The Motivation of Social Entrepreneurs: The roles, agendas and relations of altruistic economic actors

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Abstract
Social entrepreneurs present a contradiction if one accepts that economic motivation is premised on personal gain alone. In our understanding of the economic activity of social entrepreneurs we presume they are altruistic actors, their actions intending to primarily benefit others. We compare here the theoretical and actual motivations, social networks and values of these actors. A series of semi-structured interviews of prominent social entrepreneurs in the West of England forms the basis of our analysis. Our subjects are selected through a nomination-referral technique that allow us to determine and target for interview those that are considered prominent in the sector within our chosen location. We conduct two types of analysis. A narrative exploration of their motivations and a semantic networks analysis of their statements. We have found a conceptual association between those actors success, entrepreneurship, motivation and social relations that indicate profitable avenues for future research. We conclude by making a policy recommendation. The multiple roles of social entrepreneurs and the multiple
audiences they address indicate multidimensional agency. The development of the sector could very much depend on comprehending conflict inherent in their multiple agendas.

KEYWORDS: social enterprise, social entrepreneurs, social networks, semantic network analysis, social enterprise policy, snowball nominations

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Social entrepreneurs have multiple roles

A successful social entrepreneur is expected to play a good number of diverse roles.¹ Our intuition is that their success depends on an optimal balance between the agendas and priorities of each of these roles. Social entrepreneurs (SE) typically have a managerial role in running a social enterprise; play an entrepreneurial role as economic agents; and a political role to gain support from public agencies. As a matter of principle, they also reflect on the repercussions of their economic actions on their community and can therefore be seen to play an active civic role. In multiple definitions of social entrepreneurship (Harding, 2006; Shaw and Carter, 2007; Lyon et al., 2010; Mullen, 2010) we find two common denominators: the existence of social goals for an enterprise and committing a share of operational profits to community causes. Social entrepreneurs have been broadly identified with those that launch or operate a social enterprise. This can therefore often confuse the roles of managers with ‘pure’ entrepreneurs. At the same time the term is used generically to anyone who attempts to implement a social agenda through economic enterprise. An alternative trend follows the extensive literature in Public Administration on public service motivation (Lee, 2012). In this vein Germak and Robinson (2014) find there “exists a unique blend of motivational components...that could explain why they engage with SE” (ibid: 18).²

We claim that the motivation of SE cannot be divorced from the outcome of their actions, as with other economic action where actors are presumed self interested. Presuming that the outcome of their endeavour could improve public utility and enhance social capital, we seek here insights that can inform the debate on policies which can facilitate the development of the sector. Our task is complicated by the diversity of roles these actors play and the potential for conflict the relevant agendas imply (Di Domenico et al., 2009; Tracy et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2012). Empirical analysis has allowed us to contextualise

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¹ We use roles heuristically here and do not directly engage with the possibility of role conflict (Festinger, 1957) or the potential dissonance between motivations and roles (Parsons and Shils, 1951) examined by social psychology.

² In a similar vein there has been some research comparing the traditional non-profit and entrepreneurial non-profit models (Duncan, 2007).
the motivations of a group of prominent such actors by employing narrative analysis and semantic social network analysis (SNA). Targeting a small population of subjects for in-depth semi-structured interview is a deliberate attempt to focus on prominent practitioners. Our investigative strategy also stems from the recognition that the complexity of their social, political and economic agency could not easily be captured through a survey. We contend here that reference to the motivation of economic and social agents can remain agnostic to the rationality of their decision making. Indeed the work of Kahneman & Tversky (1979) on bounded rationality has gradually discredited classic rational choice assumptions by recognising that social phenomena are often the result of unintended consequences of social action (Lindenberg, 1990:731; Kahneman, 2011). By focusing on a narrative analysis we gain an insight on the way actors rationalise their actions through their discourse. So, we are interested in what SE say (their discourse) and how this creates a narrative that reflects on their motives.

In this manuscript, we start by looking at the theory of economic, political and civic entrepreneurship and how the hypotheses and findings of previous research can inform this inquiry. These theoretical and empirical claims guide us in identifying pertinent categories from which to launch a semantic analysis of the data. A brief description of social enterprise in the West of England contextualises this study. The next section explains the methodologies employed to select and interview prominent SE, analyse data and provide the background to the presentation of empirical results. In conclusion we summarise insights gained and draw implications for policy.

**The social entrepreneur as an economic agent**

Scholarship on SE has pondered the relevance of classic theories of entrepreneurship to the sector (Austin et al, 2006). The key issue is whether and in which respect they differ from other economic agents. Economic entrepreneurs can be understood as agents attempting to exploitsymmetric information in the market place (Casson, 1982). They benefit from information inefficiencies or inventively exploit proprietary knowledge. Successful entrepreneurs are presumably better at assessing opportunities compared to
other economic actors. Their success is therefore contingent on their ability to predict risk better than other agents. Of course they should also be willing to take action and inclined to undertake necessary risks. In an idealised view of entrepreneurship they are creating new paths or possibilities by taking imaginative leaps in providing innovative solutions to economic problems.\(^3\) Their motivation is assumed to be personal gain, most commonly associated with material wealth. The term entrepreneur was used interchangeably in the English language with adventurer, prospector and undertaker until Adam Smith introduced the all encompassing notion of the capitalist in late 18\(^{th}\) century. The Austrian school with Joseph Schumpeter (1934) re-defines entrepreneurs to be those actors with a penchant for innovation and 'creative destruction'. Most significantly for Schumpeter and later for Israel Kirzner (1973) risk taking was not an essential characteristic of entrepreneurship.\(^4\) For Kirzner entrepreneurs are actors alert to profit opportunities that arise out of markets in a constant state of disequilibrium.

Leibenstein (1978) employs earlier theories developed by Hicks to associate the role of entrepreneurs with x-inefficiency. This is quite an interesting theoretical development that associates difference of motivational levels in individuals to the lack of unique production functions in industry. Widespread inefficiencies create the background of entrepreneurial opportunities. The role of information, whether proprietary (such as patents and licenses) or market (including personal and social) has also received particular attention. Casson (1982) associates entrepreneurship with information advantages of agents, while Baumol (1990) with the ability of entrepreneurs to locate new ideas. It should be obvious that information dissemination is network dependent and therefore this approach elevates personal and market networks to a primary role in the success of economic actors.

\(^3\) Business literature fads have employed an idealised view of entrepreneurship such as intrapreneurship (Pinchot, 1986).

\(^4\) Of course the question could be asked of how is it possible to engage in 'creative destruction' that would be devoid of risk.
As a factor of production the effect of entrepreneurship is assumed catalytic. It helps to attain an efficient allocation of resources and an optimal use for other production factors. Successful entrepreneurs are also assumed risk-neutral, as they are able to understand and correctly interpret risks to economic action. This entails what has been termed a 'moral hazard'. Rothschild and Stiglitz refer to how "the insured can often bring about, or at least make more likely, the event being insured against" (1976:642).

Imperfect information provides the potential for hidden actions by certain actors. An example often employed is the superior knowledge possessed by managers compared to owners (i.e. shareholders) of enterprises. Furthermore, it is argued, hidden information is entailed in most economic activity. This can lead to agent actions affected by 'adverse selection' in their evaluation of risk.

