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Beyond a Balanced View of Social Entrepreneurship within a Social-Commercial Dichotomy: Towards a Four-Dimensional Typology

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Abstract: With regard to the basic understanding of the location of social entrepreneurship, there is a widespread explanatory approach of a dichotomy with two poles: social and entrepreneurial. According to this, a lesser expression of one pole automatically leads to an approach toward the other pole. Social entrepreneurship is to be positioned in the middle of the two poles. On the basis of a qualitative empirical study (qualitative content analysis and metaphor analysis), this paper questions the basic understanding of the bipolar continuum and postulates a different, four-dimensional basic understanding of social entrepreneurship. This new draft does better justice to the given complexity of social entrepreneurship and provides an expanded explanatory approach to how social entrepreneurship can be conceptualized beyond the two dimensions. An approach with 36 types of social entrepreneurship emerges from the research results. The implications for science and practice are discussed. This article contributes to a better understanding of the different logics of social enterprises with hybrid organizational principles dedicated to sustainable development.

Keywords: social entrepreneur; social enterprise; hybridity; continuum; bipolar; dichotomy; definition



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1. Introduction

The birth of the neologism “social entrepreneur(-ship)” can be placed in the middle of the 20th century [1], but early scientific debates only occurred later. The most notable of these are Young [2] as well as Waddock and Post [3], with their papers on the blending of the corporate drive toward generating revenue with the fulfillment of a social mission. However, as of today, despite the ever-growing attention of scholars from various disciplines, there is still no mutually agreed upon definition of the SE (social entrepreneur) [4] (with reference to [5,6]). There are “very different interpretations of ‘social entrepreneurship’ across the globe. In other words, the qualitative aspects about who becomes a social entrepreneur, what their objectives are, and how they understand social entrepreneurship will likely be different across the world” [7] (cf. also [8–11]). Using content analysis, Kruse, Chipeta, Surujlal, and Wegge [12] identified 87 different definitions of social entrepreneurship.

For example, Galuska [13] positions social entrepreneurship as a separate group between “shareholders” and “social business”, and describes the orientation towards social values and financial success at an intermediate level. This positioning excludes, for example, companies with a relatively high focus on both social values and financial success. Rummel [14], for example, takes a more differentiated look at “classic non-profit organizations” and “social business”, examining their intersections with “social entrepreneurs”. Rummel adds “social responsible corporations” and “business corporations” as other groups that also intersect. Millner [15], on the other hand, discusses intersections as “blurring boundaries” (cf. also [16–18]). He differentiates between the public, private, and third sector, and understands social entrepreneurship as part of the third sector. Millner describes the intersection with the public sector as “social enterprise policy”. Yunus [19] categorizes even more broadly with his hierarchical differentiation between social entrepreneurship without cost recovery, with some cost recovery, with full cost recovery, and, at the highest

level, with more than full cost recovery, so that social entrepreneurship in principle can be assigned to all sectors. In this context, Yunus coined the term “social business enterprise” to include nonmonetary but socially related profit maximization with, for example, a political or religious aspect. He prioritizes the claim that a social problem needs to be solved.

Beyond these examples of the understanding of the term, the fundamental question as to how to differentiate it from “conventional” entrepreneurship arises; i.e., how to differentiate it from traditionally oriented companies. It is argued that the goal of the SE is not to generate profit, but to fulfill a social task. In this case, the financial surplus becomes a means to a higher end [20,21] (cf. also [17]).

Dees [9] reinforces the differentiation from the “conventional” or “business entrepreneur” when he anchors a change agent in the social entrepreneur’s understanding of the role: “Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value), Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission, Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning, Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand, and Exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created” [9] (p. 4). In doing so, Dees relates social entrepreneurs to conventional entrepreneurs, because “social entrepreneurs are one species in the genus entrepreneur” [9] (p. 2). Similarly, in the understanding of intersections, SEs can be actors in a social business as well as in nonprofit companies.

In summary, it is emphasized that scientific publications set different standards as to which people or organizations with certain objectives are still or no longer considered social entrepreneurs (e.g., [4,6,7,12,15,22,23]). In addition, there are—at least for Germany—several empirically unsound research findings, because the relevant studies bow to lobbyist interests in data collection and interpretation (cf. [24]). For example, some studies only consider the university context. All nonacademic SEs are excluded from these studies. In addition, the quantity of social entrepreneurs varies greatly in studies. The figures for Germany range from a few thousand to 300,000 (cf. *ibid.*).

The need for target profiles can also be indirectly derived from international studies on SE typology (cf. in particular [25]). Although classifications lead to incomprehensible exclusions [25], the presented typology approaches are generally very unspecific or, if there are insufficient empirical data, tend to formulate hypotheses or refer to the social entrepreneurship intention (cf. [26–28]; for an overview of SE–organization typology approaches, see [29]). The conflicting legal frameworks that exist in an international comparison of entrepreneurial activities also make it difficult to operationalize the concept (e.g., [30]).

The common understanding of all the aforementioned definitions is that social and commercial/entrepreneurial are combined. To understand this connection, social entrepreneurship research emphasizes that the entrepreneurial represents a counter-pole to the social within a continuum, so that a lesser expression of one pole automatically leads to an approach toward the other pole: “Being ‘purely social’ or ‘purely commercial’ are considered only two poles of a continuum” [4] (p. 5). “Since social enterprises aim to generate social value as well as profits, they too lie on this continuum, and are treated as hybrid organizations.” [31].

