

The Innovative and Entrepreneurial Nature of Sport: A Critical Assessment Review DOI 10.1108/IJEER-10-2017-409

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The timing of this book is particularly opportune, in that sport has increasingly adopted the position of an industry that serves as a lever for innovation and growth in different economic blocks (meso level), countries (macro level), regions (regional level), cities (urban level) and companies (micro level). Sport is sufficiently multidimensional to require research efforts that involve rethinking and revealing new approaches to the study and exploration of sport, joining innovation theory and entrepreneurship theory.

The editors, Ratten and Ferreira (2017), approach the discipline of sport entrepreneurship, positioning it around two entrepreneurial forms of sport, namely, adventure sports and lifestyle, which represent and induce different forms of entrepreneurial innovation and behaviour. However, they underline that the integration of innovative solutions in traditional sports is also an unavoidable fact. There are clear differences between sports that represent *per se* a lifestyle, as in the case of surfing, which is almost a religion, a statement of free spirits and itinerant tribes, although this is also found in sports associated with a lifestyle represented by urban tribes that like to show a certain elite status and economic and social power.

The new collection of cases presented here is an outstanding work of revealing the different facets of innovation and entrepreneurship, crossing very well these two theoretical approaches with the social dimension of the phenomenon, which favours achievement of the former, with notable success in terms of education and social inclusion. This multidimensional matrix forms a valuable contribution for political decision-makers to be able to use sport as a policy vehicle for investment, entrepreneurship, innovation, education, culture and promotion of social and gender equality.

In this connection, this book takes an initial pedagogical approach that provides the reader, in an innovative way, with various conceptualizations of sport entrepreneurship and innovation, which allows sport to be positioned and perceived as a vehicle of behavioural change and innovation in the context of different units of analysis.

In the line defended by Ratten (2012), sport firms must be socially and economically innovative, adopting entrepreneurial behaviour in facing different observable risks in the external environment. There is also the need for them to provide solutions to problems related with sport, following a pro-sustainable management approach, reconciling the social, environmental and financial dimensions.

Consequently, sport entrepreneurs must be able to develop leadership qualities that influence all the stakeholders with whom they interact, as well as exercising transformational leadership able to take on board participants and supporters for successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities.

As mentioned by Kraus *et al.* (2011), many entrepreneurs act intuitively, without resorting to continuous planning, which leads them to react to, rather than anticipate change. This behaviour pattern contrasts with the actual situation observed in sport entrepreneurship, as this promotes strategic and negotiating agility, as well as flexibility and innovation, ending up by stressing rewards for the so-called inquiring minds. Therefore, sport entrepreneurship can help organisations to position themselves better in the market, in order to achieve and maintain their competitive advantages. Sport firms face the additional challenge of finding business solutions for sporting problems. In many cases,



sport firms are required to be truly sustainable, in the dimensions already mentioned (social, environmental and financial), and for that reason they must be innovative, not only in drawing up their corporate strategies, but also in anticipating changes occurring in the social, cultural and economic tendencies and preferences of target customers, in particular, and of stakeholders in general (Chell *et al.*, 2010).

According to Ratten (2012), sport entrepreneurship is a particularly complex construct, which describes innovation, risk-taking and pro-active behaviour in the sport context. Consequently, there is a latent need to develop a policy oriented to better understanding of the social and economic factors that stimulate sport entrepreneurship. It is therefore necessary to provide comparative analyses of international cases of sport firms, as well as cross-analyses of sport organisations that allow deeper understanding of the great number and diversity of entrepreneurial and innovative practices that have gained prominence in the context of competitive or social sport.

To address the caveat identified, this book provides a crossing of theories of innovation and entrepreneurship, with sport as the background. In addition, it gives access to a multifaceted collection of cases that unequivocally reveals the entrepreneurial and innovative nature of sport, covering various applications, such as: non-profit organisations; local tourism; social inclusion through sport; municipal sport firms; sport leadership; blue ocean strategy, in a sport context; social impact and public financing of sport events; sport entrepreneurship as a vehicle for community development; consumer behaviour of swimming; participation in running events; and public policy for innovation and entrepreneurship in sport.

The book is structured in 15 chapters, including an introductory chapter by the editors emphasising the relevance of the topic of sport entrepreneurship and innovation, and establishing a conceptual and theoretical basis, which provides the necessary anchor for developing further research efforts in this emerging discipline.

The presentation of different international cases follows, among which the pertinence and topicality of Chapter 9 on “Sport entrepreneurship and community development in Japan” stands out.

The authors of this chapter, Okayasu and Morais (2017), make an analysis of community sport organisations, whose aim is to promote the physical and mental health of members of their communities of influence. Despite their strategic mission of promoting the community’s quality of life and well-being, this type of sport organisation has frequently faced problems of financial management. However, the authors explain in great detail the importance of this type of organisation for the social and integrated development of directly influenced communities. Establishing a connection between the still scarce literature on sport entrepreneurship and that of social entrepreneurship is a cornerstone for the design and subsequent implementation of public policies aiming on one hand to build happy, healthy communities, and on the other, install the values inherent to entrepreneurship and innovation at the heart of target communities. In addition, the authors reveal this as an intelligent way to stimulate a stock of socially responsible citizens and entrepreneurs, able to activate, endogenously, new entrepreneurial initiatives.

