

Reimagining entrepreneurship: A post-individualist philosophical inquiry into identity, ethics, and agency

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship has always been interpreted as a pattern that presupposes self-autonomy, economic rationality, and market-driven innovation. However, these pillars are eroded by the recent socio-cultural changes which are marked by the increasing collectivism, ethical pluralism, and technologically mediated changes. The current conceptual argument is a reconceptualization of entrepreneurship post-individualism that incorporates elements of existential, communitarian and ethical tradition based on the thinkers like Heidegger, Arendt and Bauman. Being based on philosophical hermeneutics, the paper criticizes liberal individualist model and reorients entrepreneurial identity as a process that occurs as a socially embedded and ethically driven process. Its main themes are how it seems to be a conflict between individuality and normative behavior, the decreasing of authenticity in the entrepreneurial culture, and how networks, technology and collective action are transformative. Through combining the knowledge of sociology, political economy and innovation theory, the paper suggests a comprehensive interpretation of entrepreneurship that put an emphasis on the relevance of significance, relations and the cultural sustainability rather than on the profitability and simple economic production. Entrepreneurship education, policy frameworks and ecosystem design are all implicated and it is argued that approaches that would enhance ethical responsibility, social interdependence, and collaborative agency in the entrepreneurship ecosystem should be encouraged. The piece will also be of use to fledgling interdisciplinary discussions, providing as it does a normative and ontological reconfiguration of entrepreneurship that will be suited to post-modern, digitally networked societies.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Liberal individualism, Post-Individualism, Ethics and Identity

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1. INTRODUCTION



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Entrepreneurship has always been praised as an innovation driver, a growth engine and a source of jobs. Nevertheless, due to the cultural and philosophical changes that are being experienced in modern societies, it is worth reconsidering. Entrepreneurship as a phenomenon that long has been understood as fundamentally economic in nature and based upon individual autonomy and competitive participation in the market (Gartner, 1990; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) is now also being affected by the cultural trends of what has been called post-individualism. According to Bauman (2001) and Lipovetsky (2005), this state is characterized by lack of personal agency, hedonistic disengagement and the loss of genuine engagement and thus the norm of entrepreneurial independence and innovation are called into question. The hegemony of economic paradigms based on formalism and positivism continue to propagate a restricted vision of entrepreneurship as rational economic behavior within the capitalist market economies (Clarke, 2009). Even though these frameworks reflect the ability of entrepreneurship to generate wealth and meet the market demand, they fall short in explaining the underlying social and philosophical forces that shape the actions of entrepreneurs. The modern business models often emphasize independence, consumption, and productivity and conceal the contradiction between individual and cultural conformity. This narrow-minded approach has marginalized the moral and cultural aspect of the entrepreneurship and excluded its possibility as a valuable form of human interaction and social change.

Basing on the existential and phenomenological ideas of Heidegger (1962) and Arendt (1958) this study attempts to redefine entrepreneurship as neither a formal economic actor nor a formal agent, but as a meaning-seeker and a freedom-seeker in the context of the multi-faceted socio-cultural environments. The contradiction of the entrepreneurial culture that praises experimentation and encourages passivity throws light upon the general societal trends towards the lack of authenticity and moral detachment (Lipovetsky, 2005). The philosophical inquiry provides a critical perspective through which these contradictions can be approached by shifting the understanding of entrepreneurship as part of the intricacy of human experience and the overall direction of development. Entrepreneurship is still mostly studied in individualist, rational-choice, and performance-based approaches even though an interdisciplinary discourse is expanding. The ontological, ethical and cultural aspects of entrepreneurial identity are regularly left out in these paradigms. Though sociology or institutional theory has been integrated in some scholar work, very little research has been done on philosophical approaches, including existentialism, communitarian ethics, or post-individualist thought, that examine the importance of meaning, relationality, and ethical responsibility to entrepreneurial behavior.

The present study thus takes up an essential reflection on entrepreneurship in a philosophical context by focusing on the shifting definitions and meaning of entrepreneurship in post-individualistic settings. Particularly, it investigates the role of entrepreneurship within collective networks, cultural settings, and institutional frameworks and reconstructs the meaning of the entrepreneurial agency and meaning. The study increases the interdisciplinary focus of the field and the interchange between philosophy and entrepreneurship by questioning the widespread use of individualist paradigms. It is based on the work of Heidegger, Arendt, Bauman, and Taylor who transcend the logic of the economy to question the cultural embedding of entrepreneurship, ethics and human relevance. The analysis has three main contributions as follows:

- a. It challenges the dominance of liberal individualism in entrepreneurial theory.
- b. It advances a new model of the entrepreneur as a socially embedded, ethically motivated, and relationally situated actor.

This contribution is particularly timely given the socio-economic transformations of the post-modern world, where entrepreneurial success increasingly depends not only on innovation, but on purpose, community, and values. This study employs a conceptual and interpretive methodology, grounded in philosophical hermeneutics, to critically investigate the evolution of entrepreneurial identity in the context of post-individualism. Eschewing empirical data, the research engages in a close reading of foundational texts from philosophy, economics, and sociology—specifically the works of Heidegger, Arendt, Bauman, and Bourdieu. These thinkers serve as interpretive lenses for examining the ontological and ethical dimensions of entrepreneurship. Their ideas are synthesized through thematic clustering and conceptual

mapping, allowing for a comparative exploration of agency, meaning, and social embeddedness. Through this theoretical synthesis, entrepreneurship is re-conceptualized not merely as an economic endeavor, but as a socially situated, meaning-making practice. The study contributes to existing interdisciplinary debates by advancing a reimagined framework that transcends the limitations of individualism and formal economic rationality.

