

Beyond Social and Private Enterprise: Towards the Integrated Enterprise

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In the past two decades we have witnessed – in conjunction with the rise of civil society – the emergence of social entrepreneurship as a new phenomenon. Such social enterprises have by now established themselves as a new force in societal development. Simultaneously, business and its engagement in society, hitherto termed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), has become ever more important. However, such CSR and social entrepreneurship remain very separate from each other. Further, both fail to take into account the so-called “hybrid” enterprises emerging. In this article we shall briefly analyse the fertile chaos that such a changing face of enterprise represents, and will argue for the need to transcend such current notions towards a more integrated form of enterprise. We illustrate how such a newly integrated form is better equipped to address the burning issues organisations are facing today, than the old economic-and-social ones in turn.

1. The Changing Face of Enterprise

Entrepreneurship in the Private Sector: Ongoing Expansion of the Traditional Notion of Private Enterprise

Business, over the past two decades, has come a long way from general philanthropy, corporate social responsibility and corporate social investment. We have seen a gradual expansion of the traditional notion of private enterprise, whereby an increasing number of organisations are putting more and more emphasis on societal engagement. Corporations are reaching out towards culture, education, environment and other fields. Cross-Sector Partnerships are encouraged, and the term Public-Private-Civic as well as Multilateral Partnership is by now part of common vocabulary. Business is then reaching out to society at large, acknowledging that such engagement is vital in order to preserve its own “eco-system.”

A prominent case in point is the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF), initially established in the UK by the Prince of Wales, in 1990 to promote responsible business practice in developing and transition economies. Working closely with more than 100 large multinational corporations, IBLF is exploring new ways of “business in society“, in partnership with public, civic and multilateral enterprises. In a recent repositioning, IBLF now argues that business needs to move to “the heart of sustainable development”, to the benefit of business and the communities within which it operates. The growing gap between the rich and the poor and the advent of climate change and peak oil prices, makes business leaders realise that something more than CSR is required. Such business leaders therefore start looking for new ways of engaging in society, as for example can be seen in a recent speech of Unilever’s current Group CEO, Patrick Cescau on “Beyond Corporate Social Responsibility: Social Innovation and Sustainable Development as Drivers of Business Growth”. (1) While the private sector is hence looking for new and more meaningful ways of societal engagement, the civic sector has developed its own approach: the “social enterprise”.

Entrepreneurship in the Civic Sector: The Rise of Social Enterprise

In the United States today non-profit organisations are the fastest growing category of enterprises. In policy-making and in discussions on how to balance the role of government, business and civil society, social and civic entrepreneurs get central attention. “Social entrepreneurship” is seen to be engaging in many different initiatives, in the health sector, in the environment, amongst NGO’s, in the informal sector in the third world, and in other cultural and social domains. Such new initiatives are viewed as a form of R&D in the welfare system, innovating new solutions to intractable social problems. They help communities to build up social capital. (2) One new form of such is the so-called “social business”.

Entrepreneurship between the Private and the Civic Sector: The “Social Business”

Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus (by way of his own example through his Grameen enterprises in Bangladesh) has promoted a new form of “social” business as a “hybrid” between conventional private and social enterprise. For him, both concepts fall short. The private entrepreneur, for Yunus, is deemed to be dedicated to one mission only – the maximization of profit. Yet the reality is very different. People are not one-dimensional. They are multi-dimensional. They have the potential to self-actualize, to realize heightened levels of consciousness. Mainstream free-market theory, for Yunus, suffers from a “conceptualization failure”, a failure to capture the essence of what it is to be human. It actually ignores higher levels of “world-centric” consciousness. (3)

Yunus goes on and argues that in the conventional theory of business we have created a one-dimensional human being to play the role of business leader, the so-called economic entrepreneur. We have insulated him or her from the rest of life, the religious, emotional, political and social that characterize the “social” entrepreneur. However, that puts also the latter into a box. This is where Yunus’ concept of “social business” comes in. Entrepreneurs will set up a “social business” not to achieve limited personal gain but to pursue social goals. A social business respects the multi-faceted motivations of the entrepreneur, including his or her “business” orientation,

which, of course, includes the generation of profits to secure the economic sustainability of the business. Hence, such an enterprise is simultaneously social *and* economic. We now turn from society to the environment.