The research question on which this paper is based (“Does the location of social entrepreneurship on a bipolar orientation do justice to the complexity of the phenomenon?”) arose in addition to a grounded theory study concerning work design conditions and the effect of work on social entrepreneurs in Germany (doctoral dissertation, published in German [24]). In its early open coding process, an additional research question arose concerning the extent to which all statements could be plausibly assigned to the bipolar understanding. In order to answer this research question empirically, interview data from the grounded theory study were evaluated in an additional study using qualitative content analysis and metaphor analysis.

The definitional understanding in this study is based on the relatively broad understanding that social entrepreneurs identify social or socioeconomic, and possibly also

ecological, conditions as insufficient or as invaluable. They specify the resulting social grievances and deficits. As a result, they generate ideas for a correspondingly positive development, which they transform into entrepreneurial actions, so that fields of (employment) work can emerge from this.

To understand the current discussion of this socio-commercial combination, a critical review of the existing literature shall be carried out first.

2. Literature Review

Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern show an early account of the continuum that is “ranging from purely social to purely economic” [32]. “Purely social” focuses on being altruistic, but not profitable; purely economic represents the opposite (e.g., [33]). Austin et al. [32] postulate four different variables to guide the comparison of social entrepreneurship with commercial entrepreneurship: (1) *Market failure* (creating differing entrepreneurial opportunities for social and commercial entrepreneurship); (2) *Mission* (creating social value for the public good versus creating profitable operations that result in private gain); (3) *Resource mobilization* (creating different approaches in managing financial and human resources); and (4) *Performance measurement* (creating challenges for measuring performance: social purpose versus quantifiable measures). “Thus, while these four propositions can be distinguishing factors between commercial and social entrepreneurship, the degree to which they delineate the differences can vary. For example, a social-purpose commercial enterprise may differ less on these dimensions from its commercial counterparts than a social enterprise that does not have any commercial aspect to its operations.” (ibid.).

Since then, and till today, studies refer to this understanding of the continuum [7,14,34–37], and some authors illustrate the continuum graphically (e.g., [38,39]).

The joint statement of all publications is reproduced in Figure 1. Social entrepreneurship is located in the middle, between the two poles. For example, corporate social responsibility and venture philanthropy are clearly assigned to the economic pole, while charities are clearly assigned to the social pole.



Figure 1. Common basic understanding concerning social and entrepreneurial as two dimensions of a continuum.

In this understanding, social enterprises “continuously balance out the tradeoff between market orientation and social orientation to ensure social value creation along with sustainability.” [31] (p. 2). This bipolar representation is indeed prominent. However, as of this moment, how far a social–commercial dichotomy captures the complexity of the whole phenomenon has not been sufficiently researched.

Social entrepreneurship “can be undertaken by individuals, profit ventures, nonprofit organizations, public agencies or by hybrid organizations” [40] (cf. also [41]). When social enterprises are conceptualized as hybrid organizations, nonprofit and for-profit elements are even mixed in cross-sector partnerships (ibid., cf. also [6,32,41–43]). Two different forms of organization can be established, with one organization appearing as an entrepreneur and another serving to fulfill social objectives, as a nonprofit association for example (cf., e.g., [44–50]). Each organizational form continues to embody its own logic (cf. [51]). Both logics are incompatible within one organization; hence, they seem contradictory [48]. For example, hybrids embody their own logic of value creation, in which there can be different service recipients depending on the objective and target group (cf. [48,52]). Kreutzer and Niendorf [53] point out that which of the limited resources are invested for economic or social value creation varies from social enterprise to social enterprise. The given inconsistency implies a potential for conflict [54], and it affects performance [55]. Such hybrids do not legitimize themselves; therefore, they may require explanation. It is assumed that the development of conceivable tensions depends on the extent to which the social objectives and market orientation are in conflict with each other or

whether they can be reconciled [51]. However, in the aforementioned literature, it is based on the understanding that hybrid social enterprises are also located within the bipolarity and dichotomy (cf. also [7,38]).

Agrawal and Shekhar Sinha [31] also determined with their recent explorative review and subsequent systematic literature analysis that, in general, there is potential for conflict for social enterprises at the operational level. However, a consideration of the conflict situation for members in an organization, i.e., for SEs, and how they deal with the conflict, is not discussed in-depth by any of the authors.

Accordingly, an inductive empirical research approach shall be appropriate to answer the research questions.

3. Materials and Methods

In the aforementioned grounded theory study, 35 social entrepreneurs (SEs) in Germany were interviewed nationwide in problem-centered interviews [56,57] combined with narrative elements, in case-contrasting, bottom-up sampling [58] up to theoretical saturation.

To ensure ecological validity, the case selection must correspond to the everyday reality of the studied situation. Glaser and Strauss [59] coined the approach of theoretical sampling in the sense of an intentionally designed case selection in the context of their grounded theory development. The theoretical sampling reflects the heterogeneity of the entire research field. Normatively, the decision for the next interview partner has to be made after the evaluation of the data of the previous interview. Only the first case selection is inevitably random. This study uses the criterion “failed as an SE”.