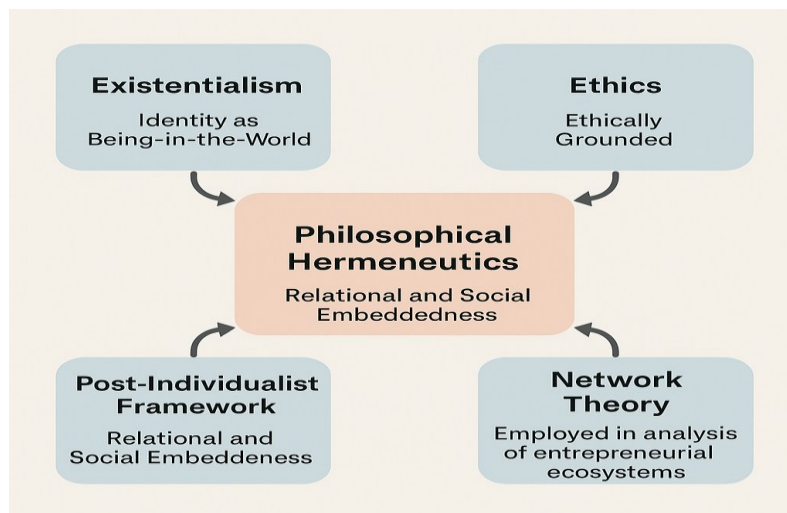


Figure 1. Methodological Diagram

2. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship has a long intellectual lineage that precedes its formal inclusion in academic research. Early understandings are deeply rooted in classical economic and philosophical traditions, many of which continue to shape contemporary debates. This section outlines how foundational thinkers contributed to dominant ideas of the entrepreneur and how their legacies inform the transition toward a post-individualist perspective.

2.1. Classical and Modern Economic Thought

Economic principles have been a part of Western civilization for over two millennia. The classical Greek ideations of the economic field were based on ideas of property and resource management. In the body of Xenophon *Oeconomicus* (late 4th c. BCE), the author methodically discusses the systems with the help of which revenue could be earned directly not through clever breeding and careful rearing of livestock. At the same time, the *Politics* of Aristotle (ca. 350 BCE) develops an ethical landscape in which animals and the earth are property, and that is what he taught the future king of Macedonia, Alexander the Great. However, in the development of a distinct academic discipline regarded as "economics," it is English classical history of the late 18th and 19th centuries that is often referred to as the first to give entrepreneurship coined by the French economists as entrepreneur significant philosophical respect (Say, 1803). Through the development of the economic discourse, an incremental shift of the economic thought was the evolution of the English Classical to the Neoclassical tradition. During this era, economists were moving toward a more significant distinction between that of the capitalist and the entrepreneur, to the extent of giving each a determinate role in the economy, a change marked by Ekelund and Hert (2009).

In large part due to some theories of the Industrial Revolution period and certainly since World War II (as a branch of neoclassical economics until only sixty or so years ago), the central figure in economics (even when outwardly concerned with entrepreneurship) has essentially been the "maximizing individual." And so, we now have a notion of an entrepreneur as a "bearer of risk," or as an individual "employment specialist." Indeed, new student orientation seminars conducted during September always provide vivid examples of parents accompanying the students to one of our world-renowned research libraries before

their academic studies even begin, with the explanation that "These students want to get ahead and make it in the world. These books will give them the competitive edge they're looking for." Digging farther into economic theoretical and philosophical traditions, Ekelund and Hbert (2009) argue that the relationship of the economic theory, the empirical constraints and the issue of institutional innovation be complex. Economy theory has not, by any means, emerged as an independent intellectual enterprise, instead being shaped by tangibly felt policy problems and change in modern institutions. The reciprocal influence indicates that macroeconomic examination will constantly be flexible to changing historical situations and to the changing needs of a society (Boldyrev and Herrmann-Pillath, 2012).

2.2. Philosophical Underpinnings

The individualistic view of entrepreneurship, grounded in a set of moral, philosophical, and metaphysical assumptions, bears noting especially considering the criticisms leveled at liberal individualism and economic man (Friedman, 1962). Such criticism extends to its conceptual understanding of value and its perception of economic activity as one central aspect of individual human action. After all, entrepreneurship comes into being in the context of the interdependent economic and commercial networks that are characteristic of the many overlapping market systems (Granovetter, 1985). The concept further comes to life through collective, cultural, and institutional engagement. Entrepreneurship modifies and adjusts these networks, along with the accompanying allocation of resources and distribution of the benefits, and presumes human agency and purpose, all traits that are well understood as collective social goods (Bourdieu, 1984).

Moral philosophers are generally comfortable with integrating agency and human welfare, traditionally emphasizing the importance of society and community (Aristotle, circa 350 BCE). As they have exercised considerable influence on the shaping of modern institutions, they share responsibility for the preoccupation with utility and self-interest alongside longer-term issues of human nature, purpose, and the common good (Sen, 1999). While many arguments for reconsidering liberal individualism are based upon social and ethical considerations, they also make sense in the context of our analysis. However, we must return to first principles to take a closer look at the philosophical underpinnings that shape our perceptions and that affect the nature and functioning of the market system and that of economic agents such as individuals and entrepreneurs (Heidegger, 1962).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMING: POST-INDIVIDUALISM AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

The nature of poverty and the condition of the working class have evolved significantly over the successive phases of capitalism, rendering any simplistic explanation such as attributing poverty solely to an individual's incapacity to work insufficient. As capitalist development advances, traditional forms of class struggle and collective emancipation have become increasingly fragmented and less cohesive (Standing, 2011). This dissolution reflects the changing socio-economic landscape, where precarious labor and new modes of social exclusion have replaced earlier, more tangible bases for collective action (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005). Moreover, chronic deprivation and uneven development across different regions complicate revolutionary prospects. Extreme poverty is still rooted in many peripheral and semi-peripheral parts of the international system, but the worldwide spread of capitalist relations has restructured conventional spheres of social struggle (Wallerstein 2004). The decline in the relevance of the classical ideals of socialism and the consequent disintegration of the working-class unity are symptomatic of a wider crisis of the progressive discourses, such as the linear and deterministic progress that was the foundation of the modernity in the West (Giddens 1991).