Most of mainstream economics assumes actors to be structure dependent. Adam Smiths’ invisible hand implies self-interested actors tied into a market embodying an inexorable dynamic. Marshalian notions of markets in equilibrium, capable of only marginal change, again presumes a famed ceteris paribus perfect information environment. An idealised view of entrepreneurship on the other hand implies that agents are capable of affecting structure. This could be seen as a more realistic depiction of economic process as it allows modelling the interrelationship between structure and agency. In a comparison of social enterprise in four different cities in the UK (Sunley and Pinch, 2014) it is

Baumol (1990) perceives high economic rents to drive entrepreneurs to 'entirely unproductive or even destructive pursuits'.

Rothschild and Stiglitz in their seminal paper on insurance markets suggest that "perfect competitors may limit the quantities their customers can buy, not from any desire to exploit monopoly power, but simply in order to improve their information. Second, equilibrium may not exist. Finally, competitive equilibria are not Pareto optimal" (1976:638)

'Adverse selection' is often used to describe how an insurer cannot with certainty assess the risk behaviour of those they insure. They therefore penalise the risk averse and undercharge the risk-takers.
acknowledged that some economic models might be weak in failing to account for the agency of SE. But what are the economic motives of SE?

Social entrepreneurs are presumed, at least partly, to be driven by market opportunity. They have to perceive opportunities to be present in order to take action. The SE, like the classic economic entrepreneur, would perceive the existence of opportunity to be associated with a product, process or service. The opportunity in other words will be associated with their ability to satisfy pent-up demand or, as is often the case with social enterprise, providing a service where none exists. Some scholars have theorised that it is compassion that drives SE to altruistic action (Miller et al., 2012). Others, that ‘prosocial’ emotions can trigger action to counter perceptions of social inequality (Thomas et al., 2009). Since, for SE, ethical questions entail a primary aspect of their economic action, the environmental and social impact of an operation directly impacts their economic decisions. Economic effects relating to employment and sustainability are often quoted as relevant to the motivational structure of these actors.

Like all other economic actors SE have to account for the risk of enterprise. Their account of risk however is more complex and very much depends on the nature of their finance arrangements. Increasingly the expectations of public and private finance bodies is that social enterprise will provide a substantial section of their turnover as trade income and that they will therefore generate operating profits. Classic entrepreneurial motivation implies a behaviour that rewards opportunism, competition, risk taking and tenacity (Kirzner, 1973) as part of a process of 'creative destruction' (Schumpeter, 1934). Social economic motivations by comparison imply that a substantial part of rewards to SE are in positive social outputs often associated to an increase in generalised social capital (Putnam, 2000). It is pertinent to distinguish the two main theoretical arguments explaining the creation and propagation of social capital. Both schools originate from Coleman’s (1988) attempt to combine rational choice with structural analysis. Nan Lin (2001) stays well within the rational choice paradigm and considers social capital to be generated by strong ties (or bonding ties) and closure within groups. While Ron Burt
(2005) borrows from Granovetter (1985) and views social capital as the outcome of access to diverse resources, (often) through weak ties (or bridging ties). In this latter case brokers/entrepreneurs generate social capital by bridging social structural holes. The difference between these two views lies in considering the mechanics for the generation of social capital and whether indeed it is brokerage or closure that generates it. We assume that SE generate social capital and loot for their discourse to illuminate whether they perceive a difference in their use of bridging and bonding ties in their networks.

Overall, literature on entrepreneurship can explain economic agency but for a number of caveats. Its incipient idealism ignores that imperfect competition renders a number of innovative agents ineffective. It focuses on entrepreneurs as agents thriving in competition where in reality their primary motive is in eliminating risk, often by colluding with competitors to achieve market fragmentation and monopolistic domination. Economic actors will take all action necessary to protect their knowledge advantage, whether this is an innovation or market opportunity, to the exclusion of all others. Such behaviour, more often than not, stifles innovation. Social entrepreneurs by comparison are less concerned with economic profits, monopolistic dominance or an information advantage. Their main similarity to economic actors in that they seek to provide goods or services in a competitive market, while not strictly being self interested.  

Empirical work on the motivation of SE is intended to place in perspective the theoretical assumptions of earlier scholarship. These actors pose a definitional challenge as they are active in multiple arenas (economic, political and social) and deliver a unique class of goods. On top of that, ideally, they possess management and leadership skills to allow them to successfully launch and administer new ventures and projects. Inevitably, existing

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8 These are not necessarily private goods however. Some could be classified as hybrid public goods, since they are non-excludable and some as quasi-private goods whose pricing conceals a subsidy to account for externalities. For a discussion of imperfect public goods see Cornes and Sandler (1996).
studies capture only facets of such multifaceted individuals. We concentrate on their motivations, agendas and networks.

The social entrepreneur as a political and civic agent

Social entrepreneurs have to play an overt political role to the degree that they need to build-up public or state support for their project. This requires them to develop and use the same tools and skills of other political actors in the public arena. They have to be adept at dealing with the media, at organising grass root support and at instilling enthusiasm for a project within their team. They require the charisma of a political nous. To the degree that the social enterprise depends on public funding the social entrepreneur is required to possess skills of classic political entrepreneurs. This is so that their funding priorities remain on the political agenda, that they will be able to negotiate the best provision for their project and that they will be able to satisfy the requirements of the funding bodies.

So who are those exceptional political agents we call political entrepreneurs? They are often portrayed as actors who can maximise public utility by exploiting inefficiencies in resource allocations.9 In that respect they are similar to SE since they are seen as suppliers of public goods. Political entrepreneurs are presumed instrumental in solving problems associated with collective action and the 'tragedy of the commons'.10 Typical

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9 Ward (1993) is typical of the game theory literature in assuming these actors to be aiming at the maximisation of social welfare.
10 The collective action problem (i.e. less efficient outcomes from actors that cannot coordinate) can be linked to the nature of public goods (i.e. consumption of which is non-exclusive and non-rival). Public entrepreneurs can be seen to take advantage of information inefficiencies from collective action problems to coordinate the provision of goods that are not readily provided by the market. It has been furthermore argued that "acting on an entrepreneurial opportunity in politics requires collective action" (Holcombe, 2002:144).
of this view are Frohlich and Oppenheimer (1978:68, italics in the original) who argue that "a political entrepreneur is an individual who invests his own time or other resources to coordinate and combine other factors of production to supply collective goods". Olson (1965) suggests that society should offer private goods (a utilitarian incentive) to those that provide public goods. These private goods (payments) act as incentives to political actors (Olson, 1965:134). So, instead of calculating the economic motives of SE we could consider their incentives for solving collective action problems. Knoke (1990) reviews a number of authors that examine collective action models. These incorporate variables on:

"imperfect information, the selective inducement aspect of collective goods, and entrepreneurial emphasis on non-material benefits;...elaboration of the property space of utilitarian incentives;...the differential side effects of positive and negative incentives for collective action;...the importance of leadership in fostering decision maximizing behaviour;...and the costs to the individual of not contributing to collective actions" (Knoke, 1990:63).

