



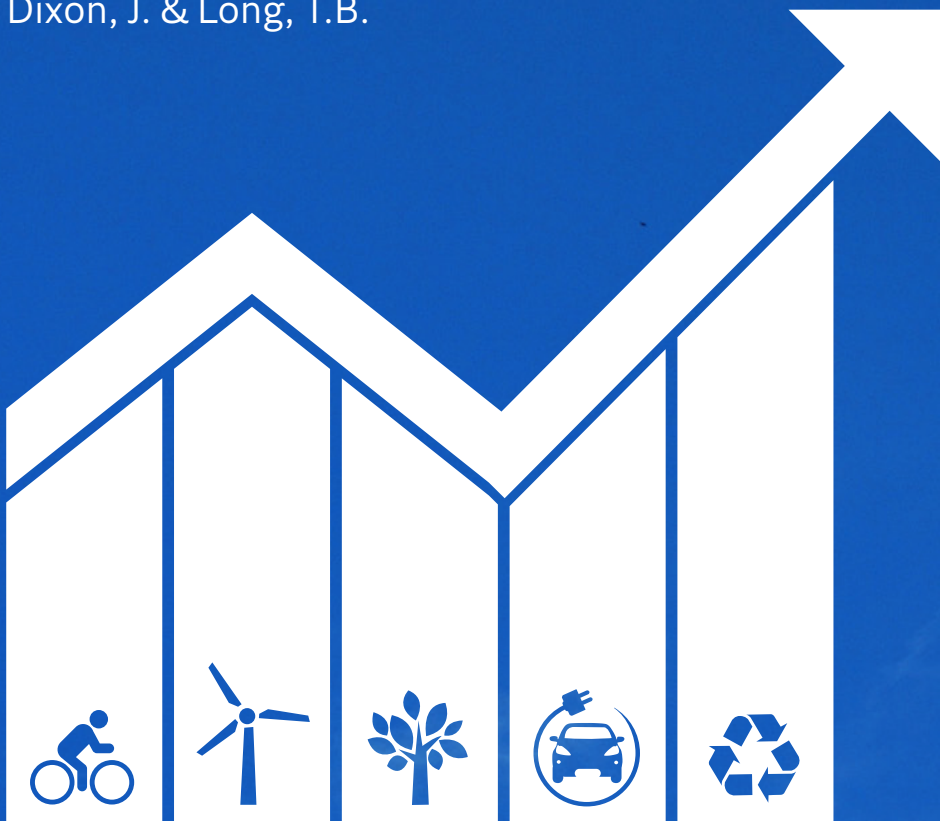
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Sustainable entrepreneurship and the management of social innovation: How to improve outcomes in response to a global pandemic?

Dixon, J. & Long, T.B.



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Sustainable entrepreneurship and the management of social innovation: How to improve outcomes in response to a global pandemic?

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Abstract

Communities across Europe have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 epidemic. Recent estimates suggest that unemployment and inequality are likely to increase across Europe, exacerbating existing societal challenges, such as climate action or health and wellbeing. Sustainable entrepreneurship is seen as a key provider of social innovations and takes on new importance in a post-Covid-19 context. Current approaches to sustainable entrepreneurship emphasise the creation of economic, social and environmental value, but are often framed in idealised and uncritical ways. The 'social' or 'environmental' is seen as neutral, while little research has effectively assessed sustainability outcomes. This is problematic, as the framing and definition of a problem, and how it is 'made sense of' has consequences. Solutions developed through a particular perspective can have unintended and negative consequences and outcomes. For example, failing to take account of inequality could negatively impact wider outcomes and exacerbate related sustainability challenges. As such, the 'social' or 'environmental' that is tackled through sustainable entrepreneurship and associated social innovation should be questioned. Additionally, there is recognition that there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of social innovation in creating a just society. There are critiques that it can reinforce the status quo or worse, potentially increase inequality, thus undermining the assumed social value and the solutions developed. All of this can negatively affect outcomes. There is additional demand to better understand the role and value of sustainable entrepreneurship in a post-covid-19 recovery, and where support is needed to mitigate risks and make the most of the opportunities. This raises the central question of our discussion: How can sustainable entrepreneurship and social innovation be reorientated, reinvigorated, and enhanced to better aid the post-covid-19 recovery?

Keywords: Sustainability, Heuristics, Ethnography, Identity, Hybridity, Strategy change