Special Issue of Public Management Review:
The Third Sector, Social Enterprises and Public Service Delivery

Call for Papers

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To address the public service development and delivery challenges which are not met by either the government or the market alone, governments have established networked and collaborative governance based on multiple sectors. Social enterprises offer an appealing solution to governments, because they have the potential to promote the engagement of multiple sectors, existing as they do at the crossroads of the government, market, and civil society (Defourny and Nyssens 2010) thereby embodying the potential to solve intractable problems through pursuing both social purpose and economic profit based on cross-sectional collaboration. Indeed, social enterprises have been employed for multiple social purposes.

The Social Enterprise Alliance in the United States defines social enterprises as ‘organisations that address a basic unmet need or solve a social problem through a market-driven approach’. The British government defines SE as ‘a business with primary social/environmental objectives, whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or community rather than mainly being paid to shareholders and owners’ (DTI 2002).

Social enterprise can fulfil demands for public goods left unsatisfied by government and, thus, contribute to creating public value. Social enterprises have the potential to help us to find a breakthrough in promoting co-production, such as co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery, and co-assessment (Nabatchi & Sancino, 2017), or co-creation of public value based on multiple sectors (Bryson, Sancino, Benington, & Sørensen, 2017). This is because social enterprise is able to play a crucial role as a platform for public value co-creation in promoting both the engagement of diverse stakeholders, such as social entrepreneurs, managers, employees, social impact investors, customers, and beneficiaries of social enterprise, based on democratic and participatory decision-making structure and collaboration across the three sectors. Social enterprises have been used to promote employment in rural areas or of specific target populations, such as disabled people or convicted felons, addressed social exclusion, developed local community services, such as bakeries or small production plants, and enhanced employee decision making and participation in program development and delivery of services. Examples include the Greyston Bakery in New
York which claims: “We don’t hire people to bake brownies, we bake brownies to hire people,” and uses their profits to provide self-sufficiency programs to the disadvantaged, and Clarity in London which provides meaningful employment for people with disabilities and serious health conditions and claims “we don’t fundraise and we don’t take donations, we provide meaningful employment by simply creating and selling great products that you want to use time and time again”.

Social enterprise, as an emerging practice, has demonstrated its positive social and economic impacts throughout the last two decades, as one answer to a wide range of social challenges across different contexts at the local, national, and international levels (Alter 2006, 2007; Cooney 2015; Kerlin 2009, 2010, 2013, 2017; Terjesen et al. 2011; Noya and Clarence, 2007). Social enterprises are one method of collaborative governance, usually on a small scale, to address highly contextualized needs for employment and service delivery. Social enterprises and governments have usually engaged in partnerships and contractual relationships, in which governments finance public services and social enterprises deliver them, while in the U.S., social enterprises are more likely to depend on social entrepreneurship in the market rather than direct contracts with government that finance the development of social enterprises. In all cases, social enterprises use their sector hybridity to blend social purpose and market-oriented income generation, in whatever co-production model they use (Choi, Berry and Ghadimi, 2018; Choi and Berry, 2018). However, there are criticisms that social enterprises do not have the necessary skills and experience to deliver public services effectively putting public services in danger and not meeting the needs of their service users (e.g., Powell and Osborne, 2015, Powell and Osborne, 2018, Powell, Gillet and Doherty, 2018). Equally, over-reliance on grant funding can stifle their ability to innovate and develop a sustainable business model. This raises the questions of whether social enterprises are any more effective at delivering public services than non-profit organizations, and is there scope to work more collaboratively to avoid failure? Thus, social enterprises can present both a complement and a competitor to non-profit organizations, and this paradox has not been addressed directly in much research or theory development.

This special issue of Public Management Review is focused on the following questions that explore the relationships between non-profit organizations and the third sector, social enterprises policy and implementation, and the delivery of public-oriented services. In particular, we are interested in the following questions:

- How have social enterprise laws been used to improve or change service delivery?
- Are management practices used in non-profits sufficient for social enterprise management? What innovations in management for social enterprise have been used and been effective?
- How do non-profits and social enterprises compare and contrast? How do they work together or compete in the same service delivery environments? Do they displace each other, or coordinate and bring different strengths to public service delivery?
- What factors enable social enterprises to build effective relationships across sectors?
- How can social enterprises’ relationships drive innovative public services?
- How can social enterprises gain legitimacy and build effective relationships with the public sector? Does government funding strengthen or weaken social enterprises, and how is funding made available and incentivizes sustainability?
- Do grants enable social enterprises to grow or does it stifle their ability to innovate?
What policy tools allow social enterprises to develop public value enhancement, and how?
Do social enterprises have similar relationships and outcomes as contracted out services?
Is our current theory on third sector and non-profit management sufficient to cover social enterprises? How can our theories be improved?
How does the hybrid space social enterprises exist in make them more vulnerable or more adaptable to public service delivery needs in communities?
Do social enterprises utilise their hybrid orientation to more effectively deliver public services? In what ways?
How can government and public affairs training incentivize social enterprises or social entrepreneurs, and should we? Are there dark sides to these efforts and outcomes?

We welcome theoretical essays, perspectives on theory development, or qualitative or quantitative empirical work to both contribute to public management practice and promote academic rigor in public management theory development related to the above topics. We also welcome papers from diverse disciplinary perspectives that address social enterprise governance and public service delivery issues.

All papers submitted for the special issue will be subject to a double blind review process that PMR uses as standard practice. Presentation at the conference panel does not guarantee publication, and presentation at the panel is not a requirement in order to be able to submit a paper. Please contact either of the co-editors if you have questions related to the special issue.

Timeline

1st November 2018: Launch of Special Issue – Call for papers
15th January 2019: Paper proposals Due to both Co-editors
15th February 2019: Proposals are accepted or rejected
31st August 2019: Deadline for submission of papers
June/July 2020: Publication of the Special Issue online
April 2021: Hard Copy Publication

The editors intend to have: 1) a social enterprise panel at PMRC June 2019 (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and 2) a panel at the IRSPM April 2019 Conference in Wellington New Zealand, and will consider papers submitted for these panels.

References


EDITOR BIOS

**Dr Frances S Berry** is the Reubin O’D. Askew Eminent Scholar and the Frank Sherwood Professor of Public Administration in the Askew School of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University. She was elected a Fellow in the National Academy of Public Administration in 2006, and served as a Fulbright Scholar to the Republic of China in 2009. In 2014, she was awarded the Distinguished Research Award, a joint award from ASPA and NASPAA, given annually to a scholar whose work has made a significant impact on the field of public administration. She serves on the editorial Boards of PMR, JPART and PAR. Her main research interests are public policy, innovation and diffusion, strategic management, and social enterprises and entrepreneurship.

**Dr Madeline Powell** is a Lecturer of Marketing at Sheffield Management School and completed her PhD in 2015. She is a fellow of the Higher Education Academy and has received funding from the Academy of Marketing. She is a board member for the International Research Society for Public Management and is on the editorial board for Public Management Review. Her main research interests are on how social enterprises can build relationships with key stakeholders to become financially sustainable.