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Adam Zadroga

**Catholic
Social Teaching
and Social
Entrepreneurship**



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Adam Zadroga

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Preface

The year 1989 is permanently etched in the minds of Poles and other inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe. It became an indication not only of a new stage in the life of a single nation and state but also the beginning of a new European Springtime of Nations, reshaping the continent. The sooner-than-expected collapse of the communist ideology and the economic system based on the principles of collectivism and central planning put the societies – hitherto enslaved by the ideology of communism – in a dilemma about which socio-political model should be applied in further development. Over forty years of ideological attempts and their deplorable outcomes discouraged further experimentation. Nevertheless, there was a common open attitude towards the reconstruction of the social system based on the one implemented in highly developed countries during the post-war period, which included a democratic form of political power, a free market economy and private property. Of course, this change was not immediate but took the shape of a long process with various meanders and threats throughout it. However, it led many nations into the path of democracy, a free market and building a civil society.

The social market economy model, successfully implemented first in Germany and then in other Western countries, seemed particularly attractive. The name itself contained an important distinguishing feature: *social* model – not only in terms of semantics but, above all, axiology. This social outline concerns not only factors in the *macro* dimension, such as the role of the state in economic life or the shape of social policy but also those related to specific forms of economic entities. In addition, this model determines some specific structural solutions for the economic system, integrating the economy's efficiency with justice, social peace and the subjectivity of free market participants.

The foundation of the social market economy is the concept of *ordo*, i. e. social order, which must be based on certain core values embedded in the entire system. The social market economy synthesises freedom, social justice, subjectivity, personal responsibility and solidarity. As Aniela Dylus notes, the *social* component is not a state-enforced external adjustment of the economy but its purpose.¹ It is also not some rigid doctrine set once and for all but rather a system open to changes, adjustments and amendments, requiring further research and study.

In this context, it is necessary to appreciate the extremely important and successful attempt to present a particular aspect of economic and social life from

1 Cf. Aniela Dylus, *Gospodarka. Moralność. Chrześcijaństwo* (Warszawa: Kontrast, Wydawnictwo Fundacji ATK, 1994), 14.

the Christian or, to be more precise, from the theological and moral perspective that Adam Zadroga undertook in this monograph. It concerns the axio-normative conditions of social entrepreneurship because it is precisely social entrepreneurship that seems to be a unique form of organising civil society based on business activity, in which the social and normative components are evident. It is worth emphasising at this point that the key competences of a social entrepreneur – like many other professions – include not only professional knowledge and extensive practical skills but also certain moral and social attitudes. This issue will be the subject of detailed analysis by the author later on. They ensure a responsible way of fulfilling individual professional duties, building relationships with stakeholders of the organisation and strengthening the internal purposefulness of the social economy system.

This publication is also an important voice in the discussion on the need for a dialogue between economics and ethics. Oswald von Nell-Breuning is certainly right to argue that morality is a scarce good and, like other scarce goods in nature, it should be used very sparingly and rarely.² However, the lack of correlations between economic rationality and moral order is characteristic only of the adherents of extreme economism, supporting the absolutisation of economic values.

The author of the publication – a professor of moral theology at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and, at the same time, a graduate of doctoral studies in economics at one of the most prestigious universities of economics in Poland, the SGH Warsaw School of Economics – seems uniquely qualified to undertake the issue of axio-normative conditions of social entrepreneurship, additionally confronted with the assumptions and principles of Catholic social teaching. In the Department of Social Moral Theology, he researches various aspects of the morality of economic life. This is clear, especially when one takes into account that the area of economy – like any other area of human social activity – is subject not only to its own laws but also requires an ethical component. As *homo ethicus*, a person cannot act outside morality. On the other hand, it should be emphasised that the moral reflection on economic reality within the framework of the social teaching of the Church and Catholic moral theology must be based on a thorough knowledge of economics as such. Only that which is rational at the same time and therefore corresponds to the nature of things is beyond ethical reproach.