Based on the knowledge gained from the evaluation of the data of the previous interview, a conscious decision should be made in favor of a minimum or maximum case contrast, and, based on the contrasting relevance derived from this, an appointment with a suitable follow-up interview partner should be arranged. If the evaluation of an interview produces new insights into an examined criterion, this newly identified aspect of knowledge can be deepened in a subsequent interview with a comparable case. This corresponds to minimal contrasting, e.g., realized by researching different empirical values in dealing with failure as an SE. An opposite criterion expression should only be focused on if no new knowledge gain can be generated from an examined, minimally contrasted criterion. This, in turn, corresponds to maximum contrasting, e.g., realized by researching particularly successful, in no way failed, SEs. In this way, selection criteria can be worked out in the research process and developed based on one another. However, the contrasting procedure of this bottom-up approach [58] to case selection has limitations for several reasons. On the one hand, several criteria can appear equally relevant; for example, the combination of “having failed” and “many years of experience as an SE”. In the present study, too, there is an increasingly complex, multidimensional set of conditions of influencing criteria, which appear to be significant in different combinations and intensities for SEs. Thus, linear case contrasting per se cannot be mapped. Individual criteria must be prioritized for contrasting at the expense of other criteria, which consequently have to be the focus of attention at a different point in time in the data collection process. In this respect, arbitrary intervention is essential. On the other hand, the research process would be disproportionately lengthened if the restrictions imposed by the interview partners, such as postponements and waiting times of several months, dominate the interview scheduling (cf. also [60]).

A matrix table was developed as part of the case contrasting, which allows us not to lose sight of all the criteria. The table allows all the criteria taken into account in the course of the data collection to be viewed in an overall context and as equivalent. The criteria are mapped as a grown structure. The survey process must continue until no further knowledge gain can be generated and knowledge gain is no longer to be expected with the best possible safeguarding with the sampling method used. This creates the basic prerequisite for assuming theoretical saturation. This is the case in the present study with the 34th interview. Nevertheless, the 35th interview can be rated as a useful “control interview”. IP35 was only available for the interview several months after the appointment

request, before the final interview dates were arranged. The interview with IP35 did not produce any new knowledge, which justifies theoretical saturation. The number of interviews conducted in this study also corresponds to the empirical values in which a point of saturation can be reached in comparative studies (cf. e.g., [61–64]).

In order to recruit suitable interviewees, intensive specialist journals, specialist books, the Internet, and access to private, professional, and university networks as well as events and conferences represented regionally and nationally in Germany were used. Immediately after their interviews, some SEs offered to activate their own network specifically for establishing contacts. In the course of the data collection process, this was used in three cases, in which the potential interview partners matched the planned case selection. An information letter was provided to forward the interview request within the networks of the persons and institutions contacted.

All interviews were conducted over a 19-month period. The average interview duration was >90 min. The shortest interview lasted 46 min; the longest, 144. With the exception of three interviews, all of them lasted longer than an hour.

Linguistic peculiarities were noticed early on in the open coding process. From the beginning of the evaluation and within the framework of several interview analyses, an additional question arose as to whether all statements can be plausibly assigned to a bipolar understanding. This question could not be answered specifically within the framework of the coding system for the grounded theory methodology. Therefore, there was an additional investigation with two evaluation methods: a metaphor analytical and a qualitative content analytical evaluation.

3.1. Systematic Metaphor Analysis

In the systematic metaphor analysis applied according to Schmitt [65], both hermeneutic detailed analyses of individual words and the systematic comparison of the relationship of words to each other were carried out. A transcript is systematically broken down into its metaphorical components and analyzed with regard to linguistic patterns. On this basis, the attitudes and actions that may be described using metaphorical concepts are able to be reconstructed. Two work steps are carried out in parallel: working out which idioms apply to which target area, and identifying the concepts that are contained in them. Then, the collected items are sorted.

3.2. Content-Structuring Qualitative Content Analysis

Following the metaphor analytical evaluation, a relevant transcript was completely coded by content-structuring qualitative content analysis according to Kuckartz [66]. All text segments found that contained a specific statement on the “social” dimension were compared with one another in terms of their meaningfulness. If two passages in the text were incompatible or contradictory in terms of their content, they were compared and this was documented. In this way, text references could be isolated and systematically assigned in relation to the transcription. Similar to the instructions for a memory game, whether the second text segments “fit” was checked. However, here, the accuracy of fit was determined by their contradiction or incongruity. A text segment is in direct contradiction in terms of content or in direct incompatibility with another text segment. In this respect, both text segments form a specific positive–negative pair constellation. Further passages in the text could often be assigned to a pair of contradictions or incongruities that had already been analyzed, which additionally illustrated the phenomenon worked out in the process. In this way, all isolated transcription sources could be tabulated and systematized in terms of their inconsistency or incompatibility.

All text segments that contained a specific statement on the “entrepreneurship” dimension were treated in the same way.

3.3. Method Critical Reflection

The theoretical sampling took on the function of a vehicle for generating consistency [67]. This can help to identify and eliminate confounding variables. This benefits internal validity.

A transcription agency specializing in working with qualitative data was commissioned with the rule-based transcription for all interviews. This allowed the four-eyes principle to be followed during proofreading. Overall, both analysis methods turned out to be remarkably complex; in particular, due to a lack of experience for the metaphor analysis, it was necessary to complete a methods workshop with Schmitt for quality assurance.