The key to this crisis is the loss of technology of its previous ideological context. Where technology had been thought of as a tool of societal development and human liberation, it is nowadays becoming more and more instrumentalized in capitalist forms of production and is often not thought in ethical or teleological terms (Feenberg 1999). Such alienation has led to ambivalence in technological innovation

whereby emancipatory potentials are being pushed to the periphery by the quest to achieve security and control (Bauman 2000).

Table 1. Theoretical Framing

| Philosophical Lens | Key Thinker(s) | Entrepreneurship Dimension | Thematic Axis |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Existential Ontology | Heidegger | Being, Authenticity, Freedom | Agency vs. Conformity |
| Political Action | Arendt | Plurality, Responsibility, Promises | Individualism vs. Relationality |
| Social Theory | Bourdieu | Habitus, Field, Cultural Capital | Structural Constraints vs. Agency |
| Ethical Critique | Bauman, Taylor | Moral disengagement, Liquid modernity | Instrumentalism vs. Ethical Meaning |
| Communitarian Ethics | Taylor, Etzioni | Identity, Social embeddedness | Self vs. Community |

Note: Compiled and synthesized by the author

At the same time, modern capitalistic cultures are characterized by increasing focus on the present consumption and instant gratification at the expense of long-term social values or social good (Lipovetsky 2005). The erosion of traditional socialist ethical discourses and the subsumption of social life under capitalist logic signify a profound cultural transformation, wherein capitalism is no longer simply an economic system but has become a pervasive form of life (Bourdieu, 1994).

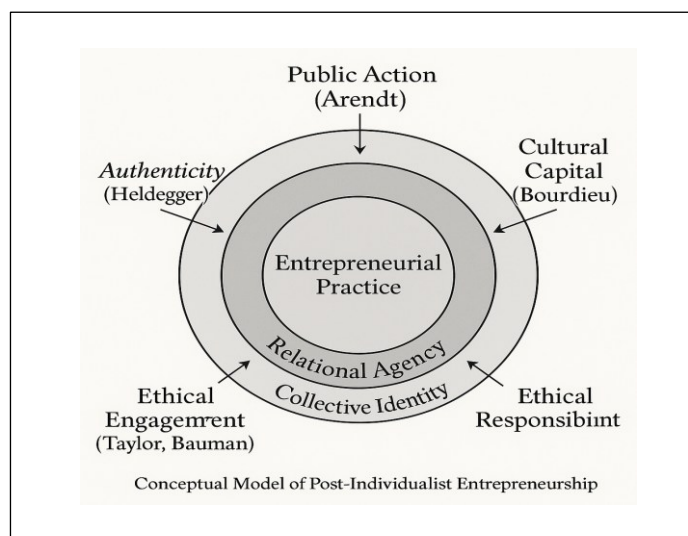


Figure 2. Concept-Theoretical Model of Post-Individualist Entrepreneurship

Note: Model based on theories of post-individualism and philosophical perspectives, compiled and synthesized by the author

3.1. Defining Post-Individualism

Despite the received wisdom concerning the business 'clockspeed', the 'velocity of change' associated with the new economy has to do with much more than enhanced speed. In a somewhat Hegelian mode of analysis, we claim that at a fundamental level, the industrial age concept of the individual is being reconfigured in the emerging information age. The new economy is not marked by a speed-up of the old; rather, it ushers in profound social reorganization. At the level of competency, we argue that a shift from the mechanical to the intuitive metaphor calls forth a recasting of human nature. We outline aspects of this recasting which we term a move from fragmented to nested self-images, a shift from an ethics of separation to the virtues of connection, and a turn from contingent to obligatory business. It is

suggested that these shifts put a premium not on the self as an arbitrary individual but on an embodiment of complex interdependent communities (Giddens, 1991).

In a critique of the new economy movement, the study deconstructs the industrial age idea of individualism and contextualize it in the evolving meaning of capitalism. The study highlights aspects of the new economy which call into question assumptions about the nature of work and the scope of business enterprise. By considering the importance of these foundational questions, we hope to contribute to the project of rewiring business and revitalizing the corporation to contemplate business adjunct to society, with a power to serve rather than manipulate, coerce or subvert the people within its remit (Freeman, 1984). In conclusion, the study argue that the morality of the new, responsible business will have less to do with the wage bargain and more to do with the ordungs of society (Bauman, 2000). To analyze whether post-individualism represents a new era for entrepreneurship, we must first explore the current socio-cultural and economic contexts in the world in which entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship operate. The economic context is most explored in contemporary research and textbook presentations. This extensive knowledge should be familiar to any student or reader interested in entrepreneurship (Hisrich et al., 2017). Socio-cultural context is usually considered independently both in research and regarding textbook presentations. Questions regarding whether entrepreneurs are born or made or whether the stereotype of an entrepreneur is more masculine or feminine can be found, primarily in sections that deal with individual characteristics, much more often than in sections that analyze concepts, subjects, social organizational aspects, or economic-environmental models (Ahl, 2006).