Entrepreneurship in the Environmental Sector: Emerging Eco-Enterprise

There is another entrepreneurial form increasingly visible, which so far has been subsumed under the Social Enterprise: the Eco-Enterprise. With Eco-Enterprise we mean enterprises, which have a strong environmental orientation, and are deeply rooted in a nature and nature's principles. For Catherine Campbell, a South African social psychologist currently based at the London School of Economics: "... growing ourselves and our communities in harmony with the land is seldom recognized as an entrepreneurial activity. Although a majority of the world's population live on the land, only a tiny fraction of people in the industrialized world do, and most theories of entrepreneurship emanate from the latter. We have discredited our enterprising physical selves and commoditized the business of living. In fact we exist today because our foremothers foraged and gathered and, later, accomplished the transition to gardening and agriculture." (4)

According to Campbell, modern notions of entrepreneurial behaviour are in many ways idealizations of the mythical hunter. But our species did not survive by hunting alone. Close study of a subsistence relationship with "Mother Earth" reveals the quintessential entrepreneurial responsibility for our individual and collective process of self-creation and self-nurturing. Unlike industrial production or knowledge work, work that occurs with and for the land is axiomatically concerned with space and place. Such "grounded" entrepreneurial activity becomes a mutually beneficial interaction between and among individuals, and between people and nature, as they collectively create meaning for themselves and their community.

"Bioregionalism" is a result of such eco-entrepreneurial efforts. It dramatically reframes the entrepreneurial process, shifting the emphasis from a human to an eco-systemic orientation, whereby we become more rooted in place and space. Modern-day permaculture is another influential attempt to move towards more localized energy-efficient and productive living arrangements, and claims, that this is not a choice, but an inevitable direction for humanity. Rebuilding local agriculture and food production then, localizing energy production, rethinking healthcare, rediscovering local building materials in the context of zero energy building, rethinking how we manage waste, all build resilience and offer, according to Rob Hopkins, one of the key proponents of "permaculture" the potential of an extraordinary renaissance. (5) We now turn from the economic, social and environmental to the public at large.

Entrepreneurship in the Public Sector: Emerging Public Enterprise in a redefined "public space"

Recently upcoming discourses argue for the emergence of a public form of entrepreneurship via a redefinition of "public space". To illustrate this, we introduce the work of Scandinavian Academics Daniel Hjorth and Bjerne Bjerke. Starting from a conviction that entrepreneurship belongs primarily to society rather than the economy, and that we need to go after life rather than simply business to understand entrepreneurial processes, Hjorth and Bjerke suggest locating entrepreneurship in the

public. (6) According to them, it would be appropriate to conceive of today's society as consisting of three sectors:

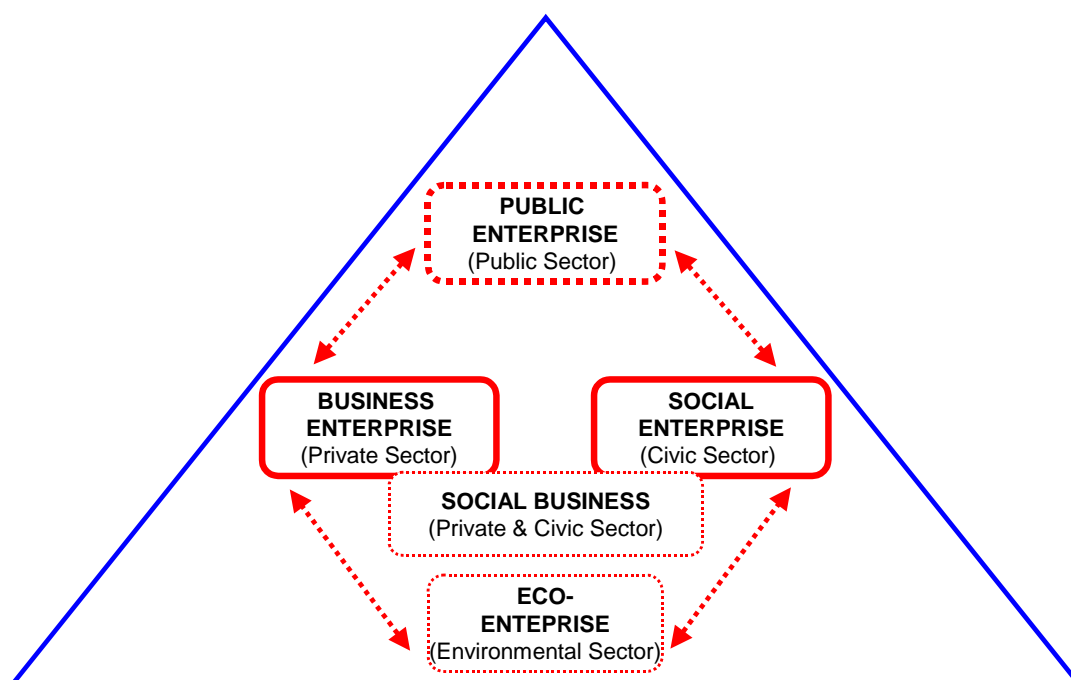
- one common sector (the traditional public sector financed by taxes);
- one business sector driven by market forces; and
- a newly called public sector, where community goals are achieved by creating sociality, including "public businesses".

