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Titolo

Social entrepreneurship: concept development, networks and open organizational form. A Case study

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Social entrepreneurship is a phenomenon with a growing business impact (Seelos and Mair, 2007; Brooks, 2009; Short et al, 2009) that has attracted the attention of the management literature in the last two decades. Social entrepreneurship is conceived as a process of social value creation, involving the innovative use and combination of resources to address social needs that are not meet by traditional organizations.

Despite the increasing amount of studies on social ventures, the field still suffers from the same and even more definitional uncertainties of the main entrepreneurship field (Landström et al., 2012; Lundstr & Halvarsson, 2006; Zahra, & Wright, 2011; Sorensen, 2008; Steyaert, 2007). As in the broader stream of literature on entrepreneurship, part of the scholars focusing their research on social entrepreneurship have devoted their effort to define the concept and set the boundaries of the social entrepreneurship field, in order to distinguish it from others areas of research in entrepreneurship and management. However, after three decades literature appeared still fragmented (Mort et al., 2003), and this fragmentation is mirrored by the variety of definitions of social entrepreneurship (Dees,2001; Galera & Borzaga,2009). For instance while in Europe, with the exception of the United Kingdom, social enterprise has generally come to mean a social cooperative or association formed to provide employment or specific care services in a participatory framework, in the United States, social entrepreneurship generally embodies any type of non-profit organization involved in earned income generation activities (Kerlin, 2006).

Debate about social entrepreneurship is still open and concerns different issues. A first one regards the extent to which social entrepreneurship is similar to and/or different from commercial entrepreneurship and is a legitimate domain of inquiry in its own right. Scholars in management and organization science are divided between those who sustain the legitimacy of social entrepreneurship as a domain of academic inquiry, due to its specific characteristics and others who remains unconvinced about the need to treat it as a distinct field of research, because it is not different from other forms of entrepreneurship (e.g., cultural, institutional, public, corporate) already analysed in the literature and it is not clear how the study of this type of entrepreneurship adds theoretical values. (Dacin, 2011)

Another key issue that informs discussions on social entrepreneurship revolves around the extent to which social entrepreneurs should pursue also business aims. This topic of tensions between social mission and business venture is rather central in the literature on social enterprises, characterised by the overlapping of social, entrepreneurship/business and not-profit domains.

The field of social entrepreneurship has been addressing new topics and opening new lines of research that replicate the recent lines of inquires of the entrepreneurship domain. At the inception of the research many contributions centred on social entrepreneur who tackle social problem and, identifying in it an opportunity and exploiting it by innovative manner, provides a new solutions to social needs (Dees & Battle Andersen, 2006; Martin &Osberg, 2007)

More recent contributions shifted the research focus to ventures formation process and dynamics of social enterprises. It has been suggested that a social venture's network of relational ties plays a crucial role on its formation (Waddock, 1991; Sharir and Lerner, 2004; Austin et al, 2006; Haugh, 2007). Other studies have recently highlighted that social innovation is a key feature of new ventures' birth (Dees & Battle Andersen, 2006; Degroote, 2008; Kerlin, 2006; Martin and Osberg, 2007;Hulgard 2010 and Hoogendoorn et all 2010).

Purpose of the thesis

The growth of the social entrepreneurship research area in different directions, yet with little convergence, calls for a synthesis and a reflection of the state of the art. We have witnessed the growing of literature reviews in the last decade. Despite the recent contributions, literature still presents some gaps. Existing review papers focused on comparative analysis on different perspectives not accounting for the relationships among different contributions and the process of accumulation in the field over time. The thesis would address these gaps presenting the most extensive bibliometric analysis (441 publications) of the literature on social entrepreneurship based on a longitudinal approach, which allowed to identify the evolution and structure of the debate in the last two decades (Chapter 1).

On the other hand, the present dissertation offers original and in depth empirical evidence on the dynamic interplay between the social venture formation and the entrepreneur's social networks. It analyse a central process of a venture formation that is the development of the new service/product concept. The focus centred on how a concept develops as a network of partners is progressively constituted, enlarged and changed and how concept elaboration in turn drives ties development and exploration (Chapter 2). After analysing the ego-network of the social entrepreneur, this work shifted the research focus to examine how a social entrepreneur develops and manages inter-organizational relationships to create social value and innovation. It suggests that social enterprises develop building on a network of competing firms that collaborate each other to deliver a new social value, and it can be conceptualised as a meta-organization. The concept of meta-organization refers to a novel form of organization, typically of collaborative open communities, where legally autonomous entities, whether firms in a network or individuals in a community, collaborate for the pursuing of a

common goal without the recourse to authority inherent in employment contracts (Gulati, Puranam, Tushman 2012 p. 573)

Moreover a specific trait of these organizations is that in a meta-organization, each agent has its own motivations, incentives, and cognitions, but unlike in a traditional business firm, they are not linked via a framework of formal authority associated with employment contracts.

The plurality of motivations and aims has become a central theme in the literature on social enterprises, since these organizations seek to achieve social missions through business ventures. Existing research points to tensions between social mission and business aim within the social venture as mainly related to divergent internal dynamics or divergent identities among sub-groups (Tracey & Phillips, 2007; Smith, Besharov, Wessels, & Chertok, 2012;Smith et al, 2013). The thesis addresses this issue by investigating whether even in the network of profit and no profit organizations with different strategic objectives and expectations, aimed at producing social innovation, divergent social and business aims are in conflict or not. Meta-organization allows us to analyse forms of relationships among firms with different goals and to understanding how this various aims reconcile or not around a common task (Chapter 3).

Structure and organization of the thesis

The thesis consists of three distinct papers. The first paper presents a longitudinal overview of the social entrepreneurship research field based on bibliometric data. The paper drawing on past literature reviews deepens the analysis of this stream of research, updating data but also tracing the development of the debate in the field since its inception. We collected a sample of 432 articles and 9 books that exceeds the one (152 articles) recently analysed by Short et al. (2009). We purposively would enrich that relevant analysis in three directions, covering a longer timespan, broadening the scope in term of journals and books and deepening the analysis by looking at the relationships (citations) among key articles.

The second and the third articles are based on a single case study of a radical innovation in the radio sector.

The second paper adopting a process-based approach through the analysis of the social venture over a three-year period (2009 – 2012) highlights how the new service/product concept development is strongly connected to the evolution of the interpersonal network of the entrepreneur. These ties play a key role in the concept elaboration along the early stages of the social enterprise formation. The paper highlights that different changes in ties are involved along the formation process, and drawing on previous classification of Elfring and Hulsink (2007) it suggests a new type of mechanism. Moreover the case study shows that there is not a single direction causal relationship between the entrepreneur networking and new product/new venture development. The new service/product

concept itself drives the search for new partners, who in turn might add new components to the concept. Finally interesting findings show that in social venture the development of the concept is reinforced by the social mission definition.

The third paper provides the first empirical evidence on how social enterprises can act as social meta-organizations to sustain their social innovation and value creation in the no profit sector. The empirical evidence collected suggests that when a goal is framed in term of important social value rather then purely economic terms, this generates easier follower's commitment, thus we would expect to see meta – organizations more frequently in the social ventures context. Moreover, we found that the social nature of a meta-task is a founding condition allowing meta-organizations of specific kind of permeability and stratification to emerge. In fact, our findings show that the social enterprise adopts a mixed business model strategy and different meta-organization design for the various partnerships, depending on whether activities are related or unrelated to the social venture mission.

Contribution and implications

The thesis as a whole contributes in different respects to three streams of research: entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and social networks. Foremost, the analysis shows the historical evolution of the social entrepreneurship field, since its inception and contributes to the understanding of the actual state of the art of the debate. It describes the different stages of the debate development, and by each phase it has been taken into consideration the size and the impact (citations) of key publications, distinguishing theoretical and empirical contributions and highlighting main research topics and their relationship.

On the other hand the present dissertation contributes to process based studies on entrepreneurship and social network, dealing with the investigation of the dynamic interplay between the social venture formation and the entrepreneur's social networks. The findings suggest future lines of investigation on how entrepreneurs' social network formation in early stage interacts with a core activity of a social venture formation process, that is the developing a new product/service concept.

The thesis contributes to the emergent literature on meta-organizations, presenting an extension of the work of Gulati and colleagues (2012) in the social enterprises context. It provides the first empirical evidence on the concept of social meta-organization to sustain social innovation and value creation in the no profit sector.

Finally, the study aims at shed more light on the issue of conflict between social and business goal in social enterprises, suggesting to treat it not just as a problem of internal dynamics of the social venture rather as a tension that can be reconciled through a mixed organizing strategy.

ESSAY I

Mapping Social Entrepreneurship over time.
A bibliometric analysis

Giacoma De Maria

Anna Comacchio

Abstract

Objectives

Social entrepreneurship (SE) is a phenomenon that has growing impact in the business and has witnessed an emerging interest as research stream. Particularly in the last decade there has been a relevant increase of theoretical and empirical studies. The paper deepens the analysis of this stream of research, drawing on past literature reviews such as Short et al. (2009); Zahra et al. (2009); Dacin et al. (2010). Building on a rich dataset and on longitudinal bibliometric data, the paper traces the development of the debate in the last two decades.

Prior work

Despite the growing attention on social entrepreneurship, academic literature appeared fragmented (Mort et al., 2003), and this fragmentation is mirrored by the variety of definitions of social entrepreneurship (Dees, 2001; Galera & Borzaga,2009). For instance while in Europe, with the exception of the United Kingdom, social enterprise has generally come to mean a social cooperative or association formed to provide employment or specific care services in a participatory framework, in the United States, social *entrepreneurship generally embodies any type of non-profit organization involved in earned income generation activities (Kerlin, 2006). Debate is still open and concerns different issues and dimensions that have to be considered in order to define social entrepreneurship.*

Approach

In order to map chronologically the SE research field, the paper adopts a longitudinal approach based on bibliometric data, for the exploration of research field not yet well established. Given that social entrepreneurship is a relatively recent research stream, we conducted our search in ISI Web of Science database, without any time boundary to explore the field since its inception. We collected a sample of 432 articles and 9 books that exceeds the one (152 articles) recently analysed by Short et al. (2009). We purposively would enrich that relevant analysis in three directions, covering a longer timespan, broadening the scope in term of journals and books and deepening the analysis by looking at the relationships (citations) among key articles .

Results

The analysis shows the historical evolution of the field, born in 1991. We describe the different stages of the debate development, and by each phase we take into consideration the size and the impact (citations) of key publications, distinguishing theoretical and empirical contributions and highlighting main research topics and their relationship.

Implications

The paper provides a map of the social entrepreneurship research and contributes to the understanding of the key topics of the field along its evolution and more recent advancements.

Value

The value of the paper lies in its longitudinal overview of the field of social entrepreneurship that provides new insights to understand the actual state of the art of this debate.

Keywords: *social entrepreneurship; social venture; social enterprise; bibliometric approach*

1.Introduction

Social entrepreneurship (SE) has become a phenomenon that has a growing impact due to the increased number of social ventures (Seelos and Mair, 2007; Brooks, 2009 Short et al, 2009). Furthermore it is consolidating as an emerging research stream (Hemingway 2005; Tracey and Jarvis, 2007; Short et al., 2009; Zahra et al., 2009; Dacin et al., 2010) as indicated by academic journals publishing special issues (see JBW 2006 and ETP 2010), as well as international academic conferences and workshops being organized around the world about the topic and university research centres and teaching programs for future social entrepreneurs having established at universities including Harvard (the Social Enterprise Initiative at the Harvard Business School) and Oxford (the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at the Said Business School). Short, Moss and Lumpkin (2009) reported a 750% increase in articles published on social entrepreneurship between 1991 and 2009. Elite endorsement of this activity by political and business leaders has also stimulated a broad interest. At the same time, several important organizations (e.g., Ashoka, the Aspen Institute and the Skoll Foundation) promote social entrepreneurship, drawing public attention to and celebrating examples of social entrepreneurs who affect profound social change by addressing some of the most intractable social problems in both developed and developing countries. Despite the growing attention by scholars to social entrepreneurship, academic literature appeared still fragmented (Mort et al., 2003), and this fragmentation is mirrored by the variety of definitions of social entrepreneurship (Dees,2001; Galera & Borzaga,2009).

Thus the growth of this research area in different directions, yet with little convergence, call for a synthesis and a reflection of the state of the art. The paper deepens the debate on the filed development, by providing a bibliometric analysis of past literature building on a rich dataset and on longitudinal bibliometric data. We conducted our search in ISI Web of Science database, without any time boundary to explore the field since its inception. We collected a sample of 432 articles and 9 books, that exceeds the one (152 articles) recently analysed by Short et al. (2009). We purposively would enrich that relevant analysis in three directions, covering a longer timespan, broadening the

scope in term of journals and books and deepening the analysis by looking at the relationships among key articles.

In the following sections the past debate on social entrepreneurship is analysed with special focus on the definition of social entrepreneurship. Method section describes the methodological approach adopted to map the literature. Main findings are discussed in section four and section five draws some final discussions and conclusions.

2.Theoretical background

What is social entrepreneurship? Since its inception research on social entrepreneurship have vividly debated on the definition of social entrepreneurship. After three decades literature did not converge on a workable and common definition, instead we have to recognise with Austin (2006) that there are different concepts ranging from broad to narrow (Austin et al., 2006). The broad definition of the concept relates social entrepreneurship to individuals or organizations engaged in entrepreneurial activities with a social goal (Certo and Miller,2008; Van de Ven, Sapienza and Villanueva, 2007) including a variety of organizational forms along a continuum, from profit-oriented businesses engaged in significant social commitments, to double-bottom-line businesses that combine profit objectives with a social mission, to non-profit organizations (Roberts and Woods, 2005). Moreover, other scholars argue that social entrepreneurship is a process equally possible in the non-profit, public sector or across sectors, such as hybrid organizations, which mix for-profit and non-profit approaches, and hence regardless of a specific legal form (Austin et al., 2006; Bornstein, 2004). Short et al. (2009) delineate social entrepreneurship boundaries by focusing on three main areas. The first lies at the intersection of entrepreneurship and public/non-profit research; the second studies the overlap of entrepreneurship and social issues in management; and the third informs social entrepreneurship by studying the junctures among these three domains.

One key issue that informs discussions on the definition of social entrepreneurship revolve around the extent to which social entrepreneurs have social objectives over and above economic ones (GEM, 2009).

Within the broad definition, whether social goals are central or if they are taken on at least does not matter in terms of qualifying as social entrepreneurship (Galera and Borzaga, 2009). Peredo and McLean (2006) identify a range of possibilities: at one extreme they place entrepreneurs and groups who are driven entirely and exclusively by the aim of producing social benefits, also when not endowed by an entrepreneurial structure. On the opposite extreme, they position those who pursue a

social goal, but subordinate its pursuit to the prominent or prime profit-making goal. In between, they consider enterprises pursuing goals that are chiefly social, albeit not exclusively, and enterprises which consider social goals among other goals of the enterprise (Peredo and McLean, 2006).

According to a narrower definition, social entrepreneurship is located strictly in the non-profit sector and it refers to the adoption of entrepreneurial approaches in order to earn income. (Galera and Borzaga). Accordingly, this approach presupposes that the social mission is explicit and essential (Dees, 1998) and it implies the adoption of business practices exclusively by non-profit organizations (Reis, 1999).

GEM report on social entrepreneurship in 2009 presents the measures of strictly defined social entrepreneurship (composed of not-for-profit social entrepreneurship, economically oriented social enterprises and socially oriented social enterprises) and broadly defined social entrepreneurship also including traditional NGOs and for-profit social entrepreneurship.

Bacchiega and Borzaga (2001: 274) contributed to the debate differentiating the social ventures from traditional no-profit organizations claiming that "the term 'social enterprise' has come into use to distinguish the new entrepreneurial forms from more traditional third-sector or non-profit organisations. The distinction underlines the growing involvement of the new organisations in the production of services and it is this which differentiates them from traditional charities"

Debate about social entrepreneurship is still open and concerns different issues. A first one regards the extent to which social entrepreneurship is similar to and/or different from commercial entrepreneurship and is a legitimate domain of inquiry in its own right. Scholars in management and organization science are divided between those who sustain the legitimacy of social entrepreneurship as a domain of academic inquiry, due to its specific characteristics and others who remains unconvinced about the need to threat it as a distinct field of research, because it is not different from other forms of entrepreneurship (e.g., cultural, institutional, public, corporate) already analysed in the literature and it is not clear how the study of this type of entrepreneurship adds theoretical values. (Dacin, 2011)

The field of SE has been developing along the last three decades, addressing new topics and opening new lines of research. The debate is still open for instance on the dimensions that have to be considered in order to define social entrepreneurship, and there is a little convergence on a workable definition that still ranges on a continuum between a strict and a broad one. Yet, different perspectives and schools of thought (Dees and Battle Anderson 2006; Hoogendoorn et al 2009) have interpreted the phenomenon, and even different geographical approaches have addressed the topic of the third sector: the European tradition rooted on social economy and American tradition based on not-profit.

As this area of research has been evolving and enriching scholars agreed on the need of systematizing the state of the art. Accordingly we have witnessed the growing of literature reviews in the last decade. Short et al. 2009 provided a first bibliometric analysis, mapping past literature and main lines of research in the field. In 2010 Zhara et al. tackled the issue of the SE concept and definition, illustrating more than twenty definitions of SE. Despite the recent contributions, literature still presents some gaps. First a few studies have focus on the relationships among different contributions, second the analysis of the state of the art have been based more on a comparative analysis on different perspectives then on the evolution of the field over time. Our study would address these gaps, building on a rich dataset and on longitudinal bibliometric data, the paper traces the development of the debate in the last two decades and show the emerging debate of the last few years.

3. Method

Data collection

In order to map the SE research field, we adopted a bibliometric approach (Zupic and Čater 2014). Bibliometric analysis is a helpful approach to literature review for the exploration of research fields not yet established, multidimensional and multidisciplinary such as social entrepreneurship. In fact the quantitative analysis on citations data can be performed to identify the domain's core contributions that includes the articles that have greater impact on the field in term of citation indexes as well as to examine their respective and mutual influence on scholarship, analysing their citation relationship (Peteraf et al. 2013, Marzagão et al, 2009). As a first in this analysis, we identified topical key words emerged through the literature review. The key words were the following i.e. "social entrepreneurship", "social entrepreneur", "social venture", "social enterprise" and "social business". Second we decided to conduct our search in ISI Web of Science database, without any time boundary. Given that social entrepreneurship is a relatively recent research stream, we wanted to explore the field since its inception. Third we refined our search in order to select a coherent set of publications, using two out the several filters Web of Science permits to adopt. First we refined the search by document types not including documents such as book review, meeting abstract, biographical item or letters that are not relevant for our analysis on central publications, being documents for which ISI does not provide citation data. Second we refined our data collection by 20 categories of disciplines not including into the search articles classified in categories out of the management studies, such as dermatology, microbiology or ophthalmology. After the second running selecting by 20 categories, we refined our search by excluding some others categories not part of the

management studies field such as history, medicine, law or philosophy. This data collection design allowed us to retrieve a sample of 413 articles from a variety of scholarly disciplines in management studies published on the topic of social entrepreneurship. The sample spans over a period of 22 years until November 2013, the first article being published in 1991.

A second set in our data collection was the analysis of "outers references" by Histcite. It is a tool for bibliometric analysis by which identifying the most significant work on a topic and for tracing the debate development year-by-year. The HistCite system has been used in different knowledge domains as a helpful tool for the exploration of research field not yet well established, and more recently it has been used in reviewing the dynamic capabilities research topic (Peteraf et al. 2013).

Outers were selected in order to check whether there were books as well as journal articles that are not included in our sample, but are frequently cited by the papers retrieved. We decided to enrich our sample adding outers according to two selection criteria, a quantitative one according to which we included those cited articles that have a citation score higher than the average citation score of our panel (i.e. 9 citations) and a qualitative one, according to which we selected among the most cited outers only those that debated a topic pertinent with social entrepreneurship.

Following this procedure, we added to the initial sample of 413 articles, 19 more articles and 9 books obtaining a final sample of 441 publications, composed by 432 articles and 9 books. This sample exceeds the sample of 152 articles analysed by Short et al. in 2009. We purposively would enrich that relevant analysis in two directions, having a longer timespan and broadening the scope of our search in term of journals analysed. This collection constitutes the sample for our longitudinal and comparative (with respect to Short et al. sample) analysis presented in the following section.

