”, social entrepreneurship should be positioned on the social sector that will be located between the public and private sectors. In this context, the next section will include an assessment of social entrepreneurship from a sociological perspective.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

When literature related to the concept of social entrepreneurship is searched, the concept seems to be in the field of interest of, primarily business management and behavioral intelligence, approximately 25 different disciplines such as sociology, psychology, psychiatry, geography, ethics, ergonomics, accounting, technology, public administration, tourism and law (Gonçalves, Carrara, & Schmittl, 2016). The close relationship of social entrepreneurship with the society, which creates solutions to social problems by creating social value by putting the social mission at the focal point and aims at realizing a social transformation, has attracted the attention of sociology discipline as a requirement of the interdisciplinary nature of the concept as well (Mengü, 2016a).

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