

Development of a Qualitative Research Framework to Define Social Innovation

This Research Project is submitted as partial fulfilment for the award

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Abstract

Purpose - A variety of definitions of social innovation (SI) exists, alongside differing interpretations which lead to contrasting understandings of the term. SI is increasingly gaining attention in diverse sectors and varying research fields. A conceptual framework was sought to better understand and define SI more concisely.

Research Design - A conceptual model was developed through the reviewed secondary sources. This informed the strategy to employ primary research to gain a greater insight to social innovation as the literature review did not sufficiently offer information on this matter. Part of the research design was a case study, investigating SI in relation to an organisation which was selected based on the established themes in the literature review. A triangulation of methodology allowed the collation of data from leadership and management via interviews as well as service providers and service recipients from a focus group session. Further insight was established through autoethnographic accounts.

Findings - The conceptual model highlighted the bottom-up approach as a fundamental aspect of SI, if not its very foundation. Recommendations for future research is for studies to focus on what SI is and determining its definition as clearly as currently possibly, ideally including input of a broader range of perspectives and knowledge from a larger variety of sources. Furthermore, this project intends to add to the promotion of SI to be further developed, but not restricted or limited to one sector or one form of purpose as to not deter its increasingly positive application.

Research Limitations - A contribution to current achievements of defining SI was successfully made, although this project's definition of social innovation still allows for further development as the scope of the project was restricted to a small scale.

Originality - The most significant contribution is made through the established framework to integrate empirical data and by doing so allowing the voices and participation of all levels of stakeholders to be introduced into the research and the progression of SI. This bridges the practice-led origins and scope of academic research while improving theory and practice of SI by the suggested forms of engagement of diverse stakeholders.

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Ethical Considerations

This project includes a case study on a charity supporting refugees. Research, including refugees, is not morally neutral considering the debates around any type of migration. Any ethical dilemmas will be considered with all required seriousness and beyond adhering to Plymouth University ethical guidelines, START trustees are consulted throughout this project.

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1 Introduction

Currently, SI is associated to social enterprise, social entrepreneurship (SE), technological innovations yielding social benefits or corporate social responsibility (CSR) (The Young Foundation, 2012). In the last decades, despite growing interest, significant work is still required to identify a clearer SI definition (Cajaiba-Santana 2013; Kocsiszky and Somosi, 2016; Lorenz and Elsen, 2014; Matei and Antonie, 2015; Mulgan, Tucker, Ali and Sanders, 2007; Nicholls, Simon and Gabriel, 2015; The Young Foundation, 2012; Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016).

The SI process embodies a bottom-up view to design and implementation that starts with the belief that communities and all members of society are competent interpreters of their own lives and have the capacity to solve their own problems (Mulgan et al., 2007). This is illustrated by the fact that community or civil society actors are the creators of a sizeable number of social innovations (Nicholls & Murdock, 2012; van Niekerk & Bonnici, 2014). Mulgan (2006) criticises that the absence of sustained and systematic analysis is holding back the practice of SI, making it harder to detect gaps in current provision of funding, advice, and support. Simultaneously fewer innovations are being initiated due to a lack of knowledge of common patterns, resulting in great difficulty for innovators to be effective (Mulgan, 2006). To understand the relevance of exploring SI both crisis and economy are examined in relation to the SI concept.

Clayton and Pontusson (1998) highlight a sharp decline of social spending in most OECD countries going back to 1980 and claim welfare states fail to offset the rise of inequality and insecurity. Castro-Spila and Fronti (2016) urge SI is vital to build social and ecological resilience with the stark increase of complex challenges to our economic, social, political and cultural institutions. The Young Foundation (2012) highlight the issues for global societies are the 'failure' of the modern welfare state, the failure of conventional market capitalism, resource scarcity and climate change, an ageing population and the associated care and health costs, the impact of globalisation, the impact of mass urbanisation and more (The Young Foundation, 2012). The Young Foundation (2012) explain impeding the interception of these challenges are silos in the public sector, market failures in the private sector and a

lack of scale and fragmentation in the civil sector and SI could be the answer to overcoming these challenges.

Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan (2010) warn if radical policies cannot intercept the progressive increase in chronic diseases, healthcare cost is forecast to rise from 9% to 12.5% of GDP in the UK within 15 years and from 16% GDP in 2007 to 25% in 2025 in the US, with predictions of costs further rising to 37% by 2050. Climate change, pollution control, waste reduction, poverty and welfare programmes, criminal justice or traffic congestion are all prevalent issues affecting everyone in society (Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan, 2010). The effective policies to tackle these issues are preventative, but despite obvious economic and social benefits effective prevention has been notoriously difficult to introduce (Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan, 2010).

In the first nine months of 2015, 487,000 people seeking refuge entered Europe, doubling the number from the whole of 2014 (Banulescu-Bogdan and Fratzke 2015: in Holmes and Castaneda, 2016). According to Holmes and Castaneda (2016) there are estimates of over 1 million more refugees yet to come, leading the European Commission to call this the 'largest global humanitarian crisis' of our time (ECHO 2015, 1: in Holmes, S.M. and Castaneda, H., 2016). Mulgan (2006) stresses the growing diversity of countries and cities which demand innovative ways of organising schooling, language learning, housing and conflict management.

Mulgan, Tucker, Ali and Sanders (2007) suggest that SI is ever more important for economic growth due to climate change issues or ageing populations which may only be overcome through SI. These are only two of many crises we face as a national and global society, but these crises aren't recent phenomena. Rather the interconnection in the context of global systems elevates issues to new levels of urgency and uncertainty (Westley, 2008).

Tommasi (2015) raises attention to the aftermath of the European Financial Crisis resulting in an ever more pressing need for SI and highlights that the impact of globalisation has become more relevant with the outbreak of the global financial crisis. Globalisation advanced significantly the vast development of civil society and international non-governmental organisations (NGO's) estimated to amount to over 55,000 (Lawrence and Weber, 2017). Key growth sectors in the 21st-century are predicted to revolve around health education and care, accounting for around 20% - 30% of GDP (Mulgan, Tucker, Ali and Sanders, 2007). This change is rooted in the

decline of manufacturing and the increasing dominance of service industries (Mulgan, 2006). It is not coincidental that the EU Commission incorporated specific policies on development of social innovation in Horizon2020 (Elsen, 2014). The re-occurring dialogue on Small to Medium Enterprise's (SME), including NGO's are linked to economy, sustainable future and social innovation. The term SME is often concerned with companies, but the term also covers charities, universities, statutory bodies, government and so on (GOV.UK, 2017). Lawrence and Weber (2017) explain the Three-Sector World is split into business or private sector, government and civil society e.g. Non-profit, educational, religious, community, family which all culminate into social organisations without a commercial or governmental purpose.

2 Social Innovation

The vast variety of many SI definitions exceed by far the scope of this project and it is not the focus of this research to collate as many definitions as can be found. To show a range of definitions the first eight definitions examined during the early stages of research for the literature review have been collated in a table. This selection of eight definitions is offered in a table below, in no particular order, to demonstrate the versatility in the ways SI is defined.