Data Analysis

Different levels of analysis were conducted on data. We first treated the whole sample of 432 articles, producing descriptive graphs of the distribution of publications and citations over time as well as various tables. A table presents a picture of countries of authors, while in another one the journals have been classified into different research domains, in order to identify the disciplines with more influence and importance.

We classified the journals according to the categorization provided by Short and colleagues in their study, with respect to which we wanted to compare our results. For journals not included into that list we alternatively used the categorization of WoS and when they were classified in more than one research domains according to WoS we search for their main topical aim. The "Other" category includes those journals targeting not a unique and specific issue and others not provided by WoS that constitute the "outer references". We renamed as "Not Profit and Voluntary Sector" the category "Other Business" present in Short. On the other hand, we wanted to enrich the analysis of Short and

colleagues broadening the number of journals analysed, and for this purpose we included six more research domains provided by WoS (Health Policy and Service, Planning and Development, Public Administration, Psychiatry Applied, Social Work and Urban Studies).

A second set of analysis has been carried out on a central group of articles composed by the most influent studies on the knowledge's domain. Articles were sorted by local or global citation frequencies. The local citation score (LCS) or frequency is the number of times a paper is cited within the HistCite collection. The global citation score (GCS) measures the citation frequency in the entire Wos global collection. In order to identify them we consider those articles with a global citation scores higher than the average citation score of our sample (16 citations) calculated on the papers that received at least one citation. These 56 most cited articles were analysed in their chronological order according to the publication year aiming to get insights on the development of the debate on social entrepreneurship field.

We carried out a correlation analysis between global citation score and publication year for the purpose of excluding a sort of effect "time" according to which a paper published in an earlier period could have a better chance to have a longer number of citations than a paper published in a later period. This correlation was accomplished in order to make more robust our results.

Among the 56 most cited papers we select a group to be included in the historiograph since it can be readable if it involves no more than 20 – 25 nodes. The historiograph is a graphical representation where each paper represented by a node is arranged over a time line of the their publication date while connecting lines with arrowheads display the citation relationships among papers. The selection criterion was the local citation score, that as stated before indicates the number of times a paper is cited in the retrieved collection and for this reason it appears to be an indicator of prominence of articles among social entrepreneurship research domain only. The graphical map includes 21 papers locally cited above the threshold of the average local citation of our sample (19 citations) calculated on the papers that received at least one citation. By the mean of this graphical representation of the core articles within a field it was possible to analyse how they relate and influence each other over time.

Our study was extended to the description of the most influential books in the filed. We focused on five of the nine book retrieved, that were included in the top 10 most cited publications.

Finally we deepened our literature mapping through a text mining approach. Our aim was to identify main themes within the corpus of articles collected.

We carried out a text data mining analysis (TM) on the sample of 432 articles, with the aim to analyse the words included into the abstract, the title and the keywords of each article.

We used TM package provided by R, which offers functionality for managing text documents. Foremost, we check whether there were papers in the collection without keywords or abstract. We

identified 33 papers that we excluded from the analysis. In our search strategy we tried balance sensitivity and precision to ensure key terms are captured, and terms with irrelevant records are removed. Therefor we cleaned up the resulting dataset up through whitespace removal, stemming (to obtain the root of words), or stop words and punctuation deletion and excluded. Then, we created a Document Term Matrix where rows correspond to the articles of the collection and columns correspond to the terms while the entries display the occurrence of each term per each paper. We deleted those words having a limited number of occurrences as well as common terms such as paper or article. Then we coupled the results of the text mining process with statistical tools. We run a hierarchical clustering using the Euclidean distance between articles based on terms occurrences.

4. Findings

A first aim of our analysis was to depict the historical evolution of the field. Thus we first analysed the frequency of publications per each year (Figure 1). Social entrepreneurship spans a period of 22 years from 1991 to 2013. Until 2005 we register a stable but a very low rate of publications with an average of 4 articles per year and a total of 58 articles published from 1991 to 2005. Only in recent years, namely in the last eight years analysed, there has been a growth of interest and hence of publications. From 2006 until 2009 there were published 112 articles, an average of 28 articles per year and there was an increase in publication rate of 93%. From 2010 until 2013 the number of publications increase even more passing to 213 articles with an average of 68 per year and an increase in publication rate of 142%.

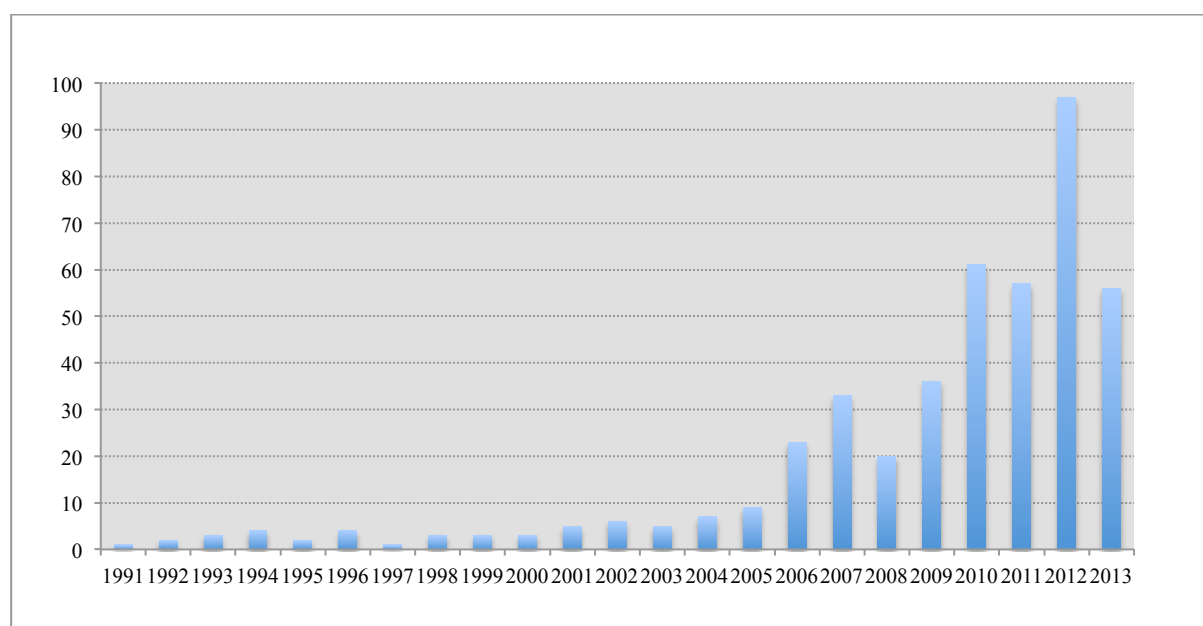**Figure 1 - Publications between 1991 - 2013**

Figure 2 shows the citations trend of articles over time that, as we can see, appears discontinuous. Papers published from 1991 to 2005 have been totally cited 2065 times with an average of 136 citations per year and 36 citations per article. Even if only 58 articles were published in the period analysed the rate of citation indicate the relevance of seminal articles such as Waddoch and Post (1991), Dees (1998), Thompson et al (2000),Thompson (2002), Mort et al (2003) and Dart (2004). We notice two peak of citations in 2006 and 2010 that indicates respectively a special issue of Journals of World Business (JWB) and Entrepreneurship Theory and Practise (ETP) resulting in temporary increases of publication and hence of citations. Not only are special issues responsible for the peak, but the fact that ETP, one of the two top entrepreneurship journal, publishes a special issue on SE indicates its legitimacy as a research stream in the entrepreneurship field.

Considering the period 2006 - 2009 the number of total citations amounts to 2016 with an increasing average of 504 citations per year but a decreasing average of 18 citations per article, signalling that the rate of citations depends by the contribution of the articles appeared in JWB such as Mair and Marti (2006) Peredo and McLean (2006), Weeravardena and Mort (2006), Sharir and Lerner(2006) and Foster and Bradach (2005).

From 2010 until 2013 the number of total citation decreased by 68% amounting to 653 citations, 68 citations per year and 2 per article, probably due to the "effect Time" mentioned above in the data analysis section.

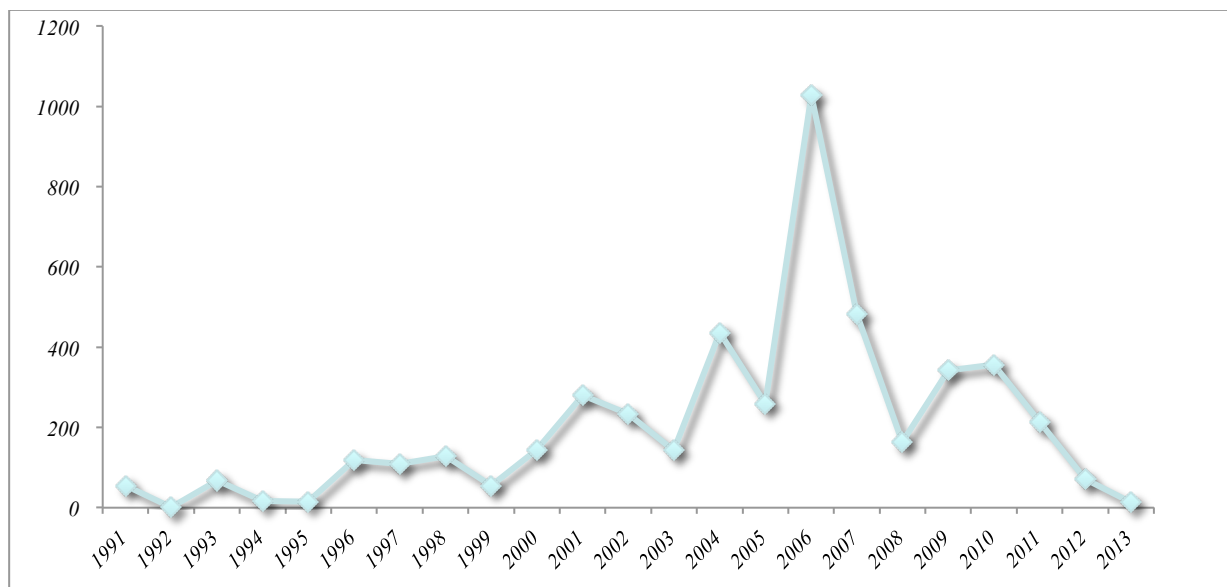**Figure 2 – Citations between 1991 - 2013**

Table 1 displays the research domains publishing and citing on social entrepreneurship topic based on our subset of 432 articles. We classified the journal list obtained from our sample into 18 categories of discipline following the method of categorization described into the data analysis section. The first two disciplines publishing and cited the most in social entrepreneurship field are Management (with 19,4% of articles and 32,1% of citations) and Entrepreneurship (with 15,7% of articles and 22,2% of citations). It follows Non-profit and Voluntary Sector (10,9% art, 9,3% cit), Public Administration (5,3% art, 8,4% cit), Economics (5,8% art, 5,2% cit), Education (8,3% art, 4,4% cit) and Sociology (3,2% art, 3,6% cit). The 432 articles have been cited 3943 times as shown in Table 1. Citations is a measure of intellectual influence of research, thereby we can say that Management and Entrepreneurship are the leading research domains that dominate the debate on social entrepreneurship with about 53% of citations to articles published in their journals and an average citation per year respectively of 124,48 and 201,66.

With respect to Short et al. our sample shows that the rate of citation for management and entrepreneurship increased by 2/3 (53% vs 30%) as well as the number of articles published in management and entrepreneurship journals respectively increased by 110% (17 vs 68) and 300% (40 vs 84), signalling a growth in interest in this topic in these two fields. Both the number of leading management and entrepreneurship journals publishing on social entrepreneurship and the number of articles in those journals indicated by Short and colleagues increased since 2009. Many management top journals published on social entrepreneurship. Those publishing the most are: Harvard Business Review (8 articles), the special issue Journal of World business (7 articles), Journal of |Management Studies (6 articles) and Management Decision (6 articles). Top entrepreneurship journals published in percentage more then management ones. Among them are Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice (22 articles) and Entrepreneurship and Regional Development (16 articles).

With respect to Short et al we enrich the analysis including categories of disciplines not mentioned in their work, that contribute not marginally to the research such as Health Policy and Service, Public Administration, Urban studies, Social Work and Psychiatry.

Table 1 – Domain publishing and citing social entrepreneurship research

Research Domains	N. Papers	Papers %	N. Citation	Citations %	Average Citation Per Year
Management	84	19,4%	1266	32,1%	224,48
Entrepreneurship	68	15,7%	877	22,2%	201,66
Non-profit and Voluntary Business	47	10,9%	366	9,3%	73,14
Public Administration	23	5,3%	330	8,4%	40,94
Economics	25	5,8%	206	5,2%	37,50
Education	36	8,3%	172	4,4%	53,05
Sociology	14	3,2%	140	3,6%	22,85
Health Policy and Service	30	6,9%	136	3,4%	29,56
Urban studies	16	3,7%	87	2,2%	14,15
Marketing	13	3,0%	80	2,0%	12,85
Political Science	15	3,5%	68	1,7%	12,85
Planning and Development	7	1,6%	57	1,4%	10,44
Other	17	3,9%	41	1,0%	9,79
Social Work	13	3,0%	36	0,9%	8,14
Psychiatry	11	2,5%	26	0,7%	4,20
Law	4	0,9%	17	0,4%	2,90
Accounting	2	0,5%	17	0,4%	4,83
Business	6	1,4%	12	0,3%	3,83
Anthropology	1	0,2%	9	0,2%	1,13
TOTAL	432		3943		

A picture of countries of authors' affiliation (table 2) is given in order to understand whether social entrepreneurship represents a topic considered relevant all over the world or only specific regions are particularly interested in. As we can see, there are 45 countries involved but USA and UK contributes respectively for 29,3% and 22,9% (Europe 19,3%).

Table 2 – Main Contributing countries (authors' affiliation)

Country	N. articles	Percent
USA	129	29.3
UK	101	22.9
Unknown	80	18.1
Canada	41	9.3
Australia	29	6.6
Spain	20	4.5
Netherlands	15	3.4
Italy	13	2.9
Germany	10	2.3
New Zealand	6	1.4
China	6	1.4
France	5	1.1
India	5	1.1
Israel	5	1.1
Romania	5	1.1
Brazil	4	0.9
Ireland	4	0.9
South Korea	4	0.9

A second set of analysis focused on the most influential studies of the body of research on social entrepreneurship. They were identified as having global citations score higher than the sample average (16 citations), which were calculated on the papers that received at least one citation. Before analysing those 56 most cited papers we carried out a correlation analysis between global citation score and publication year on the whole sample and on the sample of 56 most cited articles. The variable global citation results significantly correlated to publication year (- 0,394) in the whole sample but there isn't correlation between the two variables considering the sample of 56 most cited articles (0,89).

Table 3 shows the 56 most cited articles ordered chronologically according to the publication year from the oldest published in 1991 to the more recent. It displays how the field development happens through four different phases:

1991-99 : First attempts to identify entrepreneurial initiatives in the third sector

2000-2004 : Theoretical debate on the definition of social entrepreneurship

2005-2006 : Taking stock of social entrepreneurship research – JWB special issue

2007-2011 : Emerging of key themes and world comparative research GEM 2009

Table 3 The 56 most cited articles

Authors	Year	Ranking	Total Citations	TH/EMP
Waddock and Post	1991	17	55	Emp
Savio and Righetti	1993	56	17	Emp
Dees	1998	6	90	Th
Pastakia	1998	46	22	Emp
Prabhu	1999	44	23	Th
Thompson, Alvy and Lees	2000	14	65	Emp
Fowler	2000	21	48	Th
Sagawa and Segal	2000	31	32	Th
Purdue	2001	26	37	Th
Thompson	2002	13	68	Emp
Drayton	2002	25	42	Th
Mort, Weerawardena and Carnegie	2003	12	70	Th
Eikenberry and Kluver	2004	3	112	Th
Alvord, Brown and Letts	2004	5	93	Emp
Dart	2004	8	85	Th
Seelos and Mair	2005	10	74	Th
Hemingway	2005	20	48	Th
Foster and Bradach	2005	22	46	Emp
Haugh	2005	36	29	Th
Tan, Williams and Tan	2005	38	26	Emp
Tracey, Phillips and Haugh	2005	45	23	Th
Austin et al.	2006	1	188	Th
Mair and Marti	2006	2	175	Th
Peredo and McLean	2006	4	108	Th
Peredo and Chrisman	2006	7	88	Th
Weerawardena and Mort	2006	9	76	Emp
Sharir and Lerner	2006	18	51	Emp
Dorado	2006	29	33	Th
Spear	2006	33	31	Emp
Christie and Honig	2006	48	21	Th
Elkington	2006	49	20	Th
Vanslyke and Newman	2006	53	18	Emp
Anderson, Dana and Dana	2006	55	17	Emp
Chell	2007	16	59	Th
Baron	2007	23	46	Th
Shaw and Carter	2007	27	35	Emp
Tracey and Phillips	2007	28	35	Th
Tracey and Jarvis	2007	30	32	Emp
Martin and Osberg	2007	34	30	Th
Haugh	2007	35	29	Emp
Haugh and Kitson	2007	47	21	Th
Dees	2007	52	19	Th
Dixon and Clifford	2007	54	18	Emp
Parkinson and Howorth	2008	42	25	Emp
Cornelius et al	2008	43	24	Th
Certo and Miller	2008	50	19	Th
Zahra et al	2008	51	19	Th
Zahra et al.	2009	11	71	Th
Short, Moss and Lumpkin	2009	15	61	Th
Mair and Marti	2009	19	49	Emp
Dacin and Matear	2010	24	44	Th
Ball and Exley	2010	37	27	Th
Nicholls	2010	40	25	Th
Yunus Moingeon and Lehmann-Ortega	2010	41	25	Emp
Tracey, Phillips and Jarvis	2011	32	31	Emp
Pless, Maak and Stahl	2011	39	25	Emp

Our analysis focused also on the most influential books in the field, selecting the nine most cited (Table 4). Five of the nine are very influent in social entrepreneurship research not only because they have a high citation score occupying the third, fourth, sixth, seventh and eight position within the top cited publications, but also they have a high average citation score per year ranging from 11,38 to 9,08.

Table 4 - The most cited books in the social entrepreneurship research domain

Books	Authors	Total citations	Local citations	Average total citations per year
The emergence of social enterprise (2001)	Borzaga, Carlo; Defourney J	148	28	11,38
How to change the World : Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas (2004)	Borstein D	126	40	12,6
Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change (2006)	Nichols A	111	25	13,88
The rise of the Social Entrepreneur (1997)	Leadbeater C	110	37	6,47
Placing the Social Economy (2002)	Cameron A, Amin A, Hudson R	109	20	9,08
Enterprising Nonprofit: A toolkit for Social Entrepreneurs (2001)	Economy P, Dees JG, Economy P	59	13	4,54
Making democracy work: Civic tradirtion in modern Italy ((1993)	Putnam R, Leonardi R, Nanetti RY	48	16	2,29
New Social Entrepreneurs: The Success, Challenge and Lessons of Non-profit Enterprise Creation (1996)	Emerson J	47	20	2,61
Social enterprise in anytown (2003)	Pearce J	33	17	3

As described in data collection section among the 56 most cited articles we selected a group of 21 "core papers" to be included in the historiograph, identified as having local citation scores higher than the average i.e. 19 local citations calculated on the papers that received at least one citation.

The historiograph showed in figure 2 was created using a GCS and the discussion that follows will be in reference to this.

The historiograph confirms that 2006 is a crucial year because, a part of being the period of intense publication activity as shown the large number of circles, also the number of citations considerably increases starting from 2006. In fact before that year there was no citation activity and each papers was as isolated work. Waddock and Post [# 1], the oldest article published in 1991, is cited for the first time 15 years. Dees (1998) [#19], Thompson, Alvy and Lees (2000) [#24] and all the other articles published before 2006 are cited in 2006 for the first time.

From few seminal key papers analysing SE as phenomenon of entrepreneurial approach in the no – profit sector such as Waddock and Post [# 1] and Dees [#19], in 2003 first empirical contributions

with multiple case studies focusing on the figure of social entrepreneur, the social ventures and factors impacting on its success appeared (Alvord et al (2004) [# 48], Weerawardena and Mort (2006), [# 69] and Sharir and Lerner(2006) [# 68]).

In 2006 the three most cited papers were published: Austin et al. (2006) [#70] Mair, and Marti [#65] Peredo and McLean [#72].

Staring from 2006 the citation activity increased as witnessed by the increased number of connecting lines. We can identify the first works of literature review starting from 2009: Short et al [#151], Zhara et al (2009) and Dacin et al [#207].