Knoke objects to rational choice and proposes that "adherence to equity norms, standards of fairness, altruism, emotional ties to persons and groups – all may play some part in individual decisions to act collectively" (Knoke, 1990:63–4). So actor involvement according to Knoke depends on both public and private incentives. He further claims that "in conceptualising human motivation as monocausal and in assuming that individuals make choices in isolation from social influences, Olson's rational men and women fail to act collectively as real people do" (1990: 65–6). His focus is on the provision of public goods through organisations but his dialectic applies well to the examination of actor incentives within networks. He makes the interesting distinction that "public goods motivate people who hold major political goals, whereas selective utilitarian inducements are more powerful for involving members of apolitical organisations" (Knoke, 1990:66). SE can be seen as such actors, who although not holding public office, require an inducement to deliver the provision of a good or service.
It seems a fair assumption that "political institutions stand in the way of a political entrepreneur who wants to be a residual claimant in such a situation" (Holcombe, 2002:146). Weberian social science is premised on the assertion that the strength of social and political institutions delineate the boundaries of private and public, of virtuous and corrupt, of the acceptable and the inappropriate. In short, institutions, whether formal or informal, create the boundaries of entrepreneurial behaviour. Interestingly the Schumpeterian view would contend that the entrepreneurial ideal is of actors that 'go beyond' institutions. This implies agents that transcend structure. This view becomes the background within which entrepreneurs are ascribed idealised attributes. Particularly so within the public arena where political agents are often idolised and idealised as exceptional leaders. Kuhnert (2001) suggests that public entrepreneurs do not regard the rules of the game (i.e. institutional structure) as given. Their actions attempt to transform such structures and in the process they are pushed to innovate. They 'invent opportunities' and imagine a future that was not possible under the original institutional structure. Their innovative actions spark competition among rival entrepreneurs that eventually guarantee that "the purposeful evolution of the institutional framework never reaches a state of 'equilibrium'" (Kuhnert, 2001:26).

Institutions can also be seen as delineating the boundaries of political brokerage. A network account of political entrepreneurs would ascribe them roles of network

11 See for instance the development of the concept of 'status groups' and the concept of the 'social estimation of honour' in Gerth and Mills (1948 & 1991: 184–87) or Weber's work on organisations (1947).

12 The now classic attempt by Giddens (1979) through the notion of structuration to integrate the duality of structure and agency is directly relevant, but unfortunately as a theory virtually untestable and therefore only useful as a heuristic devise.

13 Of direct relevance is the attempt by Hay and Wincott (1998) among others to develop historical institutionalism as the theoretical background to this debate.
dependent brokers.\textsuperscript{14} According to Knoke for such actors influence rather than raw power is of import. This is because "brokers wheel and deal primarily within communication networks, hence they are concerned with influence rather than domination forms of power" (Knoke, 1990:144). This view again fits assumptions on the role of SE, who can therefore be seen as brokers concerned with influencing, rather than controlling, political outcomes.

Governments are often at pains to encourage private and civil society organisations to deliver public services.\textsuperscript{15} Social entrepreneurship has also been seen as a mechanism to counter market failures. This is particularly so in developing economies where the scope for SE to provide public goods has led to a call for a special type of ‘development entrepreneurship’ (McMullen, 2011).\textsuperscript{16} Regardless of prevailing political dogma, SE have to be capable of representing the interests of their venture to political actors. They also have to find a way for their preferences to remain on top of the political agenda. They have to be effective at mobilising resources from their personal networks while possessing the skill to negotiate with both economic and non-economic actors. Success for classic political entrepreneurs is contingent on the exercise of power and influence (Kingdon, 1995). This is presumably channelled through formal and informal networks. The ethics inherent in social entrepreneurship however are often in direct conflict with the exercise of political influence and the generation of fungible political capital. SE political challenge is to be effective in influencing political bodies and public agencies.

\textsuperscript{14} "As the broker between two otherwise disconnected contacts, a manager is an entrepreneur in the literal sense of the word – a person who adds value by standing between others" (Burt, 1998:10).

\textsuperscript{15} In the UK this has followed a mantra on facilitating ‘Big Society’ although the concept is poorly understood by SE (Allinson et al., 2011).

\textsuperscript{16} To complicate the picture further, the advancement of the interests of one group is not tantamount to community welfare. Putnam (2000) may be the most celebrated but not the only author to discuss the dark side of social capital. He provides the example of how a lack of bridging and preponderance of bonding social capital impact racial segregation across the United States (Putnam, 2000: 350–363).
without getting entrapped in the political exchange that may compromise their integrity as social agents.

As assumed so far, SE are required to play political and economic roles while maintaining notions of public welfare and utility. This implies they also play a broadly defined civic role. Existing literature is not concerned with any contradictions inherent in combining such roles. Tasks identified for these actors by Leadbeater (1997) are related to organisational growth and linked to their effect on a presumed ‘virtuous cycle’ of the generation of social capital. Dees (1998) suggests that the gauge of value creation for SE is social impact and that entrepreneurs are one ‘special breed of leader’ (p.6). Goldsmith (2010) on the other hand sees the civic entrepreneur as an innovator that brings ‘bold interventions’ to the public domain. While Dollery and Wallis (2003) suggest that ‘appreciative and inspirational leadership’ can provide an interpretation of the value issues faced by SE. But their values and value systems, are rarely considered in understanding these actors motivation. The work of Lee (2012) investigates the distinction in the value systems of public and non-profit employees when they volunteer, while Hsieh et al. (2012) examine the dimensions of public service motivation to students of public management. This thread is picked-up in the work of Germak and Robinson (2014) in a study of students who are prospective SE who blend “components of personal fulfilment, a desire to help society, a focus on things other than money, a need for achievement, and a closeness to the social problem at hand” (ibid: 18). Values are inescapably central to any definition of public utility and the value systems of those exhibiting pro-social behaviour are of particular interest.

Table 1 summarises the points raised in the theoretical discussion regarding key tenets and their relevance to social entrepreneur engagement. In essence it is a summary of the

17 A major weakness in social enterprise models is that the generation of a public utility can warrant enterprise survival. The lack of consistent criteria to determine an operation’s survival has the unintended side-effect of stifling competition for the provision of public goods between social enterprises.
theoretical assumptions of action and implications for those engaged with social enterprise. It also serves to compare the different theoretical conjectures for economic, political and civic agency as they translate into social entrepreneur action.

**TABLE 1: Theories of Action Relevant to Social Entrepreneurship (about here)**

**Hypothesizing multidimensional agency**

So far we have examined the theoretical assumptions and empirical findings associated with the motives of SE, whether perceived as economic, political or civic agents. There are contradictions between the theoretical claims outlined in table 1. By viewing SE as multidimensional agents we can explore different facets of their agency to determine the degree to which they represent distinct aspects of the discourse and expressed motivations of SE. In this section we combine theoretical assumptions that fit a multidimensional perspective of their agency and examine existing hypotheses to their entrepreneurial motivation. We are not investigating any direct contradictions between roles but draw from influential theories in the study of SE to help us classify our data into pertinent concepts.

Alex Nichols (2010) has identified the social entrepreneurship field as pre-paradigmatic. He makes the convincing claim that the different discourses employed to describe social entrepreneurship are in conflict, lack a ‘normal science’ or a consistent epistemology (ibid: 611). In essence the legitimacy of social entrepreneurship as a field is at stake (ibid: 617). In his overview of institutions, government agencies and research centres that engage with the field he identifies two narrative logics. One he calls the ‘hero entrepreneur’ logic versus the alternative ‘community building’ logic (ibid: 621). At the same time, he suggests one organisational model favours social enterprise as business with an alternate model favouring advocacy and social change. He concludes with the hypothesis that “the logics of the hero entrepreneur working within a business (or business-like) setting will come to dominate the paradigmatic development of the field,
while the logics of communitarian action linked to social justice and empowerment will become marginalized” (ibid: 624). This is a well founded hypothesis on the dialectics of social enterprise that is worth exploring from the perspective of practitioners. The ideation of heroic entrepreneurship is therefore one of the concept statements we seek to associate with actor motivation in the analysis of the interview data.

