

HOW ALTERNATIVE IS ALTERNATIVE?

The Role of Entrepreneurial Development,
Form, and Function in the Emergence of
Alternative Marketscapes

Edited by Matthew M. Mars
and Hope Jensen Schau

ADVANCES IN THE STUDY OF
ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INNOVATION
AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

VOLUME 29

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Hope Jensen Schau

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INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH VOLUME 29

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DEVELOPMENT, FORM,
AND FUNCTION IN
THE EMERGENCE
OF ALTERNATIVE
MARKETSCAPES**

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INTRODUCTION

Matthew M. Mars and Hope Jensen Schau

There is growing interest in marketscapes that offer both producers and consumers with alternatives to dominant market systems and structures. While alternative markets are not clearly defined, the notion of “alternative” broadly centers on entrepreneurial strategies and market models that operate outside of the mainstream. If successful, alternative ventures and marketspaces can be profoundly disruptive. For example, consider ride share apps such as Uber and Lyft that have transformed the personal transportation market and in doing so have mostly displaced conventional taxi services. More often though, alternative ventures and marketscapes emerge as co-existing substitutions to the mainstream, as in the case of local farmers’ markets that operate concurrent to supermarket chains.

The extant literature on alternative entrepreneurship marketspace development examines a vast range of models and initiatives for bringing greater diversity and heterogeneity to dominant, mainstream market structures. Examples of the topical foci of this literature include consumer-led interventions that challenge mainstream practices (e.g., [Gollnhofer, Weijo, & Schouten, 2019](#); [Kozinets & Handelman, 2004](#); [Weijo, Martin, & Arnould, 2018](#)) and industry-driven innovations such as the expansion of online market channels that further embed the local in the global ([Lewis & Cockrill, 2002](#); [Mazzarol, 2015](#)). There is also a robust literature on counter-movements that aim to displace rather than transform global market structures. The most prominent of such movements is that which promotes the hyper-localization of both production and consumption ([Ciuchta & O’Toole, 2018](#); [Kurland & McCaffrey, 2016](#); [Mars, 2020](#); [Mars & Schau, 2018, 2019](#)). The chapters composing the current volume contribute to this literature a unique blend of theoretical and applied perspectives on the entrepreneurial underpinnings of alternative marketspace development and market-based movements. Together, these chapters explore the meaning, unpack the complexities, and challenge the common assumptions of alternative entrepreneurship and marketspaces.

The volume opens with two theoretical perspectives on the nature of entrepreneurial inputs to alternative marketscape development. First, Craig A. Talmage, Kaleb Boyd, and T. Alden Gassert draw on dark side theory to confront the assumptions that alternative entrepreneurship is inherently “good.” By drawing on literary stories from the past and modern-day examples of renegade groups, Talmage and colleagues advance a theoretical view of misfit entrepreneurship. This view illuminates the ways in which alternative entrepreneurship may involve

anti-social strategies that eschew established economic and legal institutions and/or blur the lines of what is and is not considered ethical behaviors and intentions. Provocations for further research into the heroism of alternative (or misfit) entrepreneurship and the ethical boundaries of alternative market movements are provided. Second, Jessica Lindbergh, Karin Berglund, and Birgitta Schwartz delve into the common perceptions of conventional entrepreneurship as a viable approach to addressing the many wicked environmental and social problems that threaten modern day society. They rely on [Gibson-Graham's \(2008\)](#) conceptualization of diverse economies to identify and underscore the incongruences between conventional capitalist models and progressive market movements. Using three case studies as descriptive points of reference, Lindbergh and colleagues illustrate the ways in which alternative entrepreneurs move between various organizational models and practices to advance societal change in alternatively entrepreneurial ways. The result is a compelling foundation on which to expand otherwise surprisingly narrow views of the role entrepreneurship plays in societal progress.

The next two chapters view alternative entrepreneurship and marketscape development in the context of organizational environments and collective movements. In the first of these two chapters, Gordon E. Shockley uses the concept of organizational centrifugalism to frame the strategies used by late nineteenth and early twentieth century avant-garde artists to create alternative marketplaces alongside the organizational spaces needed to support their innovations. Shockley presents readers with a compelling argument for the importance of balancing public engagement with organizational innovation during periods of alternative marketplaces growth and development. In the second of these two chapters, Matthew M. Mars conducts a qualitative discourse analysis of the social entrepreneurship literature and in doing so reveals a paucity of research on the day-to-day realities of social entrepreneurship. This finding leads Mars to propose an ingenuity framework for studying the ways in which entrepreneurial change agents work to persist under the constraints of alternative market movement agendas.

The final three chapters present a series of case studies in which the challenges and opportunities of alternative entrepreneurship and marketscape formation are explored. First, Tyler E. Thorp uses a visual analysis to compare the storylines regarding local food products at farmers' markets with those at chain supermarkets. The findings support Thorp's argument that local food entrepreneurs fail to convey to consumers a compelling understanding of the meaning and value propositions of locally produced products and in doing so leave the identity of their alternative market movement open to corporate co-option. In the next chapter, Chika Kondo and Atsushi Suzuki develop a counter-perspective through four case studies of alternative food networks in Japan. Kondo and Suzuki use the insights generated to suggest ways in which the integration of alternative entrepreneurship with mainstream market models can help to create more collaborative and sustainable food systems. In the final chapter, Liz Pocock describes the emergence and evolution of a community-based incubator that transformed its mission and model from seeking and supporting early-stage ventures with the promise of rapid scalability to a more inclusive approach centered on nurturing

small-scale entrepreneurs with ties and commitments to the economic, environmental, and cultural fabrics of their community.

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