Morality that becomes familiar with the laws of a given area of reality becomes moralism. This must be remembered by moralists, ethicists and social activists who, out of a sense of superiority, tend to set excessive ethical requirements in various areas of life too quickly or have fixed solutions for remedying them. The author is far from such an attitude. He presents himself not only as a competent

² As cited in: Aniela Dylus, "Polityka a moralność: typologia stanowisk," *Studia Theologica Varsaviensia* 29, no. 1 (1991): 63.

theologian, moralist, social ethicist and expert in Catholic social teaching in relation to social entrepreneurship but also as an insightful researcher of other aspects of this scientific discipline. At the same time, he considers entering the world of economy and business with an axio-normative component as both a necessity and a serious challenge (not devoid of methodological problems).

All of this makes the research results presented in the monograph far from cheap moralising, which is common among ethicists and theologians who, without in-depth knowledge of economic reality, make excessive and unrealistic demands regarding the practice of economic life. They believe that even economic laws must give way to the absoluteness of moral standards. The subordination of economic values to moral ones is usually demanded by people not involved in the economy.

It is also worth noting the topicality of the discussed subject, especially concerning the ongoing changes taking place in Poland and the world. In this case, emphasis is placed not only on the modernisation of the economy but also on the ethical dimension of economic changes; unfortunately, the latter is still not stressed enough. Prof. Zadroga's publication becomes an important contribution to the contemporary discussion about the necessary reforms from the point of view of the social teaching of the Church and the entire Christian morality. At the same time, it can be an excellent foundation for the formation of lay Catholics who would like to become more involved in economic activity.

At the centre of economic life stands the human being – realised not only in their fundamental personal dignity, exceptionality and uniqueness but also in the community dimension. The scientific reflections on the axio-normative conditions of social entrepreneurship presented in this publication serve to confirm that to understand the morality of economic and social life, a proper and integral concept of a human being is necessary, which means a reference to Christian anthropology. It is human beings who are the meeting point between economics and ethics. At the same time, all economic activity is focused on human beings because its intention is not only to increase wealth and create social well-being but, above all, to address the needs of human beings in such a way as to enable their integral development: both in the spiritual and bodily dimension, individually and socially, naturally and supernaturally. Christian morality, with its integral concept of human beings, upholds this understanding of development.

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Introduction

1. General Relevance of Research

Social entrepreneurship is a relatively young academic discipline. Research in that field addresses innovative solutions in relation to social issues, such as social exclusion, development of local communities or care for the natural environment. The practical dimension of social entrepreneurship is the skilful combination of economic and social goals, with the achievement of specific social effects being of primary importance. Social enterprises are a particular manifestation of this type of approach. These organisations are hybrid in nature – they have features of both non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and commercial enterprises. The individuals who establish and manage them are called social entrepreneurs.

In his encyclical *Centesimus annus*, John Paul II writes with appreciation about the good practices of social entrepreneurship, when he recalls the social reforms introduced in the hundred years since the publication of *Rerum novarum* by Leon XIII:

These same reforms were also partly the result of *an open process by which society organized itself* through the establishment of effective instruments of solidarity, which were capable of sustaining an economic growth more respectful of the values of the person. Here we should remember the numerous efforts to which Christians made a notable contribution in establishing producers', consumers' and credit cooperatives, in promoting general education and professional training, in experimenting with various forms of participation in the life of the work-place and in the life of society in general.¹

While appreciating the practical advantages of that form of activity, one should remember that every practice, even the best one, always requires a theoretical analysis.² Hence, the development of social entrepreneurship as a mechanism for solving social issues depends not only on formal and legal, financial or socio-political conditions but also on the appropriate theoretical foundations, including considering that reality in axionormative terms.³ Therefore, the studies addressing

1 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), no. 16.

2 Elizabeth Chell, "Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship," *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship* 25, no. 1 (February 2007): 5–26, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242607071779>.

3 Piotr Frączak and Jan Jakub Wygnański, eds., *Polski model ekonomii społecznej. Rekomendacje dla rozwoju. Zaproszenie do dyskusji* (Warszawa: Fundacja Inicjatyw Społeczno-Ekonomicznych, 2008), 15.

the axiological and normative (rather than purely pragmatic) aspects of social entrepreneurship are also important. The results achieved with such an approach can be used, for example, to develop an ethical code for social entrepreneurs and other detailed guidelines or recommendations for individuals operating in the social entrepreneurship sector.

2. Detailed Rationale for the Axionormative Analysis of Social Entrepreneurship

For the purpose of analysing the conduct of a social entrepreneur, a distinction can be made between the internal level of their actions (acts), which includes the mental, moral and spiritual dimensions, and the external level, which reflects the material (physical) effects of their actions.

