Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a field of considerable interest over the past two decades. However, its rapid growth has resulted in a rather fragmented body of literature that lacks a set of well-established theories by which to predict and explain social entrepreneurship and a generalizable set of empirical findings from which commonalities about it can be gleaned. In response, this special issue seeks manuscripts that build on extant research in the field and beyond in order to develop, apply, and/or test theory with the goal of improving our understanding of social entrepreneurship phenomena.

The following is a list of potential topics for the special issue:

- Application of extant theory from organization studies or other academic disciplines (i.e., economics, sociology, psychology, etc.) to predict and/or explain social entrepreneurship phenomena.
- Inductive or deductive approaches to developing new theoretical explanations of social entrepreneurship phenomena.
- Development of testable propositions articulating cause-and-effect relationships central to social entrepreneurship.
- Development of typologies/frameworks with which social entrepreneurship phenomena can be better understood.
- Exploratory or confirmatory empirical studies of theoretically-grounded models of social entrepreneurship phenomena.

These are just a sampling of the topics that could be addressed and submissions on other related topics are welcome. Regardless of the approach, submissions should seek to contribute to the collective understanding of social entrepreneurship via the production of new, generalizable knowledge. For submissions seeking to apply extant theory to new phenomena and/or develop new theoretical arguments all together, authors should take care to ensure their theoretical models represent conceptually sound, parsimonious approximations of phenomena relevant to social entrepreneurs (Bacharach, 1989).
For submissions seeking to conduct empirical tests of theory, authors may rely on either qualitative or quantitative data; however, given that the majority of the empirical work in the field currently relies on descriptive techniques, authors should take care to subject their data to rigorous analytical methods. In all cases, submissions will ultimately be evaluated on the basis of whether they contribute meaningfully and substantively to the development of our understanding of social entrepreneurship phenomena. At the same time, however, given the pre-paradigmatic nature of the field, theorizing as a process is as important as theory as a product; thus, submissions representing “interim struggles” (Weick, 1995) along the way to good theory are encouraged.

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