

**Towards Sustainability-as-Flourishing:
The Role Social Entrepreneurs' Metacognition Plays
in Shaping Transformational Change**

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Abstract

This thesis investigates some human-centred factors involved in socioeconomic change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. In particular, it qualitatively examines the role social entrepreneurs' metacognition – awareness and regulation of thoughts and feelings – plays in shaping such change. I suggest that metacognition influences decisions and actions at the entrepreneurs' individual level, which shapes the value creation process at the enterprise level. Social enterprises that generate social and environmental value in their wider environment may collectively contribute to a transformation of industries and communities. The thesis comprises four related studies, as described below.

The first study is a review of the literature pertaining to sustainability-as-flourishing (an ideal vision offered by US academic John Ehrenfeld) and to three types of entrepreneurship – social, environmental and sustainable. The review identifies a set of requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing, defines contributions of, and limitations in each type of entrepreneurship research relative to these requisites, and proposes a future research agenda.

The second study explores how social entrepreneurs' inner realities (involving ordinary cognitive and emotional processes as well as metacognitive processes) shape entrepreneurial actions. It also investigates how these actions shape social and environmental value creation. Thematic analysis of eight interviews with social entrepreneurs show entrepreneurs engaged in self-awareness practices, which increased their knowledge and regulation of positive and negative aspects of their inner realities. Positive aspects enabled generative organisational value creation mechanisms, leading to positive social and environmental outcomes, while negative aspects interfered with value creation, leading to unintended negative outcomes.

The third study examines how social entrepreneurs' metacognition affects social and environmental value creation, which in turn transforms industries and communities, ultimately nudging society towards sustainability-as-flourishing. Thematic analysis of interviews with five social entrepreneurs demonstrates entrepreneurs' metacognition facilitated insight and letting go of limiting thought patterns at the individual level, leading to social entrepreneurial action. Entrepreneurs

utilised various metacognitive abilities as they developed effective and responsible social enterprises with valuable capabilities. The enterprises' caring cultures and organisational capabilities in tandem with entrepreneurs' creative and interpersonal conciliatory capabilities facilitated positive socioeconomic changes within industries and communities. It is these kinds of changes that could perhaps bring about sustainability-as-flourishing in the long run.

The fourth study explores how coaching can enhance a social entrepreneur's metacognition potentially to enable ultimately wider change towards flourishing. A series of coaching conversations between the author and a social entrepreneur supported the entrepreneur in recognising and regulating some of her limiting thoughts, unpleasant feelings, and unhelpful behaviours. The coaching improved her work effectiveness, relationships, and the ability of the social enterprise to achieve its mission. Findings suggest potential for coaching in a social entrepreneurship context to trigger entrepreneurs' awareness that may affect their organisations and beyond.

From these studies, I identify implications for social entrepreneurs in a short article directed at a practitioner audience.

Overall, the thesis signals that metacognition plays a key role in helping social entrepreneurs transform some of their limiting emotional and thought patterns to more enabling ones so that they can shape effective, responsible enterprises and ultimately contribute towards positive socioeconomic change. This research indicates that although social entrepreneurship can be a useful process to contribute to a shift towards flourishing, it can – at times – also involve mechanisms that unwittingly hinder such a shift.

This thesis contributes to the literature in several ways. It offers a bottom-up multi-level entrepreneurial process model of change towards sustainability-as-flourishing that starts with self-awareness. Furthermore, it provides a more nuanced view of social entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial process. Moreover, the thesis identifies that metacognition can support social entrepreneurs in their recognition that they have some choice in how they respond to unpleasant individual experiences and challenging circumstances in the wider environment.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Also, I declare that I am the principal author of the jointly authored manuscripts listed below and have engaged in the data collection, analysis, and the initial writing up. The co-authors, who are my primary and secondary supervisors, have assisted with idea development, research design advice, clarification of analysis, editing and commenting on drafts and assisting with the review process. The agreed percentage contributions for each manuscript appear at the end of each reference, in parentheses, in the same order as the authors are listed in each reference. The following manuscripts relate to work undertaken for this thesis:

Manuscript 1: An early version of this manuscript titled, *Entrepreneurship towards sustainability: An agenda for radical change*, was accepted for and presented at a Sustainability Conference with the theme “Sustainability Rhetoric: Facts and Fiction” at Massey University, Auckland in November 2013. The later reworked and revised version of the manuscript that appears in this thesis was published in 2015 by the journal *Organization & Environment*. Reference:

Schaefer, K., Corner, P. D., & Kearins, K. (2015). Social, environmental and sustainable entrepreneurship research: What is needed for sustainability-as-flourishing? *Organization & Environment*, 28(4), 394-413. (80/10/10)

Manuscript 2: An earlier version of this manuscript titled, *Social entrepreneurs at the heart of social and environmental value creation*, was accepted for and presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) in Queenstown in December 2015. The current version is titled, *How social entrepreneurs' inner realities shape value creation* (80/10/10).

Manuscript 3: The current version is titled, *How social entrepreneurs' metacognition supports change towards flourishing* (80/10/10).

Manuscript 4: The current version is titled, *Towards a coaching framework that enhances social entrepreneurs' metacognition* (100/0/0).

Manuscript 5: The practitioner-oriented manuscript was recently published online in NZBusiness. Reference:

Schaefer, K. (2018, 2 October). Social entrepreneurs: Creating positive change from the inside out. Retrieved from <https://nzbusiness.co.nz/article/social-entrepreneurs-creating-positive-change-inside-out> (100/0/0).

Past research overview: An earlier version of some parts of the literature on sustainability-as-flourishing, environmental degradation, social inequalities, and economic instability, as well as social/environmental/sustainable entrepreneurship was published in a book chapter. Reference:

Kearins, K., & Schaefer, K. (2017). Women, entrepreneurship and sustainability. In C. Henry, T. Nelson, & K. Lewis (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to global female entrepreneurship* (pp. 52-67). Oxon: Routledge. (60/40)

Synopsis of the thesis: A synopsis of this work titled "How social entrepreneurs' inner realities shape transformational change" was accepted for and presented at the Management, Spirituality, and Religion Scholarship Consortium in the course of the Academy of Management Conference, Vancouver, Canada in August 2015. It was awarded second place in the Most Promising Dissertation Award competition.

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Start close in – Poem by David Whyte

Start close in,
don't take the second step
or the third,
start with the first
thing
close in,
the step
you don't want to take.

Start with
the ground
you know,
the pale ground
beneath your feet,
your own
way of starting
the conversation.

Start with your own
question,
give up on other
people's questions,
don't let them
smother something
simple.

To find
another's voice,
follow
your own voice,
wait until
that voice
becomes a
private ear
listening
to another.

Start right now
take a small step
you can call your own
don't follow
someone else's
heroics, be humble
and focused,
start close in,
don't mistake
that other
for your own.

Start close in,
don't take
the second step
or the third,
start with the first
thing
close in,
the step
you don't want to take.

Chapter 1 / Introduction

The overarching aim of this doctoral thesis is to explore social entrepreneurship as a vehicle to promote transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing, and the role entrepreneurs' metacognition (i.e. awareness and regulation of thoughts and feelings) plays in this context. In this chapter, I introduce the thesis by outlining its rationale and significance. I offer an overview of past research on the thesis' central concepts: sustainability-as-flourishing, social entrepreneurship, and metacognition. From this overview, the research questions and intended contributions are derived. I then present the research design and layout, which includes the overarching thesis methodology, overall comments on data collection and analysis, the social entrepreneurial research context where fieldwork was carried out, as well as the thesis layout. The thesis encompasses this introductory chapter, five chapters written as publishable manuscripts (Manuscripts 1-5), and a concluding discussion chapter.

Rationale for and significance of the thesis

Sustainability-as-flourishing, *the possibility of indefinite human and planetary thriving* (Ehrenfeld, 2008b) is an animating, exalting vision (Laszlo et al., 2014) of an ideal future. It surfaced in the strategic management and corporate sustainability literature (Ehrenfeld, 2008a; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; G. B. Grant, 2012; Kurucz, Colbert, & Wheeler, 2013; Laszlo et al., 2014; Laszlo et al., 2012). In this vision, individuals live life to the full (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; Keyes, 2003; Maslow, 1943), communities live in abundance, enterprises prosper (Laszlo et al., 2014), and the natural environment thrives (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). Scholars contend that sustainability-as-flourishing enables us to tap into an elevated level of energy that can inspire (Cooperrider & Fry, 2012; G. B. Grant, 2012; Harré, 2011; Laszlo et al., 2014; McGhee & Grant, 2016). It seems particularly relevant at this time, as a rising number of humans yearn for inspiration, purpose and meaning (Aburdene, 2005; Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004; Driver, 2007; Laszlo et al., 2012). A vision like eternal planetary and human thriving might have the potential to trigger humans' "autonomous, intrinsic or self-determined motivation" that is key for "discovering innovative solutions, deep or

conceptual learning, or expressing values” geared towards flourishing (G. B. Grant, 2012, p. 123). Just how and whether it might work is still in question, however.

Scholars have started to theorise the changes needed to achieve sustainability-as-flourishing in society in general (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Moore, 2015), and business in particular (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Laszlo et al., 2014; Laszlo et al., 2012; Upward & Jones, 2016). However, further exploration of our academic and practical efforts to achieve it is needed (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Laszlo et al., 2012). This thesis aims to address this gap by investigating the role that business and social entrepreneurship in particular can play in promoting the required changes.

Sustainability-as-flourishing is in stark contrast to the state of the world we currently live in (Worldwatch-Institute, 2013, 2015, 2017) and to the way many critical scholars might suggest we approach complex problems of unsustainability¹. Humanity is facing unprecedented levels of unsustainability across the globe in various interrelated domains (Worldwatch-Institute, 2013, 2015, 2017). Evidence suggests the Earth has entered the Anthropocene era that brings with it challenges and risks (Crutzen, 2002). Environmental degradation has reached a level that could drastically change life on Earth (Engelman, 2013; Folke, 2013; IPCC, 2007, 2013; Rockström et al., 2009) with Earth’s supportive capacity being challenged in numerous areas, including biodiversity, climate change and the nitrogen cycle (Folke, 2013; Rockström et al., 2009). These ecological issues are concerning, given that all living beings are critically dependent on and inextricably intertwined with the biosphere’s life-supporting services and resources (Folke, 2013; IPCC, 2007).

