Welcome to the third issue of Social Enterprise Journal this year, and my first as editor. It is a great honor to take over from Bob Doherty who I have worked closely with over the past eight years. The journal is in excellent shape and I intend to build on the foundations Bob has laid for the journal rather than making wholesale changes. We are currently undergoing a refresh of the editorial board and I have invited some new members with a particular focus on quantitative skills. Also, Michael Roy has joined me as Deputy Editor and will work closely with the existing Associate Editors Chris Mason and Janelle Kerlin. Going forward, we are seeking to increase the number of articles per issue and the impact factor of the journal to improve our position in the various journal ranking systems. We will also seek to reduce the average turnaround time for papers. We have some exciting special issues lined up. The next issue of the journal will be guest edited by David Littlewood and Zaheer Khan and will focus on social enterprise and networks. We have also just launched a call for papers for a special issue on social enterprise and health, guest edited by Michael Roy and Kelly Hall. Plans are in the pipeline for future special issues on the cultural economy and critical perspectives on social innovation.

There are seven papers in this issue of Social Enterprise Journal. The first, by Jenny Morrison and Kathryn Semcow, explores the potential for extending the National Science Foundation Innovation Corps program to the social sciences to create social innovation. The article contributes to a developing literature on social enterprise and innovation education, which social enterprise journal is keen to publish.

The second article, by Emerald Jay Ilac, extends recent literature on social enterprise and leadership (Jackson et al., 2018) through a phenomenological analysis of the lived experiences of social enterprise leaders in the Philippines. This leads the author to develop a framework of leadership development for social entrepreneurs.

The third article, by Omid Sabbaghi and Gerald Cavanagh, further contributes to literature on social enterprise education through an analysis of students experiential learning gained through exposure to the Global Social Benefit Institute of Santa Clara University. The article will be of particular interest to those also interested in faith-based approaches to teaching social enterprise.

Our fourth article, by Anne Humbert and Muhammad Roomi, adds to the literature on social enterprise and gender via a quantitative analysis of the motivations of women social entrepreneurs. The authors find that, as well as being driven by self-interest and pro-social motivations, women seek to develop alternative business models. An interesting finding, worthy of future exploration, is a strong relationship between self-interest and revenue.

The fifth article, by Morven McEarchern, Emma Sutton and Kevin Kane, returns to the theme of social enterprise education, focusing on how higher education institutions in the UK use the social enterprise mark to communicate their social agendas. This article has wider relevance to those interested in marketing social enterprise to internal and external audiences.

The sixth article, by Sharon Zivkovic, adds to an emergent literature on the use of labs to incubate social innovation (Steiner and Teasdale, 2016) through a discussion of some of the problems faced by existing lab type. This leads the author to propose a new lab type – the Systemic Innovation Lab – as a vehicle to address wicked problems.

Our final article, by Nimruji Jammulamadaka and Kamalika Chakraborty, is a fascinating study of the local geographical distribution of social enterprises within an Indian
State. The article suggests that clusters of social enterprises emerge around networks of resources – often initiated by development aid. The author discusses the potential negative ramifications for those areas without the necessary infrastructure to deliver social welfare through social enterprise. This article usefully extends similar geographic analyses of social enterprise distribution around finance networks (Sunley and Pinch, 2012) to developing country contexts.

Over the summer, the editorial team will be attending various conferences, most notably the annual meeting of the Academy of Management in Chicago in August and the International Social Innovation Research Conference in Heidelberg in September. Also, in September, the Social Enterprise World Forum will be hosted in Edinburgh, with an academic symposium held in Glasgow. If you have an idea for a paper or a special issue, please make contact with me at these events or just e-mail me at simon.teasdale@gcu.ac.uk.

Simon Teasdale

Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University,
Glasgow, UK

References


Lean Startup for social impact
Refining the National Science Foundation’s Innovation Corps model to spur social science innovation

Kathryn Semcow
Miracle Consulting, Calgary, Canada, and
Jenny Knowles Morrison
The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, USA

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore an adaptation of the National Science Foundation Innovation Corps (I-Corps™) program, which uses the Lean Startup methodology to help STEM scientists commercialize their research. The adaptation, known as I-Corps for Social Impact (I-Corps SI), extends the for-profit canonical model to include mixed revenue and non-profit business models, to help researchers generate social impact.

Design/methodology/approach – A research team of policy and non-profit experts observed and adapted a canonical I-Corps process, then interviewed academics who are scaling and sustaining socially impactful solutions from their research, including past I-Corps participants, to validate research team learning.

Findings – The paper describes limitations of the I-Corps model and modifications required to enhance social impact.

Practical implications – While the field of social entrepreneurship has grown rapidly over the past few decades, social scientists have lagged behind in translating evidence-based research into solutions that can be scaled and sustained to achieve social impact. The paper presents an evidence-based case for a pedagogical tool to close this gap.

Originality/value – A focus on validated learning and business model development supports a paradigm shift within the social sciences, which can help spur greater social innovation from evidence-based research.

Keywords National Science Foundation Innovation Corps (I-Corps), Lean Startup methodology, Social innovation, Social impact, Social entrepreneurship, Validated learning, Business model development, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), Evidence Action, Georgetown University’s Institute for Reproductive Health, Crimson Hexagon

Paper type Research paper

This work was supported by the United States National Science Foundation under Grant Numbers 1549578, 1446218, and 1340618.

Additional curriculum development team members:
Angela Evans, Primary Investigator, The University of Texas at Austin, LBJ School of Public Affairs.
Will Brown, Texas A&M University, Bush School of Government and Public Service.
Mahmud Farooque, Arizona State University, Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes.
David Swindell, Arizona State University, School of Public Affairs.
Karen Anderson, Results for America.

Architect, Lean LaunchPad Course: Steve Blank.

NSF mentors: Dean Chang, University of Maryland, Office of the Provost; Rathindra Gupta, Lydia McClure, Jerry Engel.

NSF Program Officer, Social, Economic and Behavioral Division: Mo Wang.
Introduction
While the field of social entrepreneurship has grown rapidly in size and influence over the past few decades (Tandon, 2014), social scientists have lagged in translating evidence-based research into solutions that can be scaled and sustained over time to achieve social impact. Social scientists specialize in researching “grand challenges” such as human and civil rights, environmental degradation, health epidemics, education, crime, security and global inequality (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2013, p. 11). Yet, rarely are they involved in creating and implementing actionable solutions to the challenges they study. With their focus on human behavior (Campaign for Social Science, 2015) and production of cumulative knowledge (Kallergis and Lambelet, 2015), the social sciences have significant opportunities to inform, promote and generate social innovation[1] beyond the academic sphere; yet, they require new methodologies to tap into this potential.

According to Evans and Morrison (2013, 2015), successful cases of social innovation initiated within the social sciences tend to be serendipitous in nature, fraught with challenges and unsustainable over time. Social scientists who generate impact from their work outside of the academy are rare in numbers and exhibit qualities lacking in many traditional academic researchers, including the:

- ability to collaborate and communicate across a range of settings and disciplines;
- acuity to identify common values and interests with potential partners;
- creativity to develop sustainable funding models;
- willingness to take risks; and
- flexibility to adapt and respond to setbacks and failure (Evans and Morrison, 2013).

A similar set of qualities are shared by commercial and social entrepreneurs (Gupta et al., 2015; Gimmon and Spiro, 2013; Haugh, 2007).

Simply put, the social sciences are no exception to the maxim that generating more social innovation requires the training of more socially minded entrepreneurs (Phills et al., 2008). To date, no formal training protocol has emerged that focuses on the specific needs of social scientists to develop the skills for developing socially impactful innovations (Evans and Morrison, 2015). Validated learning pedagogies (Shah and Tripsas, 2007; Reis, 2011), such as the Lean Startup methodology (Blank and Dorf, 2012), hold great promise for generating such a connection between traditional research and entrepreneurship.

This article explores Lean Startup as a potential curricular tool for helping social scientists develop entrepreneurial skills and mindsets that help them to scale and sustain socially impactful ideas, ultimately helping them generate greater public value from their work. The proposed program, I-Corps for Social Impact (I-Corps SI), is an adaptation of the existing National Science Foundation (NSF) Innovation Corps (I-Corps™) program (www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/). I-Corps is primarily deployed within the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields to commercialize research ideas into scalable and sustainable business models, to help scientists explore possibilities for transmitting evidence-based research into profitable business solutions. The aim of this research is to explore whether promulgation of such a model into the social sciences creates a similar opportunity to spur evidence-based innovation, but with the added potential of generating social impact[2] beyond commercial goals.

The article begins by presenting a background on the NSF I-Corps program, followed by an assessment of its suitability for dissemination to the social science community and potentiality for generating social impact. The method includes an assessment of the I-Corps “canonical” [3] pedagogy by a research team of policy and non-profit researchers. It also
includes interviews with academics who have either successfully scaled and sustained socially impactful initiatives or were in the process of attempting to do so, including a number of past I-Corps participants.

The analysis brings to light a number of findings from which the authors propose to pilot a modified I-Corps pedagogy, I-Corps SI, to test its potential to capacitate a new generation of socially entrepreneurial social scientists. Potential participants could come from any number of disciplines, with a desire to translate evidence-based research into an entrepreneurial solution to a social problem. The proposed model would be grounded in the Lean Startup pedagogy, yet expand the process of business model development to include non-profit, public and mixed revenue strategies, as well as tools and strategies for measuring impact-related performance.

This article contributes to existing literature in its analysis, prioritization and framing of pedagogical choices that can add significant value to social entrepreneurship education. It also provides insights into the most effective bridges between traditional and entrepreneurial research training processes which can support participants to achieve greater and more rapid social impact from their traditional research findings.

**Background: the NSF I-Corps program**

Over the past five years, the NSF has inspired a sea-change in how academics commercialize their research findings into profitable businesses that promote economic development. I-Corps has created an opportunity for previous (two-time) NSF awardees, most often physical scientists and other researchers in the STEM fields, to accelerate product development from their academic research. This experiential process is designed to encourage researchers to “get out of the building” with their research ideas and engage in a “Customer Discovery” process, to determine the value of the researcher’s innovation and its potential for commercialization.

From a pedagogical point of view, I-Corps has created a paradigm shift within academia with its deployment of the Lean Startup methodology (Blank and Dorf, 2012; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Reis, 2011). Lean Startup is a validated learning model which gives primacy to end-user knowledge and experience over researcher assumptions. This involves creating a step-wise “Business Model Canvas” (see Figure 1 below) to structure the user exploration process, and researcher engagement in a rigorous “Customer Discovery” methodology to guide examination of the end-user experience. Such a research design creates an important methodological bridge between traditional evidence-based research and exploration of end-user understanding and validation of more theoretically driven knowledge creation, professionally mandated by the academy.

The I-Corps training lasts eight weeks and consists of two in-person training events which bookend six weeks of online group webinars led by an experienced faculty team. Cohorts are typically made up of 8 to 12 teams, with three participants per team. Selected I-Corps teams are composed of a traditional academic lead (primary investigator), a graduate student (entrepreneurial lead) and an experienced innovator or industry leader (mentor). Only two-time NSF awardees are eligible to apply for the I-Corps training, creating an elite cohort of participants.

Over the eight weeks, teams move through the development of a Business Model Canvas, interviewing at least 100 customers and stakeholders, to achieve several key outcomes, namely:

- refine their initial product into a minimum viable product (MVP), an early-stage concept that can be tweaked and altered based on information gathered during customer discovery interviews;
clarify their value proposition and identify customer segments who would find value in their innovation;

- test their assumptions about their innovation, by sharing it rapidly and broadly with potential users and payers;

- use these insights to refine the conceptualization of the product, enacting “ponds”, or significant changes to the business model based on new information;

- establish a “Go/No Go” decision to help them formulate next steps in launching the product or returning to the “drawing board”; and

- test out their innovation’s viability by engaging with venture capitalists and angel investors, as well as apply for Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Small Business Technology Transfer (SBTT) grants and other funding mechanisms.

Underlying the I-Corps process is the pedagogical concept that the repetition and rigor of customer discovery, coupled with a “relentlessly direct” coaching style, means that entrepreneurship can be taught – even to career academics with very little business acumen or experience. While direct outcomes include:

- helping researchers avoid lengthy traditional business modeling processes; and

- increasing the rate of commercialization for their immediate ideas.

A byproduct of the experience is that these researchers learn to think and behave entrepreneurially, creating the potential for increased innovation over the span of their careers and fundamentally shaping research culture toward more entrepreneurial outcomes in the future.

To date, over 217 colleges and universities have sent more than 905 teams (composed of 2,908 trainees) to I-Corps trainings (www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/resources.jsp). Of the teams surveyed, approximately 50 per cent followed through to form companies, raising over US$103m collectively. I-Corps-born companies have secured more than
US$30.8m in private investments, and at least three of them have undergone major acquisitions. Totally, 54 per cent of the participants formed new collaborations with industry, while 28 per cent did so with government entities. About 26 per cent of the participants developed new collaborations with investors because of the I-Corps award (www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/resources.jsp).

Many participants cite the significant influence the training has had on the rapid evolution and scaling of their innovation (https://venturewell.org/category/i-corps/). Of note, 98 per cent of the entrepreneurial leads and principal investigators surveyed report that I-Corps had a positive influence on their career and research (www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/resources.jsp).

I-Corps has also led to the development of a number of sister pedagogies, which are used to generate innovation in different contexts and among different participant bases. More than 20 government agencies are implementing some form of Lean Startup (Bae, 2017), including the Department of Defense (Blank, 2017), the State Department (Blank, 2016b), the National Institutes of Health (https://sbir.cancer.gov/sites/default/files/ICorpsNIH2016.pdf) and the Department of Energy’s Advanced Research Projects Agency (https://arpa-e.energy.gov/?q=site-page/i-corps-arpa-e). Agencies such as the State Department also use I-Corps-type methodologies to promote economic development across the globe (https://venturewell.org/gist/).

Yet, even with so much promulgation and promise, there has not been systematic consideration of how to adapt the I-Corps pedagogy to the social science sector until an Early-concept Grant for Exploratory Research (EAGER) was awarded by NSF to create a curriculum assessment team, the findings of which are reported in this article.

**Method**

From August 2015 to March 2016, a research team comprised of seven policy and non-profit experts, as well as an I-Corps process expert (who had participated in adapting and developing I-Corps L), assessed the potential for an I-Corps-based curriculum to support the movement of social science research ideas to the public and non-profit spheres[4]. The team observed a canonical I-Corps training, which involved 24 teams participating in workshops in San Francisco in January and February of 2016, as well attending six weekly WebEx trainings between these dates. This included observing a parallel “Train the Trainer” process for preparing new instructors to teach the program.

During the summer of 2016, members of the research team also completed in-depth interviews with 19 academics who had either successfully scaled and sustained socially impactful initiatives, or who were in the process of attempting to do so (See Table I). Of these 19 interviewees, eight had participated in I-Corps canonical or I-Corps L trainings (six social scientists and two STEM scientists, from across five teams total). The purpose of these interviews was to validate the research team’s assessment against actual participant experiences. The research team developed this sample of interviewees after a review of the whole I-Corps participant database, identifying:

- teams composed of social scientists; and
- more multidisciplinary teams which had expressed intent to deliver a service or product with the potential to produce public value.

The research team contacted all possible participants meeting these criteria and scheduled interviews with responsive parties.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization and interviewees</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social scientists who have successfully scaled and are sustaining socially impactful initiatives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>IPA[5] Yale Economist and IPA President and Founder Dean Karlan and Director of the IPA Social Protection Program Nathanael Goldberg</td>
<td>IPA is a non-profit organization dedicated to bridging the gap between academia and development policy, and creating scalable initiatives. IPA is the largest implementer of randomized evaluations in the international development field, combining rigorous evaluation design with high quality research implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab[6]</strong> Harvard Economist and former MIT Professor Michael Kremer, who was an early member of J-PAL, and whose work heavily influenced J-PAL, IPA and Evidence Action</td>
<td>A renowned research center at the MIT Department of Economics, J-PAL is a global network of 136 professors from more than 40 universities who conduct randomized evaluations to test and improve the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at alleviating poverty. The group maintains a dedicated policy group that creates new policy content, disseminates knowledge and supports policymakers to scale programs that are proven to be effective.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence Action[7]</strong> Karen Levy, Director of Global Innovation</td>
<td>Evidence Action bridges the gap that exists between rigorous research and pilot programs on the one hand, and large-scale programs on the other. Using data and evidence, it supports and implements development programs that have proven and rigorously evaluated impact. The organization places emphasis on cost-effectiveness, prioritizing projects that offer good “value for money.”</td>
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<td><strong>Crimson Hexagon[8]</strong> Founder and Chairman Gary King, who is also Director of the Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science</td>
<td>Developed based on a quantitative solution King developed for categorizing mass data, Crimson Hexagon is a global leader in social media analytics, currently serving major corporations, non-profits, academics, governments and politicians.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social scientists in the early stages of attempting to scale and sustain socially impactful initiatives</strong></td>
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<td>CycleTelTM[9] Georgetown University’s IRH Director Victoria Jennings, Former Project Manager Nicki Ashcroft and Program Officer Courtney McLarnon-Silk</td>
<td>The CycleTel program provided safe and effective family planning to couples via their mobile phones through SMS. As part of a USAID grant, IRH was exploring strategies to develop a sustainable business model for scaling the service in India.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agruppa[10] Co-Founders CEO Carolina Medina and COO Verena Liedgens, who developed the social enterprise while pursuing graduate studies at London School of Economics</td>
<td>Agruppa leverages mobile phone technology to empower small food vendors in low-income neighborhoods of Bogota, Colombia, by providing them with fruits and vegetables at wholesale prices. Delivering orders directly to stores saves vendors costs and time lost to traveling to the central market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LiftEd[11] Co-Founder and CEO Andrew Hill, who developed the social enterprise while pursuing his MBA at University of California, Berkeley – Haas School of Business</td>
<td>LiftEd is a mobile software platform designed to help educators and related service providers to track real-time progress data, refine instruction and accelerate educational outcomes for learners with disabilities or special needs, ages 3 to 22. The aim is to enable communication among educators, administrators and parents supporting this student group, helping them to stay digitally “on one page.”</td>
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Table I. Interviewee summary.

(continued)
The remaining 11 interviews were conducted with social scientists without exposure to I-Corps, who had formed, or were in the process of forming, innovative impact-focused organizations and initiatives. Interviewees included founding members of several renowned organizations, including Dean Karlan and Nathanael Goldberg of Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), Michael Kremer of Abdul Lateef Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), Karen Levy of Evidence Action and Victoria Jennings of Georgetown University’s Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH). Interviews were constructed to identify crucial experiences, practices and perspectives which these independent social scientist innovators identified as important to the successful translation of their research findings to the public or non-profit spheres. Interviews also served to document comparative insights between successful innovation processes distinct from the I-Corps pedagogy. Data from interviews with former I-Corps participants were thematically analyzed to shed additional light on gaps and opportunities within the I-Corps format and process, as well as to determine novel approaches generating social impact seemingly unique to the I-Corps experience, as compared to the experiences of the non-I-Corps sample.

Findings and discussion
This research offers a number of insights which support specific adaptations to the I-Corps program to enhance its ability to generate social impact. Overall, the validated learning pedagogy and business model development processes inherent in the Lean Startup methodology are well suited for developing and scaling products, processes and services, with the potential for generating social impact. However, when considering the suitability of
the I-Corps canonical program to allow for a wider scope of impact-oriented outcomes, preliminary interview data suggest the need for several adaptations, namely:

- expanding the focus beyond commercial business models to also allow for non-profit, public and mixed revenue solutions;
- incorporating tools to measure social impact; and
- addressing a male-dominated STEM science culture, where social scientists and women suggest they feel out of place and outnumbered.

The following section provides a synthesis of research team observations and interview data, grouped around six thematic propositions which emerged from data analysis, providing support for the suggested adaptations:

**P1.** The validated learning process inherent in the Lean Startup methodology, integral to the I-Corps process, is well suited for developing and scaling products, processes and services that generate social impact.

In many ways, the Lean Startup methodology is suitable for researchers attempting to produce social impact from their work. In the same way, scientists with an idea for commercialization need to “get out of the building” to connect with potential customers to test the viability of the potential product, service or process, researchers with an idea that can generate public value must “get out of the building” to connect with decision-makers, potential end users and other stakeholders to test initial hypotheses about the value of the idea or solution.

These findings were confirmed by several I-Corps participants. A professor from Team 4, for example, emphasizes the benefits of Lean Startup for social scientists. “I was delighted when they told us to “get out of the building,”” he recalls. “We learned to talk [to customers], learn[ed customer] pain points […] We learned different price points in different segments. . . .”

As well, Team 5 noted that the customer discovery process of Lean Startup was valuable in identifying customer pain points, potential partnerships and competitors – all of which are important to consider when developing innovations for social impact. “The I-Corps template is designed to help us get more realistic, get out in the world. . . .” explains the Primary Investigator. “The same process could be very applicable to social scientists trying to make a difference in policy”.

Of the social science entrepreneurs interviewed who had not participated in I-Corps, at least two teams described their own experiences of conducting formal customer discovery in line with Lean Startup principles. The Agruppa team, for example, participated in a Lean Startup process that included conducting 25 customer interviews and testing a prototype (i.e. MVP) with small shop owners for six weeks in Kenya to validate their idea. As well, Andrew Hill with LiftEd completed 130 customer discovery interviews to identify users and payers for his software program.

While other non-I-Corps interviewees did not describe a formal Lean Startup process, *per se*, they did describe a similar process of “getting out of the building” to speak with potential customers, gathering new information and enacting significant changes to their business models. Harvard’s Gary King notes, for example, that starting a business is not that different from research – both are processes that require asking the right questions and iterating based on new information.

In sum, it was observed that entrepreneurial skills taught by the canonical I-Corps program, such as customer interviewing and development, and rapid environmental
scanning are equally important for public, non-profit and social entrepreneurs who need to engage relevant stakeholders to promote and/or implement their idea. Systematic validated learning processes that engage communities of stakeholders (Reis, 2011, 2017; Shah and Tripsas, 2007) can help determine the real-world value of proposed solutions, creating new relationships for generating user insights which hold significant potential for generating social impact:

P2. The concept of the “pivot” used by Lean Startup is well suited to the development of ideas and business models in the non-profit, for-profit, social enterprise and academic worlds.

Throughout the findings of this research, the notion of the “pivot”, a construct embedded in the Lean Launchpad pedagogy that involves making significant and rapid changes to a business model in the face of new information, emerges as a powerful mechanism to support the fluid nature of ideas and business models in the non-profit, for-profit and academic worlds. This is evident in the numerous pivots experienced by past I-Corps participants and other social science interviewees. A dramatic example of such a process is Team 3, which switched from a product related to weather systems to a smartphone application for hospital pre-discharge and discharge heart failure patients “though our original project was to investigate the effectiveness of hurricane warning systems, we quickly pivoted when we discovered this market wasn’t big enough to sustain a company, so we shifted to patient education,” recalls one of the co-founders.

Interviews with social science entrepreneurs with no exposure to I-Corps also describe numerous pivots in their development processes. Carolina Medina and Verena Liedgens with Agruppa, for example, enacted a number of pivots to their wholesale produce service, first developing the solution for Kenya and then adapting it to Colombia and later shifting from a simple SMS service to a mobile application. Gary King also describes his own pivot with Crimson Hexagon, moving the company from an in-house data analytics service to a cloud-based model. Finally, the team from Georgetown University’s IRH enacted a significant pivot with their CycleTel family planning service in India, switching from an SMS-based service to the CycleBeads application (www.cyclebeads.com), a smartphone app, based on shifting consumer preferences in a rapidly changing telecom market:

P3. Business model development, an essential part of the Lean Startup methodology, is critical for scaling and sustaining social impact initiatives.

The research team determined that scaling and sustaining an academic idea to achieve significant and long-term social impact often requires the development of an appropriate business model (Phills et al., 2008; Florin and Schmidt, 2011; Newth and Woods, 2014). Perhaps, the strongest example of this is the development of the anti-poverty research organizations J-PAL, IPA and Evidence Action. Since 2002, J-PAL and IPA have developed in parallel to become co-pioneers in conducting randomized evaluations to test and improve the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs and policies. In 2013, Evidence Action developed as an offshoot of IPA. While the three organizations work in partnership to provide evidence-based development solutions, each does so through its own specific mission, activities and funding structure.

IPA and J-PAL often work symbiotically, in that the two organizations share a number of researchers and work together on a number of research projects, yet they approach these initiatives using different business models. IPA employs an independent non-profit model, which gives it the flexibility it to build the infrastructure to run randomized evaluations, for example hiring operational staff in countries where an academic institute may not have a
foothold. J-PAL, on the other hand, stands as a research center housed within the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which allows it to harness the MIT brand and network to attract world-class researchers, form relationships with policymakers and partner with other universities.

Meanwhile, Evidence Action operates as a separate non-profit to support its specific focus on improving the cost-effectiveness of programs that have already been incubated with organizations such as IPA and J-PAL. According to Evidence Action’s Director of Global Innovation Karen Levy, “pressure testing” programs and allowing them to “fail fast” means that only small amounts of funds are spent to determine which programs will be successful, and larger amounts of funding can be spent on programs that have a high probability to work.

The experimental method used by J-PAL, IPA and Evidence Action to test anti-poverty initiatives is a reminder that not all business models are destined for success. In business and social science entrepreneurship, even the best of ideas require testing to determine whether they are viable. In particular, determining whether a sustainable revenue model exists early on can ensure that funding and investment for social initiatives are allocated appropriately and that time and costs are minimized. The focus of I-Corps on revenue models and “Go/No-Go” decisions may serve as a complementary tool for such decision-making, providing a new method for assessing the viability of ideas and determining their long-term potential to achieve maximum impact at a minimum cost.

P4. I-Corps, with its focus on commercialization, can help social scientists to channel for-profit business models to achieve socially impactful outcomes.

“A widespread belief across the social sciences is that the for-profit realm is increasingly all-pervasive and colonizing the few remaining spaces of daily life untouched by its powerful force”, write Williams and Nadin (2011, p. 119). This belief, however, may limit the potential for academics to generate social impact, as for-profit business models are often suitable for sustaining actionable solutions to social challenges (Phills et al., 2008).

Gary King is a specific case of a leading social scientist who has turned to commercial business models to generate impact from his research. King’s company, Crimson Hexagon, evolved from an algorithm he developed from his research for categorizing mass amounts of data and has grown to become a global market-leading social media analytics company. While the company earns a healthy profit from its client base (comprised mostly of businesses, but also non-profits, academics and policymakers), it is also generating significant social impact. The US State Department, for example, uses the software to better design online strategies to counter terrorism, including disseminating anti-terrorism information (Bing, 2016). A number of high-profile politicians have used the software for their political campaigns, assessing voter sentiments across social media. As well, Crimson Hexagon offers academics grants to use the software for free for their research.

King, who maintains his academic positions as the Weatherhead University Professor and Director of the Institute for Quantitative Social Science at Harvard, while also serving as Chairman of Crimson Hexagon, emphasizes the value of commercializing research-based ideas for sustaining impact for the long term. “The purpose of a university – and the purpose of an academic role – is the creation, preservation, and distribution of knowledge”, he says. “What better way to do all three of those things than to commercialize an idea?” Further, he adds, “If you commercialize an idea, it will last […] It’s going to have value, so people are going to want to keep it going”.

In a similar light, I-Corps, in its support for commercialization and helping academics to think entrepreneurially, holds the potential to spur a paradigm shift within the social
sciences, helping to produce a culture that sustains more knowledge transfer, produces greater social innovation and generates more impactful results:

P5. Researchers who explore non-profit, public and mixed revenue models, in addition to commercial models, have an opportunity to generate a broader spectrum of social innovation than those who focus solely on commercialization outcomes.

While for-profit models relying solely on customer revenues for sustainability are often instrumental in achieving social impact, the public nature of social problems also means that many of their solutions require government, non-profit or mixed-revenue funding models. J-PAL’s Michael Kremer, for example, demonstrated that, while offering deworming medication to children in Kenya for free is an inexpensive way to reduce school absenteeism, efforts to promote cost recovery by charging users for the drugs were not successful. A small increase in the cost of medicine to treat worms in Kenya led to an 80 per cent reduction in the use of the drug, compared to offering it for free (Kremer and Miguel, 2004). Although providing such medicine has been proven to be highly effective in improving the well-being of poor communities, external subsidies are still required and “the pursuit of sustainability may be an illusion” (p. 1). It is worth noting that deworming has been scaled primarily by national governments, such as the government of India, which last year delivered deworming medication to approximately 200 million children, with assistance from non-profit organizations (Kremer, 2018). Deworm the World (www.evidenceaction.org/dewormtheworld/), the initiative Kremer developed to support government-run school-based deworming programs, was initially incubated by IPA and is now managed by Evidence Action, both organizations which rely on non-profit business models.

The conundrum of pursuing commercial business models to provide public goods such as healthcare is further demonstrated in the case of CycleTel, a mobile family planning program in India developed by Georgetown University’s IRH. The service uses the Standard Days Method® (SDM) to help a woman track the fertile days of her menstrual cycle, encouraging couples seeking to prevent pregnancy to avoid unprotected sex during this time by sending the user messages on “unsafe” days. Initially, donors had encouraged the program to secure user-generated revenue to become self-sustaining, and formative research had demonstrated that users were willing to pay for the service. When it came time to scale the program, however, the IRH team found that the telecom market had shifted rapidly, and users now expected to receive mobile-based services for free. IRH then pursued other financial sustainability options, such as partnering with sanitary pad companies, selling customer databases and integrating the service into other mobile platforms. However, they were unable to find a commercial solution. Ultimately, IRH pivoted to offering SDM through mobile applications (www.cyclebeads.com), in partnership with a technology provider, and supported by funding from USAID.

SDM is highly effective (it has been proven to be more than 95 per cent effective in preventing pregnancy when used correctly (Arévalo et al., 2002), yet its provision can be categorized as a public good. “No family planning method is financially sustainable,” notes CycleTel Program Officer Nicki Ashcroft. “Every global program is subsidized”. In the context of a pure customer-generated “for-profit” business model, this would be a “No Go”. Yet, when one considers the potential social impact the product has to offer as a safe, natural and effective solution for family planning, an effort should be made to make it a “Go”.

Several past I-Corps participants faced a similar challenge with the I-Corps pedagogy, when grappling with its predominant emphasis on resource accumulation and securing profit. Team 2, for example, experienced frustration in the lack of guidance on developing a non-profit revenue model, which would be necessary to bring their impactful idea to fruition.
“We came out [of I-Corps] more confused than ever”, explains one of the co-founders. “We never went into it thinking of developing a for-profit enterprise”. Following the program, the team sought out a mentor who was an expert in social entrepreneurship to help them develop a non-profit funding solution.

As well, Team 5, which envisioned government entities as its main customers, found that I-Corps failed to support them to develop a non-profit or government-funding model. “I-Corps was always forcing us to monetize…” says one of the team members. “We played along, and I think we had some ideas there. But that was not our idea, not our incentive”. Subsequently, on the Business Model Canvas, the team found they were not able to move beyond development of an MVP.

Further, Team 1 explained that, although I-Corps helped them define scalability for their digital solution aimed at helping graduates find employment, they sought out supplementary exercises with a non-profit organization to envision the potential impact of the solution.

While I-Corps encourages participants to “trust the process” of the Lean Startup methodology to bring their ideas to scale, the program’s sole focus on commercialization actually serves as a blockage to the full process of social entrepreneurship – a process that requires founders to consider and offer varying weights to economic and social outcomes (Williams and Nadin, 2011). By limiting participants to a for-profit paradigm, I-Corps not only potentially stunts the full entrepreneurial experience but creates a missed opportunity to generate impact from research ideas that may require a non-profit, public or mixed revenue (Teasdale et al., 2013) funding model to meet their social goals:

P6. I-Corps training has been described by participants and observers as a male-dominated experience, with female participants expressing a sense of discomfort and alienation – something to be overcome during adaptation of the pedagogy to a social science audience.

Of the past I-Corps participants interviewed, two of the three female interviewees explicitly describe the I-Corps culture as male dominated. One interviewee expresses a sense of alienation for being the only all-female team in the cohort, with members who were younger than most other teams. “We didn’t quite fit in”, she says, noting that she had the sense her team did not receive the same level of respect and attention as the male teams. “We all felt that, being all female and looking young […] we all felt ‘untalked’ about [i.e. ignored]”.

Another female interviewee, who had been one of two females in her cohort, notes that the I-Corps culture was oriented strongly to white males. “I feel like they’re trying to create a shark tank culture”, she says:

I was a soccer team coach and I remember learning that you teach male soccer teams so different than women. I wondered how you create a female team here [in I-Corps]… You don’t have to be a narcissist and an ass to be successful […]”.

Supporting the observations of the two female participants who expressed frustration with the I-Corps culture, several members of the research team, male and female, described noticing immediately upon arriving at the I-Corps training that the bulk of cohorts were comprised of men. As for the Train the Trainer participants, the majority of trainees (all except two) were male, while the head trainer and three lead instructors were all male.

The male-dominated environment and culture of I-Corps may simply be due to the fact that the I-Corps program was incubated and developed within the STEM sciences, where the population of graduates (in all fields except the biological sciences) and workers (across all STEM fields) are predominantly male (Catalyst, 2016; Hur et al.,
Overall, the behavioral and social sciences demonstrate greater gender balance than the STEM sciences (with the exception of economics and political science fields) (Hur et al., 2017). The issues of gender imbalance and gender bias have been acknowledged widely within the STEM sciences (American Association of University Women, 2010; Hur et al., 2017), as well as the startup and entrepreneurship world (USA Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 2014; Pines et al., 2010), so it is not surprising that such imbalances would intersect in a STEM-focused entrepreneurship program.

Anecdotal evidence from I-Corps trainers who have taught similar Lean Startup programs to varieties of groups, however, suggests that the pedagogy is transferable and can be adapted successfully to cohorts who are all-female or of different nationalities, ages, education and income levels, industries and sectors. An I-Corps program incubated in the social sciences, where the issues of gender equality and minority rights are important focuses of fields such as sociology, women’s studies and development studies, to name but a few, could be expected to take on its own unique culture, allowing for greater participation of women and other “unheard” groups.