Hjorth uses the concept "public" to think his way back from "social and society". He does this as a reaction against how managerial economic rationality has come to define and refer to the "social" while being called upon to provide expert knowledge in the recent urge for "re-inventing government".

Such a perspective on public enterprise also contests the neo-liberal attempt to limit citizenship to the role of consumer choices in a market. Rather, a different view of citizenship is developed, that involves a creative "making use" of the public space between state institutions and civic society. In the discourse on social entrepreneurship the public citizen is valorized as an enterprising self. Citizenship, on the other hand, is a composite notion that includes individual and group identities. Public entrepreneurs, for Hjorth and Bjerke, operate to create new forms of "sociality" in the face of withering state institutions.

Entrepreneurship in Society: A State of Fertile Chaos

In summary then, in introducing the changing face of entrepreneurship in today's society we have focussed on three core trends. We have firstly described the ongoing expansion of business' engagement in society and its reaching out to society's other sectors while exploring new concepts of doing so. Secondly, and at the same time social enterprises have established themselves primarily to counterbalance the shortcomings of the private and public sectors. Thirdly, there are a variety of emerging entrepreneurial forces, such as the "social business" (positioning itself simultaneously in the business and in the social world), the Eco-Enterprise, as well as attempts of a redefinition of Public Enterprise. Figure 1 serves to illustrate such core trends.



*Figure 1: Types of Enterprises in the Societal Arena of PPC Partnerships
(Established Types = full line / Emerging Types = dotted line)*

Further building upon these trends is the emerging notion of cross-sector partnerships, most commonly termed Public-Private-Civic Partnerships. There are also significant attempts to consolidate upon such partnerships, educationally, for example illustrated by the “Partnering Initiative”, an educational joint venture of the International Business Leaders Forum and the Cambridge (UK) University (www.thepartneringinitiative.org).

We regard these developments as “fertile chaos”, serving to acknowledge a need for change, for respectively new forms of entrepreneurship and new ways of partnering between different types of enterprise.

What then can be said critically about the current situation?

2. Critical Reflections on the current state of Entrepreneurship

General Critique: A Lack of Social Innovation

The above trends in the field of entrepreneurship are promising. And yet, we are all too aware that besides this new orientation toward social betterment to which all described forms of entrepreneurship aspire, the “social situation” of the world is increasingly deteriorating (while, by the way, the “technological situation” is thriving). In short, notwithstanding the evolution of social entrepreneurship, there remains a sincere lack of social innovation. What we mean by such “innovation” is that the very structure and functioning – as opposed to merely the values and practices of the micro enterprise, and of the macro economy that surrounds it – needs to change, fundamentally. This has not yet happened. We shall now elaborate on such a

need for change, why we believe that we remain stuck, before we propose a way forward.

“Profits with Principles” is Not Enough

The influential work of Harvard’s Ira Jackson and Jane Nelson on “Profit with Principles” (7) reflects the value-based expansion of traditional business towards a more intense engagement with society. There are many other authors who argue, that a new set of values would solve the problems. Consequently, for example, codes of practice (e.g. in Corporate Ethics and Corporate Governance) have emerged worldwide. However, the moral codes provided by such expanded perspectives fail to provide a new structure and functioning of enterprise, nor do they challenge the current economic functioning of society. By ratifying such codes corporations feel that they have done everything to comply with international business standards. A true evolutionary impulse is missing, one which would serve to evolve both the micro-structure and functioning and the macro economy and environment of business.