The impact of social enterprise has been examined in work by Miller and Wesley (2010) who suggest that a measure of effectiveness can be assessed by estimating whether a venture will exist and deliver social value within ten years. They concentrate on the opinion of venture capitalists and angel funds. They identified a number of social sector criteria and were able to associate their effectiveness with the social mission of a venture, the passion of social change and the community network of the social entrepreneur. The size of their social network is assumed to provide leverage for an entrepreneur (ibid: 723) and is explored in our analysis.

Another interesting series of assumptions on how opportunities are recognised by SE is proposed by Corner and Ho (2010). They suggest that SE take decisions on a continuum on the one extreme of which they effectuate and in the other act as rational actors. In the former case they mould their environment by taking decision in the absence of any structure, while in the latter case they predict what is the likely outcome of exploiting available opportunities. As the authors concede, entrepreneurship is likely to exist somewhere in the middle of this continuum. We explore here the relevance of effectuation and relational opportunity assessment in the concept statements of our interviewees. A related concept is bricolage applied to social entrepreneurship by Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey (2010). This indicates actor “resourcefulness and adaptability” for actors “ready to deploy whatever strategies are required...in response to unpredicted activity” (ibid: 685) who furthermore refuse to be constrained by limitations. These are actors who “create something from nothing” (ibid: 699). This concept can be assumed nested within effectuation but we consider it is worth examining on its own right.
The relevance of entrepreneurial orientation (Morris, Webb and Franklin, 2011) has also been suggested as an important determinant of the performance of social enterprise. This is associated to the social and commercial conservatism or entrepreneurialism of firms. The potential commercial and social conservatism of the sector is of great interest but also entail within it other concepts examined here. It is not therefore specifically explored in this analysis.

Finally, Katre and Salipante (2012) suggest a fine grained analysis that goes beyond the high level tasks of SE. They suggest that successful SE “require heterogeneous knowledge and networks because they need to deal with diverse mission and business constituencies” (ibid: 988) and that struggling entrepreneurs “were either blind to the structural holes in their knowledge and networks, or they underestimated the impact [of the structural holes] on their ability to perform critical tasks” (ibid). This indicates a further dimension that is worth exploring. Namely, is network heterogeneity associated to success? In summary, the list of concept statements to be explored include those associated with the key theoretical assumptions on entrepreneurial behaviour and the specific insights associated with research on SE.

Data and Methodology

Social enterprise has been defined for this study following the most widely used criteria. Social enterprises from which we identified SE had to generate more than 25% of their income from trading; derive less than 75% of turnover from grants; have social and environmental aims; pay less than 50% of profits to owners; and reinvest surpluses to the community or business (see Allinson et al., 2011).

The South West of England has been identified as a hotbed of social enterprise second only to London within the UK (Harding, 2006; Buckingham et al., 2010). Whether this is an outcome of civic values, policies or chance it is difficult to ascertain. It is possible that the variation in prevalence of SE among regions of the UK are due to countervailing supply and demand for social enterprise (Buckingham et al. 2012). At the same time
there are likely to be significant within region disparities (ibid.). To put this in perspective, we can point to the incidence of social enterprise across the UK. The claim has been made that “3.2% of working age population is engaged in social enterprise activity” compared with 6.2% that engage in business entrepreneurship (Harding, 2006: 13), while there are higher levels of social entrepreneurial activity in rural locations and deprived regions. Another interesting distinction of SE in the UK is that their risk aversion lies somewhere between the general population and business entrepreneurs. When asked if ‘fear of failure would prevent them from starting a business’ affirmative responses for the general population is 34%, for SE it is 25% and for business entrepreneurs 14% (Harding, 2006: 16). Overall, the same study found SE to have more positive attitudes to enterprise than the UK population and to exhibit a risk behaviour at an intermediate level between economic entrepreneurs and the general public. The introduction of Community Interest Companies in 2005 signaled the maturity of the sector, but also indicates an expectation for social enterprise to generate economic returns. Studies on the scale of social enterprise indicate the sector represents close to 5% of economic activity in some European countries (Lyon et al., 2010). While studies on the geographic distribution of social enterprise finds the West of England to be consistently prominent among UK regions, measured in the number of social enterprises and in the vibrancy of the sector (Buckingham et al., 2010).

A series of semi-structured interviews questioned respondents on their personal motivations and the relevance of relations and social networks to their success. We used a standard snowball technique (Christopoulos, 2009), where SE identified other actors who then nominated others in a snowball chain. This first phase was aimed at actors identified in a local register of social enterprise and aimed to just gain nominations of prominence in the sector. We stopped the snowball chain after we had collected 40 responses. We employed a threshold of prominence where more than three nominations by their peers led to actors being targeted for interview. All those contacted in this way responded positively in our request for interview. Interviewees had to be active in social enterprise in the West of England. Six individuals, met these limiting criteria and their
responses are analysed here. Interviews were conducted between June and September 2012. Respondents provided interviews of between 40 minutes and two hours. Following standard survey protocol they have been offered anonymity for participating in this study. We asked questions on the eight key 'variables' that affect social entrepreneur action. These relate to actor success, motivation, perceived opportunities and constraints, network size, trust, networking activity and entrepreneurial behaviour. The interview schedule provided for open ended questions to all these topics that were recorded in situ. Respondents sometimes diverged or ignored questions asked which means that the statements reflecting on the original questions vary in number per respondent (between 12 and 21) and have been refined to indivisible text units that retain the meaning of the response.

In all but one case all interviewees managed successful social enterprises at the time of interview.18 Most are serial SE. Their businesses (minus the one exception) employed from five to just under 50 full and part time staff. They all (with the one exception) had a positive outlook for the future growth of their operations. They provided many unanticipated responses on their motivation and relations as well as a number of insightful comments beyond the interview schedule.

There are two elements to the analysis of interview data. The first part provides a narrative analysis that distinguishes different types of motivation, their associated perceptions and any remarkable insights that can be deduced. The second part of the analysis seeks associations between categories of concepts by employing semantic network analysis. “Semantic networks are often used to represent the knowledge that a person, group, or mankind has about topics, domains or the world at a given time” (Diesner and Carley, 2011: 596). Semantic networks can be broadly distinguished into two types. The first follows Rice and Danowski (1993) and measures the relationship between words. In such a case semantic networks are based on word frequencies and the association or co-occurrence of words (Schnegg & Bernard, 1996). The second follows

18 The one interviewee whose social enterprise was in the process of folding at the time of interview, met our peer prominence criterion and their continuous engagement with the sector was confirmed at interview.
Monge and Eisenberg (1987) for whom semantic networks represent associations based on shared interpretations (Doerfel, 1998). This is a concept co-occurrence method in which the relationships among words are mapped by indexing the pairs of concepts. This method reveals “the manifest conversational structure among participants as it appeared to an external observer, and second, it indirectly represented the collective cognitive structure among participants.” (Doerfel, 1998:19).