The first level enables the description, interpretation and evaluation of the conduct of a social entrepreneur, e. g. from the perspective of moral values, norms and virtues, as well as spiritual and religious inspirations, which can also constitute the basis for the initiatives undertaken by that individual.

The second level relates to the specific organisational form given by an entrepreneur to their venture in order to be able to achieve the adopted goals; it also includes detailed initiatives, projects and tasks.

In practice, the two levels are closely linked. What is necessary is both an appropriate set of internal motivations to determine the direction and stimulate creative action in fulfilling the function of a social entrepreneur, as well as professionalism in organising material and personal resources so that they can be used to achieve economic and social goals in an efficient and effective way.

Taking the above insight into account, especially the indication of the first, intrinsic level, it should be noted that a deeper understanding of social entrepreneurship requires research also in the scope of normative and axiological analyses.

A review of the existing literature on the subject allows concluding that there is a *research gap* prompting axionormative analyses of social entrepreneurship in several areas. First, the concept of social entrepreneurship is rooted in values that are only intuitively “sensed” but not sufficiently clearly indicated and described in the academic literature. Second, social enterprises as specific organisations need to develop an appropriate concept of the moral dimension of their management. Third, there is no coherent proposal relating to the principles and virtues of the professional ethics of social entrepreneurs. Such a concept could certainly constitute

<https://www.fise.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Polski-model-ekonomii-spoecznej.pdf>. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), no. 8.

an axionormative point of reference for an ethical code for professional social entrepreneurs.

3. Study Objectives

The study focuses on the three identified areas of axionormative determinants of social entrepreneurship. After analysing these determinants, they will be subjected to a conceptual assessment from the point of view of Catholic social teaching.

The scant interest in the above-mentioned topic is probably due to the belief of many researchers that if an activity is social in nature, it also means that it is ethically correct. Thus, it is assumed *a priori* that every human action that pursues social goals is morally justified. This position is extended to the ideological and systemic (*macro*), organisational (*meso*) and individual (*micro*) levels of social entrepreneurship. Hence, it is assumed that (1) the idea of social entrepreneurship is based on a clearly defined axionormative system, (2) a social enterprise as an organisation should be managed in a morally appropriate manner, and (3) a social entrepreneur, due to the pro-social nature of the profession, should act ethically according to certain principles and be characterised by relevant moral virtues.

In that context, the problem of the lack of theoretical concepts that would describe the axiological and normative determinants of social entrepreneurship in the three indicated aspects is noticeable. Only a few articles on this topic have been published so far.⁴ There is no monograph on the subject.⁵ Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to enhance knowledge in that field and fill the publishing gap.

4 Adam Zadroga, "Ekonomia społeczna i nauczanie społeczne Kościoła. Wzajemne implikacje aksjologiczne," *Roczniki Teologiczne* 56, no. 3 (2009): 213–29. John F. McVea and Michael J. Naughton, "Enriching Social Entrepreneurship from the Perspective of Catholic Social Teaching," *Religions* 12, no. 3 (March 9, 2021): 173, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12030173>.

5 Therefore, the author, who has already published partial research results in the above-mentioned area in the form of articles in scientific journals, collects them in this project and presents them in a coherent form (in a new way) as a monograph. These are primarily: Adam Zadroga, "Etyka zawodowa przedsiębiorców społecznych w perspektywie chrześcijańskiej etyki personalistycznej," in *Humanistyczne i społeczne aspekty biznesu i zarządzania*, ed. Leszek Karczewski and Henryk A. Kretek (Opole: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Opolskiej, 2019), 97–104. Adam Zadroga, "Professional Ethics of Social Entrepreneurs: The Perspective of Christian Personalist Ethics," *Verbum Vitae* 39, no. 2 (2021): 495–513, <https://doi.org/10.31743/vv.11462>. Adam Zadroga, "Catholic Social Teaching as a Source of Enrichment of the Moral Dimension of Social Enterprise Management," *Verbum Vitae* 40, no. 4 (2022): 989–1006, <https://doi.org/10.31743/vv.14380>. Adam Zadroga, "Axionormative Determinants of Social Entrepreneurship in View of the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching," *The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II* 13, no. 1 (2023): 37–49, <https://doi.org/10.15633/pch.13103>.