Table 1: SI definitions

<p>Lisetchia and Brancu (2013): p.89</p>	<p><i>'The term social innovation has overlapping meanings: it can cover social processes, like open source methods and techniques, or it may refer to innovations with a social purpose, like microcredit or distance learning, or both. It may be related, also, to social entrepreneurship and it is tied with innovation in public policy and governance.'</i></p>
<p>Bulut, Eren and Halac (2013): p.122</p>	<p><i>'As a concept, social innovation means developing original and sustainable ideas to the problems that ranging in a spectrum from working conditions to education, individual to societal development, monitoring health and environment to climate changes.'</i></p>
<p>Nicholls, Simon and Gabriel (2015): p.11</p>	<p><i>'Social innovation can best be understood as a loose movement founded on ideas: above all the idea that in the right circumstances people can make, shape and design their world, and more specifically, that they can invent and grow new forms of social organisation.'</i></p>

Cajaiba-Santana (2014) p. 42	<i>'Social innovations are new social practices created from collective, intentional, and goal-oriented actions aimed at prompting social change through the reconfiguration of how social goals are accomplished.'</i>
Van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016): p.2	<i>'Contemporary sociologists have conceptualized social innovation as new ways of creating and implementing social change.'</i>
Mulgan, Tucker, Ali and Sanders (2007: p.8	<i>'...innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organisations whose primary purposes are social.'</i>
Goldenberg (2004): p.3	<i>'Social innovation is finding concrete ways to deal with social and economic problems so as to make a real difference in the lives of real people.'</i>
Westley (2008: p.1)	<i>'Social innovation is an initiative, product or process or program that profoundly changes the basic routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of any social system. Successful social innovations have durability and broad impact.'</i>

A vast variety of definitions exist and can be as simple as SI refers to new ideas which are developed to fulfil unmet social needs (Elsen, 2014; Matei and Antonie, 2015). Bulut, Eren and Seckin Halac (2012) define the SI concept, a little more detailed, believing it can develop original and sustainable ideas to problems that range in a spectrum from working conditions to education, individual or societal development, tracking health and environment as well as climate change. Elsen (2014) raises the definition to more complex explanation and goes on to combine the functions of social innovations which act within levels of society such as the micro (eg. changes in family structures), the meso (such as new institutional arrangements) or the macro (e.g. Social Security for everyone), with these levels existing in structures (such as flatter hierarchies), processes (e.g. participative planning) and individual agency which are the innovative thinkers allowing the spark of innovation to ignite and come to realisation. The range of SI definitions at first glance evidence how social innovation is seen as a concept, idea or is a practice. There are not only contrasting elements to the ways in which SI is defined. Lisetchia and Brancu (2013) explain this by stating:

'Various definitions approach the social innovation concept by observing different aspects: what is social innovation, which is the object of the innovation process, which

are its motives and effects, which is the object of change, which is the targeted area of change, which are the components (Lisetchia and Brancu, 2013: p.89).'

There are common denominators across the definitions of social innovation which will be analysed as part of this research. The Young Foundation (2012) believe SI is practiced differently in varying fields, sectors and continents, and therefore, multi-disciplinary by nature allowing it to cut across sectors and fields of action. SI has previously described such terms as:

- *societal transformation*
 - *a model of organisational management*
 - *social entrepreneurship*
 - *the development of new products, services and programmes*
 - *a model of governance, empowerment and capacity building*
- (The Young Foundation 2012: p.6).*

Drawing on the Young Foundation's (2012) extensive research, having developed the 'Open Book of Social Innovation', and outline a six-stage process of innovation which is:

1. *Prompts – which highlight the need for social innovation*
 2. *Proposals – where ideas are developed*
 3. *Prototyping – where ideas get tested in practice*
 4. *Sustaining – when the idea becomes everyday practice*
 5. *Scaling – growing and spreading social innovations*
 6. *Systemic change – involves re-designing and introducing entire systems and will usually involve all sectors over time*
- (Young Foundation, 2012: p.33).*

Westley (2008) believes in relation to social inclusion that socio-ecological resilience and social innovation are intimately connected. Corroborating this is Davies' and Simon's (2012) study which explores citizen participation in relation to SI. They argue that engagement has such a key role in SI due to citizen's specific knowledge of the challenges they face, enabling a better understanding of issues that an innovation is intended to address (Davies and Simon, 2012). Davies and Simon (2012) insist this is not only to have a larger source base of diverse and novel ideas through involving a broad range of individuals and groups, but many of the

challenges SI is geared to address require the participation and co-operation of people. Tackling challenges with SI such as obesity or climate issues heavily depend on fundamental changes to behaviour and attitudes (Davies and Simon, 2012).

Moreover, Westley (2008) insists:

'The capacity of any society to create a steady flow of social innovations, particularly those which re-engage vulnerable populations, is an important contributor to the overall social and ecological resilience (Westley, 2008: p.6). '

The Young Foundation (2012) claim:

'Social innovation has also emerged as a response to growing social, environmental and demographic challenges – often called 'wicked' problems because they are complex, multi-faceted, involve a range of stakeholders and are, by their nature, impossible to solve (The Young Foundation, 2012: p.5). '

The question is whether this is considered in how SI has been defined and if not whether this impacts on the comprehension and exploitation of social innovation.

3 Related and Interlinked Concepts to SI

Innovation

Throughout literature SI is rooted in innovation (Bulut, Eren and Seckin Halac, 2012; Lorenz and Elsen, 2014; Matei and Antonie, 2015).

Bessant and Tidd (2011) explain studies of innovation and entrepreneurship tend to focus on creative key individuals with entrepreneurial characteristics such as Steve Jobs who is world renowned as a visionary innovator (Satell, 2016). Guy Kawasaki (2014) sees innovation as a process in which to create meaning in terms of achieving and excelling through innovation, stressing the need to create positive impact. Jack Ma, in his public speeches acknowledges he is an innovator and one of the most successful Chinese entrepreneurs (Allen, 2014), rooting his innovative and entrepreneurial activity in an urge to support Chinese SME's through Alibaba (Davos-Klosters, 2017). Alibaba is not credited as an innovation, but its founder is certainly considered an innovator. This could also be said for Jobs or Kawasaki and their time at Apple.

Matei and Antonie (2015) attribute the increasing use of the term 'innovation' to the recognition of the need for fundamental change regarding human's relationships with each other and with their environment. Innovation is not a matter of luck or exclusive to elite, but innovation can be nurtured, supported and managed (Matei and Antonie,

2015). One of the first mentions of innovation can be followed back far into the last century when Schumpeter (1928) explains innovation is putting productive resources to use which were previously untried or utilising them in new ways. Since Schumpeter's description of innovation, this definition has not drastically changed. Similar to the EU Commission's vested interests in entrepreneurship as explored further above, there has been a developed understanding of the importance of innovation for the future of European competitiveness and the global economy, and further state:

'The EU is implementing policies and programmes that support the development of innovation to increase investment in research and development, and to better convert research into improved goods, services, or processes for the market (European Commission, 2017b: online).'

Studies conducted by the European Commission show companies prioritising innovation achieve the highest increase in turnover with 79% of companies introducing at least one innovation since 2011 experiencing an increase of their turnover by more than 25% by 2014 (European Commission, 2017c). The initial Innobarometer was a survey collating data on activities and attitudes related to innovation and each year it gathered opinions and feedback from the general public and EU businesses (European Commission, 2017c). The progression of the Innobarometer, in 2016, began to capture details of the main behaviours and trends in innovation-related activities in EU businesses (European Commission, 2017c). The main results of the research found further action must be taken to support efforts to promote innovation in Europe (European Commission, 2017c).

The concept innovation is traceable way back to over a century ago. Co-operatives could be perceived as social innovations (Bobic, 2013). In 1844, the Rochdale Pioneers brought to life the cooperatives to answer social problems of the time, that still prevail today (The Rochdale Principles - Rochdale Pioneers Museum, 2017). The Co-operative is now international movement and applies a bottom up approach giving equal power to all participants (Bobic, 2013). Elsen (2014) argues that social innovation predominantly allows for solutions to social problems. This definition very much fits with what the co-operative stands for as well as aligning with the principles of the Rochdale Pioneers. Storey and Salaman (2004) claim charities and NGO's are often seen as innovative by their very nature, due to their focus to fulfil unmet social needs. However, not all charitable organisations are truly innovative as they may

begin with a new idea, but then settle swiftly into a secure and predictable routine (Storey and Salaman, 2004).