Evidence also points to high levels of social distress, despite some alleviation being achieved (Raworth, 2013; World Bank, 2016). Human deprivation, social exclusion, and vulnerability remain acute for 11 % of the population worldwide (World Bank, 2016). Simultaneously, social inequality keeps increasing, both in high- and low-income nations (OECD, 2011; UNICEF, 2011; World Bank, 2016).

¹ Critical researchers in this arena tend to propose approaches that address external, and often deep collective social structures, such as, for example, accounting rules, discursive devices, corporate hegemony and power (Higgins, Stubbs, & Milne, 2018; Milne, Kearins, & Walton, 2006; Russell, Milne, & Dey, 2017). In comparison, this thesis focus on actors’ internal, individual awareness and values, as a starting point for analysis.

Economic instability continues a decade after the global financial crisis (Jackson, 2011; Lietaer, Arnsperger, Goerner, & Brunnhuber, 2012; Morgan, 2013; World-Bank, 2017). The global economy faces a deceleration in growth (International-Labour-Organization, 2013; World-Bank, 2017), with worldwide unemployment at a record high (Farrell, 2016; International-Labour-Organization, 2013). Some commentators argue that the severity of the issues across all three mentioned dimensions highlight systemic impairments in conventional institutions of society (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Lietaer et al., 2012; Morgan, 2013).

Beyond these environmental, social and economic pressures in what we might consider 'the exterior world', according to some, the human race is facing a predicament in the inner realm (Driver, 2007; Driver & Porter, 2012; Fromm, 1976; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). It has been claimed that increased numbers of people experience a loss of purpose and meaning in life and work, which can create suffering (Driver, 2007; Driver & Porter, 2012; Fromm, 1976; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). The so-called inner crisis² manifests in symptoms such as a perceived decline in overall well-being, in tandem with an increase in pathological and psychological disorders (Brownworth, 2013; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Seligman, 2011; Twenge, 2015).

Taken together, these aspects represent highly complex and intertwined unsustainability challenges. Wilber (2017) and others (Cooperrider & Fry, 2012; Moore, 2015; O'Sullivan, 2008) see them reflecting a turning point that offers an important human development opportunity. These circumstances not only highlight the need to take action but also to do so with considerable care (Schein, 2015). Given the complexity inherent in current unsustainability challenges, we likely need many approaches to deliver environmental and social solutions. We need changes at all levels of the system, for example, regulation of waterways, emissions and other elements of the global commons across national borders; social movements to

² While I acknowledge that "inner" and "outer" reality are inextricably linked, I separate the two dimensions in this thesis. I make this distinction in line with Ken Wilber (2017) who suggests in his four quadrant model that a phenomenon has both an interior and exterior dimension (as well as an individual and collective dimension). The interior-individual dimension is subjective and encompasses self and consciousness, as well as intentional, cognitive and emotional aspects. The exterior-individual dimension is objective (as it can be seen and touched) and involves form and organisms, behaviour, skills and performance. The inner and outer dimensions are linked; for example "the material brain is the exterior correlate of interior states of consciousness" (Wilber, 2017, p. 246).

encourage social change as well as responsible business action and market approaches at local levels and beyond; and individual level changes including ethical consumption, respect for difference, and others such as those made by social entrepreneurs as focused on in this research.

In response to current problems, business has made efforts to reduce unsustainability (Aragon-Correa, 2013; Markman, Russo, Lumpkin, Jennings, & Mair, 2016; Shevchenko, Lévesque, & Pagell, 2016). A range of positive results have been achieved, for example, decreased pollution and waste in some places, and a stronger focus on social responsibility by some firms (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). However, despite this progress, many social and ecological issues are becoming more manifest (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014).

As a result, some scholars have described orthodox corporate measures to minimise unsustainability as being insufficient (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Markman et al., 2016; Roome, 2012; Shevchenko et al., 2016), and others even as fundamentally flawed (Costanza et al., 2013; Ehrenfeld, 2012; Jackson, 2011; Moore, 2015; Tregidga, Kearins, & Milne, 2013; Tregidga, Milne, & Kearins, 2014). Researchers suggest most efforts have centred on the optimistic supposition that eco-efficient technology would ease the burden on the limited carrying capacity of our planet while still allowing businesses to develop and prosper (Costanza et al., 2013; DeSimone & Popoff, 2000). Many businesses adhere to their focus on strong economic growth (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Moore, 2015). If growth is unfettered, scholars maintain it ignores Earth's finite resources and is insufficient in delivering human and planetary well-being (Costanza et al., 2013; Moore, 2015). Consequently, scholars argue that the majority of conventional business practices reinforce the dominant profit-focused business-as-usual paradigm, complemented by peripheral incremental environmental or social initiatives (Crane, Palazzo, Spence, & Matten, 2014; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Kurucz et al., 2013; Laszlo et al., 2014; Milne et al., 2006; Roome, 2012). Merely doing less harm with incremental measures (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Markman et al., 2016; Shevchenko et al., 2016) has been described as a band-aid that might mask the deeper, cultural roots of our unsustainability (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). Not tackling the underlying root causes might even make things worse (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013).

In comparison to many conventional organisational approaches to bring about sustainability, the concept of sustainability-as-flourishing recognises there is a

dimension to behavioural change in individuals that ripples out through different ways of organising into wider social systems that researchers have not investigated much, and that is people's awareness of entrenched values and assumptions. Sustainability-as-flourishing scholars and commentators seem to acknowledge more readily that a shift in mindset is needed to work towards flourishing (Kassel, Rimanoczy, & Mitchell, 2015), and indeed that is the starting point for the research in this thesis.

Moving beyond less unsustainability towards the creation of sustainability-as-flourishing requires profound, transformational change at the roots of our modern culture and underlying collectively shared beliefs, ideas, and attitudes (Fromm, 1976; G. B. Grant, 2012; Harman, 1998; Kurucz et al., 2013). While others (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; G. B. Grant, 2012) and I believe this is possible, it is by no means a simple task. It might even take centuries and massive environmental and social shocks for human awareness to evolve to the required level, if indeed it does. It has been argued if we realise that our conventional way of thinking and behaving is outdated, and we change it, we could possibly transform our society to thrive (Moore, 2015; Senge & Krahnke, 2013). Such changes could possibly enable the creation of new collective beliefs, norms, and values, allowing the emergence of a new culture and social institutions more in line with sustainability-as-flourishing (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Harman, 1998; Kurucz et al., 2013). Business approaches that are new and different from the conventional commercial approach may challenge the unsustainable status quo and help engender a shift towards sustainability-as-flourishing (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Laszlo et al., 2014). Scholars propose social entrepreneurship as a promising and useful business approach to consider (Driver & Porter, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009).

In this thesis, I suggest that social entrepreneurship may not only contribute to the solution of social and environmental problems but generate change towards sustainability-as-flourishing, in line with others who see enterprises' potential to contribute to flourishing (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Laszlo et al., 2014). Social entrepreneurship – a process that can create *social and environmental value beyond private economic gain* (Seelos & Mair, 2005) – is optimistically regarded as a panacea for social and environmental challenges (Driver & Porter, 2012; Gibbs, 2009; J. K. Hall, Daneke, & Lenox, 2010; Seelos & Mair, 2005; Tilley & Young, 2009; Walton & Kirkwood, 2013; Zahra et al., 2009). Social entrepreneurship, like commercial

entrepreneurship, has the potential to revolutionise industries and assist in bringing about transformational change in a society's culture (Driver & Porter, 2012; Mair & Martí, 2006; Montesano Montessori, 2016; Pacheco, Dean, & Payne, 2010; Waldron, Fisher, & Pfarrer, 2016; Zahra et al., 2009). It is acknowledged that social entrepreneurship, like other well intentioned forms of business, can of course engender unintended and unwanted negative outcomes, but these are hopefully more limited and outweighed by the positive outcomes it contributes.

Social and environmental value creation, analogous to the conventional entrepreneurial process, is an extension of the entrepreneur's inner subjective reality (Chu, 2007; Karp, 2006). Stated differently, it is influenced by the interior condition from which one's decisions and actions originate (Karp, 2006; Scharmer, 2009). It is therefore important to understand how inner reality affects social entrepreneurship and that is the purpose of this thesis.

Interestingly, psychology research confirms that much of the ordinary cognitive and emotional patterns that are part of people's inner reality flow automatically and habitually without conscious awareness (Haidt, 2001; Reynolds, 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising that researchers endorse the development of metacognitive capabilities that allow entrepreneurs to overcome habitual cognition (Haynie, Shepherd, Mosakowski, & Earley, 2010; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Haynie, Shepherd, & Patzelt, 2012; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006).

Metacognition refers to *awareness of patterns in thought processes, thoughts and feelings, and regulation thereof* (Flavell, 1979; Shimamura, 2000). Entrepreneurs' metacognition shapes their entrepreneurial decisions and actions (Haynie et al., 2010; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Haynie et al., 2012; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). It needs to be distinguished from ordinary cognitive and emotional processes (Haidt, 2001; Reynolds, 2006). These ordinary processes denote how an individual assimilates information from the environment (i.e. sensory input) and makes sense of it (R. A. Baron, 2008; Hayton & Cholakova, 2012; Reynolds, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). In contrast, metacognition can enable more effective cognition and decision-making, which entails the creation of better outcomes for organisations (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Haynie et al., 2012; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011). Despite these benefits, social entrepreneurs' metacognition remains underexplored (for an exception see Pavlovich & Corner, 2014).

I offer four reasons why we need to understand how metacognition affects social entrepreneurship. First, it has implications for how social entrepreneurs navigate their environment. Scholars propose metacognition as a mechanism that can help individuals navigate complex dynamic contexts (B. C. Brown, 2012b; Haynie et al., 2010; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009), and allows them to more systemically view intertwined unsustainability challenges (Boiral, Cayer, & Baron, 2009; B. C. Brown, 2012b). The ability to deal with ever-changing information from unstable contexts appears particularly important, given the dynamic, uncertain environment social entrepreneurs operate in, and the complex nature of unsustainability issues they seek to address (Goldstein, Hazy, & Silberstang, 2008; Levy & Lichtenstein, 2012; Waddock, 2013).

