



Radical Social Entrepreneurs: An Introduction to Strong's Law

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Entrepreneurs take initiative to create new enterprises. Social entrepreneurs do so with the well-being of humanity in mind. Radicals go to the root causes of problems.

Radical Social Entrepreneurs (RSE) are those who take entrepreneurial initiatives to go to the root of the problem to improve the human condition for all.

Because existing nation-state governance is ultimately the most challenging obstacle to solving our most critical problems, going to the roots of these problems involves addressing the challenges with existing nation-state governance through entrepreneurial initiative.

Because cultural differences are largely responsible for most differences in outcomes other than those due to governance, going to the root of these problems involves allowing for endlessly developing and growing better subcultures through entrepreneurial initiative.

Right now there are institutional obstacles to improving governance and culture through entrepreneurial initiative. If we want to accelerate the rate at which we improve the human condition for all, we need to remove these institutional obstacles.

Because most people take existing governments and their associated policy frameworks for granted, it is worth pausing to consider a world in which every aspect of law and governance is designed to appeal more effectively to prospective residents of that jurisdiction - and subject to a process of continual improvement in order to make it even higher quality, lower cost, and designed to appeal to particular tastes and preferences.

Consider Strong's Law:

Ceteris paribus, properly structured free enterprise always results over time in higher quality, lower cost, and more customized products and services.

Strong's Corollary:

This theorem applies just as forcefully to the entrepreneurial supply of law, governance, community, housing, education, health care, happiness, and well being as it does to technology. Our world suffers because we have not allowed entrepreneurial initiative to fully address the most important issues facing humanity.

Just as cheap t-shirts and cell phones are now ubiquitous, even among the global poor, if we allow for the entrepreneurial creation of more important human needs we will see the global poor rapidly having access to high quality, low cost, and more customized law, governance, community, housing, education, health care, happiness, and well being.

The prevailing mental model is that while endless technological innovation is possible, the process of endless improvement does not apply to human systems. This belief is incorrect. If we are able to create a framework within which we can allow for the right balance of experimentation, feedback, and re-investment in better alternatives, then we will see the same endless system of refinement in human systems that we have seen in technological systems.

I. Endless Innovation in Law and Governance

At the most basic level, most people would acknowledge some benefits from the development of innovations of rule of law, constitutional governance, democratic governance, and human rights. Each of these are elements of law and governance that have not always existed nor are they ubiquitous today. Over the course of many centuries they have evolved to their present, highly imperfect, state.

More recently, thinkers have begun focusing on ways to accelerate the evolution of improved law and governance. The economist Deirdre McCloskey describes this process as one of "market-tested betterment," though one could just as well describe it as "human-approved betterment." That is, just as products tend to win in a marketplace when they satisfy the

tastes and preferences of consumers, so too a world in which market-tested betterment in law and governance would win insofar as it provided citizens with bundles of rights-protection and provision of public services that were more desirable.

Right now hundreds of millions of people immigrate across international borders annually, despite severe restrictions on who is allowed to do so. Moreover, the international community restricts recognition of new jurisdictions and existing nation states rarely allow for new jurisdictions within their territories. Thus we have not created an ecosystem within which new jurisdictions can come into existence and, for the best ones, to thrive. In order to accelerate the creation of new experiments in law and governance, we need to allow for a dramatically increased rate of increase in new jurisdictions. Thus Radical Social Entrepreneurs are interested in supporting Startup Societies, LEAP Zones, Startup Cities, Charter Cities, Polycentric Law, and various other formulations of similar and related concepts.

II. Endless Innovation in Culture

The prospect of endless entrepreneurial innovations in culture for the sake of human betterment is even more esoteric than is the prospect of endless innovations in law and governance. The following excerpt, from Michael Strong, "The Creation of Conscious Culture through Educational Innovation," is the best short introduction to this process:

Government control of education—through public schools or through regulation of charter or private schools—amounts to granting control over the young human beings to all those who produce short-term stimulations. Either real human beings, with distinctive intentions and ways of life, are allowed to create cultures with integrity—by means of direct human control over education—or bureaucratic rules prevent the formation of appetites in the young, and marketers of all sorts thereby prey on them. This is the situation that we find ourselves in today. Educational freedom, rather than government control, is the sine qua non for the creation of happiness and well-being for all.

This argument may be summarized by means of 20 propositions on education and wellness:

1. Culture, habits, and attitudes are the most important prerequisites to education.
2. Historically, traditional cultures have varied widely; human variability due to culture is extraordinary. That variability is currently being lost through the force of those technology-based monocultures that are sweeping the world.
3. Over the course of 13 years of formal education, the average high school graduate is exposed to 14,000 hours of K–12 schooling. It is possible to have a considerable impact on the habits, attitudes, ideals, aesthetics, aspirations, and culture of the students over

that time if that were to become the primary focus of educational institutions.