Another noticeable issue is that the authors of the existing, albeit not very numerous, publications who undertake research in the indicated field eagerly refer to various approaches to normative ethics (e. g. Kantian ethics, utilitarian ethics, virtue ethics, discourse ethics, postmodern ethics, ethics of care, etc.) but almost completely ignore Catholic social teaching.⁶ Hence, another purpose of the dissertation is to explore the axionormative potential of Catholic social teaching in terms of: (1) identifying and describing the axionormative determinants of the idea of social entrepreneurship, (2) developing moral principles for the management of a social enterprise, and (3) preparing a concept of professional ethics for social entrepreneurs.

4. Detailed Rationale for the Theological and Moral Analysis of Social Entrepreneurship

What makes the research approach in this monograph unique is the fact that the analyses undertaken here are conducted from the point of view of the axionormative system of Catholic social teaching, which is primarily personalistic in nature. Although there is a long and rich tradition⁷ of conducting theological and moral scientific discourse in relation to all social issues, including economic issues, it seems that addressing social entrepreneurship from the perspective of Catholic social teaching requires more explanation and justification.

To start with, it should be emphasised that one of the goals of Catholic social teaching⁸ – as a theological, and specifically theological and moral discipline⁹ – is

6 Elizabeth Chell et al., “Social Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics: Does Social Equal Ethical?,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 133, no. 4 (November 20, 2014): 619–25, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2439-6>.

7 More in: Domènec Melé and Joan Fontrodona, “Christian Ethics and Spirituality in Leading Business Organizations: Editorial Introduction,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 145, no. 4 (November 1, 2017): 671–79, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3323-3>. Jerzy Gocko, *Ekonomia a moralność. Poszukiwania teologicznomoralne* (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1996).

8 At that point, it should be clarified that the *Social Doctrine of the Church* belongs to the deposit of faith and is subject to the official interpretation of the *Magisterium Ecclesiae*. Something slightly different, however, is *Catholic Social Teaching*, which is a scientific theoretical and practical reflection based on the official teaching of the Church on social matters, with the purpose of deepening and expanding it. More in: Władysław Piwowski, “Katolicka nauka społeczna,” in *Słownik katolickiej nauki społecznej*, ed. Władysław Piwowski (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1993), 76–77.

9 This position is adopted by John Paul II in the encyclicals: *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 41 and *Centesimus annus*, no. 55.

a dialogue with every field of human knowledge.¹⁰ John Paul II, in the encyclical *Centesimus annus*, stated that this task stems from the conviction that “the theological dimension is needed both for interpreting and solving present-day problems in human society.”¹¹ At the same time, the fundamental intention of that dialogue remains the desire to inspire and imbue social life with the values that result from the Gospel. In that sense, moral theology is an instrument of the evangelising mission of the Church.¹²

It should also be emphasised that human dignity is placed at the centre of the social teaching of the Church. Through this, the Church wants to make its contribution to “*the question of man’s place in nature and in human society*.”¹³ It is an expression of “solidarity, respect and affection for the whole human family.”¹⁴ The above is done by establishing a dialogue with humanity on fundamental problems,

[bringing] to mankind light kindled from the Gospel, and [putting] at its disposal those saving resources which the Church herself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, receives from her Founder. For the human person deserves to be preserved; human society deserves to be renewed.¹⁵

The fulfilment of that mission is expressed by, inter alia, encouraging other scientific disciplines to open up to the values and norms presented to them by Catholic social teaching, as well as “to a broader horizon, aimed at serving the individual person who is acknowledged and loved in the fullness of his or her vocation.”¹⁶ What the Church offers to all people can be defined as *an integral and solidary humanism*,¹⁷ as such humanism is in line with God’s design of love towards every human being and calling all people to unity as children of one Father.¹⁸ At the same time, this approach is accompanied by the conviction that the implementation of the assumptions of humanism understood in this way will make it possible to

10 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), no. 76–78.

11 John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 55.

12 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 62–68. More in: Jerzy Gocko, *Kościół obecny w świecie – posłany do świata. Teologiczno-społeczne aspekty posłannictwa Kościoła w świecie po Soborze Watykańskim II* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2003).

13 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 14.

14 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 18.

15 Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 3.

16 John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 59.

17 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 19.

18 Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* (21 November 1964), no. 1.