The above findings suggest that, with a few adaptations, the I-Corps pedagogy can help social scientists develop the skills to scale and sustain their research-based ideas to generate social impact. Interviews with social scientists who have successfully scaled impactful initiatives support Gimmon and Spiro’s (2013) assertion that social and commercial entrepreneurs share a large number of traits and operational processes, such as developing partnerships, attracting capital, behaving innovatively, using and allocating resources appropriately and transferring knowledge.

Further, the underlying premise of I-Corps that “entrepreneurship can be taught” and its demonstrated capacity to help researchers think and act like commercial entrepreneurs, suggests that the pedagogy can also be beneficial for helping social scientists think and act like social entrepreneurs. Such a mindset change is exemplified by the professor from Team 4, who describes his team’s internalization of, and conversion to, I-Corps principles, such as focusing on specific customer segments. “The language of I-Corps we take to heart”, he explains. “We take to heart the principle of not trying to be everything to everyone”.

Participation of social scientists in I-Corps can not only help change their individual perspectives on entrepreneurship, but it can also help bring about institutional transformation and cultural change within their larger social science institutions. An example is Team 3, whose members included a dean and senior associate dean from a college of communication and information, within a major university. Their participation in I-Corps inspired them to launch an interdisciplinary, campus-wide innovation network, which included an advisory board and undergraduate certificate in entrepreneurship, with courses for students of all disciplines hosted in their own faculty. While this initiative created some resistance within the college, persistence on the part of its founders paid off. “There was a little push back, oddly, in the college [from people] who felt that entrepreneurship was the purview of the business school”, recalls one of the founders. “People have very strong ideas about what an “entrepreneur” is. Once we could have conversations [however] […] they became supporters”.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

Powerful science organizations such as the NSF hold significant potential for closing the gap between traditional research activities that provide evidence to support solution generation and more entrepreneurial explorations that assess end-user perspectives of proposed solution. The canonical NSF I-Corps program, in its deployment of business model
development and validated learning methodologies to help academic researchers commercialize their ideas, is helping to spark such a sea-change. As a result of the program, a large number of I-Corps participants have undergone a significant paradigm shift (www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/resources.jsp), increasingly assessing end-user perspectives of the questions they ask, resulting in ideas with greater commercial viability and higher potential for scale, as well as financial sustainability. Further, with newfound entrepreneurial skills, a number of I-Corps participants have gone onto launch companies, secure investment and ultimately contribute to the US economy.

While NSF I-Corps has demonstrated an ability to generate economic impact by supporting commercial innovation, the program holds an untapped opportunity to generate wider impact by fostering social innovation. Interviews with successful entrepreneurial social scientists, such as Gary King, Dean Karlan, Michael Kremer and Victoria Jennings, indicate that academics who successfully scale and sustain impactful initiatives exercise a set of skills similar to those of commercial entrepreneurs. Further, interviews with past I-Corps participants suggest that many may join the program with the intent of learning entrepreneurial skills to launch innovative ideas that hold the potential to generate social impact, yet falter when the for-profit focus prevents them from developing business models which may require non-profit revenue solutions.

In short, I-Corps’ requirement of commercial viability for a “Go” decision means that many innovative ideas that could create public value become a “No Go” decision and fail to reach implementation. Expanding the I-Corps process to include non-profit, public and mixed revenue solutions, in addition to for-profit models, will, therefore, allow for a wider range of innovation and the generation of economic and social impact on a larger scale.

Analysis of these findings has resulted in the following recommendations to support the implementation of I-Corps SI.

**Recommendation 1: Adapt the language of the I-Corps Lean Startup pedagogy to allow for non-profit, public and mixed revenue models, in addition to for-profit solutions**

As Phills et al. (2008) remind us, “The advantage of examining the pursuit of positive social change through an innovation lens is that this lens is agnostic about the sources of social value”. In the I-Corps canonical program, instructors encourage each team to “trust the process”, which means letting go of preconceived notions of what the final business model should look like and using customer interviews to pivot and iterate, until they determine a model that is viable. Expanding the commercial nature of the I-Corps model to one that includes – yet is “agnostic” to – non-profit, public, for-profit and mixed solutions is in line with this vision.

Adapting the canonical I-Corps process to incorporate social impact will require minor alterations to the program’s language and pedagogy. The research team has developed a number of suggestions with this in mind, for example replacing “Customer Development” with “Stakeholder Development” and “Customer Discovery” with “Stakeholder Analysis” to acknowledge the variety of (often conflicting) interests of various actors in public decision-making. As well, Blank (2016a) has developed the Mission Model Canvas, a version of the Business Model Canvas which takes into mind the public nature of social impact initiatives, for example replacing “Customer Segments” with “Beneﬁciaries” and “Revenue Streams” with “Mission Achievement”. As well, Calderon (2015), with the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, has developed the Social Impact Canvas, which is inclusive of for-profit, non-profit and mixed revenue models. It is important for the NSF to explore these and other existing adaptations to the Lean Startup methodology to adopt a framework that best supports the I-Corps SI process.
Recommendation 2: Explore the use of tools and strategies for measuring social impact that can complement the I-Corps Lean Startup process

In the same way that commercial entrepreneurs measure their success using financial indicators, such as profit and revenue, social entrepreneurs need tools to measure their success in terms of social impact. Measuring impact helps organizations to outline a clear path from selecting inputs to achieving desired outcomes and to select or design appropriate indicators to track progress toward their missions and goals (Ebrahim and Rangan, 2010). The Agruppa team, for example, mentions that measuring impact is as important to them as measuring revenues and costs when launching their enterprise. They have already developed basic indicators, such as cost savings to households and numbers of users, and are participating in a randomized evaluation supported by IPA and the World Bank, to identify further impact measures. As well, at least one I-Corps team interviewed notes that they sought out additional guidance to develop measures for determining the social impact of their innovation.

These findings indicate that it is important to supplement the I-Corps process with tools to measure performance beyond profit-focused indicators. Several other social impact curriculum models, for example, Calderon’s (2015) “Social Lean Launchpad” and “Startup Disco” courses (http://entrepreneurship.berkeley.edu/courses/), as well as Acumen’s “Social Impact Analysis” (www.plusacumen.org/courses/social-impact-analysis), have partnered the Lean Startup methodology with measurement strategies and indicators. Specifically, these courses use the “Theory of Change” to define the social value chain of an organization, identify measurable indicators and calculate and define a plan for monitoring performance (Bengo et al., 2016). The reporting framework “Impact Reporting Standard & Investment” (IRIS) (https://iris.thegiin.org/) complements this process, offering a catalog of performance measures applicable to a wide range of sectors (Bengo et al., 2016). The successful integration of the theory of change and IRIS with the Lean Startup methodology suggests the potential for adopting a similar strategy for I-Corps SI.

Recommendation 3: Pilot I-Corps SI within a broad range of social sciences, to test its potential for promoting social innovation and to develop it using cohorts that are more gender balanced than in the STEM sciences

Support for research-based innovation has historically focused on STEM fields (Campaign for Social Science, 2015), with the potential for advances in areas such as mobile technology, medicine and defense capturing the lion’s share of funders’ attention in recent years (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2013). However, we have seen from this research that the social sciences offer vast potential for informing and generating social innovation due to their inherent focus on finding solutions to social problems. Tapping into the power of a wide range of social science disciplines, such as psychology, law, anthropology, political science, economics, sociology, public policy, geography and history, can help bring insights to problems of import in the public sphere (Academy for Arts and Sciences, 2013).

Piloting I-Corps SI within the social sciences will not only support the creation of public value from social science research, but will allow for the exploration of I-Corps in a new cultural milieu. As we have seen from these findings, several female social scientists find themselves an overlooked minority in the I-Corps program, likely due to the fact that cohorts are comprised mostly of researchers from the STEM sciences, where the population is predominantly male. Piloting I-Corps SI within the social sciences, which maintains a larger female population, will help test out I-Corps in a new environment and explore methods for instilling gender equality within the entrepreneurship field.
Recommendation 4: Explore the potential for expanding I-Corps SI beyond the social sciences to a variety of participant bases in need of social entrepreneurship education

While it is important to pilot I-Corps SI within the social sciences, it is also worth exploring its potential as a pedagogical tool for social entrepreneurship education in other fields. Interviews with two engineers who participated in I-Corps in an attempt to generate public value from their research indicate a possible interest from STEM scientists in participating in an I-Corps program focused on impact. A limitation of this exploratory research is that the sample included only 16 social scientists and two STEM scientists due to limited numbers of social scientists participating in I-Corps. It is, therefore, necessary to interview more academics from a range of disciplines to understand the scale of potential for I-Corps SI across academia as a whole, as well as pilot the I-Corps SI pedagogy, to further assess its fit with the social science community. Expanding I-Corps SI to other disciplines, once fully incubated within the social sciences, should allow for a growth in specific outcome measures, deepening understanding of the social impact potential of such pedagogies on the whole.

Despite these limitations, this preliminary research highlights ways in which I-Corps SI can serve to bridge the gap that exists between academic research and social entrepreneurship education, helping to increase the use of scientific evidence to improve decision-making. As the National Research Council (2012, p. 54) writes:

[Using] good science [. . .] helps to decide what social conditions need attention, what should be a public responsibility or better left to the market or not-for-profit actors, and what interventions – to grow the economy, improve welfare, protect security – are efficient and effective.

Training academics to think and act like social entrepreneurs can not only increase the transfer of knowledge between the two spheres, but it can also serve as an example of how academic evidence can be used to inform social entrepreneurship outside of the academy. As Hand (2016) explains, systematic academic research holds vast potential to inform the social entrepreneurship field, beyond the field’s traditional use of anecdotal evidence and case studies.

Further, it is worth exploring the potential use of I-Corps SI for training social entrepreneurs outside of the academy. Brock and Steiner (2009), in their examination of 107 social entrepreneurship courses around the world, found that only 36 per cent of these pedagogies address methods for scaling social innovations. This serves as a bottleneck to social entrepreneurs who are encouraged to “think big” to “change the world”. The rigorous process of the I-Corps model and its emphasis on scale and sustainability (which includes encouraging “No-Go” decisions when scale is not possible) could, therefore, become instrumental in expanding the impact of innovative ideas within the social entrepreneurship field. In the same way, I-Corps has inspired a number of innovation programs in government agencies and corporations globally. I-Corps SI has the potential to contribute to social impact education in non-profit, public policy, social enterprise and private spheres around the world.

Notes

1. In the context of this article, “social innovation” is defined as “the process of inventing, securing support for, and implementing novel solutions to social needs and problems” (Phills et al., 2008, cited in Phills et al., 2008).

2. “Social impact” is defined by the Center for Social Impact as “the net effect of an activity on a community and the well-being of individuals and families” (www.csi.edu.au/about-social/). In the context of this article, this impact may touch upon the larger global community and include environmental benefits, as well as economic impacts that extend beyond an organization’s
immediate financial bottom line, such as job creation or cost savings. The term is also used interchangeably with the term “public value”.

3. “Canonical” refers to the original I-Corps training that is delivered to STEM scientists. Other versions of I-Corps and variants of I-Corps exist, as described in the following section of this article.

4. Additional research team members are noted in the Acknowledgements section.

5. www.poverty-action.org/
6. www.povertyactionlab.org/
7. www.evidenceaction.org/
8. www.crimsonhexagon.com/
10. www.agruppa.co/
11. www.liftingeducation.co/
12. Due to the critical nature of feedback, names of I-Corps teams and participants have been masked to protect their identity while they are still (potentially) active NSF grantees.

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Further reading


**Corresponding author**
Jenny Knowles Morrison can be contacted at: jenny.knowles.morrison@utexas.edu

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Exploring social enterprise leadership development through phenomenological analysis

Emerald Jay D. Ilac
Psychology, Ateneo de Manila Loyola Schools, Quezon City, Philippines

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to construct a theorized leadership development model for social enterprises based on the experiences of its current leaders, highlighting what are inherently imperative processes and competencies future leaders should hold.

Design/methodology/approach – Using the epistemological lens of phenomenological analysis, it focuses on the developmental process elements for the social enterprise leader, between the individual and the environment, and the individual and the community. To formulate the model, multiple data collection methods were utilized.

Findings – Analyzing multiple experiences of different social enterprise leaders formed a suggested processual leadership development model, which discovers fundamental elements and skills necessary in their development.

Research limitations/implications – Findings provide a foundational basis in the continued development of social entrepreneurs as rooted in the unique experiences of current social enterprise leaders. A limitation worth noting is the contextual distinctiveness of experiences that may shape the leadership experience.

Practical implications – Findings provide a baseline theorized framework on the critical facets of leadership development for social enterprise. Pragmatically, this functions as a competency framework that can be transformed into concrete learning activities and training sessions.

Originality/value – This paper provides perspective into social enterprise leadership emergence. It underscores the processes involved in comprehending how these leaders evolve through interpreting context, understanding their value and creating awareness with and through others.

Keywords Leadership development, Philippines, Social enterprise, Phenomenology

Paper type Research paper

Social enterprises continually receive interest for their unique and distinctive characteristics (Bacq et al., 2013) as they address complexities in social, economic and environmental problems affecting myriad lives. In this light, they have become a global phenomenon (Keh, 2009) with activities tied to their individual missions and visions (Massetti, 2012) while balancing profit and social-value objectives (Dacanay, 2004). They have crafted entrepreneurial solutions addressing various social market situations (Drayton, 2002), showing that as business becomes the preeminent organizational model in human society markets, the businesslike hybrid face of social enterprise is showing legitimacy and responsiveness to the times (Dart, 2004). Given the multiplicity of these enterprises as major players in commerce, it is imperative to understand distinguishing elements of social enterprise from other industry players to aid organizational growth and evolution (Nicholls, 2006), especially with regards to leadership and leaders.

Reviewing related literature showcase multiple case studies and research highlighting key features defining social entrepreneurship, history of successful organizations and the
social impact of these enterprises on target communities (Hechanova, 2009). Despite attempts at region-wide analysis (Dacanay, 2009; Santos et al., 2009), the topic of social enterprise leadership in Southeast Asia in particular remains understudied, analogize to other countries in the global South and more so versus the global North which garner more attention. Yet there have been few studies investigating leadership development in social enterprises, this despite leadership within the social work profession taking greater importance (Wilson and Lau, 2011). Over the past years, various studies suggest competencies required for effective social work leadership (Wilson and Lau, 2011; Holosko, 2009). However, relatively there is not much material on social enterprise leadership development for Southeast Asia. Therefore, it is urged to conduct research on social change organizations because of their increasing importance in the world (Cooperrider and Pasmore, 1991).

This paper presents a research seeking to understand experiences of social enterprise leaders. It aims to create a suggested theorized leadership development framework that might provide initial direction in guiding future leaders and which may afford insight in theorizing the nature of social enterprises. Following phenomenological analysis epistemology, this paper contributes to leadership research by:

- bringing forward leadership studies in a developing Southeast Asian country such as the Philippines;
- highlighting the contribution of leadership development in social enterprise; and
- bringing forward the value of these leaders infrequently focused in organizational studies.

Social enterprise leadership

Scholars have outlined social enterprise leadership as an incorporating set of strategic responses to varied environmental and situational turbulences (Dees, 1998a, 2003; Emerson and Twersky, 1996). Zahra et al. (2009) analyzed various meanings of the phenomenon and integrated saying, it “encompasses the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define and exploit opportunities in order to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organizations in an innovative manner” (p. 522). Thus, a social enterprise is a hybrid, self-sustaining business, generating actions from the members of the community and creating positive impact on a group or for society in general (Bargsted et al., 2013). It emerged contrast to traditional non-profit organizations and has striven to be economically viable by being effective, innovative and ingenious with the passion, values and mission of a not-for-profit organization (Smith et al., 2013), even if definitions of social enterprise differ in terms of the amount of the income that must be generated through trading (Haugh, 2005).

In practice, social enterprise leadership activities often include revenue-source diversification, fee-for-service program development, private sector partnerships and social-purpose business or mission-focused practices involving business practice, revenues or both (Dart, 2004). Three approaches to social enterprise leadership often come forward: that it is a combination of viable commercial enterprises with social impact (Emerson and Twersky, 1996); that it places emphasis on innovating for social impact by highlighting social arrangements often with relatively little attention to economic viability (Dees, 1998b); and that it acts as a catalyst for social transformation beyond solutions to initial problems producing small short-term changes reverberating to large changes in the long term (Ashoka Innovators for the Public, 2000).
In third-world countries of the global South, social enterprise is found significant in aiding government to create livelihood, enabling communities with marginalized sectors a better chance for decent life. As these are communities vulnerable to market prices and natural calamities, social enterprises make solutions evident in attaining sources of income and welfare (Evangelista, 2013). Evangelista (2013) stipulates that factors on macro-economic stability, employment, trade and investment, agribusiness and anti-corruption are being established by social enterprises strengthening the country’s competitiveness in the global arena. Currently, there is a growing number of social enterprises in the global market and social enterprise leaders are motivated to learn best practices and models adaptable and applicable to increase success rates and sustainability.

Asian countries have become a significant arena for social enterprises, as the region represents the largest market in the world: 2.86 billion people with an income of $3.4 trillion or 83 per cent of the region’s population and 42 per cent of its purchasing power (World Resources Institute, 2007). In the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report on Social Entrepreneurship (Terjesen et al., 2009), it was found that in Southeast Asian countries, less than 30 per cent of social enterprises are non-government organizations and that there is “a relatively high rate of for-profit social enterprises and economically oriented hybrid enterprises, which could possibly be due to the definition of social entrepreneurship [as] geared more toward the for-profit end” (p. 19). The same report states that in Southeast Asia, social entrepreneurship is considered “relatively new, and experts tend to associate its growth […] with international influence, [its] organizations operating as philanthropic and voluntary intermediaries operating as subsidies […] at the international level” (Terjesen et al., 2009, p. 27). With its novelty, most countries in the region have not attracted substantial research interest on social enterprise.

**Social enterprise in the Philippines**

The Philippines, for instance, is a sample of a country warranting attention. Of the population, 30 per cent live at the bottom of the social strata (World Resources Institute, 2007), and with no definition of what is a social enterprise in the country, Dacanay (2013) stipulates that social enterprises aim for “inclusive and sustainable development: a social enterprise with the poor as primary stakeholders [SEPPS]” (The British Council, 2015, p. 3). Its main premise is to explicitly reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the poor through a distributive enterprise philosophy (Dacanay, 2013). In 2007, it was estimated that there were 30,000 social enterprises operating in the Philippines, most of which were cooperatives and associations, and 500 were microfinance industries (Dacanay, 2013). Most of the country’s social enterprises are found in Manila, but “several organizations have [extended] their operations outside Manila, and there are a growing number of initiatives to engage with social enterprises in other regions of the country” (The British Council, 2015, p. 7).

A thrust for positive economic performance has been at the forefront of the national agenda to move the country towards prosperity, with the goal of reaching developed country status by 2020, this despite having no social enterprise legislation in the country. Most social enterprises in the Philippines are “producer-based organizations, working with low-income and marginalized groups of producers and suppliers [whose] primary focus is often to improve prices for producers and increase access to markets” (The British Council, 2015, p. 17). It is in this light that social enterprise initiatives offer a potential path for the development of human capabilities and improved economic welfare; however, most of their accomplishments have been largely gone unnoticed by the international community.
(Nielsen and Samia, 2008) despite the active work of its social enterprise leaders to create and manage these innovative entrepreneurial organizations.

Entrepreneurial leaders
Despite being unnoticed, social enterprise leadership is considered critical for twenty-first century economic development (Kuratko, 2007). As value-oriented trailblazers who generate social change by establishing an enterprise (Germaine, 2008), Certo and Miller (2008) describe these leaders as individuals who recognize, evaluate and exploit opportunities resulting in the creation of social value. Bornstein (2004) highlights them as motivated to change society because of their discomfort of the status quo and meets these social objectives through the creation of a business model (Roper and Cheney, 2005). Thus, social enterprise leaders are innovators focusing on process innovation as important means in creating competitive differentiation (Zahra et al., 2008; Roper and Cheney, 2005). As visionary leaders, they engage the less-privileged by sharing the dream, passion and commitment of working for a cause, and encourage them to act in the same way (Hechanova and Dela Cruz, 2009). Accomplishing these activities successfully require the social enterprise leaders to assume a myriad of roles in managing the enterprise. The ability to perform these roles require skills and competencies in specialist, functional and process areas (Hynes, 2009).

Notwithstanding their value in society, there has historically been very little research into the leadership phenomenon of social enterprises in comparison to for-profit sectors (Thach and Thompson, 2006). Low and MacMillan (1998) propose that research in this area should “seek to explain and facilitate the role of new enterprise in furthering economic progress” (p. 141), underscoring the fact that innovative organizations with a social and economic mission is still a legitimate area for research with its rich and socially relevant field (Prabhu, 1999). Leadership in the social enterprise field is still in its infancy, and this “is partly due to the relatively small size of the sector and the resultant lack of empirical evidence about what exactly makes leadership in this sector distinct from mainstream for profit business, the public sector, and the wider third sector” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 73). Thus, studying social entrepreneurial organizations can give mainstream entrepreneurship researchers valuable insight into the process of evoking values and ideologies of the organization, and can likewise enrich the study of social entrepreneurial behavior and processes in these industries (Prabhu, 1999), especially into the development of social enterprise leaders in preparation for complex roles. This paper can help further address the questions proposed by Jackson et al. (2018): “what is distinctive about leadership practices within the field of social enterprise given that it works within a distinctively novel and complex institutional context?” (p. 73).

Leadership development underpinnings
Social context
Yukl (2010) mentions the field of leadership studies has evolved with two key shifts in focus. The first shift is with respect to roles: from personal characteristics to the role of leadership or from an individualistic and decontextualized conceptualization to one which emphasizes leadership roles as an interaction with the social and organizational context (Day, 2000; Iles and Preece, 2006; Thorpe et al., 2009). Here, it is important to read and understand leadership as embedded within the context the leader partakes, and the leadership phenomenon is shaped penultimate by the very context the leader is in. The second shift is in the process of leadership, which looked on leadership as a set of traits or behaviors and actions that
engages the community to social progress (Day, 2000), creating individual and collective empowerment.

This demonstrates a movement from the individual to the group, from the human to the social context (Day and O’Connor, 2003; McCallum and O’Connell, 2009). It is imperative to see leadership as a process involving members collaboratively, such that collaboration shapes the leadership process benefitting both parties. Social capital theory emphasizes on the relational dynamics of establishing relationships among individuals to enhance cooperation and resource exchange, leading to the creation of organizational value (Leitch et al., 2012). Given the relational aspect of social capital, leadership development should focus on how to build social network and relationships to access resources and coordinate activities. In this sense, leadership is “an effect, rather than a cause, an emergent property of social interaction in context” (Iles and Preece, 2006, p. 324). Thus, leadership development should be understood within the parameters of the cultural context the leader navigates in relation to other individuals.

Cultural repercussions
Comprehending context should underscore cultural dimensions relevant in social enterprise leadership. Cultural values influence leadership practices (Alves et al., 2005), making it not easily expandable globally (Steers et al., 2012). Ulrich (2010) conjectured given the differences in cultural heritage, political systems, demographics and social structures, it is challenging to create a uniform view of leadership applicable to every nation. Studying leadership, therefore, must respect a country’s specificities: historical (development history or maturing process of leaders in their specific context), societal (social structure or networks of a specific context) and cultural (values, ideational systems and behavioral models) facets influencing leadership outcomes. Zhang et al. (2012) considered these factors “unique in the studied context, requiring the indigenous approach” (p. 1064). Even the Philippines with its strong collectivist background (Jocano, 1998) may have its own independent framework in understanding leadership divergent from other countries which Roces (1994) further underscores by stating data in leadership studies must utilize respondents where the Filipino identity resides. This would permit comprehending leadership based on methodological and substantive aspects (Bass, 2001), culture included.

Qualitative method in leadership development
To forward this conception of social enterprise leadership development, “a new framework for leadership studies can be built upon a direct, phenomenological experience of leadership that occurs prior to the creation or adaptation of conventional knowledge” (Barker, 2001, p. 483). This acknowledges leadership is a complex social process where culture, context and its nature shape its understanding. In this light, a leadership development framework for a particular context must take into account processes an individual would partake within the social strata, rather than highlight personalistic attributes. This paper shifts to an inductive method focusing on a specific industry to frame leadership development as embedded within the social process.

A qualitative method is appropriate in trying to understand complexities and behavioral nuances (Bryman and Bell, 2015) even within the premise of leadership. Given the exploratory nature of this research, delving into participants’ experiences and subjective meanings can verbalize experiences and clarify stories, allowing researchers to understand the context behind their subjectivities (Stumpfegger, 2015). With this, the epistemological positioning of this paper uses phenomenological analysis, which allows personal, subjective experiences to be brought to the forefront amidst prevailing sociocultural perceptions (Gray,
minimizing misconceptions (Stumpfegger, 2015). Phenomenology is defined as the study of phenomena: appearance of things, as they manifest themselves in experience and, thus, the meaning things have in experience (Klenke, 2016). The central structure of an experience is its intentionality or the way it is directed through its content or meaning toward a certain object in the world (Moran, 2000); in this case, how social enterprise leaders navigate themselves as embedded within the context of the social enterprise. Thus, the unit of analysis is the phenomenon, not the individual (Klenke, 2016).

Giorgi and Giorgi (2008) stipulate rather than attempting to reduce a phenomenon to a convenient number of identifiable variables and control the context in which the phenomenon will be studied, phenomenology aims to remain as faithful as possible to the phenomenon and to the context in which it appears in the world. In this frame, phenomenological analysis attempts to discern the psychological essence of being a social enterprise leader and seeks to understand meanings that constitute leadership through investigating and analyzing lived examples of the phenomenon within the context of the participants’ lives (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2008). The intent of phenomenological research is to understand the leadership phenomena on its own terms to provide a credible description of human experience as perceived by the individual and allowing the essence of that experience to emerge (Cameron, Schaffer, and Hyeon-Ae, 2001). By rooting into this method, this paper aims to construct a framework for the development of social enterprise leadership.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants complied with the following criteria:

- founder of or in an executive position in a social enterprise for the past 3 years; and
- their social enterprise is a benchmark for sustainability, community development and livelihood generation.

After inviting various individuals, the research gathered information from six individuals compliant with the requirements, which conforms with the sample size requirements of Creswell (1998) and Morse (1994) in qualitative phenomenological research. Four of these leaders came from organizations that started as non-government organizations but later became social enterprises, while two started their organizations with the direct intent of a social enterprise. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, identity of the informants and organizations are withheld.

**Instruments**

The research produced a semi-structured interview guide of open-ended questions in Filipino. The research pilot tested the guide for review and feedback. The questions focused on:

- how they began as leaders in the social enterprise;
- critical events relevant in their leadership experience;
- important people in their leadership experience;
- conceptualization of what is a social enterprise;
- internal and external drivers and challenges to the leadership exercise;
- skills and competencies of a social enterprise leader; and
- their vision for the future of the social enterprise.
An Informed Consent Form was also created, gave, discussed and signed prior interviews in accordance to ethical requisites.

Procedure
The consent form was shown, read and explained to the interviewees, clarifying the purpose of the entire research. Interviews lasted for an hour to an hour and a half and ran in the presence of a research assistant. The questions were asked in English, and participants replied in English or Filipino. The same research assistant digitally recorded and transcribed the interviews, which was reviewed by the main proponent and another peer reviewer, triangulating validity. The qualitative research acknowledged reflexivities, and a detailed report was created outlining the paper trail of the research process. In acquiescence to qualitative research protocol, the data were presented back to the interviewees for affirmation, increasing research validity.

Analysis procedure
The data analysis method fulfilled the methodological guidelines on descriptive phenomenology, which brackets all past knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation (Willig, 2008). Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) provide detailed guidelines for descriptive phenomenological research:

- obtain a concrete description of the phenomenon;
- adopt the phenomenological attitude towards the phenomenon;
- read the entire description to gain an impression of the whole;
- reread the description and identify ‘meaning units’ capturing different aspects of the whole;
- identify and make explicit the psychological significance of each meaning unit; and
- articulate the general structure of the experience of the phenomenon.

This was repeated across each transcript in an iterative process.

Results
The results presented here showcase findings generated after iterative analysis of data. Ten themes were generated common across the interviews, encapsulating facets deemed necessary by social enterprise leaders, producing a processual leadership development framework. The results report sample verbatim responses participants gave to the questions with their codes and line number in parenthesis.

Self-reflection
This refers to an awareness of one’s own strengths and weaknesses, owning one’s personal philosophy and acknowledging limitations and challenges. In “periods of discovery,” there came about a “grounding” of their own persona, with a comprehension of their identity in comparison to others. The process allowed them to see their “meaning” and anchoring philosophies in life, accepting their limitations and finding means overcome these:

That was what I would call my period of discovery. I was trying to discover myself, where I was good at, where were my weaknesses, and how could I compensate for my weaknesses (Ca, 29).

I have to seek answers beginning with myself (Me, 129).
So I searched for the meaning in my life and my grounded purpose. Maybe it’s because we were also children of our times (Lo, 145).

I’d like to say I’m a bit different from all the other social entreps because when I started, it was actually like a normal business. But it was always at the back of my mind, if things do well, then I will help people out (Ch, 21).

**Values**

This refers to an important anchor pivotal to the person, a guiding principle to help steer the leader in making decisions affecting the enterprise. It is a sense of discerning between what is “right and wrong”, formed from awareness of their “character” through other institutions or people such as education which shaped their “ethics” as leader:

As long as you have a very clear sense of right and wrong then you’ll do well (Co, 94).

This is the important foundation in my leadership evolvement. Effective and efficient, ethical leader, having character and competence (Pa, 14).

I underwent 27 sessions of values formations. And finally, sign an agreement, a covenant that there will no gambling or drinking, or getting into drugs (Me, 40).

[The Jesuit] will instill in us the ethical values [...] one way or another I got involved in this non-profit. I guess it kind of evolved from there (Ch, 342).

**Change in mindset**

It was apparent this was a decisive point when leaders had a “paradigm shift”, listening to their individual calling and actualizing a change of heart. To them, this was influenced by the environment, important people or through introspection. For the respondents, a person may self-reflect and hold values, but without the paradigm shift, the learnings would plainly remain cognitive. This change made them go decisively “out of the old mentalities” and “create solutions with other people”:

And since my development model happens to be a pattern after the life of the Master Builder, who is the world’s most popular squatter, with a construction worker as a father, I realized that I have to get out of my comfort zones, you know? Out of my old mentalities to really enter the world and create solutions with others (Me, 2).

That your drive for happiness is not from material things. And that you create solutions with other people in a way that makes them happy. Not just spiritually in a theological sense, but because you know your place in the bigger scheme of things (Co, 173-4).

Then it was a decision to go into service (Ca, 2).

**Social responsibility**

As respondent leaders become self-aware and accept the impetus of change, social responsibility steps in, raising the bar of social awareness. It becomes an obligation they should act to “benefit” society, where people are accosted as “equals”. Thus, acting is a perceived duty leaders must perform. From the intrapersonal concept of values and change
in mindset, this becomes key in looking outside themselves and comprehend their obligations to the society:

I consider poverty as evil. As a Church person, I should be in the forefront of liberating the poor from poverty and misery. That’s when my leadership started (Pa, 4).

That our products are made by Filipino hands, using indigenous ingredients, that really benefit a lot of rural communities and provide higher wages for the poor coming from Payatas and other, former slum communities (Me, 117).

What makes me better is that I am more educated than most in society, but in terms of being a person, we are equal, and that makes me think what can I do to work for the benefit of society (Ch, 151).

Visioning for the future
Once the social responsibility sets in, a sense of “direction”, long-term goals and plans for the future is formed to give respondent leaders a sense of “focus” on their entrepreneurial activities. For the respondents, they envision social enterprise to continue aiding in “nation building and community development”. They envision their intentions for the enterprise and the community, and their actions are strategically aligned to these objectives. They even forecast social enterprise as “the normal business” model for all future enterprises:

My focus and goal is to produce things that last, and to enjoy a quality of life beneficial for all (Co, 170).

I realized unless you have a vision, you don’t have a clear direction. And so my purpose is to end poverty in the Philippines, within one generation (Me, 6-7).

Because I see the farmers and the social entrepreneurs will be the new wealth creators in our country [. . .] soon it is the farmers and social entrepreneurs (Me, 100).

I think social enterprise in the Philippines will grow. And there are organizations promoting social enterprise. These will push social enterprise in the Philippines to aid in nation building (Pa, 126).

For me, I think eventually there will be no more distinction for social enterprises. There will be no more social enterprise but instead that would be the normal business (Ch, 298).

Social mission
Formed with vision is the social mission of the social enterprise leader. This becomes the “purpose” and “strategy”, leading to an alignment in goal, purpose and action. It is a “social choice”, pegged on a model leaders find affinity:

You have a social mission, a purpose to serve, to make the lives of the community better than when you found them. Your strategy is the enterprise. The enterprise will give you the resources to be able to continue that mission. If your social mission is not clear then it does not matter whether you have a good business or not because you don’t have a mission (Co, 138-139).

And I became a servant-leader following Jesus Christ, with Mark 10:45 as inspiration, “I came not to be served, but to serve, and offer my life for the ransom of many” (Pa, 8).
Social enterprise is about making a choice. You can go up the corporate ladder so to speak, but it is a social choice to work with farmers instead. All my actions were aligned to that (Lo, 5).

**Innovation and creativity**
The participants mentioned the critical competencies of innovation and creativity, to “create new products” and “new solutions to solve community problems”. The products and outputs of the social enterprise must be “pioneering” enough to entice commercial sustenance and yet able to solve problems in the society:

We lack in creativity and innovation, so it is vital for me to have these two in order to find new solutions to solve community problems (Pa, 58).