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged to fuel the economy and employment growth, leading to high-impact by entrepreneurs to micro level issues as well as macro level issues (Baregheh, Rowley, Sambrook and Davies, 2012). Ashoka founder, Bill Drayton defined entrepreneurs as those who see an opportunity and turn it into a realistic idea, spreading this across society (Ashoka, 2017). Drayton believes beyond entrepreneurship, enhancing commercial business and technology is needed in education and human rights, whilst considering entrepreneurs in the two latter domains as social entrepreneurs (Newton, 2017). Linking the relevance of innovation and entrepreneurship for the economic future, there is an emerging connection between both concepts and the relevance of support services.

A common thread within entrepreneurship and innovation appears to be positive impact, creating meaning, instilling values and working towards a progressive future. Wagner (2012) interlinks innovation and entrepreneurship with sustainability highlighting the relevance of the European Commission on CSR linked to sustainability and its relevance within the framework program of the EU, including the Les bon agenda focusing on quality-of-life through European citizens. This is predominantly in the context of technological innovation and entrepreneurship, however Baregheh, Rowley, Sambrook and Davies (2012) believed innovation and entrepreneurship is driven by individuals as well as being embedded in organisations and societies which can be considered to apply beyond technology. The way sustainability links in is best explained by Porter and Kramer (2006; Wagner, 2012) when stating sustainability can be defined as meeting needs of the present without threatening future generations in meeting their own needs.

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs are called on by Dees (1998, 2001) to develop new models for a new century. Beyond social entrepreneurship, SI is conceptualized as a new avenue to create positive social impact (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016) and it is believed to accelerate in the next hundred years (Mulgan, 2006).

Al-Dajani, Carter, Shaw and Marlow (2015) offer a more critical insight to entrepreneurship aimed for social purposes in their research on destitute women, offered micro-loans to improve living standards. A focus on the value of entrepreneurship as a strategy for economic and social development is debated and whether entrepreneurship aimed at eliminating poverty and aiding marginalised peoples can be an instrument of improvement or involuntarily cause disempowerment (Al-Dajani et al, 2015). An increasing focus on the link between entrepreneurship as a solution to deprivation and international development (Naudé, 2010, 2013: In Al Dajani et al, 2015), may lead to entrepreneurship to be perceived as a swift, simple fix to stabilise economies whilst reducing poverty. Data collated by Al-Dajani et al (2015) suggest 'entrepreneurship' was pursued by research participants as a means available to 'get by' rather than an opportunity to 'break free'. Nonetheless, the means of entrepreneurship clearly have a social function insofar as support for disadvantaged women was offered with the scheme to provide microloans encouraging enterprise enabling an income to be generated.

Yunus and Weber (2010) introduce Social Business to promote social benefit within business. Muhammad Yunus is a Nobel Peace Prize winner for transforming entire villages of impoverished Bangladeshi people with the concept of Grameen Bank which enabled microloans for the poorest of the poor and now reaches far beyond Bangladesh (Yunus and Weber, 2010). The social business concept began interweaving with NGOs, charities and the education sector (Yunus and Weber, 2010).

Dees (1998, 2001) recognizes significant differences between business and social entrepreneurs and explains the ideas of Say, Schumpeter, Drucker, and Stevenson appear attractive due to the applicability to the social sector as well as the business sector. Social entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs with a social mission and face challenges due to their socially orientated mission (Dees, 1998, 2001). To Dees (1998, 2001) where others see a problem, a social entrepreneur will perceive an opportunity which is why their passion and drive goes beyond a perception of a social need, but instead strive to achieve improvements. The central criterion, thus, becomes the impact achieved by the mission rather than wealth accumulation (Dees, 1998, 2001). Dees (1998, 2001) claims SE did not have to rely solely on not-for-profit structures but could take advantage of social purpose for-profit business structures or hybrid organisations with a combination of not-for-profit and for-profit elements.

The core of the SE mission is the key element distinguishing social entrepreneurs from business entrepreneurs, even where there is a social responsibility as a foundation of the business (Dees, 1998, 2001). Different from business entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs exhibit a heightened sense of accountability which sets them apart (Dees, 1998, 2001).

Dees (1998, 2001) highlights the language and vocabulary around SE is new, however, the concept itself is not and claims social entrepreneurs have a long history despite previously not being named as such. This new vocabulary and language will aid in widening the playing field, further attracting attention and will support social entrepreneurs to continue exploring the most effective methods of serving their social missions (Dees, 1998, 2001).

Burns (2016) claims social enterprise promotes social innovation and he defines SI as a 'new' idea which meets social needs more effectively than alternatives, whilst enabling more social relationships or collaborations. Successful social enterprises have the great capacity to network and mobilise a variety of supporting resources, drawing together to allow the launching of social initiatives (Burns, 2016).

Stanford Graduate School of Business (2017) differentiate between SI and social entrepreneurship and state although social entrepreneurship has become a popular rallying point for those trying to improve the world, social change can happen outside of them.

Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Resilience

Mulgan (2015) claims CSR being displaced in many ways through SI. This is a relevant factor for SI understanding. Social innovation it seen to enthuse values and ethics in business and enterprise in comparison to companies adopting CSR policies (Mulgan, 2015). Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (2017) stress the importance of ethics and trust for successful business, innovation and for entrepreneurs. The Young Foundation (2012) claim:

'Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and community investment activities can also be drivers of innovative approaches to social challenges. However, there is a tendency for them to be run at a gold standard level (since they showcase the sponsoring business) which means they are often unsustainable in the longer term. (The Young Foundation, 2012: p.29). '

Where there is no institutionalised social mission in a private company, commitment is likely to waver with a change in leadership or adaptations to business strategy (The Young Foundation, 2012). Wagner (2012) interlinks innovation and entrepreneurship with sustainability highlighting the relevance of the European Commission on CSR linked to sustainability and its relevance within the framework program of the EU, including the Les bon agenda focusing on quality-of-life through European citizens with a focus on technological innovation and entrepreneurship. Baregheh, Rowley, Sambrook and Davies (2012) believe innovation and entrepreneurship is driven by individuals as well as being embedded in organisations and societies which can be considered to apply beyond technology. Westley (2013) reports resilience theory is becoming increasingly popular perspective to analyse anything from the individual, to the organisation, to the community to regional and global aspects. It resembles sustainability science to an extent and focuses on building resilience in complex systems through strengthening cultures of innovation (Westley, 2013). Westley (2013) explains such cultures would value diversity, because the more different the parts, the greater the possibility of new and radical combinations. Essential to build these cultures are communication and engagement which encourages a coming together for experimentation and support, allowing the support for SI, and in turn SI builds resilience (Westley, 2013). SI serves vulnerable populations and is served by it, since resilience of social-ecological systems is dependent on the introduction of novelty in the back loop, resilience is also increased by that re-engagement (Westley, 2008). The Bureau of European Policy Advisor (2011) state social innovations are innovations which are good for society and promote societies ability to act (Bureau of European Policy Advisors, 2011: in Burns, 2016).

The Bottom-up Approach

Tommasi (2015) states social change as well as SI are both seen as concepts that describe the process of social transformations. Although neither concept can prescribe nor describe the direction of social transformation, what is clear is that these processes affect diverse groups of society in different ways (Tommasi, 2015). Westley (2008) urges the re-engagement of vulnerable populations into mainstream economic, social and cultural institutions is vital. This engagement is intended not as mere recipients of services but as active participants and contributors (Westley,

2013). Westley (2008) claims the need to re-integrate the poor, the homeless, the mentally ill or the lonely into community derives from the benefits of their personal perspective, diversity and other elements they have to offer that will be lost without efforts to engage with these vulnerable people.