[create] a new social, economic and political order, founded on the dignity and freedom of every human person, to be brought about in peace, justice and solidarity. This humanism can become a reality if individual men and women and their communities are able to cultivate moral and social virtues in themselves and spread them in society. “Then, under the necessary help of divine grace, there will arise a generation of new men, the moulders of a new humanity”.¹⁹

On the other hand, the attitude of openness to interdisciplinary dialogue naturally also applies to Catholic social teaching. It can thus acquire competence, concreteness and topicality and, consequently, the Church

can gain a more precise understanding of man in society, speak to the men and women of her own day in a more convincing manner and more effectively fulfil her task of incarnating in the conscience and social responsibility of our time.²⁰

One of the areas of human knowledge in which the Church has become more interested in recent decades is social sciences. As John Paul II stated,

research in the field of social sciences can effectively contribute to the improvement of relations between people ... That is why the Church, constantly concerned for the true good of a man, becomes more and more interested in that field of scientific research and wants to draw from its specific guidelines to fulfil its mission of teaching based on them.²¹

The key premise of the Church’s openness to social sciences is the conviction that if the truth about a man and the surrounding world is sought, no area of knowledge can be excluded from that process. Thus, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace states that

the Church recognises and receives everything that contributes to the understanding of man in the ever broader, more fluid and more complex network of his social relationships. She is aware of the fact that a profound understanding of man does not come from theology alone...²²

19 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 19. Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 30.

20 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 78.

21 John Paul II, *Motu Proprio Socialium scientiarum* (1 January 1994). Translated by the author.

22 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 78.

In that context, one should also keep in mind the observations by Ireneusz Mroczkowski:

The most important methodological task in the creation of ... moral theology remains the critical dialogue between faith and practical understanding of ethics, taking into account the effectiveness of God's grace as well as the biological, psychological and social conditions of activities of a contemporary man. However, the most difficult methodological task is the defence against the reductionist approach to a man by modern human sciences, which are as suspicious of biblical moral truth as they are of the ability of ethics to develop objective values that would defend the value of a man.²³

Hence, it is worth reaching for Catholic social teaching, which provides valuable principles of reflection, criteria for evaluation and guidelines for action.

In view of the presented scope of competence of Catholic social teaching, it is also necessary to point out the legitimacy of undertaking theological and moral analyses of entrepreneurship. The starting point is that entrepreneurship can be read in the light of Revelation as the vocation of every human being.²⁴ The source of that truth is the act of creation. Through that act, a man was endowed with the ability to love, free will and reason (and thus creativity as an aspect of rationality). Thus, it was God who made a man enterprising. Therefore, it can be stated that a man is entrepreneurial by nature. This is the main source of the theological and moral rationale for entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship.²⁵

5. Research Methodology

The research undertaken as part of this study is primarily conceptual and will be conducted based on the methodology characteristic of moral theology, particularly Catholic social teaching. Accordingly, the study uses the method of content analysis of academic literature on social entrepreneurship, economics, organisational and management theory, business ethics, Catholic social teaching and moral theology

23 Ireneusz Mroczkowski, *Chrześcijańska tożsamość osoby. Zarys antropologii moralnoteologicznej* (Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2016), 5–6. Translated by the author.

24 Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, "Vocation of the Business Leader," November 2014, https://www.humandevlopment.va/content/dam/svilupppoumano/pubblicazioni-documenti/archivio/economia-e-finanza/vocation-of-business-leader/Vocation_ENGLISH_4th%20edition.pdf.

25 More in: Anthony Percy, *Entrepreneurship in the Catholic Tradition (Studies in Ethics and Economics)* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010). Michael Novak, *Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

to develop the ethical concepts identified in the research objectives. Considering that the main research task is to formulate and justify the norms of economic ethics in the context of a specific form of business activity, i. e. social entrepreneurship, it will also be necessary to use the comparative method.

Firstly, the methodical analysis of the content of selected publications in the field of social entrepreneurship will allow to discover: (1) constitutive values of social entrepreneurship (*macro level*), (2) characteristic principles of social enterprise operation (*meso level*), and (3) the specificity of the social entrepreneur profession (*micro level*).

Secondly, the analysis of literature in the field of business ethics will make it possible to explore the axiological and moral issues concerning the three levels of research indicated above.