**Figure 3 – Historiograph of the core papers within the social entrepreneurship field**
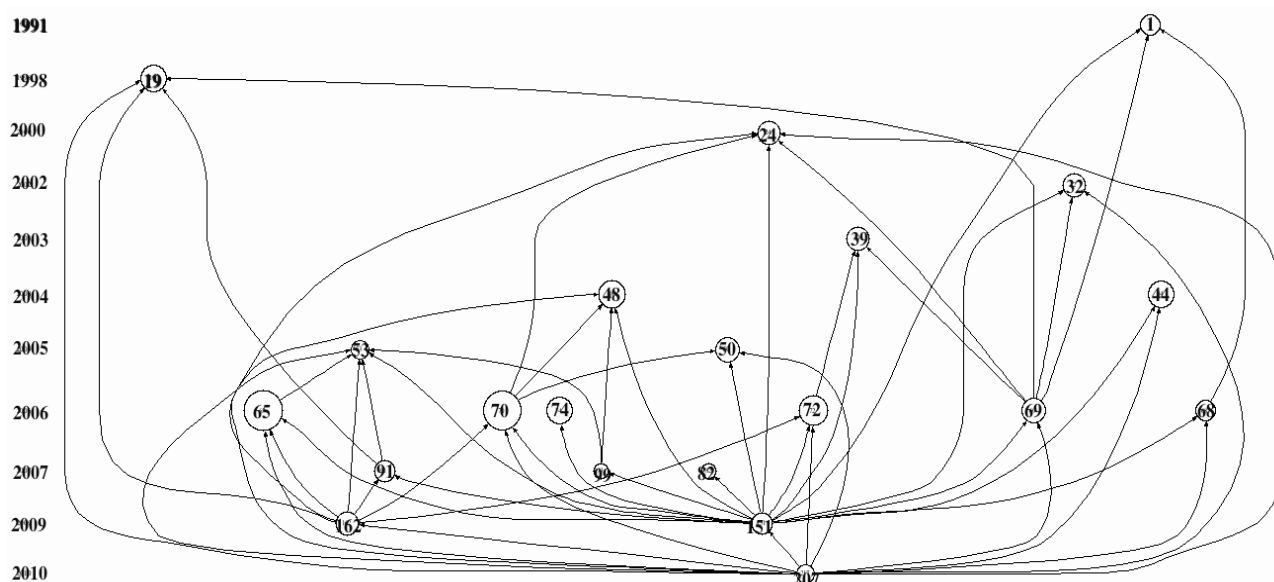
	GCS		GCS		GCS
65 Austin et al. (2006)	188	69 Weerawardena and Mort (2006)	76	91 Chell (2007)	59
70 Mair, and Marti (2006)	175	50 Seelos and Mair (2005)	74	1 Waddock and Post (1991)	55
72 Peredo and McLean (2006)	108	162 Zahra et al. (2009)	71	68 Sharir and Lerner (2006)	51
48 Alvord et al (2004)	93	39 Mort et al (2003)	70	53 Foster and Bradach (2005)	46
19 Dees (1998)	90	32 Thompson (2002)	68	207 Dacin et al (2010)	44
74 Peredo and Chrisman (2006)	88	24 Thompson et al (2000)	65	82 Shaw and Carter (2007)	35
44 Dart (2004)	85	151 Short et al (2009)	61	99 Tracey and Phillips (2007)	35

We performed a social network analysis of our sample of 56 articles through Ucinet (fig. 4) to trace the main relationships among articles and their centrality. According to our data articles with the highest out degree centrality, namely those that have the highest number of ties towards other nodes (articles), are, as expected, three theoretical papers of literature review : Short et al. (2009), Zhara et

al. (2009), Dacin et al (2010). The articles with the highest indegree centrality, thus those most cited and influential, are the two theoretical seminal contributions of Mair and Marti (2006) and Alvord et al (2004) and the empirical paper of Foster and Bradach (2005). Finally articles that are able to bridge different group of scholars and contributions are those with the highest Betweenness centrality: Short et al. (2009), Zhara et al. (2009), Mair and Marti (2006) Peredo and McLean (2006), Weerawardena and Mort (2006).

Figure 4 – Network of citations of the 56 most influential articles
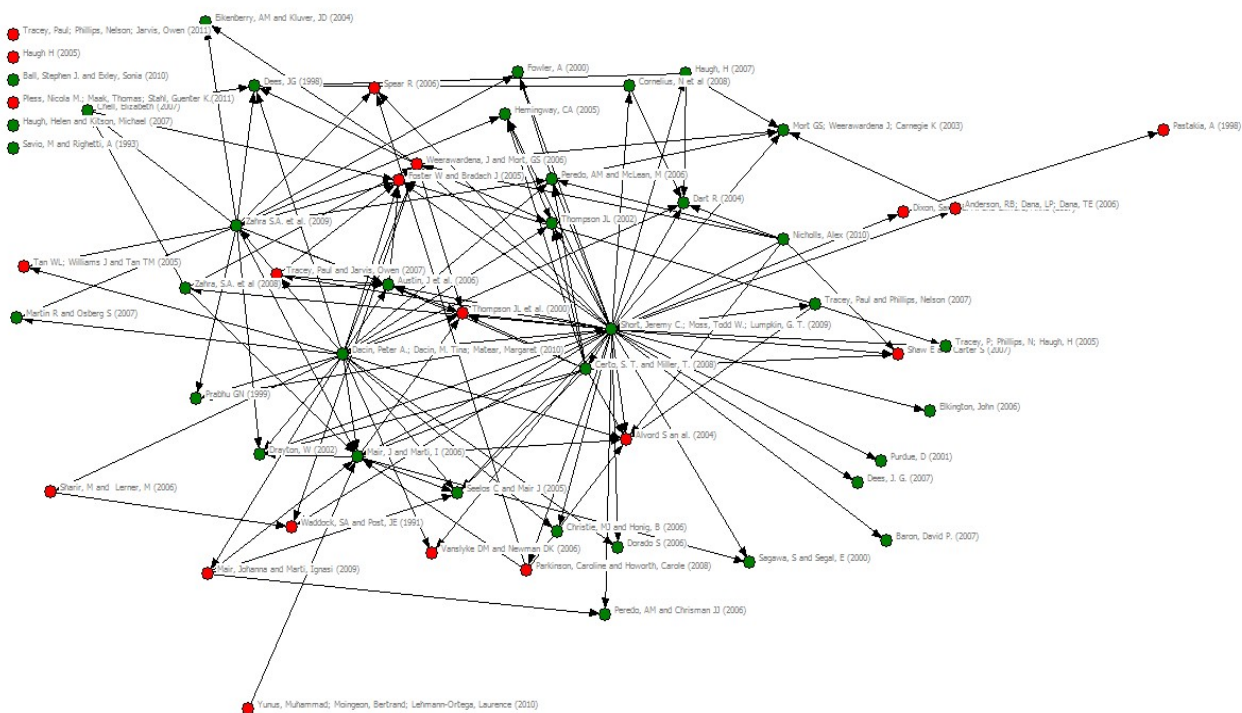
From the text data mining process and clustering analysis we grouped articles in five clusters. As shown by the Cluster Dendrogram (fig. 5) three groups are larger (counted about one hundred papers by each one) than the other two (with less then fifty articles by each one).

Figure 5 - Cluster Dendrogram

Cluster Dendrogram

dist(dtm[, -b])
hclust (*, "ward")
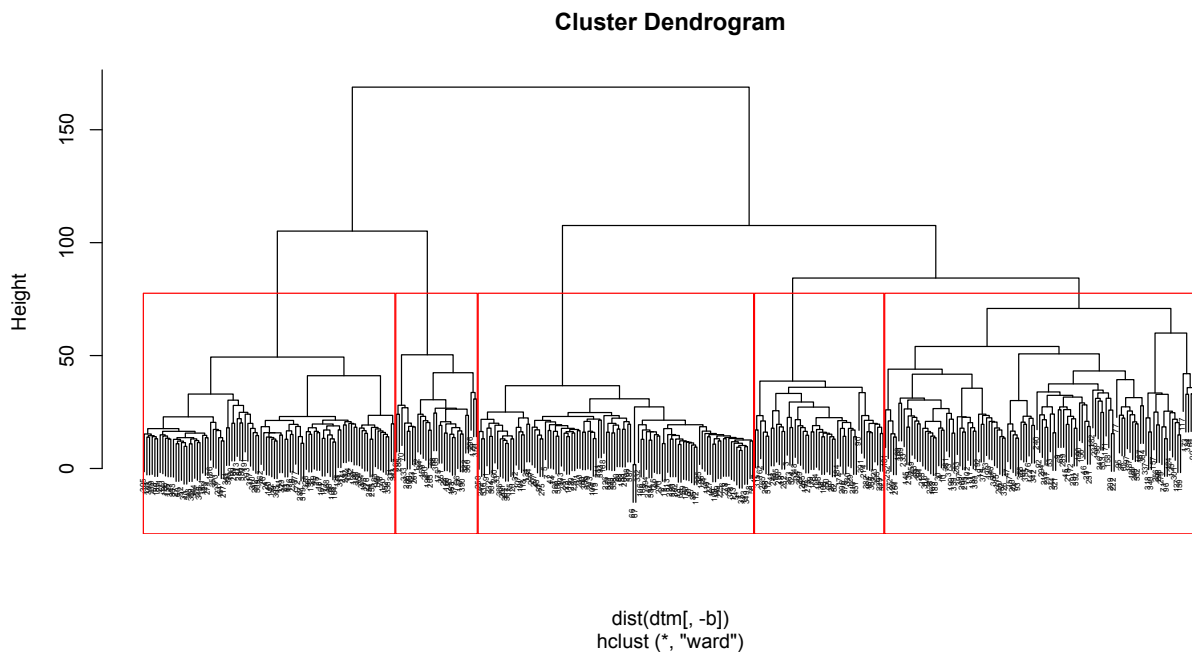
Within each cluster we identified the 56 most cited papers as well as the words most frequently used, namely present at least one time in the 25% of the articles grouped in each cluster (see Table 5 and 6). By analysing how the 56 most cited papers are distributed among the five groups we aimed to investigate, on one hand, how they are distributed across clusters, hence whether the SE literature is uniform or not; on the other hand, we wanted understanding which kind of debate emerged within each "community" of contributions.

Our findings show that the most cited papers are equally distributed among clusters, with a similar percentage on articles of each group. Findings show that we can identify a first "community" of articles that includes the first and second cluster, both using with the highest percentage across clusters three terms related to the literature of entrepreneurship investigating the setting of social entreprise. The terms are entrepreneurship (88,4% cluster 1 and 83,9 % cluster 2) business (42,1% cluster 1 and 45,2% cluster 2) and innovation (37,9% cluster 1 and 51,6 % cluster 2).

Besides these similarities, the two clusters are different as regards to the most cited articles embodied in each cluster. In the first cluster there are several theoretical articles and it includes most of the articles with the highest in and out degree centrality, namely Short et al. (2009), Zhara et al. (2009) , Dacin et al (2010) ; Alvord et al (2004) , Foster and Bradach (2005) and they mainly focused on defining the concept and setting the boundaries of SE. Whereas, the second cluster of papers centred more on social entrepreneurial processes and particularly on network, term with the highest occurrence and not present in the other four clusters.

The third cluster is the most comprehensive group, with a corpus of contributions published in a time span of twenty years (while in the others the time span is about ten years), the most concentrated in the first period of SE research. Indeed a key term emerged is the word public, not present in other clusters, suggesting that within this group there are articles focusing on the public sector as an environment where social enterprise can emerge and operate. The fourth and fifth group formed a third " community" of contributions, both sharing terms such as market, govern and work. The fourth group is characterised by the high percentage of occurrences of the term no profit, not present in other clusters and the highest percentage of the term community suggesting the focus on social enterprises in the no profit sector and as a community-based organization. Finally in the fifth cluster embodying articles published between 2006-2010 there are two studies with highest indegree and betweenness centrality Mair and Marti (2006) and Weerawardena and Mort (2006). The shorter time span suggests that this cluster represents a group of articles central in the recent debate that spur new directions, specifically the article of Mair and Marti (2006) introduces the conceptt of embeddedness, while Weerawardena and Mort (2006), through a field research based on a multiple case study provide a original theoretical contribution, developing a multidimensional model of social entrepreneurship.

Tabella 1 - The 56 most cited papers within the five clusters

Autori	Type	Theme	RQ	Key findings
Group 1 (n=95)				
A. Fowler (2000)	Th	NGDOs history and role	How NGDOS must regain a moral underpinning and inspiration for their existence and action	It explores whether or not the paradigm of social entrepreneurship for civic actors as agents of social change offers a new source of inspiration for NGDOS. It does so by looking at social entrepreneurship as an idea, as an evolving practice and as a paradigm for development beyond aid. It proposes the NGDOS as role of civic innovators
D. Purdue (2001)	Th	Social capital and social entrepreneurs	The analysis of Social Entrepreneurs as Transformational Community Leaders	Community leaders act as key points of contact between governmental regeneration initiatives and local residents in neighbourhoods. The effective development of this role, whether conceived of as social entrepreneur or not, requires the accumulation of two types of social capital—internal communal and external collaborative social capital.
J. L. Thompson (2002)	Emp	Entrepreneurial process	Map the sector of social entrepreneurship	New map of the world of the social entrepreneur based on four themes : Job creation, Utilisation of buildings, Volunteer support and Focus on helping people in need.
S. H. Alvord, L. D. Brown and C. W. Letts (2004)	Emp	Social entrepreneurship as a catalyst for social transformation	Factors of successfull social enterprise	Hypotheses about core innovations, leadership, organization, and scaling up in successful social entrepreneurship
W. Foster (2005)	Emp	Generating earned income in not profit organizations	Process of entrepreneurship in NFP's	Executives of nonprofit organizations should evaluate rigorously the business opportunities to create ventures using a mission-first approach

W. L. Tan, J. Williams and T. M. Tan (2005)	Emp	Social entrepreneurship definition and forms	Understanding what social entrepreneurship is and capturing its "social", altrustic objectives	It provide a taxonomy of social entrepreneurship according to (1) Community-based enterprises (2) Socially responsible enterprises (3) Social Service Industry Professionals, and (4) Socio-economic or dualistic enterprises.
J. Austin, H. Stevenson and J. Wei-Skillern (2006)	Th	Social entrepreneurship definition	Comparative analysis of commercial and social entrepreneurship	Relevance of social value proposition, and a four dimension model to understand SE : P(people)C(context)D(deal)O(opportunity) model of social entrepreneurship
H. Haugh (2007)	Emp	Social venture creation	Producing a model of the stages of venture creation	Qualitative study of the inception of five community-led non-profit social ventures. Model of the stages of venture creation: (1) opportunity identification, (2) idea articulation, (3) idea ownership, (4) stakeholder mobilization, (5) opportunity exploitation, and (6) stakeholder reflection. A formal support network and a tailor-made support network are also part of the model, contributing resources to the new venture and assisting progression through the stages. The model highlights the resource acquisition and network creation that precede formal venture creation.
H. Haugh (2007)	Emp	Entrepreneurial process	Comparative analysis of commercial and social entrepreneurship	Four key themes of differentation related to entrepreneurial process: opportunity recognition; network embeddedness; the nature of financial risk and profit; the role of individual versus collective action in managing and structuring enterprises; and creativity and innovation
J. C. Short, T. W. Moss and G. T. Lumpkin (2009)	Th	Boundaries and exchange conditions of social entrepreneurship research	Assess the state of social entrepreneurship research	Social entrepreneurship research is still in an embryotic state. Social entrepreneurship is informed by common areas of interest to management scholars like entre- preneurship, public/nonprofit management, and social issues
S. A. Zahra et al (2009)	Emp	Entrepreneurial process	Typology of social enterprisers	A typology that identifies three types of social entrepreneurs: Social Bricoleur, Social Constructionist, and Social Engineer
P. A. Dacin, M. T. Dacin and M. Matear (2010)	Emp	Entrepreneurial process	Comparative analysis of commercial and social entrepreneurship	Social entrepreneurship is not a distinct type of entrepreneurship and the greatest opportunity for scholars exist in examining insights existing theories inherent entrepreneurship framework
Group 2 (n=31)				
J. Thompson, A. Lees and G. Alvy (2000)	Emp	Entrepreneurial process	What is a social entrepreneurship in the context of a state welfare system	Elements to foster the growth of the sector: 1) More publicity - especially via case studies - to generate awareness. 2) More effective ways of engaging additional people - to help out at the most simple level.3) Fostering more entrepreneurship by bringing together people and ideas. 4) Training and development packages
R. Dart (2004)	Th	The legitimacy of social enterprise	Making sense of the emergence of social enterprise as a prominent form of organization in NFP's	Social enterprise has emerged as a businesslike contrast to the traditional nonprofit organization. social enterprise is seens as a new legitimate institution more proper organizing model than conventional non-profit organization given the dominant neoconservative, pro-business, and pro-market ideology
M. Sharir and M. Lerner (2006)	Emp	Networking	Key factors that contribute to the success of a social venture	Four component of Gartner framework for new venture creation: individual, environment, process and organization
D. M. Vanslyke and H. K. Newman (2006)	Emp	Social entrepreneurship and venture philanthropy	Examine the relationship between social entrepreneurship and venture philanthropy	It described through an in-depth case analysis over time the work of a venture philanthropist and social entrepreneur in the redevelopment of the East Lake Meadows neighborhood
Group 3 (n=104)				
S. A. Waddock and J. E. Post (1991)	Emp	Catalytic leadership for change	What is the role of social enterpreneur in the public domain	Three characteristics of catalytic leadership: complexity of social problem, credibility of social enterpreneur and commitment fro a collective purpose

M. Savio and A. Righetti (1993)	Emp	It analyses the history and development of an integrated cooperative established in 1981 in northern Italy	How do a social enyerprise in the care of mentally disordered people operates by providing them with job opportunities	The results show that cooperative members come from different marginalized areas of social and health distress, of which the two largest are social service users and psychiatric service users. There is a noticeable turn-over rate, which underlines one function of the cooperative as being a transitional working context from which users can gain access to other more rewarding job opportunities in the labour marke
J. G. Dees (1998)	Th	Generating earned income in not profit organizations	Process of entrepreneurship in NFP's	Social enterprise spectrum ranging from purely philanthropic social enterprise to purely commercial on the bases of commercialization degree
G. N. Prabhu (1999)	Th	Social entreprenerial leadership	It examines research prospects in social entrepreneurial leadership	The paper analyse similarities and differences between social and economic entrepreners. It identifies main features of social entrepreneurial leaders
S. Sagawa and E. Segal (2000)	Th	The nature of the relationship between business and social sector organizations	Cross sector partnership and future social sector agenda	To take advantage of the many benefits of cross-sector partnerships, business and social sector organizations in general will need to widen their view and reexamine not what they do but how they do it.
G. S. Mort, J. Weerawardena and K. Carnegie (2003)	Th	Conceptualization of social entrepreneurship	Pprocess of entrepreneurship in NFP's	.Social entrepreneurship leads to the establishment of new social organisations or NFPs and the continued innovation in existing ones. NFPs Multidimentional social entreprepreneurship construct framed within an organisational capability model of sustained competitive advantage based on innovativeness, high risk taking, social opportunity recognition, proactivness and delivering of superior social value
H. Haugh (2005)	Th	A research agenda for SE	What is social entrepreneurship	This paper categorises the social entrepreneurship research agenda into eight themes each of which would strengthen and deepen our knowledge of social entrepreneurship: defining the scope of social entrepreneurship; the environmental context; opportunity recognition and innovation; modes of organisation; resource acquisition; opportunity exploitation; performance measurement and training education and learning about social entrepreneurship.
C. Seelos and J. Mair (2005)	Th	Societal transformation for poor and marginalized groups	Entrepreneurial creation of social value	Social enterprise creates social value as their primary mission and generate economic profits as more a byproduct
R. B. Anderson, L. P. Dana and T. E. Dana (2006)	Emp	social entrepreneurship	Describe a case of social entrepreurship	It explores business development activities that flow from the later aspect of indigenous land rights in a Canadian context, suggesting that the process is a particular and important instance of social entrepreneurship
S. Dorado (2006)	Th	Social entrepreneurship process	Bridging profit and servise	Explore whether differences among SEV and EV are worth specific research attention, explaining the areas in which SEV is distinctive
A. M. Peredo and M. McLean (2006)	Th	Conceptual geography of ''social entrepreneurship'' considering both the ''social'' and the ''entrepreneurship'' elements in the concept.	What makes social entrepreneurship	Pproposal of a suitably flexible explication of the concept: social entrepreneurship is exercised where some person or persons (1) aim either exclusively or in some prominent way to create social value of some kind, and pursue that goal through some combination of (2) recognizing and exploiting opportunities to create this value, (3) employing innovation, (4) tolerating risk and (5) declining to accept limitations in available resources
R. Spear (2006)	Emp	The creation of a social enterprise	Developing a framework which allows both economic and social entrepreneurship to be analysed.	The framework is developed to accommodate the often neglected collective or pluralistic dimension of entrepreneurship. It draws on the behavioural approach to adopt a straightforward definition of social entrepreneurship – focusing on the creation of a social enterprise (co-operative, mutual or voluntary organisation). The paper is exploratory, developing a conceptual framework, based on some case studies of social enterprises in a range of business sectors, in the UK.