Dees (1998, 2001) proclaims a wide array of governmental and philanthropic efforts fall far short and larger social sector institutions are frequently seen as inefficient, ineffective, and unresponsive to bridge gaps in provision. Two decades ago, concerns were already expressed that market forces linked to governmental policies enforcing and strengthening these not only are unable to meet human needs, but in fact, destroy community and social solidarity (Scott, 2013).

Westley (2008) criticizes social service organisations who struggle to find financial support for those suffering from mental illness without addressing the economic system that excludes them from the mainstream economy. SI addresses seemingly unsurmountable social issues such as homelessness, poverty, and mental health and in these domains, the social sector struggles often due to the focus on tackling the immediate symptoms but not the underlying causes (Westley, 2008). Moreover, Westley (2008) argues that the taken for granted institutions are often the source of such intractable problems. Actual innovation without institutional change appears unrealistic (Westley, 2008) and Tommasi (2016) takes this further when explaining: *'Social innovation challenges traditional organization, institutional processes, power structures and gender relations. It impacts on society, economy and policies. Hence, social innovation will result in vested interest (Tommasi, 2016: p.2).'*

Charities and NGO's face decreasing funding sources (BBC, 2012; Butler, 2017; May, 2016; Tyler, 2016; Pati,2011) which is drawing Third Sector's management and leadership interest to seek new opportunities and creative ideas to secure income sources to continue providing the same work geared towards social benefit and remain sustainable.

4 SI Research and Definition

A vast variety of definitions exist and can be as simple as SI refers to new ideas which are developed to fulfil unmet social needs (Elsen, 2014; Matei and Antonie, 2015). Bulut, Eren and Seckin Halac (2012) define the SI concept more detailed, claiming it can develop original and sustainable ideas to problems that range in a spectrum from working conditions to education, individual or societal development,

tracking health and environment as well as climate change. Elsen (2014) raises the definition to more complex explanation and goes on to combine the functions of social innovations which act within levels of society such as the micro (eg. changes in family structures), the meso (such as new institutional arrangements) or the macro (e.g. Social Security for everyone), with these levels existing in structures (such as flatter hierarchies), processes (e.g. participative planning) and individual agency which are the innovative thinkers allowing the spark of innovation to ignite and come to realisation. Lisetchia and Brancu (2013) explain:

‘Various definitions approach the social innovation concept by observing different aspects: what is social innovation, which is the object of the innovation process, which are its motives and effects, which is the object of change, which is the targeted area of change, which are the components (Lisetchia and Brancu, 2013: p.89).’

The range of SI definitions at first glance evidence how social innovation is seen as a concept, idea or is a practice. The Young Foundation (2012) informs that a considerable amount of SI definitions makes explicit reference to social innovation involving ‘new’ ideas or ‘novel’ solutions which is a shared theme across innovation literature. Edwards-Schachter, Matti and Alcántara (2012) investigated 76 journals and examined SI definitions on characteristics associated with SI and the correlating dimensions. A list seen below demonstrates the versatility in which the term is used, applied, defined and understood:

- Aims
- Purposes / objectives
- Drivers
- Sources
- Context
- Agents
- Sectors
- Process
- Empowerment and capacity building (social capital)
- Governance
- Results / outcomes

(Edwards-Schachter, Matti and Alcántara, 2012).

Despite SI's wide application the concept holds considerable gaps in research.

Mulgan (2015) believes SI research lacks evidence of value creation and destruction

of social innovation, in as far as it follows the same principle of innovation with its creation of value for some, but destruction of value for others. This research gap can be drawn back to Schumpeter (1942: In Carter and Jones-Evans, 2012) and his view of economic development, being a process of creative destruction with entrepreneurs playing a key role in the introduction and expansion of some enterprises whilst other enterprises simultaneously exit or collapse.

Social Innovation Drivers

Carter and Jones-Evans (2012) explain the global economic crash renewed the focus on civil society as well as the Third Sector to find creative solutions to address social welfare problem. The traditional post-war welfare system is continuously being dismantled and restructured whilst a political rhetoric on community-based action is growing (Carter and Jones-Evans, 2012). However, this is not a phenomenon that occurred as abruptly as perceived but rather a continuous process of citizens wanting their needs heard and support (Carter and Jones-Evans, 2012). Carter and Jones-Evans (2012) enlighten social entrepreneurship emerged as one approach in solving these issues and its development is attributed to profound economic and political changes in society and the reduction in public provisions.

Kestenbaum (2008) claims innovation is crucial to improve public services, ensure economic competitiveness and social wellbeing. Kocsiszky and Somosi (2016) see innovation a key role in the constancy for the performance of an economy. Kocsiszky and Somosi (2016) see a correlation between the innovation potential of a region and their ability to produce economic output. Economists have known for a long time SI functions as a compensating factor for a lack of economy and science innovation (Kocsiszky and Somosi, 2016). Moreover, the European Union in the past decades pay great attention to the context of SI interlinked with social changes (Kocsiszky and Somosi, 2016). Kocsiszky and Somosi (2016) believe it is not coincidental that the European Union incorporated social innovation into their objectives for the programming period of 2014 - 2020.

If SI can be a solution finder for social problems whilst also impacting positively on the economy, what links markets to communities and societies? Dym and Hutson (2005) claim, where service agencies are concerned, the relation between organisational objectives and community needs are evident. The same market will respond to non-profit services, less directly connected to individual organisations

with ideas about social changes or educational achievement (Dym and Hutson, 2005)

Westley (2008) argues SI can be aided by market demand or equally by political demand. Another form of opportunity would present itself to social innovation by cultural demand in the form of a breakdown in sense making or meaning such as aspects of the welfare instated after the Second World War (Westley, 2008).

Nonetheless, Westley (2008) clarifies that these dynamics are as complex as they are difficult to manipulate directly, if not completely impossible to influence. Another criticism may be that NGO's obtain funding which gives them a better chance to succeed, but this kind of alignment with national and regional funding trends could violate the organisation's own goals cultural strategies (Dym and Hutson, 2005).

Linking market demands to social need is a complicated undertaking.

Complex market demands inevitably must impact corporations and businesses without social purpose. Do businesses link SI into their strategies or structures?

Case Study Indicators

Unceta Castro-Spila and García Fronti (2016) offer an overview of SI indicators:

Table 2: *Si Indicators*

Three Identified Approaches to SI Indicators	The Individualist Approach	The Organisational Approach	The Regional / National Approach
Approach Descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to social entrepreneurship prefers • SI indicators are assessed through characteristics, motivations, and contexts in which social entrepreneurs develop their activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected to structures between companies, NPOs and public sector (hybridisation) • Highlights the emergence and governance of business models which focus on social purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted by European policy makers • Requires the development of SI indicators at macro level (regionally or nationally)
Limits of the Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deemed insufficient due to limited scope • Measures motivations, experiences and contexts of social entrepreneurs rather than an integrated vision of social innovation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located between the individualist approach and regional/national approach • Organisations are intermediate structures between individuals and their contexts • Supports social structures, resource and knowledge networks which organise collective, transformational learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators measure what “can” be measured not what “must” be measured • Indicators are the result of surveys and information gathering that do not refer to SI • Provides generic approach to how SI occurs • Does not measure SI itself
Data collated and adapted from ‘ <i>Social innovation indicators</i> ’ Unceta Castro-Spila and García Fronti (2016)			

The above is not an exhaustive pool of relevant approaches and inquiries to find frameworks to measure SI and establish precise SI indicators.

Stanford Graduate School of Business (2017) speak about SI drivers spurring on contemporary SI with three key mechanisms:

- Exchange of ideas and values
- Shifts in roles and relationships
- Integration of private capital with public and philanthropic support.