Second, better understanding of social entrepreneurs' metacognition may ultimately help entrepreneurs to resolve tensions (Bledow, Frese, Anderson, Erez, & Farr, 2009; B. C. Brown, 2012b; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Lewis, 2000) inherent in the simultaneous creation of social/environmental benefits and economic value (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Jay, 2013; Kirkwood, Dwyer, & Walton, 2017; Smith, Gonin, & Besharov, 2013). Tensions that arise when pursuing conflicting goals can induce clinging to past viewpoints, emotional anxiety, and defensiveness (Lewis, 2000). Awareness of habitual thought patterns, interpretations, and emotions is said to be able to assist in liberating oneself of emotional anxiety and defensiveness (Lewis, 2000), and in breaking free from automatic cognitive patterns. Thus, it can allow for new and creative solutions to social and environmental problems (Bledow et al., 2009; Siqueira & Pitassi, 2016).

Third, metacognition likely influences the organisations social entrepreneurs create which, in turn, can shape society. Extant research suggests that entrepreneurs' awareness of habitual thought processes and emotions influences actions, behaviours, and decisions at the individual level (Haynie et al., 2010; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). Those entrepreneurial actions and decisions are seen to shape the enterprises at the organisational level (Parrish, 2010) and ultimately to shape transformational socioeconomic change at the wider environment level (Alvord, Brown, & Letts, 2004; Driver & Porter, 2012; Zahra et al., 2009).

Fourth, commentators argue nurturing the possibility of sustainability-as-flourishing requires the whole of humanity to overcome outdated entrenched patterns

of thinking and behaviour (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Harman, 1998; Kurucz et al., 2013; Moore, 2015; Senge & Krahnke, 2013). I argue that individual social entrepreneurs' ability to be aware of patterns in thinking and behaviour might enable them to challenge and ultimately contribute to a change in current cultural assumptions in business and the wider social system. Therefore, applying a metacognitive lens that investigates individual social entrepreneurs' awareness of and ability to let go of habitual ways of sensemaking and related behaviour seems useful (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016). All told, I suggest researching whether and if so, in what way social entrepreneurs' metacognition shapes their enterprises and may ultimately contribute to sustainability-as-flourishing.

The purpose of this thesis is thus to examine empirically social entrepreneurs' metacognition and its effect on the enterprises they found, and the social and environmental value creation process. This thesis also investigates the influence of these enterprises on wider society in relation to sustainability-as-flourishing.

Finally, the thesis investigates the role coaching can play in enhancing social entrepreneurs' metacognition. The study of coaching extends the research on metacognition into the realm of practice, recognising it as an intervention that may help develop metacognitive capabilities. Coaching has been discussed as an approach to enhance individuals' self-awareness and self-regulation, as well as their functioning in organisations (D. T. Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999; Whitmore, 2009; Witherspoon, 2014). Coaching can be defined as a "process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective" (Peterson & Hicks, as cited in Feldman & Lankau, 2005, p. 830). While it is seen to emerge as one of the most important and popular methods in leadership and executive development (Gray, 2006; Korotov, 2016; Segers, Vloeberghs, & Henderickx, 2011), academic research on coaching in organisations is still in its relatively early stages (Korotov, 2016; Segers et al., 2011). In particular, coaching in a social entrepreneurship context has not yet received much attention. In addition, the mechanisms of how coaching can enhance metacognition in individuals and then improve leadership skills and effectiveness remain under-researched (De Haan, Bertie, Day, & Sills, 2010; Hanssmann, 2014; Mosteo, Batista-Foguet, McKeever, & Serlavós, 2016; Sammut, 2014).

The next section offers a deeper review of the literature pertinent to the three main concepts of this thesis: Sustainability-as-flourishing, social entrepreneurship, and metacognition.

Past research overview

Sustainability-as-flourishing

The term sustainability-as-flourishing was coined by John Ehrenfeld who defines it as “the possibility that humans and other life will flourish on the Earth forever” (2008b, p. 6). Flourishing is understood as an emergent quality of the global socioeconomic and natural system (Ehrenfeld, 2012, p. 613). This quality includes properties like justice, freedom (Ehrenfeld, 2012), or virtue (McGhee & Grant, 2016). Flourishing offers a meaningful purpose to our act of sustaining, and as such can serve as a societal aim and target of business strategy (Ehrenfeld, 2012).

Sustainability-as-flourishing is characterised by two fundamental beliefs. The first belief is, ‘authentic human behaviour is based on caring for ourselves, other humans, and the Earth’ (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Tolle, 2008). Caring involves an awareness of our connectedness to others and the natural world (Heidegger, 1996; Laszlo et al., 2012; Pope-Francis, 2015). The second belief is, ‘the world operates as a complex, dynamic, organic, and holistic system’ (Capra, 2002; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Gladwin, Kennelly, & Krause, 1995; Gladwin, Newbury, & Reiskin, 1997; Levy & Lichtenstein, 2012; McKelvey, 2004; Senge & Krahnke, 2013). Such a belief acknowledges that the world as a large system consists of interdependent components (Senge & Krahnke, 2013), and manifests non-linear behaviour (Levy & Lichtenstein, 2012; McKelvey, 2004). Importantly, this belief recognises humanity’s (i.e. the material economy and society’s) embeddedness in and dependency on, the ecological life-support system (Costanza et al., 2013; Davidson-Hunt & Berkes, 2003).

Scholars have engaged with concepts related to sustainability-as-flourishing from different (i.e. individual, organisational, and wider environment level) perspectives. At the individual level, the vision of human flourishing emerged in positive psychology research (Cooperrider & Fry, 2012; Keyes & Haidt, 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), focusing on the question ‘What makes for a fulfilled life?’ (Seligman, 2011). For positive psychologist Martin Seligman (2011), thriving human relationships with other people and meaningful contributions to a greater whole are

two components of individual well-being. This understanding is supported by others who highlight the importance of spirituality – an individual’s orientation towards a deep sense of connection to and caring for self, others, and the world – for individual flourishing (Laszlo et al., 2014). However, most research at the individual level is not linked with flourishing at the organisational (for an exception see Fry, 2003) or wider environment level.

In this vein, the field of positive organisational scholarship explores flourishing in organisational contexts (comprising individuals, groups, and entire organisations) (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). The research proposes businesses that put a thriving world at the core of their *raison d’être* also create a work environment in which their employees flourish, and exhibit personal excellence and creativity (Cooperrider & Fry, 2012). Positive organisational scholarship focuses on human well-being and organisational prospering but does not necessarily consider human and organisational embeddedness in the natural environment or planetary thriving (Hoffman & Haigh, 2012).

At a wider environment level, the philosophy of deep ecology (Naess, 1973), which shares certain aspects with sustainability-as-flourishing, has been discussed in the literature. Deep ecology (in contrast to shallow ecology), refers to the world as a web of phenomena that are deeply related and interdependent (Naess, 1973). It ascribes intrinsic value to all living beings and grants them equal right to live and to flourish (Naess, 1973), irrespective of their utilitarian instrumental advantage for human use (Capra and Pauli, 1995, as cited in Bebbington, 2001). Deep ecology acknowledges “we are all embedded in, and dependent upon, the cyclical processes of nature” (Capra and Pauli, 1995, p.3, as cited in Bebbington, 2001, p. 139). Like sustainability-as-flourishing, deep ecology requires a shift in the consciousness of contemporary societies that boils down to a shift in consciousness at the individual level towards a self-awareness of being inextricably linked with nature (Naess, 1988; Schein, 2015). I contend the philosophy of deep ecology has not gained traction in the strategic management and corporate sustainability literature. The lack of traction could possibly be due to the literature’s focus on firm-level performance.

Sustainability-as-flourishing offers an alternative to the conventional notion in the literature (and business practice) of reducing unsustainability. ‘Reducing unsustainability’ is used in this thesis as an umbrella term that refers to orthodox

business efforts aimed at balancing the financial, environmental and social domain of the business (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Markman et al., 2016). Reducing unsustainability comprises a plethora of concepts in the literature, such as mainstream corporate sustainability, sustainable development, environmental management, greening, eco-efficiency (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Kearins, Collins, & Tregidga, 2010), the triple-bottom-line (Elkington, 1997, 2018, June 25), corporate social responsibility (Crane et al., 2014; Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017), stakeholder management, corporate citizenship, and business ethics (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Harris & Tregidga, 2012). These approaches have served to advance an appreciation of the interrelatedness of business, nature, and society (Aragon-Correa, 2013). However, despite businesses' stated goal of balancing the financial, environmental and social domain, trade-offs routinely prioritise the financial bottom-line over the environmental and social dimensions (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Hahn, Figge, Pinkse, & Preuss, 2010; Kearins et al., 2010; Markman et al., 2016).

Much of the dominant strategic management and corporate sustainability scholarship on reducing unsustainability is seen to defend common business practices by maintaining a strong focus on the economic purpose of the business (Bazerman & Hoffman, 1999; Crane et al., 2014). Some scholars endeavour to corroborate the so-called business case for sustainability (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Day & Arnold, 1998; Harris & Tregidga, 2012) and thus conform to the dominant beliefs rooted in the strategic management and corporate sustainability literature (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). For example, research has advocated for environmental management (Albertini, 2013), corporate social responsibility, and corporate citizenship (Margolis, Elfenbein, & Walsh, 2007; Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003; Surroca, Tribó, & Waddock, 2010) as long as these activities generate financial payoff for the business (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014).

Sustainability-as-flourishing proposes a positive perspective on creating social and environmental value that is in contrast to the problem-oriented and fear-based view of minimising unsustainability. The discourse around minimising unsustainability in the business and wider sustainability literature has been criticised for its prevailing problem-orientation (G. B. Grant, 2012). Framing the goal of a particular business activity as reducing social distress or ecological deterioration puts the focus on identifying and solving a problem, or – as an extreme example – on defending the

world against a disaster (G. B. Grant, 2012). Such framing can be perceived as threatening which can lead to stress and eliciting a survival response (G. B. Grant, 2012; Harré, 2011). Unfortunately, a survival response motivated by fear may make adhering to acquainted strategies and habitual thoughts and behaviours more likely (G. B. Grant, 2012, p. 125; Harré, 2011). At the same time, a fearful response may not yield the creativity beneficial for solving the problem (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005; G. B. Grant, 2012; Harré, 2011).