Because the gain in scientific knowledge in qualitative empirical research cannot be considered independently of the researcher, the entire data evaluation was coded and analyzed in interdisciplinary working groups. A metalevel was self-reflectively taken in order to be aware of preconcepts, to mentally capture them and to be sensitively distanced from them. Coders see themselves as research subjects who, for example, systematically work through the metaphors they have carried into the evaluation material through a structured approach. The aim is to be aware of one's own subjective influence and to be able to apply the conceptual rules of metaphor analysis. In addition, during the qualitative content analysis, several parts of the text were re-encoded to check the process' stability. The coding results corresponded to one another (intracoder reliability). There was also a high level of agreement with regard to a second coder who edited text excerpts independently. Any inconsistencies could be clarified in an informative manner. In this way, congruence in the evaluation results could be ensured (intercoder agreement). However, it has to be critically noted that not all of the data material could be analyzed in working groups. In addition to the knowledge gained, other metaphorical patterns and codes may have remained undiscovered. Nevertheless, all of the results can be understood intersubjectively.

4. Results

The target area of metaphorization was the interviewees' understanding of the concept of social entrepreneurship. The results show different concepts that are not compatible with each other. This is explained in detail below.

4.1. Conceptual Incompatibility at the Theoretical Concept Level

In order to illustrate the derivation of the results, the metaphor analytical findings are first presented using the example of an interview analysis (IP1), and further interview examples are then integrated.

IP1 describes the social aspect of social entrepreneurship from the organizational founding process to the procreation of a child: a baby is born and organic growth takes place, during which the baby experiences development and is protectively accompanied on its way to maturing development. Interpersonal contact design is of great importance. However, this interviewee describes the entrepreneurial aspects of founding and acting as a social entrepreneur exclusively as a process of building, in which the activity resembles a mechanical process, i.e., the construction of buildings and machines. Mechanical resistance in the process should be compensated for with more kinetic energy and drive. The social can and should develop in the course of one's life, and one should learn from mistakes. However, entrepreneurially, a mechanism that must work is required from the start. On the conceptual theoretical level, social entrepreneurial action for IP1 is based on two different, incompatible attitudes, which are subsequently characterized by resistance and ruptures. Ultimately, this interviewee fails entrepreneurially with his social entrepreneurship and describes failure as pulling a plug from the socket. In doing so, this SE robs his social enterprise of its life energy. He does not put the plug anywhere else or insert it in any other way, and in the end, he failed with his credo of "I want to change my life!" This interviewee does not reflect his own claim to a social entrepreneurial transformation process, i.e., "I manage to live my change!" There is no conceptual approach that combines the social and the entrepreneurial. Seemingly through the power of anchored schemas,

this SE remains firmly entrenched in his disconnected concepts; in any case, there is no differentiated, harmonizing conceptualization.

As a result, there is neither a connection metaphor nor a balance metaphor for the socio-entrepreneurial concept of understanding among several interviewees. On the basis of the systematic metaphor analysis, a first indication could be made concrete that fundamentally questions the bipolar understanding of the concept of social entrepreneurship, i.e., the two dimensions of “social” and “entrepreneurship” within a continuum. Accordingly, the social and the entrepreneurial are each an independent phenomenon. In no way are both phenomena automatically in a linear connection to each other. Several interviewees speak from two sides of the same coin. One interviewee points out that the content-related idea represents the basis on which entrepreneurship is designed. This means that entrepreneurial effectiveness can, at best, be as good as the content concept, in which the content concept is continuously reflected and optimized as best as possible or adapted to new environmental conditions and knowledge; i.e., it represents a living, flexible construct. The statement by those interviewed SEs, that social entrepreneurship is similar to living in two worlds, fits the coin metaphor with its two sides. This two-world metaphor raises the question of how much effort is required to unite the two worlds, and who can be the interpreter for both worlds, so that mutual understanding can be achieved. There are also reasons for the different functions of the two worlds or sides of the coin, which raise the question of why and how both identities are brought together. Instead of the unification of both worlds, it is possible—to use the balance metaphor—to weigh up which parts of the “capitalist world” bring value for social entrepreneurship, appear adaptable, or need to be adjusted. Entrepreneurial aspects are related to social objectives, but they are not linearly connected. With this coping strategic approach, a new point of reference emerges between two scales, each with its own weighting, without ignoring the different norms or identities of both worlds. Social entrepreneurship can therefore succeed by addressing capitalist approaches and not by rejecting them. The bipolar understanding, on the other hand, only allows for an either/or assignment or a more-or-less weighting. However, the cross-interview analysis points to an as-well-as understanding that allows for the pursuit of several objectives at the same time, which may only motivate further, new actions when viewed together, while preserving their peculiarities. A parallel balancing of the two dimensions of “social” and “entrepreneurship” takes place.

4.2. Inconsistencies with Bipolarity: Extension to Four Unipolarities

Similarly, the bipolar understanding excludes the possibility of contradictory content from the outset; however, the metaphor analysis points to concepts that lack internal consistency. In the qualitative content analysis carried out, contradictory or incompatible statements can be identified from the transcriptions of some interviewees. For example, some interview partners express respect for others as well as disrespect. Contradictions in content can certainly embody a feature of consistency [68]. In order to investigate this phenomenon in more detail, transcripts were encoded according to the content-structuring qualitative content analysis according to Kuckartz [66].