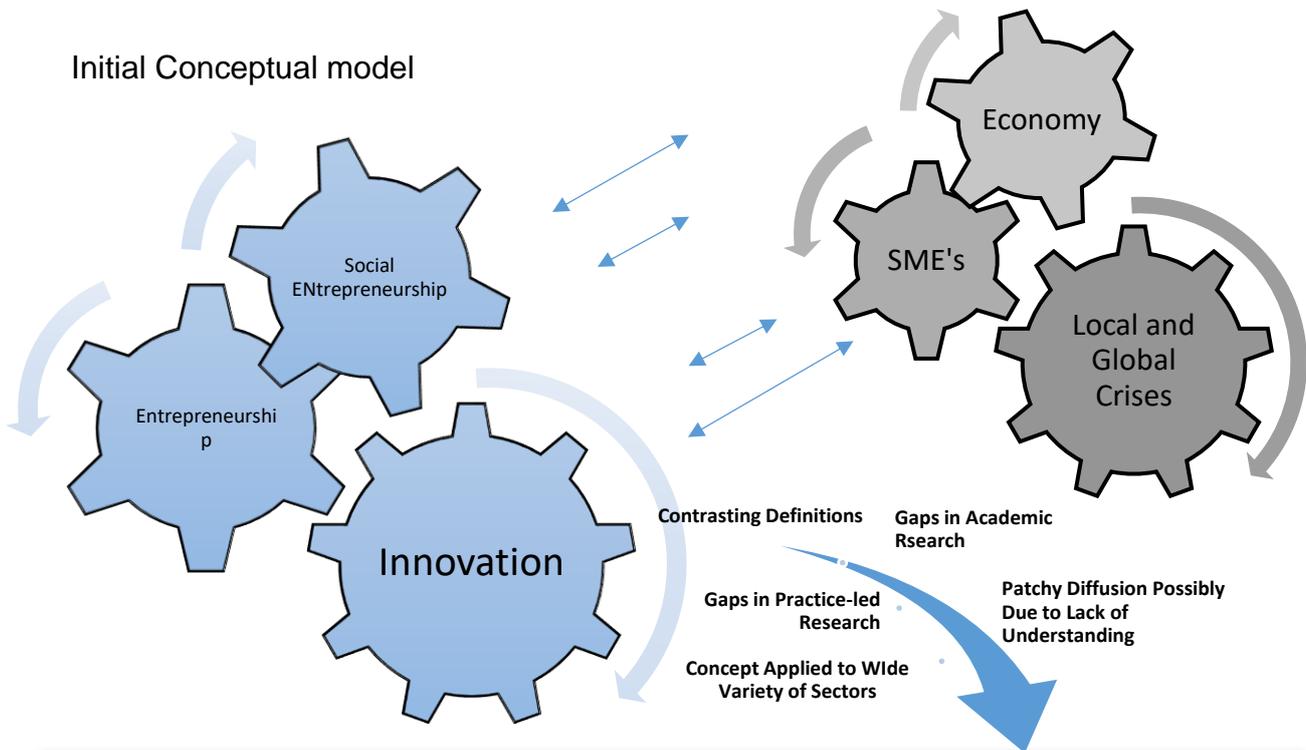
These three key mechanisms are believed to fertilise cross-sectoral and the most challenging, relevant problems cannot be comprehended nor solved without the non-profit, public, and private sector. (Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2017). If this perspective was to be combined with the views on the fundamental aspect of empowerment, resilience building and the application of bottom-up approaches then it becomes clear that to understand SI fully requires the engagement of all stakeholders involved in social innovation processes. This revelation will significantly inform the conceptual model developed for the purposes of this project to design a qualitative research framework to refine the definition of social innovation.

Conceptual Model

A conceptual model shows the different concepts of entrepreneurship, SE and innovation interlinking with SI and the complex interaction between economy, SME's and crisis. Through the conceptual model the weight of literature on SI appears unevenly distributed. The relevance of the bottom-up approach in SI is raised in research, albeit not sufficiently elaborated on despite its evident importance. There is a lack of empirical data enabling the engagement of vulnerable people not only in SI processes, but also in the research development of the concept itself.

The most common denominator of SI being defined as new idea or novel solution did not allow to merge or refine existing definitions to an extent to reach an improvement. Rather the integration of a larger pool of SI stakeholders to be part of the definition process appeared a relevant finding.

Initial Conceptual model



What is required to progress social innovation definitions from a working progress to a more united, inclusive definition?

What is required to progress in a concise SI definition?

Identify commonalities in current definitions in SI

What are the common denominators in current SI definitions?

Social innovation definitions claim SI involves 'new' ideas or 'novel' solutions

Does a review of current definitions suffice in producing a concise definition?

What is absent in current definitions of SI?

Insufficient

The integration of the bottom-up concept in SI into research

What is required to integrate a bottom up approach in the process of SI definition?

Is engagement of all stakeholders with particular care to invite the voice of vulnerable people possible?

Possible solution: Case study to gather primary data through interviews combined with a focus group and autoethnographic accounts

Definition of Social Innovation Refined Through Stakeholder Engagement

(McNally, 2018).

A case study was selected to investigate an SME potentially with SI potential.

Background of the Case Study Organisation

Burns (2016) tells of the long voluntary and charitable history in the UK for their communities and social initiatives and further claims the social entrepreneurship movement calls for partnerships to be extended to link the public, social and business sector to reconstruct welfare provision. NGO's then would undertake entrepreneurial ventures, pooling government welfare funding under control of local communities. The possibility of these partnerships and ventures may well already exist. To effectively shape a research framework to investigate an understanding and definition of SI an organisation was chosen as a case study as part of the empirical research. This decision derived from the rich literature offering an insight into SI and particularly the importance of SI being rooted in empowerment with respect to a bottom up approach. Unfortunately, not enough information is available from existing research nor do studies allow an insight to what SI is to leadership, management, service providers or service recipients. Without this to which extent can it be possible to truly offer a well-informed and grounded definition and understanding of SI when key individuals were not involved in the process?

A selection was made to investigate a SME, based in the South-West of the UK considering the above. Students and Refugees Together (START) has operated in Plymouth since 2001 and has proven to be both, successfully create an innovative learning environment whilst providing high quality support services to vulnerable refugees (Butler, 2005; Butler, 2007). Students from the UK and all over Europe, with an educational background in Social Work and Occupational Therapy, but also Geography and Business, undertake practice placements at START (Bellinger and Testa, 2016). Student-led services have been set up in many countries to address a variety of issues (Bellinger and Testa, 2016; Black, Palombaro and Dole, 2013; Dominelli and Bernard, 2003; Goodier, Uppal and Ashcroft, 2014; Forbes-Mewett and Nyland, 2012; Palombaro, Dole and Lattanzi, 2011). It is not the aim to compare START to other student-led services, but through a randomized brief search of other student led services it was possible to establish, within limitation, that START stands out amongst other student-led services. The charity success and far-reaching impact was not the determining factor to choose it as a case study for SI, but it's unusual

combination of work it undertakes as well as the strong application of the strength's approach which embeds equality and empowerment on all levels whether it is leadership, management, staff, students on placement and most importantly to service users. START wins large government tenders (START, 2016a), supplying significant services as well as contributing to the economy pulling financial resources into the Plymouth. Despite the charity being funded in part through grants, the most recent annual report shows a significant part of START's income is derived from contracts for work commissioned by government, whilst a smaller amount flows in from student fees and other wide variety income generation (START, 2016a). A priority at the organisation is the avoidance of any possible exploitation and great care is taken to ensure arrangements impact in equal measures on students, the community and the educational institution (Bellinger and Testa, 2016). The strain to maintain a balance through a strength approach may be the attribute determining START's social innovative capacity.

5 Research Design

A triangulation of methods allowed the collation of data from leadership and management via interviews as well as service providers and service recipient focus group. Further insight was established through observations recorded in autoethnographic accounts. Due to research scope it was vital to employ a method complimenting data collated in interviews and the focus group session. In the autoethnographic accounts observations were possible which could not be drawn out from interviews or the focus group.