Combining and comparing the results of those two stages of analysis, thanks to the author's conceptual work, will allow for the implementation of detailed research tasks related to the axiological and normative conditions of social entrepreneurship.

The research will use the text analysis method, applying it to the collected literature. In order to obtain answers to the detailed research problems, the comparative method will also be necessary to show the axiological links between Catholic social teaching and the values that determine the effective implementation of the idea of social entrepreneurship. The descriptive method will be necessary to characterise the key concepts related to the subject matter of the study. Meanwhile, the method of synthesis will be essential in drawing important conclusions and developing the concepts of morally responsible social enterprise management and professional ethics for social entrepreneurs. The following categories of research material will be used at the analysis stage: literature necessary to characterise social entrepreneurship, theological sources (the Bible, patristic literature, documents of the Ecclesiastical Magisterium), theological studies, and auxiliary literature.

The results of the content analysis of the methodically selected literature will be subjected to conceptual assessment to develop a design of professional ethics for social entrepreneurs in an original way – that is, from the point of view of Catholic social teaching. The concept of the moral dimension of social enterprise management will be developed in a similar way. In turn, the meta-theoretical reflection on the axiological conditions of social entrepreneurship will make it possible to define and describe in detail the constitutive values of this idea.

6. Specific Study Objectives

In light of the above, the selection of publications (research material) for analysis was made according to the criterion of substantive relevance for the implementation of the following research tasks (in the following order):

1) Discussion of the concept of social entrepreneurship as the subject matter of the research and description of the phenomenon (nature) of social entrepreneurship.

2) Characterisation of the axionormative criteria drawn from Catholic social teaching. Demonstration of the nature and importance of the principles of Catholic social teaching and fundamental values, especially in the process of creating a moral conception of broadly-understood socio-economic order, including the axionormative foundations of social entrepreneurship.

3) At the *macro level* (ideological, systemic) – identification, definition and description of the axionormative conditions of social entrepreneurship. This research stage will focus on exploring the axionormative background of social entrepreneurship; therefore, it will be necessary to refer to the literature on economics, economic philosophy, axiology and Catholic social teaching.

4) At the *meso level* (organisational, managerial) – development of a concept of ethical principles in the social enterprise management process. This stage of the research will concern the moral dimension of the functioning of a social enterprise. The investigation and analysis in this area will cover the literature in the field of management sciences, particularly relevant publications on the specificity of managing a social enterprise.

5) At the *micro level* (individual, professional) – development of a concept of professional ethics for a social entrepreneur. At this stage of the research process, the author will focus on the analysis of the individual dimension of social entrepreneurship, i. e. on the normative determinants of the conduct of a social entrepreneur. At this point, it will be necessary to perform a scientific query focused on the characteristics and competence of a social entrepreneur, as well as to consider the issue of professional ethics in general and the question of what moral virtues and codes of ethics are in that context. The publications in the field of social entrepreneurship, business ethics, business psychology, moral theology and Catholic social teaching will be useful here.

It should be emphasised that the logic of the above-mentioned stages of the research procedure corresponds to the methodological assumptions characteristic of Catholic social teaching.

Finally, the collected research material will be analysed in terms of specific research objectives, and then, it will be organised based on the principles of logical and coherent outcome. Ultimately, this will allow the author to develop a compact synthesis presenting the achieved theoretical results in the form of a monograph.

7. Description of the Monograph Content Layout

The stages of the research procedure described above had a direct impact on the layout (structure) of the content of the monograph. The study consists of five chapters, which are separate thematic sections. At the end of each chapter, the most relevant conclusions are presented as the results of the conducted analysis and discussion.

The first chapter is meta-scientific research on the identity of social entrepreneurship. Firstly, a discussion on the definitions is conducted. Next, social entrepreneurship as a field of practice and policy is described. Then, the main lines of research on social entrepreneurship are discussed. Finally, theoretical contexts as possibilities for further research are presented, and the most important academic schools of thought on social entrepreneurship are discussed.

The second chapter presents an overview of the fundamental axionormative assumptions of Catholic social teaching. The nature and relevance of the principles of Catholic social teaching and core values are analysed and discussed here. Those principles and values, as universal axionormative criteria, can be used to make a significant contribution to the creation of a moral concept of the broadly-understood socio-economic order. Thus, they can also be the point of reference for axionormative research in the field of social entrepreneurship.