This office has pioneering and creating unique systems as its interest. Meaning, what hasn’t been done we try do. We invest in all the hardships because pioneering is an important lesson for social enterprises (Co, 110).

Creating new product lines are critical for this endeavor as I know I have many competitors, so my chocolate products have to be unique and different from the mainstream (Ch, 69).

**Financial acuity**
An enterprise must survive as a business; thus, this theme focuses on skills that “ensure financial profitability” while balancing social mission. By ensuring the enterprise earns, there will be “continued success” for both entrepreneur and community. This theme highlighted necessary skills required for the business to prosper:

I realized I lack in management know-how. I think I have the character, but lack in competence. And I realized in the long run, in order to be effective, efficient, and ethical, I have to be better as a leader for continued success (Pa, 12).

I still always have to worry about, you know, our monthly profit and losses to ensure financial profitability, what have you (Ch, 173).

When you show big business that it makes good business sense to invest with us in bringing people out of poverty, because it expands the market and when they put their name, you know (Me, 64).

**Networking and collaboration**
This focused on “partnerships” with “government” and other institutions and the ability to improve bureaucratic processes with political sensitivity. Social enterprise has many stockholders from community to business partners to board members to co-workers. Added to these are local and national government regulations that may control the enterprise directions and processes. Knowing how to manage these stockholders are vital to business success.

We believe in meaningful partnerships with government […] Look for partners. Find out what they’re saying, find out what their intentions are. Find out about possibilities of working together. And chances are somebody will respond as they do respond often (Co, 153-57).

So somehow, we learned to do things ourselves. Then whenever there is opportunity to work with local government units, they help us (Lo, 213).
I know that I need others. I need others to solve a problem. I cannot do it alone so I need to convince other people (Ca, 172).

The other thing is that it has to be a multi-stakeholder approach leveraging resources. Somebody donates land, a big corporation donates houses, then the poor put in the sweat, I get volunteers from schools and from other NGOs. I get the local government to build the roads and water system (Me, 46).

**Future leader development**

This final theme looks forward and highlights the role of the leader on planning and “developing new leaders” and “participatory development” for the enterprise through understanding individual strengths and areas for growth:

There will be new leaders. I will no longer be part of the organization. I will consider it a yardstick of my success if after a few years others can step up and I am no longer required. I need to step away so others with more energy can take over (Co, 187).

We train the community. And return to the community in form of talent, value adding service, or profit sharing [...] We develop new leaders (Ca, 157).

New leaders can work with us, and we contribute to their labor. We create participatory development (Lo, 284).

Looking at the journey of these social enterprise leaders, it becomes apparent all respondents commenced their social enterprise leadership with what is integral to them. Admittedly some of them professed they did not see themselves becoming social entrepreneurs, as they had their own business, professions and careers. However, what triggered is the search for meaning and development within the context of Philippine society and the increasing poverty. Thus, the intrinsic push to aid other people appeared within a business mindset. This pivotal change transformed social enterprise leaders to look beyond themselves and comprehend more the social context they are embedded in. The turn to social enterprise, according to them, required their values as moral compass and an awareness of the possible socially oriented roles they can partake to contribute to society. This awareness came, according to them, from being updated with issues transpiring all over the country through the help of technology. Of course, this shift to social enterprises was not easy, and demanded the fundamental support from colleagues and family members to guarantee they can manage the transition from their prior careers to that of becoming social enterprise leaders.

Respondents mentioned the skills needed for the social enterprise were learned early on in their personal careers. Working with people, financial management skills, innovative ideation and strategic human resource planning were directly applicable to their social enterprise leadership exercise regardless of their pre-social entrepreneurship beginnings. These skills were inculcated to them through various experience, direct trainings and observation from other leader models. Some revealed these skills were honed better while in the social enterprise as they worked hands-on within their organizations to safeguard its survival, sustainability and social commitment. Faced with difficulties arising from managing social enterprises and adjusting into leading a venture, most of the respondents said these same skills aided them in navigating through the entire gamut of these processes. Guidance from mentors and role models also facilitated in the leadership exercise as they provided sounding boards and provided consultations for their multiple decisions.
Analysis and discussion
The development of the themes as a journey – starting from internal to the person, to that of working with people and the community, toward the future of the enterprise – suggests how social enterprises must be led. The processes are depicted in Figure 1.

Developing social enterprise leadership
At the heart of the model of the social enterprise leadership development are moments of Self-Reflection and acknowledgement of Values. Here, the leader pivots on an internal transformation, where Self-Reflection is central to deepening their cognitive analysis, as guided by what one deems important and relevant. To be an effective change agent, the interior drive of the leader reflects and assesses on two layers: their own capabilities as individual and their notions of the social context. This allows principles of conviction to propel the social enterprise leader to assume agentic roles as aligned to their Values. Thus, Self-Reflection and the Values one holds supports and impels a paradigm shift.

This directs the leader to a Change in Mindset or an internal paradigm shift towards the initiatives of social enterprise creation. The leader desires social change by looking at the social context where one is embedded, and the epiphanies from Self-Reflection and the guiding Values bolster the Change in Mindset of the social enterprise leaders, as they operate within their context.

It necessitates the leader to respond to internal transitions within the milieu of relating with people. This agentic movement thrusts the leader to move from within to without and exercise leadership in a forward motion embedded in the social context. Social Responsibility is this outward expression of agentic commitment for change and engagement for the community and larger society, becoming an imperative for the social enterprise leader to translate the conversion happening within the individual for the benefit of the society. Without this shift to action, realizations in Self-Reflection remain abstracted.

This flows into Visioning for the Future, where the leader communicates the paradigm to inspire others towards a social goal. This occurs on two levels, from the perspective of the enterprise itself, and from the perspective of social enterprise as business model. In the first level, the leader formulates plans to hone entrepreneurial activities towards profitability, sustainability and continued institutional improvement. It leads to the second layer of visioning, where social enterprises become a way of life in national commerce, permeating corporate business and becoming contributory to national development. This wider scope of

![Figure 1. Social enterprise leadership development framework](image-url)
Vision is central to leadership as it shifts from the micro perspective of business advancement to institutionalizing social enterprise on the macro level.

The vision is tied to Social Mission. The mission is an extension and concrete application of the enterprise vision, translating the goal into action. Leaders reiterate the end goal of the social enterprise is the betterment of the community in general, and the social enterprise is the key strategy in achieving this. Respondents warned obscurity in goals merit vagueness as well in purpose. However, aided with Self-Reflection and empowered with Values, the leader can find alignment to their intent for the social enterprise and its utility to serve following ideological principles and models.

From here, the social leadership development framework turns into the pragmatic by defining critical competencies essential for social enterprise leaders: Innovation and Creativity, Financial Acuity, Networking and Collaboration and Future Leader Development.

Innovation and Creativity is a business imperative which operates on both product innovation and community solutions. To become sustainable, leaders have to sell valuable pioneering products to the buying public, allowing the enterprise to survive against big-time players in the industry. At the same time, these products must be beneficial to the community by solving issues, such as addressing health concerns. By having this unique edge in their product lines, social enterprise leaders construct advantage over competitors, raising the bar for excellence. Financial Acuity involves entrepreneurial technical skills, know-how in marketing and numerical ability. From a business lens, this competency is fundamental for the long-term success and sustainability of the enterprise. However, this is not merely focused on generating income and should not outweigh the social goals and mission of the enterprise. With this in mind, the business venture balances its two natures of commerce and service.

Another competency is Networking and Collaboration, building bridges and solidifying alliances with national and local government, non-profit organizations, media, church, civil society and international bodies. As a business venture, leaders must know how to navigate through the political and bureaucratic processes of various institutions directly affecting them. This political sensitivity and stockholder management within and without is essential to formulating deals and treaties utilitarian for the enterprise. The last of the mentioned competencies, Future Leader Development, looks forward at the future of the social enterprise. There exists an internal requirement of succession planning and development of future leaders, assuring enterprise continuity among competent members of the next generation to help create a viable future.

**Contribution to current literature**

This study shows how leadership processes are understood from the specificity of social enterprise. This paper corroborates previous studies yet offers a different look on leadership development unique to social ventures. Though phenomenology assumes uniqueness because of context specificity and its resultant model atypical and contextual, it is relevant to check the theorized model vis-à-vis current literature to validate the research's contribution.

Looking at literature, the framework is supported by other studies. Bass (2001) defines change agent as “an individual who guides the process of group or organizational change” (p. 1210). The very identity and core of the social enterprise leader as change agent involves a change in mindset, a paradigm shift for the community. However, this transformation occurs when the leader understands his/her self-concept or the way people perceive and evaluate themselves (Bass, 2001). This is done through self-reflection as a deepened
consciousness evaluation of social contributions, making the leader not an enclosed deep thinker but an engaged and caring change agent immersed in a social situation. Paired with this consciousness are values people consider right, good and important (Bass, 2001). Self-reflection and values are echoed in authentic leadership which includes self-awareness and internalized moral perspective (Walumbwa et al., 2008). This refers to how the leader is cognizant of oneself and other people, while internalized moral perspective refers to behaviors guided by internal moral standards as opposed to behaviors based on external forces such as peers, organizational and societal pressures.

Buttgereit (1932) noted a turn to social responsibility is required of leaders. In fact, commitment for social issues is usually borne with a sense of emotional affection and sense of responsibility to sustain an environmental and/or social cause (Keogh and Polonsky, 1998). Miller et al. (2012) highlight the importance of compassion as a pro-social and others-oriented factor which motivate social enterprise leadership to look beyond themselves to social goals. On this reading, these leaders undertake social goals as the firm’s objectives (Peredo and McLean, 2006), affirming the leadership responsibility of agentic change.

As leaders move outward as change agents, they are driven by compelling social vision that encapsulates a strong sense of obligation and destiny towards fulfilling a basic human need (Barendsen and Gardner, 2004). This vision drives the ability to see opportunities beyond the present with the objective of extending the stewardship arm (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010). A visionary ability is correlated with positivism and future perspective, producing a continuous effort of engaging the entrepreneur towards articulating a vision for the organization in a strategic manner. Paired with this is its mission, where the social enterprise highlights pro-social motives that drives it and emphasizes social outcomes. The culture and ethos of the social enterprise are based on principles of voluntarism, ethical behavior and a mission with a social cause (Chell, 2007), which distinguishes social enterprise leaders from business leaders with the former finding social mission fundamental. This is a mission of social improvement that cannot be reduced to private benefits (Dees, 1998a). With the end goal in mind, it is imperative the mission answers how to achieve that end goal.

Social enterprise leaders need to be agile and creative in shaping collective social solutions (Elkington and Hatigan, 2008). Being innovative and creative unlocks value by creating a platform for sustainable solutions through a synergistic combination of capabilities, products, processes and technology (Auersweld, 2009). Innovative processes and technologies are important for them to create a social and strategic fit for products and services to tap into underdeveloped, uncharted markets (Hart and Christensen, 1992). As leaders, they encourage organizational creativity and innovation by designing the organization to foster an environment conducive for creativity (Agbor, 2008).

The financial perspective originates from the view where entrepreneurs seize opportunities as agents to maximize financial wealth (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010), as social enterprises are pro-socially and financially motivated in what Emerson and Twersky (1996) describes as double bottom line. Social enterprises emphasize on the creation of both social returns as well as financial returns (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010), and these profits are reinvested in the business to serve social policy initiatives. Prior research support leaders must have financial acuity to ensure the enterprise is a financially stable venture to continue its mission. Creating a fit between investor values and community needs is important (Dees, 1998a).

Social networks, both formal and informal, form an invaluable resource to social enterprise leaders for advice, human resources, innovative ideas, financial and emotional support (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010). Network ties enable information sharing to create
innovative and relevant solutions (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010) and uses even personal contacts to build support for their mission. The mission is achieved, therefore, through networking and collaboration with other entrepreneurs, investors, community, NGOs and governments, which facilitate the generation of sustainable outcomes (Wheeler et al., 2005). As Dees (1998a) stated, social enterprise leaders leverage limited resources by drawing in partners and collaborating with others.

The last theme, Future Leader Development, looks at the sustainability of the social enterprise through staff empowerment. Building and maintaining employee motivation and commitment to the organization is important for social enterprises (Prabhu, 1999). Developing commitment creates citizenship within the context of social entrepreneurship, and the individual may consider social responsibility as an opportunity to ameliorate one’s intrinsic social vision within other personal goals (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010). Developmental activities could be through coaching, mentoring, job rotation, special assignments and action learning (Yukl, 2010).

The findings echo the analysis of Jackson et al. (2018) on their “systematic assessment of the distinctive challenges and opportunities associated with creating leadership within the realm of social enterprise” (p. 71) or their “Six Ps” of leadership based on Grint’s (2005) leadership study. It contributes as well to the theorizing of the nature of social enterprises through the behavioral lens of its leaders.

When understanding social enterprise leadership through person, the “underlying assumption is that a particular person can and should create leadership because of their particular characteristics and qualities such as superior knowledge, skill and experience or special values, beliefs, motives and charismatic presence” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 75). This is echoed in the theorized leadership development framework, with leadership rooted from Self-Reflection and the intrinsic Values germane to the leader. Looking at the proposed four critical competencies of Innovation and Creativity, Financial Acuity, Networking and Collaboration and Future Leader Development, it is apparent social entrepreneur leaders tend to be quite similar to economic entrepreneurs save they tend to focus more on social rather than economic value creation (Chell, 2007).

By looking at social enterprise through position, the social enterprise sector is “characterized by a strong commitment to challenging the status quo” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 77) and is reflected in the sense of Social Responsibility as obligatory to perform for the benefit of the society, functioning as “an ‘organizational compass’ […] of how a social enterprise is likely to develop over time” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 77). More than focusing on themselves in a top-down approach in leadership, respondents mentioned Collaboration as essential in follower compliance or what Ridley-Duff (2010) states as adopting collective communitarian approaches to governance. Ebrahim et al. (2014) stressed this by saying leadership governance in social enterprise provides a vital safeguard for ensuring its dual commitment to social and commercial ends, and this is depicted in the theorized developmental framework through the duty-bound vanguard of Social Responsibility more than the individual’s agentic role.

This flows into the Vision and Mission in the theorized developmental framework, which corresponds to what Jackson et al. (2018) mention as social enterprise leadership through purpose. In this light, “social enterprise must effectively formulate and communicate a mutually compelling purpose to the employees and volunteers of the organization [and that] the social enterprise must appropriately ‘sell’ the agreed-upon purpose to a variety of different stakeholders […] to balance both commercial and social ends” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 82). In the theorized developmental framework, the purpose of leadership is the formulation of a compelling strategic future for the enterprise paired with pro-social motives.
emphasizing dual outcomes of profitability and sustainability and creation of fundamental social change.

The facet of Networking and Collaboration looks at the collective nature of social enterprise leadership as process. This relational view recognizes leadership as a phenomenon generated in the interactions among people (Fairhurst, 2009). At its core is the assumption that leadership is co-constructed in social interaction that “generally enables groups of people to work together in meaningful ways” (Day, 2000, p. 582) allowing social interaction, power and organizing to aid in the creation of successful sustainable social enterprise leadership (Dey and Teasdale, 2013). This collective method, in the “spirit of quid pro quo, plays an active role in promoting leadership development and education” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 79) as reflected in the theorized development framework as Future Leader Development.

Two lenses in Jackson et al. (2018) study that were not reflected in the model were social enterprise leadership through performance and through place. The theorized development framework focused more on the processes deemed essential by the respondents in becoming a social enterprise leader and did not showcase “a quantitative “results-oriented” dimension [nor] the qualitative critical task of acquiring and maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of the social enterprise’s stakeholders” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 80). As the research focused more on the individual’s skill sets needed before becoming a social enterprise leader, it did not locate performance measures which occur during the leadership exercise. With regards to place, all of the respondents geographically came from one region in the same country, and they did not discuss their social enterprises within the socio-economic system, as the research focused on individual prerequisites needed to become leaders. They did not analyze their own “economic behavior within its historical, temporal, institutional, spatial and social contexts” (Jackson et al., 2018, p. 81), as they focused more on their behaviors prior becoming leaders. These two lenses can be further analyzed in future studies.

**Replicability and validity**
This paper conjectures complete replication is difficult. It is more appropriate to ask whether the framework, if applied to a similar situation, will allow prediction of phenomena. It is also argued if the theory does not support existing literature, but the variation can be explained by substantive differences in research situation, then the theory could be said as reliable (Parry, 1998). The paper complied to Barbour’s (2001) suggested procedures in improving depth, breadth and sensitivity of qualitative research. Triangulation was used to corroborate information by utilizing more than one data source. Having more than one analyst review and validate information and analysis aided in comparing researchers’ coding. The research adhered to protocols of qualitative research when the gathered data was presented back to the interviewees for feedback. Finally, the research highlights individuals rarely given attention as essential sources of leadership theory.

**Reflexivities**
Researchers are part of the research endeavor rather than objective observers, and their values must be acknowledged as part of the outcome (Mills et al., 2006), known as reflexivities. Willig (2008) stipulated forms of reflexivities. For personal reflexivity, given a background in psychology, the transcripts were viewed in light of human behavior and mental processes. Epistemologically, utilizing face-to-face interviews allowed a personal approach, highlighting individualized stories. Finally, participants were comfortable in replying in any language.
Limitations

I recognize limitations in this research. First, given the small sample size, the findings would not be generalizable to all social enterprise leaders. The six final respondents may neither be representative of all kinds of sectors in Philippine social enterprises, nor representative of regional differences in the country. Phenomenology as a method also requires interpretation from the researcher, making phenomenological reduction an important component to reduce biases, assumptions and pre-conceived ideas about the phenomenon, yet detecting these biases can be difficult. Despite these methodological limitations, the research explored a social enterprise leadership development framework and contributed to furthering knowledge in leadership. Specifically, this research contributes to the knowledge being built on studying leadership in the Philippines.

This paper used an exploratory framework, moving from quantitative to qualitative methods in generating a leadership development model for social enterprises. This shift highlighted processes within their context, resulting in a model grounded from experience, appreciative of multiple contexts and their interaction on the leaders inside and outside. By doing this, the approach provided a perspective on how leaders are formed in social enterprises. Major contribution of this research is the model itself and the process of the outward shift of the leader after a pivotal intrinsic change. This research echoes earlier studies of leadership even from the global North. In abiding to the requirements and principles of qualitative research, the study strengthens its reliability and validity. In the future, the framework can be validated quantitatively which could offer additional insights. In terms of implications for practice, the research highlights competencies essential to developing social enterprise leaders. Creating programs aligned with these can help ensure leaders are prepared to bring to fruition their social ventures.

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**Corresponding author**
Emerald Jay D. Ilac can be contacted at: eilac@ateneo.edu

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Social entrepreneurship and sense-making: evidence from the Global Social Benefit Institute

Omid Sabbaghi and Gerald F. Cavanagh, S.J.
University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit, Michigan, USA

Abstract

Purpose – The study aims to provide an empirical investigation of social enterprises in the context of experiential learning. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the interplay between faith-based principles and the processes of opportunity recognition and exploitation through an in-depth, qualitative study of social enterprises offered through the Global Social Benefit Institute (GSBI).

Design/methodology/approach – In this study, student experiences with social entrepreneurship are examined and their subsequent reflections are analyzed. Applying the Gioia methodology to the sample of student reflection data, this study enriches the growing literature on sense-making by looking closely at how student entrepreneurs engage their own faith-based education in helping their teams, beneficiaries and stakeholders “make sense” of a social change opportunity.

Findings – This study finds evidence of variability in the elaboration of the faith-based principles when sampling on the social needs of affection, behavioral confirmation and status.

Originality/value – The results suggest a role for faith-based sense-making when confronting the realities of social change opportunities.

Keywords Experiential learning, Social entrepreneurship, Social needs, Applied ethics, Sense-making, Global Social Benefit Institute

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship is an important ingredient in today’s business education environment and contributes significantly to the overall well-being of society. Solving business problems for underserved and resource-constrained communities depends on how well modern-day business leaders understand the impact of their products and services. In today’s global economy, there is a growing need for business leaders to adopt products, services and strategies that allow for increases in social value as well as economic value. Consequently, social entrepreneurship provides an important framework for focusing on human needs and understanding social equity. The main objective of this paper is to examine the ways in which social entrepreneurship connects ethics, institutional values and management education.

In our study, we examine the interplay between faith-based principles, such as dignity of the human person, and the processes of opportunity recognition and exploitation in social
entrepreneurship through immersions with social enterprises offered through the Global Social Benefit Institute of Santa Clara University. In a search of young entrepreneurs’ reflection essays from Santa Clara University’s Global Social Benefit Institute between 2012 and 2013, we identify 19 accounts pertaining to 5 unique social enterprises. Using the Gioia methodology, we examine each account to understand how the young entrepreneurs give different sense to their immersion experiences, and attribute their reflections to underlying Catholic social teaching (CST) principles. When analyzing the data, we better understand how the young entrepreneurs “make sense” of a social change opportunity, thereby enriching the growing literature on sense-making, especially the emotional and spiritual angles.

Our results indicate that the social entrepreneurs make sense of the social change opportunities largely on the CST principles of solidarity, rights and responsibilities and dignity of the human person. In addition, we find differences in elaboration of the faith-based principles across the social enterprises when sampling on social needs. Thus, we argue that interpretations matter as students confront the realities in the social change opportunity context, and that the emotional and spiritual angles of sense-making should be considered in practical and scholarly work.

2. Literature review
Social entrepreneurship addresses social needs by catalyzing social change and creating social value. In a recent study, Choi and Majumdar (2014) propose that the concept of social entrepreneurship comprises five integral components, and envelope the social entrepreneur component, social innovation component, social entrepreneurship organization component and market orientation component by social value creation. In a related study, Zahra et al. (2009) state that:

> Social entrepreneurship encompasses the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities in order to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organizations in an innovative manner.

Elkington and Hartigan (2008) emphasize that social enterprises serve human beings, while Kickul and Lyons (2012) suggest that social entrepreneurship focuses on solving social problems. Similarly, Bacq et al. (2015) suggest that social entrepreneurs pursue both social and financial value creation to address societal problems. Gordon et al. (2018) argue that social enterprise plays a key role for individuals and communities to work together to build their capabilities and resilience. In a seminal study, Dees (1998) defines social entrepreneurs as change agents that adopt a mission to create and sustain social value. Mendoza-Abarca et al. (2015) state that social enterprises exhibit greater potential to solve complex social problems by purposefully addressing them and Hechavarria and Welter (2015) suggest that social ventures are, on average, considerably more innovative than other kinds of start-ups. While numerous studies attempt to define social entrepreneurship, there is an absence of research that relates social enterprises to the growing literature on sense-making. Furthermore, much of the discussion in the sense-making and entrepreneurship literatures is not faith-based, thereby providing the motivation for the present study.

This study is most closely related to two strands of research. First, the present article bridges the gap between social entrepreneurship, faith and applied business ethics in the context of experiential learning. Our study also contributes to the existing literature on the integration of emotional, ethical and spiritual learning in business education. In a seminal study, Cavanagh (1999) states that spirituality in business education allows for a more integrated perspective, and that faith-based institutions are integrating mission, spirituality and service learning in their curricula. Service learning helps students to focus on the
growth and well-being of people and communities, thereby underlining the importance of servant leadership. Delbecq et al. (2010) propose that service learning helps students develop important experiential sensitivities while Guitián (2015) argues that servant leadership shares with CST its belief in the attitude of service in business relationships and the need to express service through virtues that show respect for human dignity. In a separate, yet related work, Petrovskaia and Mirakyan (2018) propose a conceptual connection between social entrepreneurship and servant leadership, underlining qualities such as altruism, integrity, trust in others and empathy. Our study supplements existing theoretical work on social movements, social capital, servant leadership and CST with empirical evidence. Our study further expands on the role of CST principles by responding to the suggestion made by Dacin et al. (2011), who argue that the most meaningful way of understanding social entrepreneurship, both empirically and theoretically, is through a focus on outcomes and context. That is, we place a strong emphasis on assessing immersion experiences and their impact on the participating students, as evidenced by the students’ reflection essays.

Immersion experiences, integral to a Jesuit Catholic education, challenge business students to engage the realities of the world while reflecting on the values of human dignity and servant leadership. Such immersion experiences help business students develop sensitivities to those whose economic backgrounds are very different from his or her own (Delbecq et al., 2010). As Murphy et al. (2012) point out, a goal of experiential learning is encouraging students to reflect upon the complexities of responsible business education. Similarly, Caza et al. (2015) find that holistic and experiential learning tools are related to improved business school student attitudes and confidence. Furthermore, immersion experiences within social enterprises are reflective of experiential learning. For example, Rae (2012) argues that it is important to connect action learning with new venture creation and entrepreneurial learning. In their recent work, Secundo et al. (2017) explore how entrepreneurial learning processes between entrepreneurs and university students enhance entrepreneurial practices and development, while Schaeffer and Matt (2016) examine the case of the University of Strasbourg and how it contributes to the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Similarly, Johannisson (2016) argues that academic education in entrepreneurship provides the necessary competencies when allowing students to travel across the boundaries of the university. Sud et al. (2009) argue that social entrepreneurship is effective in addressing social ills when partnerships with social institutions, such as universities, exist. Entrepreneurial learning processes include the learning processes of experiential and contextual learning, experimenting and acting and thinking and reflecting. As Mair and Marti (2006) point out, assessing social performance and impact is one of the greatest challenges for practitioners and researchers in social entrepreneurship. Thus, our study also complements the work of Murphy and Coombes (2009), who argue that university entrepreneurship centers best serve as a venue for examining social entrepreneurs and conducting research on social entrepreneurial discovery. Similar to Henley et al. (2017), our paper highlights the relevance of student leadership in the context of entrepreneurship development.

Second, our research provides seminal findings to the literature on sense-making and social entrepreneurship through a spiritual lens. In a seminal study, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) develop the sense-making framework for understanding strategy. As Weick et al. (2005) point out, sense-making focuses attention on the interplay between action and interpretation and involves shaping current interpretations of past events. There are few studies that integrate sense-making in entrepreneurship. For example, Hoyte et al. (2016) provide a framework of the sense-making processes inherent in the entrepreneurial process and draw on case study evidence from student entrepreneurs working with venture ideas in a university incubator. The latter study suggests that entrepreneurs consider their experiences in the social context in which they occur. In a separate study, Valliere (2017) develops a model of individual sense-
making that explains the commonality of beliefs in entrepreneurship. Chandra (2016) provides an understanding of the ways in which social entrepreneurs give sense to their work by introducing a rhetoric-orientation view of social entrepreneurship and confirms that the rhetoric of social entrepreneurs is more other, stakeholder engagement and justification-oriented and less self-oriented than the rhetoric of business entrepreneurs. Hall et al. (2012) examine empirical data based on 16 interviews and find that motivations for a social enterprise were empathetic in nature. By focusing our empirical analysis on student reflections, we expand upon the emotional and spiritual angles of the collective sense-making literature. In a recent study, Schutte and Adamczyk (2016) consider the role of religion as a sense-making tool and provide empirical evidence suggesting that spiritual sense-making could have consequences for individuals’ behavior and, thus, shape future actions. Hence, we enrich the growing literature on sense-making through close examination of how young entrepreneurs engage their own faith-based education in helping their teams, beneficiaries and stakeholders “make sense” of a social change opportunity. In particular, we examine how student entrepreneurs give radically different sense to their teams and, therefore, alter which social needs are pursued as well as how the social needs are pursued. We believe that it is important to study these approaches as they can have an important impact on the reflexive evolution of the values of those who participate in them.

In this study, we examine our sample social enterprises based on social needs that are fulfilled by relationships. We delineate social needs based on the theory of social production functions (SPF) (see for instance, Lindenberg, 1996, 2001; Ormel, 2002; Ormel et al., 1999). According to Steverink and Lindenberg (2006), there are three social needs that emerge from the theory of social production: affection; behavioral confirmation; and status. In separate studies, Van Bruggen (2001) provide strong evidence for these three social needs, while Nieboer et al. (2005) endorse these social needs in a confirmatory factor analysis. These social needs are fulfilled by social relationships in different ways. In particular, Steverink and Lindenberg (2006) state that affection is fulfilled by relationships that give you the feeling that you are liked, loved, understood and furthermore, know that your feelings are reciprocated. In other words, affection reflects what kind of person you are and the love you get for being who you are. Behavioral confirmation, on the other hand, is fulfilled by relationships that give you the feeling of doing the “right” thing in the eyes of others and results primarily from your actions and what you do (Steverink and Lindenberg, 2006). Behavioral confirmation includes doing things well, contributing to a common goal and being part of a functional group. Status is the third social need and is fulfilled by relationships that give you the feeling that you are independent, realize yourself and being known for skills or assets (Steverink and Lindenberg, 2006). That is, status reflects what you have or can do. The Global Social Benefit (GSB) Fellowships that we examine in this study are Team Anudip-iMerit, Team Equal Access, Team Solar Sister/Angaza/Kiva, Team Solar Ear and Team Fundacion Paraguaya. We select these case studies in light of the availability of student reflection data through the Santa Clara University website. Moreover, the aforementioned case studies comprise the earliest evidence that is available on the Global Social Benefit Institute website, spanning years 2012 through 2013. We describe these Fellowships and the underlying social needs that are being addressed.

3. Methodology and data
3.1 Global Social Benefit Institute
Santa Clara University exercises social entrepreneurship through their Global Social Benefit Institute (GSBI), housed in the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship. The GSBI engages Silicon Valley’s expertise, products, services and business leaders in tackling business
problems faced by the poor in resource-constrained communities. That is, the GSBI leverages the startup expertise and social capital in Silicon Valley in eradicating poverty and promoting social change for the common good. Santos (2013) finds that the GSBI helps socially minded entrepreneurs “to build sustainable, scalable organizations and solve problems for people living in poverty around the world” and additionally, argues that social enterprises related to the GSBI are examples of organizations that develop innovative solutions to social and environmental problems. Kreiner (2014) reports that the GSBI draws on a global network of more than 120 Jesuit universities and that it has impacted the lives of nearly 100 million people in 55 countries. Importantly, GSBI exerts significant positive impact through incubating social enterprises and enabling students to partner with the social enterprises through immersion experiences in marginalized communities across the world. The focus on serving the global poor through its social enterprises highlights the Institute’s commitment to CST principles and fulfills the characteristics of experiential learning.

In terms of curriculum, an important component of the Miller Center’s educational programs is the GSB Fellowship for undergraduate students. The GSB Fellowship is a mentored, field-based study for college juniors and consists of a 6-8 week immersion experience during the summer in a developing country along with two academic quarters of academic research. The duration of the immersion experience, combined with the period of rigorous academic research, is approximately nine months and offers a unique perspective on practical social justice in the Jesuit educational tradition. In most instances, the social enterprises that students partner with are those that have been incubated by the GSBI in the previous years.

Several student-led field projects emerge from the GSB Fellowship on an annual basis. Importantly, the GSB Fellowship provides experiential learning in social venturing. While the sample Fellowships in this study differ from one another in terms of research activities and site locations, the overall portfolio of Fellowship projects addresses important social needs. Thus, for each project, we sample case studies that have been realized and present evidence of student reflections in the form of essays, videos and related media. Such evidence suggests that the social entrepreneurial initiatives fulfill the characteristics of experiential learning and that the activities have an important impact on the reflexive evolution of the values of those who participate in them. Furthermore, such evidence demonstrates the impact it has had on the participating students as well as the affected communities.

3.1.1 Team Anudip-iMerit. In the Team Anudip-iMerit case study, student fellows partner with the social enterprises Anudip and iMerit in 2013. Anudip is a social enterprise that provides skills in the form of human capital, while iMerit is a web-enabled information technology (IT) service company. Both social enterprises focus on the livelihoods of women and youth in impoverished areas of India through IT training. In the case of the Anudip-iMerit Fellowship, student fellows partner with the social enterprises to document the importance and impact of investing in human capital. Specifically, the IT training that these social enterprises provide helps to bring the local people out of poverty, enabling them to gain independence, as well as the ability to help provide education for other family members, such as a brother or sister. In this particular project, student fellows use their skills to create short film documentaries with regards to how the social enterprises, Anudip and iMerit, encourage social change in the field site, namely, in rural and impoverished areas of India. iMerit hires marginalized individuals, who are then endowed with IT skills, to conduct special projects for global firms. For example, one video documents the story of Musarral Jahan, an iMerit Employee and student at a local college in India. In the video documentary, Musarral speaks of how iMerit financially supports her with an income that is
triple the average family income in the rural town of Metiabruz and how she uses the income to pay for her and her brother’s education at a local college, thereby allowing her dream to be fulfilled (Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University, 2014b). Another video documentary provides significant visual evidence of the degree of poverty in rural regions of India and how Anudip helps to improve the livelihoods of the people through training in information technology and the promotion of gender equality (Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University, 2014a). A student fellow further contributes to the investment in human capital by applying her academic competency to create a training guide that covers the basics of HTML and XML. The IT training allows the women and youth to gain digital jobs, thereby creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. Chapman (2014) refers to the IT training as Market Aligned Skills Training (MAST) and further describes in detail the social impact that the Anudip and iMerit model exerts, in terms of personal and professional impact and goals, as well as education and skill development. For example, by using surveys of 150 iMerit employees, the latter study finds that only 10 per cent of employees and their families had a stable income in the five year period prior to working at iMerit.

The evidence suggests that Anudip and iMerit catalyze poor people to become their own agents of change by leveraging their digital and technology backgrounds to improve the lives and communities present in marginalized regions of India. In a related study, Pless and Appel (2012) document an innovative social entrepreneurial approach toward solving sanitation problems in India’s poorest region, and furthermore, how the approach improves health, empowers women and contributes to an equitable and sustainable society where people live in peace and dignity.

In the Team Anudip-iMerit case study, the marginalized are being taught skills that they do not know. Learning and using these skills provide feelings of doing things well, doing the “right” thing in the eyes of others and themselves, as well as being useful and contributing to a common goal. Thus, the Team Anudip-iMerit project reflects behavioral confirmation as the underlying social need.