Several beliefs underlying both business practice and literature are regarded to perpetuate social injustice and environmental degradation and therefore inimical to sustainability-as-flourishing. For example the taken for granted need for exponential economic growth (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014) rejects a focus on growth as not only insufficient to deliver human well-being (Costanza et al., 2013; Moore, 2015), but also potentially contributing to greater environmental degradation (Balakrishnan, Duvall, & Primeaux, 2003). Furthermore, the belief that the main purpose of business is to generate profit for shareholders (Friedman, 1970) – still prevailing in much current thinking (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014) – often invokes trade-offs to the detriment of the social or environmental dimensions of business (Hahn et al., 2010; Kearins et al., 2010). Even deeper lying assumptions that undergird practice and literature (and culture in general) include the scientific worldview of Cartesianism (Ehrenfeld, 2008a) which assumes there is a single objective reality that can be known through science (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Welford, 1998). While the scientific worldview has led to major accomplishments, such as medicinal treatments for many illnesses that once killed millions of people (Watkins, 2014), its reductionist approaches result in a narrow view of the world (Welford, 1998). This reductionist, mechanistic, and positivist scientific worldview can restrict the understanding of the complex living system Earth (Gladwin et al., 1995; Lovelock, 2000; Roome, 2012; Welford, 1998). Another problematic deep-seated belief is that a human thinks and behaves as homo economicus — self-interested, rational, and utility-maximising (Gladwin et al., 1995). Such an assumption can give rise to excessive consumerism and unsustainable behaviour that negatively affects the environment (Assadourian, 2013; Renner, 2015; Rimanoczy, 2013) and may leave intrinsic human aspirations unfulfilled (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976).

Given these ingrained assumptions that are inimical to sustainability-as-flourishing, scholars argue transformational change is required at the behavioural, cultural, and institutional foundations of our modern industrialised economies (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; G. B. Grant, 2012; Kurucz et al., 2013). I suggest together with others that the possibility of sustainability-as-flourishing can become more likely when we transform our current beliefs and norms – that is our habitual ways of thinking and acting individually and societally (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Laszlo et al., 2014; Moore, 2015).

In sum, sustainability-as-flourishing offers a framework for thinking about the creation of social and environmental value that is in sharp contrast to much of the critical and orthodox literatures on corporate sustainability. The critical literature has usefully focused attention, for example, on the difference between corporate discourse on sustainability (akin to weak sustainability) and the requirement of more ecologically centred approaches which eschew trade-offs between the different dimensions of sustainability (also referred to as strong sustainability) (Roome, 2012). The corporate social responsibility literature has focused on perpetuating the dominant unsustainable profit-focused business-as-usual paradigm rather than challenging it (Crane et al., 2014; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Roome, 2012).

On the contrary, sustainability-as-flourishing throws mainstream beliefs into doubt, but remains largely theoretical and requires further inquiry of our academic and practical endeavours to manifest the positive vision (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Laszlo et al., 2012). The thesis employs sustainability-as-flourishing as a lens through which to empirically investigate social and environmental value creation, starting with the individual social entrepreneurs' inner reality and metacognition. As such, it seeks to contribute to the literature by researching social entrepreneurship as a process that might help transform society and underlying conventional beliefs in literature and business practice (Driver & Porter, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Zahra et al., 2009).

Social entrepreneurship

In accordance with other scholars, I understand and explore *social entrepreneurship as a process that involves the innovative use of resources to create social and/or environmental value (Mair & Martí, 2006), and to catalyse socioeconomic*

transformation (Driver & Porter, 2012; Mair & Martí, 2006; Montesano Montessori, 2016; Parrish & Foxon, 2009; Waldron et al., 2016). *Simultaneously, social entrepreneurship engages in commercial activities to financially sustain the enterprise* (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). As an extension of this understanding and in line with Haigh and Hoffman (2014), I argue that social entrepreneurship might have the capacity to advance humanity towards sustainability-as-flourishing. This optimism is maintained despite the recognition that social entrepreneurship might face challenges in scaling impact and thus might be limited in its potential to initiate large-scale change (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Laszlo et al., 2014; Sud, VanSandt, & Baugous, 2009). Even though individual enterprises and the collective sector are often small in size (Kaplan, 2018; Smith Milway, 2014), some argue that social enterprises can disrupt established industries and signal new pathways of how to steer the process of change (Elkington & Hartigan, 2008). Social enterprises' demonstration of successfully integrating social and environmental with economic goals can throw established management thinking around maximising profits at the expense of social and environmental goals into doubt (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). We have not yet seen the large-scale changes needed for sustainability-as-flourishing.

The literature presents three orientations of entrepreneurship that innovatively engage in social and environmental value creation, and that may hold the potential to engender a societal transformation of cultural norms and beliefs (Assadourian, 2013; Driver & Porter, 2012; Waldron et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009). These orientations comprise *social* (Mair & Martí, 2006; Miller, Grimes, McMullen, & Vogus, 2012; Montesano Montessori, 2016), *environmental*³ (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998; Meek, Pacheco, & York, 2010; York, O'Neil, & Sarasvathy, 2016), and *sustainable entrepreneurship*⁴ (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Markman et al., 2016; Parrish, 2010).

³ The term *environmental entrepreneurship* subsumes the terms ecopreneurship (Dixon & Clifford, 2007; Isaak, 2002; Kirkwood & Walton, 2010; Pastakia, 1998), green entrepreneurship (de Bruin & Lewis, 2010), and environmental businesses (Holt, 2011).

⁴ In addition to social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship I also consider research on hybrid organisations where relevant (Battilana, Sngul, Pache, & Model, 2015; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Jay, 2013). Hybrid organisations refer to organisations that integrate a social and environmental mission with commercial activities to sustain their operations (Battilana et al., 2015; McMullen & Warnick, 2016).

The three orientations are considered distinct, although striving for related goals (Thompson, Kiefer, & York, 2011). In narrow terms, social entrepreneurship predominantly focuses on improving the lives of marginalised and disadvantaged (Alvord et al., 2004; Martin & Osberg, 2007) “*people today*” (Thompson et al., 2011, p. 204), such as making available affordable adequate medical care for the poor (McMullen & Warnick, 2016). Environmental entrepreneurship centres on generating both “*economic and ecological*” wealth (Thompson et al., 2011, p. 204), for example producing renewable energy to diminish dependence on pollution-intensive forms of energy production (York et al., 2016). And lastly, sustainable entrepreneurship concentrates on a “‘triple bottom line’ of *people, planet, profit*” (Thompson et al., 2011, p. 204), such as importing organic and fair trade food commodities from so-called developing countries to developed countries to enhance environmental practices and provide a just livelihood for rural producers (Parrish, 2010).

I use ‘social entrepreneurship’ as an umbrella term that encompasses all three orientations – social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship – in most parts of this thesis, except in Chapter 2 / Manuscript 1 which explores the distinctions between the three orientations of entrepreneurship in more detail. Taken together, research has referred to these entrepreneurial orientations as having the potential to foster non-economic value beyond private economic wealth (Thompson et al., 2011; York et al., 2016) and to bring about a profound change in cultural beliefs and behaviour (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). Scholars tend to adhere to this positive appraisal even though commercial entrepreneurship attracts criticism for reproducing the unsustainable economic model of market capitalism (Calás, Smircich, & Bourne, 2009) and for its – to an extent – dysfunctional effects on society (Zahra & Wright, 2016).

Research implies how social entrepreneurship can move humanity toward sustainability-as-flourishing. Social entrepreneurship has been theorised to engage in envisioning a better world and constructing a related new narrative, which might shift conventional convictions (Dey & Mason, 2018; Montesano Montessori, 2016). Recent work suggests that social entrepreneurship engages new beliefs and practices, due to its integration of social and/or environmental missions with commercial activities (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Battilana & Lee, 2014; McMullen & Warnick, 2016; York et al., 2016). This unconventional entrepreneurial orientation might pose challenges to the historical assumptions and practices ingrained in strategic management literature

and orthodox business (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). However, the notion that social entrepreneurship contributes to socioeconomic transformation remains largely conceptual and prescriptive in the literature (J. K. Hall et al., 2010). Empirical research has yet to provide much insight into whether and how social entrepreneurship is stimulating the transformational change (J. K. Hall et al., 2010) that others say is required for sustainability-as-flourishing (Laszlo et al., 2014; Upward & Jones, 2016).

Moreover, scholars call for research that goes beyond the general problem-solving approach taken in existing literature. This problem-solving perspective generally informs much of existing social entrepreneurship research – akin to the problem-orientation of scholarship on reducing unsustainability. There seems to be a subtle undercurrent to ‘creating social and environmental wealth’, and that is ‘solving social and environmental problems’ (J. K. Hall et al., 2010; Lenox & York, 2012; Martin & Osberg, 2007; Smith et al., 2013). Similar to scientific research in general (G. B. Grant, 2012), including early psychology research (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), social entrepreneurship inquiry often starts with the identification of a problem, such as environmental degradation, or social inequality (Desa, 2012; Engelke, Mauksch, Darkow, & von der Gracht, 2016; Smith et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2011; Zahra et al., 2009), for an exception see Shepherd and Patzelt’s (2011) article. Some researchers seem to perceive problem-solving as the ultimate goal, and that is against what they assess social entrepreneurial outcomes. This scientific approach certainly has offered fertile ground for discovery and development so far (G. B. Grant, 2012).

