



International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing

Special Issue on: "Intensifying Research on the Dark Side of Entrepreneurship"

Guest Editors:

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The dark side on entrepreneurship (DSE) is an emerging but rapidly growing field of academic research. DSE research was sparked by the recognition that entrepreneurship research typically focuses on the positives of entrepreneurship (Shepherd, 2019; Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009; Wiklund et al., 2011; 2019), including phenomena such as wealth creation, economic growth, regional and urban development, innovation, and job creation (Casson, 2003, Kirzner, 1985). The list of positives is constantly expanding, as evidenced by the fact that entrepreneurship is increasingly seen not only as a driver of economic wealth creation but also as an engine of emancipation and positive social change (Calás et al., 2009, Laine & Kibler, 2022). While these positive elements are important, they represent only a relatively specific part of entrepreneurship. DSE scholars have thus argued that focusing exclusively on the bright side of entrepreneurship comes at a significant cost, as the "fairy tales of entrepreneurial success hide the dark side of entrepreneurial behaviours and the damage they cause" (Dannreuter, 2020, p. ix).

Perhaps the first to disturb the unadulterated positivity of entrepreneurship research was Kets de Vries, who, back in 1985, coined the term 'dark side of entrepreneurship'. He argued that some personality traits, such as a high need for control or a dislike of authority, can prove detrimental in the context of entrepreneurship, as entrepreneurs can become obsessive about details or turn out to be poor collaborators. Kets de Vries was followed a few years later by Baumol (1990), who, while not using the 'dark side' terminology, made an influential argument that entrepreneurs can potentially play a variety of roles, some of which might not even "follow the constructive and innovative script usually attributed to that person. Indeed, the entrepreneur can sometimes even lead a parasitic life that is detrimental to the economy" (p. 894). Baumol offers an exemplary application of the principle "scientia vincere tenebras" (i.e., science will triumph over darkness) by showing how scientific knowledge can be used to address uncomfortable problems that, although ubiquitous, are often overlooked, ignored, or suppressed by the academic community. His study paved the way for the realisation that scientific knowledge is the key to refuting overly one-sided, biased, or even seriously distorted and misleading views of what entrepreneurship is and what it can reasonably achieve.

Despite these early attempts, DSE research remained on the fringes of entrepreneurship research throughout the 1990s and much of the 2000s (Landström, 2020). Since then, there has been a remarkable surge of interest in the 'dark side' of entrepreneurship (Keim, 2022; Montiel et al., 2020, Shepherd, 2019, Talmage & Gassert, 2020). Although some studies have not even used the 'dark side' terminology, DSE research has blossomed into a vibrant and pluralistic research branch. Dedicated to the various negatives of entrepreneurship, DSE encompasses a wide range of issues, including violation of ethical rules (Brenkert, 2009), illegal behaviour including fraud, corruption, and money laundering (Armstrong, 2001; Lundmark & Westelius, 2012; Rehn & Talas, 2004), personality disorders and deviant psychological tendencies (Hmieleski & Lerner 2016); Lundmark & Westelius, 2019; Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Tucker et al., 2016), mental and physical health issues such as depression, ADHD, substance use or bipolar disorder (Johnson et al., 2018), entrepreneurial failure (Olaison & Sørensen, 2014), and stigmatization and marginalisation (McCarthy et al., 2014).

In light of this rapidly expanding field of research, we propose this special issue as an opportunity to intensify DSE research further.

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Subject Coverage

Suitable topics include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Literature reviews that cluster, synthesise, or typologize DSE research which has so far remained fragmented (De Sordi et al., 2022)
- Using new theoretical perspectives and approaches (incl., e.g., economic, philosophical, political science, and sociological perspectives) to problematise common understandings of DSE phenomena while helping us cast a new light on them (Dey et al., 2022).
- New theoretical perspectives and approaches that problematise common understandings of DSE phenomena and help us shed new light on them.
- Conceptual papers that outline different gradations and intensities of the dark side, e.g., from largely unintended negative spillover effects in the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities to predatory business models entrepreneurs use to extract or 'steal' value created by others (Hanlon, 2014).
- Empirical and conceptual contributions that explore how the dark and bright sides of entrepreneurship are inextricably linked in practice (Scheaf & Wood, 2022).
- Research that explores whether ethical and legal rule-breaking, such as exploitation, fraud, or corruption, are merely a necessary evil or something that should and can be prohibited (e.g., through governance mechanisms, regulation, or moral principles) (Smith & McElwee, 2014).
- Research that focuses on "dark personality factors" of entrepreneurs as necessities or "success factors" of doing business.
- Empirical research examining "dark" business models.
- Studies looking at how to prevent, mitigate, and balance the negative psychological and societal effects of entrepreneurship (Shepherd, 2019)
- Empirical and conceptual research that identifies and unpacks the underlying relationships between DSE and the "dark side of values" (Risi & Marti, 2022).
- Research that links corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate social irresponsibility (CSiR), and DSE, developing theoretical and/or empirical insights for research on DSE and potentially also for CSR and/or CSiR scholarship.
- Research examining whether, how, and why DSE serves as the originator and driver of grand societal challenges—the complex, uncertain, and evaluative problems that societies face (Ferraro et al., 2015; George et al., 2016).

Notes for Prospective Authors

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. (N.B. Conference papers may only be submitted if the paper has been completely re-written and if appropriate written permissions have been obtained from any copyright holders of the original paper).

All papers are refereed through a peer review process.

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Important Dates

Manuscripts due by: *30 September, 2023*