NVivo

NVivo allowed the structured analysis of primary data and word frequency queries were run as well as Nodes created to code the volume of information into:

- Node -Impact
- Node -SI
- Node –Challenges
- Node-bottom up
- Node –SI Unknown
- Node –Difference in START

Participants

Socio-demographic information of participants

Interviews:

- 1 trustee
- 1 manager

Focus group:

- 2 students on placement
- 2 service users

Gender balance in interviews and focus group:

- 5 women
- 1 man

General demographic information of START

In the period of 2016-2017 in which the empirical research collation for this project was undertaken, START facilitated 20 student placements:

- 14 UK students
- 6 International students

The START placement students undertook degrees in:

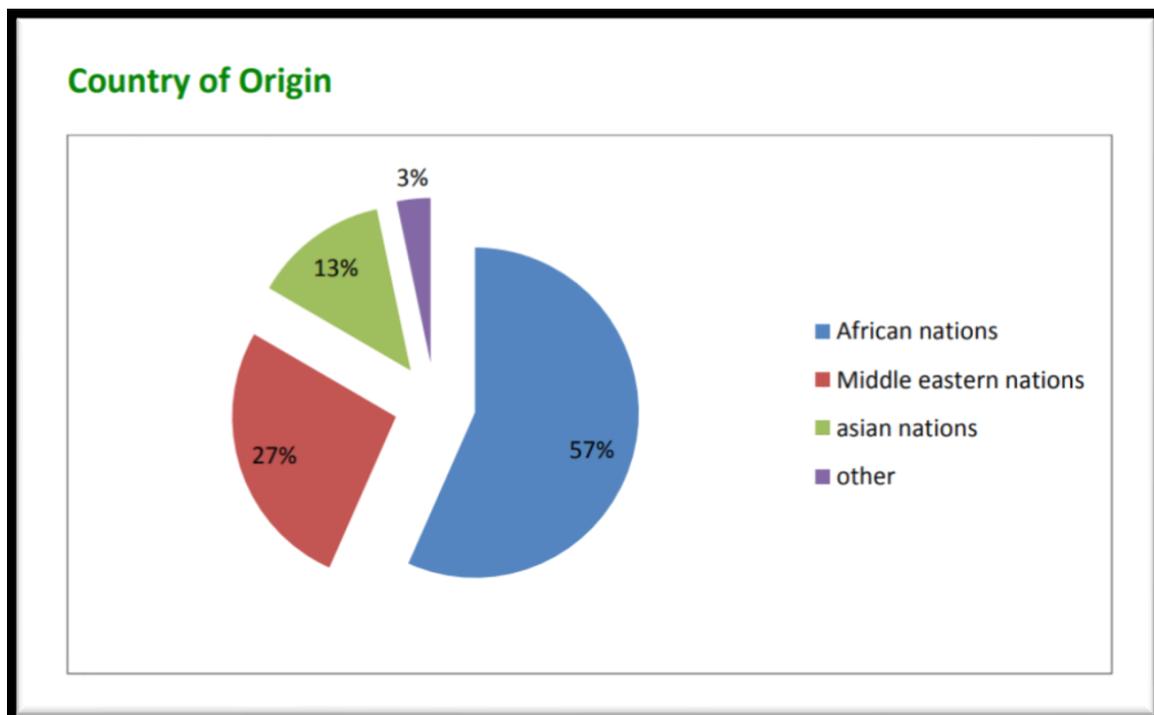
- Social Work
- Occupational Therapy
- Youth and Community Work

International students can have widely diverse ethnic backgrounds, but come to START predominantly from countries such as:

- Germany
- France
- Norway

START service user demographic percentage in 2015 can be seen below:

Image - START Demographics of Service Users



<http://www.studentsandrefugeestogether.com/>

6 Results and Analysis

Results

Interviews

START socially orientated and innovative:

Trustee - 'Because my work is not about refugees (laughs) it's about possibility, it's about human possibility....'

Focus Group

START's impact

SU 1 - 'myself and other volunteers, before you came in, we had a panel where we sit to bring up an idea called conversation club which is a club to explain or to, to like to involve these refugees that don't really have basic English and then can get basic English....**this is the basic, like a foundation that we're trying to, it's an innovation actually.'**

START's conversation club:

SU 1- '*You know if you're trying to help trying to create for themselves, trying to do things for themselves then the community is growing.'*

Student 1 - '*... there's a focus on empowerment on the service users, it's very strength focused. So, they focus on the strength of the service user, but also the students as well. '*

Results of the Word frequency Analysis

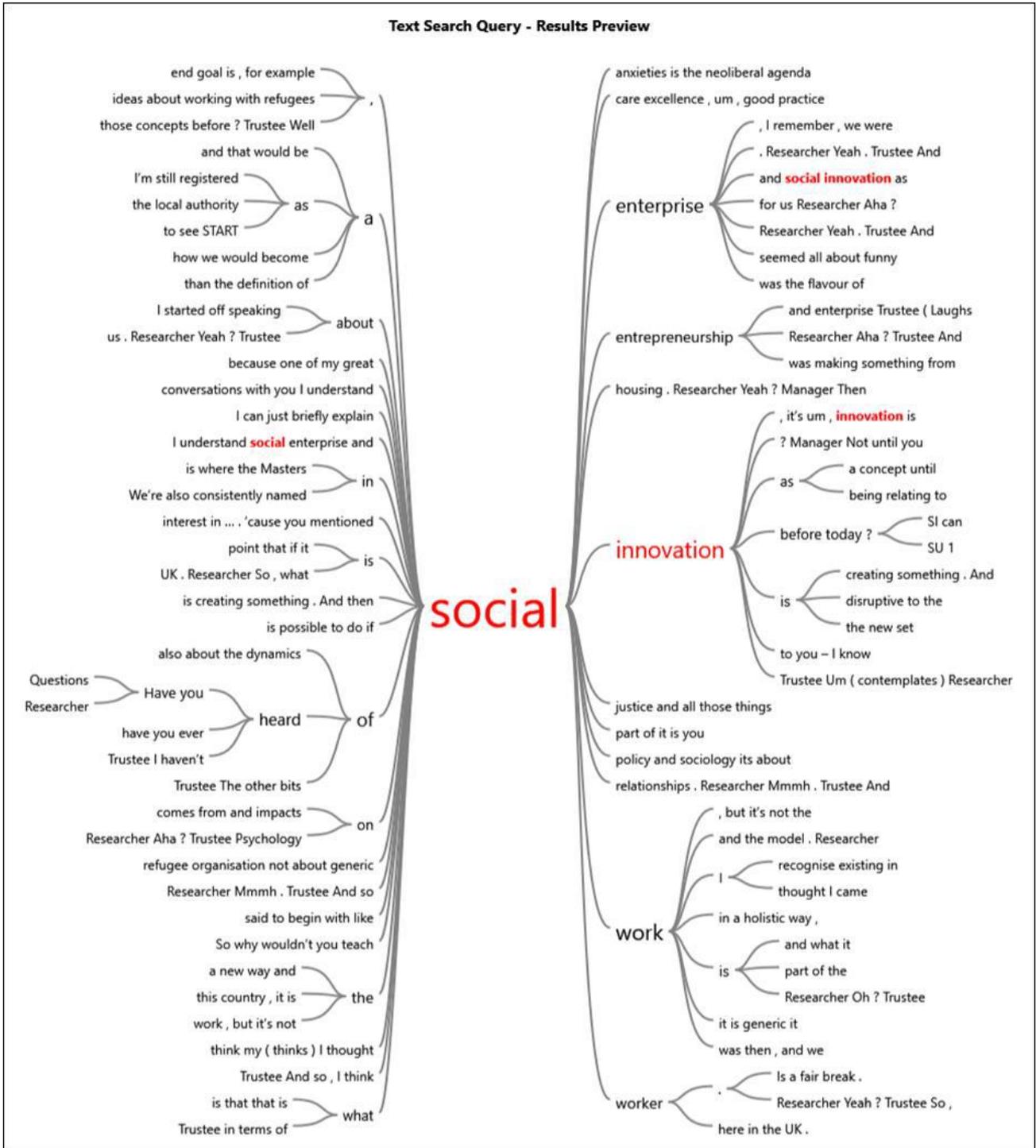
Word frequency tests were applied through Nvivo to query the predominant terms.