Interestingly, a problem-oriented approach might only lead to the absence of the problem one is addressing, including alleviated poverty or minimised pollution (R. Fritz, 1984, as cited in G. B. Grant, 2012) – which, given the magnitude of the social and environmental issues, would be huge progress. However, this approach might not enable the creation of a desired outcome (R. Fritz, 1984, as cited in G. B. Grant, 2012), such as human and planetary thriving that goes beyond eliminating problems. More research is needed that helps to envision a thriving future for humans and the planet (G. B. Grant, 2012). This thesis answers the call for this kind of research by applying the vision of sustainability-as-flourishing as an ideal reference point to explore whether social entrepreneurship’s change efforts engender progress towards human and planetary well-being.

Finally, I contend existing social entrepreneurship research focuses on the objective exterior dimension of reality and what is urgently needed is a focus on the interior dimension, as is the case in the social sciences in general (Karp, 2006). In other words, research has predominantly explored outwardly discernible social facts, structures, and relationships between people within the structures (Karp, 2006) to explain how social entrepreneurship enacts change in cultural beliefs and practices. To date, the inner subjective world of social entrepreneurs has received little attention in the literature, similar to the inner world of commercial entrepreneurs (Karp, 2006). In particular, the role of social entrepreneurs' metacognition in the generation of social and/or environmental value as well as socioeconomic change remains underexplored. Yet, this research is deemed potentially useful, because psychologists attest a strong connection between people's metacognition and their decisions and actions (Nelson, 1996; Ochsner, Bunge, Gross, & Gabrieli, 2002; Reynolds, 2006).

Metacognition

In line with psychology literature, I understand *metacognition as awareness of cognitive content, cognitive processes and related emotions, and regulation thereof* (Fernandez-Duque, Baird, & Posner, 2000; Flavell, 1979; Frith & Fleming, 2014; Nelson, 1996; Ochsner et al., 2002; Schraw, 1998; Shimamura, 2000). In other words, metacognition signifies the knowledge of patterns in thoughts and thought processes (Nelson, 1996), and related feelings (Ochsner et al., 2002). It can enable non-habitual thoughts and the transformation of emotions (Ochsner et al., 2002). Individuals have disparate aptitudes in being aware of and regulating their thought processes and feelings (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; Haynie et al., 2010), and these abilities may be enhanced through practice over time (Batha & Carroll, 2007; K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003).

As defined in this thesis, metacognition bears some similarity with other constructs that have received attention in the literature. For example, "private self-consciousness" – the ability to be highly aware of internal states and to self-reflect (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; Cramer, 2000; Trapnell & Campbell, 1999) – resembles the awareness of cognitive and emotional patterns involved in metacognition, but does not necessarily include the regulation of these patterns. A second concept that overlaps with metacognition is "emotional intelligence" – the competency to be aware

of and regulate one's emotional states (Boyatzis, 2011; K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; Goleman, 1998, 2013). However, emotional intelligence does not include awareness of associated cognitive processes.

A third construct resembling metacognition is mindfulness (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016). It can be defined as the state of being attentive to and aware of present events and experiences (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; K. W. Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). Mindfulness is described as registering both internal *and* external events and occurrences as bare facts (K. W. Brown et al., 2007).

Metacognition and mindfulness appear to be very similar if not analogous concepts (Kudesia, 2017; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012). However, they have different origins and emphases (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). The term "metacognition" comes from Western psychology; and due to its clinical perspective it appears more functional (Flavell, 1979; Nelson, 1996). The term "mindfulness", on the other hand, comes from Buddhism and, following Buddhist principles, has an ethical dimension (Purser & Milillo, 2015; Scherer & Waistell, 2018). Mindfulness has emerged in Western psychology (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; K. W. Brown et al., 2007; Kabat-Zinn, 1982, 2003) and organisational research (Marques, 2012; Purser & Milillo, 2015; Siqueira & Pitassi, 2016; Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2012; Weick & Putnam, 2006; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). Therefore, I weave in mindfulness research along the way. It is important to note the conceptual distinction between *practices* that develop metacognition or mindfulness and the *state* of metacognition or mindfulness itself.

The concept of metacognition is surfacing in management research. For example, strategic management researchers recommend metacognitive capabilities to free oneself from patterns in perception and meaning-making (Bledow et al., 2009; Lewis, 2000) and to self-regulate emotional responses (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011). For example, metacognitive capabilities have been regarded as "second-order thinking" that involves critical self-reflection to re-frame one's deep-seated assumptions (Lewis, 2000, p. 764). Metacognitive capabilities might also enable individuals to "take a systems view and even a unitive view on reality; simultaneously hold and manage conflicting frames, perspectives and emotions; and deeply accept oneself, others, and the moment, without judgment" (B. C. Brown, 2012b, pp. 561, 565). There is burgeoning research in the context of generating value beyond financial benefit, theorising that metacognitive capabilities are beneficial for social and

environmental value creation, and ultimately for profound socioeconomic change in industries and communities (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016).

The role of metacognition in entrepreneurship has just recently emerged in the literature (Haynie et al., 2010; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Haynie et al., 2012; Lorenz, Ramsey, & Richey, 2018; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). Scholars have started to explore a self-aware and self-regulatory mindset and its role in enabling entrepreneurs to think beyond biases entrenched in prevailing cognition (Haynie et al., 2012), and to change outdated inefficient ways of doing things (Haynie et al., 2010). However, to date this research remains sparse because the focus in entrepreneurship inquiry has been on ordinary cognition, also referred to as mental models (i.e. knowledge structures, heuristics, or schema) that an entrepreneur applies to make assessments, judgements, or decisions when creating and running an enterprise (Haynie et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2002, p. 97). Much research has advanced insight into commercial entrepreneurs' cognitive and emotional processes and their effect on entrepreneurial decisions and actions mostly from more objective external perspectives (R. A. Baron, 2000, 2008; R. A. Baron & Tang, 2011; R. A. Baron & Ward, 2004; Cardon, Foo, Shepherd, & Wiklund, 2012; Grichnik, Smeja, & Welp, 2010; Hayton & Cholakova, 2012).

I perceive both metacognition and ordinary cognitive and emotional processes to be a part of *inner reality*⁵ – the interior condition from which one's decisions and actions originate (Karp, 2006; Scharmer, 2009). In other words, inner reality involves habitual thought processes and associated feelings, as well as metacognitive processes that allow an individual to become aware of and regulate the habitual cognitive and emotional processes (Nelson & Narens, 1990; Shimamura, 2000). It is worth noting that self-awareness and self-regulation are more of a possibility than an everyday phenomenon for most individuals (Reynolds, 2006).

Given the potential that metacognition holds for entrepreneurship in general, and for social entrepreneurship in particular, it is surprising that little empirical research has been done on the role metacognition plays in social entrepreneurship (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). While there is initial qualitative work that suggests an

⁵ The concept of *inner reality* was my starting point in the thesis for thinking about where an individual's decisions and actions originate. It is a major concept in Manuscript 2. In later manuscripts, inner reality gave way to a deeper focus on the concept of metacognition, as the awareness and regulation of habitual cognition seemed to play a major role in shaping social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions.

entrepreneur's awareness of thoughts can contribute to venture characteristics that are beneficial for social and environmental value creation (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014), more empirical research is needed to understand how social entrepreneurs' metacognition affects the value creation process.

Interestingly, psychology research confirms, for the vast majority of individuals most thought processes and feelings flow habitually and automatically without conscious awareness (Haidt, 2001; Reynolds, 2006). That means sensory objects are often interpreted through the filters of previous conditioning (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007, p. 212) without the actor noticing this reflexive pattern matching process (Haidt, 2001; Reynolds, 2006; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012). The vastly biased nature of habitual cognition highlights the importance of metacognition for overcoming inefficient and outdated habits in thinking and resulting behaviour (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

Knowledge about practices to enhance metacognition is advancing in the organisational literature (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Mirvis, 2008; Petriglieri, Wood, & Petriglieri, 2011). While to date little research has explored how to enhance awareness and regulation of thoughts and feelings particularly in social entrepreneurs (for an exception see Smith, Besharov, Wessels, & Chertok, 2012; Zhu, Rooney, & Phillips, 2016), studies exist that investigate relevant leadership and executive development programmes. Such development programmes embrace a variety of different practices to increase participants' metacognition (Mirvis, 2008; Rimanoczy, 2017; Smith et al., 2012). Practices range from mindfulness meditation and reflective journaling to dialogue, role-play (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Laszlo et al., 2014; Waddock & Lozano, 2013), and coaching (De Haan et al., 2010; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; A. M. Grant, 2014). The general goal of these varied practices is to encourage awareness of habitual thoughts and beliefs (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Zhu et al., 2016). Awareness, in turn, can bring about behavioural changes so that individuals are more flexible, effective, and socially and environmentally responsible in an organisational context (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Laszlo et al., 2012; Roglio & Light, 2009; Zhu et al., 2016).

One practice to enhance metacognition is coaching (D. T. Hall et al., 1999). It is a practice advocated in leadership development programmes and has captured the interest of both practitioners and academics (Segers et al., 2011). Several authors

endorse the application of coaching techniques to enhance individuals' metacognition (D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Poelmans, 2009; Roglio & Light, 2009; Segers et al., 2011). Coaching is understood as *a systematic process of providing coachees with the opportunities, means, and knowledge they need to transform their mindset, in order to improve their professional performance, personal well-being and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of their enterprises* (Peterson & Hicks, as cited in Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Segers et al., 2011, p. 204). While we know much about approaches and structures for the coaching process (De Haan et al., 2010, p. 607; O'Connor & Lages, 2004; Segers et al., 2011; Whitmore, 2009), relatively little is said about the underlying mechanisms of coaching conversations that may enhance metacognition.

In addition, the application of coaching to a social entrepreneurship context with the intention to contribute to positive change appears worthwhile for future research. Coaching has been discussed as a way to support a transformation towards a better world (Lasley, Kellogg, Michaels, & Brown, 2015; Outhwaite & Bettridge, 2009). While it has been mentioned as a process for social change, research in this field is limited (Shoukry & Cox, 2018). Much existing work centres on coaching in a corporate context, primarily with senior managers (A. M. Grant, 2011b; Shoukry & Cox, 2018). In that context, coaching has been critiqued as a tool that may perpetuate the unsustainable status quo that serves people with power and privilege (Lasley et al., 2015; Shoukry & Cox, 2018). Furthermore, coaching was seen as an appropriate exemplar of an 'outsider' intervention that could be trialled for its utility in inducing greater metacognition, as a potential practical extension of this thesis.

