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Book Review

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In 2015, Ontario premier Kathleen Wynn's Liberal government set up the Social Enterprise Development Fund valued at four million dollars to support businesses with a social conscience (*Toronto Star*, 2015). Canada like many countries have made major cuts to subsidies to the social economy so this means organizations have to earn money to carry out activities in the communities, and failing to do so may mean they cannot continue. *Social Purpose Enterprises: Case Studies for Social Change* is a timely book as it discusses social enterprises which is a priority intervention in Canada's largest province of Ontario. The book examines a subset of social enterprises: non-profits which experiment with making money to fund their social mission.

Jack Quarter, Sherida Ryan and Andrea Chang are engaging researchers at the University of Toronto's Centre for Learning Social Economy and Work, a unique centre that brings together practitioners and academics in the non-profit field. Jack Quarter is a well-regarded researcher in the social economy in English-speaking Canada. The authors define a social purpose enterprise as an institution that "is intended to yield a return to society from this investment because employees are being prepared to function more fully and independently" (pp. 16-17). Social purpose enterprises are for-profit activities housed in a large non-profit organization. There are twelve case studies examining the impact social-purpose enterprises have had on the Canadians they employ—people on the margins with various disabilities or with disadvantages related to recent immigration or limited schooling who use these services. The objective of the research is to understand how social enterprises address needs, both economic and social of marginalized people in Canada's largest city Toronto.

The book does an excellent job at explaining the inner-workings of social-purpose institutions, and for teachers this work can be paired with critical literature on the social economy. The *A-Way Express case study* was fascinating as it showed the employees within a courier service can self-govern, make decent livelihoods and sustain a for-profit enterprise with state subsidies. As the authors correctly note, Toronto is a city where about fifty per cent of its residents are foreign-born (Statistics Canada 2007) and most live in low-income communities (Mensah 2010; Galabuzi 2006). The *Miziwe Biik case study*, describes an Aboriginal economic development organization based in Toronto that turns banking upside down to work for racialized Canadians. The *Alterna case study* is a credit union that is developing community-

based financial projects to target immigrant communities. The *Common Ground case study* showed in the Lemon & Allspice business that adults with learning disabilities can contribute to society by making baked goods that are in demand by paying customers.

Given these case studies think about social exclusion of groups of people, intersectionality should have been part of its conceptual framework because people's identities do affect the funding of social-purpose enterprises (Hossein 2016). This book revealed that only non-profits which are able to access grants can be in a position to pilot for-profit businesses within their institutions. This work made me reflect on the question: How do the constituents (disabled or racialized) respond to organizations whose senior managers are detached from the lived experience of the people they serve? The chapter on *Food Share's Good Food Market* program suggests that the work they do is also controversial because the staffing structure is mainly made up of white middle-class professionals. In the *Sistering case study*, it is a non-profit that provides studio space for immigrant women to sell their arts, but the case revealed tensions between staff and the racialized women who use the centre. In both cases, the fight for social change rings hollow if its social-purpose entity does not address diversity in staffing at the decision-making level (Galabuzi 2006).

This book reinforces the point that real-life case studies can liven up the work in the social economy, and students can learn a lot about the intricacies of a social enterprise organization. Why I think it is so important is that the authors exposed a tiered system occurring within the social economy where certain non-profit organizations can achieve financial viability and others cannot. In other words a push towards financial sustainability through social enterprises means that certain organizations with the 'right' networks can tap into resources to pilot fee-based services. And those organizations with no such funding are not in a position to engage in for-profit activities, and this leaves the work they lead in a precarious position.

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