3.1.2 Team Equal Access. Equal Access is a social enterprise that focuses on the use of mobile technology for communication purposes as well as for generating advertising revenues, thereby achieving both non-profit and for-profit elements. In 2013, Team Equal Access explores the Nepalese market in finding the most appropriate Short Message Service (SMS) platform, identifying market segmentations and collecting information on mobile phone usage.

Equal Access uses technology in catalyzing behavior change through the local level: by using technology and reaching out to millions of individuals there is significant social impact surrounding equal access to radio programming. In Nepal, 90 per cent of people with internet access it through their phones (Donahue, 2013b). Vital life-skills are discussed through the radio and SMS social programming, such as how to interact with other individuals in society. Moreover, individuals are empowered to communicate their needs and feelings with others in discussing difficult issues in an anonymous manner. Importantly, groups of people benefit from the radio programming despite facing oppression or hardships, such as extreme poverty or visual impairment. In particular, the participating students travel to impoverished rural villages of Nepal and comment how people were listening to the radio programming through their mobile phones and how certain social issues were demystified for the village inhabitants. For example, the founder of the listener club in one of the villages spoke about the end of child marriages in their community because of the radio programming offered by Equal Access (Donahue, 2013a). As the radio programming content is created by local people, the listeners are catalyzed to
become agents of their own change. Hence, Team Equal Access offers programming for social transformation. By reaching audiences in remote locations of Nepal, Team Equal Access reflects behavioral confirmation as fulfilled relationships provide the feeling of doing the “right” thing in the eyes of others, resulting from actions and what people do.

3.1.3 Team Solar Sister/Angaza/Kiva. In 2013, student fellows partner with three social enterprises, namely, Solar Sister, Angaza Design and Kiva, to form Team Solar Sister/Angaza/Kiva. Specifically, Solar Sister is a social enterprise that is based in Uganda and specializes in the interaction between household solar technology and woman-centered direct sales networks. Angaza Design develops solar technology that allows customers to purchase energy for their homes with their cell phone. Kiva is an online lending platform for social entrepreneurs, with a mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty via a worldwide network of microfinance institutions.

In the Team Solar Sister/Angaza/Kiva project, the student fellows focus on documenting the social impact resulting from the availability of solar energy products, such as the Solar Sister lantern, to individuals in remote African communities. By using such products, residents in remote African communities harness abundant solar energy and avoid the purchase of scarce and expensive kerosene. In addition to enabling net increases in household income, there is improvement in children’s respiratory health as a result of the transition from kerosene to solar energy. Fellows participating in this project document a wide array of social and economic benefits of solar energy and compile qualitative and quantitative data in understanding their customers and employees. For example, the effects of the Solar Sister lantern range from keeping businesses open longer to educators brightening their homes (Albi et al., 2013). The social benefits of overcoming energy poverty are numerous, empowering society with economic opportunity: as businesses are able to be open longer, this generates additional economic activity, thereby enabling the affected individuals to further support their children. Fellows identified top saleswomen of such solar lighting technologies and developed profiles of families and their living situations, finances and future goals. These profiles were subsequently submitted to Kiva so that they could receive Kiva loans to purchase solar power lamps to sell to their respective communities. The aforementioned social enterprises collectively reflect the social need of status: fulfilled relationships provide independence, self-realization and being known for skills or assets.

3.1.4 Team Solar Ear. Team Solar Ear is a social enterprise that focuses on assisting hearing-impaired people via the creation of an innovative and affordable solar-charged hearing aid. In 2013, Team Solar Ear focuses on the social impact of a solar charged hearing aid, in partnership with Solar Ear Brazil.

In 2013, student fellows participating in the Team Solar Ear project help to create an IT-platform based measurement and evaluation tool (MET) for Solar Ear Brazil so that the social enterprise is able to quantify the social benefit that accrues to individuals receiving hearing aids. The MET, relying on survey design research, is based on health, self-confidence - empowerment, education and work dimensions, and differs from traditional surveys as it specifically targets the measurement of social benefits. Importantly, the MET helps to measure the positive social outcomes of their product over time. Specifically, the MET consists of a series of questions in which survey participants respond on a five-point Likert scale. For example, a sample question asks respondents to describe how the solar-powered hearing aid has affected their education, such as the realization of higher grades, educational goals, opportunities, confidence and interest. As the student fellows point out in their report, such questions assess educational achievement as an outcome or result of the hearing aid usage (Sansone et al., 2013). Another set of questions focus on how the hearing
aid has affected their work or career, in terms of whether the hearing aid users achieve new or better jobs, higher professional goals, more work opportunities, more income, as well as increased confidence, interest and efficiency at work. Similarly, these questions aim to quantify the social benefit related to employment. Thus, in this particular Fellowship, the impact of the hearing aid is evaluated and calibrated through the MET and measures social benefits through changes in educational achievements or goals and improvements in socioeconomic conditions. As the hearing aid provides family members to fulfill relationships in which they are liked, loved and understood, Team Social Ear addresses the social need of affection.

3.1.5 Team Fundacion Paraguaya. In 2012, Team Fundacion Paraguaya was made up of student fellows partnering with the social enterprise Fundacion Paraguaya. Established in 1985, Fundacion Paraguaya is a non-governmental organization in Paraguay that promotes social entrepreneurship through services helping people to overcome poverty, giving small loans to poor people at low interest rates.

In the Team Fundacion Paraguaya project, student fellows experience first-hand how microfinance positively alleviates food insecurity as it stems from inadequate food access and food use. By increasing incomes, Fundacion Paraguaya clients have more money to spend on food. In other words, access to microfinance increases consumption and gives the poor comfort to spend money. There are several positive social effects that stem from enabling microfinance access for the poor in Paraguay. In addition to improving food security, fewer members of society suffer from malnutrition, thereby helping to contribute towards healthier lifestyles and promoting greater resistance to diseases. Additionally, microfinance allows smallholder farmers to experience credit supply effects that large-scale farmers do, thus investing more in inputs for their farms and thereby leading to greater production and food availability (Armstrong, 2012a). In this case study, the aforementioned social enterprise reflects on what one has or can do, and moreover, provides a sense of independence, self-realization and being known for skills or assets. Thus, Team Fundacion Paraguaya addresses the social need of status.

3.2 Empirical methodology

We address our research question about how the student fellows engage their faith-based education in helping their teams, beneficiaries and stakeholders make sense of a social change opportunity through a grounded, interpretative approach. Specifically, we used elements of the Gioia methodology in understanding the immersion experiences of the student fellows through their reflection essays, thereby enabling the voices of the student fellows to be heard. The Gioia methodology promotes grounded theory development through qualitative data analysis (Gioia et al., 2013). In the context of the present study, we developed an understanding of the links between CST principles and social venturing through close examination of how student fellows make sense of the social change opportunities. Specifically, we investigate whether student reflections are anchored in faith-based principles, thereby providing a context for the realized immersion experiences. That is, we examine the interplay between CST principles and the processes of opportunity recognition and application in social entrepreneurship through the Gioia methodology.

In our study, we analyze 19 reflection essays from 14 different student participants that are immersed in 5 different countries. We present a summary of our immersion, reflection and participant observation data in Table I. Specifically, for each case study, we present the host country, the underlying social need, the corresponding number of student essays and the number of participating student fellows. We conduct a qualitative data analysis of the
student reflection essays through RQDA, a user-friendly qualitative research package for R software, which facilitates the analysis of qualitative data.

In the first step of our empirical analysis, student reflection essays are imported as text files in RQDA. For each reflection essay, we code passages from the reflection essays on the basis of phrases, terms and descriptions that are directly or indirectly related to the components of CST principles. In this step, we retain the language used by the student fellows and produce a set of first-order categories. For example, the coded passages comprise phrases, terms and descriptions related to the human state of the people that the student participants were interacting with, as well as the observed economic states in the host countries. The coded passages revolve around the micro-dynamics of CST principles, such as people not losing dignity because of disability, poverty, age, lack of success or race. As a robustness check of the first-order categorization, outside experts on Catholic social principles read through the coded passages and the assignment of the coded passages to categories. Codes and categorization are discussed until agreement was strong. If there was disagreement, categories were modified. In total, we had 434 coded passages and 7 first-order categories at the end of this process. We present our first-order code categories in Figure 1.

The second step of the analysis involves close examination of the coded passages and collapsing the first-order categories into higher-level nodes. In our study, we form the second-order themes based on the overall seven themes of CST (Catholic Church, 2004). For example, comments about people having a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education and employment were grouped into a higher-level node labeled “Rights and Responsibilities”. We present our second-order themes in Figure 1.

The third step of our analysis involved reviewing the second-order themes and linking them into aggregate dimensions that underline our theorizing. Two dimensions emerge from our analysis. The first dimension consists of loving and revering all people. The second dimension comprises a shared domain with all people on the earth. We emphasize that student participants undergo an individual transformation prior to the realization of the aggregate theoretical dimensions. Figure 1 illustrates our complete data structure, delineating the first-order categories and second-order themes from which we developed our findings. Furthermore, Figure 1 highlights the bridge connecting the second-order themes and the aggregate theoretical dimensions, namely, that of individual transformation. We present representative data of the first-order categories in Table II.

In the following section, we analyze how the participating students understand their immersion experiences in relation to the faith-based principles. In addition, we discuss the social impact of these projects and evaluate how these initiatives fulfill the characteristics of experiential learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immersion experience (host country)</th>
<th>Social need</th>
<th>Type of reflection (no. of reflections)</th>
<th>Type of participant observation (total no. of observations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Anudip-iMerit (India)</td>
<td>Behavioral confirmation</td>
<td>Student essay (4)</td>
<td>Student fellow (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Equal Access (Nepal)</td>
<td>Behavioral confirmation</td>
<td>Student essay (3)</td>
<td>Student fellow (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Solar Sister/Angaza/Kiva (Uganda)</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Student essay (4)</td>
<td>Student fellow (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Solar Ear (Brazil)</td>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>Student essay (4)</td>
<td>Student fellow (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Fundacion Paraguaya (Paraguay)</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Student essay (4)</td>
<td>Student fellow (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I. Immersion, reflection and participant observation data
A. All people are sacred. People do not lose dignity because of disability, poverty, age, lack of success, or race.

B. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. We are called to respect creation, be good stewards of the earth & each other.

C. People have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education, and employment.

D. The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation, and our good efforts.

E. People have a right to decent and productive work, fair wages, private property and economic initiative. The economy exists to serve people, not the other way around.

F. We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic, and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice and work for the common good.

G. The goods of the earth are gifts from God. We have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-order themes and first-order categories</th>
<th>Social needs</th>
<th>Social enterprises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dignity of the human being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. All people are sacred. People do not lose dignity because of disability, poverty, age, lack of success or race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1. “... but because we are all dignified human beings”</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. “On our way home, we spoke to one-another about the reality of deafness and some of the struggles they face that we hadn’t thought about”</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. “It is so easy in situations where a group of people face oppression or hardships like poverty or visual impairment to forget the incredible diversity of stories and talent and potential that people living in those situations have”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. “… and by the mere age of twenty had learned both American and Brazilian sign language, as well as Portuguese and English”</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. “I felt more alive, present, whole and in touch than I ever had before and was incredibly inspired by the deep faith and hope that came hand in hand with the extreme suffering that I encountered in the people...”</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>A6. “... being able to identify with the Brazilian people despite speaking a language different than their own”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### Second-order themes and first-order categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representative data</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Affection</th>
<th>Behavioral confirmation</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Anudip-iMerit</th>
<th>Equal access</th>
<th>Fundacion Paraguaya</th>
<th>Solar Ear</th>
<th>Solar Sister/Angaza/Kiva</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Community and the common good</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. We are called to respect creation, be good stewards of the earth and each other</td>
<td>B1. “... giving me a stronger understanding of my own desire to make social change through relationships.” B2. “With my experience I want to continue to work with communities one-on-one” B3. “The mutual respect for each other and our contributions to the project brought us closer together” B4. “And then there are organizations like Youth for Blood or SparrowSMS innovating and solving problems for their community without big foreign aid. Slowly sparking the change they want to see...”</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Rights and responsibilities</strong></td>
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<td>C. People have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education and employment</td>
<td>C1. “I struggle to understand what order the need comes in, food, health, education, shelter, dignified work the list of needs is unending” C2. “Many visitors took shelter under small roofs in these tiny bungalows” C3. “... the number of people who don’t have access to treatment”</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second-order themes and first-order categories</td>
<td>Representative data</td>
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<td>C4. “. . . need to learn and be provided with tools and education that help them to improve their lives as individuals rather than relying on others”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C5. “. . . without employment, people had no chance to pay for an education”</td>
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<td>C6. “. . . showed us the necessity of supporting each other as a team, encouraging each other to maintain optimistic attitudes”</td>
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| 4. Option for the poor                          |                                                                                   |
| D. The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation and our good efforts |                                                                                   |
|                                               | D1. “. . . when the women were able to be vulnerable with me and let me into their worlds” |
|                                               | D2. “I see the need, I see the pain and I feel the heartbreak and suffering of these people living in deep poverty in a way I never could have without meeting them” |
|                                               | D3. “One mental battle I fought was trying to understand why there is poverty and the other major one was trying to understand how best to overcome a cycle of poverty” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social needs</th>
<th>Social enterprises</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Affection</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-order themes and first-order categories</th>
<th>Representative data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Dignity of work</td>
<td>E1. “Looking forward, I am excited to implement what I have learned through the fellowship in the real working world”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. People have a right to decent and productive work, fair wages, private property and economic initiative. The economy exists to serve people, not the other way around</td>
<td>E2. “Working with these three social enterprises was incredibly rewarding and taught me a lot about how to work productively in a developing country”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>E3. “If it weren't for FP's scale and size, the women who made the goods would have to compete with hundreds of other distributors in which case they would constantly have to lower their prices and the women who sell the goods would not have a stable source of income”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>E4. “Their motivation to use the loans to generate income for their family, team work, problem solving skills and gratitude reminded me of the hope and resiliency of the people...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
The integration of the two ideas, social work and business, fascinated me... The challenges of the developing world are opportunities to many individuals and the integration of the two fields, I believe, will bring solutions and growth to a beautiful country like Nepal much faster.”

F1. “I want to learn about people that I haven’t had the opportunity to learn about and satisfy my curiosity for cultures different than my own”

F2. “This was not the case with the people I worked with in Brazil. They were open and welcoming and did not treat me any differently because I spoke a different language”

F3. “...struggling to find someone willing to open up to two white outsiders sticking a camera at them. It was understandable, but still frustrating.”

F4. “I could now see that Solar Ear was making huge strides to overcome socioeconomic barriers.”

(continued)
Social needs

Second-order themes and first-order categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representative data</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F5. “It was a controversial issue and all of a sudden we were in the middle of it in the very presence of the fathers and families- and seeing firsthand what happens so often in Metiabruz when conservative views clash with progress.”</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>F6. “I knew that I had to find a way to devote my life to minimizing the suffering and inequality, to working for social change and to educating people about the deep injustices that exist.”</td>
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<td>F7. “I have learned that I am most passionate when I am working with people and working with people to create a greater good”</td>
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7. Care for God’s creation

G. The goods of the earth are gifts from God. We have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users

G1. “There is a phrase in India that the “guest is God”, and we truly felt that as the families pushed snack after snack and sweet after sweet our way”

G2. “…how much we depend on our earth”
4. Sense-making and social entrepreneurship

In Table II, the representative data suggests that the immersion experiences exhibit a powerful bearing on the student participants. In this section, we present findings from our qualitative data analysis and investigate the degree to which faith-based principles are implicit in information processing for our sample participants when confronting the realities of their immersion experiences.

In the Anudip-iMerit case study, we find that solidarity and the dignity of work are most emphasized across the second-order themes. For instance, student participants recognize how responsibilities cross racial and ideological differences, as reflected in representative data F3 and F5 within Table II. In addition, student observations reflect how the goods of the earth are gifts from God, present in G1 of Table II. Thus, the immersion experiences reinforce that the activities have an important impact on their values. Importantly, the students are exposed to individuals that they would have not ordinarily met.

In the case of Team Equal Access, we find that rights and responsibilities, as well as solidarity, exhibit the greatest count across the second-order themes. For example, the participants realize the value of rights in Nepal, especially the right to shelter and employment, present in C2 and C5 of Table II. In addition, student fellows observe conditions in Nepal and reflect on the dignity of the human person and how there is no loss of dignity because of disability or poverty, evidenced in A3 of Table II. Student fellows also observe that the social enterprises in Nepal are good stewards in that they are innovating and solving problems for their communities so that change can occur, as reflected in B4 in Table II. On the basis of the immersions, there is a realization that solving real-world problems requires experts from a broad cross-section of academic disciplines (Agrawal, 2013). The immersion experiences underline the importance of meaningful work and motivate the student fellows to implement what they have learned in their future careers and reflect on the effectiveness of social work and business, as reflected in E1 and E5 in Table II.

Upon examining the Team Solar Sister/Angaza/Kiva reflection essays, we found that solidarity and option for the poor are most emphasized across the faith-based principles. For example, student fellows fought mental battles as to why poverty exists and its cyclical behavior, evident in D3 in Table II. Albi (2013a) reflects on uneven development in the world and views their efforts as a means to overcome a cycle of poverty for the marginalized communities. The student fellows also emphasize the dignity of work through reflecting on productive work as reflections indicate that they discern their vocation in the world and the challenges in a developing country, delineated in E2 in Table II. For example, one student comments on the depth of care and compassion within the individuals that serve the communities and how they gained a new appreciation for the difficulties present in the developing world (Albi, 2013b). Kozel (2013) discusses how their understanding of social enterprises in standard textbooks in a traditional classroom setting contrasts significantly with how they work in real life based on the immersion experiences. Being immersed in Africa, the student fellows also reflect on the importance of caring for goods of the earth, reflected in G2 of Table II. Van Gasse (2013) finds that the immersion experience affects her in a transformative way in that the experience changes her way of thinking about life and relating with people. In particular, the experience enables the student to shift from wondering about her role in the world to knowing her role in the world and, furthermore, nudges her to think deeper about solidarity and its relevance to social venturing. Student fellows also reflect how the immersion experience contributes to empowering humanity through social change for marginalized people. By working with these social enterprises, student fellows help Ugandan residents to escape energy poverty and empower those individuals with no access to light.
In the Team Solar Ear case study, we find that dignity of the human person and solidarity are most emphasized across the second-order themes. For example, student fellows realize that all people are sacred and that humans do not lose dignity because of disability, age or race, evident in A2, A4 and A6 of Table II. In addition, the students discern community and the common good, and how it is important to have respect and build relationships with those that are hearing impaired, present in B2, B3, F1, F2, F4 and F7 in Table II. Sansone (2013) realizes that the field-based project requires problem-solving skills, teamwork thinking, self-reflection and a deep level of cultural understanding. For example, when encountering language barriers, student fellows communicated with the Brazilian deaf people via text graphics on their cell phones. Lays (2013) finds that the immersion experience enables her to re-evaluate her own preconceptions and prejudices toward marginalized communities. For example, the student fellow describes how her preconceptions of hearing-impaired individuals transform from that of social withdrawal to realizations of uniqueness, compassion and curiosity. In other words, the student fellow realizes that marginalized communities are not homogenous but rather communities in which there are unique and talented individuals.

The Team Solar Ear immersion experience enable the student fellows to realize the importance of being responsible to each other and recognizing the right to healthcare, evident in C6 and C3 in Table II. Fellows commented that the improvement in hearing enabled deaf individuals to go back to school and get a job. Additionally, after receiving the hearing aid, they were able to communicate with other parents that their children go to school with, as well as using the hearing aids to hear the emotions of their children, such as when their child cries, laughs or speak their first words (Duane, 2013). For example, a student fellow realizes the impact on the developing world when a four-year old boy receives the hearing aid, thereby enabling the family to overcome socioeconomic barriers. In sum, by immersing themselves in the hearing impaired population within Brazil, student fellows were affected by their interactions with the hearing impaired people, experiencing first-hand what it means to be hearing impaired. Moreover, the immersion experience provides an environment in which the students learn how to analyze and approach certain problems.

In the case of the Team Fundacion Paraguaya case study, we find that solidarity as well as rights and responsibilities exhibit the greatest count across the second-order themes. For example, a student fellow regards their purpose in life to minimize suffering and inequality and to work for social change as a consequence of the social venturing, reflected in F6 in Table II. In addition, student fellows realize the importance of having fundamental rights to food, health, education, shelter as vital tools in improving lives, reflected in C1 and C4 in Table II. Armstrong (2012b) reflects how the immersion experience provides a sense of direction, self-awareness and different perspectives, and the importance of people and relationships. While the student fellows recognize that the people of Paraguay are vulnerable and impoverished in D1 and D2, as in Table II, their reflections suggest that people do not lose dignity because of poverty or lack of success, evident in A1 and A5 in Table II. Maddex (2012) comments on the importance of getting to know the marginalized individuals through direct interactions and how spirituality is crucial in understanding reflection and information processing: increased sensitivity and awareness are crucial channels through which one can better engage the reality of the world in serving the needs of marginalized communities. Importantly, a student participant believes that the experience provides a stronger understanding to make social change through relationships, reflected in B1 in Table II, and underlines the importance of fair wages in E3 of Table II. Armstrong (2012c) realizes how microfinance empowers marginalized individuals and enables services that would otherwise be unattainable, thereby lifting communities from poverty. In E4 in
Table II, a separate student participant highlights how the social enterprise allows for economic initiative through use of loans to generate income. Nelson (2012) argues that the immersion experience verifies that social businesses are innovating at the margin. Thus, the case study of Team Fundacion Paraguaya illustrates that microfinance exhibits important indirect, as well as, direct effects.

In Table II, we provide counts for each faith-based principle on the basis of social need. In particular, we find that there is variability in the elaboration of the principles when sampling on social need. Specifically, we find that both dignity of the human person and solidarity equally exhibit the greatest count when sampling on the basis of affection. When sampling on the basis of behavioral confirmation, however, we find that rights and responsibilities attain the highest amount of counts. When sampling on the basis of status, we find that solidarity exhibit the highest number of occurrences. Thus, we find evidence of variation in the elaboration of the principles based on the underlying social need.

5. Conclusion
In this study, we bridge the gap between social entrepreneurship, faith and applied business ethics in the context of experiential learning. In particular, we examine the roles of the GSBI and Jesuit Catholic education in promoting social entrepreneurship for the common good. While many academic institutions host entrepreneurship programs on their campus, we focus on the method embraced by the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University, in which social entrepreneurship is promoted through their academic programs, institutional culture and global immersion experiences in impoverished segments of society.

By focusing on the partnership between social enterprises and students through the GSB Fellowship program, we provide evidence that participating students experience first-hand the importance of creating sustainable solutions for resource-constrained communities. We explore a broad cross-section of social enterprises and review evidence indicating how the initiatives fulfill the characteristics of experiential learning. Our findings suggest that such solutions create positive outcomes for society.

Our paper differs from previous research in that it focuses on how the participating students interpret their immersion experience, thereby contributing to the sense-making literature through emotional and spiritual dimensions. Our findings suggest that CST principles are important and underline the significance of field-based immersion experiences in encouraging students to develop sensitivities to those whose economic backgrounds are very different from his or her own. Such immersion experiences help to promote leadership development, personal growth in self-awareness and reflection. In a related thesis, Bica and Donahue (2014) discuss how compassion drives the efforts of the participating social enterprises. By serving the global poor through social enterprises, the documented immersion experiences provide a sense of direction, self-awareness and different perspectives, and demonstrate the importance of people and relationships in creating a greater good. In agreement with Lieberman et al. (2015), we believe that universities with a social vision – such as Jesuit, Catholic universities – can advance their missions in practical ways by partnering with social enterprises. We believe that a commitment to creating social value provides a working model for colleges, universities and organizations across the world.

While our study focuses on student reflections from a faith-based university, we believe that future work could conduct similar empirical investigations for student participants from educational institutions that are not faith-based. In addition, future work could further expand on the number of case studies using similar empirical techniques. Future research
could focus on the emotional and spiritual development of students in business education and how that changes the social impacts of business over time. Such avenues for future work will provide additional evidence on the emotional and spiritual angles of sense-making in practical and scholarly work.

Our study yields vital implications for public policy. Specifically, our study suggests that governments around the world can better partner with social organizations in increasing social value. In addition, future work could investigate channels in which government expenditures stimulate social entrepreneurship, thereby emphasizing social returns over financial returns. Future research could also investigate the development of public programs that help to drive social entrepreneurship by integrating social mission with the business discipline.

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Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University (2014a), “Believing in the People”, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNgPYsH-S7g


**Corresponding author**
Omid Sabbaghi can be contacted at: sabbagom@udmercy.edu
Prone to “care”?
Relating motivations to economic and social performance among women social entrepreneurs in Europe
Anne Laure Humbert
Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK, and
Muhammad Azam Roomi
Prince Mohammad Bin Salman College of Business and Entrepreneurship,
King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
Purpose – Little attention has been given specifically to the experience of women social entrepreneurs despite the assumption they are prone to “care”, and even less to their motivations or their self-perception of success. This paper aims to provide an insight into the relationship between motivations and social and economic performance among women social entrepreneurs in ten European Union countries.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper classifies the motivations of women social entrepreneurs, drawing on the results of a survey conducted (n = 380) by the European Women’s Lobby. The paper then examines how these motivations relate to self-perceptions of social and economic performance.

Findings – In addition to being driven by self-interest and prosocial motivations, women social entrepreneurs also seek to develop alternative business models. Where a social mission is central, women are likely to feel successful in meeting their social aim; however, there is a strong negative relationship between self-interested motivations and revenue.

Research limitations/implications – This analysis relies on perceptual and self-reported data; therefore, more objective measures should be considered for further research, possibly combined with a longitudinal design. Another limitation of this paper lies in the non-random sampling strategy used to identify a hard-to-reach population such as women social entrepreneurs.

Practical implications – The findings provide a better understanding of the motivations of women social entrepreneurs. This may be useful in assisting funding or support organisations, as well as social investors, evaluate where to best invest resources. In addition, a more nuanced understanding of motivations among women social entrepreneurs can inform policies aimed at supporting women social entrepreneurs, without necessarily being bound by the expectation to maximise economic and/or social outcomes.

Originality/value – This paper demonstrates the centrality of the social mission for women social entrepreneurs. The results also identify “seeking an alternative business model” as a key motivation among women social entrepreneurs, thereby breaking existing conceptualisations of entrepreneurial motivations on a binary spectrum as either “self-interested” or “prosocial”. The paper also shows that having other than prosocial motivations for becoming a social entrepreneur does not necessarily lead to higher economic revenue.

Keywords Performance, Gender, Women, Motivations, Social entrepreneurs

Paper type Research paper

The author’s would like to thank Emily Shrair Usher (European Women’s Lobby) for her insights. The author’s also thank Alison Collins for her support with the editing of this paper.
Introduction
Over the past decade, there has been an increased recognition of the potential of social entrepreneurship to remedy social and community issues (Mair and Marti, 2006; Nicholls and Cho, 2006) and address the “grand challenges” faced by the world (Shepherd, 2015). Yet, little attention has been given specifically to the experience of women within social entrepreneurship. This is despite the traditional association between concern for social and community issues with women, based on the assumption that they are more “caring” than men and the evidence that suggests that gender inequalities are less pronounced among social entrepreneurs than mainstream entrepreneurship (Lyon and Humbert, 2012; Teasdale et al., 2011).

The process of social entrepreneurship ought to be regarded as inextricably linked to social, cultural, economic and political contexts that are themselves riddled with unequal gender power relations. The literature notes the emphasis given to social entrepreneurship as a means to sustain social missions, and gives it greater prominence in the context of neo-liberalism (Sepulveda, 2015) and how capitalism might be reconsidered (Shaw and de Bruin, 2013) in Europe and the rest of the world. For example, a study conducted in Uganda by Hayhurst (2014) showed how gender development programmes for girls put an emphasis on the commercialisation of their activities to fund and sustain themselves, whereas another study in Berlin showed how young women designers engage with social entrepreneurship as a result of urban governance policies that seek to create jobs – in the creative industry, particularly for women – and promote local industries through entrepreneurial means (McRobbie, 2013). Tensions exist between the traditional portrayal of entrepreneurs as individualistic, hard, strong, etc. – much in line with the neo-liberal agenda (McRobbie, 2013) – and the potential for entrepreneurship to strive not for economic but for social goals, putting people over profit (Tedmanson et al., 2015). The language used sometimes reflects this masculine bias, such as when an ideal trait for social entrepreneurs is described as “thinking like a businessman [sic]” (Ghalwash et al., 2017, p. 270). This subtext of entrepreneurship becomes even more problematic when it is associated with traits associated with masculinity (Ahl, 2006) that women are deemed to lack (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Marlow and McAdam, 2013), despite social entrepreneurship itself being seen as more congenial to women (Humbert, 2012), as evidenced by their greater representation at all levels (Lyon and Humbert, 2012; Teasdale et al., 2011).

These observations raise a number of questions that hitherto have not been addressed by the literature. If women’s involvement in social entrepreneurship is seen as a means of addressing a range of social missions and issues, then what are the motivations of the women social entrepreneurs for doing so? And how do different types of motivations relate to both perceived economic and social performance, i.e. one’s ability to address the “grand challenges” the world is facing (Shepherd, 2015)? With few exceptions (Ghalwash et al., 2017), little work has been conducted on understanding the motivations of social entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, motivations have been identified as key to understanding the performance of social enterprises (Ghalwash et al., 2017; Zahra et al., 2009), yet with little empirical analysis to back this up. Finally, to our knowledge, no work has been conducted specifically on the motivations of women social entrepreneurs. This paper thus contributes to scholarship on the experiences of women social entrepreneurs by classifying their motivations and examining how these relate to perceived performance outcomes, both economic and social, among women-led social enterprises. It responds to calls to better understand the motivations of social entrepreneurs to foster their effectiveness (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016), and in particular to understand the role of prosocial motivations in relation to other types of motivations (Shepherd, 2015). It also responds to calls to enrich understanding of social entrepreneurship by examining different contexts (Carsrud and
Brännback, 2011; Di Domenico et al., 2010; Welter, 2011; Zahra, 2007), particularly the largely neglected perspective of women (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Calas et al., 2009). Finally, it responds to calls for more empirical, rather than conceptual, research in the field of social entrepreneurship (Dacin et al., 2010) on a scale sufficient to provide evidence that is more than simply anecdotal (Mair and Marti, 2006).

This paper draws on a survey of 380 women social entrepreneurs in ten European Union (EU) countries (Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden and the UK) developed as part of a wider mixed-methods project coordinated by the European Women’s Lobby (EWL) in 2014-15. Its main contribution is twofold: first, a deeper understanding of the motivations of women social entrepreneurs, a group that has so far been largely overlooked in the literature; second, a more nuanced understanding of how these motivations relate to the performance, measured economically as well as socially, of social enterprises from the point of view of the women behind them.

Women social entrepreneurs, motivations and economic/social outcomes

Before proceeding, we would like to set out how we conceptualise social entrepreneurship, social enterprises and social entrepreneurs, given the lack of consensus in the field on actual definitions (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010). The definitions adopted need to fulfil a dual aim: they should draw sufficiently from existing definitions, while at the same time capturing the inherent diversity of social entrepreneurial activities around the world. The definitions chosen for this article derive from those of the social business initiative (European Commission, 2011). Thus, a woman-led social enterprise is defined as an organisation that meets the following criteria:

- decision-making and leadership by a woman;
- presence of a social mission;
- a portion of revenue comes from the market; and
- a portion of profit or surplus is reinvested in the organisation.

Women social entrepreneurs are women who self-identify as social entrepreneurs, including women who lead social enterprises as defined above, as well as women who are involved in the leadership of social enterprises that do not necessarily meet all of the above criteria. Women’s social entrepreneurship is understood as entrepreneurial activities with a social focus, led and undertaken by women. Finally, social impact is defined as the net effect of an activity on a community and the well-being of its constituent individuals and families (European Women’s Lobby, 2015, p. 8). Although these definitions are informed by EU policy along with the goals of this project, they largely overlap with some of the more often-used definitions in the academic literature (Mair and Marti, 2006; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Zahra et al., 2009).

Much work has been undertaken on exploring entrepreneurial motivations, arguably because they are considered a crucial link between entrepreneurial ideation and exploiting an opportunity (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). In mainstream entrepreneurship, typical motivations include autonomy, personal satisfaction, financial gain, personal and professional development or even status (Renko, 2012). An influential approach has been to classify motivational factors as either “pull” or “push” factors (Buttner and Moore, 1997; Humbert and Drew, 2010; Orhan and Scott, 2001): a distinction is made between what entices (pulls) individuals toward entrepreneurship, and what drives (pushes) them away from their current unsatisfactory situation. Nonetheless, this area of research has been cast aside over the past decade, despite continued calls for greater understanding to be developed (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011), particularly within different forms of entrepreneurship.
Indeed, work that examines motivational factors among “other” types of entrepreneurs, such as social entrepreneurs, is relatively recent and underdeveloped, to the extent that it is described as “extremely limited and anecdotal” by Yitshaki and Kropp (2016, p. 548). Our own systematic literature review (Tranfield et al., 2003), to identify articles on this topic via EBSCO Business Source Complete databases, yielded only 22 articles, some of which were not relevant and subsequently dismissed. None provided a breakdown by sex nor approached the topic from a gender perspective. The paucity of research likely reflects the fact that social entrepreneurship is a relatively new field; to date, much of the work has focused on describing the phenomenon in opposition to other organisational forms of entrepreneurship (Miller et al., 2012).