Business and Entrepreneurship Education has not undergone a Paradigm Shift

In fact, according to Professor of Management Thought, Ellen O’Connor (8), based at the University of Paris Dauphine, more and more business schools, like Harvard and Duke in America and Oxford University in the UK, have been establishing social entrepreneurship centers, which she terms HPSE (high profile social entrepreneurship). These HPSE centers reside in the elite business schools, which need to keep up with the latest trends. They have grown out of the “new economy” of the 1990’s, when wealthy entrepreneurs, like Bill Gates and Geoff Skoll, have engaged in venture philanthropy, promoting for example social venture competitions at business schools. Such high profile programmes are still based on the neo-liberal paradigm, focused on the role of self-regulating markets in providing not only increased individual wealth, but also general improvements in society.

The retreat in many places of the “welfare state” arguably contributes to this social entrepreneurship promotion trend, maintaining the notion that social benefits, including social goals such as poverty reduction, environmental protection, health care and meaningful employment are best produced by a kind of market activity. Thereby “social entrepreneurs” are combining resources toward the delivery of goods and services, which provide social improvements and change. Ultimately, so we argue, such HPSE’s do not promote transformation. They are still rooted in a primarily economic paradigm, whereby the market rules, and have not reconceived of themselves in a cultural as well as natural, political as well as economic light. Hence, social entrepreneurship, so the argument goes, is still too close to the notion of economic entrepreneurship.

Social Entrepreneurship imitates Private Entrepreneurship

Increasingly, entrepreneurial minded non-profit leaders are bringing the tactics of the private sector to the task of solving social problems. This approach operates within a conception of entrepreneurship that makes legitimate a representation of social problems as economic ones with business solutions. Social entrepreneurs have the same core temperaments as their industry-creating peers but instead use their talents

to solve social problems. So indeed claims William Drayton, the founder of the well known and duly admired Ashoka, the worldwide network for such social entrepreneurs (www.ashoka.org). Most authors on social entrepreneurship follow an old pattern of individual entrepreneurship, albeit now in a social context. (9)

Hence, “social entrepreneurship” retains (unconsciously) its business and economic pre-emphasis, in theory if not also in practice, and fails to clearly differentiate the political and economic, cultural and environmental nature and scope of its new activities. That leads us to the next critique.

The Term “social” is not used in a clearly differentiated Manner

Recent attempts to either expand existing notions of entrepreneurship, as in the case of the private sector, or to introduce additional forms, have all one thing in common: They are trying to respond to a declining “social climate” and to address developmental issues in societies. In these attempts the term “social” was used in a rather undifferentiated manner in that it includes “all that is not economic”. Such prohibited original thinking, that not only integrated the economic dimension (as does Yunus’ concept of a Social Business), but also the other dimensions of society.

In fact, while this evolution of “social” enterprise has been going on its specific functioning has been untouched. Indeed marketing is marketing and finance remains finance, whether the enterprise is economic or social, ecological or “public” in orientation. Based on these critical comments, what then do we see as a fundamentally new way forward?

3. Towards an Integrated Enterprise

New integrated Forms of engaging with Society

In our local and global research, we have analysed how organisations have developed new forms of engaging with their specific society, and have gone beyond the either/or economic or social positioning of an enterprise.

Systems Theorists have often stated that the business enterprise as a social system needs – in order to be successful – to mirror the larger system in which it is operating in. Conventionally speaking, such a systemic analysis stops short at the *economic* market. We argue, and the trends described above underline this, that the system any organisation needs to reflect internally, is society at large (which includes, but is not limited to, the market). Hence, while for a business enterprise its primary field of engagement remains the economy (private sector), it equally needs to relate to the other sectors of societies. This is not a matter of morality, but of organisational sustainability and resilience.