The subsequent chapters contain a detailed discussion on the possibility of using the axionormative potential of Catholic social teaching to describe the key values and principles constituting social entrepreneurship (the third chapter), as well as to develop the concept of the moral dimension of social enterprise management (the fourth chapter) and the professional ethics of social entrepreneurs (the fifth chapter).

I. Social Entrepreneurship as a Phenomenon and Research Field – a Brief Overview

In the modern day, in an era of rapid and multidimensional civilisational change, challenges are emerging that require new theoretical concepts and practical solutions. This includes the need for innovative approaches to the economy, politics and all social issues.

One of the concepts for fostering social and economic development is to disseminate the idea of social entrepreneurship. This idea, although it has its historical foundations, has received renewed interest from academics, practitioners, governments and the public in the last few decades.

In recent years, there have been many initiatives, both on a practical and academic level, to analyse and understand “social entrepreneurship” and “social enterprises”.¹ Even if these initiatives partly refer to different practices or theoretical concepts, they are all – essentially – about community engagement combined with entrepreneurial action.² In this way, social entrepreneurship as a distinct field has expanded the concept of entrepreneurship by including (and in some cases emphasising) the “social dimension” of entrepreneurial ventures.³ In practice, this means first and foremost pursuing a social mission and generating social value through commercial means.

It is currently difficult to make holistic judgements about social entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, in this initial chapter – before jumping into a detailed discussion on its axionormative determinants – it is worth to present a brief overview of social

1 An excellent text on this subject was written by Marzena Starnawska and Agnieszka Brzozowska, “Editorial Paper. Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Phenomenon: Antecedents, Processes, Impact across Cultures and Contexts,” *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation* 14, no. 2 (2018): 3–18, <https://doi.org/10.7341/20181421>. Mirvis has recently published a valuable article on the debate on the definition of social entrepreneurship: Jonathan Mirvis, “The Diverse Definitions of Social Entrepreneurship: The Underlying Issues,” *International Journal of Science, Engineering and Management* 9, no. 10 (October 18, 2022): 45–54, <https://doi.org/10.36647/ijsem/09.10.a011>. Much valuable insight into the essential aspects of social entrepreneurship is provided by Anders Lundström and Chunyan Zhou, “Introduction,” in *Social Entrepreneurship. Leveraging Economic, Political, and Cultural Dimensions*, ed. Anders Lundström et al., vol. 29 (Cham: Springer, 2013), 3–22. I have drawn extensively on all the three publications to prepare this chapter.

2 Malin Gawell, “Soci(et)al Entrepreneurship and Different Forms of Social Enterprise,” in *Social Entrepreneurship. Leveraging Economic, Political, and Cultural Dimensions*, ed. Anders Lundström, Chunyan Zhou, and Yvonne Von Friedrichs, vol. 29 (Cham: Springer, 2013), 24.

3 Lundström and Zhou, “Introduction,” 4.

entrepreneurship as an area of practice and research. However, it is important to start with the discussion surrounding the definition of social entrepreneurship.

1. Definition of Social Entrepreneurship

Guo and Bielefeld point out that the term social entrepreneurship was first used in the literature as early as the 1960s,⁴ but it was not until the 1980s that the term began to be widely used, thanks to Bill Drayton⁵ (a founder of Ashoka⁶ and pioneer in the field of social entrepreneurship).⁷ The term is now widely used in public discourses and has found interest among policymakers, corporations, the media and various groups of practitioners and specialists.⁸

Despite the undeniable increase in attention to social entrepreneurship over the past few decades, researchers have yet to reach a consensus on the definition of this concept. For example, the terms “social entrepreneurship” and “social enterprise” are sometimes used interchangeably, giving rise to confusion.⁹

Research into the literature has confirmed that there is a variety of definitions of social entrepreneurship.¹⁰

Mair, Robinson and Hockertshighlight the diversity of definitions among all fifteen authors of the book on social entrepreneurship edited by them.¹¹ Similarly,

4 Meanwhile, Mirvis notes (see: “The Diverse Definitions of Social Entrepreneurship: The Underlying Issues,” 46) that the term social entrepreneurship was “coined” in 1972 by British sociologist Joseph Banks – see: Joseph Ambrose Banks, *The Sociology of Social Movements* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1972) and also Peter F. Drucker, *The Practice of Management* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1975).