Not only the social and the entrepreneurial turned out to be independent criteria with the meaning of dimensions, because each of the two dimensions are available as two unipolar forms. Overall, there are four criteria that are to be regarded as equivalent and are not directly connected in the sense of dimensions. Dimensions emerge from (1) a positive attitude towards the social/social thinking and acting (abbreviated: “social positive”), (2) a negative attitude towards the social/“anti-social” thinking and acting (abbreviated: “social negative”), (3) a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship/thinking and acting according to entrepreneurial principles (abbreviated: “entrepreneurial positive”) and (4) a negative attitude towards entrepreneurship/thinking and acting that oppose entrepreneurial principles (abbreviated: “entrepreneurial negative”).

“Social positive” is understood as interpersonal communication and cooperation that are constructively designed by individuals and serve the common good. It is characterized

by the promotion of the group membership of all members and appreciative, respectful interaction with one another, whereby one's own advantage to the detriment of third parties is consciously avoided. From the relationships that individuals have with each other in their social groups, contacts are formed that can, for example, create a basis of trust.

"Social negative" is understood as a form of contact characterized by resistance, which strengthens unstable interpersonal structures and promotes a culture of mistrust, in which people make disparaging, disrespectful comments towards third parties. In addition, thinking and acting prove to be social negatives if they are directed against the interests of the socially disadvantaged. A personal benefit to the detriment of third parties is obtained, and self-interest is placed before the common good.

"Entrepreneurial positive" is understood as the target-based planning and implementation of decisions and measures, with a scope for action that takes into account effects, side effects, and interactions both within the acting system and with regard to external partners (organizations), on a continuous basis, and is calculated in a process-oriented manner. Strategies are developed and reflected based on competence. The activities are also reflected in terms of the significance of one's own system preservation.

"Entrepreneurial negative" is characterized by the resistance to setting and following achievable and realizable goals. One's own scope for action is resisted and aversion to making decisions is encountered, or decisions are made without a concept in a short-sighted or narrow-minded manner. Effects, side effects, and interactions both within the operating system and with regard to external partners (organizations) are thus ignored or disregarded. Courses of action are viewed in isolation from each other (framing, cf., e.g., [69]). The endangerment of the system preservation can be provoked here.

Appearances are very different with regard to the four unipolar characteristics. For example, there is a striking number of concise codes for *"social positive"* for IP2. With this interviewee, there are almost no codes that can be classified as *"social negative"*. Codes for *"entrepreneurial positive"* are more in the middle here. The codes for *"entrepreneurial negative"* clearly underperform, both in number and in expression. In the case of IP33, on the other hand, there is a relatively large number of codes for all four dimensions, which always allow conclusions to be drawn about at least moderate, if not even strong, expression. However, with IP1, there are only a few, hardly meaningful codes that can be assigned to *"social positive"*. Comparatively, there is a relatively large number of expressive codes belonging to *"social negative"*. Codes for *"entrepreneurial positive"* are more likely to be assigned to the lower midfield. Codes for *"entrepreneurial negative"* clearly predominate, both in terms of number and conciseness. The data analysis shows that this interviewee, who was awarded some SE titles several years ago, is now very critical of social entrepreneurship, as well as dismissive of it, with conspicuously disrespectful statements towards clients and other SEs. IP1 justifies the ongoing process of changing attitudes in terms of his own economic difficulties and very precarious situation. This SE shows an increasingly conventional entrepreneurial orientation.

The presented content can be rendered in a spider diagram format (Figure 2). The illustration is based on the example of the statements already presented from IP1, IP2, and IP33. Accordingly, the spider diagram format can be used to display the profiles of the individual social entrepreneurs. For each of the four dimensions, a distinction is drawn between weakly expressed, moderately expressed, and strongly expressed. Each of the four dimensions can therefore range from weak to moderate to strong. For example, a social positioning that is not strongly positive does not, in any way, allow the conclusion of a strongly negative characteristic, but only that of a moderately or weakly positive characteristic.