Instead of being based on word counts, semantic networks are associated with traditional content analysis and try to grasp the relation of units of text to meaning and the construction of a discourse (Doerfel, 1998: 17). The minimal data structure of semantic networks are not words but concepts. “Concepts are abstract representations of the ideas, thoughts, and units of knowledge and meaning that people conceive in their minds. ... When concepts have a representation in natural language, the respective word or sequence of words are used as labels for nodes in semantic networks” (Diesner and Carley, 2011: 595) We employ here this latter version of semantic networks.19

In combining semantic network analysis and content analysis we do not count words but the frequency of co-occurrence of concepts. We coded statements made in interviews into categories developed from literature assumptions and in-vivo.20 Those categories represent concepts of motivation, success, social networks, constraints, opportunities and entrepreneurship. With the introductions of these concepts we interpret respondents’ meaning and conduct traditional content analysis (Doerfel, 1998). The advantage of combining semantic networks and content analysis lies in identifying the network of concepts that can be detected. In semantic networks we treat concepts as nodes (Bernard, ________)

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19 An alternative approach is the methodology introduced by Trochim (1989) and developed in Jackson and Trochim (2002) for ‘concept mapping’. The limitation of the technique is that it requires units of text to fit into single categories.

20 Two coders have assigned text units (concepts) to categories in binary form. Cohen’s kappa was calculated at 0.82 between the two coders. All scoring discrepancies between the two coders were then reconciled for complete agreement. The data depicted reflect this final bi-modal matrix projected to one mode (see Wasserman and Faust, 1994).
2013; Diesner and Carley, 2011). The added benefit from combining traditional content analysis and semantic networks is that differences “in prominence and meaning that are not due to the identity and frequency of individual concepts, but that are due to the embedding of concepts in networks” (Diesner and Carley, 2011: 596), can be identified by building a semantic network of the concepts. By allowing statements to be subsumed under multiple concepts we account for the multiplicity of meaning.

Combining two different modes of analysis allows for a more detailed and more holistic understanding of the interview data. The two different strands are integrated in the interpretation of results. The narrative analysis explores the content and its argumentation used by our interviewees, we retain the fundamental narrative structure in the data. Narratives are constitutive of reality as well as of identity/subjectivity (Riessman 1993). In essence the narrative analysis takes account of the importance of words in constructing reality. Semantic analysis, as applied here, sheds light onto the relation and interdependence of different concepts.

By combining narrative and semantic network analysis we also combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies.21 Data gained through qualitative interviewing and coded into different concepts is depicted via MDA utilizing social network visualisations. Here, mixing methods follows a complementary purpose, when “qualitative and quantitative methods are used to measure overlapping, but distinct facets of the phenomenon under investigation” Caracelli and Greene (1993: 196). In sum, both strategies of analysis focus on different aspects of the interview content. In this mixed method approach we do not mix different kinds of data but analyze qualitative interview data in two distinct approaches. Our aim is to analyze their discourse and infer the motives of SE while at the same time accepting that expressed concepts constitute the background for rationalizing motives and eventually taking action.

Our use of semantic analysis takes account of the ‘duality of meaning’ even in the most elementary text statements. In narrative contexts interviewee statements are imbued

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21 See Vogl (2012) for the reasoning behind mixing methods.
with meaning. Text units rarely fit neatly into just one category. For example, the unit of text “relationship building is important” cannot be subdivided into other units that can retain its meaning and yet it obviously associates with multiple concepts of interest to our study. In this case and within the present research context to the categories: a. relational opportunities are important and b. trust in networks is important. This is not the exception but the rule for this dataset. Forty seven percent of text units are isolate concepts neatly fitting a single concept category and there are 10% of concept categories that remain isolated, by being associated to only one unit. Interviewees contributed between 12 and 21 units of text used in this analysis. There are 94 text units in total, that are associated to between one and five concept categories, with an average of 1.74. There are 164 ties recorded in the two mode network. Categories were assigned on the basis of the key theoretical debates and exhaustively cover responses to the questions posed. For those versed in social network analysis the matrix between units and categories represent an obvious case of a two mode network of units by categories that can be transposed to a one mode category by category and analysed employing the relevant statistics (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).

Refining text to its most elemental units of analysis is an instrumental part of all content analysis. The methodological appeal of using ‘concept nodes’ is that it categorises statements and can proceed to their analysis with a data reduction technique like MDS. We are making the assumption that the data units (text offered by interviewees) represent a reflection of respondent discourse and rationalisations and therefore their combination and aggregation creates a meaningful representation to analyse. The key element of interpretation through a two mode network analysis is that when units can be classified into more than one category (by converting a two to one mode matrix) we can associate concept categories into a network of concepts. The benefit of following this approach is that by classifying basic text statements into categories we can deduce ties between categories. As most exploratory methodologies this does not readily provide a mechanism for testing hypotheses but instead offers a novel perspective that can help us represent the ‘structure’ of concepts, depicted as nodes, within the corpus of text.
analysed. It also allows us to associate key theoretical assumptions with respondent rationalisations. In our case, our text corpus is contributed by those that merit the classification of prominence within the community of SE.

By mapping concepts in relation to one another we create a “web of meaning contained within a text” (Doerfel, 1998: 17). Meaning is therefore revealed by the relationship between concepts. Conducting a network analysis of the relation between concepts we create a network graph that visualises interconnections and gives an image of mental models of our interviewees. This graph can be used as a heuristic tool and for in-depth, qualitative analysis (Diesner and Carley, 2011: 597). We commence looking at the narrative data followed by a semantic network analysis of concept categories.

**Empirical Findings: Narrative**

Findings are listed below with reference to the respondent who made them. Dates of interview are offered on the first mention of a respondent. Thereafter their unique ID number is assigned to any quoted statements. The network analysis of text units and categories follows the initial exploration of narrative concepts.

**Motivated by Social Responsibility**

Previous research has identified motivations to be linked to social, community and environmental aims (Social Enterprise Coalition, 2009). Founding motivations are also associated to perceived service gaps, preserving services at risk, personal values and interests of founders (Allinson et. al., 2011: 42). The questions we asked on motivation were designed to elicit a personal response and led to multiple elaborations on personal motives. They mentioned being motivated by “social justice” and “sustainable futures” (ID 29, 20/9/2012); by “doing something worthwhile” (ID 11, 17/7/2012); “making a difference” (ID 32, 27/9/2012) and “knowing that one life breathes easier” (ID 18, 24/8/2012) because of their endeavour. Beyond altruistic motives, they also claimed to be motivated by “having fun” (ID 11); by “the pleasure of fulfilment” and by “doing the things I enjoy” (ID 13, 19/7/2012). So, predictably they think that what they do has a welfare impact and are motivated by the enjoyment of their work.
For some it was not just social impact but broadly defined entrepreneurship, by “doing the deals, winning [in] competition” (ID 22, 31/8/2012) while for others a sense of accomplishment appeared paramount since “ego is a major drive”, acknowledging that they “had to manage ...[their] ego” (ID 18) in order not to fail. One other recurrent theme was the relevance of their work to future generations. As one respondent summarised a lifelong legacy to social enterprise “I wanted to make something for my children” (ID 29).