A major contribution is made by Ratten (2017), in Chapter 11, entitled: “Sport, innovation and public policy”. First, the literature review is a key to fully understanding the role of political action in implementing entrepreneurial and innovative practices with inter-temporal impact through participation in sport. Indeed, it is not just a question of promoting communities’ well-being, but rather designing new value chains for emerging industries interconnected with different lifestyles. The author underlines the importance of education oriented towards participation in sport and community sharing. High values, such as ethics and altruism can be rooted through culture and clear communication directed to target customers. Much can be achieved through changes in behaviour and new patterns

of social intervention tending towards modification of habits involving public health, environmental sustainability and the rational use of non-renewable resources, respecting the environment and fellow citizens. According to the most recent tendencies of the so-called eclectic theory of entrepreneurship (Audretsch *et al.*, 2015), sport policy should be thought out and implemented eclectically, as the necessary trigger to promote entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystems that combine the social, environmental, financial, public, private, business and individual dimensions. Ratten (2017) makes it clear that regarding the future research agenda, there is much to be done in exploring the types of influence of innovation on changes taking place in sport, and in assessing the ways public sport policies themselves are affected by changes in technology and education, bearing in mind the variable perception of these changes, according to different countries' cultures.

The book reviewed here is pioneering in presenting an eclectic vision of sport entrepreneurship, revealing the importance of the innovative nature of entrepreneurship in sport, setting solid bases for the need to explore this phenomenon in the context of entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystems, following a multidisciplinary and holistic perspective. In truth, the book's underlying message is that sport can be the glue and catalyst of the community unit around the major public cause of promoting communities' quality of life, and above all equal opportunities for all genders, races, faiths and beliefs, situated in a continuous and rapid process of social change and cohesion in social harmony.

Concerning implications, the book is particularly rich for anyone interested in sport, entrepreneurship and innovation, and above all for those wishing to cover new ground in studying the still developing subject of sport entrepreneurship. Therefore, it opens three windows of opportunity, namely, athletes and teams, marketing and processes and competitive environments.

The first, that of athletes and teams, covers fundamentally matters of individual performance (before, during and after the career) and factors determining performance, as well as athletes' motivations to embark on entrepreneurial careers following the sporting one. Will there be genetic, entrepreneurial and innovative characteristics, or will it be the need to reinvest the returns obtained throughout the career in sport?

In relation to the second, the nature of sports marketing and the underlying processes require additional research efforts. The third focusses on the influence of competitive environments in sport on entrepreneurship. Indeed, the possibility opened to approach change in sport as a form of entrepreneurship opens up multiple possibilities of analysis and (re)interpretation of the eclectic construct of sport entrepreneurship as an intelligent lever of endogenous innovation and growth, with the capacity to penetrate born global markets.

The aspect in which this book merits future extension concerns the need to build more theory about the feedback causality, still to be explored, which is based on the hypothetical bi-directionality between creativity and innovation, and the subsequent exploitation of business opportunities of sport entrepreneurship, in the global market context.

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Critical Perspectives on Entrepreneurship: Challenging Dominant Discourses

Edited by C. Essers, P. Dey, D. Tedmanson and K. Verduyn
Routledge

London

2017

£110.00 hbk

Review DOI 10.1108/IJEER-10-2017-408

The latest edited book from Routledge's *Rethinking Entrepreneurship Research* series extends the work of previous volumes by seeking to question underlying assumptions in dominant forms of entrepreneurship that tend to privilege certain types of economic activity at the expense of others. In doing so, it furthers the increasingly prominent debates characterised as "critical entrepreneurship studies". The various authors question and critique the practice and dominant discourses of entrepreneurship through the adoption of a variety of critical perspectives, listening to excluded voices and acknowledging the darker aspects of entrepreneurial activities. The book is structured thematically into five parts and each part includes chapters by leading scholars in the field.

Part 1 includes three chapters that are framed as seeking to contest neoliberalism. The first two chapters discuss social enterprise, with Berglund (Chapter 2) drawing on ethnographic case studies to challenge the romanticisation of social enterprise and emphasising its precarity and Lyne (Chapter 3) valuably extending this by exploring the experiences of social enterprises in a non-western context, indigenous villagers in Cambodia. Hanlon (Chapter 4) completes the first section of the book with a provocative and insightful chapter which argues for "growing corporate tendencies to entrepreneurially capture value that it did not create [using] property rights to make the virtually limitless scarce and the inclusive exclusive" (p. 51). This represents, for example, the capture and commodification of free or subsidised labour by companies such as Google, market power capturing and exploiting entrepreneurialism.