Further, agreeing with Yunus, we argue that there is a need to overcome the unhealthy fragmentation between business and social enterprise. Yunus, through then developing the concept of a “social business” has made an important step forward in acknowledging the multidimensional nature of enterprise and entrepreneurship. However, such a concept of a social business does not differentiate between all

relevant dimensions of society. In our work, we differentiate four different societal elements, which find their expressions in the respective sectors: Economic (Private Sector / Business Enterprise), Cultural (Civic Sector / Civic Enterprise, generally called Social Enterprise), Political (Public Sector / Public Enterprise) and Environmental (Environmental Sector / Animate Enterprise). While Yunus’ model groups all that is not economic under “social”, we see a need for further differentiation.

A new Enterprise–Framework: Towards multiple Sustainabilities

We shall now propose a framework for an enterprise, that simultaneously includes a private (economic), public (political), civic (cultural) and environmental (ecological) dimension. Such architecture and the underlying transformation processes that we have developed can serve as a framework for the new differentiation and integration of an enterprise, or, in the business case, for repositioning a business in society. It is based on our Four World model, which we have written about extensively. (10) In this case the framework is used to illustrate the four core sectors of each society: the private, public, civic and environmental sector, and how, on the level of a single organisation, these four core sectors are “internalised” in organisational dimensions or “sustainabilities” (see Figure 2).

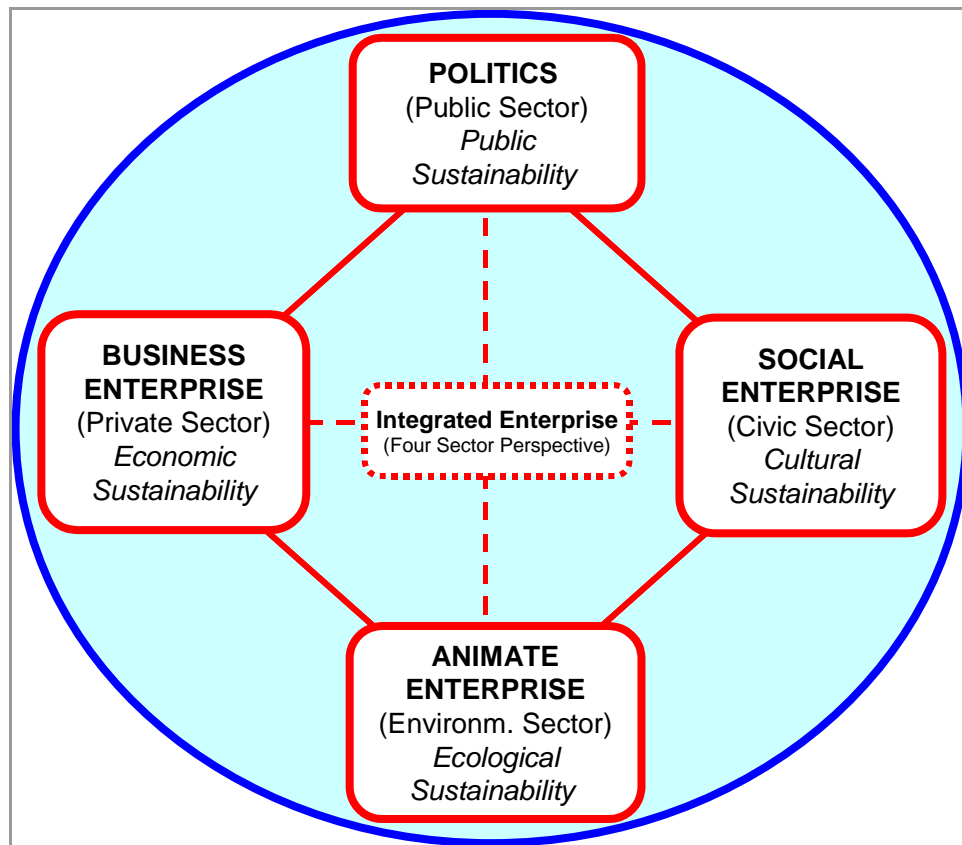


Figure 2: The Integrated Enterprise: A 4 Sector / 4 Dimensions (Sustainabilities) – Perspective

Private Enterprise is positioned in the West, as it has seen its strongest evolution in Western Societies and their pragmatism. The North is home to the public sector, providing political structure and the rationally based governing systems of a society. The East holds the Civic Sector, representing the cultural, spiritual, educational dimension of a society, while the South represents the sector closest to nature: the Environmental Sector. In this integrated perspective, nature or the environmental dimension is not subsumed in the civic sector, but takes its own equal place.