**The ‘Things I Hate’**

In some cases, expressed motivations were not as readily predictable. Incentives to action are not always strictly ‘positive’. Some stated a strong objection to hierarchical business structures. “I hate linear structures” (ID 11). Their solution was to create business where decision making is distributed and different employees are not “boxed by labels” (ID 11). This way it is possible to utilise “people’s potential” (ID 11) and challenge “received wisdom” (ID 13) on what constitutes a successful business model. This iconoclastic behaviour reflects a motivational drive that may not be unique to social enterprise but is rarely recognised. Dissatisfaction with the status quo has to be recognised as a distinct and potentially complementary incentive to any effort at improving public welfare through social responsibility. This confirms findings by Bull and Crompton (2006) that SE dislike hierarchical divisions and formal structures of business.

**Social Networks**

One of the biggest challenges for eliciting consistent responses was in reference to social networks. Social networks, defined as their social interactions, are often confused with prolific networking or with membership in exclusive groups or lately with engagement with social media. So, questions on networks had to be qualified and clarified to be about the relations respondents maintain.

Research indicates that there are many professional networks dedicated to social enterprise, with 44 generic and 35 specialist such associations identified in a UK study (Rocket Science UK, 2010). Longer term relations between social enterprises are founded
on “demonstrable value” (Allinson et. al., 2011: 95) while larger enterprises found local contacts to be of less value. Shaw and Carter (2007: 428) found networking to be an important element in developing trust and credibility locally while “been instrumental in making them aware of local conditions and helping them identify local social needs that were not been met” (ibid: 427). At the same time Katre and Salipante (2012) claim that SE “require heterogeneous knowledge and networks...to deal with diverse mission and business constituenacies” (ibid.: 988). Miller and Wesley (2010) also find that “network size is positively and significantly related to the probability of venture effectiveness” (ibid.: 719). So, previous work has seen networks relevant both for the recognition of opportunity as well as for generating support. But it has also been claimed that “networks are easy and relatively cheap to construct” (Harding, 2006: 18). Is this really the case?

When networks were perceived as referring to exclusive group membership the responses ranged from “I am not very good at networks” (ID 11) to “I am indifferent” to them(14, 20/7/2012). At the same time networking activity, as the cultivation of contacts, was seen as “very important” (ID 11) and “fundamental” (ID 22) by most. There was a recognition that some network positions deliver a specific type of advantage. Those with a business model that depended on relations claimed to do “a lot of brokerage” (ID 18). Acquaintances were instrumental and have to be cultivated as “you [need to] constantly work the connections” (ID 18). At the same time, “the narrower networks matter” (ID 32), implying that strong ties can make a difference, while “generic networking is shallow” (ID 32). Respondents intuitively understood the importance of cultivating high cost strong ties with resource wealthy actors, while having wide information capture and access to support through networks of low cost weak ties (Granovetter, 1985).

The difference between a positive and a negative impact depends on “exploiting vs contributing to social networks” (ID11). This can be seen as an intuitive understanding that those that exploit the reciprocation and altruism of others will be penalised by reputation and cannot be successful in the social economy. At the same time there was
an understanding of the fluidity of social structure as “networks change all the time” (ID22). Therefore, investment in relations needs to be continuous and strategic.

There are also those for whom social networks were perceived as less relevant. One respondent provided a narrative under which he “was striking out on his own” and explained his non-reliance on networks as a result of him not being “a good team builder” (ID 29). The same respondent suggested that “you only make progress when you meet like minded people” (ID 29), so obviously relations matter but s/he did not consider that to imply dependence on social networks. The difference between ‘networking’ as the cultivation of social contacts while seeking information and the ‘building of relations’ as the cultivation of trust have different payoffs. Successful SE appear aware of this qualitative difference.

**Trust versus influence**

What constitutes a network of trusted others and a network of influence vary significantly in size and the deviation between respondents. Invariably, respondents distinguished a close network of trusted friends and a wider network that they believed they could influence or gain support from. Their trust network was reported to number no more than ten actors with statements such as “close friends are less than half a dozen” (ID 18). The usefulness of these strong ties was identified in network terms. With “five or six close friends acting as brokers” (ID 32) to different sectors of the social economy.

Weak ties, through which respondents claimed an influence or gained support, varied from a few dozen to a few thousand. Here definitions of influence and support deviated widely. There are “3500 people on my database, 1500 I send postal notes to and 750 I am in regular contact with” (ID 18). Others were more modest in their assessment of influence claiming that they can only expect support from a few dozen (ID 29) to a few hundred people (ID 11) amongst their acquaintances and friends.

22 Robert Putnam (2000) classifies these as bonding and bridging ties while Ron Burt (2005) as closure and brokerage ties.
Entrepreneurship

Some objected to the term entrepreneurship on ideological grounds. The claim was that “a lot of the [social economy] sector has found anything that has an entrepreneurship tag distasteful” (ID 11). The reasoning behind this was that “our business is not about the business we do but going much beyond” (ID11) and responding to people’s needs. Fundamentally, “people are part of what is created” (ID 13). Some, redefined their role in managerial terms “my own label is producer and not entrepreneur” (ID 11).

Some demurred at the term entrepreneurship on the grounds that their work was not innovative, “I can’t remember having a new idea” (ID22) claimed one. This is reflecting biases associated with an idealised entrepreneurial behaviour rather than the added value of their business. Overall enterprise was perceived positively since it “brings added value” (ID 13), while the distinction between social enterprise and entrepreneurs was often blurred. The claim was also made that “every corporate could be a social entrepreneur” (ID 18). It is evident that some are consummate entrepreneurs, in their propensity to take on business ventures, even if they don’t see themselves as entrepreneurs. Claims to “love the business side of social enterprise” (ID 22) can be associated to a classic entrepreneurship trait of challenging preconceived ideas by “going beyond the boundaries of what is expected” (ID 29).

Success

As reported by Shaw and Carter (2007) SE rarely invest personal finance in their projects. In that respect failure implies “loss of personal credibility” (ibid: 431), while success an increase in social capital. This makes attribution of success or failure problematic. Our respondents predictably associated success with motivation. They viewed others in the sector to be successful when they “believed in what they do” (ID22). They viewed their own success to be directly associated with their drive. Their self-descriptors state: “I don’t give up easily, I do what needs to be done, I create space for others, I test the boundaries” of what is feasible (ID 11). Others associate success to building networks by “finding the right partners and incentivise people” (ID 13) and “learning from failures” (ID 13), all typical entrepreneurial traits. The bottom line of what determines success is “a
love of the business side, a business that works”. Overall, they associate success with drive and classic entrepreneurial traits.

**Relations with government**

Previous research has identified that small social enterprises held most of their valued ties to local authorities (Allinson et al., 2011). Respondents readily recognised they play an overtly political role and they are not just economic actors. This was often associated with a perceived failure of political actors or institutions. Their statements often indicated a disapproval of political actors, “inspite of formal [local council] leadership Bristol succeeds” (ID13); or exasperation with political institutions “the local government is incompetent and we are thrown back on our own resources” (ID 29). At the same time they see themselves as being overtly political even if not active in party politics (ID 32).