As previously stated, this thesis integrates the three concepts of sustainability-as-flourishing, social entrepreneurship, and metacognition. Firstly, I start at the individual level to explore the mechanisms of how social entrepreneurs' metacognition shapes their entrepreneurial decisions and actions. Secondly, at the organisational level, this thesis inquires into the role that social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions play in shaping social and environmental value creation when founding enterprises. Thirdly, at the wider environment level, I investigate what sort of outcomes the social entrepreneurial process ultimately creates and whether it contributes to transformational change that can nudge humanity towards sustainability-as-flourishing. Lastly, I study the role coaching plays in enhancing social entrepreneurs' metacognition and supporting wider positive change. The past research overview gives

rise to research questions and intended contributions of the thesis that are presented in the next section.

Research questions and intended contributions

The overall research question is: *How does social entrepreneurs' metacognition ultimately shape transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing?*

My subordinate research issues are summarised in the following questions:

1. How does social entrepreneurs' metacognition shape their entrepreneurial decisions and actions at the individual level?
2. How do social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions affect the social and environmental value creation process at the organisational level?
3. How does the social and environmental value creation process shape transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing at the wider environment level?
4. How can coaching enhance metacognition to enable social and environmental value creation that brings about socioeconomic change?

This thesis intends to make three theoretical contributions and to offer one practical implication. First, this thesis seeks to paint a more complete picture of the human-centred factors involved in a social entrepreneurial process of shaping a socioeconomic transformation towards sustainability-as-flourishing. To accomplish such a more comprehensive understanding, I integrate three levels of analysis, 1) the individual social entrepreneur's metacognition, thoughts and feelings, and resulting behaviour, 2) the value creation process at the enterprise level, and 3) possible changes at the wider environment level. In particular, embracing metacognition at the individual level and linking it to the organisational and wider environment level follows a call for more research of emergent, bottom-up processes (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). A more complete picture of the process of shaping change can extend the corporate sustainability and social entrepreneurship literature which to date has largely neglected an integrated view of the three levels of analysis. I also aim to enrich the corporate sustainability literature by shedding light on unconventional social entrepreneurial mechanisms in the pursuit of sustainability-as-flourishing.

Second, the thesis expands researchers' view of the social value creation process by focussing on entrepreneurs' inner reality, not just the external reality reflected in the bulk of entrepreneurship research to date (Karp, 2006). This focus is in line with a change in social science literature in general from a focus on mainly objectively observable facts in the exterior dimension of people's realities to people's inner, subjectively perceived and constructed realities (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Cunliffe, 2011; Karp, 2006; Nelson, 1996; Steingard, 2005; Weick & Putnam, 2006). More specifically, this thesis' exploration of metacognition represents a valuable departure from the present entrepreneurship research on conventional cognition (Haynie et al., 2010). All told, the thesis provides a more comprehensive understanding of social and environmental value creation.

Third, this thesis strives to enrich the social entrepreneurship literature by incorporating the vision of sustainability-as-flourishing as an aspirational benchmark to evaluate the outcomes of the social and environmental value creation process. This new benchmark might help in shifting the research field's current problem-solving focus towards a more generative approach that strives for a desired state. Also, a benchmark might help answer scholars' call for research on the social and environmental effects of entrepreneurship that seeks to create value ahead of financial profit (Markman et al., 2016).

As a practical implication, I aim to produce insights for social entrepreneurs into the way their internal reality affects how they behave and shape their external reality. In particular, I seek to highlight how metacognitive capabilities that can be practised and enhanced play out in social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions, and how these ultimately can affect change towards sustainability-as-flourishing.

Research design and layout

Overarching methodology

To answer the research questions, I embrace the following methodology. Ontologically (i.e. concerning the nature of reality), this thesis adopts a constructivist lens with an interest in socioeconomic change through changes in self-awareness. This view suggests a relativist world view and implies that realities can be comprehended as manifold, intangible, and socially based mental constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The intellectual constructions and their related realities can change over time when

“their constructors become more informed” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). From this perspective, organisations and value creation are continually shaped by actors in an “emergent social process”, by social interaction and the way the actors perceive social situations (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 28). For the thesis, this ontology entails the notion that entrepreneurs’ subjective inner realities and creative actions shape the way in which entrepreneurs understand, actively create, and continually recreate the external social world (Chiles et al. 2010, p. 143; Karp, 2006). It also implies that as the entrepreneurs (reality constructors) evolve and become more informed, so too, evolve their creative actions. Thus, this research embraces the notion of path creation and purposeful shared agency emerging through relational processes that generate phenomena (Garud, Kumaraswamy, & Karnøe, 2010). I am interested in the “source of social reality” and thus seek to explore human consciousness (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 31).

In addition, given that I am interested in transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing, I borrow from the radical humanist paradigm. I research the way in which this change in the “social world” could be brought about “through a change in modes of cognition and consciousness” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 33). I agree with the notion that human consciousness is influenced by the “ideological superstructures” (e.g. cultural beliefs) with which we interrelate, and that these forces estrange us from our “true consciousness” which impedes authentic human actualisation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 32). I am interested in exploring ways in which humans can transcend their limitations and fulfil their potentiality. I admit that I might be more engaged than a “passionate participant”, and that my voice might at times be that of a wishful “transformative intellectual” as an advocate for the increase of human awareness and a flourishing future (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 112).

The ensuing subjectivist epistemology (i.e. the relationship between the inquirer and the inquired) entails that the researcher and the object under investigation are interactively connected and jointly generate the findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The interviewees and I as the researcher cannot be separated from our knowledge or our values and thus play a role in co-constructing empirical data (Driver, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) leading to a subjective assessment of the phenomenon under study. I acknowledge that the account I formulate of the social world will present a particular constructed version of the social reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011) that

may not be shared by individual research participants. However, in my account, I aim to be truthful to what I heard and understood from them.

I aim to make explicit to the reader my values, biases, passions and assumptions that influenced me in shaping the study and interpreting the data I gathered. My enthusiasm for self-development, my desire to contribute to a desirable thriving world, and academic interest in John Ehrenfeld's intriguing vision of sustainability-as-flourishing inspired me and importantly influenced my thinking around this thesis. I have been engaging in self-developmental, reflective practices for a decade, and been regularly meditating for the last few years. I came to embrace the assumption that we all are co-creators of the world and that "ultimate cause is to be sought not in the physical, but in mind, or consciousness" (Harman, 1998, p. 159). I also agree with Albert Einstein that we cannot solve our current problems if we stay at the same level of awareness that created the problems. I gradually adopted the notion that a rise in humanity's awareness might be beneficial to create consciously the flourishing external reality to which we aspire. At the same time, I do not see it as useful to negatively judge people for their level of awareness as we are all on our journey and have equal rights to live our lives and to progress and grow at our own pace⁶. I appreciate that my partial viewpoint and past experiences have influenced my values and assumptions. Wherever possible, with the expertise and guidance of both my supervisors, I sought to reduce my personal bias to write a balanced doctoral thesis that reflects the nuanced data I collected.

The methodology (i.e. the strategy of inquiry) I embrace for the empirical investigation is interpretive in nature and is appropriate to comprehend the subjective meaning of reported experiences of the research participants (Elaine Demps, as cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). In this thesis, I seek to empathetically understand and interpret the participants' accounts of their subjective experience and their explanations of it (Bryman & Bell, 2011; B. M. Grant & Giddings, 2002), including the social entrepreneurs' subjective reports about the introspection into their inner reality (Nelson, 1996). Consequently, my approach to research is qualitatively oriented (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 20). I intend to induce theory by looking at patterns

⁶ I embrace the notion of personal progress and growth based on the humanistic assumption that all people strive for self-actualisation in that they seek to fully reach their natural potential (Stober, 2006).

emerging from a deep analysis of the data – albeit I co-constructed the interview experiences, where data was collected.

Overall comments on data collection and analysis

This section gives an overview of the method for the empirical data collection and analysis used in the thesis and described in more detail in Chapters 3 to 5 (Manuscripts 2 to 4). As an orientation, Chapter 2 (Manuscript 1) offers a literature review on social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship, and thus, is based on secondary data.

For the primary data collection embedded in Manuscripts 2 to 4 (Chapters 3 to 5), I embraced a qualitative approach to reveal, explicate and interpret how social entrepreneurs' metacognition shapes the social and environmental value creation process, and potentially a transformation towards sustainability-as-flourishing. Guba and Lincoln (1994) declare qualitative data offer rich insights into individual and organisational behaviour. Before I started data collection, I sought and was granted ethics approval (see Appendices I and VII).

For Manuscripts 2 and 3, the main data collection method was semi-structured in-depth interviews with social entrepreneurs (for a similar approach see Brown, 2012a) in the social entrepreneurship field in New Zealand and Germany. In-depth interviews aimed for a rich picture of how interviewees subjectively experienced their inner reality (i.e. metacognition and ordinary thoughts and feelings) and how this inner reality shaped their social enterprises and change beyond organisational boundaries. Supplemental secondary data, including the enterprises' websites, YouTube-videos, and articles helped to gain a better appreciation of the individual entrepreneurial contexts.

Creating a sample of social entrepreneurs involved several steps. For New Zealand, I generated a list of potential entrepreneurs by consulting with three informants in the social entrepreneurship field. For the German sample, I considered those entrepreneurs that were portrayed on the websites of two organisations supporting social entrepreneurs (ASHOKA Germany and Schwab Foundation). I also examined social entrepreneurs who had previously won an award. For both the New Zealand and the German sample, I then searched secondary resources, such as the enterprises' websites, to find out more about the business model, the vision and

mission. Lastly, to purposefully select the interviewees (Creswell, 2013), a criterion sampling method was used (Patton, 2002). In the invitation to participate in the research, I informed potential interviewees that I would maintain their privacy by using synonyms instead of their names. However, I made clear that due to the size of the social entrepreneurship sector, people within the sector might still recognise them and therefore, there was limited confidentiality.