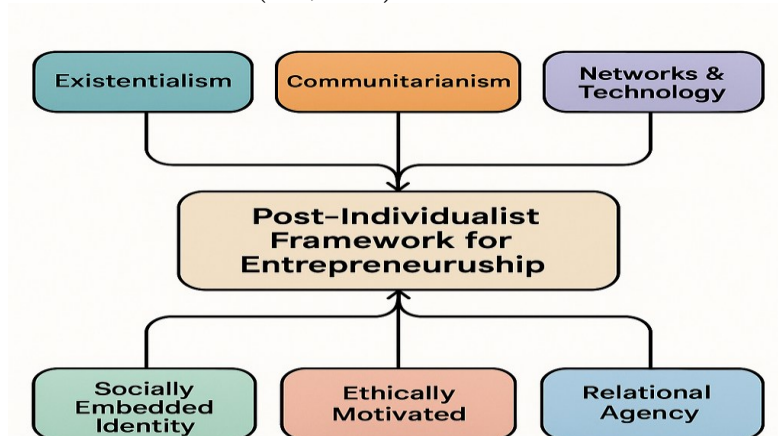


Figure 3. Post-Individualist Framework for Entrepreneurship

Note: The framework based on theories of post-individualism and philosophical perspectives, compiled and synthesized by the author

The initial interest in a socio-cultural approach arose in the subject of philosophy and began with Hannah Arendt's diverse analysis of this theme (Arendt, 1958). Nonetheless, the economic and socio-cultural approaches do converge in terms of development, principally in contemporary questions. All plays a part in both approaches. Therefore, it is logical to consider both approaches as classical while understanding present and future problems. In other words, the socio-cultural approach must continue developing by examining the existence of Heidegger (1962) or, from another perspective, Hannah Arendt's dialectic, and, to a lesser extent, Hannah Arendt's "the capacity to keep promises," affect strategy development in such depth that their status is likely to reach strategic significance. The same sagacious masters considered in labor, work, and action, that is, in work and theory from another perspective, are analyzed with so much profundity in existence that they could not avoid discussing the freedom of man from society (Heidegger, 1962; Arendt, 1958).

4. THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE ENTREPRENEUR

An evolution of the role of an individual brings about an evolutionary change in the scope and process of resource exchanges, governing laws, and business ethics. Reimagining entrepreneurship philosophy in

the post-individualism age allows us to understand a possible new role of the entrepreneur. The concept of a modern entrepreneur still reflects its traditional association with an independent, achievement-driven, and powerful figure. An entrepreneur is an economic agent who actively manages a multitude of resources and has the responsibility to run the enterprise within a free economy system. Since the entrance of the age of corporate entrepreneurship, the traditional concept of the entrepreneur began to flatten out. Under the corporation-centered organization, the modern entrepreneur is less likely to be regarded as an independent and achievement-driven figure (Schumpeter, 1934; Ayres, 1961). Scholars have attempted to analyze the role of the entrepreneur from different perspectives. Though limited to Ayres' theory of industrial evolution, he points out that "one of the 'natural' functions of business management is to plan in such a way as to diminish, on social and economic grounds, the disadvantages of having single economic units within competition" (Ayres, 1961, p. 139). Similarly, Schumpeter argues that big enterprises are a dominant feature of twentieth-century capitalist society, and their owners (entrepreneurs) are replaced by non-existent "professional management" (Schumpeter, 1934). In the past few decades, large corporations have been playing an increasingly important role in social and economic life. With their widely distributed power sources, large corporations have even participated in political activities in many countries (Mizruchi, 2013).

4.1. From Individualism to Collective Action

The We-Universe is what creates. It may be an accident of language that in English, we (i.e., the collective plural) is etymologically rooted in 'our' (as in 'our House,' 'our Journey'), a word that has been lifted to embrace cadres and pass through the centuries down to the philosophy of our own day. It is, however, almost certainly not an accident that the concept of being as a social process has also come to be a matter of interest to philosophers who make the problems of communication – of fulfillment through communication, communication as a matter of formation and realization of the human utilities – the central motif of their writings (Arendt, 1958; Habermas, 1984). The collective plural, as a process of being, yields a clearer insight into the affairs of the world than any view that identifies being with lonely individuals who represent the world to themselves by means of representations, and who, unable to enter communication with other individuals, represent each other with surrogates. The We-Universe emerges as a locus of importance for social science, a subject capable of being defined, described, explained, and evaluated in terms well-suited to the presumption that knowledge of self and knowledge of others derive not from common observables but rather from common critiques of and commitments to those observables (Taylor, 1989). The adequacy of economics as a social science is implicit in the relevant group formations and thus in them.

Economic and organizational arrangements rest upon cultural arrangements. The specific institutional structures and processes of a society, its polity, its property rights, its social norms, its educational system, its competitive intersections, and so forth, have their genesis in an underlying cultural template of disparate beliefs, values, and attitudes (North, 1990). Readings in the anthropology, social psychology, and sociology literatures show that worldwide differences in institutional structure and performance are buttressed fundamentally by differences in cultural systems (Hofstede, 1980). In these literatures, values and beliefs are often regarded as particularistic, non-potentially stable, and as functions of societal specific and cultural traits. Such beliefs and rituals reflect a picture-bound, rather than agent-centered, cognitive landscape. Readings in the economic development, economic history, and public policy literatures similarly reveal close connections between cultural backgrounds and the development of economic and other institutions (Rodrik, 2007). Such cultural backgrounds lie not only in value-led virtues, but also in cognitively driven paths of how envision economic and social processes, pathways varying through time and place compared to illusions of constancy in the constancies of representation.