An interesting qualification is their definition of the political element in their work. It was claimed that in providing social welfare the “political question is one of ownership” (ID 29), politics, in other words is about owning the means that provide social welfare. Only one of our respondents was seeking local public office in the near future, while none of them declared an interest in national politics. Although outspoken, critical and often dismissive of government, interviewed SE recognised they require a special relationship with political actors. Often their projects vitally depend on a sympathetic bureaucrat or local politician. They know they need to demonstrate to political actors who support them that this support will generate political capital. They also recognise that they need to frame their projects within local council or government ministry priorities. And often, they impressed interviewers with their political acumen. A summary of these findings is outlined in table 2. We distinguish between thematic categories, list their expressed attitudes and outline the insights we have derived. The table allows us to summarise and compare these findings. As these are prominent actors it should not be surprising that they come across as having strong value systems and a clear sense of purpose.
Empirical Findings: Semantic network analysis

We proceed to explore the graphic representations of projecting from a two mode matrix (associating units of text to concepts) to a one mode of relations between concepts (see Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Concepts are related in this projection if they share units of text. This projection is achieved by a simple multiplication of a matrix with its transpose. This allows us to infer a strength of association as ties in the projected matrix reflect the number of times two concepts would share text units. In the graphs below we employ a multidimensional scaling algorithm (MDS) to allocate the nodes to a two dimensional plane so that graph proximity represents conceptual proximity. This is a non-parametric MDS employing the classic Kruskal (1964) algorithm as improved by the MINISSA MDS(X) project. The stress for the two-dimensional solution is 0.025, achieved with the use of a TORSCA starting configuration. MDS provides a non-unique data reduction solution (that can degenerate to a local minimum) in which the Euclidean distances among nodes correspond to a rank. In MDS “nodes with very similar distances to others are placed close together...conveying near structural equivalence” (Hennig et al, 2013). Berg and Groenen (2005) provide a thorough treatment on the interpretation of MDS analysis and its limitations. At an elemental level, the algorithm places nodes proximate to other nodes to which they are connected. The implication is that nodes cluster near those they are most closely associated to. The tie width reflects the strength of a tie, calculated as the number of times units of text associate two concepts. For visual clarity this is weighted down on a scale of one to five. Visualisations and statistics are computed in NetDraw version 2.134 (Borgatti, 2002). To facilitate the

23 In the graphs presented there have been minor adjustments from the MDS solution to make all labels visible.
comparison between the two statistics we retain the same MDS solution in both graphs, with minor presentational adjustments.\textsuperscript{24}

Nodes group in a number of distinct clusters in Graph 1 and 2. On the right side is a group of concepts related to the utility and use of social networks to facilitate business. In the middle of the graph and ranging from top to bottom are concepts related to the motivation of respondents. These are in the core of the graph and exhibit some of the highest levels of centrality. Concepts associated to success are concentrated to the top and left and bottom left of the graph, while there is no clear cluster for concepts on entrepreneurship which disperse among a constellation of other nodes mainly in the centre and left of the two graphs. A strong tie between nodes 9 and 33 on the centre left of the graph associates a strong motivation to social and economic outcomes with a positive attitude towards economic entrepreneurship. Predictably a strong tie between nodes 38 and 24 on the left of the graph associate entrepreneurial effectuation to motivation as a driver for success. There is a similarly anticipated series of relations between social justice related concepts evident in the strength of tie between nodes 1, 4, 8 and 9 at the top of the graph. There are a number of pendant nodes (those connected to only one other) that depict the relative lack of association of some concepts such as to be motivated by sustainability or to challenge received wisdom (nodes 3 and 4). There are also four ‘isolate’ concept categories on the top left corner. In essence, no text unit associated with them could be also associated to other concept categories.

\textbf{GRAPH 1: Eigenvector Centrality (about here)}

\textsuperscript{24} Betweeness centrality compared with Eigenvector centrality offers multiple advantages. Betweenness is a good proxy of brokerage while eigenvector is a good proxy of global centrality. The first calculates the number of times a focal actor is in the geodesic between others (i.e. acts as a broker/conduit/bottleneck) and the second weights the centrality of those they are connected to. Both can be employed with valued data (for eigenvector symmetrised) and analyse centrality metrics on the largest component.
Node size in graph 1 reflects eigenvector centrality (values of 0.005 to 0.429), which is a statistical measure that calculates a node’s centrality as a function of the centrality of the nodes to which it is connected (Bonacich, 1972). This allows us to depict centrality not merely as the number of connections a node has (degree) but also infer a ‘global’ measure of connectedness in the graph. Nodes with high eigenvector centrality are well connected to other nodes that are well connected. The most prominent nodes are the best connected ones on the cluster to the left of the graph that depict opportunities and success to be associated with relational assets (13, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25). This cluster of concepts is associated with strong ties and exhibits high local density (nodes are connected to many others in the cluster). The eigenvector centrality of nodes 7 (motivation determines success) and 27 (success depends on team work) is high as they are well connected to other central nodes.

**GRAPH 2: Betweenness Centrality (about here)**

The node size in graph 2 reflects values for betweenness centrality (values of 0.0 to 262.2) which is a statistical measure that calculates the number of times a node is in the geodesic between two other nodes (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). In other words, this statistic calculates the potential a node has to connect others and is one of the most elemental measures of brokerage. This statistic would elevate concepts that act as ‘connectors’ between clusters of other concepts. As mentioned earlier node 7 (motivation determines success) is prominent but becomes singularly so as a broker between other concept nodes. Other prominent broker concepts include node 29 (success depends on management skill) that lies between entrepreneurial, constraint and motivational nodes. Node 32 (success depends on exploring opportunities) lies between nodes depicting entrepreneurial, opportunity and success concepts. And node 33 (positive view of economic entrepreneurship) that lies between success, motivation and opportunity concepts. Other prominent nodes in betweenness centrality terms (2, 6, 8, 9, 13, 25) reflect their structural position as broker concepts into a cluster of tightly interconnected homogeneous concepts and do not merit further attention.
To consider the implications of the SNA and MDS analysis for our hypotheses it will be important to consider not only what connections exist but also which ones are lacking. It is striking that network related concepts (nodes 13, 16–23, 25) are not directly associated with entrepreneurship related ones (nodes 32–38). This appears to counter assumptions in the literature and would indicate the need to reconsider the value this type of agent ascribes to their social relations.

The concept graph offers an insight into how entrepreneurial concepts are related to motivation and relations for this population of key entrepreneurs. They offer a new perspective at data reduction and have allowed us to explore a number of assumptions. The idealised ‘hero entrepreneur’ (node 35) is associated to effectuation and opportunity seeking (nodes 38 and 32). The ‘bricolage entrepreneur’ (node 37) is similarly associated to opportunity seeking but also to luck and management skill (nodes 32, 31, 29). The communitarian entrepreneurs (node 36), those that achieve by mobilising others, are associated to good management, a negative view of economic entrepreneurship and being motivated by a positive personal trajectory (29, 34, 5). The effectuation entrepreneur (node 38), the ones that achieve through perseverance, are strongly associated to the concept of motivation elicits success, exploring opportunities and hero entrepreneurship (24, 32, 35).