S. E. A. Dixon and A. Clifford (2007)	Emp	Ecological entrepreneurship	Extend research into social and ecological entrepreneurship. It aims to examine how ecopreneurs can create an economically viable business whilst retaining their core environmental and social values.	A strong link is identified between entrepreneurialism and environmentalism. The entrepreneurial flair of the CEO enables the pursuit of environmental, social and economic goals.
H. Haugh (2007)	Emp	Social venture creation	Producing a model of the stages of venture creation	Qualitative study of the inception of five community-led nonprofit social ventures. model of the stages of venture creation: (1) opportunity identification, (2) idea articulation, (3) idea ownership, (4) stakeholder mobilization, (5) opportunity exploitation, and (6) stakeholder reflection. A formal support network and a tailor-made support network are also part of the model, contributing resources to the new venture and assisting progression through the stages. The model highlights the resource acquisition and network creation that precede formal venture creation.
P. Tracey and O. Jarvis (2007)	Emp	Social Venture Franchising	How the two main theories used to understand business format franchising can be reframed to take account of the distinctive characteristics of social franchise systems.	An in-depth case study of one of the United Kingdom's first and most high-profile social franchises
J. Mair and I. Marti (2009)	Emp	Instutitional entrepreneurs and bricolage	When, where and how entrepreneurs act to overcome institutional voids that which impedes market participation	We are able to enrich our understanding of the types of resources institutiona entrepreneurs deploy,what strategies they enact to deploy them and how they work with existing institutions to help overcome the lack of market supporting ones. institutional entrepreneurship is a process can be understood as a form of bricolage (Fligstein, 2001b; Rao, 1998) that encompasses the continuous combination, re- combination and re-deployment of different practices, organizational forms, physical resources, and institutions.
N. M. Pless, T. Maak and G. K. Stahl (2011)	Emp	Executive education	How to develop responsible global leaders	We describe "Project Ulysses," an integrated service-learning program which involves sending participants in teams to developing countries to work in cross-sector partnerships with NGOs, social entrepreneurs, or international organizations. evidence of learning in six areas: responsible mind-set, ethical literacy, cultural intelligence, global mind-set, self-development, and community building. We also identified a number of processes through which learning occurred at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels
P. Tracey, N. Phillips and O. Jarvis (2011)	Emp	Institutional entrepreneurship		The model highlights the multilevel nature of bridging institutional entrepreneurship, showing that it entails institutional work at the micro-, meso-, and macrolevels. The study contributes to the literature by examining an important way that institutional entrepreneurs create new organizational forms; shedding light on the relationship between individual, organizational, and societal level institutional processes; and exploring the relationship between entrepreneurship and institutional entrepreneurship
Group 4 (n=49)				
A. Pastakia (1998)	Emp	Strategies developed by six grassroots ecopreneurs		The paper also explains the conceptual differences between two types of ecopreneurs. It presents the ecopreneurs and their efforts at diffusing their eco-friendly ideas and innovations and focuses on two important barriers to ecopreneurship, describing the strategies used to overcome these barriers
W. Drayton (2002)	Th	Citizen sector and social entrepreneur	what defines a leading social entrepreneur?	How citizen sector could become as entrepreneurial and competitive as business

A. M. Eikenberry and J. D. Kluver (2004)	Th	The Marketization of the Nonprofit Sector and its risks	What are the consequences of nonprofit organizations adopting the approaches and values of the private market	It reviews the major marketization trends occurring within the nonprofit sector—commercial revenue generation, contract competition, the influence of new and emerging donors, and social entrepreneurship—and surveys research on their potential impact on nonprofit organizations' contributions to civil society. nonprofit organizational leaders are embracing market values and methods through "social entrepreneurship." The outcome of marketization is the potential deterioration of the distinctive contributions that nonprofit organizations make to creating and maintaining a strong civil society.
P. Tracey, N. Phillips and H. Haugh (2005)	Th	Community enterprise definition	Shift the debate away from questioning the rationale for CSR behaviour to identifying ways in which the CSR agenda of the firm can be effectively and efficiently addressed through its strategic activities	It argue that the emergence of a new form of organization – community enterprise provides an alternative mechanism for corporations to behave in socially responsible ways
A. M. Peredo and J. J. Chrisman (2006)	Th	It develop the concept of community-based enterprise (CBE)	How entrepreneurial activity may be harnessed to ameliorate chronic poverty.	Drawing on interdisciplinary and multilevel approaches, it proposes a theoretical model of the determinants, characteristics, and consequences of CBEs
J. G. Dees (2007)	Th	Social entrepreneurship definition	Does social entrepreneurship have the potential to create sustainable and scalable impact in arenas where government efforts have been ineffective?	Description of social entrepreneurship role
R. Martin and S. Osberg (2007)	Th	Social entrepreneurship definition	What is the critical distinction between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship	Critical distinction between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship lies in the value proposition itself. three components: (1) identifying a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium (2) identifying an opportunity in this unjust equilibrium, developing a social value proposition, and bringing to bear inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude, thereby challenging the stable state's hegemony; and (3) forging a new, stable equilibrium that releases trapped potential or alleviates the suffering of the targeted group

Group 5 (n=118)

M. J. Christie and B. Honig (2006)	Th	Social entrepreneurship definition and research agenda	Editorial	Special issue on Journal of world business
J. Mair and I. Marti (2006)	Th	Social entrepreneurship definition	Is social entrepreneurship a subfield of entrepreneurship studies or is an independent field	Analysis of different thepretical perspectives. Social entrepreneurship differs from other forms of entrepreneurship. It require an interdisciplinary research approach. Embeddedness should be considered.
J. Weerawardena and G. S. Mort (2006)	Emp	Social entrepreneurship conceptualization	Need to develop coherent theoretical framework	The findings suggest that social entrepreneurship can be conceptualized in terms of a constrained optimization model. This relationship can be stated as SVC: social value creation; I: innovativeness; P: proactiveness; RM: risk management; S: sustainability; SM: social mission; E: environment.
D. P. Baron (2007)	Th	CSR	Is there a cost of CSR, and if so, who bears that cost, and why do they bear it? What is Friedman's objection to CSR? Would an entrepreneur form a CSR firm?	A social entrepreneur is willing to form a CSR firm at a financial loss because either doing so expands the opportunity sets of citizens in consumption-social giving space or there is an entrepreneurial warm glow from forming the firm.

E. Chell (2007)	Th	Is social entrepreneurship a subfield of entrepreneurship studies or is an independent field	Comparative analysis of commercial and social entrepreneurship	Social entrepreneurship is a form of entrepreneurship
P. Tracey and N. Phillips (2007)	Th	Social entrepreneurs education	outline the distinctive challenges and issues involved in teaching and developing entrepreneurs that combine social and commercial objectives.	Three key challenges for social enterprises due to their hybrid nature and dual objective (social and commercial are identified): managing accountability, managing a double bottom line, and managing identity. Approaches for integrating social entrepreneurship into entrepreneurship education are discussed
N. Cornelius et al (2008)	Th	CSR and social entrepreneurship	The corporate relationship between social enterprises, social awareness and action is more complex than whether or not these organisations engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR)	It identifies a number of internal CSR markers that may be applied to measuring the extent to which internal CSR practices are being observed.
C. Parkinson and C. Howorth (2008)	Emp	Social entrepreneurship	The paper questions the application of the entrepreneurship discourse to social entrepreneurship	Drawing on phenomenological enquiry and discourse analysis, the study analyses the micro discourses of social entrepreneurs, as opposed to the meta rhetorics of (social) entrepreneurship. Analysis using both corpus linguistics software and Critical Discourse Analysis showed a preoccupation among interviewees with local issues, collective action, geographical community and local power struggles.
S. A. Zahra et al (2008)	Th	Social venture internationalization	what are forces leading to tWe globalization of social entrepreneurial activities.	key attributes of social opportunities and show how these attributes infl uence the timing and geographic scope of social ventures' international operations.
S. J. Ball and S. Exley (2010)	Th	Social entrepreneurship and public policies		UK New Labour governments and social enterprise
A. Nicholls (2010)	Th	Social entrepreneurship	Legitimation of SE Theory	Using approaches from neo-institutional theory, this research focuses on the microstructures of legitimation that characterize the development of social entrepreneurship in terms of its key actors, discourses, and emerging narrative logics. This analysis suggests that the dominant discourses of social entrepreneurship represent legitimating material for resource-rich actors in a process of reflexive isomorphism.
M. Yunus, B. Moingeon and L. Lehmann-Ortega (2010)	Emp	Social business model		Analysis of the Grameen Group, a network of nearly 30 sister organizations linked to the Bangladeshi Grameen Bank, the microcredit pioneer

Tabella 2- The word most frequently cited by each cluster

Group 1 (n=95)
Words most frequently used (frequencies %): *Articl (30, 5%); busi (42,1%); case(34,7%); develop(43,1%); econom (29,5%); enterpris (34,7%); entrepreneur (46,3%); entrepreneuri (33,7%); entrepreneurship (88,4%); innov (37,9%); model (29,5%); need (27,4%); new (27,4%); opportun (30,5%); organ (31,6%); practc (28,4%); provid (32,6%); research (42,1%); studi (44,2%); theory (27,4%); use (38,9)*
Group 2 (n=31)
Words most frequently used (absolute frequencies): Activ (10); *address (32,2%); approach (38,7%); articl (41,9%); busi (45,2%); can (45,2%); capit (32,2%); communiti (32,2%); concept (32,2%); context (38,7%); contribut (29%); current (29%); develop (70,9%); differ (35,5%); econom (29%); economi (35,5%); enterpris (64,5%); entrepreneuri (32,2%); entrepreneurship (83,9%); explor (35,5%); find (35,5%); focus (35,5%); identifi (32,2%); implic (29%); import (32,2%); innov (51,6%); local (29%); manag (29%); model (32,2%); need (35,5%); network (45,2%); opportun (41,9%); organ (41,9%); paper (45,2%); perspect (32,2%); polici (32,2%); practic (41,9%); present (48,4%); process (32,2%); provid (38,7%); relat (29%); research (19); role (41,9%); sector (32,2%); studi (35,5%); theoret (32,2%); use (29%); valu (38,7%); within (29%)*
Group 3 (n=104)
Words most frequently used (absolute frequencies): Busi (26,9%); case (29,9%); communiti (29,8%); develop (52,9%); enterpris (52,9%); entrepreneur (29,9%); entrepreneurship (39,4%); manag (27,9%); new (36,5%); organ (38,5); paper (32,7%); provid (30,8%); public (26%); research (28,9%); studi (26%); use (33,6%).
Group 4 (n=49)
Words most frequently used (absolute frequencies): *Busi (32,6%); can (32,6%); communiti (30,6%); develop (49%); differ (38,7%)); econom (32,6%); enterpris (42); entrepreneurship (34,7%); govern (32,6%); manag (42,8%); market (30,6%); model (30,6%); nonprofit (28,6%); organ (57,1%); paper (243,5%); provid (36,7%); research (36,7%); role (30,6%); sector (30,6%); studi (40,8%); use (40,8%); work (30,6%).*
Group 5 (n=118)
Words most frequently used (absolute frequencies): *Approach (33%); busi (44,1%); can (28,8%); case (27,1); develop (60,2%); effect (26,3%); enterpris (53,4%); entrepreneurship (42,4%); examin (28,8%); find (28%); govern (28%); manag (36,4%); market (26,3%); model (33,9%); new (33,9%); organ (40,7%); paper (29,7%); practic (28,8%); process (28%); public (26,3%); research (31,4%); result (29,7%); sector (32,2%); studi (46,6%); support (29,7%); use (42,2%); work (27,1%).*

5. Discussion and conclusions

Social entrepreneurship as a diffused phenomenon with a growing business impact has attracted the increasing attention of the management literature.

Despite the growth of studies on this phenomenon, the field of social entrepreneurship still suffers from the same and even more definitional uncertainties of the main entrepreneurship field (Landström et al., 2012; Lundstr & Halvarsson, 2006; Zahra, & Wright, 2011; Sorensen, 2008; Steyaert, 2007). The heterogeneity in objects and units of analysis and the wide range of definitions of the phenomenon under investigation have hindered so far the development of the field. Notwithstanding this problem, in the last two decades we have witnessed a relevant increase of research and debate. As in the broader stream of literature on entrepreneurship, part of the scholars focusing their research on social entrepreneurship have devoted their effort to define the concept and set the boundaries of the social entrepreneurship field, in order to distinguish it from others areas of research in entrepreneurship and management.

Drawing on past contributions on understanding the debate and reviewing the research on social entrepreneurship, this paper aims at contributing to a more in-depth and updated analysis of the research field. The paper provides a rich and updated review of the research of social entrepreneurship through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of articles published in ISI web of science. After a discussion on the social entrepreneurship definitions, by distinguishing between broad and narrow definitions, the paper analyses a dataset of 432 articles retrieved on WOS. We used a novel approach by combining a bibliometric analysis of the 432 articles and a historiographic mapping of the field over a period of 22 years, in order to provide some new insights on how social entrepreneurship research has been developing in the last two decades.

The paper contributes to previous literature reviews, using a richer sample of articles under investigation. This sample exceeds the sample of 152 articles analysed by Short et al. in 2009. Moreover, the analysis was enriched by a historiographic mapping of the literature, that not only helps to trace the development of the field over a period of 22 years, but more interestingly it helps to better understand how different key papers in the field relates to each other. The pillars of social entrepreneurship research are the three most cited papers published in 2006: Austin et al.; Mair, and Marti; Peredo and McLean . All these three papers provides a conceptual contribution to the field, Austin et al. (2006) presents a framework on how to approach the social entrepreneurial process more systematically and effectively, Mair and Martin (2006) put forward the definition of social entrepreneurship as a process of social change and contributes to diversify social entrepreneurship from other forms of entrepreneurship and finally Peredo and McLean (2006) paper helps to classify different types of social enterprise. The conceptual nature of these three papers highlight the need of

structuration and the distinction of the field from others areas of scientific endeavour in entrepreneurship and management.

The mapping of the literature has been further developed by analysing 56 key articles through a social network analysis that showed which are the central papers and their relations.

Findings show that the social enterprise concept is born and developed initially within the literature on not profit, NGOS, third sector, but with the development of the field over time main contributions come from management and entrepreneurship studies, that initially focused their attention in understanding the "who" is the entrepreneur and "what" is social entrepreneurship, to investigate later the role of social and economic value of these venturing endeavours. Further studies focused on the convergence toward a working definition of social entrepreneurship: there are some common elements towards most definitions converge: first, social entrepreneurship is conceived as a process of social value creation; second, this process involves the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities, to create social change an/or address social needs that are not meet by traditional organizations; third, social entrepreneurship involves the offering of services and products but can also refers to the creation of new organizations.

The discussion on concept definition is still open on how much social ventures should pursue also business aims. This topic of tensions between social mission and business venture is rather central in the social entrepreneurship literature and it has been growing through the contribution of different perspectives. The "reconciliation" of social and economic aim is a key challenge in social enterprises characterised by the overlapping of social, entrepreneurship/business and not-profit domains. Literature describes and categorises these tensions as they are mainly related to divergent outcomes or divergent internal dynamics or divergent identities among sub-groups, and between subgroups and divergent time horizons (Smith and Lewis 2011; Smith et al 2013). This debate leads to the analysis of the formation process of new social venture. This specific stage is still under investigated by social entrepreneurship literature, however its understanding could help to examine how the social venture manages the conflict between social and economic aims since its inception. More over another emergent issue is the role of social networks in the social venture formation (Alvord at al. 2004; Sharir and Lerner 2004; Haugh 2007) and the dynamics of social entrepreneurship process. Further investigation could bridge the two latter contributions in order to shed more light on the role of networking into the entrepreneurial formation and dynamics. Our literature review finally suggest that the field of social entrepreneurship is still explorative, considering that conceptual papers outnumber empirical studies, and most of empirical studies and qualitative and explorative ones.

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ESSAY II

Concept development through network creation.
A Case study of an innovative social venture

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Abstract

Objectives

Literature on social enterprise has recently highlights that social innovation is a key feature of new ventures' birth. More recently it has been suggested that a social venture's network of relational ties plays a crucial role on its formation. We would bridge these contributions in order to shed more light on a neglected issue that is the dynamic interplay between the social venture formation and the entrepreneur's social networks. In order to address this gap we analyse a central process of a venture formation that is the development of the new service/product concept. We investigate how a concept develops as a network of partners is progressively constituted, enlarged and changed and how concept elaboration in turn drives ties development and exploration.

Prior work

There is a growing interest in the entrepreneurship literature on social networks and how they might impact on a new venture's formation. This stream of research highlights the relationship between the entrepreneur's network of relationships and entrepreneurial mechanisms such opportunity recognition and resource mobilization. Recent debate in the research area of social entrepreneurship focuses on the social innovation driven by the entrepreneur, who tackles a social problem, by identifying an opportunity and providing an innovative solution to unmet social needs. The paper aims at bridging this yet separated streams of research. In order to fill this gap it analyses the concept development process at the centre of a new venture formation and investigates how this is related to the concurrent development of the entrepreneur's network of relational ties.

Approach

Coherently with our research aim we adopt a qualitative approach based on a case study. We studied RM, a Not Profit Foundation, and we investigate the Radio's formation over a three year period 2009 - 2012, from idea inception to December 2012 the 10th, when the RM started to broadcast. This case study is a coherent setting for the study of the process of concept development through networking. First, RM represents a radical innovation in the field of Italian radios for children and specifically teens with special needs. Second, RM has been developed by an open approach: engaging a network of actors coming from various fields, musicians, editors, paediatricians, to create the Radio's concept.

Results

Our analysis, adopting a process-based approach, highlights how the concept development is strongly connected to the evolution of the interpersonal network of the entrepreneur. These ties play a key role in the concept elaboration along the early stages of the social enterprise formation. We highlight that different changes in ties are involved along the formation process, and drawing on previous classification of Elfring and Hulsink (2007) we suggests a new type of mechanism.

Moreover the case study shows that there is not a single direction causal relationship between the entrepreneur networking and new product/new venture development. The new service/product concept itself drives the search for new partners, who in turn might add new components to the concept. Finally we show that in social venture the development of the concept is reinforced by the social mission definition.

Implications

The paper findings suggest future lines of investigation on how entrepreneurs' social network dynamics in early stage interacts with a core activity of a social venture formation process, of developing a new product/service concept.

Value

Theoretically the paper contributes to three streams of research: entrepreneurship and network, social entrepreneurship and innovation and social networks and innovation in concept development. The paper offers original and in depth empirical evidence, bridging two key topics of social entrepreneurship literature: social innovation and social networks.

Keywords: concept development; social venture; social network; social innovation; case study

1.Introduction

There is an increasing attention of the entrepreneurship literature on the role of social networks (Stuart and Sorenson 2005). This literature claims that entrepreneurship is socially situated and social capital plays an essential role in different phases of its life. More specifically the importance of social networks in a specific stage of a new venture, namely the early formation and growth, has been recognised by a growing research (Greve and Salaff 2003; Hite and Hesterly 2001; Elfring and Hulsink 2007; Steier and Greenwood 2000). This debate has been extended to research on social ventures, whose creation is even more socially embedded, however only a few articles have analyses this relationship (Haugh 2007 and Sharir and Lerner 2004). Despite the increasing interest on this research topic, there are still a few studies on the dynamic interactions between the two processes of network and venture formation (Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2010). Accordingly we suggest that to fill this gap an in depth analysis of the interaction process between network formation and venture formation is needed. Our paper aims at contributing to this debate by analysing a process at the heart of a venture formation that is the new service/product concept development and how it relates to the entrepreneur's social network development in the early stages

of venture growth. Drawing on recent research on new product concept development (Seidel 2007; Seidel 2013) and on theoretical and empirical studies on entrepreneurship and social networks (Jack and Anderson_2002; Jack et al. 2008; Jack 2010; Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2010; Elfring and Hulsink 2007; Hite 2005) the paper aims to shed more light on how the interplay between the new venture concept and the entrepreneur's network occurs. Indeed, we investigate how a concept develops as the network of partners is progressively constituted, enlarged and changed by the entrepreneur, and in turn how the concept elaboration process itself drives the search of new partners and the building and changing of ties in the early stages of a venture formation.