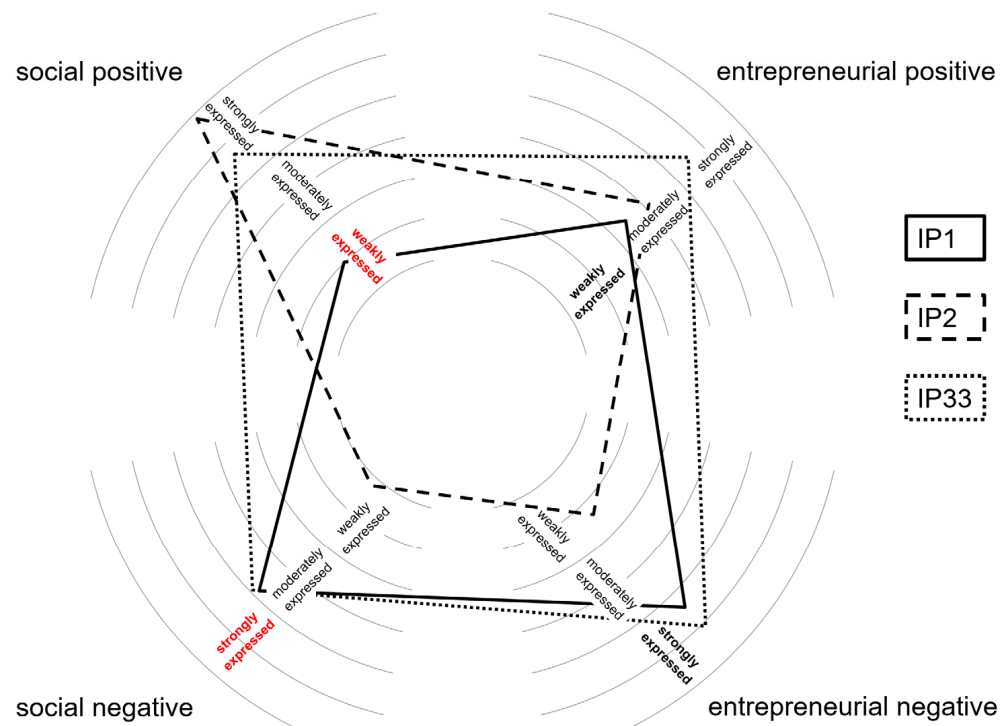


Figure 2. Spider diagram for four unipolar dimensions to be viewed as equivalent, including example IP profiles.

It has already been emphasized that studies on social entrepreneurship can only make sense if they differ from conventional entrepreneurship. Due to the given interest in knowledge, it seems appropriate to undertake a suitable focus for this. Therefore, a definitional differentiation is taken as a basis, according to which social entrepreneurs who have a weak expression in the “social positive” and a strong expression in the “social negative” dimensions are excluded from belonging to the social entrepreneurial target profile (marked with red in the spider diagram). It is hypothetically defined that social entrepreneurs always have at least a moderately positive social attitude or at least a moderately positive social thinking and acting as a basis. They also show a negative social attitude that is, at most, moderately pronounced, or negative social thinking and behavior that are, at most, moderately pronounced. However, this differentiation happens because of the expediency, i.e., with the given interest in knowledge as a contingent decision. However, this still does not allow a judgment to be made as to whether an interviewee is a “real” social entrepreneur or not. The interviewee can only be located within the framework of the research process in relation to the operationalization that has been carried out.

As a logical consequence, another conceivable limitation in the typology approach taken must be reflected upon. Finally, the suspicion arises that a strongly positive social attitude in combination with a strongly positive entrepreneurial attitude represents a favorable position in terms of social entrepreneurship. In this respect, it can be defined for the entrepreneurial, comparable to the social, that a weakly positive expression of the entrepreneurial contradicts the affiliation to social entrepreneurship. This is because, without a positive entrepreneurial basic understanding, there can be a lack of goal-based planning and implementation of decisions and measures. It is conceivable, for example, that the scope for action is not sufficiently calculated, strategically used, and exhausted on the basis of competence, taking into account the effects, side effects, and interactions that can exist within the organization and also with regard to external partners. Possibly, activities are not reflected to the required extent in relation to the importance of one’s own system preservation. As a result, it is impossible for SEs to embody a weakly positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and towards thinking and acting according to entrepreneurial principles.

However, due to the data analysis, a differentiation appears necessary. As part of the grounded theory study, it was determined that several SEs can clearly name their deficits with regard to their entrepreneurial competence profile and, therefore, work together in team structures, so that the existing deficits are not only compensated for but also preventively and strategically managed. On the one hand, these SEs show a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, although this positive attitude can be rated as moderate overall. On the other hand, they do not think and, above all, act entrepreneurially in a pronounced manner, although their teamwork coping strategies may reflect entrepreneurial thinking to some extent. Therefore, their positioning towards the entrepreneurial is rated as weakly positive. Nevertheless, the involvement of suitable partners can be crowned with entrepreneurial success in its implementation.

In addition, it is necessary to take a differentiated look at the effects that a strongly negative form of entrepreneurship can have. For example, it seems conceivable that an SE reflects his concerns and doubts in a constructive and critical manner and ultimately puts them into perspective. A corresponding SE may be open to assistance from SE consultants. For example, an interviewee (IP26) named a learning process in which a social idea matured in his mind, but he lacked the entrepreneurial competence to act. Only after he had acquired the business knowledge did his entrepreneurial activities come into play. Some other interviewees specifically founded their social enterprise with a cofounder who had entrepreneurial skills. A weakly positive entrepreneurial positioning and a strongly pronounced negative entrepreneurial positioning can therefore be compensated for.

The result is the realization that criteria relevant to social entrepreneurship can change in their characteristics. They represent flexible structures (cf. also [70]). This realization also has the result that SE-specific profiles can be created.

4.3. Derivation of a Typology Approach

In this way, a typology approach can be determined with 36 possible combinations/types. Under the assumption that this has not been empirically proven and insofar as the abovementioned expediency as well as the given interest in knowledge as a contingent decision, the following assumptions are made: In the case of SEs that have already founded their social enterprise, the action-motivating power of their goal to move forward is stronger than the action-demotivating power of their states from which they want to distance themselves. This allows positive attitudes, positive thinking, and positive action to be prominently considered. Accordingly, the negative aspects can be subordinated to the positive aspects in terms of their relevance. With this approach, six different prominent types of SE can be identified, each of which can be broken down into six subtypes. Six of the thirty-six types can, therefore, be the same in their positive attitude patterns (i.e., in their prominent type), but they differ in the extent of their negative attitude patterns. Figure 3 reflects this differentiation approach of the 36 SE types.