In summary, for prominent SE in the West of England: a. motivation is associated to success; b. networks and networking is clustered distinctly from other entrepreneurial behaviour; c. a number of theoretical assumptions on entrepreneurship (bricolage, heroic, effectuation, communitarian) are recognised as distinct entrepreneurial types; and d. economic entrepreneurship is not strongly associated to concepts of success and motivation and is often peripheral to social entrepreneurship. In the next section we look at what we have learned from this study and examine fertile routes for future inquiry.
Conclusion: Social entrepreneurs and policy making

Social entrepreneurs can be understood as actors who have to simultaneously play economic, political and civic roles while their products and services aim to increase general welfare. This can be seen as improving social capital via economic means. Their positive effect on the community is associated to the promotion of civic values while providing goods and services not always available in the market economy. Their behaviour is assumed to be premised on actions that are not motivated by economic gains and are rewarded directly through nonmaterial benefits (status, honour, fame, respect and recognition) or indirectly through an increase in public welfare. This altruistic economic behaviour counters assumptions of self serving entrepreneurs and can be better understood with reference to the multiple roles that guide their actions. In the earlier sections we theoretically substantiated our assumption that these multiple roles for SE can engender separate agendas. This implied that an optimal behaviour could be multi-dimensional. We then proceeded to discover if SE perceive they are under multiple roles and agendas both on their narrative and in a semantic analysis of their discourse.

This study entails an intentional selection bias, by interviewing prominent SE. These actors are influential to their peers and to some degree are viewed as role models. At the same time, their relative prominence and success implies they have been adept at the different roles demanded of them as SE. Their motives, rationalisations and actions cannot however be assumed typical of all actors in the sector and conclusions reached cannot be automatically generalised. The insights attained are outlined below in an attempt to aid the operationalisation of wider and more representative studies of the sector. So, what have we learned about them and what do we still need to know?

The narrative analysis helped us determine what these actors consider to be their ‘added value’ to economic growth, to social cohesion and to broadly conceived politics. Like most exploratory analysis claims made here are open to further scrutiny. We would like to remain cautious at this early stage with the use of a novel approach to mixed methods research. Our conclusions therefore tread lightly on a number of implications from this analysis which can hopefully be developed further on future projects. We found that
semantic network analysis can enhance a qualitative narrative analysis of text. The next step to this methodology would be to employ clustering algorithms to group semantic concepts and rank or associate them based on their network metrics.

Creating a graph of proximity between concept categories we have depicted the corpus of their discourse on their motivations. We have detected a distinction between concepts associated to political roles that are clustered on the right side of graph 1, which references network competence and whether success depends on networks. Civic roles associated with social justice and the increase of social capital are clustered at the top of the graph. While economic agency associated to opportunity and management tasks is mainly located to the left and bottom of the graph. These areas are therefore conceptually distinct in the discourse of SE. We suggest that these distinct concept groups associate to political, civic and economic roles.

Overall, there appears to be a high level of concordance between the hypothesised relations and empirical evidence. As anticipated, SE are motivated by social responsibility, but also by an iconoclastic need to redefine the world based on their own values. It was not a surprise to find that in their use of social contacts, they make a sophisticated distinction between bridging and bonding ties. At the same time the big deviation in the size of their reported support networks might indicate something beyond psychological predispositions. They appear equivocal on the value of entrepreneurship and associate success to enabling others. The size of their support and influence network could be a predictor variable to their success. An obvious further exploratory hypothesis would consider the brokerage benefits of SE strong ties, i.e the resources they can draw from bonds to their immediate alters.

As political actors, SE appear aware of a symbiotic but often strained relationship with local and national government. It is conceivable that the quality of this relationship and the ability of SE to optimally engage in it can determine their success. It has been argued elsewhere (Christopoulos, 2006) that entrepreneurship is not a binary state of an agent.
This implies that entrepreneurial behaviour can vary depending on context and personal disposition. Furthermore, it can also be argued, that although a behaviour in itself is exceptional the actor may not be. A successful outcome can be a matter of chance, ingenuity or a combination of the two, while an actor is highly unlikely to be successfully entrepreneurial in all of their actions all of the time.

Previous policy recommendations vary along a wider range of criteria. It has been suggested that policy should support social entrepreneur networks, provide finance, assistance in de-motivation and training at schools (Harding, 2006). Also improving the social enterprise brand, dealing with gaps in management experience, expert training of board members, training of staff, external business support and knowledge of specialised finance products (Allinson et. al., 2011). Others identify a challenge in finding board members with the necessary skills; deciding on the appropriate governance structures for combining entrepreneurship with a social mission; and managing diverse stakeholder interests and governance systems (Lyon et. al., 2010). While the difficulty of disaggregating from wider geographic units to local conditions makes some authors cautious on offering any general policy recommendations (Buckingham et. al., 2010).

Two characteristics of their economic engagement are unique to these agents. Failure of enterprise is more often associated with status rather than economic loss, while their multiple agendas are pegged against profit and growth motives as assumed in classic literature (see Table 2). The implication is that policy makers attempting to affect the sector would have to amplify the status gain of success and minimise the status loss of failure. It seems reasonable to assume that motives and agendas will be contingent on local values, welfare traditions and levels of social capital. The potentially conflicting agendas of their roles indicate that a policy aimed at facilitating the growth of the social economy would have to be multidimensional. For example, such a policy would have to simultaneously improve (economic) tax incentives, offer (political) access to stakeholders
and acknowledge (civic) status to SE. We suspect that iconoclastic social entrepreneurs are unlikely to accept engaging with formalised ‘consultation networks’. The proliferation of such networks (Rocket Science, 2010) indicates a professionalization of representation that may alienate some in the sector. Frequent stakeholder consultations could offer a tool for the engagement of such actors in the policy process.

As some of our respondents suggested, economic means should have social ends. Their mobilisation of political resources is rarely aimed at gaining public office, but at achieving social goals and furthering their values. Indeed the case can be made that if a shrinking welfare state ‘entrusts’ these actors with a voluntary provision of public goods, they should be entitled to more direct policy input. All those interviewed declared local political contacts to be instrumental to their success. We suggest that incentivising these actors by recognising them as stakeholders and facilitating their access to local and national policy making is a low cost policy tool that will impact the growth of the social economy.

Similarly the work of Battilana et al. (2012) suggests a shift of policy focus in the US to ‘hybrid’ corporate models that will combine business for-profit operations with non-profit operations, while in the UK CICs have created a legal form that facilitates social enterprise investments for profit. The UK Public services (Social Value) Act of 2012 may also positively affect social enterprise contracts with the public sector (Villeneuve-Smith and Chung, 2013).
REFERENCES


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<td></td>
<td>from their social relations vary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Identification with economic entrepreneurship is</td>
<td>Diverse motives have to be hypothesized for their relation to business and profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>often contested</td>
<td>They recognize multilayered agendas and motives to their economic actions that are not strictly economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Associated to motivation levels, networks,</td>
<td>Status rather than economic loss is at stake when SE fail and therefore their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>networking, relations with government and</td>
<td>assessment of risk should be considered in this frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>entrepreneurial behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with Government</td>
<td>They play an overt political role</td>
<td>SE provide a hybrid set of public goods, often on a quasi-private basis for which they may require favorable regulatory regimes or direct subsidies</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SE supplant failures of political actors or institutions</td>
<td>Success of SE depends on their political acumen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GRAPH 2: Betweenness centrality

- 12. CONSTRAINT large ego
- 14. OPPORTUNITIES political
- 17. NETWORKING poor
- 18. NETWORKING no use of social media

- 20. SUCCESS depends on innovation
- 26. SUCCESS depends on entrepreneurship
- 28. SUCCESS depends on motivation

- 32. ENTREPRENEURS create their success through education
- 34. ENTREPRENEURS adaptability important to success

- 31. SUCCESS depends on luck

- 10. CONSTRAINT local government
- 3. MOTIVATION sustainability