Given the aim of the paper the research is based on a longitudinal case study of a radical innovation in the radio sector. We choose a unique case of RM Not Profit Foundation and analyse it over a three-year period from 2009 to 2012, through a process-base approach.

The article is organised as follows. Next section will discuss the theoretical background. Then we describe the research method, including the setting choice and the data collection approach. Following section presents key findings and the last one will draw conclusions and theoretical implications.

2.Theoretical background

Social network and entrepreneurship

There is an increasing attention of the entrepreneurship literature on the role of social networks and how they influence the entrepreneurial process (Stuart and Sorenson 2005). Recent research, mainly drawing on social network literature, emphasised that entrepreneurship is a socially embedded process (Granovetter 1973; Jack and Anderson 2002; Hite 2005) and social capital plays an essential role in new venture birth and growth (Larson and Starr 1999; Hite 2005). This relation is not static but rather dynamic (Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2010). Social networks might change over time as it does the venture itself, entrepreneurs reconfigure their ties dynamically throw-out the different stages of the venture growth. Recent studies on the ties formation process (Hallen and Eisenhardt 2012) and the strategic tie portfolios building (Phillips et al. 2013), showed how the entrepreneur strategically designs and changes over time the structure of her social network to foster key entrepreneurial processes, such as opportunity recognition and resources mobilization. Moreover the importance of social networks in a specific stage of a venture, namely the early formation and growth, has been recognised (Brass et al. 2004; Greve and Salaff 2003; Hite and Hesterly 2001; Hite 2005; Elfring and Hulsink 2007; Steier and Greenwood 2000). Despite the increasing interest on this research topic and the recognition of the concurrent evolution of a new venture and the array of relational ties on

which it leverages, literature has remained silent of the dynamic interplay between these two development processes of network and venture formation, as sustained by Hoang and Antoncic (2003) and Slotte-Kock and Coviello (2010). Previous research focused either on network as an antecedent impacting on venture formation and growth or on network as a consequence of entrepreneurial efforts to enact the venture context in order to recognise new opportunities, mobilize resources and gain legitimacy. Both literature reviews of Hoang and Antoncic (2003) and Slotte-Kock and Coviello (2010) highlighted that there are still open questions on how networks emerge and develop during the entrepreneurial life and they call for process-oriented studies in order to investigate the dynamic interaction between network evolution and venture formation, as suggested by Slotte-Kock and Coviello "the entrepreneurship literature has only just begun to investigate how relationships are developed and transformed" (Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2010: 48).

Social networks, innovation and concept development in a new venture formation

Literature on network dynamics focused on the connection between structure and content of social network and the entrepreneurial processes, and particularly investigated how social network influences entrepreneurial opportunities discovery, resources mobilization and legitimacy gaining. A large and differentiated network of relationships might facilitate environment scanning, and help in opportunity recognition by bridging structural holes (Burt 2007). Social network facilitates resources mobilization in that it allows overcoming some of the obstacles to resources access because it links the provision of resources to social obligation and norms of fairness (Stuart and Soreson 2005; Eckhardt and Shane, 2010).

Studies have investigated the features of ties and their impact on the venture formation, showing that the entrepreneur first turn to existing ties to get social, economic support to translate an idea in a business (Starr ad Larson 1999). Moreover, more recent studies focusing on the strength of ties and their impact on the venture creation process show that the mixing of strong and weak ties is relevant and contingent to stages of venture development and type new enterprises (Elfring and Hulsink 2003; Baer 2010). Strong relationships at the stat-up inception are relevant in obtaining resources, while weak ties facilitate the discovering opportunities. Indeed, weaker ties connect far clusters of group of individuals and because are non-redundant social ties provide people with novel information facilitating the discovery of opportunities (Eckhardt and Shane, 2010; West and Meyer,1997). Social network research showed that in case of radical innovations, since they are based on new combination of diverse knowledge domain, weak ties enable the search for information possessed by individuals with experience much different than the innovator (Hansen 1999). Elfring and Hulsink (2007) linking the diversity of ties in the tie-formation process to the type of start-up, the type of innovation that they're pursuing and entrepreneurial processes, distinguished different patterns of

network development. One pattern observed applies to independent start-ups pursing radical innovation and is characterised by a large number of weak ties in the emergence phase. As a new venture moves into its early growth stage newly developed strong multiplex ties to prominent player in field become crucial, making the search and selection of resources more efficient and focused. Hallen and Eisenhardt (2012) recently describe two (not one) "equifinal" paths for how firms efficiently form ties: some firms rely on strong direct ties, while others have to form them.

While these studies have contributed to highlight different features of social networks and their role contingent to new venture formation, less is known about the process of innovative venture formation, specifically about what is central in this process that is the developing of the product concept at the core of the new business reality and how shaping social network could interact with it. At the beginning of an innovative new venture the process of opportunity recognition and resource seizing is mainly devoted to support the endeavour of translating the initial entrepreneurial idea into a new product or service concept. In theoretical and empirical studies on entrepreneurship and social networks as discussed previously an depth analysis of the innovation process at the centre of the entrepreneur's endeavour in a new venture early stages is still missing (Jack and Anderson_2002; Jack et al. 2008; Jack 2010; Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2010; Elfring and Hulsink 2007; Hite 2003). Specifically prior literature on tie formation and new venture has neglected the concept development process, which instead is a significant aspect of the entrepreneurial innovation motive and is related to the entrepreneur's networking activity since the enterprise inception. We draw on recent research on new product concept development (Seidel 2007; Seidel and O'Mahony 2014), which shows how the development of a new product concept is based on a process of elaboration and concept shift requiring different cognitive inputs. We suggest that the process of concept elaboration and shift is deeply related to network formation. The innovative entrepreneur does not act in isolation and the search for ideas, feedbacks, social support could leverage on the dynamics of her social network. Change process of product concept in radical context takes place through shifts of individual concept component (Siedel 2007; Siedel and Mahoney 2014). The dynamics of tie, forming during the early stages of the new venture, brings in new ideas and cognitive materials needed to change, adapt, develop the novel product concepts after initial idea generation of the entrepreneur. We claim that the parallel analysis of concept development process as network is developed could provide more in-depth insights on the dynamic process of venture and tie formation than previous studies. Thus our research question is the following: how does the interplay between the new venture concept development and the entrepreneur's network formation occur in the early stages of new ventures.

Social network research has deeply investigated the impact of networks on creativity and innovation: Hansen (1999) showed the twofold effect of weak ties on the capacity of innovative teams to explore

new idea according to knowledge complexity, interesting findings show that strong ties are a better channel when knowledge to be transferred is complex. More recently Baer enlarged the analysis providing a comprehensive discussion and empirical evidence on the joint effects of network size, strength, and diversity on creativity (Baer, 2010). This stream of research however mainly focused on within innovation processes in established firms. Moreover despite extensive research, to our knowledge even from the social network perspective there is scant in-depth analysis of the interplay between social network features and the creative endeavour of concept development in new ventures' formation.

To fill this gap we take a process-based approach, answering the claim that entrepreneurship research would benefit from studies moving from a causal relationship between networks and new venture to a dynamic and process-based approach (Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2009). Accordingly we would investigate how a concept develops as the network of partners is progressively constituted, enlarged and changed by the entrepreneur and in turn how the concept elaboration process itself drives the search of new partners and the building of new ties in the early stages of a venture formation.

Social network and social new ventures

Social entrepreneurship is a phenomenon with a growing business impact that has attracted the attention of the management literature in the last two decades. Social entrepreneurship is conceived as a process of social value creation, involving the innovative use and combination of resources to address social needs that are not meet by traditional organizations. Innovation is a central topic in social entrepreneurial inquires and is recognized as playing an important role in the most important and successful social experiences. Particularly, innovation is a key feature according to the Social Innovation School of Thought on social entrepreneurship (Hoogendoorn et all ,2010), one of the two research approach within the American academic tradition (Dees & Battle Andersen, 2006; Degroote, 2008; Kerlin, 2006). Debate on innovation within the Social Innovation School focuses on the social entrepreneur who tackle social problem and, identifying in it an opportunity and exploiting it by innovative manner, provides a new solutions to social needs (Dees and Battle Andersen, 2006; Martin and Osberg, 2007).

Despite the increasing amount of studies on social ventures, the field still suffers from the same and even more definitional uncertainties of the main entrepreneurship field (Landström et al., 2012; Lundstr & Halvarsson, 2006; Zahra, & Wright, 2011; Sorensen, 2008; Steyaert, 2007). Thus, the relationship among networks and social venture formation is a still open question. We suggest that the role of social network in social new venture represents a promising line of research, considering that social enterprise creation is even more socially embedded than a business venture formation. However despite its relevance, this issue has received scant attention. Recently in her study on the

role of networks in the venture creation process, Haugh suggests that "networks should be incorporated as an indigenous element in new venture creation models" (Haugh 2007: 164). Other field studies highlighted that networks, together with other key determinants, impact on the formation on this type of venture and on its success (Sharir and Lerner 2004). Accordingly we suggest that to fill this gap an in depth analysis of the interaction process between network formation and social venture formation is needed.

3. Method

Our exploratory aim is twofold: on the one hand we analyse the development process of the new service/product concept of a nascent social enterprise, on the other hand we investigate the role of network in this process. We would analyse how the concept elaboration process and its shifts are affected by and in turn impact on the network of ties the entrepreneur seek to constitute, change and enlarge.

Coherently with research questions we adopted qualitative approach. Our research is based on a longitudinal case study, as suggested by Slotte-Kock and Coviello (2010).

The case chosen is RM Not Profit Foundation and we analyse its life over three years period (2009 - 2012), from its foundation to December 2012 the 10th when RM starts to broadcast, through a process-based approach incorporating procesual insights such as timing, as suggested by Hoang and Antoncic (2003). We analysed the venture formation as a sequence of key events occurred over time and we focused on the related changes of the ego-network of the entrepreneur. We analysed the egonetwork studying each key dyadic interaction between the entrepreneur and partners. The case study under analysis meets several empirical requirements. First of all, RM represents a radical innovation in the field of Italian radio for children and teens. Indeed, this is the first radio for children, even kids at the early stage of their life, covering 0-13 age group. It has dedicated programs joining the typical entertainment function of the radio with an educational, learning and social one. Radio's contents, created with the collaboration of a Committee of experts of development childhood, are based on the most recent scientific results and methods of medicine, neuroscience, paediatrics and music therapy with regard the well-being and the development of thought, language and emotions associated to good listening practice of all children and specially children with special needs. Yet Radio's contents are aligned with Universal Design principles and available in different multimedia format (audio, video, integrated) to allow them to be enjoyable and fully accessible to all, including children with learning difficulties, visually impaired, blind, autistic, deaf.

The second feature of RM as a case study, fitting the research question, is that it is based on an open innovation model (Chesbrough 2006). A network of actors coming from various fields, musicians, editors, paediatricians, managers, museums all work together with the RM entrepreneurs to create the Radio's offer. Thus being RM a social enterprise with an interdisciplinary nature and being based on a large network since the beginning, its is a natural setting for the study of the cognitive process of concept development through networking.

Finally, RM is characterised by a changing network (its size enlarged from 2 to more than 10 nodes) and the venture formation is punctuated by a series of key events.

We gathered data from primary and secondary sources. We interviewed in depth the entrepreneur but, differently from most previous studies, we enriched our sample interviewing other key actors playing a key role in the concept development process as well as in the network dynamics. For the intent to reconstruct product/ venture business and networks co-developing, questions were focused to chart key events in the development of start-up, the content and contributions ties provided and the name of ties. The name-generator approach allows to track changes in the mix of weak and strong ties over time (Burt 2002) and to develop new firm storylines, combining the networking with the development of the start-up. We also asked how new venture was conceived at the moment of the involvement in the network and we were able to identify its main features as product/ venture in each key events phase classifying them in term of concept components (Seidel 2007). The in-depth interviews were semi-structured and, on average, lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The interviews were taped and transcripts were made. In addition to direct interviews we also collected web interviews posted on RM website that were transcribed.

One of the two authors directly observed seminars, conferences in which Radio presented itself.

Among secondary sources we consulted material of promotional purpose such as brochures, website, company reports among whom the Business Plan and articles in newspaper, magazines and press.

Table 1 - Interviews

Interviewees	Number of interviews	Duration	Mode
Founder and President	8	18 h	Site
Paediatric; coordinator of scientific and technical equipe	1	1 h 10'	Skype
Editor in chief; speaker	1	1 h 35'	Skype
Researcher	1	1 h 12'	Skype
Advisory provider for Spin - off	1	1 h 10'	Skype
Total:5	12	23 h 7'	

In addition to the interviews outlined above, follow-up emails and document to confirm interpretation or to explore some areas that had become more important during the analysis stage were carried out.

Table 2 - Data Sources

Data Source	Type of Data	Use in the Analysis
Archival data (75 pages single spaced)	*Company-related documents*: project presented to a call for academic spin-off (22); updates on the development of project (14); Business Plan document (39)	Support the understanding of concept/business idea, the reconstruction of its development process and the identification of concept components. Triangulate evidence from observations and interviews.
Material for promotional purpose and press articles	Brochures (3), website, power point (3) inserts (1) and press articles (25)	Triangulate interpretation and perception emerging from interviews and archival data
Observations	*Field notes and detailed record from seminars and conferences attendance* (3 seminars and 2 conference).	Triangulate interpretation and perception emerging from interviews and archival data. Particularly a press conference integrates the reconstruction of story of the enterprise and network development get by direct voice of protagonist of early stage (first donors; founder) and start up phase (editor in chief, paediatrics; political administrator of Veneto Region). Investigate how and which concept components are used for communication purpose.
	Informal conversations(5). Informal talk with founder, editors and researcher, ranging from brief exchanges to longer talks before and after meetings, seminaries and during lunch time.	Familiarize with the organizational context, gain trust of informants, discuss insights from observation, clarify uncertainties regarding project-related decisions, and support emerging interpretations.
	Web interviews (6) posted in RM website of founder, an expert paediatric, a psychologist, a neuropsychiatrist, an editor in chief and a famous musician.	Triangulate interpretation and perception emerging from interviews and archival data
Interviews (60 pages double spaced)	*Site or Skype interviews* (12) with founder, expert paediatric and coordinator of scientific and technical equipé, editor in chief, researcher and an advisor for academic spin - off	Support the reconstruction of the development process of RM either in term of concept and network creation. Investigate cognitive process according to Siedel's concept components

4. Findings

The RM social enterprise

RM is a web digital platform that supports a radio and an on-line library for children and teens from 0 to 13. The web radio broadcasts 12 hours a day and seven day a week music, stories and kids programs that stir imagination and entertain the young generations by stimulating listening skills and fantasy. The programs are developed daily by the editorial staff, which is made up of writes, speakers, and music consultants. They work side by side with a Scientific Committee, composed by experts in developmental childhood (paediatricians, neuropsychiatric, teachers, psychologists, etc.) in order to select contents for children of varying ages and with different needs. Some of the contents are finalized to develop specific skills in the children, such as: language skills, increase attention skills, sensory - motor coordination through games to play while listening. Together with the web radio broadcasting twelve hours per day is an on-line library organized as a Village with four houses, designed to allow access to the content of increasing complexity, but without a strict regard to age, because each child goes through different personal development stages. It begins with the Water house (birth) symbolized by the Minnow, it follows the Earth with Hedgehog (exploratory phase), the Air with the little Eaglet (phase of abstract thought), and finally to the Fire with the little Cub. A close look at this library allows understanding part of this radio's mission. RM places at the centre of its philosophy and projects a culture of inclusion. In fact, the beauty and fascination of listening can be amplified and opened to all thanks to four different formats that make the story inclusive and accessible to all, including young people with special needs. Every paperback book introduced into the digital library might get an audio format for all but essential for children who are blind or visually impaired; a video narratives with the LIS (Italian Sign Language) for hearing impaired children; a text in Symbols Language (WLS-Widgit Literacy Symbol) for those who can not or is not able to use the letters of ' alphabet i.e. children with language problems connected to issue of autism, for pre-school children who are learning to read and for foreigners; and a text with the high- legibility font for those with dyslexia or visually impaired.

Finally, in the RM portal, a toolshed is designed to offer information, suggestions and good practices related to childhood and special needs to adults like teachers, educators, and families.

The mission of RM is to promote culture and the pleasure of active listening among children, their families, to sensitise adults to the importance of reading aloud, to instil strong listening habits at an early age to all children and to collaborate with institutions in order to promote initiates that disseminates the benefits of good listening. RM mainly aims broadcasting free listening products for the edutainment (entertainment and education) of children at home, school and hospitals.

At the inception of the project and subsequent concept developments

The story of how the concept came to be is strongly related to the entrepreneur's personal motive, in particular to her taking care of her son, who is affected by a rare congenital disease. She says : "It was been watching my wonderful son and his early passion for certain types of music, audio books that I realized that in him, as who knows how many children, the "talent auditory" compensated behavioural deficits and learning….. In August of 2009 I was on holiday with my family. My son did not want to swim because he was listening to an audiobook the Chocolate Factory. I said to myself: why not create a web radio for all children by providing all my experience with my son about the most suitable materials to listen?"

Inspired by that emotional moment the entrepreneur crafted an idea about an unmet children's need of listening without any constraint. The starting idea was creating a portal as a sort of a box containing listening files (fairy tales, stories, music) continuously updated and calibrated for age.

In a few months the idea was developed into a project and it was submitted to a call application for academic spin-off (January 2010). First physical prototype is represented by the project document delivered to the granting institution. In it the prototype of a radio was described in its main features. In the project the business idea was presented as a collection of resources that could enrich the child over time: stories, music and games that are tailor-made products based on the principles of music therapy.

Verbal story component was enriched as entrepreneur came in contact with medical world or various associations related to different disabilities. As the entrepreneur said: "*My initial project seems to me very limited when I come in contact with new realities…. experts in dyslexia, hyperactivity syndrome of DHD, experts blindness. Entering this network I was able to see things that I did not know at all: I discovered the language of symbols and signs, and I said: why I must confine myself to the audio … We also might put the video*

with the language of symbols and signs. Then ..... I found the character of high readability for dyslexics. So what began as only an audio tool becomes even video in order to insert symbols, sign language, and then the character of high-readability. A story can be told through four different language forms".

In search for new languages to enrich the RM's contents the entrepreneur added a new relevant tie to her network: a paediatrics, who became the coordinator of scientific Committee. He brought in a new knowledge domain and an approach to the project, as he said "*What I provide is scientific advise on types of disabilities RM could address because founder was not a psychologist or a doctor... I made Rm known among paediatrics and children caregivers but also I provide key contacts for entrepreneurial process*".

A third version of the concept is the final feature of RM that is conceived no more as a box containing listening file but as a proper radio for even very young children with its own palimpsest designed to keep children attention active. The aesthetic principle was relevant in RM concept development and finally multi-accessibility was obtained through the use of four different languages formats: audio, video – narrations, language of symbols and font at high readability

The development of the entrepreneur's social network

The idea to create a web radio for children grew out on the summer 2009 when the entrepreneur was on holiday in Sicily with her family. She was at that time and still is professor at University and her main research interest was collective action and networks. A unique opportunity to implement the idea occurred on autumn of the same year when the project FIRM-Infrastructure and Management for the Construction of Academic Spin off – supported by a Consortium for the promotion of high-tech firms was presented into a Conference at University. The project FIRM aimed at supporting the creation and development of innovative start-ups based on business ideas came out from university research projects. It involved a plurality of actions, ranging from assistance and tutorship to financial support, provided in three distinct phases: 1) Gestation and birth; 2) Start up; 3) Expansion. The enterprise projects, selected through the project FIRM tender for the access to the gestation and birth phase would were provided of a fellowship amounted to 12,000 euro and a set of support services aimed at verifying the technical, economic and financial feasibility that concludes with an elaboration of a Business Plan, over a period of one year.