As shown, the definitions of “social positive”, “social negative”, “entrepreneurial positive”, and “entrepreneurial negative” each consist of several elements. Each definition component can be present in different forms for each SE. As a result, the marking on the scale can only represent an average value for all definition components taken together. In addition, each individual definition component can be lived inconsistently. For example, one and the same person can behave in a strongly “social positive manner” in one situation and “weakly social positive” in other situations, so that the rating on the scale can only represent an average value. It has already been explained that average values cannot be meaningful here, but the personal values behind them can. Inconsistencies can be worked out to some extent by differentiating between the negative and the positive criteria.

Type Number	Prominent Type		Subtype	
	social positive	entrepreneurial positive	social negative	entrepreneurial negative
1	strongly expressed	strongly expressed	weakly expressed	weakly expressed
2			weakly expressed	moderately expressed
3			moderately expressed	weakly expressed
4			moderately expressed	moderately expressed
5			moderately expressed	strongly expressed
6			weakly expressed	strongly expressed
7	strongly expressed	moderately expressed	weakly expressed	weakly expressed
8			weakly expressed	moderately expressed
9			moderately expressed	weakly expressed
10			moderately expressed	moderately expressed
11			weakly expressed	strongly expressed
12			moderately expressed	strongly expressed
13	strongly expressed	weakly expressed	weakly expressed	weakly expressed
14			weakly expressed	moderately expressed
15			weakly expressed	strongly expressed
16			moderately expressed	weakly expressed
17			moderately expressed	moderately expressed
18			moderately expressed	strongly expressed
19	moderately expressed	strongly expressed	weakly expressed	weakly expressed
20			weakly expressed	moderately expressed
21			weakly expressed	strongly expressed
22			moderately expressed	weakly expressed
23			moderately expressed	moderately expressed
24			moderately expressed	strongly expressed
25	moderately expressed	moderately expressed	weakly expressed	weakly expressed
26			weakly expressed	moderately expressed
27			weakly expressed	strongly expressed
28			moderately expressed	weakly expressed
29			moderately expressed	moderately expressed
30			moderately expressed	strongly expressed
31	moderately expressed	weakly expressed	weakly expressed	weakly expressed
32			weakly expressed	moderately expressed
33			weakly expressed	strongly expressed
34			moderately expressed	weakly expressed
35			moderately expressed	moderately expressed
36			moderately expressed	strongly expressed

Figure 3. The 36 types of social entrepreneurs. Color legend: Green: Basic condition that is strongly positive social entrepreneurial. Yellow: Basic condition that is moderately positive and moderately negative social entrepreneurial. Red: Basic condition that is strongly negative social entrepreneurial.

Apparently, with the described differentiation from the typology approach presented, the impression can be given that the qualitative data have been quantified and that the arranged results that have been worked out have been returned to qualitative categories. This has to be put into perspective. This is because it goes without saying and is nevertheless expressly emphasized that with this procedure, a quantitatively secured scaling of IP data can neither be guaranteed nor intended, because the assignment of the statements to an IP is not based on operationalized scales and statistical quality has taken place, but there is room for interpretation. Rather, starting from all individual cases, an identical abstraction process can be presented, and on this basis the types shown can be formed. The fact that there can be no claim to accuracy or unambiguity with this intended approximate assignment

is already proven by the interview analyses carried out in the context of coding working groups, when the comparative location of an IP was discussed. However, these analyses prove, in the same way, the intersubjectively comprehensible assignment on a spectrum for all four criteria, and this is exactly where the quality of the procedure lies. For all SEs, there are characteristics on all four scales, so that abstracting an idealized type of formation from an individual case can be carried out; thus, the typology approach proves to be conclusive and knowledge-expanding.

5. Discussion

The method key that was honed for this study made it possible to open the lock on the gate of knowledge, leading towards a four-dimensional typology, which allows one to adopt a balanced view of social entrepreneurship within a social–commercial dichotomy.

The findings can serve as a basis for further investigations:

1. The various approaches to defining social entrepreneurship can be relocated, taking into account the explanation of the spider diagram and typology approach. In this way, an attempt can be made to better understand the different logics of social enterprises with their hybrid organizational principles dedicated to sustainable development (cf., e.g., [51,55]).
2. These findings can be used to develop psychological tests, which can be triangulated with validated tests in the field to examine the specific circumstances and needs of SEs. For example, suitable valid test procedures for examining job satisfaction or stress management could be triangulated with the findings from this study (e.g., [71]). As a result, this can sharpen the view of necessary support measures for social entrepreneurs in practice.
3. Future research can investigate how SEs occur with regard to the different types (cf., e.g., [72]). The findings can possibly be used to explore more deeply the existing “lack of consensus about what competencies are essential for the development of a career in social entrepreneurship” [73] (p. 350).
4. Above all, segregation effects in research are to be avoided. SEs without an academic background are currently being excluded in studies, as are actors in rural areas and regions with weak infrastructure. In addition, the research focus is on social startups. This excludes SEs that are already in the operating phase with their social enterprise and who can experience their own problems in the socioeconomic field of tension.
5. The results also show that the effect of SE awards needs to be researched in a more differentiated manner. It was made clear that no permanent motivation to act can be derived from SE awards, let alone the execution of actions. The results show that the self-disclosure “*I am a social entrepreneur*” has to be put into perspective on a case-by-case basis. Maybe it should take place as a self-critical retrospective, something such as “*I had social entrepreneurial ambitions, but was only active as a social entrepreneur for a short time*”. This can be useful for transparency. In addition, an even more differentiated view can be derived. This is because an entrepreneur who owns several companies can point out, “*With my business model ‘A’ I act as a social entrepreneur in the market, but with my business model ‘B’ I do not act as a social entrepreneur, but run a conventional company*”. This applies to several interviewees. Such differentiations could counteract the instrumentalization of lifelong SE awards (cf., e.g., [74]) and avoid the risk of false connotations in public.

In particular, implications for management can be derived from the research:

1. In the consulting sector, the spider diagram/typology approach can be used to develop a model with mission–vision anchoring through to personal assignment in impact measurements. Development goals can be formulated and assigned graphically (cf. [75]).
2. An expansion of the counselling services and the quality assurance of the consultant’s competence is recommended. Quality standards with minimum requirements for a requirement profile for consultants are recommended. A curriculum for the

basic training of a “social entrepreneurship consultant” can be helpful here. Professional associations can cooperate with universities that have the corresponding technical and methodological expertise. Implementing specific counseling offers for SEs in stressful situations, e.g., case supervision/coaching and management team supervision/coaching, should be considered.

3. The typology approach can also be used in situation analyses to answer various questions, as well as being capable of being used in different practical references. For example, it is conceivable that SEs can work out situations of intrapsychic conflict and inner contradictions with the help of the spider diagram/typology approach. If they can better recognize mental and social conflicts themselves on this basis, then it can be easier for them to develop coping strategies [76,77]. In this respect, a practical benefit can be that consultants of social entrepreneurs work methodically with the spider diagram structure/typology approach. The need for support can be specified based on the type. In addition, intrapersonal comparisons—e.g., changes in the attitude and action patterns of an SE over time—can be pointed out, as can interpersonal comparisons between the attitudes and actions of several SEs, e.g., cofounders.
4. It is also conceivable that, in management, the spider diagram/typology approach can be deposited with different value systems in the sense of evaluation schemes. As a result, it can be checked to what extent a target profile or scope for action changes normatively if a different evaluation scheme in the sense of a different canon of values is used to measure a scope (cf. [78]).
5. In Maslow’s understanding [79], a typology approach can also be used to compare self-image and external image or to clarify moral dilemmas. For example, a normative sense of entitlement to having to reinvest profits [80,81] can put pressure on SEs with regard to their own security. A person’s needs, motives, and attitudes can conflict with one another [79,82]. They act as components of a conditional structure. In addition, the social idea not only requires care but also implementation strength [83]. The social idea must be able to defend itself against resistance in the corporate world in which it grows up. Depending on the context of the situation, different behaviors can be shown. In order to be able to understand the action-motivation process of social entrepreneurs with its peculiarities, neither the bipolar average value for needs, motives, and attitudes, nor the average value for the behavior shown can be used. Average values cannot represent the different qualities of thought and action.
6. Management requirements for measuring social effectiveness can also be derived. The inclusion of harmful creation and the long-term nature of effects should be taken more into account.

Last but not least, given the assumed inferiority of negative positioning, the impression can be given that, in decision-making situations in everyday social entrepreneurship, a moderately socially positive expression appears more prominent and has a more significant effect than a moderately social negative expression. However, such conclusions are not easy to derive. It should certainly be taken into account that a strongly negative social positioning should carry relatively more weight with only a moderately positive social positioning than if a social positive attitude is also strongly pronounced. This is because if demotivation dominates, the underlying drive strength can come to a standstill (cf., e.g., [82,84,85]). For example, if SEs are struggling with escalated team conflicts, including personal insults, this can lead to capitulation. However, many other influencing criteria must be taken into account, including well-known ones. For example, success-motivated and failure-avoidance-motivated individuals can have different decision-making bases for achievement motivation [86]. A reliable prognosis for action can by no means be derived from the typology approach. In addition, the characteristics can neither be added nor multiplied. However, the further development of the four unipolar dimensions is to be respected in its value, and the resulting typology approach shows that the four dimensions can interact in a complex way.

6. Conclusions

In summary, this paper has shown that a basic understanding of the bipolar continuum reflects neither the work reality nor the range of mental attitude patterns of SEs. The four-dimensional basic understanding that is determined in this paper does better justice to the given complexity of social entrepreneurship. It provides an expanded explanatory approach to how social entrepreneurship can be conceptualized beyond the two dimensions. The developed approach, with 36 types of social entrepreneurs, contributes to a better understanding of their different logics. The identified need for further research and the recommendations for management clearly show that, despite the increasing number of studies, some of which are relatively broad, social entrepreneurship is still in its infancy, such that it requires care from different directions.

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