4.2. Ethical Entrepreneurship

Central to reimagining entrepreneurship from a philosophical and humanistic perspective is the question of what counts as ethical behavior and practice in the form of entrepreneurship. Many

commentators note that contemporary stakeholder approaches that ask for corporations' and entrepreneurs' active engagement in solving social and ecological problems do not suffice. If anything, they ask for more social responsibility on the corporate side, as Milton Friedman and many classical economists did (Friedman, 1962). All those approaches see business as an instrumental tool in the service of society and policy priorities. They treat changes and reforms as lacking from other organizational fields, such as politics and democracy, and as external to businesses. Public relations, image grooming, marketing, or advertising all those strategies could support the real objectives of making and taking profits (Banerjee, 2008).

Companies and entrepreneurs can benefit and prosper from engaging in socially responsible activities, even if they are mandated through regulation or are spontaneously initiated by the companies. Yet none ever asks whether and to what extent more regulation or corporate responsibility would be detrimental in other fields, for instance, in their relation to democratic elaboration of priorities and rules of conduct. Many businessmen and entrepreneurs subscribe to ethical voluntarism, which can build upon the questionable concept of corporate personhood. Corporate personhood paired with the logic and objectives of corporate voluntarism could indeed bring about a new spiritualization and humanitarianization of the economy, at least on the surface (Miller & Rose, 1990). Businesses would at least proclaim that they no longer consider profit exclusively as their *raison d'être*. They would refer to their broad social engagement and to the public good. They would take more liberties in attributing a good conscience and peace of mind to themselves and their organization. They would also take liberties in using CSR and ESG strategies as a means of appeal, seeming moral in the eyes of consumers, voters, and citizens alike or at least in the eyes of those who appreciate sustainable and conscientious behaviors and value systems. But if corporate personhood is to be much more than a rhetorical tradition, and if its moral and ethical potential should be explored, defended, and promoted, then it should not be equated solely with undertakings of corporate social responsibility. After all, corporate personhood invites moral agents to behave in a corporate capacity as a moral person, at least according to sets of legal, religious, or moral rules, do they not? It is not clear whether this is even internally coherent. It may also feel unnecessary and artificial. These problems require in-depth scrutiny which, given the novelty and weight of the relevant conceptual issues, must happen sooner rather than later (Cragg, 2012).

Table 2 :Comparative Table: Traditional vs. Post-Individualist Entrepreneurship

| Dimension | Traditional Entrepreneurship | Post-Individualist Entrepreneurship |
|--------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Identity | Autonomous individual | Relationally embedded actor |
| Agency | Self-determined, independent | Interdependent, collaborative |
| Motivation | Profit, growth, competition | Meaning, ethics, sustainability |
| Values | Efficiency, scalability | Inclusivity, responsibility |
| Ethical Lens | Instrumental rationality | Existential and virtue ethics |
| Impact View | Market-centric success | Socio-cultural and moral contribution |

Note: Compiled and synthesized by the author

5. PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON INNOVATION

It would be nice if philosophers would present Fisher's ethology in a way that would make his attempts to introduce a new biological perspective on human institutions amenable to analysis in the light of the tradition that runs from Vico through Herder to Hegel and beyond to Wittgenstein. And it would be nice if, too, in the course of what has been the more than twenty-year renaissance in political philosophy that has seen the revival Figure 1.1 of a tradition of thought that sees institutions not as external constraints on individuals but rather as part of the conditions of the possibility of significant activity involving multiple individuals, philosophers would not have been so uninterested in the work of cognitive and developmental psychologists and economics in the field of human rationality. But these fruitful connections and conversations between the social sciences and the humanities do not exist, at least formally. However, scientific theories of innovation can be connected in other interesting ways to the humanities than those suggested by the language we use to articulate those theories. Besides defining the direction of technological development, good theories of technological innovation provide stories or accounts of how we have achieved and might plausibly achieve our capability for collective control over a physical and

biological external world that can importantly aid philosophers trying to understand who we are, what we are up to, and how we are organized. The scientific image that has emerged has too long been the only possible candidate, or choice, for the way we scientifically understand ourselves and our activities. That is a bit peculiar. For the defects of the linguistic turn image to invade our understanding of the linguistic turn project must at the very least be a temptation we should resist.

5.1. Creativity and Imagination

In advocating for the 'resurgence' of entrepreneurship, any philosophical reflection must focus, then, on recuperating the underlying premise that it is creativity itself – or more specifically "creativity-under-constraint" – which is responsible for the deep and widely recognized material and other wealth-creating potential, which individual entrepreneurs and their enterprise teams are known, empirically, to draw upon (Sarvasvathy, 2001). Although philosophical understandings of the nature and role of creativity in economic production have generally been thin, to the extent that any entrepreneurial creativity or innovativeness has been taken seriously by natural scientists it has signaled a pervasive social creativity. This has suggested that the economic rewards associated with entrepreneurial acts of discovery might be identified with the pains and efforts involved in arriving at path-breaking solutions which are both novel and useful, particularly in a physical-public sense (Schumpeter, 1934). These creative inventions and discoveries are seen as expanding the range of technologies and productive capabilities available to enhance the lives and livelihoods of future generations (Kirzner, 2008).

5.2. Sustainability and Social Responsibility

The study has just described how entrepreneurs can create value not only for themselves, in pursuit of social development that results from widespread access to wealth. Wealth creation in a long-term perspective, which is based on creating a sustainable society will depend on how it is on the same path with environmental protection, and preservation of natural resources. That wealth promotion becomes tenable in the long run, however, only when harnessed to sustainability protecting the environment and preserving natural resources. Social entrepreneurship refers to a practice that combines a shared social purpose with business practices, thus representing a trend toward the increased importance of values and ethical concerns in entrepreneurial settings (Tykkylainen & Ritala, 2021). Happiness is understood to be the legitimate objective of human action; prosperity is a result of entrepreneurship that serves the world. The profit motive ceases to be universally central (Sen, 1999). Individualism and profit maximization, as Hegel and Marx suggested, foster class conflicts, arouse passions of envy and jealousy, and advertise consumption as utopia (Marx, 1867; Hegel, 1821). If only pursued within limits, with an increased responsibility to the society of which entrepreneurs are part and without negatively affecting the entrepreneurial spirit itself, entrepreneurship can promote and defend the active creation of wealth to satisfy both material and philosophical human needs (Schumpeter, 1934).

6. ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS AND NETWORKS

Entrepreneurship is an inherently network-rich phenomenon. Thus, while recognizing the significance of the entrepreneur or entrepreneurship as a driven action, it is equally important to take into consideration that successful entrepreneurial action is made possible through multiple interactions and relationships, or the network of social relations (Granovetter, 1973). Complementing Ariane Berthoin Antal's ideas drawing on Etzioni (1988) and drawing on the evolution of the economic thinking of the Austrian School of economics, especially its connection to the relationship between knowledge and economic calculation, entrepreneurial ecosystems are identified. Discussion then turns to Schumpeter's ideas, which in recent times found their most robust formulations in the strategic management approach to entrepreneurship, the resource-based view (Schumpeter, 1934). Entrepreneurs as actors, therefore, exist in a network of social relationships. Indeed, "by its very essence," entrepreneurship "is an exercise in social

relations" as a "legitimate component in the social fabric" of communities in "anticipation of future exchange" (Acs et al., 2014). The study of entrepreneurship as the subject of an extensive literature because of the seminal contributions of Joseph Schumpeter can be characterized by many various perspectives, ranging from the psychological to the cultural (Schumpeter, 1934). However, sociological perspectives on entrepreneurship "come from encountering or incorporating perspectives from economists, ergonomists, and anthropologists. The entrepreneur, whether in large firms, institutions or a state, is seen not as the only driving force of economic development. The socio-economic entrepreneur is both subject and object of socio-economic constraints, both local variable and agent of economic regulation" (Audretsch & Thurik, 2001). This chapter has examined the multi-faceted approaches to the theory of the entrepreneur. A compelling real-world example of post-individualist entrepreneurship can be found in Patagonia, the outdoor apparel company and certified B Corporation. Patagonia has redefined entrepreneurial success not by profit maximization but by environmental stewardship, ethical sourcing, and long-term community engagement. The company famously redirected profits to environmental causes and recently restructured its ownership to ensure all profits are used to combat climate change and preserve undeveloped land (Patagonia, 2022). This reflects a shift from autonomous, profit-seeking enterprise to a model grounded in collective ethics, intergenerational responsibility, and purpose-driven governance—mirroring the post-individualist philosophical framework explored in this study.

6.1. Collaboration and Connectivity

Entrepreneurship is fundamentally an individual and innovative endeavor because it presumes strict autonomy and individual sovereignty. It emphasizes the producer's interest apart from the rest of the social order (Etzioni, 1988). Policymakers believe they can create a "nation of entrepreneurs" by teaching people to think and act in particular ways. What is this typical educational system? It is one that assumes an indefinite series of fixed, predictable knowledge and believes that the ecology of knowledge renders those pieces not only knowable but relevant (Kuhnian, 1962). Infractions dividing disciplines, with separate faculties instructing separate groups of students. This vision provided a radical critique of the competitive, almost rapacious social Darwinian interpretation of industrial capitalism, which underpinned a scientific managerialism that divided those who managed from those who executed (Bruton et al., 2008).

The current scientific-technological enterprise seeks scientific management that defies future shock, asserting an ability to make predictions which will then allow us not only to adapt to but also to manage the future. Recent critiques of this non-collateral collateral and data-driven intuition have pointed to the absence of an underlying theoretical grounding, assuming that in an age of post-modern knowledge and industries, intelligence and a knowledge of rapidly dissipating reservoir hip are complementary. However, this critique assumes that our scientific governance carries with it some capacity from a strategic or planning perspective. On the contrary, in an age of rapidly dissipating capabilities and post-industrial knowledge, industries are making structural investments based on the apparent hard assets of data and knowledge-based estimations (Porter, 1990). The Mondragon Corporation, a federation of worker cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain, exemplifies entrepreneurship embedded in communitarian ethics. Founded in 1956, it now includes over 90 cooperatives employing nearly 80,000 people globally. Rather than elevating individual ownership, Mondragon emphasizes democratic governance, shared equity, and social cohesion (Cheney, 2002). This cooperative model challenges the atomized entrepreneur by fostering a collective economic identity, where entrepreneurial action is embedded in solidarity, ethical labor practices, and local cultural values closely aligning with the post-individualist vision advanced in this research.

6.2. Global Perspectives

The expanded definition of entrepreneurship proposed here is particularly well-suited to the unstable international context. Among the fundamental features of this proposed new kind of entrepreneur are commitment to the common good, capacity to bring about public discussions, training in resilience and generational thinking, adaptation to times of change, and networking propensity (GEM Global Report, 2021). The values and characteristics of the inclusiveness age's citizens are applied in the context of a world that is increasingly united, both for good and for ill, by globalization. The inclusion of

nations is the process of oneness and harmony with the rest of humanity; the benefits of globalization linking our world through commerce, travel, communication, education, entertainment, and the exchange of cultures are substantial (Audretsch & Thurik, 2001). Income differences in the world have never been as altered within such a short span of time as during the last half-century. Even so, the increasing globalization of the world, beneficial as it has been in terms of global wealth, brings with it paradoxes such as demographic differences, social tensions, and the non-renewable depletion of the planet. Before going any further, let us sketch out the communitarian vision. It is communitarian not because of any tendency toward a return to the local but, rather, because of the desire to help build a world based on respect for the individual and for groups, on the understanding and acceptance of cultural differences, and on openness (Berthoin Antal & Sobczak, 2014). This communitarian perspective is not national in scope, but supranational.

7. TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is inherently entangled with networks of innovation and technological change. Contemporary studies consistently identify technology—whether in the form of digital tools, AI systems, or platform infrastructure as central to entrepreneurial processes (Audretsch & Thurik, 2001). This extends to social and cooperative models of entrepreneurship, suggesting that technological disruption is not just a byproduct but a core function of entrepreneurial agency. Historically, the entrepreneur has been imagined as a singular force of transformation a visionary individual driving change through ingenuity and persistence (Schumpeter, 1934). This narrative continues to inform dominant management theories, which revolve around incentivizing high-performing individuals within hierarchical organizations. Whether resource-based or contingency models, most frameworks assume the entrepreneur as the primary locus of value creation. Moreover, this celebration of individual genius often aligns with broader cultural narratives of exceptionalism and self-made success, helping to sustain the ideologies of consumerism and growth (Florida, 2002). While this vision of the innovative entrepreneur has contributed to progress, it must now be reassessed considering new technological paradigms and ethical expectations.

Does the individualist model of entrepreneurship still serve society's evolving needs—or does it obscure the potential of collective, ethically-driven innovation?

7.1 Digital Transformation

The digital transformation has revolutionized entrepreneurial processes. Digitization and the virtualization of previously physical services are now widespread phenomena, reconfiguring everything from business models to labor structures (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Internet start-ups have become symbols of success and disruption, associated with agility, scalability, and wealth generation. However, the implications of digitization extend far beyond efficiency. The rise of global platforms has led to significant social and structural changes that remain only partially understood (GEM Global Report, 2021).

While digital services initially promised decentralization, critics warn of market monopolies, algorithmic control, and economic bubbles that may undermine the knowledge economy's long-term sustainability (Audretsch et al., 2008). Calls for ethical regulation of data and platform governance have become more urgent as supranational tech companies consolidate power. In contrast to extractive gig-economy models, platform cooperatives such as Stocky United offer a post-individualist alternative. Owned and governed by its contributors, Stocksy redistributes profits and empowers members to participate democratically in decision-making (Scholz & Schneider, 2017). This model exemplifies how digital tools can be leveraged for relational entrepreneurship one grounded in equity, mutual responsibility, and shared value. The modern entrepreneurial projects are becoming more ethically consistent with the post-individuality model of morality where interdependence and inclusion redefine the technological frontier. This trend represents a step forward in the evolution of the ego-centered models of entrepreneurship towards a relational approach to entrepreneurship, where the common intentionality and win-win are the most prominent features.

7.2 AI and Automation

The lines of entrepreneurial agency are being reformed using artificial intelligence (AI) and automation. Formulated in the past as the manifestations of heroic individualism, entrepreneurial activities nowadays more and more rely on the use of algorithmic systems, predictive modeling, and machine-based decision-making (Giones & Brem, 2017). Technological interventions in this way question the preconceived ideas of human agency and intention in the entrepreneurial process. It is explained by philosophical traditions. The focus on practical wisdom (phronesis) by Aristotle, the analysis of non-logical action by Pareto, and the view of being-in-the-world by Heidegger all show that there is no rational choice in entrepreneurship. Instead, it is impregnated with intricate interchanges between setting, instruments and significance (Heidegger, 1962; Arendt, 1958). In a post-individualist system, AI ceases to be a tool of productivity and become a collaborator of collective intelligence. The subject of entrepreneurship therefore changes not only from the individual innovator, but a networked actor within technological environments and moral reflection. Such a reconceptualization puts urgent questions of responsibility, transparency and purpose to the forefront of the automation of decisions. As automation restructures industries, entrepreneurial action must be evaluated not only in terms of disruption or profit but through its capacity to serve societal well-being. This marks a departure from isolated innovation toward a model of entrepreneurship that is interdependent, anticipatory, and ethically accountable.

8. THE FUTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The erosion of fixed benchmarks of truth and untruth and the heavy corrosion of ethical conduct in twenty-first-century businesses have contributed significantly to the unraveling of societal structures (Ratten, 2021). Consequently, it is essential to identify the underlying causes for these shifts and understand their implications for entrepreneurship as a constantly evolving phenomenon. The transitions we propose must originate in reconceptualizing the human condition. While modern paradigms often focus on material comfort and technological advancement, they frequently neglect the existential and spiritual crises facing humanity (Sparviero, 2020). Entrepreneurship, as it can be seen as the self-guided process of value creation, is based on interconnectedness and is realized in constant interaction of ideas and values. Therefore, entrepreneurial activity should be the focus of inquiries in broader studies of human progress and evolution (Stephan et al., 2022).

8.1. Emerging Trends and Opportunities

The dichotomy of a capitalistic and entrepreneurial economy developed by Daniel Bell still has influence on recent studies. The former assumes the existence of a fixed order, but the latter assumes processes that are dynamic and drive innovation and change in society (Audretsch et al., 2022). The current entrepreneurial fields are influenced more by the global interconnectedness, the fast-paced technological advancements, and the changing values in culture (Nambisan et al., 2021). This literature thus questions the possibility of re-conceptualizing entrepreneurship in an interdisciplinary manner- one that gives prominence to care ethics, feminist theory and communitarian ideology. These frameworks presuppose a more holistic and sustainable version of entrepreneurship that does not focus on economic goals exclusively but on the well-being of the society (Haugh et al., 2023).