Encouraged by M.F. R. the advisor of the FIRM project, enthusiastic of her idea and personal motivation, on January 2010 the 30th the entrepreneur submitted her project involving two friends having competencies required by the project: I. S. music therapist of the entrepreneur's son with an important experience on autism and dyslexia diseases and E.F. copywriter producing editorial contents for websites and portals. The enterprise projects were selected and it started an "exploration phase" that covers a period longer than one year estimated for Gestation and birth phase (it concludes at the end 2011) where the business model and the legal form of the new firm were defined. Considering the first months of the project (March 2010 - July 2010), the main activity carried out within the first network made up by the entrepreneur, her friends and the project FIRM tutor MF R was an intense brainstorming aimed to define the "object" of the business project, focused on 4P of marketing mix: Product: what sell: Price: at what price; Place: to whom; Promotion: how distribute.

Tutor of the project played a key role in order to focus on the pillars of the future business model having a Socratic and coordination function among the fist three components of the project.

The following months (September 2010 – January 2011) were characterised by the search of the appropriate legal form and the analysis of the business plan. Different hypothesis on the legal form have been considered: from the creation of a business firm, to a hybrid, to the creation of a not- profit. Since the decision of the legal form was difficult and required more time to be analysed it was asked to postpone the deadline of the gestation and birth phase that would be concluded with the elaboration of the business plan until the end of 2011.

From Autumn 2010 and during the entire 2011 the entrepreneur proactively started networking activity aimed at seeking new ideas to enrich the radio's content, at fund raising and building reputation and legitimacy. A key event of network development process was the meeting with G.T. He is an expert paediatric, consultant for international cooperation projects for UNICEF and WHO, president of Centro per la Salute del Bambino Onlus. He was also president of NPL (Nati per Leggere) and NPM (Nati per la Musica), two Italian projects supporting the importance of active listening from the life early stage. He created the networked with paediatrics, health agencies, paediatric magazines, NPL and NPM and various other associations such as ACP (Associazione culturale Pediatri), CSB (Centro per la Salute del Bambino) Onlus, e AIB (Associazione Italiana Biblioteche). He played a role of "facilitator of contacts process" using a term that

himself implied, allowing RM to be known into paediatric community but also to know key actors for social enterprise such as A. E. that would become the editor in chief and speaker of RM. G.T. would become the coordinator of the RM scientific Committee made up of experts in developmental childhood (paediatrics, neuropsychiatrists, teachers, psychologists, etc.).

The entrepreneur invested much of her time in meeting people, going to fairs publishing, seeking donors and affiliating with VIPs, such as artists : a famous musician, an actor and an actress. On December 2010 at a national publishing fair, one of the most important appointments for medium and small editing houses in the country taking place in Rome every December, she met first editing houses interested in providing stories and pictures for free in order to be transformed in audio or video-narration format.

From January to October 2011, in parallel with networking activity, a research study on 44 web radios and 249 radio programs was conduct in a thesis by a graduate student with the tutorship of the entrepreneur. The student after the graduation continued to collaborates with RM as a research fellow until October 2013.

At a certain point the entrepreneur realized that she needed a manager, with programmatic and organizational competencies. At the beginning of 2011 she hired a musician M.F. as head of marketing.

On April 2011 RM participated in the first competition for social enterprises, did not win but in that occasion it has been noticed by Vodafone Italia Foundation and identified its call for application as an opportunity. At the end of 2011 a central issue was the choice of the societal form to give to RM. Excluding RM could be an Srl firm, because of its specific social – educational goal, the choice was among a social enterprise, a social cooperatives or a Foundation. In September 2011 there was an important meeting with F.S. a vice president of the "European organization of cooperatives", who suggest a foundation legal form for RM because the other two form (social enterprise and social cooperatives) require the provision of certain services or goods and RM was just an idea at the moment. In addition, presenting RM to the public with a non-profit nature and rigid legal form facilitates the raising of financial resources and materials for listening. F. S. also creates the contact with CEO of Beeweb enterprise that will realize for free the digital platform of RM.

Considering that RM wouldn't be a business firm the entrepreneur couldn't access to the second phase of the project FIRM Start up, providing direct funds for Srl firm only. Thus the entrepreneur sought funding from donors.

Not having enough resources to build a foundation, in January 2012 entrepreneur together with four main donors, created the Committee for RM not Profit Foundation aimed at raising funds. The Committee for RM not Profit Foundation didn't last long because in February 2012 RM won the call for application of Vodafone foundation Italy. Vodafone foundation Italy, aimed to sustain innovative projects of social benefit, provides RM the financial resources necessary for the creation of RM not Profit Foundation, finally created on May the 18th 2012. At the beginning of 2012 E. and M. F. had conflicts and the entrepreneur needed a new manager. G.T. met A.E. a journalist and radio speaker and successively allowed the contact between her and the entrepreneur. A. E. worked in radio as editor in chief for a long time, was expert in the creation of radio formats and had a personal and cultural heritage (study in developmental psychology and education, experience in laboratories for children and with visually impaired and Down syndrome children) that made her a proper person capable to manage this sort of project with an important social-educational goal. She became the new project manager, the "foreman" coordinating activities, as well as the editor in chief and speaker of RM. She was the "turning" figure for the creation of RM that concretized the entrepreneur idea because she had the know-how required to develops a radio for children, namely radio timing and how create a palimpsest.

A key event was a central meeting taken place on April 2012, the first involving the scientific Committee components where A. E. submitted for approval the first palimpsest with audio stories recordings and it were elaborate contents structure of on – line library according to different age classes and theme.

In June digital platform and first video – narration with LIS Lindo Porcello by Eric Batut were realised. On December 2012 the 10th RM starts to broadcast on the website

Table 2 Key actors description

I. S., musician, composer and music therapist, is an expert in the dynamics related to the effect that music has on children. He has many years of experience in conducting individual and group sessions of music therapy with various types of disabilities.

E. F., copywriter and editor in chief of Metalibris, publishing house she founded, has worked for years in the publishing world and web. She coordinates sites and portals, for which, in addition to organization and update, deals with communication.

E. R. is a Researcher at the Department of Economics and Management, University Ca 'Foscari, Venice and has specialized in the study of governance models to support collaboration for the benefit of public goods in real and virtual environments at the University of California Los Angeles, and then at the University of Michigan.

C. F. R., teacher of Math and Sciences, was tutor FIRM project, who had to offer operational support of and assistance in the development of the project idea, the presentation of the proposal and its implementation. She played a key role having a Socratic and coordination function among the fist three components of the project in a brainstorming activity aimed to delineates contents of business project.

AE editor in chief and speaker of RM.

G. T., paediatric at IRCCS Burlo Garofolo of Trieste, consultant for international cooperation projects for UNICEF and WHO and president of Centro per la Salute del Bambino Onlus and Nati per Leggere e Nati per la Musica project. He played a role of "facilitator of contacts process" using a term that himself implied. In fact he promoted RM in the paediatric world and created contact with the network of ACP (Associazione culturale Pediatri), CSB (Centro per la Salute del Bambino) Onlus, Federazione Italiana Aziende Sanitarie e Ospedaliere e AIB (Associazione Italiana Biblioteche), Nati per Leggere e Nati per la Musica two national projects supporting the importance of active listening from the early stage of life. GT facilitator role was two sides because on one hand he allow RM to be known into paediatric community, and through it to families, and on the other hand he allow RM to know key actors for social enterprise such as AE engaged in February 2012.

Venture formation as an innovative process: the network and concept development dynamics

Analysing the venture formation as an innovation driven process, findings suggest that the relation between social and business innovation has a role in the dynamic interplay between social network and venture formation. Innovation associated to the venture's social mission is described by the entrepreneur as the promotion of "active listening, the search of beauty and pursuing of the inclusion". The new concept associated to the venture's business goal was an innovative web radio for children and teenagers. Accordingly the entrepreneur activated new ties of her network and gathered from them new ideas, feedback and information useful for concept elaboration. The RM's concept

elaboration is informed by the search of *what* and *how* delivering, according to the exploration of special audience's needs. The need for medical – scientific competencies on "special needs spectrum" drove the search for experts in paediatric environment or experts in various type of disabilities that integrated the concept with others components (for example the Italian Sign Language - LIS). The main change of product concept takes place through shift from the content (music, tales, etc.) to the radio broadcasting process.

The challenge was related to the coordination of different disciplinary backgrounds and radio's representations of the partners. Findings suggest that the entrepreneur tried to solve this problem by leveraging on cognitive tools such the prototype and the metaphor of the "shell" as provider of a world of sounds and stories. It seems that she also leveraged on the symbolic management of the social value she wanted to pursue, in order to align partners around the key values of active listening, beauty and inclusion.

Literature recently pointed to the relevance of building legitimacy in early stages in order to likely success in tie formation and showed how entrepreneurs do this through narrative identity work (Philips et al 2013), symbolic management (Zot and Huy 2007) and storytelling (Garud et al 2014). Finding suggest that the process of building legitimacy positively interacts with the process of concept development in a social venture formation, in that symbolic management helps to align different concept representations

The innovative social value of RM is a central part of the entrepreneur's storytelling, a practise she adopted to develop a common understanding among different partners, joining the venture at different stages and with diverse contributions.

The case study shows also that there is not a single causal relationship between the entrepreneur networking and new product/concept development. Adding a new node might activate the discovery of a new concept component and viceversa the new service/product concept itself might drives the search for new partners. An example of network development driving concept development coincides with the engagement into the network of A.E., journalist and radio speaker, expert in the creation of radio formats, as editor in chief and project manager. A.E. was the "turning" figure for the creation of RM that allowed a shift in the concept conducing RM to be what it is today, a proper radio with its own palimpsest. From a box containing listening file as conceived at the inception of the project RM became a proper radio for even very young children with its own palimpsest. On the other hand, an example of concept development driving network development takes place when concept elaboration process spurs the search for new and scientific ideas on special needs in paediatric environment. The entrepreneur engaged into the network GT.

leading figure in the paediatric community. The new partner acts as a "multiplex tie" (Elfring and Hulsing 2007) providing a plurality of contents (opportunity recognition, legitimacy, brokerage). The entrance of G.T produced a sort of shift in the network because the new tie substitutes existing ones that were downgraded or even dropped.

A final contribution of the research regards the changing structure and content of dyadic ties.

The study shows that weak ties play an important role in the emergence phase, by giving access to a wider array of resources and informations which are useful in shaping the concept. Moreover, weak ties widen the span of potential resources that cannot be obtained otherwise by the entrepreneur (Hite, 2005; Jones and Jayawarna, 2010). Weak ties acted as brokers helping the entrepreneurs to explore new ideas and access distant cognitive domains useful to enlarge the radio contents. In the early growth stage the initial closed and small network grew in size and in ties diversity through both cognitive (driven by concept elaboration) and social (driven by the social mission building) exploration. Newly developed strong multiplex ties became crucial in managing start-up network.

Network development takes place through different ties' dynamics, namely adding ties, upgrading them, dropping ties and substituting them. We found that adding a new tie is important because it might enrich the set of resource an entrepreneur needs to access. On the other hand, dropping a tie might help to reduce of some inertias related to a specific relationship and person's background and perspective, and might spur a new search for a substitutive tie, that restarts the exploration process of new opportunities. Therefor we highlight that a process and dynamics perspective of the interaction between ties and venture formation, could shed more light on positive effects of a tie dropping, and could help to investigate more in depth on how , on the other hand, the network expansion could not always positively affect the new venture development.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The aim of the paper is the analysis of the interplay between the new venture's concept and the entrepreneur's network in the early stages of new venture formation. Existing network literature still pays little attention to the connection between social network dynamics and enterprise formation. Our study fills this gap giving new insights in understanding in

greater depth this interplay, especially in respect to how the interaction, between the concept development and network development, occurs.

In table 3, we are able to identify different key steps along the process of the RM formation. In each of them we highlight a relevant concept shift coupled with a network change. We conceptualised network change according to Elfring and Hulsink, (2007), classification: adding a tie, dropping one and upgrading or downgrading it, and we consider a new tie dynamics that is substitution of tie, happening when an upgrading of a tie from weak to strong is associated to a concurrent downgrading or even a dropping of another tie.

We observed that the entrepreneur purposefully shapes the ego-network (Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010), and mainly she searches to enlarge the network of relationships as a way to explore new opportunities. The entrepreneur moulds her network exploiting all the three changes. She added nodes, by engaging voluntary contributors such as GT, through storytelling and leveraging on their professional intrinsic motivation, of being part of an innovative and socially relevant project. Second she had to drop nodes, like IS, or upgrade them like in the case of AE. Our findings show that developing network does not significantly affect the concept development just when a new tie is added. While adding a tie might enrich the set of resource an entrepreneur needs to access. Dropping a tie might help to reduce of some inertias related to a specific relationship and person's background and perspective, and might lead to a new search for a substitutive tie, that restarts the exploration process of new opportunities.

We found evidence of the finding by Elfring and Hulsink (2007) about a specific pattern of network development for independent start-ups pursing radical innovation. Our research shows how weak ties play an important role at emergence phase. In early growth stage newly developed strong multiplex ties to prominent player in field such as AE become crucial in managing start-up network signing a change from unfocused to focused search and selection of resources. AE has known how, necessary technical expertise, contact network necessary to recognised opportunities and mobilised resources to create a web radio for children.

The case study shows that there is not a univocal causal relationship between the entrepreneur networking and new product/new venture development. As social network develops new identified opportunities as well as resources mobilised act as inputs changing the concept. Indeed the concept develops in the direction of the opportunities that are identified and also based on the resources owned. Our analysis highlights how concept

development is strongly connected to personal experience of social entrepreneur but it is also related to the network of partners and their backgrounds, which play a key role in defining the concept and elaborating it along the early stages of the social enterprise foundation. On the other hand the new service/product concept itself becomes a cognitive space that drives the search for new partners and where each actor brings in new conceptual elements associated to their own background.

Our findings suggest that the social entrepreneur uses the story of her personal experience and motive both to gain legitimacy and engagement and to develop a common understanding and align different representations of the new product concept (Seidel O'Mahoney 2013). She uses social value of the project as well to gather resources and engaged nodes into her network. Shift or integrations happen in the concept only, while the social value is a catalytic element remaining almost unchanged and ensuring the consistency of the project and the coherence of the concept. The construction / development of the concept is functional to the creation of social value. The network works when it remains consistent with the social value and the entrepreneur manages the network in order to maintain its consistency to the social value.

In summary our study provides first exploratory contributions to three streams of research.

First we contribute to the literature on social network and entrepreneurship. Our study provides first empirical evidence on the idea that network dynamics interacts with new venture formation. Prior literature on social network and entrepreneurship linked network development to the need of finding new ideas, of mobilizing resources and gaining legitimacy. Our study suggests that network development process is interconnected to concept elaboration, shifting, freezing processes.

Second we add to the literature on social entrepreneurship. The study suggests that social value is a factor of integration both on a cognitive level and on relational level, in that it gives legitimacy to the venture facilitating the engagement process of new partners. We suggest that while the concept development process operates as a driver spurring the search of the entrepreneur for new ties, and it acts also as cognitive space where new ties could add new components, the ability of the entrepreneur to broadly represent the concept to all through the narration of the social mission of the new venture helps to engage partners, maintain concept coherence, favouring different cognitive domains integration (Seidel and O'Mahony 2014).

Third we contribute to the literature on innovative start-ups and social networks. Our study confirms the results of work of Elfring and Hulsink (2007) on social network and new

venture formation in start-ups pursuing radical innovation. Yet entrepreneur moulds her network exploiting all the three changes identified by Elfring and Hulsink. She added, dropped, up/downgrading ties but also we found she substitutes them: Adding a tie in the search of new concept components; Up - Downgrading them because of coherence/incoherence of concept component with the social value; dropping ties as an opportunity of reducing inertia and opening to new interpretation/elaboration of the concept. We suggest a fourth mechanism: the ties substitution. It might happen when a weak tie is upgraded into a strong one, this provides multiple benefits to be exploited, thereby reducing the relevance and the need of other ties with a similar function. This might spur the entrepreneur to economize on the network width, by exploiting the new tie and dropping some weak ties or downgrading some strong ties.

Further research is needed to support our preliminary findings and future research may also deepen our study on the dynamic interplay between social network and venture formation through concept development.

Our preliminary findings require more investigation by means of a broader qualitative research in order to have theoretical replication (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007).

Table 3 - Network and product concept co-development

Date	Key Events	Actual Network	Tie dynamics Add, Drop Up/Down grade, Substitution	Type of tie	Contribution by the Node	Content	Input on the concept or activity fostered by the network	Product/business concept	Characteristics of components
October 2009 – January 2010	Conference of Consortium IMPACT and call for application of IMPRESA project	Entrepreneur	ADD MF R.	Weak	M.F. R. FIRM project Advisor for spin – off encourage entrepreneur to participate to the call application of FIRM project	M.F. R. : Opportunity recognition - Identification of the IMPACT call for application; Resource - tutorship-technical assistance for a feasibility analysis.	E. involved two friends in the project	The concept of a radio for children particularly focused on children with special needs.	Verbal story
March 2010 – July 2010	Submission of the application for the IMPRESA project, definition of the project ideas and business model	Entrepreneur with two friends and the project IMPRESA tutor MF R.	ADD two friends	Two friends: Strong and broker M.F.R. Weak	Two friends (I. S. and E. F.) helps entrepreneur to the writing phase of the document/project with the supervisory of M.F. R.	I. S.: resource – music therapist E. F.: resourse: copywriter. M. F. R. Resources - Socratic and coordination function in brainstorming activity	Braistormin on 4 P (price, product, place and promotion).	A portal containing free audio files (tailes, stories, music) and an e. commerce section on the i-tunes or tradebit model where sell audio files self -produced Training courses on music therapy for teachers. wi-fi radio called RadioMà	Prototype
September 2010 – January 2011	Drafting preliminary business plan	Entrepreneur and two friends, M.F. R and Em. F	ADD Em. F. CHANGE M. F. R. in strong	weak	E. F., business consultant expert in start up at Start Cube of Padua University	Resource: competence for Business Plan development	Development of a first business plan draft and analysis of the appropriate legal form.	Different hypothesis of legal form: S.r.l or not-profit?	Model of business
Autumn 2010.	- Need for medical – scientific competencies on "special needs spectrum" and certification of quality. Focus on network formation	E. and two friends, M.F. Ri, Em. F and GT	ADD GT CHANGE E. F. in weak	GT :Broker and Weak I.S.: Broker and Strong	GT lets RM to be known into paediatric community. Contact for A.E.future editor in chief and speaker of RM	GT: Opportunity - Network with paediatrics and various associations Resource: Expert paediatric, leading figure in the paediatric community	E. met experts in dyslexia, hyperactivity syndrome of DHD, experts blindness discovering various communication tools for disabled people.	Beside the audio stories there could be provided video narratives with the LIS (Italian Sign Language)	
December 2010	Need of materials, namely stories to be use for free by RM.	Entrepreneur, I.S., M. F. R. first network of publishers	DELATE E. F. CHANGE I.S. in weak	Publishers – weak	First network of publishers gives their stories for free	Publishers– Resources – Stories	Reputation. RM start to get known in the editorial area	Focus on stories because there are a lot of materials.	
January - October 2011	Need to study the web radios for children and best practices around the world	Entrepreneur, I.S., M. F. R.	ADD G. L.	Weak	A student of Ca' Foscari University that needs a topic to develops her thesis	Resources-Research study on 44 web radios and 249 radio programs around the world.	Awareness of the innovativeness of RM		
February – March 2011	Need of a project manager and an expert of radio	Entrepreneur, I.S. and M. F. R.	ADD M. F.	Weak	M. F.: musician and head of marketing of international music events enter into the team	Resources: his competencies as musician and as head of marketing			
April	Competitio	Entrepren	CHANG		Rm didn't win	Opportunity	Focus on the		