4. Habituation in new cultural norms may be successfully cultivated in the young only when they are educated by adults who consistently, moment-by-moment, support and enforce the new forms of habituation and personally exemplify the new virtues. In order to do this, the adults themselves must exhibit a consistent form of habituation. New cultures cannot be created by innovations in textbooks or software.
5. Except for those few educational approaches that have distinctive teacher training programs (Montessori, Waldorf, and some religious school systems) combined with schools that actively support those pedagogies, existing teacher training does not even begin to ensure consistent habituation. The most consistent habituation faced by K–12 students in government schools today is habituation in passivity and dependence.
6. Cumulatively, deliberately inculcated habits and attitudes may provide a foundation for new cultures. The Jesuits deliberately created a more disciplined and intellectual European culture out of the chaos of medieval education. The Buddhists developed the capacity of individuals to engage in extraordinary feats of serenity, in the most extreme cases being calm in the face of immolation.
7. The existing government-controlled education system acts as a monopolistic standard with a marketshare far greater than that held by Microsoft's Windows standard. Unlike the Microsoft dominant standard, the government schooling standard is enforced legislatively and financed coercively.
8. Only when this dominant standard collapses will great educational innovations begin to be launched.
9. Freedom has been necessary for innovation in the world of ideas, the world of technology, and the world of entrepreneurship. If Galileo had been more effectively censored, Newton and modern physics might not exist. If government had regulated the invention of electrical devices in the nineteenth century, Thomas Edison's "invention of invention" would never have come into being. If tech entrepreneurs had needed government licenses to do their work, Silicon Valley, the microcomputer, and the Internet would be a pale ghost of their current selves, if they existed at all. Likewise, educational freedom will be necessary for educational innovation.
10. Only visionary organizations, designed and built with a commitment to a distinctive vision, can consistently create distinctive cultures that are powerful enough to compete with the teen culture defined by the media. A distinctive, long-term vision can only be implemented voluntarily. Visionary leaders must be able to hire, fire, and promote faculty based strictly on their own perception of quality. All metrics must be defined internally by the mission-driven organization.
11. Markets will supply those goods desired by consumers.

12. Parents want their children to be healthy, well, productive, and happy.
13. In a free educational market there will be a demand for schools that can supply a healthier culture.
14. Innovative educators employed by private, visionary organizations will gradually develop increasingly healthier and more positive versions of teen culture.
15. Peer culture is a more powerful influence on teens than are parents. Currently teen culture is the biggest obstacle to parental ability to raise their children well. Conversely, a positive teen culture could compensate for many of the weaknesses of poor parenting. Judith Rich Harris' *The Nurture Assumption* abundantly documents the extent to which peer culture trumps parenting.
16. Culture by its very nature produces "neighborhood effects," or externalities; once we have created more sources of positive teen culture it will spread to those who don't originally pay for it or even choose it.
17. Many of us develop critical habits as teens; a healthier teen culture will result in a healthier adult culture. Indeed, behavioral health issues including substance abuse and mental illness in adults, already the largest cause of disability globally, are both adolescent onset. Their incidence and severity is exacerbated through stressful, hostile, disconnected, and meaningless schooling experiences. If we reduce the incidence of these diseases of modernity during adolescents, we reduce their incidence in adults.
18. "Healthier" may be construed widely; the foregoing analysis applies to any positive cultural characteristic.
19. Cumulatively, the long-term effects of an innovative, competitive market for adolescent well-being may produce cultural consequences as profound as, or more profound than, the long-term effects of technological innovation.
20. Cumulatively then, just as technological innovation has had a dramatic impact on the economic standard of well-being, so too, cultural innovation will have a dramatic positive impact on our social, emotional, and moral standard of well-being. It has been said that the greatest invention of the nineteenth century was the invention of the invention. While there had certainly been inventions prior to the nineteenth century, only gradually did tinkerers and experimentalists begin to become conscious and deliberate about the act of invention. A magnificent turning point was Thomas Edison's creation of a laboratory specifically for the sake of creating inventions.

The worlds of martial arts and eastern spiritual practices contain innumerable lineages, each with a revered founder. The founders of new branches of lineages are rarely described using the rhetoric of innovation, yet that is precisely what they are. They are individuals who have achieved a new advance on a particular discipline or practice, resulting in new techniques

that are then passed on to subsequent practitioners of the lineage. Similarly, the founders of monastic orders, such as St. Francis or St. Benedict, are not usually perceived as cultural innovators, despite the fact that they launched new cultural institutions that have survived for centuries.

In western education, individual educators are recognized as leaving a legacy from time to time. Thomas Arnold is renowned for creating a distinctive culture at Rugby School in England in the nineteenth century. Maria Montessori is well known for founding Montessori education, as is Rudolf Steiner for founding Waldorf education. Older alumni to this day feel a powerful attachment to the Hutchins' College, the program at the University of Chicago during the tenure of Robert M. Hutchins as college president, 1930–1950. As with the saints, gurus, and martial artists, with the exceptions of Montessori and Steiner these educators are not usually conceptualized as innovators.

The haphazard cultural inventions that have taken place hitherto, in eastern and western cultures, are analogous to the occasional inventions that characterized western society prior to the nineteenth century. By means of radical school choice combined with a conscious recognition of the power and importance of creating new school cultures, the greatest invention of the twenty-first century may be the invention of new cultural models that continually allow human beings to adapt ever more effectively to a world of ongoing creative destruction while allowing for ever deeper levels of happiness and well-being for people of all races, cultures, classes, and abilities.

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Stephen J Blackwood Brilliant and profound; wonderful, rare perspicacity. Thank you.
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 Michael Strong replied · 4 Replies

Christine von Lersner Great essay. Courageous, ambitious and inspiring! (I love how this dovetails with the E. coli piece.) How do we hasten the collapse of the dominant educational standard? (How do aspiring innovators get out from under crippling regulations?)

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Scott Harris Too many schools are accepting of any and all parts of a culture from which a student comes, instead of really selling them, their parents and the community on the SCHOOL CULTURE. An excellent school culture can overcome darned near anything.
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I think I see a couple of typos? I added the word have to this paragraph below. If that's not what you meant to say I will correct it.... [See More](#)
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