Motivations for mainstream entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs are relatively similar (Shaw and Carter, 2007). Financial compensation and economic returns have been identified as motivational factors in entrepreneurship literature since its earliest days (Knight, 1921; Schumpeter, 1934), yet emphasising these has been shown to underplay the roles of other motivations (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011; Miller et al., 2012). Social entrepreneurs reroute potential economic returns principally, if not totally, towards generating social value (Dacin et al., 2010; Peredo and McLean, 2006; Zahra et al., 2009) – the so-called prosocial motivation theorised by Grant (2007) and Grant and Berry (2011). Constructing social value, in the sense used by Kirzner (1973), means that social entrepreneurs can incorporate higher levels of innovation and address previously unmet social needs. This is typically done at the macro rather than the local level, with a focus on social systems that are overlooked by institutional actors, such as governments, NGOs and businesses. Scale, therefore, tends to be central – organisations should “match the scale and scope of the social needs they seek to address” (Zahra et al., 2009, p. 525) – alongside significant affective commitment to the issue (Baron et al., 2012; Grant, 2007) and a sense of personal identification (Lewis, 2016). However, not all social entrepreneurs conform to the image of the “grand visionary”; some, finding themselves in the right place at the right time and possessing the right set of skills, opt to tackle issues at a more local level (Zahra et al., 2009). Social entrepreneurs tend to be close to the communities or issues that they assist/address (Zahra et al., 2008), indicating that proximity facilitates opportunity recognition. Where this is the case, motivations such as empathy and compassion play an important role (Dees, 1998; Grimes et al., 2013; Miller et al., 2012), and are seen as rooted in personal experiences which have created awareness of particular social needs (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016). Individuals are rarely motivated by a single goal, however, and the coexistence of different goals – for example, prosocial and financial – has been noted (Boluk and Mottiar, 2014; Williams and Nadin, 2011; Zahra et al., 2009).

To our knowledge, little is known in the context of women social entrepreneurs. Previous research on motivations in the context of gender and entrepreneurship has sought to better understand the lower participation rates of women (Brush, 1992, 2008; Verheul et al., 2012) and has shown that there are more similarities than differences between women and men (Humbert and Drew, 2010). In Western countries as well as in developing countries such as Pakistan, the main motivations include personal freedom, security and satisfaction (Shabbir and Di Gregorio, 1996). Early research on gender and entrepreneurship sought to develop typologies of motivations (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Carter and Cannon, 1992). Where differences have been found to exist, they tend to reflect the gendered societal contexts in which entrepreneurs live, as well as women’s positions in social and family structures (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Aramand, 2012; Brush et al., 2009; Kirkwood, 2012; Langowitz and Minniti, 2007; Patrick et al., 2016). For example, women are more likely to seek flexibility and autonomy in becoming entrepreneurs. This is often in response to family demands
constraining paid employment, leaving entrepreneurship as an alternative means to derive an income. In a comparison of the motivations of women and men entrepreneurs in Ireland, motivations were found to be similar, with the exception that women were more likely to be seeking a better work-life balance and men a greater income (Humbert and Drew, 2010). Understanding motivations is important because of the role they can play in determining the extent to which different objectives – social or economic – are met (Cardon et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2012; Welpe et al., 2012; Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016). Yet, little work has examined how motivations relate to future performance (Jennings et al., 2009), particularly in the context of social entrepreneurship (Renko, 2012) and specifically among women social entrepreneurs.

Higher levels of prosocial motivations are generally seen as related to better entrepreneurial outcomes (De Dreu et al., 2011; De Dreu and Nauta, 2009; Grant and Sumanth, 2009). As social entrepreneurs combine both economic and social-value creation (Zahra et al., 2009), these two aspects need to be considered separately, as success in one does not automatically lead to success in the other. While it stands to reason that high levels of prosocial motivations are associated with greater success in meeting social objectives, this is not necessarily so when it comes to economic outcomes. For example, there is greater failure among non-profit organisations that seek to adopt a social enterprise model to remedy funding uncertainty, and likewise where stakeholder and internal management capabilities are not competent or aligned to the economic model of profit generation (Kirkman, 2012). In addition, social goals often require increased complexity and more innovative responses, meaning not only that more resources may be necessary but also that social entrepreneurs are likely to face greater uncertainty and risk (Koellinger, 2008; Samuelsson and Davidson, 2009). This was confirmed empirically in Renko’s (2012) study showing that social motivations are negatively related to firm creation among nascent entrepreneurs.

On the basis of previous research undertaken mostly within mainstream entrepreneurship, this paper seeks to produce a valid measure of motivations among women social entrepreneurs in ten EU countries. Empirically, the dichotomy theorised between “self-interest” and “prosocial” motivations will be explored – and challenged. The article will then explore how different types of motivation relate to economic and social outcomes. The methodology used for these purposes is outlined next.

Methodology

This article draws on quantitative data collected by the EWL in 2014-15 as part of a wider mixed-methods study of women’s social entrepreneurship across ten EU Member States. These countries were chosen to obtain a diverse geographical representation and size, as well as a mixture of social enterprise ecosystems. The EWL designed its survey in collaboration with the project’s advisory group – comprising social entrepreneurs, academics and policymakers – and other relevant stakeholders and experts, of which the first author was a member. National-language versions were produced for all countries, with the exception of Germany[1], to capture responses from non-English speakers.

The number of social enterprises in the EU – although evidently many are women-led, for instance in the UK (Teasdale et al., 2011) – is hard to compile accurately. Consequently, the sampling frame in this study was constructed using snowball sampling techniques. National researchers were tasked to develop a list of up to 100 women-led social enterprises in their respective country on the basis of their network of personal and professional contacts. Information about these contacts was recorded, including electronic addresses to which the survey was subsequently forwarded. In addition, the survey was disseminated via the EWL’s social media channels (over 20,000 followers on Facebook and 6,000 on
Twitter) and through the list of member organisations and their European networks of gender and enterprise stakeholders. To encourage participation, respondents were given the chance to participate in a raffle to win a trip to the project conference in Brussels held on 11 September 2015. In total, 380 women across the ten Member States of the project responded to the survey, although there were stark differences between the numbers of responses by country – many more from the UK than from Lithuania or Bulgaria[2], for example. Whether this relates to the proportions of women’s social entrepreneurship activity in these countries, sampling issues or both, remains unknown. In this study, given the wide differences in responses at the national level, the data are analysed at the aggregate level. For descriptive statistics at EU level, the results are weighted according to the actual population size in each of the ten countries considered.

Two main measures are used in this analysis. In total, 15 items were included in the survey to capture potential motivational factors using a four-point Likert scale ranging from “not a motivating factor” to “a very strong motivating factor”. These items were derived from both an extensive literature review on motivations among (women) entrepreneurs and during consultation meetings with the project advisory group, which included academics, policymakers, civil society representatives and women social entrepreneurs. Besides motivations, this paper also draws on two measures of perceived performance that were part of the survey, each consisting of a single item: first, respondents’ perceptions of success in meeting social impact goals according to a four-point Likert scale ranging from “not at all successful” to “extremely successful”; second, economic performance as measured by the revenue (in euros) reported by women social entrepreneurs. The relationships between types of motivations and social/economic performance are assessed through the use of ordinal logistic regression, where variables are excluded in case of missing data, leaving a valid sample size of 315 responses.

Motivations and measures of performance
The incidence of different motivational factors is presented in Table I, together with numerical summaries that show the distribution of the data. There is a striking polarisation in motivational factors: on the one hand, women social entrepreneurs strongly agreed with motivations aligned with social impact, innovation an unmet need in the community, or seeking to create either a more ethical or a more sustainable model of doing business; whereas on the other hand, the majority of them reported that unemployment, underemployment and the need to contribute a secondary income were not motivating factors. Using the pull/push framework, where a pull factor entices an individual into becoming an entrepreneur and a push factor constrains them to do so (Humbert and Drew, 2010; Orhan and Scott, 2001), the results suggest that among women social entrepreneurs, pull factors largely predominate. This is largely in line with other (non-sex-specific) studies, such as the work of Yitshaki and Kropp (2016) in Israel.

When it comes to perceptions of success in meeting social impact goals, responses were divided, with nearly half of respondents (48 per cent) feeling somewhat successful and a further 43 per cent feeling very successful. The numbers at the extremes of the scale for this item were therefore marginal. Reported revenue ranged from less than €10,000 to €500,000 or more. For many women-led social enterprises, revenue was towards the lower end, with 33 per cent generating less than €10,000 and a further 25 per cent between €10,000 and €49,999 per year. Nonetheless, a non-negligible minority (8 per cent) of women-led social enterprises in the study reported revenue exceeding €500,000.

Besides describing the motivations for the respondents to become social entrepreneurs, this paper seeks to better understand the structure of these motivational factors and develop
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Not a motivating factor (%)</th>
<th>Somewhat of a motivating factor (%)</th>
<th>A strong motivating factor (%)</th>
<th>A very strong motivating factor (%)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to make a specific social impact</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative idea for new product, process, market or service</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to an unmet need in the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to create a more ethical model of doing business</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to create a more sustainable model of doing business</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal connection to a particular issue or group</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to try something new and learn new skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater decision-making and leadership power in my job/career</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking better work-life balance</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking more financial independence in my job/career</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to make profit</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to support myself and/or my family as a primary earner</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment or underemployment</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding opportunity was available</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to contribute a secondary income to my household</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>n</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seeking to make a specific social impact</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.691</td>
<td>-1.830</td>
<td>3.324</td>
<td>343</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovative idea for new product, process, market or service</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.844</td>
<td>-1.619</td>
<td>1.784</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to an unmet need in the community</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.630</td>
<td>-1.542</td>
<td>2.516</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to create a more ethical model of doing business</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>-1.094</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to create a more sustainable model of doing business</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.993</td>
<td>-1.071</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal connection to a particular issue or group</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.917</td>
<td>-1.084</td>
<td>0.291</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to try something new and learn new skills</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>-0.770</td>
<td>-0.203</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater decision-making and leadership power in my job/career</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.037</td>
<td>-0.332</td>
<td>-1.074</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking better work-life balance</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.116</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>-1.342</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking more financial independence in my job/career</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.071</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>-1.185</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to make profit</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.062</td>
<td>0.386</td>
<td>-1.084</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to support myself and/or my family as a primary earner</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.014</td>
<td>0.682</td>
<td>-0.814</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment or underemployment</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>1.440</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding opportunity was available</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.971</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>-0.416</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to contribute a secondary income to my household</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td>1.354</td>
<td>0.723</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table I. Motivations among women social entrepreneurs in ten EU countries 2014-15**
a valid instrument of measure that allows for further analysis. The core aim is to better understand whether a latent structure exists, to which end factor analysis is used. Not all of the available items (only 8 out of 15) are retained in the solution provided here, as the criteria are to ensure good measures of fit in the overall model and adequate reliability within the items grouped under each factor.

Exploratory factor analysis is implemented through SPSS, using principal components analysis as an extraction method. This produces a factor solution that, following the Kaiser criterion, is above the cut-off value of 1 with an eigenvalue of 1.129, and which explains 71 per cent of the total variance. All communalities are also above the threshold of 0.5. The solution provides an acceptable fit, with a KMO value 0.694 putting it above the suggested threshold of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974) and a highly statistically significant \( p < 0.01 \) Bartlett’s test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1954). To facilitate the interpretation of the loadings, the axes are rotated using the Varimax method, thereby maintaining orthogonality (and independence) between the factors identified. The validity of each factor has been checked by computing Cronbach alpha, with each meeting the recommended reliability level of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2006). These results are presented in Table II.

Two of the factors (1 and 3) are aligned with the theoretical division between motivations among social entrepreneurs as either “self-interested” or “prosocial” (Grant, 2007; Grant and Berry, 2011; Renko, 2012; Zahra et al., 2009). However, the analysis also demonstrates that another key factor can be considered: seeking to adopt a social enterprise model as an alternative business model.

The relationship between motivations and economic and social performance was examined through ordinal logistic regression using a logit link function (Table III). Responding to calls to better take into account the potential effects of contextual factors (Welter, 2011; Zahra, 2007), the models include a categorical measure for countries to control for the heterogeneity of national contexts.

Model 1 identifies a strong positive relationship between high levels of prosocial motivations and success in meeting social impact goals. The odds ratio \( e^{1.204} = 3.33 \) shows that each additional point increment (on the four-point scale by which prosocial motivations are measured) is associated with being three times the odds of reporting a higher level of social impact success. This result is highly statistically significant \( p < 0.01 \). However,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Self-interest</strong> ( (\alpha = 0.79) )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking more financial independence in my job/career</td>
<td>0.859</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to support myself and/or my family as a primary earner</td>
<td>0.760</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to have greater decision-making and leadership power in my job/care</td>
<td>0.750</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking better work-life balance</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.541</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Alternative business model</strong> ( (\alpha = 0.88) )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to create a more ethical model of doing business</td>
<td>0.927</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to create a more sustainable model of doing business</td>
<td>0.914</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.884</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3: Prosocial</strong> ( (\alpha = 0.60) )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to an unmet need in the community</td>
<td>0.831</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to make a specific social impact</td>
<td>0.819</td>
<td>0.689</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** Values below |0.3| are omitted

Economic and social performance

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Table II. Rotated component matrix
among those seeking an alternative business model, there is a negative relationship (odds ratio: $e^{-0.408} = 0.66$) with success in meeting their social impact goal which is also highly statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). In addition, the relationship between motivations linked to self-interest and social impact success is marginally statistically significant (odds ratio: $e^{0.315} = 1.37$, $p < 0.05$).

Model 2 shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between either prosocial motivations or seeking an alternative business model and annual revenue level. However, it shows a strong negative relationship between self-interest and annual revenue level, with each additional point increment on that motivational four-point scale associated with a reduction by more than half (odds ratio $e^{-0.743} = 0.48$) in the odds of being situated in the next higher revenue band. The assumption of parallel lines holds.

**Discussion and conclusion**

This paper seeks to better understand the structure of motivational factors. Factor analysis is used to this end, by constructing and validating a measure of motivations for women social entrepreneurs. This yields a three-factor solution: “self-interest”, “alternative business model” and “prosocial”. Factor scores are then used to assess how these different types of motivations relate to perceived success of the social mission, as well as economic performance through reported revenue.
The results demonstrate the significance of the social mission within the social entrepreneurial venture. Women who lead social enterprises where a social mission is central are more likely to feel successful in meeting their social aims. This is fully in line with previous research findings showing that strong prosocial motivation is positively linked to higher social impact success (De Dreu et al., 2011; De Dreu and Nauta, 2009; Grant and Sumanth, 2009). However, the results show that higher levels of prosocial motivations among women social entrepreneurs are not associated with greater economic revenue.

What is clear from the results is that there is a strong negative relationship between self-interest motivations among women social entrepreneurs and annual revenue level, suggesting that having other than prosocial motivations for becoming a social entrepreneur is not predictive of greater revenue. This might be due to women social entrepreneurs being less “grand visionaries” than pragmatic agents seeking to create a form of enterprise that responds to their individual needs, and likely reflects the fact that many of these “lifestyle” social enterprises remain small in scale (Carter and Cannon, 1992). While such social enterprises have a legitimate place among the heterogeneity of forms and scales that social enterprises can take, this finding demonstrates the importance of understanding motivations to better distinguish between different types of women-led social enterprises.

Finally, the results identify that seeking an alternative business model acts as a motivation among women social entrepreneurs. This breaks existing conceptualisations of entrepreneurial motivations on a binary spectrum as either “self-interested” or “prosocial”. This can be seen as evidence of the importance of institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988) among women social entrepreneurs. Mair and Marti (2006, p. 40) described institutional entrepreneurs as “actors who have an interest in modifying institutional structures or in creating new ones”. The findings show that being motivated by seeking an alternative business model is negatively related to perceived success in meeting social goals. It is possible to theorise that this is related to the trend among a variety of organisations and individuals to follow the social enterprise model of “commercialisation with a purpose” (Tedmanson et al., 2015), only to find that the model fails to align with individuals, stakeholders, the organisational culture or the social need being addressed (Kirkman, 2012). If that is the case, then creating a better fit between the aim of an alternative business model and the intended social outcome needs to be tackled by other actors, such as support organisations.

Social enterprises are perceived as organisations that can fill a gap created by either market or government failures (Santos, 2012), which leave an “institutional void” for social entrepreneurs (McMullen and Bergman, 2017). In filling this gap, social entrepreneurs will aim at maximising the reach of their social venture so that they can address the specific social need. In this view, the binary opposition between self-interested and prosocial types of motivations tends to be reified, but it fails to consider that “maximisation” is not always at the fore of social entrepreneurs’ motivations. Instead, the “maximisation” assumption seems to be derived from expectations of what mainstream enterprises ought to be about. For example, Agafonow (2014, 2015) argued that it is precisely the hybrid institutional logic of social enterprises that makes it difficult for them to choose whether to maximise profit – and risk allowing the social mission to drift – or focus solely on the social aim. Social entrepreneurs are thus characterised as having to choose between maximising either their profits or their social mission, but not both (Sullivan Mort et al., 2003).

However, we argue here that social entrepreneurship might not be solely about motivations that seek to maximise economic and/or social returns, either separately or simultaneously. In fact, our results show that beyond the binary of self-interest vs prosocial, there is space for alternative motivations behind social entrepreneurship. We therefore call
for researchers not to automatically assume that individuals ought to maximise either social or economic returns. This is borne out by previous influential research suggesting that different forms of social enterprises co-exist – for example, Zahra et al’s (2009) typology of “social bricoleur”, “social constructionist” and “social engineer” entrepreneurs, which are differentiated not by the prevalence of either self-interest or prosocial motivations, but by the scale at which social entrepreneurs operate.

This article therefore contributes to calls for research that seeks not only to understand social entrepreneurial motivations but also how these might relate to outcomes (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011). While our data are limited in so far as it does not allow us to capture social or economic effectiveness, it shows that motivations are related to subjective perceptions of social and economic success. The results show a more nuanced account of entrepreneurial orientation when we expand our frame of understanding for motivations. An “entrepreneurial” orientation need not be defined by characteristics such as competitiveness, aggression or risk-taking (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996), all of which reflect a rather masculine subtext (Ahl, 2006). In fact, the specific case of women social entrepreneurs is pertinent in that they are disproportionately affected by a double set of expectations. First, as women, they operate within cultural and societal structures that create gender-role expectations of them as entrepreneurs (Gupta et al., 2009; Thébaud, 2010). Because women are expected to “care”, they are more likely to be expected to perform entrepreneurship differently (Brush et al., 2009). Evidence suggests that it is likely that these dynamics can be transposed to the context of social entrepreneurship (Humbert, 2012; Teasdale et al., 2011). Second, social entrepreneurs are likewise expected to “care” more; empathy and compassion are seen as fuelling their ventures (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016). However, expectations that women social entrepreneurs “care” should not stand in the way of a more nuanced understanding of their motivations and their venture outcomes.

The findings have practical implications for social entrepreneurship. First, they can assist funding or support organisations, as well as social investors, in evaluating where to best invest resources, particularly among women social entrepreneurs for which little empirical evidence exists regarding their motivations. Second, a more nuanced understanding of motivations among women social entrepreneurs can support policy development aimed at supporting women social entrepreneurs, without necessarily being bound by the expectation to maximise economic and/or social outcomes.

As the data used in this analysis measure perceptions, a further research step entails assessing this relationship further through the use of more developed and/or sophisticated measures, at the point of either data collection or analysis. As this analysis relies on perceptual and self-reported data, more independent measures should be considered for inclusion. A more longitudinal design would also be of benefit, as social outcomes take time to materialise and may not be easily measurable (Grant, 2007). Another limitation of this paper lies in the non-random sampling strategy used to identify a hard-to-reach population such as women social entrepreneurs. The dissemination of the survey via social media platforms could have introduced some issues in relation to self-selection bias.

This article has provided an exploratory account of the main types of motivations present among women social entrepreneurs in ten EU countries. It has shown that women-led social enterprises are most likely to be socially effective where prosocial motivations dominate. Social enterprises – whether they grow or remain small – have their value in the extent to which they can meet their social aims. It is therefore of critical importance to better
understand motivations among nascent women social entrepreneurs, so that targeted support measures can be used most appropriately.

Notes

1. The questionnaire was administered in each country by individual contractors and not translated in Germany for operational reasons. This could therefore potential bias the results for this country. However, only 33 women social entrepreneurs were based in Germany, representing less than 10 per cent of the sample and therefore unlikely to be of concern at aggregate level.


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**Corresponding author**
Anne Laure Humbert can be contacted at: alhumbert@gmail.com
Communicating a social agenda within HEIs: the role of the social enterprise mark

Emma Sutton  
University of Salford, Salford, Greater Manchester, UK

Morven McEachern  
Huddersfield Business School, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, UK, and

Kevin Kane  
Salford Business School, University of Salford, Salford, Greater Manchester, UK

Abstract

Purpose – By using the lens of the social enterprise mark (SEM) accreditation which enables social enterprises to “prove” that the interests of people and planet are put before shareholder gain, this study aims to enhance the knowledge of how effectively the social agenda is communicated by higher education institutions (HEIs).

Design/methodology/approach – By using a qualitative research design, this exploratory study uses a combination of both a focus group and in-depth interviews with HEI holders of the SEM.

Findings – With a particular focus on University A, this study advances the knowledge around how social agendas and the role of the SEM in particular are used to communicate to HEI employees as a key stakeholder group.

Research limitations/implications – At the time of this study, fewer SEM accredited HEIs existed, and therefore, the following conclusions are based upon a small select sample of HEIs that held the SEM. Further studies are needed to provide a more representative view of each university’s use of and commitment to the SEM/Social Enterprise Gold Mark.

Practical implications – Building on Powell and Osborne’s (2015) observations regarding the role of marketing in social enterprises, the findings of this study offer practical insight into current and or prospective HEI SEM holders as to the role of “social” accreditations, stakeholder perceptions of such marketing initiatives and how they can be used as a vehicle to improve social communications in the future.

Originality/value – The area of social enterprise and social impact has been evolving in recent decades, but literature in relation to its promotion and communication in the higher education sector remains scant. This study responds to this gap in the literature by providing greater insight into how social agendas and engagement with the SEM, specifically, are communicated by HEIs.

Keywords Social value, Higher education, Social enterprise, Marketing communications, Social enterprise mark, Social impact reporting

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Despite extensive literature around the conceptualisation of social enterprise in the UK (Haugh, 2005; Di Domenico et al., 2009; Galera and Borzaga, 2009; Teasdale, 2010; Mauksch

The authors would like to thank the anonymous comments and suggestions made by their reviewers.
et al., 2017), higher education institutions (HEIs) are increasingly recognised as social enterprises\cite{1} in their own right, whilst simultaneously striving to develop and promote links with other social enterprises to demonstrate social impact and enhance competitive advantage (Allan, 2005; Brown, 2015; Social Enterprise Mark, 2018). Moreover, the dual purpose “hybrid” (Doherty et al., 2014) nature of HEIs (i.e. pursuing a mixture of social objectives and profit-making objectives) has meant that they are considered by many to be the natural successor to cash-strapped local authorities, given that they possess both the available resources and the requisite public commitment to the local community to engage effectively (Thompson, 2011; Mannion, 2016). However, evidence suggests that there remains a lack of awareness among HEI stakeholders about current initiatives within their institutions to advance a social agenda (Djordjevic and Cotton, 2011; Lozano, 2011). Although a number of certification schemes have been developed in recent years (e.g. the social enterprise mark [SEM]; B Corporation certification; and Social Enterprise UK), the challenge for HEIs is to identify a meaningful approach to measuring and communicating social value to stakeholders (Kickul and Lyons, 2012; British Council, 2016).

The SEM is an accreditation scheme that promotes enterprises that use their profits to maximise social and/or environmental impact across a range of sectors (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2016; Social Enterprise Mark, 2018). It can also be used as a vehicle for enterprises to improve their credibility as social enterprises and to set themselves apart from competitors as an ethical alternative (Social Enterprise Mark, 2018). The SEM also aids strategic differentiation as it prevents private businesses from “claiming they are social enterprises on the basis of their PR and community-support activities” (Ridley-Duff and Southcombe, 2012, p. 179). Building on Ridley-Duff and Southcombe’s (2012) critical review of the conceptual dimensions of the SEM, the guiding research question for this paper is whether the SEM accreditation provides HEIs with a tool to positively influence communication of their social message to stakeholders, or whether it pays lip service to their commitment to a social agenda?

Consequently, there is scope to empirically advance our understanding of social value creation in HEIs, borne out by the fact that 11 UK universities have already been accredited by the SEM (Djordjevic and Cotton, 2011; Social Enterprise Mark, 2018). Despite the ever-growing body of literature on social enterprise in general (Defourny and Nyssens, 2008; Perez de Mendiguren Castresana, 2013; Kay et al., 2016), little has been published regarding its engagement with the higher education sector (British Council, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the social enterprise field by investigating the effectiveness of the SEM as a communication tool for HEI employees. Thus, advancing our knowledge of how the social agenda is currently being communicated to key HEI stakeholder groups, namely, employees, with a particular focus on University A.

In light of the growing number of international, socially led, ethics-led and/or sustainability-led accreditations available to HEIs (e.g. Ashoka\cite{2} and PRME\cite{3}), the importance of further research into stakeholder and community engagement in the HEI reporting process is strongly accentuated (Schmeltz, 2012; Ceulemans et al., 2015; Too and Bajracharya, 2015). Regarding the role of marketing in social enterprises, of which securing various accreditations plays a key part, Powell and Osborne (2015) also acknowledge the limited understanding of such activities within social enterprises. Thus, in response to such calls and to advance our knowledge around the role of the SEM accreditation scheme when pursuing a social agenda, the following objectives are identified for this paper. First, we explore what University A’s employees understand by a social agenda and how it is communicated. Next, we seek to understand how University A currently uses its SEM status to communicate its social values. Finally, we critically compare how University A’s approach compares with that of four other HEIs holding the SEM.
This paper first considers the empirical literature which begins by reviewing the characteristics of the SEM and its accreditation process. Next, within the context of the SEM, we explore the communication of a social agenda within HEIs, with specific emphasis on communication and stakeholder management, to better understand how the social message can be communicated. After an outline of the adopted methodology, key findings, discussion and conclusions sections are then presented.

Characteristics of the social enterprise mark: a communications perspective

The process of SEM accreditation involves defining the HEI as a social enterprise and is based on conformity with six criteria relating to the HEIs social/environmental objectives and the distribution of its profits for social/environmental purposes. Consequently, a stringent registration process is undertaken to assess applications in terms of suitability, with some 30 per cent of all applications or expressions of interest rejected on ineligibility grounds (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2016; Social Enterprise Mark, 2018). In view of the excluded organisational formats, this has drawn much academic criticism. For example, a company limited by shares, such as ethical market leader Café Direct, would not be eligible to become accredited by the SEM (Westall, 2009). Others note SEM’s evaluation criteria as being biased in favour of charities (i.e. HEIs are generally deemed “exempt charities”) and community interest companies (CICs), as they exclude co-operatives that pay over 50 per cent of their profits as dividends to members, enterprises that earn less than 50 per cent of their income via trading and enterprises that have no “asset lock to prevent assets being used for private gain” (Teasdale, 2010, p. 14; Ridley-Duff and Southcombe, 2012). Nonetheless, the SEM currently feature 11 UK-based HEIs and just under 200 accredited social enterprise members, less than ten of which are international (Social Enterprise Mark, 2018). This is in contrast to the likes of Ashoka and PRME who feature 45 HEI members across nine countries and over 600 signatories across 100 countries (see Ashoka, 2018 and PRME, 2018, respectively).

As is common practice amongst many accreditation bodies, there are also tiered levels of membership (e.g. PRME has a Basic Signatory, Advanced Signatory and PRME Champion level). In the context of the SEM, eligible enterprises demonstrating robust governance, good business practice and ethics, as well as social impact and financial transparency, lead to an enhanced accreditation membership in the form of the Social Enterprise Gold Mark (SEGM), of which five HEIs have achieved “social enterprise excellence” to date (Social Enterprise Mark, 2018), one of which includes University A. With the aim of guaranteeing such standards to an external audience, basic/enhanced membership of SEM enables HEIs to use a specific logo (Social Enterprise Mark, 2018) in their corporate communications and access a range of on-line promotional resources.

Since time immemorial, the HEI sector has sought external validation of its governance, research and educational programmes to claim elements of international quality (e.g. Research Excellence Framework[4] [REF] and the Knowledge Exchange Framework[5] [KEF]). With benefits and impacts identified as including enhanced institutional reputation, knowledge mobilisation, learning opportunities for students and a greater understanding of societal needs, alongside the opportunity to empower both SE partners and local communities (The British Council, 2016), HEIs and social enterprises are increasingly engaging with local communities to address social problems, improve efficiency measures and increase stakeholder involvement (Lozano et al., 2015). Hoeser and Sliva (2016) argue that a core motivation for such behaviour is that the funding challenges facing HEIs are similar to those of non-profit companies, therefore requiring them to look to new models to enhance their services and funding sources by extending their mission to include the local
community. This adds further support for UK HEIs to use accreditations such as the SEM to provide evidence of social value that benefits both institution and community. Because of the plethora of accreditations, however, this in itself causes problems for HEIs. Namely, the lack of standardisation in assessment tools across institutions makes it extremely difficult to generalise findings (Shriberg, 2002). Peattie and Morley (2008, p. 102) also add that the very “hybrid” nature of HEIs as a social enterprise makes them particularly “challenging businesses to manage, to research and to develop effective policies for”. More importantly, the majority of university accreditations refer to “sustainability” in a very general way (Lozano et al., 2015) with limited or no specific focus on a social agenda per se.

Therefore, additional professional accreditations such as the SEM can help to provide credibility and legitimacy to HEIs seeking to improve their social and environmental credentials. However, Allan (2005) points out that any additional accreditation must offer something of value to communities to ensure that it does not simply become another in a long line of similar accreditations. While some would suggest that the SEM has been successful in attracting membership (Ridley-Duff and Southcombe, 2012), the jury is still out as to whether it offers something different from other social enterprise schemes such as Social Enterprise UK or established sustainable and/or socially responsible accreditations such as PRME and Ashoka.

The official SEM website offers information on the history of the accreditation, the qualification criteria and application process and benefits and resources available to SEM holders, as well as access to a Directory of Accredited Social Enterprises providing details on individual holders, together with their social impact declarations (Social Enterprise Mark, 2018). Although there are more than 150 metrics available for assessing social impact (Murray et al., 2010), Moody et al. (2015) argue that none have become widespread among social enterprises/HEIs owing to the complexities of calculating social value.

In fact, much of the communications research generalises about communication in organisations without specifically addressing how this may be structured differently within the public, private and third sectors: for example, Goodman (1994) merely reflects that the way in which organisations communicate depends on the character of the organisation and its relationship with its stakeholders. As a result, Varey and White (2000) advocate the need for stronger links between those who need to communicate and senior management who are responsible for facilitating these communications. Barrett (2002) and Thornhill et al. (1996) support this proposition, stating that employee communication is pivotal in organisational strategies that promote employee involvement and commitment, including initiatives to increase information flow up and down the organisation, thereby emphasising the importance of strategic employee communications (Thornhill et al., 1996; Melewar and Akel, 2005).

Organisational structure is believed to play a decisive role in how communication management becomes institutionalised and legitimised, both formally and informally (Grandien and Johansson, 2012; Gunter et al., 2012). Here, Goodman (1994) asserts that many corporations consolidate their communications centrally to project a uniform image and maintain the culture of the organisation through consistent and coherent use of messages. This approach is generally supported, in that internal communication is aimed at promoting organisational goals and reinforcing employee commitment, particularly during periods of change, affirming the need for upwards and downwards communication to ensure employees commit to the change (Barrett, 2002; Cornelissen, 2008; Welch, 2011).

It is noteworthy that the concept of organisational legitimacy, both internally and externally, is one that appears repeatedly throughout the communication literature (Cornelissen, 2004; Grandien and Johansson, 2012). This logic clearly applies to employees
As stakeholders because their perceptions of their organisation’s integrity will be negative if there is no consistent message between what is being instructed by senior management and what is being projected to the marketplace. This is further evidenced by Cornelissen (2008), who suggests that internal communication can only be effective if employees are well informed about the future direction of the organisation.

As stakeholder identity and image are central to managing communication in HEIs (Kantanen, 2012), Djordjevic and Cotton (2011) point to some of the common weaknesses inherent in HEI communications, namely, the failure of awareness-raising campaigns to make a difference in employee behaviour, information overload resulting in incoming e-mail traffic being widely ignored and the reluctance of employees to decode messages. Consequently, many authors (Schmeltz, 2012; Ceulemans et al., 2015; Too and Bajracharya, 2015) emphasise the importance of further research into stakeholder and community engagement in the HEI reporting process. In the absence of earlier work around HEIs and engagement with social enterprise-based accreditations, an interesting research question which this study seeks to address, is whether the SEM accreditation provides also HEIs with a tool to positively influence communication of their social message to stakeholders, or does it simply pay lip service to their commitment to a social agenda?

**Adopted methodology**

Leaning towards a social constructionist approach (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002), a qualitative research design was selected, making use of both a focus group and semi-structured interviews to actively create data. An informal telephone interview was also held with the SEM CIC marketing team prior to data collection to provide insights into the organisation’s promotional activity around the SEM and to inform the line of questioning in the focus group and interviews.

Data collection was carried out in two stages:

1. an exploratory focus group involving participants from University A; and
2. a series of face-to-face and telephone depth interviews with selected participants from University A and all other SEM/SEGM HEI members at the time of the research.

These methods were preferred to survey research because of the flexibility in questioning and the opportunity to direct conversation to draw out experiences, whilst maintaining consistency over the concepts discussed (Wengraf, 2001; Kozinets *et al.*, 2013).

The focus group took place at University A. While 12 potential participants were approached via email or phone, only six individuals were ultimately able to participate. However, there was considered to be good representation across the University’s divisions (i.e. participants from the Library, Estates, Research and Enterprise, relevant research Centres and the Business School Marketing team), thus providing a range of perspectives capable of revealing insight and contradictions in the SEM discourse. The discussion was wide-ranging and lasted an hour, punctuated with visual stimuli, such as an SEGM leaflet, University A’s social and economic impact report and a short social impact video to direct attention to the study’s main focuses of interest. This sought to draw out views that would provide rich information with which to inform areas of discussion when conducting the subsequent interviews (Kozinets *et al.*, 2013).