Before the main interviews, I tested the semi-structured questionnaires in two pilot interviews with social entrepreneurs and slightly adjusted the questions. Interview questions asked the social entrepreneurs about their thoughts and feelings in the entrepreneurial process, the way they engaged in social and environmental value creation, and the impact their enterprises had on the wider environment. Indicative interview questions for the social entrepreneurs can be found in Appendices IV and V. I conducted 17 semi-structured interviews with social entrepreneurs in New Zealand and Germany. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

As a qualitative data analysis method, I embraced inductive thematic analysis. The goal of this method was to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes across my data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006) relative to how the social entrepreneurs' metacognition shaped the value creation process and the change they created in the wider environment. Analysing the qualitative evidence involved several analytic devices that enabled me to abstract the evidence from the data and identify themes (Singh, Corner, & Pavlovich, 2015). These devices included open and expanded coding, analytic memo-ing, and theme-ing (Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Richards, 2005; Singh et al., 2015). I used NVivo software as supporting data management tool (Patton, 2002; Richards, 2005) and, in part, to assist the process of coding. Tables were created to track, summarise, and display emergent themes and supporting data (Galunic & Eisenhardt, 1996). For example, Table 6 (Chapter 3 / Manuscript 2) on page 78 captures one of the themes (Mechanisms generating social and environmental value creation), its subthemes and supporting evidence that emerged through the data analysis. Lastly, I generated process models reflecting what was going on overall in the evidence (Creswell, 2013). These process models helped to interpret the larger meaning of the data and to induce and visualise theory (Creswell, 2013; Singh et al., 2015). Figure 1 on page 84 exemplifies such a model. Although the analysis might appear as linear and clearly structured, the process was more iterative and required

tracking back and forth between theory and data multiple times (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

For Manuscript 4, I employed an action research approach. I (as the coach) conducted a series of coaching conversations with a New Zealand social entrepreneur. Indicative coaching questions, which I had previously tested with a professional coach, can be found in Appendix X. All conversations were recorded and transcribed. Data analysis adopted a pragmatic method to develop theory. It involved examining the conversations through the lens of the research question. I started by reading the transcripts of the conversations and my reflections. Then, I created tables that summarised important moments of interaction between the social entrepreneur and me during the conversations and wrote a narrative that recounts the entrepreneur's journey of self-growth throughout the coaching sessions.

Research setting

Data were collected from New Zealand and German social entrepreneurs. From a socioeconomic perspective, the two OECD countries have complementary Western cultures (Hofstede-Centre, n.d.), and slightly different, but comparable socioeconomic models. New Zealand is characterised by a “mixed economy which operates on free market principles” (The-Treasury, 2016) and a social welfare system (Carpinter, 2012). Germany in comparison operates as a social market economy (Engelke et al., 2016), merging a free market capitalist economy with the social policies of a welfare state. Thus, in both cases, the states traditionally have been providing various benefits and services for their citizens (Carpinter, 2012; Engelke et al., 2016). In recent decades, public budgets contracted, while simultaneously social and environmental issues, such as environmental degradation, poverty, growing social inequality, unemployment, or ethnic and demographic changes necessitate truly innovative solutions (Engelke et al., 2016; Fuchs, 2014; Kaplan, 2013).

In response, in both New Zealand and Germany social enterprises are on the rise in the pursuit of more effective and affordable solutions (Kaplan, 2013; Scheuerle, Glänzel, Knust, & Then, 2013). Both countries embrace a similar understanding of social enterprises – as businesses with primarily social and environmental objectives (Engelke et al., 2016; Kaplan, 2013). In the two countries, most social enterprises are

young and small with low annual revenue and a predominantly local or regional sphere of influence (de Bruin & Lewis, 2010; Kaplan, 2013; Scheuerle et al., 2013).

Only recently has public and academic interest in social entrepreneurship in both countries increased (de Bruin & Lewis, 2010; Jansen, Heinze, & Beckmann, 2013; Kearins & Collins, 2012). The phenomenon is gaining momentum for various reasons, including governmental budget cutbacks, deficient governmental social programmes, young talented and dedicated social entrepreneurs (Engelke et al., 2016; Kaplan, 2013; Scheuerle et al., 2013), urgency for effective solutions (Fuchs, 2014; Kaplan, 2013), and increased social and environmental awareness by financial investors (Kaplan, 2013).

The social enterprise contexts in the two countries show a few slight differences. At the time of data collection for this thesis, New Zealand's social enterprises were seen to receive little financial support and to lack a supporting ecosystem (Kaplan, 2013) – despite emergent umbrella organisations like the Ākina Foundation that aims to grow selected enterprises. In comparison, social enterprises in Germany seem to be more fortunate with long-established support networks, such as Ashoka Germany or the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. In addition, it seems to be relatively easier in Germany than in New Zealand for start-ups to receive public funding (Jansen et al., 2013; Scheuerle & Bauer, 2013; Scheuerle et al., 2013).

Overall, New Zealand and Germany share many similarities in the social entrepreneurial research context but show small differences. In both countries, social entrepreneurship is at an early stage and faces obstacles, but momentum is building. Having lived in both Germany (28 years) and New Zealand (eight years), and being fluent in German and English uniquely positioned me to collect data in these two countries. The layout of the thesis is outlined next.

Thesis layout

This thesis comprises five manuscripts, which are overviewed below and appear as Chapters 2-6 of this document. The final Chapter 7 offers an integrating discussion and conclusion. As a Format 2 thesis at AUT, all chapters, excluding the first and the final one, were written in the format of publishable manuscripts. Additionally, Chapters 2-6 begin with a preface explaining how the chapters are linked and build upon each other to ensure that the thesis is a cohesive whole. At the time of enrolment, the university requirement was that there should be three to five

component manuscripts for this thesis. There was no requirement to publish within the enrolment period.

Chapter 2 / Manuscript 1. Title: *Social, Environmental and Sustainable Entrepreneurship Research: What is Needed for Sustainability-as-Flourishing?*

Manuscript 1 critically reviews the literature on social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship to determine what aspects of sustainability-as-flourishing are explicitly addressed. A set of requisites for a flourishing planet is distilled to assess the three orientations of entrepreneurship literature. The manuscript suggests a research agenda that addresses the most apparent limitations, such as a scarcity of exploring critical reflection processes that can shape entrepreneurs' actions and a lack of emphasis on the Earth's physical carrying capacity.

Chapter 3 / Manuscript 2. Title: *How Social Entrepreneurs' Inner Realities Shape Value Creation*

Manuscript 2 investigates how social entrepreneurs' inner realities shape entrepreneurial actions and ultimately social and environmental value creation. The qualitative approach employed a thematic analysis of eight⁷ in-depth interviews with New Zealand social entrepreneurs to provide a rich picture of their inner realities and associated entrepreneurial outcomes. This manuscript focuses on subordinate research questions 1 (individual level) and 2 (organisational level), and to a lesser extent on question 3 (wider environment level).

Chapter 4 / Manuscript 3. Title: *How Social Entrepreneurs' Metacognition Supports Change towards Flourishing*

This manuscript explores how social entrepreneurs' metacognition affects social and environmental value creation, and ultimately may induce change that can move society towards sustainability-as-flourishing. Thematic analysis of interviews yielded patterns across five cases of social entrepreneurship in Germany at different levels of analysis – individual entrepreneur, enterprise, and wider environment level. This manuscript investigates the first three subordinate research questions.

⁷ I interviewed twelve social entrepreneurs in New Zealand. However, in Manuscript 2, I focused on and induced themes based on only eight of these twelve interviews with social entrepreneurs who were running younger enterprises (less than eight years old). I used the other four cases of older organisations to substantiate induced themes.

Chapter 5 / Manuscript 4. Title: *Towards a Coaching Framework that Enhances Social Entrepreneurs' Metacognition*

Manuscript 4 explores how coaching can enhance a social entrepreneur's metacognition to enable change towards flourishing at an individual and organisational level, and potentially in the wider environment. It adopts an action research approach that involved a series of coaching conversations between the author and a social entrepreneur. The goal was to empower the entrepreneur to reach her goals by becoming aware of and regulate limiting thoughts, unpleasant feelings, and unhelpful behaviour. This manuscript predominantly answers the fourth subordinate research question but also touches on the first three questions.

Chapter 6 / Manuscript 5. Title: *Social Entrepreneurship: Creating Positive Change from the Inside Out*

The final short manuscript targets a practitioner audience. It makes the implications of the thesis for practice explicit and summarises findings from the previous manuscripts. It highlights the benefits of metacognition for social entrepreneurs and explains how it affects decisions and actions at the individual level. It also describes how there is a flow-on effect to innovative and responsible organisations that may contribute to wider flourishing. It offers ideas for social entrepreneurs to enhance metacognition through practices like coaching.

Chapter 7 / Discussion and Conclusion. The discussion and conclusion chapter integrates the findings of the different manuscripts. It offers implications for theory and practice, mentions limitations and areas for future research. I conclude with some personal reflections.

Having laid the foundation of the thesis in the introduction, I now move on to the presentation of the individual chapters/manuscripts.

Chapter 2 / Manuscript 1 –

Social, Environmental and Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Research: What Is Needed for Sustainability-as-Flourishing?

Preface

In this chapter/manuscript, I build on the introductory overview of past research on sustainability-as-flourishing, social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship, and metacognition (termed ‘critical reflection’ in this manuscript) by reviewing the literature in more depth. First, I conceptually further develop the vision of sustainability-as-flourishing. To do so, I draw out a set of requisites for flourishing from environmental and social scientific research. I suggest a possible sequence for embracing the requisites and associated changes in organisations that could, over time, move us closer to sustainability-as-flourishing. I then review social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship research in light of the requisites to examine the extent to which the three types of research explicitly address sustainability-as-flourishing. I find both contributions of, and limitations in the research. In particular, I highlight a need for further research on entrepreneurs’ awareness of their habitual mental and emotional patterns, as well as on complex systems thinking and root causes.

The spelling in this manuscript differs slightly from the remainder of the thesis as it is in line with the requirements of *Organization & Environment* where it was published in 2015.