5 “Innowator społeczny o swojej ciągłej ciekawości,” accessed February 27, 2023, <https://www.ashoka.org/pl-pl/story/innowator-spo%C5%82eczny-o-swojej-ci%C4%85g%C5%82ej-ciekawo%C5%9Bci>.

6 “Ashoka,” Ashoka | Everyone a Changemaker, accessed February 27, 2023, <https://www.ashoka.org/en-nl>.

7 Chao Guo and Wolfgang Bielefeld, *Social Entrepreneurship: An Evidence-Based Approach to Creating Social Value (Bryson Series in Public and Nonprofit Management)* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Brand, 2014), 3.

8 Starnawska and Brzozowska, “Editorial Paper. Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Phenomenon: Antecedents, Processes, Impact across Cultures and Contexts,” 3.

9 Guo and Bielefeld, *Social Entrepreneurship: An Evidence-Based Approach to Creating Social Value*, 3.

10 Mirvis, “The Diverse Definitions of Social Entrepreneurship: The Underlying Issues,” 45–54. Jacques Defourny and Marthe Nyssens, “Conceptions of Social Enterprise and Social Entrepreneurship in Europe and the United States: Convergences and Divergences,” *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship* 1, no. 1 (March 2010): 32–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19420670903442053>.

11 Johanna Mair, Jeffrey Robinson, and Kai Hockerts, *Social Entrepreneurship* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

Dacin, Dacin and Matear list as many as 37 definitions, which confirms the lack of agreement.¹²

According to Mirvis, this lack of consensus in definitions arises from the fact that, as a new field that requires a multidisciplinary approach, it has attracted researchers from many fields. This has led individual scholars to undertake research from the perspective of their primary disciplines.¹³

Lundström and Zhou argue that the proposals made so far have placed considerable emphasis on understanding the nature and limits of social entrepreneurship while attempting to distinguish it from commercial entrepreneurship.¹⁴

Trivedi, on the other hand, notes that efforts to define the concept have conceptualised it in terms of the characteristics of the social entrepreneur, the processes of social entrepreneurship, and the outcomes that social entrepreneurship generates: from purely social to socio-economic ones.¹⁵

Guo and Bielefeld state that,

the wide variety of existing definitions can be roughly categorised as broad and narrow. A narrow definition of social entrepreneurship refers mainly to earned-income strategies for non-profit organisations, or what Dees and Anderson call the “social enterprise” school of thought. (...) A broad definition of social entrepreneurship tends to include all types of innovation, social-value-creating activities that occur within or across sectors, or what Dees and Anderson call the “social innovation” school of thought, which sees social entrepreneurs as people who attempt to solve societal problems and meet its needs in a novel way.¹⁶

Mirvis provides a valuable analysis of the different approaches to defining social entrepreneurship.¹⁷ First, he argues that it is worth noting that the purpose of

12 Peter A. Dacin, M. Tina Dacin, and Margaret Matear, “Social Entrepreneurship: Why We Don’t Need a New Theory and How We Move Forward from Here,” *Academy of Management Perspectives* 24, no. 3 (August 1, 2010): 37–57, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2010.52842950>.

13 Mirvis, “The Diverse Definitions of Social Entrepreneurship: The Underlying Issues.”

14 Lundström and Zhou, “Introduction,” 7.

15 Chitvan Trivedi, “Towards a Social Ecological Framework for Social Entrepreneurship,” *The Journal of Entrepreneurship* 19, no. 1 (January 2010): 63–80, <https://doi.org/10.1177/097135570901900104>.

16 Guo and Bielefeld, *Social Entrepreneurship: An Evidence-Based Approach to Creating Social Value (Bryson Series in Public and Nonprofit Management)*, 3,6–7. See also: James Gregory Dees and Beth Battle Anderson, “Framing a Theory of Social Entrepreneurship: Building on Two Schools of Practice and Thought,” in *Research on Social Entrepreneurship: Understanding and Contributing to an Emerging Field*, vol. 1(3) (Indianapolis: Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), 2006), 39–66, https://centers.fuqua.duke.edu/case/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2015/02/BookChapter_Deas_FramingTheoryofSE_2006.pdf.

17 Mirvis, “The Diverse Definitions of Social Entrepreneurship: The Underlying Issues,” 47.