

## Sport social enterprises vs. Corporate Social Responsibility in sport

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There seem to be a need for a clearer conceptual framework for small as well as big sport organisations operating in a context of increasing pressure to respond to social responsibility.

However, in sport literature there is a confusion regarding the relations between on the one hand social entrepreneurs/entrepreneurship/enterprises (SE) and on the other corporate social responsibility (CSR). The AIM of this paper is to problematize the relationship between the two concepts SE and CSR in the context of mass sport, viewed as part of the social economy, and the top tier of sport, viewed as mainstream business.

As METHOD, this is a literary and conceptual review of the field of SE in sport literature. Taking its starting point in the European Commissions' (EC) definitions of CSR and SE, the review exclusively considers peer-review articles between 2006-2016 with a focus on SE processes.

After having carried out a LITERATURE REVIEW, it is apparent that similarities and differences between conceptual approaches to CSR and SE are several. According to the EC, CSR 'refers to companies voluntarily going beyond what the law requires to achieve social and environmental objectives during the course of their daily business activities' (EC, n.d.), and SE 'an activity whose primary purpose is to pursue social goals, produce goods and services in a highly entrepreneurial, innovative and efficient manner to generate benefits for society and citizens' and using its surpluses mainly to achieve social goals (EC, 2012: 23). Current approaches to CSR as well as SE are commonly similar in terms of outcomes, i.e. their contribution to societal improvements. Although both concepts showcase examples of social integration, health, (un)employment, and environmental initiatives, their historic backgrounds and current conceptualizations are different. As an approach, CSR has primarily focused on solving problems perceived by society to be the product and fault of the corporation. In other words, focus is on improving its image in relation to stakeholders. SE is about solving societal problems through social innovations.

To find different, sometimes contradictory, definitions of the same concepts is to be expected and may even be the drive behind a research field such as that of CSR and SE. That conflicting definitions and opinions of CSR, debates on sincerity and white/greenwash, not been in the way of CSR becoming a commonly accepted mainstream concept within the field of sport management is the obvious spot at the EASM conferences, numerous text books and sport management programs proof of. Compared to CSR, the conceptualisation of SE in sport research is more heterogenic, but also highly problematic for practitioners as well as SE and CSR research. Approaches in line with the aforementioned EC definition is represented by Cohen and Peachey (2015), others such as Ratten (2011), seemingly concurring with this definition, but presents cases better described as CSR and philanthropy, and yet others defining the social entrepreneur by the ability as network facilitator whilst "his/her" organisation is termed social enterprise by default (Gallagher, Gilmore & Stolz, 2012).

To bring SE and CSR research forward, to take advantage of the concepts' individual uniqueness, this paper will argue that there is first a need to establish the conceptual overlaps. In line with Cohen and Peachey (2015), this paper will maintain that whilst the social entrepreneur is a person in any type of organization who through a social innovation aims to solve a societal problem, without expecting profits or publicity, and the social enterprise is largely a business approach that has as its primary goal to solve problems in society. Hence, the social entrepreneurship is the sum of social entrepreneur plus social innovation. CSR, on the other hand, despite an expressed will to solve societal problems, with its focus on keeping up or improving the image of the enterprise will always make it distinctly different to SE.

This paper will present a conceptualisation of CSR and SE that will allow the two concepts to be used side by side without cannibalising on each other. Not to endanger the two concepts sustainability as individual analytical tools within their own right, the approach will make use of the similarities between CSR and SE and highlight the important differences and uniqueness.. A major difference being that although their outcome may be similar, the goals of the SE and the conventional enterprise are distinctly different. Whilst social entrepreneurship and CSR may coexist in an organisation, CSR cannot be exercised in a social enterprise. Hence, the IMPLICATIONS of this literary and conceptual review is both theoretical and practical for both researchers and practitioners.

### References

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