The second stage comprised a series of semi-structured interviews, with primary data collected either face-to-face or via telephone interview with the principal SEM contacts at each HEI. It was concluded that conducting depth interviews of this kind would capture personal perspectives and experiences with the SEM (Wengraf, 2001), as well as provide
significant insight into how these institutions could more effectively use this as a communication tool. However, it should be noted that, although a similar set of questions was asked at each interview, responses varied in length and depth, with the face-to-face interviews at University A, generally provoking more open and naturally flowing conversation.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants, whereby information-rich participants able to specifically address the research problem posed were deliberately selected to provide greater insights and perspectives (Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2013). When recruiting for the focus group at University A, consideration was given to the general recommendation that groups comprise between six and eight people, usually sharing a particular characteristic (Kozinets et al., 2013; Silverman, 2013). Silverman (2013) proposes giving consideration to how many interviews will be sufficient when using a semi-structured interview format. Largely owing to time and resource constraints, the number of interviews was restricted to seven: three at University A, which forms the primary focus of this study and one each from four other HEIs holding the SEM/SEGM.

Based on the focus group data gathered and with further reference to the literature review, a more comprehensive and tightly focused discussion guide was subsequently developed for the key-participant interviews, concentrating primarily on respondents’ views on social enterprise, measurement of social and environmental impact and the way in which the SEM is promoted and communicated in their institution with guidance from SEM CIC. A list of discussion points was sent to the participants in advance for preparation purposes.

Consequently, the focus group and interviews collected over a seven-week period in 2016-2017 were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim following each meeting with participants’ consent. Drawing on Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic analysis tool, thematic networks were constructed, whereby basic themes were rearranged into organising themes, refined into further themes until saturation was reached and in a final stage, global themes were deduced (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Silverman, 2011). An example of this process is shown in Table I. The focus group discussion involving University A’s employees’ understanding of a social agenda and how it is communicated illustrated two global themes which emerged abductively as a result of the transcript analysis:

(1) poor employee engagement with the social agenda; and
(2) greater institutional commitment needed to drive social engagement.

The interview data focus on how University A currently uses its SEGM status to communicate its social values and compares these activities with that of four other HEIs holding the SEM/SEGM. Here, four major themes emerged inductively:

(1) commitment to a social agenda;
(2) reporting social impact;
(3) engaging the student body; and
(4) embedding the social agenda within HEIs.

In light of publication restrictions, it is necessary to remain succinct and avoid repetition; therefore, the following findings are presented under the broad headings of:

- employee perceptions and engagement with the SEM;
- observations of HEIs and their commitment to a social agenda; and
- HEI communication practices when conveying a social agenda.
Credibility and trustworthiness of the findings were verified through triangulation of the focus group data with the interview data for corroboration purposes, as well as through achievement of rich data gathered through use of active listening techniques (Silverman, 2011).

Descriptors have been used to conceal the identities of each respondent and their institution to ensure that data used cannot be linked back to any individual (see Table II for details of key-participant descriptors used for the sample).

**Employee perceptions and engagement with the social enterprise mark**

Unless directly involved with the accreditation (i.e. central to the individual’s role within the HEI), University A’s employees possessed little awareness of the SEM and its accreditation process. In fact, when discussing the various accreditations that University A held, it quickly became apparent that employees generally struggled to name any of the widely recognised accreditations (e.g. Business in the Community, Athena SWAN and The Small Business Charter). Part of the explanation offered for their lack of awareness and/or
knowledge was because of the fact that the University promoted a wide variety of accreditations, for example, “I know the School’s got lots, but I don’t know what they are. They’re just an alphabet soup of letters aren’t they?” (FG P1). Another explanation for employees’ limited awareness and/or understanding of the SEM was that they were often too busy to engage with many of the mass communications received:

I think sometimes just mass-e-mailing people just to say you’ve communicated doesn’t mean its message has actually been reached or achieved or, you know, so I think the way it’s communicated could be looked at (FG P3).

Yes, communication is two-way, so it’s also communication, communicating centrally, but it’s people taking that message on board or taking it out and looking or being engaged (FG P5).

These findings complement Djordjevic and Cotton’s (2011) study, which suggests that employees suffer from information overload and as a result generally ignore mass emails because they are unwilling and/or unable to spend time decoding the messages. For the SEM specifically, there was also a general lack of awareness across each of the accredited universities around what “social enterprise” meant and whether it should apply to HEIs, for example:

I’m conscious that every time that social enterprise is discussed, whenever I watch them discuss it in mainstream media, it always starts with an explanation of what they are (FG P1).

One gets quite fed up, actually, with going over this - what is a social enterprise? (HEI 4)

After discussing the concept of social enterprise, many employees agreed that the university has a civic duty to become a driver for engagement with social enterprise, for example, one participant felt that:

The University is part of the infrastructure of the State and when you break it down, the University is one of the fundamental pillars of, you know, a civil society (FG P1).

The current fee-paying structure was another aspect of HEI business that confirmed HEIs as social enterprises by the majority of participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key-informant descriptor</th>
<th>Method of data collection</th>
<th>SEM membership status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 FG P1</td>
<td>Focus group (face-to-face) Participant 1</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 FG P2</td>
<td>Focus group (face-to-face) Participant 2</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 FG P3</td>
<td>Focus group (face-to-face) Participant 3</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 FG P4</td>
<td>Focus group (face-to-face) Participant 4</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 FG P5</td>
<td>Focus group (face-to-face) Participant 5</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 FG P6</td>
<td>Focus group (face-to-face) Participant 6</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 A</td>
<td>HEI interview (face-to-face)</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 B</td>
<td>HEI interview (face-to-face)</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 1 C</td>
<td>HEI interview (face-to-face)</td>
<td>University A/SEGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI 2</td>
<td>HEI interview (telephone)</td>
<td>University B/SEGM</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEI 3</td>
<td>HEI interview (telephone)</td>
<td>University C/SEM</td>
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<td>HEI 4</td>
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<td>University D/SEM</td>
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<td>HEI 5</td>
<td>HEI interview (telephone)</td>
<td>University E/SEM</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Membership status of each University refers to at the time of the data collection
Because I think it’s a business. I think it’s obviously allowed to be – it’s a public sector organisation, but when I look at my understanding of a social enterprise, it can make troughs of money, it’s what it does with that money (HEI 1C).

I have difficulty with the notion of universities as businesses, but I do recognise for all sorts of reasons why to call ourselves a social enterprise has got a certain amount of growing understanding within the sector (HEI 2).

These “hybrid” (Peattie and Morley, 2008; Doherty et al., 2014) perceptions are also supported in the social enterprise literature, which indicates that HEIs are increasingly being recognised as social enterprises in their own right and employees are therefore encouraged to engage further with local social enterprises to demonstrate social impact (Allan, 2005; Brown, 2015; Mannion, 2016). However, a common response to senior management requests for greater employee engagement with the SEM, and the social agenda, in general, was often perceived as a coercive attempt to make employees engage beyond that of their core work activities, and in some cases, it is perceived as a way to force employees into being social:

We are supposed to get the time to engage more in these things, but the nature of the University is that we’re all busy. And at the end of the day, you’ve got to get your job done and if you’ve got all this stuff on top, something’s got to give somewhere (FG P6);

[...] so why should I give here any more or less than giving near my own home or community, or to a particular charity or cause, so it’s very much a personal thing, isn’t it? [...] It shouldn’t be forced through your workplace (FG P4).

Consequently, it emerged that engagement with the SEM and/or a social agenda fluctuated greatly at both individual and institutional level. This is further reinforced by Djordjevic and Cotton’s (2011) study, who conclude that attempts to change employee behaviour and increase involvement in social activity are futile and almost always, generally fail. This outcome is not specific to HEIs but to all corporate settings, thus creating numerous calls for a more “co-operative university” (Winn, 2015, p. 40).

**Observations of higher education institutions and their commitment to a social agenda**

Certainly, for some participants, the core business of an HEI was to focus on recruiting students rather than the pursuit of a social agenda:

And if people’s concerns are the immediate, you know, getting student numbers and validating new degrees which will attract more students in the future, the day-to-day concerns sometimes eclipse any high-minded values (HEI 2).

This led to the expression of scepticism towards the benefits of SEM membership and/or the pursuit of a social agenda for both the HEI and the student population:

I don’t think a student will go “Oh, we’ve got a Gold Mark in social enterprise. I must go there, because I will get a fantastic career out of it (FG P4).

You know, universities are increasingly measured on where students end up [...]. You know, that’s part of the DLHE [Destination of Leavers from Higher Education] survey, that’s the test it’s linked to. Therefore pushing, encouraging students to go and work in sectors that are low paid is not in the University’s financial interests at all (FG P1).
It was felt that these tensions highlighted a disconnect between HEI levels of commitment and subsequent management/employee engagement with SEM and a social agenda in more general, and as a result, several participants felt that their respective institution lacked a centralised social strategy:

I think it’s done a little bit piecemeal. I don’t think it’s quite as joined up as perhaps we would like it to be (HEI 1B).

Even if you have a leader who is very clear with their values and their views and the direction they’d like to go in, the speed at which they go and the direction which they take, they’ve got to take everybody else with them (HEI 2).

This disconnect was seen by many as a direct lack of funding, for example, one participant stated that “universities like badges and they like making statements, but they don’t like putting large resources behind it” (HEI 1A). Other participants explained that their HEI approach to implementing a social agenda appeared fragmented and tokenistic because of the fact that so many additional socially led initiatives such as PRME or Business in the Community were also embraced by HEIs to help communicate their social agenda. Another participant felt that the disconnect experienced by employees was because of a lack of commitment from senior management and that it was not always possible to obtain the necessary commitment to the social element, for example:

We’re not at that stage yet, I mean, there are people who can do this internally, put it that way. That might not be the best way to do it, but, you know, I haven’t yet got the buy-in (HEI 5).

I wouldn’t say the commitment isn’t there, but it’s not seen as something we spend a long time communicating about (FG P1).

I think the people that are driving social enterprise buy-in and most HEIs tend to be relatively down the ladder, rather than being very senior people thinking (HEI 5).

As organisational structure is instrumental to how communication management becomes formally/informally legitimised (Grandien and Johansson, 2012; Gunter et al., 2012), restructuring and change often undermine the ability to send out a coherent and uniform message to stakeholders (Barrett, 2002; Cornelissen, 2008; Welch, 2011). Coincidentally, it was felt by many participants that a key reason for pursuing a variety of social agenda-related initiatives was because of ongoing institutional change and restructuring activity:

The University, like many universities in the sector has been going through some turbulence [...] and so consequently a lot of the energies and efforts have been taken up restructuring the University in terms of its faculties, departments and also coming to terms with the financial realities with open enrolment (HEI 2).

That’s largely to do with institutional changes rather than lack of commitment or anything (HEI 5).

Thus, a clear discussion thread observed among participants was that there needs to be a long-term resource commitment by HEIs to the social agenda and that this needed to be done through greater institutional coordination:

But the first step is to say we’re going to actually going to put some resource, significant resource behind it and we’re going to commit to that over a period, so it’s not just today or when the Vice-Chancellor leaves the University (HEI 1A).
but to actually pin that down and to make it a much more, if you like, institutionalised and prominent feature, you have to get beyond the rhetoric and have to be, you know, we have to be doing even more than we’re doing (HEI 2).

The University itself needs to coordinate itself a more strategic set of communications over a long period of time with its staff around social value (HEI 5).

As promotion of the social message is seen as being hampered by an institution’s restructuring and/or change, as well as a disjointed approach (Thornhill et al., 1996; Varey and White, 2000; Barrett, 2002), many participants felt that HEIs must act collaboratively to send out a more powerful message:

I think that talking collectively as universities as well is very powerful and something that doesn’t happen frequently enough, but, you know, I think it is a very positive thing (HEI 4).

Unsurprisingly, employees urged HEIs to ensure that they “walk the talk” as so to speak: “And we’re in this process of making sure we actually live, you know, the values that we’re going to put on the page” (HEI 4).

Higher education institution communication practices when conveying a social agenda

Using a combination of visual stimuli (i.e. SEGM leaflets, Social Impact Reports and Impact video), communications activities were also discussed at length by the participants. However, as social impact appeared not to be widely reported or understood among employees, further sceptical comments were made regarding the contradictory practice of having a social enterprise accreditation such as the SEM but failing to raise awareness of it because of ineffective communications. For example, P3 held the view that “It’s only if people know about it that it has any value” (FG P3). Consequently, some participants felt that if it could be demonstrated that an HEI’s social values were a unique selling point to attract students, it may be worth investing in:

I think some of the best ways of promoting our image to staff and students is to do good stuff and then make sure they hear about it and that’s what we try to do all the time (HEI 3).

What we should think about is influence, not just messages and spreading the word, but actual influence and impact, then I think that would be the biggest driver and enabler, you know (HEI 4).

Given Cornelissen’s (2008) comments around the implications of ineffective communication and their impact on a lack of buy-in from employees, when talking specifically to coordinators of the SEM within the other HEIs, most participants felt that their HEI showed a strong commitment to measuring and reporting on social activity:

I think we take the kind of social dimension of sustainability perhaps more seriously than other universities might (HEI 3).

The number of reports that we put in every year that I’ve just listed to you, that do that, because they’re kind of official and, you know, have meaning to the University immediately, because they’re going to our regulators (HEI 4).

However, akin to all employees, it was felt that while plenty of social activity is measured by HEIs, it is still not effectively reported upon:

I mean, there is obviously a social return on investment model, so as long as they are adhering to kind of a national framework, because the problem that I had when I’d seen them was when you,
for example, were looking at the value of someone’s volunteering, it was very much subjective as what you would relate that to (HEI 1C).

Moreover, where they do exist, they were observed largely as having little influence:

And I don’t see the University investing into social issues or anything that I think they would be able to count coherently in something like a return on social investment model (HEI 1C).

It’s one of those where people just put that in a filing cabinet. It’s not a living document that’s influencing decisions and informing change at the University (HEI 1C).

Problems in measuring social impact were also listed by participants as a factor for a lack of HEI commitment to social impact reporting:

[...] one of the difficulties is that institutions normally start out by saying “And we want to know what the impact is”. What, for us, will be “impact” and how are we going to measure it? (HEI 2).

This perception is supported by much of the literature on social impact measurement, which confirms that a lack of quantitative data to analyse social impact makes a comprehensive assessment difficult and infers that it may be largely symbolic as a way of satisfying stakeholders (Arvidson et al., 2010; Luke et al., 2013).

These reporting limitations are surprising in light of national HEI assessment exercises such as the REF and the forthcoming KEF. Thus, without the commitment and investment into making social impact reports living documents; membership of organisations such as SEM and all social reporting efforts of this kind by HEIs are superficial at best. Interestingly for the SEM, all participants felt that any ineffective communications issues did not lie with the SEM promotional materials which are considered to be comprehensive, but rather that there are not always the resources to engage with them fully. Consequently, many suggestions to improve uptake were forthcoming from participants. One participant felt that “there’s a conversation that the Company [i.e. the SEM] need to have with existing Mark holders all the time” (HEI 3). Another suggested that there needs to be a financial and a social incentive for institutions to hold the SEM, for example:

If the Mark has some sort of, I don’t know, government backing or regional backing or Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) backing, whereby there was some sort of subsidy, or something. Some financial advantage as well as social advantage, then that’s what good business looks like to me (HEI 4).

Additionally, while SEM champions within HEIs would help to promote the message, it was felt by the majority that this was a resource issue which was hard to justify financially:

You can’t invest it in champions. You have to be in the DNA of the organisation (HEI 1A).

Because everyone’s under so much pressure and student recruitment is really tough nowadays. It’s a different game and it’s all very, very, very aggressive, you know (HEI 4).

Conversations around the enhanced SEGM accreditation also took place, with some participants believing it to be a positive indication of the HEI’s strategic direction, whereas others felt that it would only add value if the social agenda becomes more embedded:

The decision came entirely from the Vice-Chancellor. [...] she identified the Social Enterprise Mark as being an important signifier of the direction she wanted the University to go in (HEI 2)

I’m not sure what the Gold standard would give us more than we have already in that kind of promotional way (HEI 3).
In addition, one participant argued that the SEGM would need to have greater meaning in terms of ability to trade with others to be worthwhile, for example:

So, they’ve got to get sufficient University Mark holders and then have them agree as a group that they will recognise the Mark in the companies that they trade with and so the Mark will then have value (HEI 4).

This reinforces the views expressed by Ridley-Duff and Southcombe (2012) and Allan (2005) that the SEM needs to offer something different from other accreditations and have recognised value if it is to become embedded by the majority of HEIs. Similarly, participants emphasised how important it is for HEIs to focus on the positive messages when communicating a social agenda:

Because no one can really argue with the agenda, because why would you not want to do it? And we are leading in it in certain areas, so, you know, it’s a good news story, it’s positive (HEI 1B).

One of the fears I have is universities become so hard-nosed that they lose sight of many of the social benefits they can give to their employees and to the outside community (HEI 2).

In moving the social agenda further forward, participants also felt that improved engagement with the social agenda through the SEM accreditation and similar vehicles must be achieved with the student body. Consequently, students were identified as a more effective target than employees as a key stakeholder group for becoming SEM champions and engaging with the social message:

I would say we need to get better at communicating to potential students what the social enterprise difference is (HEI 3).

And I think that is where the push will come from, because all universities now are acutely aware of what it takes to attract students to their courses (HEI 3).

[...] obviously the more institutions become engaged with this, the more understood it is, the more likely it is to influence student choices (HEI 2).

Moreover, if HEIs are more able to overtly express and live their social values and move beyond the corporate image currently projected to both employees and students, there may be a greater opportunity to fully embed the social agenda within HEIs strategies.

Discussion

Owing to the limited awareness and/or understanding of the SEM from employees, the SEM accreditation for HEIs largely failed to positively influence communication of University A’s social message to employee stakeholders. Part of this failure was put down to the fact that effective communication in such large institutions such as HEIs is complex, making it difficult to engage with employees. Thus, HEI employees tended to carry out their own localised social activities and get involved with institutional-level initiatives that are relevant to their own roles, partially owing to workload and pressures on time. In some cases, employees also felt as if they were being coerced to adopt a social agenda (Figure 1). This in itself, makes it clear that the SEM and/or social agenda is not considered a priority for HEIs, although if a more cohesive and coherent communications strategy were put into place, there could potentially be greater employee buy-in (Figure 2). For example, giving employees’ time in lieu at work to undertake social enterprise-related activities (e.g. increased collaboration with enterprises around placements, internships or knowledge
teaching partnerships) may encourage greater engagement, as well as provide quantifiable data for measuring social impact. There is also significant potential for the SEM personnel to assist HEIs in producing clear guidelines around their role as social enterprises and around the criteria that is being assessed. Indeed, without such toolkits, the effectiveness of the SEM will remain a tokenistic badge for HEIs and fail to convince stakeholders of their commitment to a social agenda.

The thematic networks generated from the focus groups findings interconnected well with the themes that emerged from the HEI depth interviews. These were conducted with HEI SEM/SEGM holders to explore and compare the way in which the SEM accreditation is used by HEIs to communicate a social message. Here, our findings identified a greater need for HEIs to demonstrate their social values more overtly to prove the importance of the social agenda to senior management. Although HEI mission statements profess commitment to a social agenda, many are guilty of mission drift and do not effectively live these values at present. The existing literature also suggests that HEIs have not yet fully addressed this shift towards a more explicit commitment to the social agenda (Djordjevic and Cotton, 2011; Lozano, 2011) and this study’s findings support this commonly held view. Overall, these findings have been able to offer greater theoretical insight into an under-researched area of the literature, namely, employee engagement (Welch, 2011), with the
social agenda and also to link this to another less developed area around communication in HEIs (Djordjevic and Cotton, 2011) around social enterprise (British Council, 2016).

**Conclusions, limitations and avenues for future research**

This study set out to explore in the context of University A, whether the SEM accreditation provides HEIs with a tool to positively influence communication of their social message to stakeholders. This involved exploring employee views about how social messages are conveyed and promoted at the university and to ascertain how effectively University A’s internal communication mechanisms functioned in engaging with employees compared to other HEIs who held the SEM/SEGM. Visual stimuli in the form of SEM/SEGM leaflets, promotional materials and University A’s social and economic impact report/video, helped to facilitate an insightful debate around the value of the SEM for HEIs.

In conclusion, this study has responded to calls for a greater understanding of marketing activities within social enterprise (Powell & Osborne) and provided theoretical insight into an under-researched area of the literature, namely, employee engagement (Welch, 2011), with the social agenda and more specifically the marketing role of the SEM accreditation. Moreover, we also contribute to the less developed area around communication in HEIs
(Djordjevic and Cotton, 2011) around social enterprise (British Council, 2016), especially regarding whether the SEM positively influences stakeholders or merely pays lip service to HEI commitment to a social agenda.

While it was acknowledged by participants that the SEM offers a means of publicly displaying an institution’s commitment to the social agenda, our findings reveal that in many cases, HEIs are merely paying lip service to their social commitment and the SEM could be considered “just another badge” (i.e. akin to greenwashing). Similarly, it was felt by a number of HEIs that the SEGM currently has no meaningful impact as an enhanced accreditation because it is unable to provide added value or a financial incentive such as preferential trading arrangements, for example. As such, it is difficult to make a case to senior management for making the SEM accreditation and/or the pursuit of a social agenda a priority over other competing economic and/or market demands in a way that would provide competitive advantage. This indicates a need for a stronger narrative around social values to better articulate this, for example, by reframing economic objectives as social objectives.

It also emerged that employee engagement was not considered the most effective way to improve communication of the social message and that instead the student body should be targeted. Students are the core business of HEIs, and therefore, achieving their buy-in towards the social message would be a step in the right direction in embedding a social agenda within institutional strategy, if it could be demonstrated that attending a socially responsible institution would be a factor in making their future study choices. HEIs have a responsibility to remain true to their mission statement and seek to fulfil their social mission beyond tokenistic acquisitions of accreditations if they are to engage stakeholders with a social agenda. This is an emerging topic in the management literature in relation to PRME and the citizenship agenda and warrants further research to ascertain its impact on student choice (Arac and Madran, 2014).

However, this study is not without its limitations, especially in the area of reaching theoretical saturation. At the time of this study, fewer SEM accredited HEIs existed, and therefore, the above conclusions are based upon a small select sample of HEIs that held the SEM. However, the use of purposive sampling utilised in this study is one means of accommodating generalisability issues (Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2013), given that the participants were deliberately selected from areas in which the processes studied were most likely to occur. Nonetheless, further studies are needed to provide a more representative view of each university’s use of and commitment to the SEM/SEGM.

To achieve institutional buy-in for the social message and the SEM accreditation in particular, further impactful research should be carried out to investigate the additional benefits that the accreditation can bring, both financially and socially. Finally, although this study focuses on the social message, it is important to recognise that the SEM accreditation also refers to an organisation’s environmental impact. Therefore, given the increasing role of the REF/KEF and its growing emphasis on demonstrating research impact, it is crucial that HEIs are able to more adequately and effectively report on social impact through means of external audits and/or social return on investment-based models. This would encourage stakeholders to take the social agenda more seriously in the future.

Notes

1. Although regarded as highly complex and often contested, a common definition of social enterprise is an “independent organisation with social and economic objectives that aims to fulfil a social purpose as well as achieving financial stability through trading” (Haugh, 2005, p. 3). In
other words, social enterprise “shapes, and is being shaped, through everyday practice”, and therefore, understood as an ongoing “performative enactment” (Mauksch et al., 2017, p. 114).

2. Ashoka is a network which aims to address global problems. In so doing, they “identify and accelerate cutting edge social innovation”, aiming to bring together communities to help build a world where “everyone is equipped and empowered to be a changemaker” (Ashoka, 2018).

3. The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a United Nations-supported initiative founded in 2007 as a platform to raise the profile of sustainability in schools around the world, and to equip today’s business students with the understanding and ability to deliver change tomorrow (PRME, 2018).

4. The REF is the UK’s system for assessing the excellence of research in HEIs.

5. The KEF is intended to increase HEI efficiency and effectiveness in use of public funding for knowledge exchange.

6. With over 1000 members, Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) is one of the largest social enterprise networks whose work involves communicating the concerns of members and ensuring social enterprise issues are heard by decision makers across sectors. They also carry out leading research to build the evidence base for social enterprises. They also have a strong regional presence in communities through a Social Enterprise Places Programme (SEUK, 2017).

References


**Corresponding author**
Morven McEachern can be contacted at: m.mceachern@hud.ac.uk
Systemic innovation labs: a lab for wicked problems

Sharon Zivkovic
University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes, Australia

Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to question the appropriateness of current lab types for addressing wicked problems. A new lab type, a Systemic Innovation Lab, is proposed which combines the features of existing labs that are suited to addressing wicked problems.

Design/methodology/approach – Characteristics of initiatives that are considered appropriate for addressing wicked problems and existing lab types that contain any of these characteristics are identified. These lab types are Social Innovation Labs, Living Labs, Urban Living Labs, Urban Transition Labs and Public Sector Innovation Labs. The proposed new lab type is reasoned by combining the features of existing labs that are suited to addressing wicked problems. How the new lab would work in practice is illustrated with a case study.

Findings – When addressing wicked problems, labs need to take a systemic design and not a service design approach. They also need to focus on addressing complex problems, take a place-based and transition approach, enable coherent action by diverse actors, involve users as co-creators, support a networked governance approach and recognize government as an enabler of change.

Practical implications – This paper provides a new lab type designed specifically for addressing wicked problems. This new lab supports practitioners that take a systemic design, solution ecosystem and systemic innovation approach. Systemic design is based on a core set of principles that are a crossover between design and complexity theory.

Originality/value – For the first time, this paper analyzes different lab types to determine their appropriateness for addressing wicked problems. It also proposes a new lab type whose sole purpose is addressing wicked problems.

Keywords Complexity theory, Wicked problems, Labs, Systemic design

Paper type General review

Introduction
“Wicked problems” are complex social policy problems that societies face which cannot be definitively described and that do not have definitive and objective solutions (Rittel and Webber, 1973, p. 155). Examples of wicked problems include: terrorism, environmental degradation, poverty (Krawchulk, 2008, p. 69), climate change, obesity and indigenous disadvantage (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007). While the range of problems that are classified as being “wicked” are quite diverse, they all share the same characteristics, including the following: they have multiple causes; they have many interdependencies; different stakeholders have a different understanding of what the problem is; and therefore, they have conflicting goals; they have no clear solution; attempts to address them often lead to unforeseen consequences; and they are context specific (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007).

Labs are increasingly being used to address societal problems. There are many different forms of labs, both within and outside of government, that are created for the purpose of solving social problems (Puttick, 2014, p. 7). While some authors consider that the different terms used to describe labs are just a matter of semantics, others consider that the different
names given to labs highlight the different types of labs that occur in practice (Schuurman and Tõnurist, 2017). The different types of labs include: Social Innovation Labs, Living Labs, Urban Living Labs, Urban Transition Labs and Public Sector Innovation Labs.

Many of these lab types are underpinned by a service design methodology. Both Social Innovation Labs and Public Sector Innovation Labs consider that design thinking from a service design perspective is the most popular methodology for labs (Tracey and Stott, 2017). Similarly, Living Labs are considered to share tools and methods from design thinking (Almirall and Wareham, 2011, p. 90). The relationship between Living Labs and service design is highlighted in the evaluation criteria for Living Labs that are seeking membership into the European Network of Living Labs. One of the evaluation criteria is the adoption of user-driven service design methods (ENoLL, 2018). Despite this popularity of using a service design approach, the discipline of design is starting to question the suitability of service design for addressing wicked problems: instead, a systemic design approach is being proposed as the most appropriate approach when addressing wicked problems (Jones, 2014).

By referring to the literature on addressing wicked problems and existing lab types, this paper provides an original contribution to the literature by positing a more appropriate lab type for addressing wicked problems. This new lab is a hybrid lab, as it incorporates features for addressing wicked problems that are characteristics of existing labs but are not all currently included in the one lab type. The new lab is named a Systemic Innovation Lab, as it supports systemic design, solution ecosystem and systemic innovation approaches.

This paper is structured as follows. After discussing the shift to systemic design for addressing wicked problems, the paper describes key features of approaches that are recommended for addressing wicked problems. These features are: focus on addressing complex problems, take a place-based transition approach, enable coherent action by diverse actors, involve users as co-creators, support a networked governance approach and recognize government as an enabler of change. The paper then identifies which existing lab types have these identified characteristics as defining features. The paper concludes by describing a new Systemic Innovation Lab that focusses on addressing wicked problems and incorporates the features required to address wicked problem. A brief analysis of the Systemic Innovation Lab at the macro, meso and micro level is provided. To illustrate how the new lab would work in practice, a Systemic Innovation Lab methodology is described.

The shift to systemic design
Design is defined as “the ability to imagine that which does not yet exist, to make it appear in concrete form as a new, purposeful addition to the real world” (Nelson and Stolterman, 2012, p. 12). While design has its legacy in craft and industrial production, Buchanan’s (1992) paper “Wicked Problems in Design Thinking” is considered to have been instrumental in moving design theory towards a more generalized “design thinking” (Kimbell, 2011, p. 292). Despite the term design thinking originating with academics that conducted research within the design disciplines, the academic design literature has been mostly ignored in the books and papers that have been responsible for popularizing the idea of design thinking (Kimbell, 2011, p. 293).

According to Buchanan (1992), there are four broad areas of design thinking: symbolic and visual communications, artefacts and material objects, activities and organized services and complex systems or environments. The design of symbolic and visual communications includes the traditional work of graphic design and communicating information, ideas and arguments. The design of material objects is the customary design of products including clothing, domestic objects, machinery and vehicles. The design of activities and organized
services includes how design thinking can contribute to services that are more intelligent, meaningful and satisfying. The fourth area, the design of complex systems or environments, includes urban planning, the functional analysis of the parts of complex wholes, the integration of complex wholes into hierarchies and the shaping of environments.

In a similar vein to Buchanan (1992), Jones (2014, p. 93) distinguishes systemic design from service design. He considers systemic design to be “a next-generation practice developed by necessity to advance design practices in systemic problems” (Jones, 2014, p. 94). Systemic design is suited to the problem space of wicked problems, which is described by Jones (2014, p. 95) as “problem systems”.

Jones (2014, p. 104) argues that a crossover of principles between systems and design theory is required for addressing problem systems. While complexity science is included as a branch of systems thinking in the systemic design approach (Jones, 2014, pp. 93-94), there are key differences between complexity science and systems thinking: while they both consider it important to take into account whole systems (Senge, 1990; Sturmberg et al., 2014), they do differ in how they see the relationships between cause and effect within complex systems. Systems thinking considers there to be clear relationships between cause and effect, whereas complexity science recognizes that there are not clear relationships between cause and effect (Snowden and Stanbridge, 2004). The type of systemic design advanced by this paper aligns to a complexity and design theory approach.

The crossover of principles proposed by Jones (2014, p. 105) provide a core set of principles for systemic design. These principles are: compelling collective action toward a desirable outcome, appreciating complexity, purpose finding, boundary framing, feedback coordination, system ordering, generative emergence, continuous adaptation, self-organizing and requisite variety (Jones, 2014, p. 106).

The systemic design principle of compelling collective action toward a desirable outcome is supported by the complex systems leadership theory of “generative leadership”. Generative leadership emphasizes the need for goal alignment: it promotes the need for goals to be specified in advance so that interactions can be aligned towards them and the knowledge gained through interactions can be selected and applied to problem-solving (Surie and Hazy, 2006, p. 17).

The principle of appreciating complexity when addressing wicked problems is essential, as different types of problems need to be addressed in different ways (Snowden and Boone, 2007, p. 4). It is well recognized that complex problems cannot be addressed using epistemologies that are based on mechanistic explanations (Schlindwein and Ison, 2004, p. 27).

The systemic design principle of purpose finding aligns with the complexity concept of solution ecosystems. Solution ecosystems consist of all the initiatives in a geographical area that are addressing any of the interdependent causal factors that underpin a wicked problem. Together these initiatives, as a complex open system, self-organize to create an ideal future state that addresses the complex problem (Eggers and Muoio, 2015).

Systemic design’s boundary framing principle is a key consideration when taking a complexity approach. The boundary that is chosen needs to be firm enough for self-organization processes to occur but permeable enough to allow exchanges of information and resources with the environment (Snowden and Boone, 2007, p. 6; Goldstein, 1994, p. 49). Such boundaries prevent the energy of diverse stakeholders from dissipating and enable the collective energy of stakeholders to be channeled to the challenge at hand (Schultz, 2008, p. 90).

The feedback coordination systemic design principle highlights that positive feedback loops can be used to amplify and negative feedback loops can be used to stabilize action when addressing wicked problems. Intervention characteristics that amplify action include: enabling safe fail experimentation (Snowden et al., 2011, p. 124), enabling rich interactions in
relational spaces (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009), supporting collective action (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009), partitioning the system (Surie and Hazy, 2006, p. 18), establishing network linkages (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008, p. 206) and framing issues to match diverse perspectives (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008, p. 206). Characteristics of interventions that stabilize feedback include: integrating local constraints (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009, p. 625), providing a multiple perspective context and system structure (Surie and Hazy, 2006), enabling problem representations to anchor in a community (Surie and Hazy, 2006) and enabling emergent outcomes to be monitored (Surie and Hazy, 2006).

Systemic design’s system ordering principle supports the view that complex adaptive systems can be manipulated (McKelvey and Lichtenstein, 2007). Complex systems leadership theories consider that systems can be ordered to undertake transitions towards a more desirable state by creating the enabling conditions of create a disequilibrium state, amplify action, encourage self-organization, stabilize feedback and enable information flows (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009; Zivkovic, 2015, p. 3).

Emergence is a characteristic of complex systems where structures, patterns and properties arise during the process of self-organization (Goldstein, 1999). For the emergence to be generative, systemic design’s generative emergence principle requires that the emergence be intentionally sparked by agency (Lichtenstein, 2016, p. 45). Empirical research has shown that large complex systems, such as communities, require enabling conditions to be created to maintain the coordination required for emergent self-organization and adaptive capability (McKelvey and Lichtenstein, 2007).