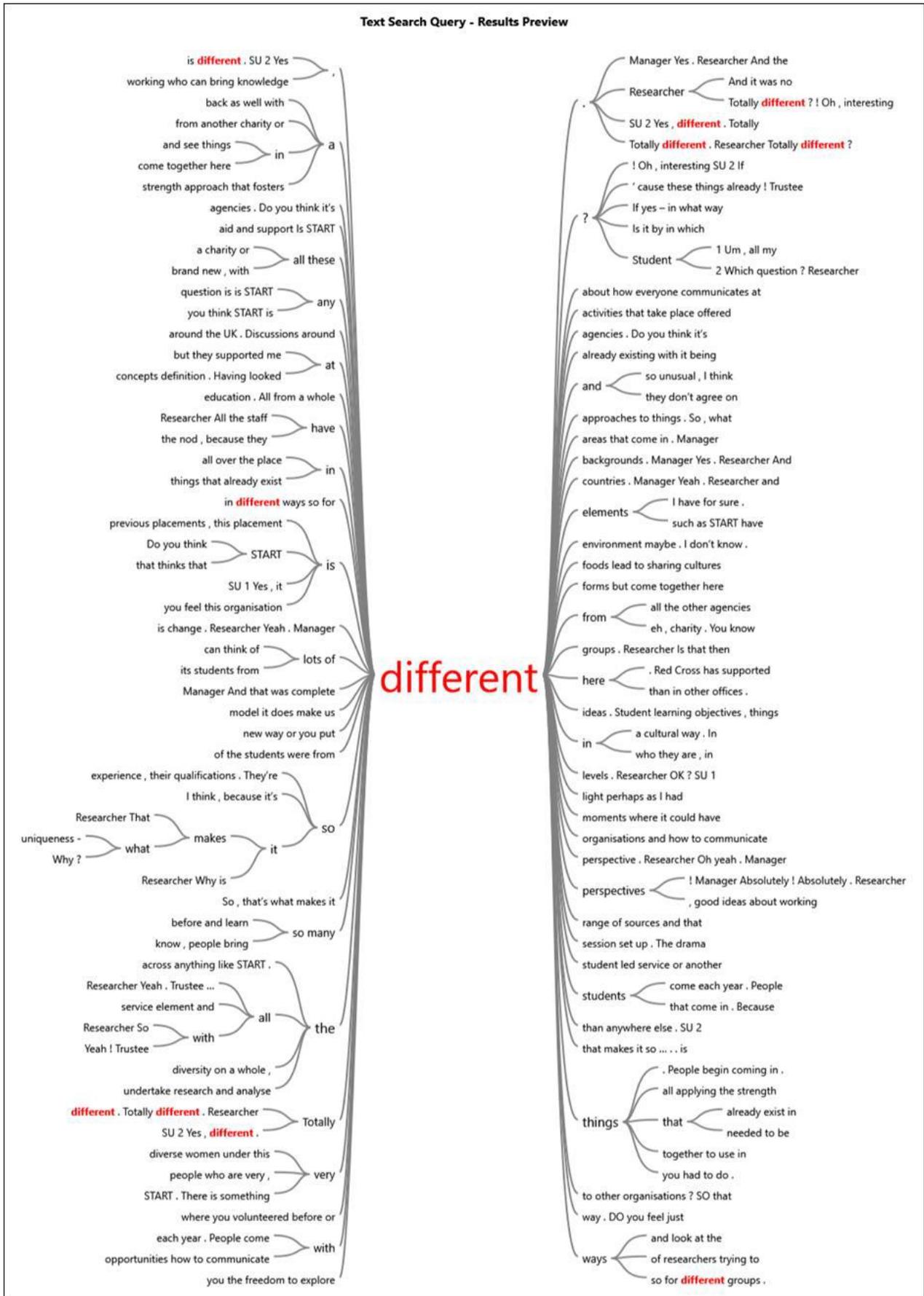
Table 3: word frequency 'social innovation'

Name	References	Coverage
AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNAL last draft	64	0.81%
Interview Transcript Manager	7 0	.18%
Interview Transcript Trustee AB	43	0.84%
START FOCUS GROUP	10	0.73%

Table 4: word frequency 'different'

Name	References	Coverage
AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNAL last draft	6 0	.13%
Interview Transcript Manager	15	0.45%
Interview Transcript Trustee AB	22	0.56%
START FOCUS GROUP	16	1.38%





Results of Common Threads Found in Interviews and Focus Group

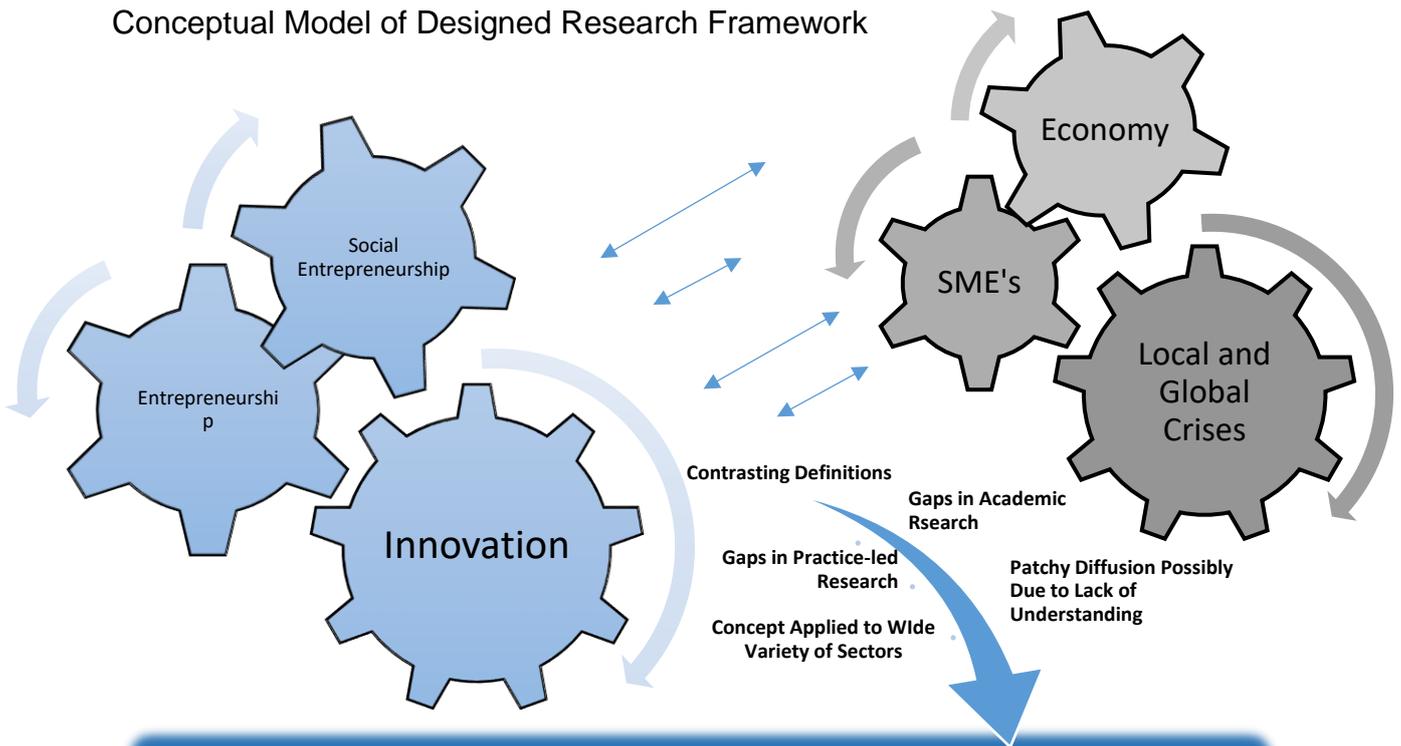
- Students integrated into service support
- Inter-(multi) cultural environment
- Strength Approach
- None of the participants had heard of SI prior to the research

