

CROSS-CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: INNOVATIVE CAPACITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH PAPERBACK – JANUARY 11, 2020

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Abstract

This is a book on entrepreneurship and the key cultural elements that consist of its dynamics. It is a down-to-earth book that brings together insights from history, sociology, philosophy, even religious studies in order to put more focus on quite concrete entrepreneurship opportunities in low income societies. The claim advanced here is that looking at small businesses from such a broad horizon adds some real comprehension in project planning. More often than not, we are all tumbling in space because we are not oriented in time. For enterprises in low income economies this means that they tend to struggle for their daily survival without understanding the societal dynamics they operate in – and the waves of which often bring them down. It is not at all so easy to bring the obstacles for successful entrepreneurship in low income economies to the table. It seems like everybody has reason to avoid those issues or to be in denial. But problems that cannot be named and for which we feel ashamed, can for that same reason not be dealt with in adequate business strategies. These hurdles for entrepreneurship concern particular societal values, like planning, initiative, cooperation, trust, and more, and institutional voids in governance, and they all have a long-term historical background. It is difficult often to really see what's right before one's eyes and to accept that it is there. Entrepreneurs from low income societies may also have reason not to name those issues, because they often prefer to deal with them under the table. They like to be modern, even if they have difficulty in coping with stubborn, and nevertheless valuable, traditions. Then the entrepreneur rather doesn't tell for instance that his nephew is also on the payroll, although he doesn't perform. Academics, especially from Western institutions, often not bothered by too much knowledge of the societal dynamics of low income societies either, also prefer not to see problems. They tend to blame the messenger, in that by naming the obstacles for entrepreneurial success the messenger exposes himself as politically incorrect or as representing some unreflective cultural superiority, and they suppose the messenger is not aware of the misdeeds of Western colonialism. Who are you to blame and name? The only ones who might understand are the entrepreneurs from the West who did operate or still are operating in low income societies. They often are quite straightforward in calling things by their name. But often they as well display little broader comprehension of the problems they run into and merely try to deal with them on a practical level for the sake of survival. They don't read much, so they will probably not read this book anyway.

About Authors

Otto Kroesen is an Assistant Professor in ethics, intercultural communication and development theory at the Technological University Delft. He also teaches technology,

innovation and development at the Technological University of Eindhoven. His research focuses on the co-development of society, values and technology, especially in view of future strategies for developing countries, both in terms of entrepreneurship and the broader framework of governance. He published on the moral philosophy of Levinas and about society, values and technology related to the sociologist Rosenstock-Huessy, analyzing the cultural embeddedness of technology and the co-development of society and technology in different contexts from a historical and development perspective.

David Ndegwah is a scholar with a difference, he also has hands-on experience via an entrepreneurship program between the Delft Center for Entrepreneurship and Tangaza University College, where he was working at the time. He taught ethics and religious studies, at that time at Tangaza University College, and was educating social workers who were supposed to contribute to income generation for the community. He supervised a great many internship students from the Delft University of Technology. Now he teaches at the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology in Bondo, Kenya.

Rudi Darson studied Policy Analysis at the University of Leiden, coming to the Netherlands from a Surinam background. His village was severely devastated by the jungle war between two factions of the Surinam Army in 1986. He supervised many students doing an internship in Surinam, putting a lot of time and effort in it while working from the Netherlands as a consultant, and constantly being on the phone to Surinam.

Editorial Reviews

Review

“A daring and innovative—yet at the same time empirically grounded and pragmatic—book, about how entrepreneurs in low income countries can and must navigate old and new cultural institutions in their quest for performance and profits.” Tim Kelsall, Senior Research Fellow at London's Overseas Development Institute, specializing in Political Anthropology and Political Economy.

“An indispensable reading for understanding entrepreneurship in developing countries. Too often academics from Western institutions fail to understand the institutional and cultural challenges for successful entrepreneurship. Long-lasting and yet valuable cultural traditions are at stake. With field work in Kenya, Tanzania, Surinam and other countries, Kroesen argues that entrepreneurship must be analysed within a broader framework of history, sociology, and even religion. Theories about entrepreneurship cannot easily be transcribed from the developed countries to the Global South. This groundbreaking book will make a serious impact for quite some time to come.” George B.N. Ayittey, PhD. Distinguished Economist, American University and President, Free Africa Foundation, both in Washington DC, USA.