Systemic design’s continuous adaptation principle emphasizes the need to support a system’s continual adaptation. The enabling conditions of create a disequilibrium state, amplify action, encourage self-organization, stabilize feedback and enable information flows (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009; Zivkovic, 2015, p. 3) support the continuous adaptation of a system while maintaining a preferred purpose and objectives.

The self-organizing principle of systemic design recognizes that self-organization is a defining characteristic of complex adaptive systems. Self-organization involves agents recombining in new patterns of interaction and working arrangements that improve the functioning and the performance of a complex adaptive system (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009, p. 620). This occurs without a master plan as “it is never possible to control a complex adaptive system entirely” (Ostrom, 2007, p. 172). Instead, the process of self-organization can be encouraged by incorporating into initiatives characteristics that support self-organization (Zivkovic, 2015).

The systemic design principle of requisite variety is the basis of a law when working with complex adaptive systems. The law of requisite variety states that “only variety can destroy variety” (Ashby, 1956) which suggests that to control the variety of a system, such as all of the causal factors and interdependencies of a wicked problem, the approach to address the wicked problem needs to have as much variety as the wicked problem. Complex adaptive systems can have as much variety as wicked problems. By definition, complex adaptive systems are complex, which implies a great number of connections between a wide variety of elements (Zimmerman et al., 1998). Communities and solution ecosystems within communities are complex adaptive systems (Amadei, 2015, p. 4). Therefore, according to the law of requisite variety, solution ecosystems are ideally suited to addressing wicked problems.

**Features appropriate for addressing wicked problems**

Approaches that are identified in the literature as being appropriate for addressing wicked problems have a number of distinguishing features. These features include a focus on
addressing complex problems, taking a place-based approach, taking a transition approach, enabling coherent action by diverse actors, involving users as co-creators, supporting a networked governance approach and recognizing that governments need to create enabling conditions.

**Focus on addressing complex problems**

When addressing wicked problems, the approach taken needs to be appropriate for addressing wicked problems. Wicked problems are a special type of complex problem: they have the characteristics of complex problems and they are the subject of social policy (Rittel and Webber, 1973).

The crossover of principles that have been proposed by Jones (2014, p. 104) focus on addressing complex problems. Complex problems are significantly different to simple and complicated problems (Westley et al., 2007). They are unpredictable; they do not have a right answer as the problem is constantly changing; and relationships between cause and effect can only be determined in retrospect (Snowden and Boone, 2007). Complex problems are considered to be more than the sum of their parts (Snowden and Boone, 2007): there is an essence in the interacting relationships between the people, experiences and moments in time that constitute the problem (Westley et al., 2007). Addressing complex problems has been likened to raising a child: every child is different, following rigid protocols generally does not work and is often detrimental; and raising one child successfully does not guarantee success with raising a second child (Westley et al., 2007). As suggested by the law of requisite variety (Ashby, 1956), solution ecosystems are an appropriate approach for addressing complex problems.

While a solution ecosystem approach is suitable for addressing the complexity part of a wicked problem, consideration needs to also be given to addressing the policy part of the problem. It has been argued that a systemic innovation approach is the most appropriate form of social innovation for addressing wicked problems (Davies et al., 2012, p. 17). Systemic innovations are “a set of interconnected innovations, where each is dependent on the other, with innovation both in the parts of the system and in the ways that they interact” (Davies et al., 2012, p. 4). This approach recognizes the need to address the interface with government policy and argues that governments need to create the enabling conditions for systemic innovation to occur (Davies et al., 2012).

**Take a place-based approach**

Given that wicked problems are context specific (Westley et al., 2007), they need to be addressed through place-based approaches. Place-based approaches are defined as “stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a geographic space, be it a neighbourhood, a region, or an ecosystem” (Bellevontaine and Wisener, 2011, p. 6). They are an evolving process that incorporates adaptive learning and the interests of stakeholders; they try to achieve synergies by integrating across silos and dimensions of sustainability (social, economic, environmental, cultural); they use their shared ownership of the approach to leverage their assets and knowledge; and they frequently try to achieve behavioral change (Bellevontaine and Wisener, 2011, p. 5).

Collaborative place-based approaches are considered to have emerged as a means of addressing wicked problems (Bellevontaine and Wisener, 2011, p. 5). According to Marsh et al. (2017, p. 443):

Place-based approaches seek to break down the “wickedness” of broad and complex problems – like poverty for example – by dealing in detail with its different manifestations in different places at a very fine-grained local level.
Approaches that are place-based have been described as complex adaptive systems (Bellefontaine and Wisener, 2011, p. 10) and, according to the law of requisite variety, are therefore appropriate for addressing wicked problems.

Take a transition approach
Transitions are “non-linear movements or leaps from one stable level to another” (De Roo, 2012a, 2012b, p. 149). The field of social entrepreneurship is interested in addressing wicked problems through community transition processes that are based on an understanding of complex adaptive systems (Goldstein et al., 2008, 2010). This complexity-informed social entrepreneurship approach recognizes the need to create conditions that support community transitions: the conditions for transitioning from an original attractor representing the current way of working in the community to a new attractor that represents the systemic social innovation (Goldstein et al., 2010, p. 104). An attractor shows the stable patterns of a complex system (Svyantek and Brown, 2000, p. 71): the range of possible actions in the system set by their circular, nonlinear structure of beliefs, actions and results that strengthen each other and act as a non-permeable barrier and attractor (Goldstein, 1994, pp. 76-77).

From a complexity perspective, transition processes are considered to follow a well-understood path:

[...]
a new order appears if forces at play exert tension on the system; a small change, if amplified, leads to a transformative process which, fuelled with the new imported resources and positively reinforcing forces, leads to a new equilibrium (Thietart and Forgues, 2011, p. 59).

Conditions promoted by a complexity-informed social entrepreneurship approach that encourage transitions include: fostering the emergence of innovation, allowing self-organizing social processes to occur and promoting coherence between diverse community stakeholders (Goldstein et al., 2008, p. 12).

In a similar vein to the social entrepreneurship approach, spatial planning has an interest in creating conditions for transitions (Boelens and De Roo, 2014, p. 11). Transition planning is a relatively new spatial planning approach based on complexity sciences (De Roo and Boelens, 2016, p. 7; De Roo, 2012a, 2012b, p. 152). To support this new planning approach, the role of a transition manager has been proposed for complexity-informed spatial planners (De Roo and Boelens, 2016, p. 6) that acknowledge evolving processes (De Roo, 2012a, 2012b, p. 152). Transition managers are not controllers of development but are managers of change that support and guide diverse urban and rural community stakeholders to find their most appropriate positions (De Roo and Boelens, 2016, p. 6). In this new role, the planner’s focus is not the content and process of planning but rather the conditions for possible developments (Boelens and De Roo, 2014, p. 19): the conditions for encouraging transitions (Boelens and De Roo, 2014, p. 11).

Enable coherent action by diverse actors
For a particular geographical area, addressing wicked problems requires the combined insights and actions of multiple diverse actors (Bradford, 2005, p. 4). These stakeholders need to be diverse as a range of different expertise is required to ensure the complexity and interconnectedness of the wicked problem is understood, possible solutions can collectively be identified and any required behavior change is understood, discussed and owned by the people whose behavior needs to change (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007).

The need for coherent action by diverse stakeholders has been described by Glenn and Gordon (2004) who state: “common platforms are needed that connect governments,
corporations, NGOs, universities, and international organisations in collaborative decision making”. In their report, they quote the following statement from a speech by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan: “The most creative agents of change may well be partnerships among governments, private businesses, non-profit organisations, scholars and concerned citizens such as you” (Glenn and Gordon, 2004). Conklin et al. (2007, p. 5) explains the importance of diverse stakeholders taking coherent action when addressing wicked problems:

You don’t so much “solve” a wicked problem as you help stakeholders negotiate shared understanding and shared meaning about the problem and its possible solutions. The objective of the work is coherent action, not final solution.

Solution ecosystem and systemic innovation approaches support diverse stakeholders to take coherent action.

**Involve users as co-creators**

Systemic innovation, which is considered the most appropriate form of social innovation for addressing wicked problems (Davies et al., 2012, p. 17), “requires co-operation between and across organisations and sectors” to bring about systems change (Davies et al., 2012, p. 6). These users, who are part of the solution ecosystem that is addressing the wicked problem, need to be involved as co-creators throughout transition processes to achieve the coordinated and coherent response that is required (Davies et al., 2012, p. 8).

Involvement of users as co-creators is especially important during the amplifying action and self-organization stages of transitions. Intervention characteristics at the amplify action stage that support users as co-creators include: enable rich interactions in relational spaces (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009), support collective action (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009), partition the system (Surie and Hazy, 2006, p. 18), establish network linkages (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008, p. 206) and frame issues to match diverse perspectives (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008, p. 206). At the self-organization stage, intervention characteristics that support users as co-creators include: create correlation through language and symbols (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009; Surie and Hazy, 2006, p. 17), encourage individuals to accept positions as role models for the change effort (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009), enable periodic information exchanges between partitioned subsystems (Surie and Hazy, 2006, p. 17) and enable resources and capabilities to recombine (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009).

**Support networked governance approach**

Network governance is considered the most appropriate form of governance for addressing wicked problems (Meuleman, 2008, p. 104). Traditionally, the aim of governance networks has been the creation of self-organizing governance settings where operationally autonomous but interdependent diverse actors “develop and pursue common goals through sustained interaction that involves open-ended deliberation as well as hard-nosed bargaining” (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016, p. 448). In this traditional conception of governance networks, the term “self” in self-organization refers to “do-it-yourself” (Rauws, 2016, p. 341). This type of self-organization is considered important for traditional governance networks because if governments become too intrusive and constraining and do not let the governance network “do-it-themselves”, the members of the network could disengage from participating in the network or fiercely oppose the government’s attempts at control (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016, p. 445).

The term “self” in self-organization has a different meaning than “do-it-yourself” when a complex adaptive systems approach is taken to address a wicked problem. As a complexity
science concept, the term self-organization refers to the emergence of organization “by itself” (Rauws, 2016, p. 340) without the organization being controlled by anyone. The solution ecosystem approach to addressing wicked problems aligns to this complexity type of self-organizing governance network.

Recognize government as an enabler of change
While for complexity type self-organizing governance networks, emergence of organization occurs spontaneously out of the interactions of the diverse actors, empirical research has shown that large complex systems, such as communities, require enabling conditions to be created to maintain the coordination required for emergent self-organization and adaptive capability (McKelvey and Lichtenstein, 2007). Bentley and Wilsdon (2003, p. 26) argue that governments need to take on this enabling role.

Despite communities being complex adaptive systems (Amadei, 2015, p. 4) and taking a complex adaptive systems approach being recommended for addressing wicked problems (Klijn, 2008, p. 314; Australian Public Service Commission, 2007, p. 14; Bentley and Wilsdon, 2003, p. 26), governments have been reluctant to treat communities as complex adaptive systems (Mulgan, 2001, p. 1). This reluctance is because of government challenges which are more easily met when there are clear relationships between cause and effect, such as time pressures for making government policy and the requirement of governments for simplicity, repetition, clarity and accountability (Mulgan, 2001).

To address this hesitation of governments, it is recommended that the adaptive capacity of governments be built and that governments be enabled to support multi-level governance approaches (Duit and Galaz, 2008, p. 318). The adaptive capacity of governments can be built by building their capacity to balance two roles: the unplanned exploration of solutions with communities and the planned exploitation of community knowledge, ideas and innovations (Duit and Galaz, 2008, p. 319).

Existing lab approaches
There are a variety of lab types discussed in the literature including: Social Innovation Labs, Living Labs, Urban Living Labs, Urban Transition Labs and Public Sector Innovation Labs. None of these existing lab types incorporate, as defining characteristics, all of the features for addressing wicked problems that were described in the previous section. Each of these lab types does, however, have as defining characteristics some of the features for addressing wicked problems. The defining characteristics for addressing wicked problems for each of the individual lab types is shown in Table I.

Social innovation labs
Social Innovation Labs have the key defining features of focusing on addressing complex social problems and enabling coherent action by diverse stakeholders. Social Innovation Labs are defined as a process, one that is intended to “support multi-stakeholder groups in addressing a complex social problem” (Westely et al., 2014). They have three core characteristics: they are social, experimental and systemic (Hassan, 2014, p. 3). Social Innovation Labs bring diverse stakeholders together to work in a collaborative team. They address social challenges through iterative experimentation that focus on the systemic nature of the problem (Hassan, 2014, p. 3). While Social Innovation Labs emphasize the need for stakeholders to understand challenges from a user perspective, involving users as co-creators is not a defining feature (Westely et al., 2014, p. 4).
Several antecedent trajectories have been linked to the advent of Social Innovation Labs (Westley et al., 2014, p. 9). While “complex adaptive systems theory to social innovation” is recognized as one of these trajectories (Westley et al., 2014, p. 9), the “design thinking to design lab” trajectory is considered the dominant methodology (Tracey and Stott, 2017, p. 54). The type of design thinking that has gained prominence with Social Innovation Labs is that which has been popularized by design consultancies (Westely et al., 2014, p. 11).

Living labs
Living Labs are:

[... ] physical regions or virtual realities where stakeholders form public-private-people partnerships (4Ps) of firms, public agencies, universities, institutes, and users all collaborating for creation, prototyping, validating, and testing of new technologies, services, products, and systems in real-life contexts (Westerlund and Leminen, 2011).

This definition highlights that Living Labs enable coherent action by diverse stakeholders. It also suggests that while Living Labs can be used to address complex social policy problems and can take a place-based approach, they are not defining characteristics: Living Labs are also used to test new technologies and they can occur in virtual realities.

Another defining feature of Living labs is that they involve “users as co-creators on equal grounds with the rest of participants” (Almirall et al., 2012, p. 12). While the European Network of Living Labs (2018, p. 2) specifically “place the citizen at the centre of innovation” (ENoLL, 2018, p. 2), Eriksson et al. (2005) consider Living Labs can involve users, consumers or citizens.

Urban living labs
Urban Living Labs have the defining features of being place-based and enabling coherent action by diverse stakeholders. Many of the projects that are using living lab methodologies
focus on urban areas (Voytenko et al., 2016, p. 45). In response to this interest, a range of stakeholders, including city planners, universities and technology companies view urban areas as ideal places to develop Living Labs: Urban Living Labs (Juujärvi and Pesso, 2013, p. 22) and these users engage as co-creators.

Urban Living Labs are also characterized as taking a networked governance approach. While there is no uniform definition of Urban Living Labs, they are characterized as a form of collective urban governance and experimentation (Voytenko et al., 2016, p. 45) that captures opportunities and addresses challenges created by urbanization (Voytenko et al., 2016, p. 53). They are considered to be a progression of the geographically embedded partnership-based modes of urban governance from the 1990s onwards that bring together diverse stakeholders (Voytenko et al., 2016, p. 47).

Addressing complex problems is not a distinguishing feature of Urban Living Labs. Urban Living Labs aim to address urban problems of varying complexity (Juujärvi and Pesso, 2013, p. 22). They have a range of uses including serving as technology-assisted research environments with the goal of improving an urban environment or local services; the co-creation of local services and urban artifacts; the development of new kinds of urban planning that facilitate vision-making, planning procedures and support collaborative working; and addressing challenges such as low carbon cities, promoting economic growth and enhancing social inclusion (Voytenko et al., 2016, p. 47).

**Urban transition labs**

Urban Transition Labs are place-based, have a focus on complex problems and involve diverse actors: they are described as “the locus within a city where (global) persistent problems are translated to the specific characteristics of the city” (Nevens et al., 2013, p. 115). They incorporate a transition management approach (Nevens et al., 2013, p. 111) and have a focus on local urban governance (Nevens et al., 2013, p. 116). Transition management is considered “a new mode of governance based on complexity thinking” that has “the explicit aim of redirecting and accelerating transitions to a more sustainable society” (Loorbach, 2007, p. 27).

Urban Transition Labs are described as “co-creative collaboration between actors and researchers” (Nevens et al., 2013, p. 111). In “genuine” Urban Transition Labs, actors are considered to include end-users (Nevens et al., 2013, p. 115).

**Public sector innovation lab**

Public Sector Innovation Labs focus on addressing the “perceived shortcomings of standard approaches to policy and service design” (McGann et al., 2018, p. 2). They are considered to act as change agents within the public sector (Tõnurist et al., 2015, p. 2). Common activities of Public Sector Innovation Labs include problem definition and analysis and the generation and testing of solutions (McGann et al., 2018, p. 14).

An empirical analysis of 20 prominent Public Sector Innovation Labs identified that they were “predominantly engaged in service design work” (McGann et al., 2018, p. 16). This is what differentiates Public Sector Innovation Labs from other kinds of knowledge actors in the public sector (McGann et al., 2018, p. 15).

Public Sector Innovation Labs are considered to be structurally separated from the rest of the public sector and to have a great deal of autonomy in determining their work methods and targets (Tõnurist et al., 2015, p. 2). While they are considered to be structurally
separated, they can actually exist inside or outside of government and they can be subject to high or low levels of government control (McGann et al., 2018, p. 10).

The need for a systemic innovation lab

Given that no existing Lab type has all of the identified lab characteristics for addressing wicked problems as their defining features, it is proposed that a new lab approach be developed that does. This new lab is coined a Systemic Innovation Lab, as it supports systemic design, solution ecosystem and systemic innovation approaches. The proposed Systemic Innovation Lab incorporates and synthesizes all of the key features recommended for addressing wicked problems: it will focus on addressing complex problems, take a place-based transition approach, enable coherent action by diverse actors, involve users as co-creators, support a networked governance approach and recognize government as an enabler of change.

Schuurman (2015) highlights that the analysis of Living Labs can occur at the macro, meso and micro level. The macro level consists of the public-private-people partnership that carries out the Living Lab activities (Schuurman, 2015, p. 184). For the meso level, the focus is on the Living Lab projects (Schuurman, 2015, p. 184). The micro level is the specific methodology used by a Living Lab (Schuurman, 2015, p. 185) which is traditionally a user driven service design methodology (ENoLL, 2018).

Similarly, the proposed Systemic Innovation Lab can be analyzed at the macro, meso and micro level. At the macro level, the Systemic Innovation Lab consists of a collaboration of diverse stakeholders, including users that are organized to take coherent action to address a targeted wicked problem through a transition management approach in a given place. At this macro level, the Systemic Innovation Lab takes a systemic innovation and networked governance approach that is enabled by government.

The meso level of the Systemic Innovation Lab is the solution ecosystem of initiatives and the organizations that are collaborating on those initiatives. Each of these initiatives is addressing one or more of the numerous causal factors that underpin the targeted wicked problem.

At the micro level, the focus is the specific Lab methodology that is used by the Systemic Innovation Lab to undertake research and address wicked problems. For Systemic Innovation Labs, this methodology would be based on systemic design: a core set of principles that are a crossover between design and complexity theory.

Systemic innovation lab case study

During the evaluation of the pilot of its Complex Systems Leadership Program, Wicked Lab identified the need for a lab type that has features for addressing wicked problems. The evaluation identified a desire by government to use the program as professional development for staff before establishing a lab to address wicked problems. In response to this need, Wicked Lab has developed the FEMLAS process as a lab methodology. This methodology aligns to principles of systemic design and is, therefore, well suited as a Systemic Innovation Lab methodology.

The FEMLAS process incorporates the systemic design principle of appreciating complexity (Jones, 2014, p. 109). It is informed by complex systems leadership theories and recognizes that wicked problems are a special type of complex problem that have a policy focus. A solution ecosystem approach is taken to address the complexity of targeted problems and the interface between community and government systems is strengthened to address the policy interface. Taking a solution ecosystem approach to address wicked problems satisfies the purpose finding principle of systemic design (Jones, 2014, p. 109), is
appropriate according to the law of requisite variety and, hence, fulfils the requisite variety principle of systemic design (Jones, 2014, p. 11).

FEMLAS is an acronym for the six stages of the process: Form, Explore, Map, Learn, Address and Share. At the Share stage of the process, there is an iterative loop: after completing the Share stage, the four stages from Map to Share are repeated periodically. The incorporation of an iterative loop into the FEMLAS process supports systemic design’s continuous adaptation principle (Jones, 2014, p. 11). The South West Food Community, a collaborative network in Western Australia supported by Edith Cowan University, has recently commenced using the FEMLAS process to improve food security in their community.

**Form stage**

Key tasks at the Form stage of the lab methodology include: forming the core team, defining the solution ecosystem boundary, framing the solution ecosystem, undertaking the initial mapping of the initiatives and organizations in the solution ecosystem and developing a briefing paper. The core team is formed with a diverse range of stakeholders, including user and government representatives, to ensure that the complexity and interconnectedness of the wicked problem is represented. As a coherent collective, the diverse members of the core team take a complexity-informed place-based network governance role for the solution ecosystem: the core team recognizes that the solution ecosystem is a complex system and, therefore, cannot be controlled (Rauws, 2016, p. 340).

The core team of the South West Food Community includes stakeholders working in nutrition, Aboriginal health, environmental health, food production, education, social work and town planning. These stakeholders include state government, local government, university, non-profit, business and community representatives.

One of the core team’s first tasks is to define the solution ecosystem boundary for the problem that they are addressing. This boundary consists of the wicked problem and the geographical place that will be the focus of the lab. Defining the solution ecosystem boundary aligns with systemic design’s boundary framing principle (Jones, 2014, p. 111). It also supports the complex systems leadership principles of managing initial starting conditions (Snowden and Boone, 2007, p. 6), specifying goals in advance (Surie and Hazy, 2006, p. 17) and establishing appropriate boundaries (Snowden and Boone, 2007, p. 6; Goldstein, 1994, p. 49). The boundary of the solution ecosystem for the South West Food Community consists of the South West region of Western Australia and the wicked problem of food security.

Next, the core team frames the solution ecosystem into sub-systems. Such partitioning into sub-systems is a complex systems leadership principle for amplifying action (Surie and Hazy, 2006, p. 18). It also aligns to the systemic design principle of feedback coordination (Jones, 2011, p. 109) as the partitioning produces positive feedback because of the energy in the sub-system being prevented from dissipating (Schultz, 2008, p. 90). The pillars of food security have been used by the South West Food Community to frame their boundary.

With the solution ecosystem defined and framed, the core team undertakes an initial mapping of the initiatives and organizations in the solution ecosystem that are addressing any of the problem’s underpinning causal factors. This initial mapping is just based on the core teams’ knowledge and experience. Wicked Lab’s online tool is used to map each of the initiatives in the solution ecosystem to initiative characteristics that aid transitions and that strengthen the solution ecosystem and government interface (Zivkovic, 2017). This mapping is consistent with systemic design’s system
ordering principle (Jones, 2014, p. 109) as the mapping process orders the solution ecosystem according to enabling conditions for transitions and strengthening the solution ecosystem – government interface. This recognition of a “set of conditions that compels action towards a desirable outcome” also aligns with the systemic design principle of compelling collective action toward a desirable outcome (Jones, 2014, p. 108). The core team of the South West Food Community have used Wicked Lab’s Tool for Systemic Change to undertake an initial mapping of the initiatives and organizations in their solution ecosystem that are addressing any of the causal factors underpinning food security in their community.

At the end of the Form stage, a briefing paper is prepared that is used during the Explore stage to disseminate information about the lab to potential users. Complex systems leadership theories recognize the need for information to be continually disseminated throughout a system to aid its transition (Zivkovic, 2015, p. 4).

The briefing paper describes why the lab is required and the logic behind the boundary and frame that have been chosen by the core team. These points are expressed to match the diverse perspectives of users: an approach used by complex systems leadership theory to amplify action during transitions (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008, p. 206). The briefing paper also contains complex systems leadership characteristics that support the disruption of current ways of working. These include: highlighting the need to organize communities differently, cultivating a passion for action (Goldstein et al., 2010, p. 53; Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009, p. 618), embracing uncertainty, surfaced conflict and creating controversy (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009, p. 621).

Explore stage
At the FEMLAS Explore stage, the core team’s key task is to engage with users: the initiatives and the organizations in the solution ecosystem that are collaborating on these initiatives. The FEMLAS methodology takes a systemic innovation approach: it focuses on both the systemic innovation characteristics of the individual initiatives and in the way that the initiatives interact with each other to create systems change (Davies et al., 2012, p. 4).

A detailed mapping of the solution ecosystem is undertaken by the core team throughout the Explore stage. This mapping takes place during key informant interviews and sub-system focus groups. In addition to disseminating the briefing paper, a crosswalk survey instrument is used to aid user engagement. This instrument converts the 36 initiative characteristics of Wicked Lab’s mapping tool (Zivkovic, 2017) into plain English. The South West Food Community is currently developing their survey instrument.

During the interviews and focus groups, the users are asked to participate as co-creators with the core team. This continual user engagement is required to ensure that the action taken to support the solution ecosystem’s transition process is coordinated and coherent (Davies et al., 2012, p. 8) and informed by user experience.

These users include public administrators and elected members. It is vital that government users are co-creators throughout the transition process, as government needs to create enabling conditions for transitions (Bentley and Wilsdon, 2003, p. 26). Wicked Lab’s tool has two focus areas that are targeted at public administrations and two focus areas that center on elected members (Zivkovic, 2017).

The FEMLAS process recognizes that the involvement of users as co-creators is especially important during the amplify action and the self-organization stages of transitions, as according to complex systems leadership theories co-creation by diverse users can aid enabling conditions at these stages. At the amplify action stage, the
involvement of diverse users enables rich interactions to occur (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009) and assists issues to be framed to match diverse perspectives (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008, p. 206). At the self-organization stage, diverse user involvement assists the language and symbols used to support correlation, it encourages a range of users to take on positions as role models for the transition process and it enables the assortment of resources that belong to the core team and users to recombine (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009). This recognition of the importance of self-organization is also a principle of systemic design (Jones, 2014, p. 111).

**Map stage**
At the Map stage of the FEMLAS process, the main tasks are to enter into the online tool the mapping data that was collected during the Explore stage and to use the tool to create a transition card for the solution ecosystem. The transition card displays each of the identified initiatives in the solution ecosystem and highlights how each initiative is contributing towards systemic change: how each of the initiatives maps to the initiative characteristics for system transition and strengthening the interface between the solution ecosystem and government. For the South West Food Community, the transition card will showcase the initiatives in the South West region of Western Australia focusing on food security, all of the organizations working on these initiatives and how these collectively contribute towards systemic change.

**Learn stage**
The Learn Stage focuses on analyzing the transition card to determine where in the solution ecosystem there are gaps in effort for achieving systems change. These identified gaps are used to guide future action. The guiding of future action to achieve desired system affects aligns to the systemic design principle of feedback coordination which recognizes that negative and positive feedback loops can be used to guide the desired effects of systems (Jones, 2014, p. 109).

At the Learn stage, a second briefing paper is produced that informs users of the results of the mapping process. This briefing paper contains an image of the transition card and describes where gaps currently exist in the transition process.

**Address stage**
The second briefing paper is distributed at the beginning of the Address stage. During this stage, users are invited to participate in a large group intervention process to co-create initiatives that address the identified gaps. Bringing all of the users together for this process enables information exchanges between the partitioned subsystems. Enabling periodic information exchanges between partitioned subsystems is a complex systems leadership characteristic for encouraging self-organization during transitions (Surie and Hazy, 2006, p. 17). This engagement process also incorporates complex systems leadership characteristics for amplifying action during transitions: enabling rich interactions in relations spaces (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009) and establishing network linkages (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008, p. 206). These characteristics encourage new ideas to emerge and, therefore, support systemic design’s generative emergence principle (Jones, 2014, p. 106).

During the large group intervention process, users identify if their organizations and initiatives can address the identified gaps in effort by amending their existing initiatives or creating new initiatives. Users are encouraged to co-create new initiatives with other users and to take a safe fail experimentation approach. These characteristics of supporting
collective action (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009) and enabling safe fail experimentation (Snowden, 2002) are recognized in complex systems leadership theories as assisting in the amplification of action during transition processes.

Share stage
At the commencement of the FEMLAS Share stage, the transition card is updated to incorporate any amended and new initiatives from the Address Stage. Next, the transition card is embedded on the Lab’s website so that it can be viewed, discussed and shared by all of the initiatives and organizations that are participating in the solution ecosystem. The South West Food Community is embedding its transition care into a purpose-built food security platform that includes a website and app. At the end of the FEMLAS Cycle, a completion report is prepared and disseminated to stakeholders.

After the FEMLAS cycle, when new solution ecosystem initiatives are established, and existing initiatives change their transition characteristics, users complete an online form on the lab’s website to inform the core team of the changes. The core team then updates the transition card. Periodically the FEMLAS iterative loop is repeated to re-engage users.

Conclusion
It has been argued in this paper that a more appropriate lab type is required for addressing wicked problems: an approach that incorporates the features for addressing wicked problems that are identified in the literature. It has also been highlighted that a user centered service design approach is not suitable as a lab methodology when addressing wicked problems and that a systemic design methodology that combines design and complexity theory is required.

In response to this analysis, a new lab type has been proposed: a “Systemic Innovation Lab”. The name chosen for this lab represents the proposed lab’s alignment with systemic design, solution ecosystem and systemic innovation approaches for addressing wicked problems. To illustrate how a Systemic Innovation Lab works in practice, Wicked Lab’s FEMLAS process and its early stage adoption by the South West Food Community has been described.

Illustrating the practical application of the Systemic Innovation Lab through only one early stage case study is a significant limitation of this paper. To understand the potential of the Systemic Innovation Lab for addressing wicked problems, further and more advanced case study investigations are required.

Many of the world’s most pressing problems are wicked problems. If we are to tackle these systemic problems effectively, then greater thought needs to be given to choosing appropriate approaches for addressing them. This paper is a contribution towards that endeavor.

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**Corresponding author**
Sharon Zivkovic can be contacted at: Sharon.Zivkovic@unisa.edu.au

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Local geographies of developing country social enterprises

Nimruji Jammulamadaka  
Department of Behavioural Sciences, Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, Kolkata, India, and

Kamalika Chakraborty  
Department of Strategic Management, Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, Kolkata, India

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to examine the geographic distribution of social enterprises at the local sub-district level in one Indian state.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper adopts a multimethod approach. The exploratory phase involved interviews and analysis of social enterprise distribution at the national level. Phase 2 involved mapping the distribution of social enterprises at the sub-district level in one state. Distribution around established social enterprises was plotted using latitude–longitude positions. Grounded theory approach to analysing qualitative data was adopted to identify the mechanism for agglomeration.

Findings – Social entrepreneurship sees the entrepreneurial problems as solving universalized social problems abstracting them out of the geo-historical and political economic context of the social problem. This study shows that solving a social problem is itself implicating in a social–historical organizational context of aid giving within developing countries. Networks of resources that early enterprises enable draw newer organizations toward them and lead to the formation of clusters. While such clusters might improve chances of enterprise survival, the phenomenon inadvertently leads to a new kind of inequity, as areas with fewer social enterprises lack the organizational infrastructure necessary for delivery of welfare.

Research limitations/implications – Research in social enterprises needs to pay more attention to the context of the enterprises or society in addition to its current focus on universal social problems. Social enterprises themselves could be new sources of inequity in terms of the organizational infrastructure they represent.

Originality/value – Policymakers need to make directed efforts that respond not only to social problems but also to the socio-historic-organizational contexts where the problems are being solved and seeding the entrepreneurial effort in those spaces.

Keywords Developing country, Social enterprises, India, Cluster agglomeration, Funding resources, Geographic distribution

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has been increasingly acknowledged as a means for bringing about change and providing solutions to existing social problems in different spheres such as health, education or poverty alleviation (Drayton et al., 2006; Nyssens, 2006; Sperandio, 2005; Su and Muening, 2005; Todres et al., 2006; Yunus, 2006). As Alvord (et al., 2003, p. 137) pointed out, social entrepreneurship is a “way to catalyze social transformation well beyond the solutions of the social problems […]” Others see social entrepreneurs as creating social value through the provision of various services for the well-being of society (Bornstein, 2004;
Thus, social entrepreneurship has been perceived as an instrument capable of reducing inequities in access and distribution of welfare with an explicit focus on social goals.

Even though several dimensions of social entrepreneurship have been explored with growing interest in the field, aspects such as the geographic dimension of social entrepreneurship remain understudied (Buckingham et al., 2010; Muñoz, 2010; Steyaert and Katz, 2004). Geographical dimension is particularly significant given the view that social enterprises act as mechanisms to redress welfare inequities. Little has been understood regarding variations in the distribution and/or concentration of social enterprises across regions. While there is some evidence of the inverse care law (Hart, 1971; Jammulamadaka and Varman, 2010) with more needy areas having less enterprises, not much is known about the factors influencing the patterns. The lack of understanding has been attributed mainly to an absence of comprehensive data regarding spatial distribution of social enterprises and the geographic scale at which variations have been studied (Buckingham et al., 2010). Most studies have been case specific and do not shed any light on the trends in geographic variations of these enterprises. Second, large-scale empirical studies have been carried out at the regional level where aggregation effects reveal little variation in geographic distribution (Buckingham et al., 2010). A detailed understanding of the possible factors that could explain variations, if any, therefore is yet to emerge.

The paper explores presence of social enterprises at the micro sub-district level in one state of India and aims to address this gap. Using a mixed methods approach, the paper uses quantitative data to reveal the existence of clusters and a qualitative approach to study the processes driving clusterization of social enterprises. The paper concludes that the networks of resources that early enterprises enable draw newer organizations toward them and lead to the formation of clusters. While such clusters might improve chances of enterprise survival, the phenomenon inadvertently leads to a new kind of inequity, as areas with fewer social enterprises lack the organizational infrastructure necessary for delivery of welfare. Therefore, social enterprises, although seen as solutions to inequities of distribution, might end up creating a new kind of inequity. Policymakers need to be geographically sensitive while designing and implementing interventions to ensure equitable growth and development across regions.

Section 2 reviews the literature on the geographical dimension of social entrepreneurship. Sections 3 and 4 discuss the methodology and the findings, respectively, which are followed by discussion and conclusion.