2011	n for social enterprises "Che Fare", but RM did not win.	eur, M. F. R., G. L. and Em. F.	E: G. L. in strong DELATE I.S.		the competition but is noted by Vodafone foundation Italy	recognition: Identification of Vodafone foundation call for application	idea for the development of the final business plan.		
September – October 2011	Research of the appropriate legal form	Entrepreneur, M. F. R., G. L. and Em. F.	ADD F. S. CHANGE M. F. R. in Weak	F. S. Weak and broaker	F. S.,vice president of the "European organization of cooperatives".	F. S. Resouce: adivise on legal form Opportunity recognition: Contact E. D. CEO of Beeweb	F. S. suggests a foundation legal form for RM	Legal form: Choice of a foundation	Business model
October 2011- February 2012	Found raising activity. Creation of Committee for RM not Profit Foundation	Entrepreneur, P. C., L. M., E. D., , F. G.,GT, Em. F. and Foundation; Paidea	ADD P. C., L. M., E. D., F. G. and Paidea Foundation DELATE M. F. R.	P. C. and L. M.: Strong E. D., F. G. and Paidea Foundation: weak	The Committe for RM not Profit Foundation was created	P.C.,L.M. (entrepreneurs) and Paidea Foundation: Resources – Donations And Legitimacy E. D.(CEO of Beeweb enterprise): Resource: provision for free of the digital platform of RM. Donations			
January - February 2012	E. and M. F. have conflicts. Need of a new project manager	Entrepreneur, P. C., L. M., E. D., F. G. GT G. L. and A.E.	ADD A. E. DELATE M. F.	Weak	GT provides the contact with A.E.radio speaker, editor and journalist.	A.E.: Resource – Competencies as radio speaker on the timing of the radio	Shift from providing music rotations, tales, stories to producing radio format for children		Prototype
February 2012	RM won the call for application - Vodafone foundation providing relevant amount of donation	Entrepreneur, P. C., L. M., E. D., F. G., GT, G. L. and A. E.	ADD Vodafone foundation Italy DELATE Em. F.	Weak	Vodafone foundation Italy provides RM the financial resources necessary for the creations of the foundation	Vodafone foundation Italy: Resources - Donations Legitimacy - It patrocinates the initiative			
April the 1st 2012	1st Meeting involving scientific Committee	Entrepreneur, GT, G. L. and A.E.	CHANGE A. E. in Strong and broaker	A. E.: Strong and broaker	A. E became the new project manager - "foreman" coordinating activities. She designed the palimpsest and selected the actors' voices for radio contents.	A. E Resources- Expertise in the creation of radio formats. Oppotrunity – Contact for F. C. a phonic and video - makers (Red Light Ass)	Focus on the creation of radio formats (programs) for children and selection of actors' voices for radio contents.	The first palimpsest of RM programs and the structure of the on – line library, according to different age classes and themes, has been created	Prototype and business model
May the 18th 2012	Creation of RM not - Profit Foundation	Entrepreneur, P., C., L. M., E. D., F. G.,GT Paideia Fondation	CHANGE Paideia Fondation, E. D. and F. G. ion strong	Strong	Foundation was created	P. C., and L. M. :Resources – Legitimacy. They became president and vice – president of RM. E. was the Secretary			
June – December 2012	Development of platform and first video – narration with LIS Lindo Porcello. December 2012 the 10th RM starts to broadcast	Entrepreneur, GT,and the scientific Committee, G. L., F. C., Red Light Ass., Olivia Ass. and A.E.	ADD, F. C., Red Light Ass. and Olivia Ass, various actors	F. C.: Weak Red Light Weak Olivia Ass: Weak	A.E. collaborate with LIS consultant for the choice of the most suitable story to realised as video-narration with L.I.S	F. C. : Resource – phonic and sound engineer Red Light Ass: Resource - video-maker Olivia Ass.: Resouce – LIS consultants and interpreters Actors : Resources: voices for radio contents	Aesthetic principle. LIS is conceived as artistic element integrated into the video-narration. Pluriaccessibility : four languages formats: audio, video – narrations, language of symbols and font at high readability	- Digital platform with a web radio - Online library multi accessible through multimedia format (audio/video/ text with special font) - blog for adult caregiver	

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ESSAY III

Social enterprise as a Meta-Organization?
A case study

Giacoma De Maria

Abstract

Objectives

The key role of network in the most important and successful experience has been analysed from the inception of the research on social entrepreneurship. On the other hand, innovation is recognised to be a key feature of social enterprises. More recently it has been suggest that social enterprises working in collaborative networks have higher propensity to significant innovation than enterprises working independently. The paper aim at shed more light on how a social entrepreneur develops and manages inter-organizational relationships to create social value and innovation, drawing on the novel conceptual framework of meta–organization.

Prior work

Recently, entrepreneurship and management literature has shown a growth of interest in collaborative relationships among firms, typical of open communities, relying on partners for the development of products or the pursuing of a common goal without the recourse to formal authority inherent in employment contracts. These forms of organization are called meta-organizations. Recent debate in the research area of social entrepreneurship suggests that social enterprises develop building on a network of competing firms the collaborate each other to deliver a new social value. The paper aims at extended this threat of research of meta-organizations to social context in order to shed more light on how a social entrepreneur develops and manages inter-organizational relationships to create social value and innovation.

Approach

Coherently with our research aim we adopt a qualitative approach based on a case study of a radical innovation in the radio sector, RM not profit foundation. This case study is a coherent setting for the study of meta-organization framework in the no profit sector. Based on an open innovation model, RM created a network of no profit organizations to sustain the development of social innovative digital projects aimed at supporting good listening practise of all children and teens with and without learning disabilities. Moreover, RM represents a radical innovation in the field of Italian radios for children and specifically teens with special needs. I analysed four cases of social innovations created by RM with the collaboration and formal partnerships with other organizations.

Results

I found that when a goal is framed in term of important social value rather then purely economic terms, this generates easier follower's commitment, thus we would expect to see

meta – organizations more frequently in the social ventures context. Moreover, the empirical evidence collected suggests that the social entrepreneur reconcile tensions between social and business goals at organizing level, applying different model of business and meta-organization design according to different external partners and projects, depending on whether activities are related or unrelated to the social venture mission.

Implications

The paper provides the first empirical evidence on how social enterprises can act as social meta-organizations to sustain their social innovation and value creation in the no profit sector. Moreover, it aims at shed more light on the issue of conflict between social and business goal in social enterprises, suggesting to treat it not just as a problem of internal dynamics of the social venture rather as a tension that can be reconciled through a mixed organizing strategy

Value

Theoretically the paper contributes to the emergent literature on meta-organizations, presenting an extension of the work of Gulati and colleagues (2012) in the social enterprises context. It also contributes to entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship research domains giving evidence of the role of inter-organizational relationships on innovation.

Keywords: meta - organization; social venture; business model; social innovation; case study

1.Introduction

This paper examines how a social entrepreneur develops and manages inter-organizational relationships to create social value and innovation. Literature on social enterprise highlighted that innovation is a key feature of this type of ventures. Social entrepreneurship is conceived as a process of social value creation, involving the innovative use and combination of resources to address social needs that are not meet by traditional organizations. A recent field study based on an extensive database of 400 Italian social enterprises suggested that networking plays a crucial role on social venture's capability to innovate (Fazzi 2011).

Recently, entrepreneurship and management literature has shown a growth of interest in collaborative relationships among firms, typical of open communities, relying on partners for the development of products or the pursuing of a common goal without the recourse to formal authority inherent in employment contracts (Gulati, 2007; Gulati and Kettler, 2005; von Hippel, 2005; Vanhaverbeke, 2006; Gulati and Nickerson, 2008; Boudreau and Lakhani, 2009). Gulati and colleagues (2012) coined the concept of meta–organizations to define these forms of organization. Drawing on the novel conceptual framework of meta–organization (Gulati, Puranam, Tushman 2012) and the related platform business model (Boudreau and Lakhani 2009), the paper suggestes that social enterprises develop building on a network of competing firms that collaborate each other to deliver a new social value.

Coherently with our research aim we adopt a qualitative approach based on a case study of a radical innovation in the radio sector, RM not profit foundation. RM is a web digital platform with a radio and an online library for children and teens from 0 to 13. Based on an open innovation model, RM created a network of no profit organizations to sustain the development of social innovative digital projects aimed at supporting good listening practise of all children and teens with and without learning disabilities. We analysed four cases of social innovations created by RM with the collaboration and formal partnerships with other organizations.

The paper provides the first empirical evidence on how social enterprises can act as social meta-organizations to sustain their social innovation and value creation in the no profit sector.

The article is organised as follows. Next section will discuss the theoretical background. Then we describe the research method, including the setting choice and the data collection approach. Following section presents key findings and the last one will draw conclusions and theoretical implications.

2. Theoretical background

Social and business networks for the social ventures's growth and innovation

Literature on social enterprise highlighted that social networks plays an essential role in this type of venture and on its success (Purdue 2001; Alvord at al. 2004; Sharir and

Lerner 2004; Dixon and Clifford 2007; Haugh 2007). The topic has been analysed from the inception of the research on social entrepreneurship. In 1991 Waddoch coined the term "catalytic social entrepreneur" with regard to its ability to develop a complex, if temporary, network of individuals and organizations pursuing a social goal without changing their own nature or structure (Waddoch 1991: 394). Recently in his study Austin suggests that "networking across organizational boundaries to create social value is a powerful strategy for social entrepreneurs" (Austin 2006: 18). On the other hand, innovation is also recognised to be a key feature of social ventures (Dees & Battle Andersen, 2006; Kerlin, 2006; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Hoogendoorn et all 2009). Social entrepreneurship is conceived as a process of social value creation, involving the innovative use and combination of resources to address social needs that are not meet by traditional organizations.

More recently, the phenomenon of collaborative relationships among firms, relying on organizational partners for the development of new products through outsourcing and/or on the involvement of actors outside the traditional boundaries of the company with unique knowledge and expertise, has attracted increasing attention of management literature (Gulati, 2007; Gulati and Kettler, 2005; von Hippel, 2005; Vanhaverbeke, 2006; Gulati and Nickerson, 2008; Boudreau and Lakhani, 2009).

This issue is still under-investigate in social entrepreneurship research domain where instead networking across organizational boundaries, assumes a great relevance, Recently an extensive field research on 400 social enterprises in Italy conducted in 2011 by EURICSE (European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises) showed that social enterprises working in collaborative networks have higher propensity to significant innovation than enterprises working independently (Fazzi 2011). Accordingly we would fill this gap in social entrepreneurship literature analysing how social enterprises develop and manage networking with other organizations to pursue its innovative aims. We draw on the novel conceptual framework of meta–organization (Gulati et al, 2012) and the platform business model implied to analyse how a organizations manage outside innovators (Boudreau and Lakhani 2009). More specifically the paper aims at contributing to the debate by analysing governance aspects of inter-organizational network, such as how tasks are allocated and labour is divided among members

Meta-organizations and social ventures

According to Gulati and colleagues (2012), meta–organization refers to a novel form of organization, typically of collaborative open communities, where legally autonomous entities, whether firms in a network or individuals in a community, collaborate for the pursuing of a common goal without the recourse to authority inherent in employment contracts (p. 573).

Moreover a specific trait of these organizations is that in a meta-organization, each agent has its own motivations, incentives, and cognitions, but unlike in a traditional business firm, they are not linked via a framework of formal authority associated with employment contracts.

The plurality of motivations and aims has become a central theme in the literature on social enterprises, since these organizations seek to achieve social missions through business ventures. Existing research points to tensions between social mission and business aim within the social venture as mainly related to divergent internal dynamics or divergent identities among sub-groups (Tracey & Phillips, 2007; Smith, Besharov, Wessels, & Chertok, 2012). We lack contributions focused on inter-organizational level of analysis, investigating whether even in the network of profit and no profit organizations aimed at producing social innovation divergent social and business aims are in conflict or not. Meta-organization allows us to analyse forms of relationships among firms with different goals and to understanding how this various aims reconcile or not around a common task.

Gulati and colleagues (2012) identified four models of meta-organizations on the basis of the degree to which their boundaries are open (permeability of boundaries) and the degree of their internal stratification.

Permeability entails membership: who chooses members, criteria for membership and duration while stratification refers to decision rights and coordination and involves the assignment of tasks and labour division.

The taxonomy of meta-organizations of Gulati and colleagues (2012) includes: at one extreme open communities, which are open-membership meta-organizations with low stratification, where membership is self-selected and members can share knowledge freely (as the open source software (OSS) for example). On the opposite extreme, there are those meta-organizations with high stratification and closed membership, which resembles traditional extended-enterprise models, where a firm contracts with for the

development of products through the outsourcing of key tasks. In between, there are closed community model, namely closed membership meta-organization with low stratification such as the consortium, and managed ecosystem model represented by open membership meta-organizations with high stratification (Android mobile operating system platform is an example).

The platform business model introduced by Boudreau and Lakhani (2009) provide a framework for analysing how a company/organization manages outside innovation when it opens up its product to external innovators. Authors distinguish three types of platform business model:

1. integrator platform model, where the platform's designer incorporates the outside innovations of multiple actors and sell to customers. It is associated to meta – organization characterised by an high stratification (the i-Tunes platform of Apple is an example).

2. product platform model, in which external innovators build "on top" of the platform's technology and sell the resulting product to customers. An example is Goretex, the waterproof and breathable fabric provides the core technology and other companies innovate on it creating different products that sell to customers.

3. two side platform model, in which the architect of the meta-organization merely brings together external innovators and customers. In this case meta – organization is characterised by a low stratification (Facebook, where external innovators and clients can meet freely, is an example).

This paper addresses the following research questions: can a social enterprise, actively shaping the design of a network of partners, be conceptualised as a meta organization? From where it stems the bargaining power towards profit companies of the central actor when its key mission is a social one? What are the main features of a social meta-organization in term of permeability of boundaries- membership and stratification?

This paper contributes to the emergent literature on meta-organizations, presenting an extension of the work of Gulati and colleagues (2012) in the social enterprises context. It provides the first empirical evidence on the concept of social meta-organization to sustain social innovation and value creation in the no profit sector. The framework fits very well with the social enterprise's network as it has been described in the social

entrepreneurship literature. The two main features of a meta-organization, i.e. the absence of formal authority between constituent members and the system-level goal can be easily found in social enterprise networks.

Our paper aims at contributing to the debate on meta-organizations by investigating whether the typology of meta-task can foster the emergence of meta-organizations and, further, whether the social nature of meta-task can be a founding condition defining meta-organizations of a particular kind of permeability and stratification.

The empirical evidence collected suggests that when a goal is framed in term of important social value rather then purely economic terms, this generates easier follower's commitment, thus we would expect to see meta – organizations more frequently in the social ventures context. Moreover, we found that the social nature of a meta-task is a founding condition allowing meta-organizations of specific kind of permeability and stratification to emerge. In fact, our findings show that the social enterprise adopts a mixed business model strategy and different meta-organization design for the various partnerships, depending on whether activities are related or unrelated to the social venture mission. Particularly, it displays a high stratification (tailored definition of tasks) and closed membership arrangements (more careful specification of selection criteria and membership duration) and acts as an integrator platform with shared project centred on its main social mission. In other project not directly linked to the social mission but to its sustainability the platform's architect showed less stratification degree adopting a product business model.

3. Method

Our exploratory aim is to investigate how social enterprises develop and manage inter-organizational relationships to realize innovation and whether meta-organization represents a useful paradigm for social enterprises. Coherently with our research aim we adopt a qualitative approach based on a case study of a radical innovation in the radio sector, RM not profit foundation. We analysed four cases of social innovative products/services created by RM with the collaboration and formal partnerships with other profit and no profit organizations.

This case study meets two empirical requirements. First, RM represents a radical

innovation in the field of Italian radio for children and teens. Indeed, this is the first radio for children, even kids at the early stage of their life, covering 0-13 age group. It has dedicated programs joining the typical entertainment function of the radio with an educational, learning and social one. Radio's contents are multidisciplinary, they were developed with the collaboration of a Committee of experts of childhood development, and are based on the most recent research findings and advancements of medicine, neuroscience, paediatrics and music therapy with regard the well-being and the development of thought, language and emotions associated to good listening practice of all children and specially children with special needs. Yet Radio's contents are based on digital technologies, aligned with Universal Design principles and available in different multimedia format (audio, video, integrated) to allow them to be enjoyable and fully accessible to all, including children with learning difficulties, visually impaired, blind, autistic, deaf.

The second feature of RM as a case study fitting the research question is that it is based on an open innovation model (Chesbrough 2006). It created a network of no profit organizations, companies, individuals to sustain the development of its social innovative digital projects.

We analysed four key projects by which RM created four integrated innovative services provided by RM with the collaboration of different partners.

We gathered data from primary and secondary sources. We interviewed in depth the entrepreneur and other actors playing a key role in the four cases of social innovations analysed. For the intent to analyse the degree of permeability and stratification, hence issues of membership, task allocations and labour division for each shared project of social innovation, questions were focused to reconstruct the birth of the partnership (for example date of contact, who contacted whom), and to identify other elements such as the objective of the project from both RM and partner/partners, kind of expected output, who manages the project, activities of RM and of partner/partners, professional figures involved in both RM and partner/partners, type of contract between the parties, whether there is, or informal agreements. The in-depth interviews were semi-structured and, on average, lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The interviews were taped and transcripts were made.

Table 1 – Interviews

Interviewees	Number of interviews	Duration	Mode
Founder and President	8	18 h	Site
Researcher fellow	5	7 h 12'	Site
Editor in chief	1	1 h 35'	Skype
Total:3	14	26 h 47'	

The author directly observed seminars, conferences in which some projects were presented.

Among secondary sources we consulted material of promotional purpose such as brochures, power points, website, projects/documents, informal agreements such as electronic mail, and articles in newspaper, magazines and press.

Table 2 - Data Sources

Data Source	Type of Data	Use in the Analysis
Archival data (35 pages single spaced)	*Project-related documents*: Email correspondence and agreements among individuals involved in projects (8); guidelines and project descriptions (27).	Triangulate evidence from interviews and archival data.
Material for promotional purpose and press articles	Brochures (2), website, powerpoint (2) inserts (1) and press articles (10)	Triangulate interpretation and perception emerging from interviews and archivial data.
Observations	*Field notes and detailed record from seminars and conferences attendance* (1 seminars and 2 conference)	Make use of material to identify the project outcome
	Informal conversations (7). Informal talk with founder,the editor in chief, the researchersupporting staff and professional children's book author; it ranged from brief exchanges to longer talks before and after meetings, seminas and during lunch time.	Familiarize with the projects, gain trust of informants, discuss insights from observation, clarify uncertainties regarding project-related decisions, and support emerging interpretations.

In addition to the interviews outlined above, follow-up emails and document to confirm interpretation or to explore some areas that had become more important during the analysis stage were carried out.

4. Findings

The RM social enterprise

RM Not profit Foundation is a web digital platform that supports a radio and an on-line library for children and teens from 0 to 13. RM was founded in 2012 as a no-profit organization, has developed since then successfully pursuing a portfolio of different innovative projects. The web radio broadcasts 12 hours a day and seven day a week music, stories and kids programs that stir imagination and entertain the young generations by stimulating listening skills and fantasy. The programs are developed daily by the editorial staff, which is made up of writes, speakers, and music consultants. They work side by side with a Scientific Committee, composed by experts in developmental childhood (pediatricians, neuropsychiatrists, teachers, psychologists, etc.) in order to select contents for children of varying ages and with different needs. Some of the contents are finalized to develop specific skills in the children, such as: language skills, increase attention skills, sensory - motor coordination through games to play while listening. Together with the web radio broadcasting twelve hours per day is an on-line library hosted listening and video contents. It is organized as a Village with four houses, designed to allow access to the content of increasing complexity, but without a strict regard to age, because each child goes through different personal development stages. It begins with the Water house (birth) symbolized by the Minnow, it follows the Earth with Hedgehog (exploratory phase) , the Air with the little Eaglet (phase of abstract thought), and finally to the Fire with the little Cub. A close look at this library allows understanding part of this radio's mission. RM places at the centre of its philosophy and projects a culture of inclusion. In fact, the beauty and fascination of listening can be amplified and opened to all thanks to four different formats that make the story inclusive and accessible to all, including young people with special needs. Every paperback book introduced into the digital library might get an audio format for all but essential for children who are blind or visually impaired; a video narratives with the LIS (Italian Sign

Language) for hearing impaired children and with Symbols Language (WLS-Widgit Literacy Symbol) for those who can not or is not able to use the letters of ' alphabet i.e. children with language problems connected to issue of autism, for pre-school children who are learning to read and for foreigners; and a text with the high- legibility font for those with dyslexia or visually impaired.

Finally, in the RM portal, a toolshed is designed to offer information, suggestions and good practices related to childhood and special needs to adults like teachers, educators, and families.

The mission of RM is to promote culture and the pleasure of active listening among children, their families, to raise the awareness of adults about the importance of reading aloud, to instil strong listening habits at an early age to all children and to collaborate with institutions in order to promote initiatives that disseminates the benefits of good listening.

RM mainly aims broadcasting free listening products for the edutainment (entertainment and education) of children at home, school and hospitals.

The four projects of social innovation in RM

Every four key projects analysed present features that fit the framework of the analysis. They are innovative projects, based on forms of collaborative relationships toward the development of a common good and have been completed successfully.

