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**FROM POLICY TO ACTION**

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## **Extended Abstract**

# **Entrepreneurial Leadership by Design - Creating Shared Value**

### **Introduction**

Today, the capacity to identify and solve multi-faceted problems and to demonstrate entrepreneurial attributes is equally in demand from global corporations, charitable foundations, and governments. Consequently, entrepreneurial leadership in whatever guise, whether manifest in individuals or as entrepreneurial organizations has become the driver of economic and social change and innovation, altering the future of work, the way organizations are designed, and redefining the dynamics of whole industries.

### **Methodology**

This paper is informed by a longitudinal study, resulting from thirty years of professional practice and academic study, at the interface between leadership, enterprise, innovation and development within the particular challenging environment of a society in crisis. It has taken the form of participatory action in episodic developmental initiatives where the catalyst was entrepreneurial leadership through design led innovation. The methodology was reflection-in-action (Schön 1983), where a design approach informed entrepreneurial leadership in practice.

### **Systemic Challenges**

We have to acknowledge that traditional business models are failing in the face of global complexity and competition ([Reeves](#) and [Deimler](#) 2011). The existing body of literature highlights the main concern for leaders as the difficulty of addressing multifaceted issues with outmoded tools and fragmented ridged systems of thinking. Consequently, fundamental challenges have been conceptualised as the following systemic issues; Socio- Economic Value Creation (Porter and Kramer 2011); Global Venturing (Carpenter and Dunung 2011); and Academic Renaissance (Hilton and DeVaney 2017). Collectively these issues represent multifaceted challenges that are central to stimulating collaborative action for sustainable development across a diverse range of contexts. Invariably, challenging systemic issues are typically deeply imbedded within the Triple Helix (Etzkowitz 2012). In order to imaginatively address these challenges new transformational drivers, need to be articulated.

### **Socio- Economic Value Creation**

Today economic and social wellbeing are inextricably entwined (Isenberg et al. 2013). This calls for more innovative approaches to articulating and coping with multi-faceted problems. Consequently, new forms of leadership have become the driver of economic and social change

and innovation, altering future work patterns, the way organisations are designed, and redefining the dynamics of whole industries (Greenberg et al 2011). Future, regional, national and international development will depend on environments conducive to innovative socio-economic value creation, so called entrepreneurial ecosystems (Kuratko and Menter 2017). To develop these, we will require leaders who can shape and make opportunity amidst social and economic unpredictability.

### **Entrepreneurial Leadership as Transformational Driver**

Scholars are calling for new perspectives on entrepreneurial leadership to be investigated (Harrison et al. 2015). They are doing so in recognition that traditional methods of organising and planning are no longer fit for purpose; because in today's climate it becomes increasingly important to consider interactive, evolving processes that emerge as a consequence of the fluid and often temporary nature of any given context. In consequence attention now focuses on integrated forms of entrepreneurship, leadership and strategy formation. This has meant the expansion of traditional philosophies of economic value creation and corporate responsibility to include broader notions of human wellbeing, ecological sustainability and collective action. Accordingly, there is a new imperative for developmental innovation that involves team and inter-organisational collaborative behaviours and necessitates dynamic interrelationships among many actors (Leitch and Volery 2017).

### **Defining Entrepreneurial Leadership**

Contemporary scholars maintain that the field is still emerging, lacks definitional clarity and has not yet developed appropriate tools to assess its characteristics and behaviours (Harrison et al. 2015). Yet at the same time it must be recognised that entrepreneurship and the leadership thereof is an integrated concept that permeates our society and is necessary for developmental innovation. Consequently, more attention is being paid to the creative and collaborative nature of entrepreneurial leadership. How it leverages social capital by engaging in open systems networks, its role in stimulating communities that engage in co-creation and embrace collaborative competition (Renko et al. 2015).

### **Entrepreneurial Leadership Approaches**

In the process of working in collaboration with others, entrepreneurial leaders often reframe their view of systems. This observation has led to a number of studies that focus on the different cognitive approaches of entrepreneurs as they seek to understand their practice. Key creative and generative attitudes include abductive reasoning and the employment of alternative frames, and then most recently effectuation, creative logic and collaborative co-creation. Being more akin to design, these approaches have been specifically selected as the antithesis to planning

and causal logic. They represent better alignment to the creative process because of their imaginative, improvisational and inventive qualities.

Scholars have identified different entrepreneurial approaches including: -

- **Effectuation:** Entrepreneurs have learned to create the future through a process of effectuation involving action and experimentation (Sarasvathy 2008).
- **Creation logic:** In these situations of unknowability, entrepreneurial leaders must learn to also employ a different logic that is based in action, discovery, and creation. This complementary decision methodology has been labeled creation logic (Greenberg et al. 2011).
- **Collaborative Co-creation:** Contemporary entrepreneurial leadership is seen as influencing and directing group members towards recognising and exploiting opportunities (Renko et al. 2015).

The hypothesis here is that the above themes are partial expressions of a design process and that in aggregate they are facets of strategic design. By extension can it be said that entrepreneurial leaders are in fact design practitioners. If so, this calls for closer examination of the role of design in socio- economic innovation.

### **Strategic Design**

Strategic design is concerned with socio - economic innovation because contemporary macro challenges fall at the intersection of what we know (Steinberg, 2012). Strategic design theorists argue that it is a proven and repeatable problem-solving protocol that can be employed to achieve or even exceed expected results ([Verganti](#) 2009). In strategic design, design methodologies affect individual cognition and decision-making in strategy formulation.

### **Conclusion**

Concern for human wellbeing has given rise to sustainable development as a broad social goal and, as a vigorous force for change. Thus, contemporary entrepreneurial leaders are individuals who connect with others to create and manage innovative ventures, for both economic development and social change. Their task is to initiate, frame, facilitate and champion alternative strategies, generate new lines of business, solve problems and promote the spread of best practices; thereby developing professional skills, and facilitating innovative talent. It is this crossing of boundaries, multifaceted inquiry and synthesis that necessitates research and innovation by design.

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