Results of Autoethnographic Accounts

Common threads could be strung, and facts corroborated such as the lack of SI knowledge amongst all participants through following quote:

'I was curious if anyone attending the meeting had heard of SI or knew anything about it. Only the trustee who had met with me a couple of times spoke up to mention she knew now after I had brought up the term, although she still was not sure what it really meant.'

Conceptual Model of Designed Research Framework

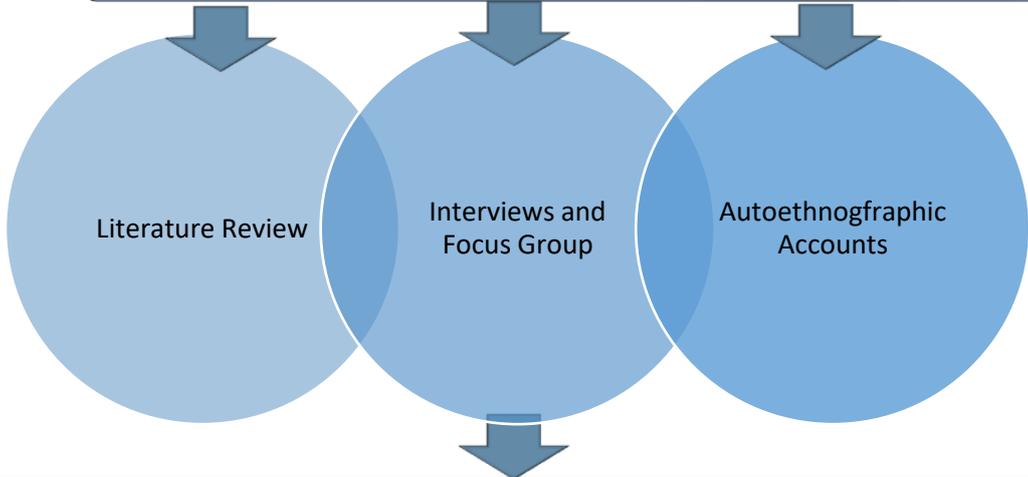


What is required to progress social innovation definitions from a working progress to a refined definition?

Design research to integrate the bottom-up concept in SI

Identify all stakeholders involved in social innovation processes investigated in the chosen source

Apply triangulation of qualitative methods with focus on engagement and empowerment



Definition of Social Innovation Refined Through Stakeholder

(Phyllis McNally, 2018).

Analysis

Interviews, Focus Group and Autoethnography

The debrief after the focus group session flowed well and SU 1 came back to ask more questions about SI and felt especially fascinated on bottom-up approaches and empowerment. During the interview debrief the manager began to passionately discuss the inter-cultural learning in START and how the international student's being new to the city come on placement and share a lot of commonalities with the refugees as they often have come new into the UK or to Plymouth. This is the strength's approach and the manager explained how important it is to respect that each individual is the expert of their own lives. In the interview with the trustee she speaks of the considered effort of instilling the strength's approach throughout START and all its work. In relation to SI Mulgan (2006) states:

'Some of the most effective methods for cultivating social innovation start from the presumption that people are competent interpreters of their own lives and competent solvers of their own problems. (Mulgan, 2006: p.6)'

Autoethnography enhanced the making of correlations within findings. It may not have been useful as a stand-alone method.

Analysis of word frequency

SI being largely an unknown entity seeking comparative words such as 'new' or 'novel' or 'innovative' which are highly regarded in association with the term social innovation in definitions it was of interest that none of these terms returned high frequency. However, the word 'different' came up 76 times during interviews and the focus group.

Defining Social Innovation

As SI, by and large is found in this research to be an unknown entity, there were no specific requests made for participants to offer their own definition of SI. The most significant direct link could be made in the focus group session. It was a START service user participating who gave an example of what she constituted as a SI of an activity the START service user focus group had developed and implemented as part of the organisations community activities. The service user had swiftly developed an understanding for SI informed through that day's focus group discussions.

This research project's refined quote of social innovation based on findings of the data:

'Social innovation is a concept, idea, approach or framework in which established ways of practice, theory, methods or epistemologies are applied in different ways to improve, progress or advance with the primary aim to benefit a social purpose (McNally, 2018).'

This definition must be considered as a working definition, based on the research limitations of scale.

7 Discussion

Young Foundation (2012) urge that reaching a common understanding of the term is critical if the field is to mature and develop further. Tushman and Anderson (2004) highlight external opportunity, company strategy and internal structure are the determining factors for a company's success. Companies that stick to what works well are often successful companies and build on strengths within their strategy (Tushman and Anderson, 2004). Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan (2010) argue that the design of services should start from the user, and that its diffusion should be approached from the perspective of users, not least because they are in many cases also co-producers. The promotion of SI has focused on the supply side and how innovations can be diffused among service providers through experts, intermediaries, and collaboration (Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan, 2010). Dym and Hutson (2005) believe community-based organisations align themselves with their communities because if they didn't then services may be refused and lead to the organisation failing. Therefore, leadership that aligns with community and other group cultures increases the organisation's chance of success (Dym and Hutson, 2005). Lorenz and Elsen (2014) echo Mulgan's prediction of service industries being the biggest growth areas in the economy and take this further in claiming the process must be coming from the bottom up. This is poignant when considering START's strength approach and the way in which their service user feedback informs their work. Bessant and Tidd (2011) enlighten a changing mindset and refocusing organisational energies requires the articulation of new vision and there are many cases where this kind of leadership is credited with starting or turning around organisations. Creativity is not just something that happens to people is actively and deliberately employed, monitored and managed (Bessant and Tidd, 2011).

Research Limitations

Time Factors: Restrictions in this projects scale allowed merely a brief survey on SI case studies as well as limiting the investigation into other student-led services or similar SME's to START to a very basic understanding.

Sample Size: Drawbacks of the methods and methodology employed further reduced the possibilities of more conclusive findings. Good data was retrieved; however, a larger sample would enhance the data quality and reliability.

Restricting Factors: The small-scale of this research resulted in restricting full employment of methods due to omitting valuable data in order to protect all research participants.

Recommendations

Understanding of who is impacted by SI is vital to comprehend how to define and diffuse it. The concept demands an approach that includes all stakeholders input based on the utmost importance of the bottom-up approach within SI.

Wording is a vital aspect to consider in future research, particularly where diverse participants are involved and meaning of social innovation may need to be forged from correlating information or synonyms used, but describing what SI is. Future research would benefit on a larger scale of participants to enlarge the data that can be gathered and considering diverse organisations in varying sectors.

8 Conclusion

SI is of great importance and research as well as practice efforts to further the concept, fully define and diffuse it further, will continue to prosper. The changing face of global demographics, economies, politics as well as prevailing and further looming human and ecological crisis call for not only a continued effort but an increased expansion of the current progress of social innovation. SI can offer clarity in strategy, new solutions, improved services, extended comprehension of stakeholder involvement, novel approaches in building equality and a fairer, more sustainable world.