Videos LIS production

As we have already mentioned, one of the main goal of RM is to transform a children story into different multimedia formats (audio, video and integrated) to make it inclusive and accessible to all, including young people with special needs. We focus on the production of one of the formats mentioned above: the video-narration with the Italian Sign Language. The "Video LIS production" project aims to foster a new way of engaging children in listening through LIS. The focus was on obtaining an effective and beauty result and product for all children. The format of video-narrations was inspired to a universal design, where the Sign Language becomes the animator of the short film, becoming pleasant to enjoy by all children with and without special needs.

In order to develop the project RM needed to create a first network of publishers. Thus it started to search for publishing houses interested to give visibility to their books through RM and join the project. The video – narrations created so far are seven, which are all available through the RM portal. The editing houses, which accepted to become partners of RM for the project, were five. They were notorious names as well as small editors, who publish a very limited list of books, focusing on quality and on an accurate selection of titles and authors.

The collaboration between RM and most of the editing houses above mentioned started at a national publishing fair. Born in 2002, this event takes place in Rome every December, and in the past few years it has become one of the most important appointments for medium and small editing houses in the country. When the founder of RM visited the fair in 2010, she had a chance to meet editors, read their books, talk about her idea of creating a web radio (with an on line daily program and a digital library) to support a culture of inclusion.

It was at this fair the founder of RM met the first partners for her idea of converting well-acclaimed books into video-narrations with the Italian Sign Language. The first step for the entrepreneur was to choose a good selection of books, which needed to have:

1. High quality texts and illustrations;
2. Easy to translate texts (for instance, it was not possible to include any books with rhymes since they can not be accurately translated into the Sign Language);
3. Illustrations with easy-to-edge margins;
4. Educational themes.

The content and illustrations of all the selected books were submitted to the judgment of a Scientific Committee, composed by experts in developmental childhood. Once the process of books selection was completed, an agreement with the publishing houses has been stipulated (both writers and illustrators needed to be involved in the process) to get permission of releasing this digital material, undertaking them for ten years. Once contracts with the editing houses were signed, an Association located in Padua has been contacted in order to get two Italian Sign Language interpreters as well as a video maker in order to create the innovative products.

RM Libera tutti

RM Libera tutti project was born from the partnership between RM Foundation, the P G Collection and the Venice Civic Museums Foundation, with the financial support of Veneto Region. It consisted in the production of sixteen unpublished stories set in the Venice museums, today available in RM portal as audio and video LIS format.

The idea to guaranty kids a playful accessibility to the artistic heritage of the Veneto region came in mind to the RM founder. She contacted the above-mentioned Venice museums, presented the project, and submitted a proposal to the Veneto Region to participate to an open contest for financial support "in order to foster creativity, social inclusion and active citizenship of school-age children". After the project was selected among the winners a professional children's books author has been hired. The author took about 5 months to write the stories set in the Venice museums, which were targeted to children between 8 and 12 years of age. After the stories were completed the author led eighteen creative writing labs with a random selection of elementary and middle school classes from the Veneto region. The labs were hosted and sponsored by the above-mentioned museums and allowed the kids to actively contribute to the completion of the stories by editing them or by suggesting to the author some small changes to the text. Finally, the stories were passed into the hands of the RM digital media professionals and the museum curators for additional editing. Once the feedback was collected and the reviews were over, the audio production of the stories took place thanks to the collaboration and work of professional actors. Together with the audio recording the production of one video-narration with the Italian sign language (LIS) set in the Venice Natural History Museum has been commissioned. A set of educational activities/cards for the school or family environment were also realized, thanks to the work of a research fellow from Ca' Foscari university. This material will allow kids to better understand and enjoy the museum collections by suggesting a variety of recreational and educational activities that can be done in class or at home. These cards are still being tested and will be available through the R M portal soon.

<u>*RM for Autism*</u>

This project is the result of a partnership between RM and Autism Project FVG, an association aimed at supporting families of children affected by autistic syndrome, pervasive developmental disorders or Asperger syndrome. This association counts about

three hundred memberships among which are one hundred families. Its mission is to assist parents and families of these impaired children in the difficult task of educators.

The collaboration between the two non-profit organizations came out from the initiative of the founder of RM and it was possible thanks to the sponsorship of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. The project was based on the idea of using the radio as an instrument of knowledge and linguistic or/and cognitive enhancement for kids with communication disorder often associated to the autistic spectrum. The founder of RM had in fact become aware of a very interesting project, where a group of young people with communication disorders also associated with the autistic spectrum, between fifteen and twenty years of age, could experiment the potential of the radio as a therapeutic instrument for linguistic and cognitive enhancement. This pilot project took place in collaboration with a national broadcaster. Sometime after this experience was completed, an association from Genoa (Italy) sponsored a book focusing on a very similar, extraordinary experience. A group of seven autistic young people between fifteen and twenty-one years of age, who could communicate only by typing words in a computer keyboard, were able to talk and to overcome communication barriers by using the radio as a tool. The one and a half year project took place thanks to the collaboration of a youth local radio. Thanks to these positive experiences on the field, the idea was to push the testing forward and propose a pilot project to experiment the therapeutic function of the radio environment in younger children. The goal of the collaboration project was to organize a series of labs for young people with communication disorder associated with the autistic syndrome to discover the value of voice and music. The radio became a stimulus to creativity and involvement of children in tasks such as the implementation of programs and interviews, the presentation of written texts and the reading aloud. Seven children were given the opportunity of working with radio tools during four classes of two hours each. Every meeting was dedicated to a different subject; there was an introduction to the radio instruments, a lesson on volume, music and voice recording, one on audio tracks and editing, and one on the creation of a short music and voice program.

These classes represent an innovative model for the use of new technologies, particularly the web radio to enhance the expressive abilities of young people with special needs. This model aims to maximize stimuli that come from teamwork, allowing the child to learn new skills and receive immediate satisfaction in seeing them applied to non-trivial tasks, artistic and intellectual content. This strengthens the self-esteem of the child and allows him to overcome relational constraints, with obvious benefits in his/her

daily life.

Before the four classes took place, the RM team and the children's therapists were able to meet twice for an exchange of competence. The RM staff learned about the specific behaviour of every child enrolled in the class while the therapists needed the acquisition of skills to be able to use a web radio. When the project was completed, with the purchase of a software, a microphone, and some headsets the therapists were able to give continuity to the radio talks by keeping working with the children for therapeutic reasons. This pilot project offered to the Autism Association a new therapeutic instrument to work with autistic children and therapists for sure benefited from the training they received from the RM staff. RM has received a monetary compensation covering the therapists' training, the labs hours, the editing of all material recorded in each class (during the four classes, children were given the possibility of recording texts they wrote beforehand; at the end of every session the material was edited to allow them to listen to a high quality product). A video testifying to the successful experience has been realized and it can be seen in both non-profit organizations websites, representing a good communication and publicity medium for both.

EBook production

The Ebook production project involves three partners : RM Onlus, an editing house and a start-up based in Turin, Italy. The goal of the project was to create an eBook for children. In this case, it was the publisher to contact RM Onlus and ask for producing the audio content for one of its own published stories for children (Raymond the ugliest dog in the world-The marathon) in order to create an EBook for sale on the iTunes.
The editing house is a very young media company, which invests in both content and technology in Italy and abroad. It has published original and interactive works combining learning and entertainment. The start-up was founded by a group of friends, active for many years in the digital publishing field. The company launched its first public beta, consisting in a desktop application designed to allow authors, illustrators and publishers to create interactive eBooks and applications without writing a single code line. The company focuses particularly on illustrated books such as children books. This software has been designed to create engaging digital stories with ease, to reach out readers in any language and on any device, and to publish in all digital forms. As a beta release, this product can still be downloaded for free, while the release of the new version it will be on

sale through the website. In this project, RM Onlus produced the audio content for the story, the publishing house provided for the book content and illustrations and the start-up provided for the software. The eBook is now on sale through the iTunes store at $8.99. Since the editing house will benefit from the partnership with RM in communication and publicity, the company has decided to donate more than fifty per cent of the revenues on every sold eBook to the Onlus Foundation.

Table 3 - Key actors description

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Videos LIS production

Editing houses
BPI is a young Italian editing house. It was born in 2001, but it had a thirty-year-old experience in the field of children publishing thanks to its Swiss ancestor BPZ. BPI maintains the strict quality line and iconographic research of the Zurich editing house, by selecting rich and compelling texts that stimulate the senses and imagination of young readers and by working with the most famous European illustrators. It publishes just ten/twelve picture books per year, being considered in the publishing world as a "niche" publisher.

Founded in 1996, the L editing house was born with a specific editorial disclosure: tourist guides designed for the little ones. Over the years, the catalogue has expanded to wordless books, art books, game and music books, fairy tales and nursery rhymes to educate and entertain the young readers.

E E is now part of one of the most important Italian editing houses for children from zero to nineteen. It publishes about 200 new titles per year and it has a catalogue of about 1200 children books. It has been operating in the market for over thirty years with the goal of making reading one of children's major activities in the process of growing up.

Z was born in 2001 and it is printing only illustrated books for children and teens. It is a very small publisher, with about five new titles per year. Among them there are also foreign editions translated into Italian.

The E study center was born in 1984 and it has played a pioneering role in the theory behind issues such as the rehabilitation and social inclusion of mentally impaired young people. The center has in fact been responsible for research, consulting and training of operators and administrators for social and educational services. All Erickson books, magazines, educational software, online multimedia services deal with subjects like teaching, education, psychology, social work, welfare. Their publications are well known and appreciated because alongside new methodologies and scientifically rigorous theories are case studies, operational tips and good practice

"RM Libera tutti"

P. G. Collection is one of the most important museums in Italy for European and American art of the 20th century.

Venice Civic Museums Foundation was founded in 2008 by the municipality of Venice with the objective of managing and developing the immense cultural and artistic heritage of the Venice Civic Museums.

RM for Autism

Autism Project FVG is a volunteer association enrolled in the General Registry of Volunteer Association since June the 3rd, 2008. Nowadays, the association counts about three hundred memberships among which are one hundred families with at least one member affected by autistic syndrome, pervasive developmental disorders or Asperger syndrome. The mission of this association is to assist parents and families of these impaired children in the difficult task of educators.

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Thanks to the help and sponsorship of the municipality where the association is located, it was able to open an office of mutual aid for families in need, with the aim of sharing experiences and collecting data in different fields, the most relevant of which are:
- Educational, sanitary, diagnostic, rehabilitation issues;
- Social, scholastic and sanitary services;
- The complexity of parental and family relationships.

EBook production

K editing house is a very young media company, which invests in both content and technology in Italy and abroad. It has published original and interactive works combining learning and entertainment.

The start-up PC, based in Turin, Italy was founded by a group of friends, active for many years in the digital publishing field. In October 2013 the company launched its first public beta, consisting in a desktop application designed to allow authors, illustrators and publishers to create interactive eBooks and applications without writing a single code line. PC focuses particularly on illustrated books such as children books. This product has been designed to create engaging digital stories with ease, to reach out readers in any language and on any device, and to publish in all digital forms. As a beta release, this product can still be downloaded for free; whit the release of the new version it will be on sale through the website.

Table 4 – Projects description and related meta-organization design (membership and stratification degree)

	LIS	RM Libera tutti	RM for Autism	EBOOK
Project description	Converting well-acclaimed books into video-narrations with the Italian Sign Language LIS	Production of sixteen unpublished stories set in the Venice museums, all delivered as audio and one as video LIS narration	Using the radio as a therapeutic instrument for linguistic and cognitive enhancement of autistic kids	Creation of an Ebook for children
n. partners	6	3	2	3
Partners no profit	1	2	2	1
Partners profit	5	1		2
Membership 1 – who choose members	RM founder contacts the publisher and asks to use their stories for free in order to produce video LIS narrations	RM founder contacts the Venice museums	RM founder contacts Autism Project FVG	The publisher contacts RM Onlus
Membership 2 – criteria of membership	Kids stories, high quality texts and illustrations and educational themes.	Being important Venice museums. Shared aim to foster the interest and accessibility to the artistic heritage of the Veneto region among school-age children	Competencies in autistic syndrome, pervasive developmental disorders or Asperger syndrome	Reputation and possession of capabilities and technologies
Membership 3 – duration	Ten year contract	Single project based	Single project based	Single project based

| Degree of Stratification tiering may be based on assigned tasks or on an administrative hierarch | High stratification associated with integrator platform. Once publishers give permission of releasing stories on RM portal, RM cares audios and videos LIS production enjoying decision making rights and coordinating. | High stratification associated with integrator platform. RM specified and assigned tasks to each member. Finally it cared the production of audios and videos LIS, ensuring the meta-alignement of the results with overarching aim. | Low stratification associated with platform business model. The partnership was based on self-design task. Rm transfer to therapists skills regarding the use of a radio as therapeutic tool on which the partner built its own successive project | Low stratification associated with platform business model. The partnership was based on the provision of competencies |

5. Discussions

RM as a Social Meta-organization

My first concern was showing that a social enterprise, actively shaping the design of a network of partners, can be conceived as a meta-organization through an in depth analysis of the case study RM not profit foundation. Foremost, RM is a focal firm that created an inter-organizational network of no profit and profit organization where partnership consists in the development of social innovative digital products/services for listening. Four key projects analysed are devised as platform products/services, namely opened to external partners engaged actively into innovative endeavour according to Boudreau and Lakhani (2009) definition. RM employed different types of meta-organization design across the four projects, as show table 4, with different membership boundaries arrangements (selection criteria and membership duration) and stratification degree (tiering based on task assignment)

The second issue addressed by the paper is the following: from where a social enterprise stems the bargaining power towards profit companies of the central actor when its key mission is a social one? We found evidence that sources of bargaining power are related to various intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of external partners to participate in a project, other than financial: status and identity that they gain through their partnership to a social collaborative effort, reputation, visibility and publicity beyond the local territory from the alliance with a no profit organization with a growing reputation at national level

but also desire to be part of some larger cause. On the hand, RM exercises its non-contractual "authority" adopting careful specification of selection criteria and tailored definition of tasks enjoying decision making rights and coordination.

Finally the paper aimed to investigate which are the main features of a social meta-organization in term of permeability of boundaries- membership and stratification.

We suggest that RM adopted different business models and different meta-organization design for the various partnerships, depending on whether activities are related or unrelated to the social venture mission.

In the first two cases of partnership, namely the videos LIS production and RM libera tutti" project, RM acts as integrator platform characterized by a high stratification (tailored definition of tasks) and closed membership arrangements (more careful specification of selection criteria and membership duration).

In the video LIS production, all editorial contents, for example, were selected from the scientific Committee on the basis of specific criteria: being kids products, having high quality texts and illustrations, having educational themes. A decision to grant membership is not based on editors self selection but is RM, as designer of the meta – organization, to chose partners after the approval of the scientific Committee. Regarding membership duration, an agreement with the publishing houses has been stipulated that gave RM permission to use their editorial materials for ten years.

In "RM libera tutti" RM itself produces its own unpublished stories based on the most recent scientific results and methods of medicine, neuroscience, paediatrics and music therapy with regard the well-being and the development of thought, language and emotions associated to good listening. In both aforementioned cases of partnership the founder of RM contacts partner for partnership. RM gets outsider knowledge and supports from network's members (editorial materials, museums settings for the stories, labs and museum curators) but audios and videos LIS narrations that would been included into the digital library, were packed inside RM, using external suppliers (the video maker, the Italian Sign Language interpreters, the professional children's books author, actors). Audios and videos with LIS production was taken care by editorial staff in order to obtain an effective and beauty result. Actors, who interpret stories, were chosen accurately in order to have the most variety of voice colours and the accomplishing voice for each type of narration. The format of video-narrations was inspired to a universal design, where the Sign Language becomes the animator of the short film, becoming pleasant to enjoy by all children with and without special needs.

RM acts as product platform in the other two partnership cases, namely RM project for Autism and the Ebook production, where it provides its knowledge and competences on which external partners built respective projects. The partnership of RM project for Autism consisted into a skills' transfer to therapists regarding the use of a radio as therapeutic tool. In the eBook production RM produced the audio content for the story.

Our preliminary findings show how RM adopted a mixed business model strategy and different meta-organizatiopn design according to different aims of the activities. Particularly, it displays a high stratification (tailored definition of tasks) and closed membership arrangements (more careful specification of selection criteria and membership duration) and acts as an integrator platform with shared project centred on its main social mission. This is the case of RM Libera Tutti project and video LIS production, aimed at creating innovative digital products for listening to include into the digital library. In the other two projects not directly linked to the social mission but to its sustainability the platform's architect showed less stratification degree adopting a product business model.

The empirical evidence collected suggests that the social entrepreneur reconcile tensions between social and business goals, expressed by no profit and profit organization involved into the network as well by itself, at organizing level applying different model of business and meta-organization design according to different external partners and projects.

Moreover, we found evidence that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, dealing with the desire to be part of some larger cause, reputation, status and identity, play an important role in open communities, as suggested by Boudreau and Lakhani (2009).

For instance, editors' membership decision is connected to the desire to gain visibility for their book through RM and gets a brand of quality, given that the editorial material inside RM is selected. The Venice Civic Museums and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection got visibility through communication and publicity. Thanks to the "RM Libera Tutti" project the Venice Museums will attract new visitors beyond the local territory. The same benefit in terms of visibility and publicity gets RM in the partnership with the Venice Civic Museums and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

In the RM for Autism project the most important motivation for both the not – profit organizations was to enact a pilot project to experiment the therapeutic function of the radio environment in children with communication disorders also associated with the autistic spectrum, even in younger children. They get also a lot of visibility and publicity

from video explaining the project that has been published into the websites of both.

In the case of eBook production, the three partners have multiple motivations. The editing house was able to publish the eBook but also will benefit from the sales and from the communication and publicity made by both RM Foundation and the start –up company. The latter also benefits from the collaboration in multiple ways. Being a company with the goal of developing a platform for apps production, it needs alleys to produce texts, illustrations and audios. Moreover, the good reputation of RM will allow its software and company to become well known among publishing houses. Having several competitors in the market, it is very important to find allies such as RM Onlus, which is a non-profit organization with a growing reputation.

The advantages that RM got to be partner in this project are a monetary compensation for the audio production of this eBook and income revenue from every sold eBook.

8. Conclusions

The paper provides the first empirical evidence on the concept of social meta-organization to sustain social innovation and value creation in the not profit sector. The novel conceptual framework of meta–organization has been applied to study the phenomenon of collaborative open communities, where firms in a network or individuals in a community, collaborate for the pursuing of a common goal without the recourse to authority inherent in employment contracts (Gulati and colleagues 2012: p 573). In this paper, we extended this thread of research to social context, since networking across organizational boundaries is a central topic in social entrepreneurship literature and is recognised as playing an important role in the most important and successful social experiences. Despite the relevance of the topic, there arre still few studies analysing the connection between inter-organizational relationships and social venture's innovation process. Even entrepreneurship literature still pays scant attention to the role of inter-organizational network on innovation, focusing mainly on the impact of entrepreneur's ego - network on innovation and creativity (Hansen 1999; Elfring and Hulsink 2003; M. Baer 2010). This paper aims to fill this gap and to shed more light on how a social entrepreneur develops and manages inter-organizational relationships to create social value and innovation.

My study provides first empirical contributions in entrepreneurship and social

entrepreneurship research domains giving evidence of the role of inter-organizational relationships on innovation. It aims at contributing to the debate on meta-organizations as well by investigating whether a social meta-task can foster the emergence of meta-organizations and, further, whether the social nature of meta-task can be a founding condition defining meta-organizations of a particular kind of permeability and stratification. The empirical evidence collected suggests that when a goal is framed in term of important social value rather then purely economic terms, this generates easier follower's commitment, thus we would expect to see meta – organizations more frequently in the social ventures context. Moreover, we found that the social nature of the meta-task can influence meta-organizations of specific kind of permeability and stratification to emerge. My results highlighted how RM adopted two alternative platform business models and different meta-organization design according the various collaborative projects, depending on whether activities are related or unrelated to the social venture mission. In projects, such as RM Libera Tutti and video LIS production, aimed at creating innovative digital products for listening to include into the digital library, RM acts as an integrator platform adopting a higher stratification. In the other two projects not directly linked to the social mission but aimed at its sustainability as in the case of the Ebook production, RM showed less stratification degree acting as a product platform.

Finally, my study confirms the finding by Boudreau and Lakhani (2009) that emphasised the important role of intrinsic and estrinsic motivations, dealing with the desire to be part of some larger cause, reputation, status and identity, in open communities.

My preliminary results require more investigation by means of a broader qualitative research based on multiple cases study in order to have theoretical replication (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007)

Limits of the research concerned data collection: few interviewees and interviews maily conducted to entrepreneur; retrospective analysis of each projects mainly limited the understanding of the process of selecting partners, task assignment and labour division.

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