

Social Work and Social Entrepreneurship:

A new framework for practice?



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Abstract

In the current context conceptualized as a society of uncertainty and risk, exacerbated by the impacts of social, global economic and financial crisis, we are witnessing the wider debate around the entrepreneurial activity as a privileged strategy to address the scenarios of structural unemployment and precariousness labor.

Under the PhD in "Innovation in Social Work: Limitations and Potentials of Social Entrepreneurship as a social integration strategy" research, we aim to contribute to the understanding of the Social Entrepreneurship as a strategy in the integration of the most vulnerable social groups in the (re)discovery and development of (new) potential and capabilities of the population, as part of the mission of the social worker. The aim is also to develop a thorough discussion of the limitations of this approach in solving such problems and how this can be seen as a further expression of individuation policy trends.

It recommends, in terms of methodology, the use of a mixed approach, to make a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods, and in deepening understanding of the social worker practices supported in Entrepreneurship logic. In particular, we intend to study the Entrepreneurship programs with participation of social work developed in Portugal.

WELFARE STATE RECONFIGURATION

From Keynesianism to the Active Welfare State

Changes in social policy: from passive to active measures (individuation)



Lisbon Strategy

- Entrepreneurship as one of the basis of the EU policies;
- Employment pointed out by EU as a key-option for social integration

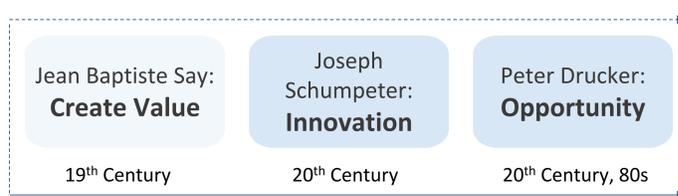
Financial Crisis

Portuguese request for external rescue
Austerity

- Rise in the unemployment rate
- Poverty
- Inequality
- Social Exclusion
- Increasing attention in entrepreneurship

WHAT (SOCIAL) ENTREPRENEURSHIP REALLY IS?

Entrepreneurship



Social Entrepreneurship

- Create and sustain **social value**
- **INNOVATION**

"this willingness to innovate is part of the modus operandi of entrepreneurs. It is not just a one-time burst of creativity. It is a continuous process of exploring, learning and improving" (Dees, 2001: 4,5)



What are the **POTENTIAL AND LIMITS** of the relationship between Social Work and Entrepreneurship?

POTENTIALS

Social Entrepreneurship

- Innovative ways to identify, allocate and manage resources;
- Designing sustainable interventions that brings effective results (Bent-Goodley, 2002).
- The concept of Social Entrepreneurship can induce, restrictively, the non-profit organizations, leaving "out" the public sector professionals (Bent-Goodley, 2002).

LIMITS

Entrepreneurship

- Revitalization of Social Work's action for individuals, groups and/or communities:
 - Acting proactively
 - Focusing always on critical reflection
 - Applying experience, knowledge and skills in the most dynamic situations (Germak & Singh, 2014).
- Focused on business
- Profit is the end
- Individual

How Social Work enhances the potential and shortens the limits?

Social Work Values:

- Dignity
- Personal and collective values
- Human rights
- Social justice

"Social entrepreneurship has much to learn from the over 100 years of experience that social work brings in working in the domain of social problems and the populations that face them" (Berzin, 2012).

Final considerations

There are a naked set of weaknesses (new and old) that arise as (new) challenges to Social Work

Need to (re)think about new directions and new paths to Social Work

Entrepreneurship takes place under the new social policy trends: **active social policies**

Reconfiguration of the Welfare triangle: Social Entrepreneurship takes place between civil society (closer to this) and market

Entrepreneurship is a silent revolution that will be for the 21st century more than the Industrial Revolution to the 20th century" (Timmons, 1990). **What does this tell us? What dangers have/may have?**

Innovation is the key element of Entrepreneurship, that can help us in the reconstruction of Social Work intervention. However, being perceived as a growth's mechanism, it puts to humanity (in particular, us, as professionals) a set of unknown moral, ethical and political issues;

Act consciously in this system/context requires a solid and consistent conception of human being and society, different from that which has been transmitted by the belief in technology and market economy as ultimate ends of human life (Garcia, 2010).