2. Literature review

Bacq and Janssen (2011) attributed the growing interest in social entrepreneurship to its innovative approach to solving increasingly complex social problems, especially with regard to access inequities and social change. With the growth in this domain, “the number and the diversity of organizations categorized as social entrepreneurial ventures” has increased (Smith and Stevens, 2010, p. 575). Doherty et al. (2014) examined the variety of social enterprises using a hybridity lens where both the social objective of welfare and economic objective of revenues are simultaneously pursued to varying degrees by the social enterprises (SEs). The pursuit of dual goals prevents these organizations from fitting into the existing categories of public, private and non-profit organizations. While one set of scholars has focused on the coming together of the social and economic logics, another set of scholars has focused on social innovation dimension of social entrepreneurship (Lehtola and Ståhle, 2014; Heiskala, 2007; Ionescu, 2015), where the emphasis is on adapting and creating new solutions which solve contextual problems (Ionescu, 2015) which often also have
normative, regulatory and cultural effects (Heiskala, 2007). Zahra et al. (2009) explored the search processes and motives in such innovation further and proposed a typology of social entrepreneurs which affects hybridity and the creation of social value. The diversity of organizational forms has led to challenges in distinctively defining the field, especially the importance of profit-earning. Following work on earlier scholarship, Smith and Stevens (2010) defined social entrepreneurship as “innovative and effective activities that focus strategically on resolving social market failures and creating opportunities to add social value systematically by using a range of organizational formats to maximize social impact and bring about change” (Nicholls, 2006, p. 23). Scholars identify two benefits of adopting such a broad definition of social entrepreneurship. First, the emphasis on social value differentiates such activities where social value creation is the major purpose of the organization from commercial ventures (Austin et al., 2006; Nicholls 2006; Zahra et al., 2009). Second, adoption of the definition recognizes a plethora of organizational forms ranging from non-profit to for-profit organizations as social enterprises (Brooks, 2008; Doherty and Thompson, 2006). This inclusive approach to defining social entrepreneurship provides scope to understand and investigate social entrepreneurial ventures which emerge in different geographical contexts based on access to social capital, community support, nature of funding or a combination of these and other factors. This inclusive definition also allows us to account for the historical transformations in the third sector where enterprises transformed from being dependent on grants to generation of revenues (Borgaza and Defourny, 2001).

Social entrepreneurship has from the beginning recognized the geographic diversity of social enterprises. This body of literature explores emergence of social enterprise ecosystems globally under varying state support and socio-historical contexts (Doherty et al., 2009; Kerlin, 2009, 2010; Borgaza and Defourny, 2001, Hazenberg et al., 2016). Kerlin (2006, 2009, 2010) in one of the few global comparisons of social enterprise ecosystems traced the impact of macro institutional factors of state, civil society and market across different parts of the world including the USA, Western Europe, East-central Europe, Argentina, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Southeast Asia. They showed that the relative emphasis on civil society or market logics among social enterprises is a response to these varying pressures. Other studies (Hazenberg et al., 2016; Borgaza and Defourny, 2001) similarly traced the socio-historical trajectories in European countries. While these studies sensitized us to the impact of institutional factors, especially the withdrawal of the welfare state which was the chief resource provider previously, they could gather greater support from the use of population-level studies of distribution of social enterprises which have in general been fewer.

Literature on geography of social entrepreneurship suggests that both supply side i.e. social capital, human and financial resources and demand side factors i.e. social needs, issues and concerns are crucial influences. In a review of social enterprises and their contexts, Amin et al. (2002, p. 121) laid down six features of local contexts that endow them toward such activity. These include the

[... ] presence of voiced minority cultures expressing non-mainstream values and needs, the role of the local authority in encouraging and supporting the social economy, a culture favourably disposed towards political agonism, which is open to minority interests and doing things in different ways, connectivity, or network resources both within the locale and beyond it, the extent and nature of socio-economic deprivation.

In examining geography of social enterprises, one strand of literature has looked at the effects of embeddedness in the local geography and community networks in identifying opportunities and accessing resources. Peattie and Morley (2008) pointed to the significan
of local networks in providing access to resources and infrastructural support in the establishment of social enterprises. The literature on entrepreneurship and bricolage has conceptualized social entrepreneurs as bricoleurs who capitalize upon their presence in local community networks to mobilize resources and also put unused and unconventional resources to work in pursuit of social value (Eversole et al., 2013; Di Domenico et al., 2010; Zahra et al., 2009). Work in this area has focused on both individual-level aspects (Zahra et al., 2009) and the macro institutional factors (Hazenberg et al., 2016). This literature has consistently highlighted the role of community embeddedness and local networks in aiding enterprise performance and effectiveness.

Another approach toward examining geographic effects on social entrepreneurship has looked at the degree of proximity with donors (local, national and international) and the resultant kind of networks that arise in determining the degree of investment in time and money in monitoring social value (Smith and Stevens, 2010) suggesting that geographic proximity is likely to affect durability of relationships and thus embeddedness. These studies thus point to the need for a geographic distribution-based approach to studying social enterprises.

Studies conducted in developed world such as the USA, UK and Europe provide mixed insights. Some studies on the local distribution of non-profit social enterprises (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Joassart-Marcelli and Wolch, 2003; Marcuello, 1998; Twombly and Jennifer, 2004) suggest that organizations tend not to locate near areas of greater poverty, even though some could be responsive to community poverty levels. Studies also find that enterprises tend to locate near areas of greater availability of funds, whether due to local generosity or local government funding (Bielefeld, 2000; Joassart-Marcelli and Wolch, 2003; Wolch and Geiger, 1983; Twombly, 2003).

These findings provide support to the inverse care hypothesis (Hart, 1971). At the same time, regional surveys do not provide enough support to such trends (Borgaza and Defourny, 2001; Gordon, 2006; Lloyd, 2003). While they do suggest effects of geography, most of them aggregate local scale differences at regional levels and the dynamics underlying the variations remain far from clear. This has prompted Buckingham et al. (2010) to suggest that demand and supply side factors could neutralize each other. In their review of spatially oriented entrepreneurship research, Trettin and Welter (2011) found that there has been lesser number of studies at smaller geographical scales, i.e. at the local level such as cities, villages or the sub-regional level. Breaking down of the areal units into smaller scales would lead to a display of greater significant variation and greater understanding of the variations in social enterprise distributions. While a focus on micro or local level appears to be one of the crucial requirements for developing a satisfactory account of social enterprise geographies, the task is further complicated in shifting attention to developing countries.

In the studies on developed world, the enterprises usually generated their financial resources from the local context either through local government grants or community funding thereby suggesting that the inverse care hypothesis may be the outcome of a logical choice of locating the social enterprise in a reasonably endowed local context (Eversole et al., 2013). On the other hand, developing countries essentially depend on grant, donor funding and/or social investing from outside the local context, often developed countries or even central governments. For instance, Kerlin (2010) pointed out that the social enterprise sector of Zimbabwe and Zambia has responded greatly to the flow of international aid, whereas in Southeast Asia along with weakness of state, market and civil society capability, weak international aid has led to a very scant social enterprise sector. Thus, embeddedness in local communities might be of limited explanatory value in explaining geographic distribution of social enterprises in developing countries. Funds are not locally generated
and distant aid pouring into these countries could theoretically reach any local and more specifically the “needy local” making it well-endowed. This complicates the direct logic of locating in better-off contexts because they are more endowed. Nevertheless, studies in the Third World show that locations of social enterprises do not coincide with the location of poverty (Fruttero and Gauri, 2005; Jammulamadaka and Varman, 2010). Some case studies and a few cross-national analyses point to historical processes and political economy of aid flowing through transnational networks of development generating “development hotspots” (Bebbington, 2004; Jammulamadaka, 2012; Koch and Ruben, 2008). This makes the geographic distribution of social enterprises which usually depend on non-local funds open to influences of distant aid flows. As such, this study takes the insight of differential influence of institutional contexts on social enterprises seriously and begins with the premise that the external flow of resources into local contexts would affect geographic distribution of social enterprises in developing country contexts differently from those observed elsewhere in the developed world. As such, we proceed by doing a population-level analysis of examining geographic distribution of social enterprises at the sub-district level in one state of India to explain social enterprise geographies in a developing country.

3. Methodology

This study followed a mixed-methods approach as it included two kinds of questions: “what is the distribution of social enterprises at the sub-district level?” and “how do they come to be distributed like that?” (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Miles and Huberman, 1984; Morse, 2003; Morse and Niehaus, 2009; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). Given that the study had an exploratory dimension, it was carried out in two phases. Phase 1 involved statistical analysis using national level data and exploratory interviews with practitioners.

In India, social enterprises are often registered as societies or as trusts. A few more of them are registered under the Cooperative Societies Act. Very few of them are registered as not-for-profit companies. Trusts can formally make profits but societies are not eligible to make profits. Organizations registered under any of these laws can and do charge fees or other contributions from communities to varying degrees. Thus, our study includes SEs which exhibit hybridity to varying degrees. For example, SEs implementing microfinance programs charge interest, whereas those implementing watershed programs seek community resources in kind through labour, etc. Nine large states of India were examined for district-wise distribution of social enterprises in comparison with socio-economic development indicators. The data on SE for this analysis were obtained from the Planning Commission of India’s database on voluntary sector. This database primarily includes those organizations registered as societies and trusts and a few cooperatives. This preliminary analysis revealed that there were vast differences and concentrations in the geographical distribution of social enterprises. Based on this, Andhra Pradesh (AP) was chosen as the research site due to familiarity with vernacular and history that had provided an edge in both data collection and interpretation (Table I).

Exploratory interviews with practitioners (ten persons) also suggested that there could be certain historical factors at work like the early founding of a voluntary organization in the 1970s in certain areas. Based on this, established social enterprises (ESEs) were identified as crucial to explaining geographic variations. Literature on Third World non-profit geographies highlighting the importance of historical processes (Bebbington, 2004) also supports the ESE concept. In further developing ESE as a testable proposition, literature works on enterprise clusters like those of Bresnahan et al. (2005) and Saxenian (1994) were consulted and five criteria were developed:
Table I. Social enterprise distribution in India and development indicator profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth 92-96, years</th>
<th>Maternal mortality ratio 1998, per 100,000</th>
<th>Death rate 1997</th>
<th>Infant mortality rate 1991</th>
<th>No. of districts</th>
<th>Population density</th>
<th>Total SEs</th>
<th>Avg. population/SE</th>
<th>Avg. SE/district</th>
<th>No. of districts with above average SEs/district</th>
<th>% contribution of these districts to NGOs population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1,549</td>
<td>42,935</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>56,876</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>82,419</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>63.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>72,525</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>80,002</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>78.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>1,163</td>
<td>71,236</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>72.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>43,688</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>71.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>1,011,658</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>144,802</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>81.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: NGO database, Planning Commission of India, 2001 and National Human Development Report 2001, Government of India. Some of the states have been bifurcated now. In computing the figures, undivided states were taken. For maintaining data quality and consistency, the organizations formed till 2000 only were included.
(1) **Age**: ESEs are among the first ones to be started in the area. They are the pioneers and generally the oldest organizations in the area.

(2) **Size**: ESEs have grown over the years and therefore they have a good scale of operations and turnover. These organizations execute big projects.

(3) **Reputation**: ESEs are well known and have good visibility among the community, peers and funding agencies.

(4) **Track record**: ESEs have a track record of successfully executing projects and creating solutions for development problems.

(5) **Spin-offs**: Former members of ESEs have moved out of the organization and started their own social enterprises.

Phase 2 involved more focused data collection. A total of 22 informants comprising social enterprise founders, ESEs founders and staff, social enterprise observers, funding agency staff, support organization staff and civil rights groups were interviewed. Interviews lasted from 30 min to 1 h. But 10 informants were interviewed several times to clarify issues. Thus, a total of more than 33 h of interviews were conducted. Interviews were also used to identify ESEs using the Delphi method. The experts used to identify the ESEs were three funding agency managers, two directors of support organizations who were also veterans of development sector in AP, two long-time social enterprise workers who had also founded organizations and one long-time observer of the sector in AP. The suggestions obtained from these eight interviews were compared against listed criteria and those which did not satisfy the listed criteria for ESEs, such as enterprises started after 1990s were excluded for violating the age criterion. After data cleaning, five organizations that appeared most frequently were finally identified as ESEs and were included for further analysis.

The interview data were manually coded and themes were generated using grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In developing further interpretations of these themes, archival material on social enterprises in AP and its specific history were consulted. The social enterprise database for AP was prepared from the CAPART database of Ministry of Rural Development[1]. The CAPART database was used instead of the Planning Commission database referred to earlier, as this includes a relatively larger number of organizations (mostly societies and trusts). CAPART also provides funding data on those organizations which have been used in analysis reported elsewhere. The funding data provide a proxy for us to ascertain that these enterprises have been functional at various points in time and are therefore not just “on-paper” registered organizations without any real activity on the ground. The quantitative analysis involved analysing enterprise locations *mandal*-wise. With evidence of prima-facie concentration, latitude–longitude positions of the *mandals* (sub-district areas) with five ESEs and the 4,859 social enterprises from the CAPART database were used to prepare a geographic concentration map[2]. The spread of social enterprises around the five ESEs was computed using a Fortran program[3].

### 3.1 Data and analysis: discovering social enterprise clusters in Andhra Pradesh

AP[4] is the fifth largest state in India and is located on the southeastern coast of the country. The state is divided into 22 districts and 1,103 *mandals*[5]. An overview of social enterprise distribution in the 22 districts of AP along with some indicative development indicators and receipt of central government grants to the districts is provided in Table II. The table shows uneven distribution of enterprises and funding which does not appear to be linked to the development needs of the area. While the funding data given in the table pertain to central
government grants from CAPART, these grants form just between 2.8 per cent (in 1991-1992, first year of CAPART funding data) and 0.6 per cent (in 1999-2000, last year of CAPART funding data included in the analysis) of the total foreign grants received by AP. These enterprises thus depend extensively on foreign grants. Specific historical data on grants made by foreign donors are not available with the agencies themselves but anecdotally they confirmed that the same social enterprises received their support too. Mandal-wise data show even more pronounced unevenness in distribution of social enterprises (Table III). Of the 1,103 mandals, 475 had no social enterprises, and 172 had only one enterprise. Another 363 had less than ten enterprises. Thus only 91 mandals contributed to the bulk of the social enterprises in AP. Only 13 mandals had more than 50 enterprises contributing to a third of AP’s social enterprise population. Of these 13 mandals, five i.e. Hyderabad, Pedakakani, Anantapur, Cuddapah and Tirupati had more than 100 social enterprises each i.e. within an area of a few square kilometres, there were more than a 100 SEs. A preliminary examination of development indicators suggested that the geographic concentration did not appear to be responding to development need of the area. Infant mortality rate (IMR) was highest in Vizianagaram district and Pedakakani’s district had one of the lowest IMRs. This district and Hyderabad’s district were the highest per capita income (PCI) ones. Similarly, many districts had much poor literacy rates. Other studies on this region had also established this pattern (Jammulamadaka and Varman, 2010).
4. Social enterprises formation around established social enterprises

The geographic distribution around the five identified ESEs (given in Table IV) showed that only four ESEs had associated clusters. The largest clusters i.e. Pedakakani and Anantapur were associated with the oldest ESEs C and B, respectively. Similarly, ESE D and E which formed during the same time period were associated with similar size clusters at Tirupati and Hyderabad respectively. Cuddapah cluster and ESE A did not have any associated ESE or cluster, respectively. A distance-wise break up showed that a large number of social enterprises were located within a 10 km radius of the ESE declining subsequently between 10 and 20 km radius and increasing thereafter. The 10 km radius usually corresponds to an area within the *mandal* and the effect of the ESE appears to have decreased after that. Prima facie, these findings supported the ESE idea in explaining the uneven distribution of SEs. Interview data helped us explain both the mechanism of ESE effect and the exceptions such as ESE A, Cuddapah cluster and increasing number of SEs after the 20-km radius. From qualitative data, we could identify three aspects as the mechanism that explains cluster formation (Table V). These are discussed below.

4.1 Increasing social entrepreneurs

ESEs helped in creating awareness about development work and thus people in their vicinity were inspired to become social entrepreneurs. By talking to and motivating the people in the area, they helped create potential social entrepreneurs. Recounting his experience, an ESE founder said, “many started SEs because, in the areas in which we were working, I used to go to the schools and talk. I used to talk to the youth and tell them it will be good if we can do such development work […]. So what we have done for want of a better word is inspire”. A social entrepreneur in ESE A neighbourhood recalls that he was first introduced to development work and social enterprise during his college days through a talk delivered by the founder. Motivated by the talk, he had established further contact with them and finally started his own organization in 1990. This enterprise in turn has been encouraging others to initiate their own organizations. He says,

People have started social enterprises looking at us. It is more from the community’s side. Already they have a certain zeal. Why can’t we also do something that is useful to the society, earn some recognition as helpful youth, this motive drives about 10 per cent to form social enterprises. Some others think these people have started and are earning money; they are providing employment to others also. Why can’t we do the same?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of mandals</th>
<th>No. of social enterprises per <em>mandal</em></th>
<th>Avg. literacy rate per <em>mandal</em> (as per 2001 census)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>475</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>363</td>
<td>2 to 9</td>
<td>58.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>63.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>11 to 50</td>
<td>60.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>More than 50</td>
<td>71.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table III.**

Snapshot of social enterprise distribution in *mandals* of Andhra Pradesh

*Notes:* 2001 literacy rate figures have been used for purposes of illustration only. *Mandal*-wise development indicators have not been measured by government for the period under consideration of this study, i.e. till 2000. 2001 is the first year when *mandal*-wise figures were available for literacy rate, and the other development indicators were not available at *mandal* level even in 2001.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESE</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Operational area (size and growth)</th>
<th>Total no. of SEs within the radius of 10 km</th>
<th>10-20 km</th>
<th>21-50 km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESE A</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Founder member of various national and international bodies. Grown in scale and is a nodal agency for some programs</td>
<td>Yelamanchali</td>
<td>3 mandals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESE B</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Founder received numerous awards and is on various national and international bodies model for watershed programs</td>
<td>Anantapur</td>
<td>1,500 villages</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESE C</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Founder highly respected in development fraternity. Staff members of various national bodies, attracts international volunteers</td>
<td>Pedakakani</td>
<td>8 states</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESE D</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Received various awards. Role model for SHG federations</td>
<td>Tirupati</td>
<td>3,000 villages</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESE E</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Founder member of various national and international bodies</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>75 villages</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ESEs also add to the pool of potential social entrepreneurs by encouraging and enabling their staff to leave them and start on their own. For example, the founder of ESE B encouraged his staff to move out and helped them establish their own organizations. Explaining the methods, an ex-staff member of ESE B said,

> It must be said to the credit of Mr X[6] that he allowed dissent. He allowed dissent within the organization and if the dissent was too strong […] he would encourage them to start their work somewhere else. He would assist them in starting their work also […] And most of his colleagues who left him, probably settled down in Rayalseema itself.

Commenting on the spin-off effect of ESE B, the program manager of an international funding agency added, “[…] ESE B provided a good training ground for a lot of people who later went out and started social enterprises on their own. Very few start an enterprise in a new place or district”. Attesting to the spin-off effect of ESE B, an ESE founder said, “In Anantapur, ESE B went there and it gave a real spin-off”. Explaining the spin-off phenomenon in ESE A, he added, “our deliberate effort was to encourage our staff to leave us after 2-3 years of working with us, go somewhere else and get started”. Spin-offs benefitted the parent by managing dissent, career aspirations, and expansion of organizational reach without rising administrative burden. For instance, ESE A encouraged one of its staff members, to move to Srikakulam, a nearby district, and start another enterprise when they were asked to expand operations there. Spin-offs helped the social enterprises and staff deal with the problem of career growth. The program manager of an international funding agency commented, “new social enterprises arise because lot of workers leave the social enterprises in which they work and go out and start on their own. This is especially because of the inability of small and medium social enterprises to retain human resources”. The program manager of another international funding agency echoed similar views. He said, “I have seen the local people, they were working in the tribal area, got tired of working in the organization, came out and started organizations”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-order themes</th>
<th>Second-order themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivating and inspiring community</td>
<td>Increasing social entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating and inspiring youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging workers to move out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling inspired by nonprofit leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissent of workers leading to moving out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No scope for growth for workers within SESs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing on the job training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building rapport with the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing development plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making people aware of SESs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing conflicts with community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsoring for workshops/training programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing start-up/seed capital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with donors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching the writing of project reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not connecting with donors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not teaching project proposal writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not providing seed capital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating network of spin-offs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building community organizing skills and capacities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating access to financial resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table V. Data analysis themes and categories

Local geographies
4.2 Building community organizing skills and capacities
Skill sets and capabilities of the community organizer and social animator roles were vital for community work as also was knowledge of the norms pertaining to development management. This knowledge not only facilitated community work but also enabled the organization to link up with the larger development sector. ESEs served as a training ground for the staff, provided on-the-job training and helped them acquire various organizational skills. ESEs also served as resource centres. New entrepreneurs approached them formally and informally to acquire skills and capacities in carrying out development work. Explaining this one young social entrepreneur said, “definitely, they (new social entrepreneurs) came once a year [...] they used to stay there for a month every year. They came when they had a doubt. Otherwise they would send their staff for training”. This capacity building and knowledge sharing process occurred formally through training programs and through informal discussions. A social entrepreneur in ESE A’s proximity explained, “Mr Y’s ideology, and his industry [methods and approach to development] appeared to be a great asset. That’s why, irrespective of whether he agrees or not, we have taken him as our guru, our teacher. We can build any amount of knowledge from him [...] We sometimes think it is our good fortune to be situated so close to him”. He mentioned that Mr Y was very supportive and shared his knowledge and experience of working with the community.

4.3 Creating access to financial resources
A third and probably the most significant mechanism by which ESEs influenced formation of social enterprises around them was by facilitating fund mobilization for new enterprises. A social entrepreneur explained, “today registering a social enterprise may not be a big thing but running it, getting funds to run it is. It depends on knowing the right people, the right language. Writing proposals, legal issues, accounting these are all problems for many who start”. Another social entrepreneur added, “Look at our situation itself. We have good capacities. We have community support, can organize meetings successfully. But we do not know how to write a project [...] convince a donor, we do not have exposure [...] Even if we try to find out and learn there is a language barrier [...] this is one kind of problem. Another thing is that there are no funding agencies in our area. They are located in Hyderabad and Bangalore. And travelling there always [is difficult].

ESEs also pointed out difficulties faced by new enterprises in securing funds. An ESE founder said, “donors don’t give money just like that [...] you have to write the proposal, convince them, bring them and show them etc”. Another ex-staff of an ESE added, “It is not easy for a new organization to attract resources from those who have resources, from some European organization or government for that matter. You have to struggle, establish yourself, show something and then resources start flowing”.

But even the start-up activity requires some funds which new social entrepreneurs may lack and therefore “generally support regarding funding agencies is expected” from ESEs. By imparting project planning, writing and management skills, donor information, access to donor networks and providing seed capital ESEs enable new social entrepreneurs to stabilize themselves. For instance, Anantapur cluster’s ESE founder used to provide seed capital to willing social entrepreneurs.

Interviews with funding agencies showed that in selecting field partners, they used feedback from existing partners and, the personal reputations of new founders among other parameters. Thus, the probability of a new enterprise securing funds from an agency depended on its being recommended by existing partners. Often ESEs in a region were the
earliest partners of any funding agency. For instance, donors like OXFAM, CARE and EZE all began work in the Visakhapatnam area by supporting ESE A. Similarly, ESEs B and C were the earliest partners of many Church-based international funding organizations. Therefore, for new entrepreneurs in ESE proximity, chances of getting a recommendation were higher. This was also because funding agencies were keen on expanding support in familiar areas. Explaining the flow of a large volume of funds into the Rayalseema area, especially Anantapur, the program manager of an international funding agency said, “donors were willing to give money because it was drought prone and backward. And they had had good experience with ESE B”. Another funding agency manager added that they had to be responsible in fund allocation and hence could not venture into risky or inaccessible areas such as Visakhapatnam district which was having unrest in the form of armed maoist violence. Explaining this trend among donor agencies to focus on familiar areas, the founder of an ESE said, “These funding agencies also have their own, you call them personal whimsicalities or whatever. They believe that if we work in a familiar area we won’t be easily duped”. Funding agencies became familiar with the areas around the ESE due to the early and long-standing association with them.

Thus, ESEs appear to be leading to cluster formation by:

- increasing the availability of potential social entrepreneurs;
- enabling new social entrepreneurs and workers to acquire skills and capacities in community work and project preparation; and
- increasing the availability of financial resources by sustaining donor interest and familiarity with the area and providing information and resources necessary for accessing funding.

4.4 Explaining absence of cluster around established social enterprises A

The importance of the ESE’s role in creating funding access is further confirmed by the fewer number of social enterprises around ESE A. Data showed that ESE A was not actively assisting new social enterprises in developing donor and funder familiarity or providing them with seed funds. Explaining the role of ESE A, a social entrepreneur said, “he never introduces us to a funding agency or connects us to them and recommends us”. ESE A founder explained only working with communities but did not dwell on program planning, fund mobilization and donor liaisoning. Lamenting on the lack of information in the region about donors and donor system, a social entrepreneur said, “in Visakhapatnam among social enterprises there is no resource centre for fund mobilization and project preparation. The poor number of social enterprises is because of such lack of information and its dissemination”. The founder of ESE A explained that they were not involved in encouraging social enterprises by helping with funding, he said, “we asked them to start without depending on having a tie-up with us. we did not give them money and ask them to start on their own. But we asked them to start on their own, so they contacted various people on their own and started an organization and came up”. This lack of access to information and skills for fund mobilization is in complete contrast to that of the other ESEs where such support was actively extended. In some instances, ESEs provided the seed capital and assisted new SEs in their work. Explaining this aspect of ESE B, an ex-staff member said, “He would go to Mr X (the founder of ESE B) and say I would like to do something on my own, what should I do? Mr X would ask questions and when he was satisfied that he is one who really wants to do some work on his own, he would give some resource and ask them to work”.

Local geographies
4.5 Explaining the Cuddapah cluster

Even though no ESE was associated with the Cuddapah cluster, interviews revealed that instead of a single organization, the presence of a large number of Church-based organizations together stimulated the formation of social enterprises in Cuddapah. Missions in Cuddapah were among the earliest in AP. Missions of a large number of denominations existed in Cuddapah. Cuddapah had the highest number of Church-based organizations in AP. According to CAPART database of the 38 Church-based nonprofits in Cuddapah, five of them were formed before 1980 (during 1960s and 1970s) in Cuddapah mandal itself. These Church-based organizations provided ease of access to human and financial resources in a manner similar to the ESEs and together fulfilled the role of ESE in Cuddapah cluster.

4.6 Social enterprise formation beyond 20 km

The spatial distribution of social enterprises around ESE showed that after a distance of 20 km, there was an increase in the formation of social enterprises. This increase continued and in the 51-100-km band, an even greater number of social enterprises were found. The 21-50 km band usually corresponded to the ESE district’s outlying mandals and boundaries. The 21-50 km for ESE C of Pedakakani, Guntur district included Vijayawada of Krishna district which also had a higher number of social enterprises due to the presence of older organizations like Arthik Samata Mandali and the surge in humanitarian action after 1977 tidal wave. Similarly, for Anantapur, there were overlaps with Chittoor, Cuddapah and Kurnool districts. In the case of Tirupati, there were overlaps with Chittoor, Cuddapah and Kurnool districts. Thus, other centres with some concentrations of social enterprises were getting included in the 21-50 km band. Similarly, the 51-100 km-band included other districts like Prakasam and West Godavari with more local effects. West Godavari and Prakasam for instance had more church-based organizations, which stimulated growth of social enterprises. These districts also benefitted from post tidal wave rehabilitation efforts. Therefore, in areas distant from ESEs, other local effects came into play.

5. Discussion and implications

This study began with the aim of identifying and explaining variations in the geographical distribution of developing country social enterprises at the sub-district level. The data and analysis of the distribution of 4,859 social enterprises in 1,100 sub-district regions of AP reveal that the distribution at the district and sub-district level is highly skewed with less than 10 per cent of the mandals contributing to most of the social enterprise population of the state. This suggests that “development hotspots” are not limited to a national level phenomenon but exist at the very micro-level also. Seen in the context of prior literature on factors driving formation of nonprofits in developing world such as Jammulamadaka and Varman (2010); Jammulamadaka (2012) and Galway et al. (2012), these findings suggest that the growth of such micro-level hotspots could be driven by flows of aid.

A surprising finding of the study was the discovery of social enterprise clusters around ESEs. The study has identified five social enterprise clusters and five ESEs within AP[7]. Clustering as a process appears to be driven by access to resources. Literature on agglomeration economies seems to suggest that high-wage and knowledge or technology-intensive industries are more prone to agglomeration (Bresnahan et al., 2005; Ernst, 2002; Saxenian, 1994). While scholars have identified industry-wise variations in clearly demarcating knowledge intensiveness (Ernst, 2002), social enterprises have never been included within the ambit of such an agglomeration analysis. Social enterprises of the kind described in this study are not characterized by high technical knowledge requirements, nor are the wage and income levels of the entrepreneurs particularly significant or high.
Nevertheless, these social enterprises present a strong geographic concentration with several hundred present within a few kilometres.

As the study shows, such concentration is a consequence of locating in areas with access to resources. Studies on embeddedness of social entrepreneurship and social bricoleurs (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Eversole et al., 2013; Zahra et al., 2009; Hazenberg et al., 2016) have focused on community embeddedness and mobilization of existing community resources. Our study shows that, even when SEs depend on international aid flow, embeddedness within ESE proximity provides access to new SEs to donor networks enabling SE survival and growth. Our study extends the literature on SE embeddedness to embeddedness in ESE vicinity by shifting attention beyond accessing distant resource flows. The mechanics of aid flows, where the grant makers use standard managerial planning frameworks and routines and seek secure partners transforms into a knowledge and information barrier that controls funding. In an average local community characterized by low levels of education, wealth and access, such information and seed funding barriers are pronounced. As such ESEs become the channels through which this information and seed funding are accessed thereby leading to clusterization. This study thus shows that enterprise agglomerations can happen even in the absence of strong technological knowledge exchanges. Scarce information on routines, networks and funds substitutes technological knowledge, and constitutes ESEs as power centres in the SE ecosystem that mediate the flow of resource and managerial knowledge to SEs.

As the small size of the cluster around ESE A has shown, an ESE may choose to either share or desist from sharing resource knowledge and thereby adversely affect the SE ecosystem around it. Following the work on power and social entrepreneurship like that of Dey (2014); Dey and Steyaert (2012) and Dey and Teasdale (2015), we can view the power effects of ESEs as manifestations of a managerial discourse and technologies of management which flow from the international donors into the local SEs. Thus we contribute to this track of literature by providing an illustration of “power effects” of ESEs as discussed by Dey and Steyaert (2012) in their typology. We also extend the critique on social entrepreneurship which has usually critiqued the entrepreneurial narrative (Dey, 2014; Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Dey and Teasdale, 2016) to include the managerial narrative of routines, and tools of project planning and monitoring.

At the same time, the proactive approach of various ESE founders in stimulating the formation of SEs in their vicinity through spin-offs, mentoring and other support, also hint at the existence of mechanisms of co-production (Brandsen et al., 2012; Durose et al., 2016) where social welfare objects are delivered by collaborating with organizations and individuals outside the SE per se. While our study does not directly explore collaborative coproduction, anecdotal evidence suggests that such coproduction might be a widespread practice with both international donors and ESE actively seeking out and forming networks of SEs in an area to both ideate and implement various social projects. This angle needs to be probed further in future research.

This study suggests important implications for policies promoting social enterprises in developing countries. So far social entrepreneurship has seen the “problem of the entrepreneur” as solving a “social problem”. In this frame, the problem in spite of its being social is ironically abstracted out of the geo-historical and political economic context into a universalized problem of access. This study shows that solving a social problem is itself implicated in a social–historical organizational context of aid giving within developing countries. In developing countries, financial resources are not native to the local context but are zoomed into the local by central and more frequently international grant makers. With the tendency among grant makers to identify reliable partners, geo-historical insensitivity in
supporting solutions may inadvertently be triggering clusters and taking both funds and organizations away from areas with greater demand and creating new kinds of inequities. Inequities in social enterprise distribution, in turn, create scarcities of organizational mediators across geographies likely creating new forms of access inequities for the poor. Policy therefore needs to make directed efforts that respond not only to social problems but also to the socio-historic-organizational contexts where the problems are being solved and seeding the entrepreneurial effort in those spaces.

Notes

1. CAPART has an open database where social enterprises can get themselves listed. For the present analysis, organizations registered till the year 2000 have been included since the raw data gets fuzzy after that. This raw data was cleaned to obtain the final list.

2. Mandal location was used for analysis rather than pin-code location because such detailed GIS data for rural areas are not yet available in India. The latitude and longitude positions of each of these mandals (totaling over 1,100 for the entire state) were individually obtained from the Microsoft Encarta Atlas.

3. The expertise of a physical oceanographer with experience in analysing geographic data was taken for this analysis.

4. The undivided state of AP is being used in this study since the data pertains to that period.

5. Actual number of mandals is 1,107; this has been reduced to 1,103, for the present analysis as rural and urban mandals of a single town have been treated as one due to the difficulty in identifying mandal boundaries and hence obtaining latitude–longitude positions, for instance Vijayawada rural and Vijayawada urban have been treated as one mandal and not two mandals.

6. The names have not been revealed for the sake of confidentiality in all the quotes.

7. That five clusters and ESEs could be identified in our data is a co-incidence.

References


Further reading


About the authors

Nimruji Jammulamadaka is an Associate Professor at Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. Her research interests include alternate forms of organizing, organizing in the social sector, corporate social responsibility in India, critical management studies and post-colonial perspectives in management. Nimruji Jammulamadaka is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: nimruji@iimcal.ac.in

Kamalika Chakraborty is a PhD Student at Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. Her areas of interest include strategy as practice, organization theory, non-governmental organizations, power and post-colonial perspectives in management.

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