An integrated enterprise may and will have its core field of activity in one sector (e.g. a business enterprise in the private sector), but is equally linked to all other dimensions.

Transforming the enterprise towards such an integrated fourfold perspective ensures that activities in all four fields are not happening in isolation, but are building on each other. Doing so, the organisation increases its overall sustainability and resilience. It becomes a holistic social system, truly mirroring and engaging with the ecosystem it is embedded in: society.

4. Examples of Integrated Enterprises

We have come across a number of business enterprises that have managed to differentiate and integrate all four dimensions and through that have created outstanding organisations, which themselves had and have a strong impact on their respective societies. We present here two cases: Broad from China, and Sekem from Egypt.

Broad Air Conditioning in China: An Integrated Focus on Sustainability

Our first example, Broad Air Conditioning, is the world's largest and most technologically advanced absorption chiller manufacturer. Established in 1988, Broad is a privately owned company, with current assets of approx. USD 2.2 Billion and around 1.800 employees. Since years, Broad is among the financially most successful and socially most admired organisations in China. The company is a rare combination of conscious integration of achievements in business, culture, and ecology. With its products and its non-business activities, it is strongly dedicated towards sustainability and environmental protection and made this the common denominator for all its activities. Hence, the ecological, civic and public/political engagement of Broad within and beyond the company borders are all in direct relation with its business. We have extensively described the integrated perspective Broad has developed in an earlier research. (11) The following table provides a first overview on the organisation's activities on an organisational and societal level:

BROAD AIR CONDITIONING, CHINA		
Internal Organisational Perspective Mutually Reinforcing Activities in the four dimensions of an integrated enterprise	&	External Societal Perspective Mutually Reinforcing Activities in the four sectors of Chinese society (while partly reaching out to a global scale)
Environmentally friendly technology / The Company Terrain as a Green Campus / Engagement in Bioorganic Farming	Animate	Public Environment Museum / Hosting of UN Environmental Programme / Issuing of a Broad Environmental Proposal
Creation of a Learning Environment / Establishment of Broad Mgmt School	Civic	Integrating Global Architecture / Building on Global Art and Wisdom
Continuous Creation of Internal Knowledge (New Knowledge Cycle)	Public	Engagement for IPR Regulations and Execution in China / Commitment to bring new Knowledge to Society
Strong Commitment to be Market Leader (No.1) / However, no compromise to guiding principle: Environmental Protection	Private	Broad as strong proponent for Chinese and Global Industry of Environm. Friendly Technology / Publishing of "The World in 2015" (an integrated political, cultural, economic and environmental manifest)

Figure 3: Broad's internal and external activities in the four dimensions / sectors

Figure 4 illustrates the company's integrated focus, while still acknowledging the private sector as Broad's primary field of engagement.