8.2. Challenges and Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations have taken a dominant position in the history of entrepreneurship studies. Modern economic life is less and less located within the boundaries of the rational individual and post-individualist accounts explain entrepreneurial action that presupposes radical business models based on the personal beliefs and dedication of the entrepreneur to society (Grimm et al., 2021). Economic models usually seek to optimize the profitability but may have sub-optimal results when those goals conflict with

inclusivity or sustainability. The dilemmas also occur with the consumer-driven markets where the mass culture has created superficial desires that lack substance in exploring the entrepreneurial offerings (Lumpkin et al., 2023). Such challenges require systematic incorporation of ethics in the entrepreneurial education and practice to ensure the creation of entrepreneurship capable of contributing to the personal growth and community progress.

9. CONCLUSION

The current study is a philosophical re-evaluation of entrepreneurship in a post-individualist context. By critically working with the existentialist, communitarian, and ethical concepts, the study challenges the hegemonic individualist discourses and puts the entrepreneur in the centre of the stage as a value-seeking, relational actor that is embedded in the social, cultural, and technological webs. The reconceptualization proposed here underscores the importance of meaning, ethics, and collective agency as core dimensions of entrepreneurial identity. While the paper is conceptual in nature, it provides a foundation for future empirical exploration of post-individualist entrepreneurship. Educators are urged to incorporate philosophical inquiry into entrepreneurship curricula to cultivate reflective and ethically grounded practitioners. Policymakers should consider frameworks that promote inclusivity, social impact, and cultural sustainability. Entrepreneurial ecosystems, in turn, must move beyond profit-centric models and support collaborative, community-oriented ventures. Ultimately, this work invites scholars to deepen the theoretical diversity of entrepreneurship research. The post-individualist perspective offers not just critique, but a constructive vision for reimagining entrepreneurship as a meaningful human endeavor one rooted in purpose, responsibility, and solidarity.

9.1. Key Insights and Reflections

This chapter builds the research question "How is society reimagining entrepreneurship?" from a novel theoretical perspective, which is the philosophical practicality issue. The discussion starts from the conceptual backlash of the overly valued individual entrepreneur at the heart of previous entrepreneurship theory. The findings also indicate that collectivism or individualism matter less in the influence of government advocacy for common pool success. This multi-level comprehensive view corroborates the rising Aboriginal and First Nation feature of economic entrepreneurship activities. We are quick to recall that our study points out that philosophical entrepreneurship does not happen if there are only systemic changes or in reaction to negative factors. Justice activism is a variance from and societal moral arrow, which we find for the first time in a theory of entrepreneurship. The paper also outlines the implications of teaching philosophical entrepreneurship as we explore the ways our findings translate into intended academic action. This chapter sketches our curiosity in the form of the research question and reports on a novel theoretical shift from a philosophical gaze. It does, however, and accordingly to previous research, provide a survey of earlier findings and discussions. Our interest and quest are by no means a detailed documentation or review of the implications of philosophy to understanding and explaining entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial individual has long been a central figure in the fabric of previous entrepreneurship research, making its meta-analysis prospects a focus on the founder, which we argue is an indicator of the lack of diversity in the most prestigious journals in entrepreneurship, as well as the reflection of a hyper-individualistic and profitable economy in the mainstream of entrepreneurship research. While philosophical inquiry allows for a deep, critical examination of foundational assumptions and ethical dimensions, it inherently lacks empirical generalizability. The abstract and interpretive nature of the analysis does not rely on quantitative or case-based data, which may limit its applicability across varied entrepreneurial contexts. This limitation, however, is counterbalanced by the conceptual depth and interdisciplinary integration the study offers. Future research should consider empirical studies that validate the proposed philosophical insights within specific entrepreneurial environments.

9.2. Future Directions for Research and Practice

The philosophical reappraisal of entrepreneurship presented in this paper carries important implications for multiple stakeholders. For educators, it suggests the need to integrate philosophical and ethical inquiry into entrepreneurship curricula to foster reflective, socially conscious entrepreneurs. For policymakers, the study offers a foundation for crafting policies that support collective and culturally sensitive models of entrepreneurship. Finally, for entrepreneurial ecosystems, the findings encourage the development of collaborative platforms, networks, and institutional support structures that reflect the interdependent and ethical nature of post-individualist entrepreneurial identity.

The era of post-individualism brings forth a renewed ground for focusing entrepreneurship under the auspices of the ontological reality of the individual. The current literature lacks discussion on the emergence of post-individualism and its implications for the discipline of entrepreneurship. The authors hope that this research enlightens the entrepreneurship community about the nuances of developing an understanding of entrepreneurs according to the contemporary zeitgeist. Specifically, drawing from the widely established performativity concept, the authors' research challenges prior reductions of the entrepreneurial self to an individual property of being. They argue that today the 'left hand' of entrepreneurship, coming mostly from economics and benefiting from peak level of being a legitimate type of social construction, encouraged a rhetoric about calling for a homogeneous view, eroding the potential benefits for developing fields, the diversity of a community, and hindered necessary heterogeneity in venturing for an array of stakeholders, starting with entrepreneurs and extending to 'great men' and 'women', that actually form the genetic features of the elite social form.

The research directly responds to calls for a multi-paradigmatic outlook in the various subfields of entrepreneurship. The authors contribute by demonstrating that philosophy has much to offer to build entrepreneurial theory while urging scholars to further develop and refine the philosophical foundations of the discipline. The research presents pistages upon which researchers can enhance the theoretical foundations of contemporary entrepreneurial philosophies, opening new areas of investigation. For example, the associations and dissociations related to the philosophy of the creative drive are somewhat abstract and will need a more concrete form for empirical investigations to move forward.

Ethical approval

This research did not require ethical approval.

Informed consent statement

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