

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts are invited for papers from anyone with an interest in rural entrepreneurship; we encourage contributions from academics and practitioners alike. Please indicate which of the conference themes you think is/are most appropriate and limit your abstract to 400 words.

Your Details

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Please use the following headings: (boxes will expand as you type)

<p>Title: A New Perspective on the Realities of Supporting Rural Social Entrepreneurship</p>
<p>Purpose of this paper (please also indicate whether empirical, conceptual or case study etc)</p> <p>Social enterprises are widely credited with the potential to address complex social problems innovatively and efficiently. However, though the concept of social enterprise is increasingly being used by politicians, support institutions, practitioners, and academics the term’s meaning is dynamic and contested (Teasdale et al, 2013). What is included in the category ‘social enterprise’ reflects political and organisational ideologies and interests (Kerlin, 2009). The resultant ambiguity facilitates an array of generally positive expectations of social enterprises. In the context of marketization of public services and growing fiscal constraints the social enterprise model is especially relevant in rural areas where dispersed populations make other, more profit-orientated, business models less attractive for the delivery of rural services.</p> <p>This paper explores accounts of social enterprises provided by staff from intermediary organisations and from social entrepreneurs accessing support. Building on recent typologies of social enterprises it distinguishes types of ‘social enterprization’ (Sepulveda, 2014). By distinguishing types of social enterprises and social enterprization it becomes possible to identify common processes, opportunities and constraints and thereby to challenge assumptions and differentiate expectations.</p>
<p>Design/methodology/approach (including limitations if applicable)</p> <p>This paper draws on fieldwork in the rural north-east of England (County Durham) using thematic analysis of data collected from interviews with staff from intermediary organisations tasked with nurturing and supporting enterprise and social enterprise, and from participant observation of networking and support events for social entrepreneurs. The data and findings are limited to social enterprises accessing support from participating intermediary organisations and do not claim to represent the entire population of social enterprises.</p>
<p>Findings</p> <p>The paper identifies how understandings of the concept of a social enterprise are contested not only at a macro-level and within academia but is also at the level of local authorities, organisations within the enterprise support infrastructure, and between social entrepreneurs themselves.</p> <p>This paper finds a range of social enterprise types and responses to processes of social enterprization distinguished by organisational origins, governance, purpose, asset –base, and</p>

aspiration.

Practical implications

Results indicate the need for a breadth of social enterprise support bridging community development processes and conventional business and enterprise support.

Policy Implications (if applicable)

In light of the findings the paper points to the importance of questioning capacity for social enterprise amongst and between rural communities, questioning expectations of self-sufficiency and sustainability, and indicates wider issues of accountability and universality of provision.

What is the originality/value of paper

Identifying processes of social enterprization provides a new perspective on the current realities of rural social entrepreneurship.

Please state if your paper is a:

Refereed research paper Practitioner Paper Presentation only X

Please indicate the theme(s) that you consider most appropriate for your paper:

- Entrepreneurship, farming and the natural environment
- Digital Rural Entrepreneurship
- International dimensions of rural entrepreneurship
- New approaches in rural theory, method and measurement
- Opportunities and challenges for rural development
- Rural Innovation, EU funding and the role of Universities
- Rural Social Entrepreneurship
- Rural Place Marketing

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x Yes No

To apply to participate in the Early-Career research development seminar, PhD applicants must submit a short project description (max 4 pages) with name, project title, affiliation, outline of methodology(ies) and a letter of recommendation from their supervisor. Post-doctoral researchers should submit a short description of their current research interest (max 1 page).