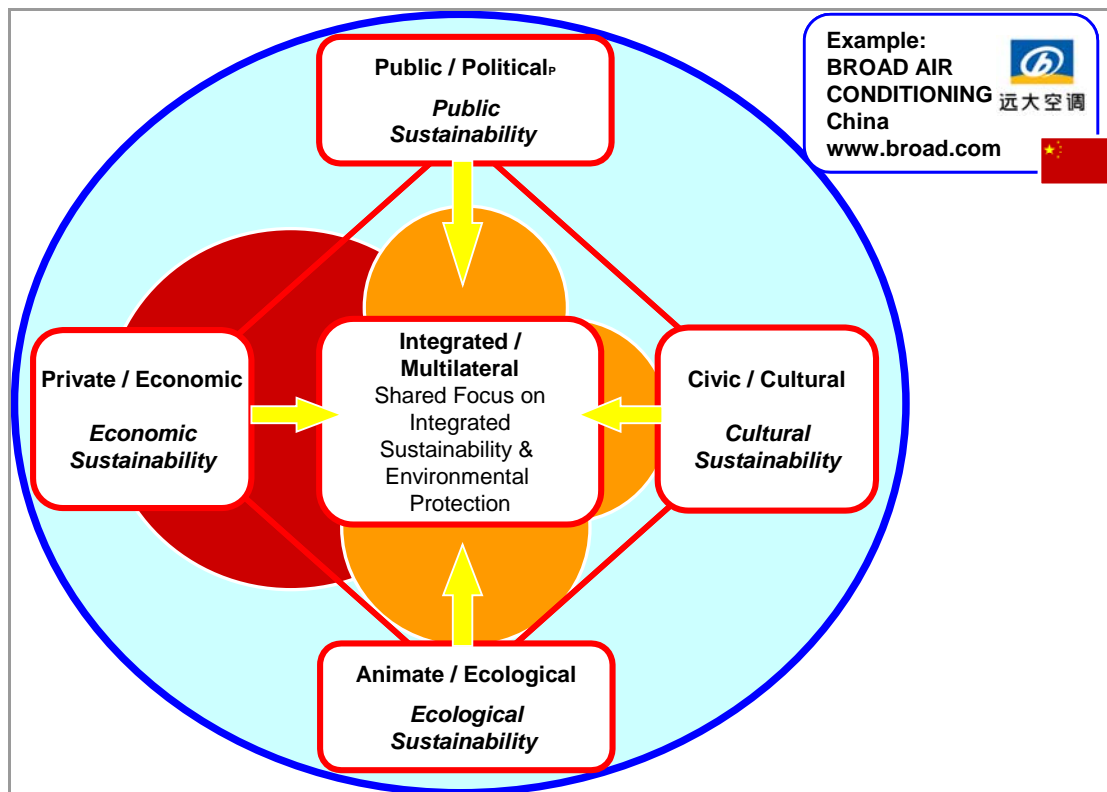


Figure 4: BROAD in China – Example for an Integrated Enterprise

Sekem in Egypt: The First Business that won the Alternative Nobel Prize

The second example we shall introduce is Sekem in Egypt. Sekem started in 1977 with biodynamic agriculture in the midst of the Egyptian dessert and has become a successful and diversified corporation with approximately 2000 employees. Sekem, whose ancient Egyptian name means “Vitality of the Sun”, is deeply rooted in Egyptian culture and tradition. Its founder Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish sees the organisation, which has received 2003 the Right Livelihood Award (also called the alternative Nobel Prize) not purely as an economic enterprise but – in a much-extended interpretation – as a kind of integrative community, which simultaneously seeks to combine economic, cultural, social, ecological and political aspects. Furthermore, as one of the few enterprises of the region engaged in intercultural communication between peoples it also takes on an active role in environmental protection. (12)

For Abouleish, “The secret of Sekem’s success is not to be found in the company’s agricultural activities only, but rather in its efforts to bring about integration of economic, social and cultural spheres of life in all aspects”. (13) From the very beginning Abouleish saw Sekem as a model for sustainable business and economics in Egypt and in the long-term also for the world. He claims that every enterprise has to play a significant role in the design of a sustainable economy and he is proving his case on multiple levels. On the one hand, Sekem has generated a true societal micro cosmos as it unites on its campus not only the relevant corporate institutions but also various cultural centres, a mosque, a hospital, a kindergarden, a school and a vocational school. However, Sekem does not rest on its (by now acknowledged) role as a case example: with the foundation of the Egyptian Society for Cultural Development as well as a national association of biodynamic farmers and now of its own university (Heliopolis University), Sekem is connecting its entrepreneurial-cultural striving with active societal engagement. In the final analysis, Sekem is an impressive example of how its activities in the various dimensions and sectors have simultaneously an internal effect (as dimensions of its own sustainability) as well as an external impact (as a means of engagement with society in large). Abouleish stresses how such activities mutually reinforce its other. This is illustrated in the following Figure 5:

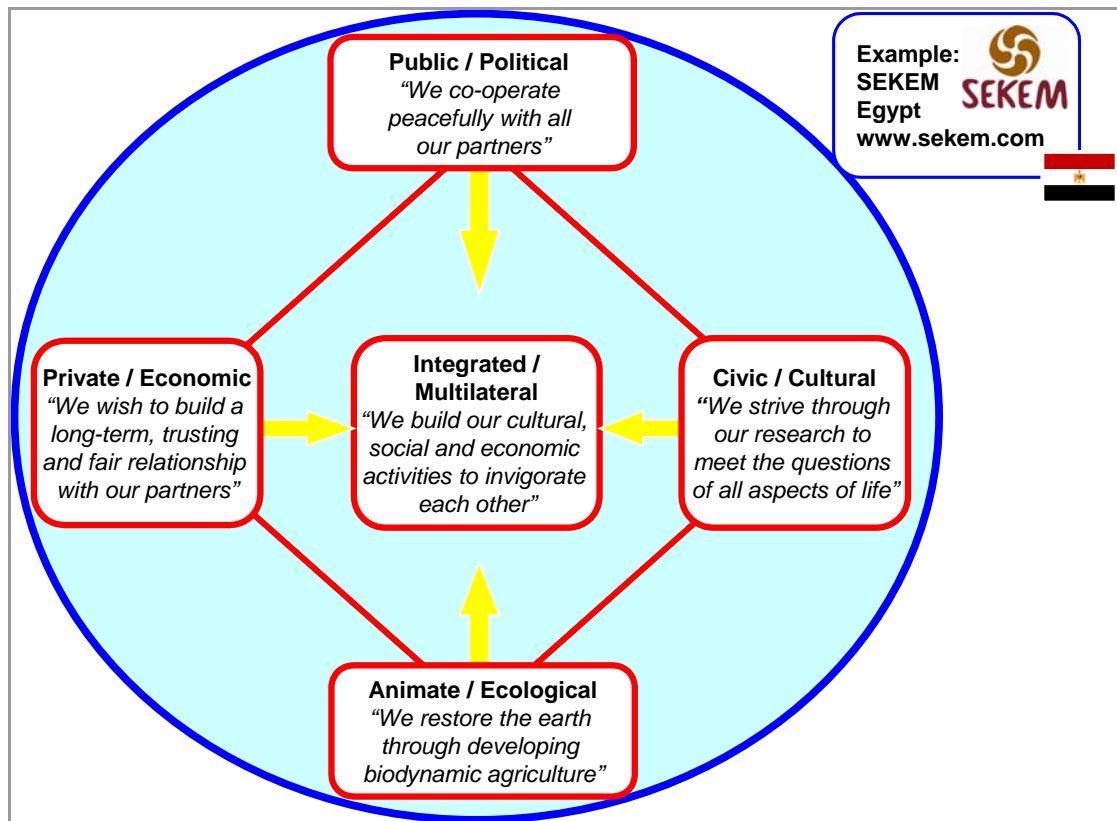


Figure 5: SEKEM in Egypt – Example of an Integrated Enterprise

5. Conclusion

We began this article by illustrating the changing face of entrepreneurship in society. The conventional notion of private entrepreneurship has been continuously expanded over the past 20 years, and business is increasingly resuming its (corporate) social responsibility in society. At the same time we witness other forms of entrepreneurship in society, addressing in various forms the core social issues, societies are facing today. The most notable and already clearly established new form is social entrepreneurship, but there are other forms of public and eco-entrepreneurship emerging.

We described this transition phase as fertile chaos, as, overall, it is encouraging us to see, how these different forms involve new ways of reframing entrepreneurship whereby organisations are embedded in and contribute more fully to society.

However, we argue, that these different forms of entrepreneurship need to be more clearly differentiated from, and subsequently integrated with, each other, notwithstanding increasing partnership across the sectors of society. Furthermore, these different expressions of entrepreneurship do not yet represent fundamentally new approaches towards entrepreneurship and enterprise, but still serve to reinforce existing forms.

In our research into newly emerging social and economic theories as well as case stories from all over the world, we have come to believe that a more “integrated” form of enterprise provides such a fundamental new orientation.

Such an “integrated enterprise” serves to bring together the public and the private, the civic and the animate (environmental). In the cases of Broad Air Conditioning in China and Sekem in Egypt, we tried to illustrate how these four constituencies of every society were internalised in the organisations and also expressed in external engagement with all four sectors of society. While each organisation remained its focus on one area (e.g. the private business on the economic dimension), such integrated organisations developed ways to integrate their activities in all four dimensions and sectors in a way, that they mutually reinforce each other. This is a big step beyond, for example, most notions of Corporate Social Responsibility, where the societal engagement of corporations in many case are not integrated with their economic activities. The (internal and external) integration of all four dimensions and sectors, does not only contribute to various forms of organisational sustainability, it also serves to more meaningful contributions of an organisation for the sustainability and resilience of society as a whole.

In other words, an integrated enterprise is better equipped to address the burning social and economic, cultural and environmental issues, organisations and societies are facing today.

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