Abstract

What process of socioeconomic transformation might move humanity towards sustainability-as-flourishing, an ideal view of sustainability where life flourishes indefinitely on Earth? We⁸ suggest entrepreneurship as one such process and review the literature on three types of entrepreneurship said to transform society by creating

⁸ This manuscript adopts the ‘we’ form as it has been written to be published as a jointly authored paper with my two supervisors.

value beyond profit: social, environmental and sustainable entrepreneurship. From environmental and social scientific literature, we distil a set of requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing, a topic of growing interest. We then review the literature on social, environmental and sustainable entrepreneurship relative to these requisites. Findings show contributions and also limitations towards sustainability-as-flourishing reflected in research on each type of entrepreneurship. We propose a research agenda to address the most glaring limitations including a failure to study critical reflection processes that can shape entrepreneurs' actions and a lack of emphasis on the Earth's physical carrying capacity. Future research could also zero in more on complex systems thinking and consider root causes.

Keywords

Social entrepreneurship, environmental entrepreneurship, sustainable entrepreneurship, sustainability-as-flourishing, transformational change, literature review

Introduction

Business has been challenged with a bold, new view of sustainability, namely "sustainability-as-flourishing," defined as "the possibility that humans and other life will flourish on Earth forever" (Cooperrider & Fry, 2012; Ehrenfeld, 2008b, p. 6; Grant, 2012; Laszlo et al., 2012). Based on a broader notion of "sustainability", sustainability-as-flourishing is a dynamic systems construct (Berkes, Colding, & Folke, 2003; Bradbury, 2003; Stead & Stead, 1994) and an aspirational ideal future state (Sharma & Kearins, 2011) that goes beyond surviving (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). We will know it has been manifested when we see self-actualised individuals (Keyes, 2003), radiant health, flourishing relationships, prospering enterprises, humming communities (Laszlo et al., 2014, p. 9) and a thriving natural environment (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). This bold new view stands in contrast to most existing research, which portrays sustainability and sustainable development as business-as-usual augmented by incremental environmental or social initiatives (Roome, 2012) that reduce risk/costs or increase reputation and revenues (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Day & Arnold, 1998). Such initiatives are described as merely decreasing *unsustainability* rather than engendering sustainability (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013).

We contend meeting the challenge of sustainability-as-flourishing requires business to create transformational, not incremental change. Transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing involves a fundamental change in society's culture and collective consciousness that enables the creation of new collective beliefs and values (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Harman, 1998). We propose entrepreneurship as a process that may contribute to bringing about this transformation (Driver & Porter, 2012), even if its commercial version is criticized for being unequal and exploitative (Tedmanson, Verduyn, Essers, & Gartner, 2012). This article focuses on entrepreneurship that creates social and/or environmental value beyond private economic wealth (Thompson et al., 2011). We understand entrepreneurship as a process that has the potential to transform industries, institutions and societies (Driver & Porter, 2012; Pacheco et al., 2010; Zahra et al., 2009). Research documents its transforming role regarding creating new ventures, products and services in the social (Short, Moss, & Lumpkin, 2009; Zahra et al., 2009) as well as in the environmental domain (Anderson, 1998).

Existing literature lays the groundwork for understanding entrepreneurship as a process for achieving sustainability-as-flourishing (Laszlo et al., 2014). In particular, scholars describe and investigate types of entrepreneurship considered to be a panacea for social and environmental issues (Gibbs, 2009; J. K. Hall et al., 2010; Tilley & Young, 2009). These types include social (Corner & Ho, 2010; Mair & Marti, 2009), environmental (Isaak, 2002; Kirkwood & Walton, 2010) and sustainable entrepreneurship (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Parrish, 2010). Taken together, these types of entrepreneurship are proposed to not only reduce *unsustainability* (Dean & McMullen, 2007) but also to create social and environmental value, and to bring about transformational change (Driver & Porter, 2012; Zahra et al., 2009), highlighting their potential to contribute to sustainability-as-flourishing. To date, little analysis has been done to see whether research on the three types of entrepreneurship reflects this potential.

The broad purpose of this article is to critically review entrepreneurship research to determine what aspects of sustainability-as-flourishing are explicitly addressed. More specifically, we critically review existing research on social (SocE), environmental (EnvE) and sustainable (SustE) entrepreneurship to assess the extent to which it acknowledges sustainability-as-flourishing.

To serve this purpose, we begin by compiling requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing from existing environmental and social scientific literature on sustainability. We then conduct a focused literature review on SocE, EnvE and SustE and critically assess identified research against the requisites. Finally, we propose a research agenda that addresses the limitations of existing research as revealed through our critical analysis. Importantly, the proposed research agenda highlights scholarship that could enhance knowledge of entrepreneurship as a process for the creation of value beyond profit and has the potential to contribute to a debate on the socioeconomic transformation needed to achieve sustainability-as-flourishing. We contend that such knowledge will not only extend entrepreneurship theory beyond its current focus on financial outcomes but also be of interest to the burgeoning number of organizations investing in social and environmental value creation.

Background: Social, environmental and sustainable entrepreneurship

To help understand the role of entrepreneurship in moving towards sustainability-as-flourishing, this section describes three different types of entrepreneurship, SocE, EnvE and SustE⁹, and attempts to tease out distinctions among them. There is a plethora of various definitions for these terms in the wider management literature (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010; Tilley & Young, 2009), and scholars continue to debate how these types overlap (J. K. Hall et al., 2010; Lenox & York, 2012; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; Thompson et al., 2011). We considered it essential to include all three types to avoid privileging one type. Below, we describe the three types as implemented in this research.

We begin with SocE, which is defined as an entrepreneurial process that focuses on the creation of social value or value for people and communities, according to several review articles (Dacin et al., 2010; Short et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2013; Zahra et al., 2009). In a more narrow sense, it is described as entrepreneurship that uplifts marginalised and disadvantaged groups (Alvord et al., 2004; Mair & Martí, 2006;

⁹ We distinguish sustainability-as-flourishing from SustE as follows. SustE is a type of entrepreneurship that adopts a business model focusing on the contribution to sustainable development (Cohen & Winn, 2007) by creating environmental, social and economic value (J. K. Hall et al., 2010). Sustainable development is about business-almost-as-usual with increased efficiencies and can be referred to as weak sustainability requiring merely incremental change (Roome, 2012). Sustainability-as-flourishing, in contrast, strives to create strong sustainability and involves fundamental change of our beliefs and culture (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013).

Martin & Osberg, 2007). Profit is regarded as a means to that end, and the social agenda is often placed ahead of economic outcomes (Thompson et al., 2011). SocE is considered distinct from SustE and EnvE because it involves a selfless and caring concern for solving social issues beyond a concern for financial returns (Thompson et al., 2011). A well-known example is the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, founded by Muhammad Yunus. It not only contributed—and still does—to alleviating poverty for several million people but also changed conventional thinking regarding creditworthiness in the banking sector (Yunus, Moingeon, & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010).

EnvE involves the creation of environmental value (preservation and regeneration of the natural environment) as well as the economic value of conventional entrepreneurship (Isaak, 2002; Lenox & York, 2012). These for-profit enterprises (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010) have an environmental mission (Pastakia, 1998) that generally is of lesser or equal importance to economic value creation (Thompson et al., 2011). EnvE is considered a unique type of entrepreneurship due to its focus on solving environmentally relevant market failures and examination of opportunities that produce both economic and ecological benefits (Thompson et al., 2011, p. 216). Solar energy organizations offer an example of environmental enterprises in the United States and elsewhere. Solar technology depends on the “renewable” and nondepleting energy of the sun to create heat or electricity, as opposed to the burning of fossil fuels with associated air emissions and other negative environmental impacts. As a “better” alternative, the technology creates value for the environment while simultaneously generating increasing economic value (Meek et al., 2010).

SustE focuses on creating products and ventures that address environmental, social and economic market failures simultaneously (J. K. Hall et al., 2010; Parrish, 2010; Thompson et al., 2011). This type of entrepreneurship involves both a social *and* environmental mission (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011) as well as the need to create economic value similar to conventional entrepreneurship (Schlange, 2009). Some scholars suggest that SustE focuses on profit as a means to an end, with the proviso that the enterprise must be financially self-sustaining (Thompson et al., 2011). SustE can be regarded as distinct from SocE and EnvE because it focuses on the creation of both social and ecological benefits in conjunction with economic value (Thompson et al., 2011, p. 210). The case of U.S. enterprise *NativeEnergy* provides an example of

SustE (Parrish & Foxon, 2009). It offers projects whereby corporations can attempt to offset their carbon emissions by funding energy projects such as wind farms for communities in need, as *NativeEnergy* states on its website in 2014.

In sum, each type of entrepreneurship provides a perspective on entrepreneurship as a process for socioeconomic transformation where business creates value beyond profit. The types offer promising avenues for studying key questions about how entrepreneurship can promote “a better way of living” (Thompson et al., 2011, p. 223) akin to sustainability-as-flourishing. We thus focus on SocE, EnvE and SustE research for our critical review.

Requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing

To achieve sustainability-as-flourishing, scholars from a variety of disciplines advocate transformational change in our economic, social and political systems (Capra, 2002; Costanza et al., 2013; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Eisler, 2008; Grant, 2012; Harding, 2006; Harman, 1998; Jackson, 2011; Kubiszewski et al., 2013). Ehrenfeld (2012), who coined the term sustainability-as-flourishing, argued for change in two beliefs underlying our thinking about these systems: (1) authentic human nature is based on caring rather than needing and (2) large systems are best understood using a complexity perspective. Building on these two beliefs, we reviewed respected environmental and social scientific research to develop a set of requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing by distilling what earlier research deemed necessary to achieve such an ideal. We started by compiling requisites that were mentioned frequently in the literature. We then condensed several of the requisites until we arrived at a number of requisites that was manageable for the review but still covered the important dimensions. We stopped condensing when we considered the requisites to be internally homogenous and externally heterogeneous. In addition to Ehrenfeld’s work (2005, 2012; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013), the research base included the following: the Worldwatch Institute’s report *State of the world 2013*; the *Oxford handbook of business and the natural environment* (Bansal & Hoffman, 2012), Berkes et al. (2003), Rockström et al. (2009), and earlier work by Gladwin et al. (1997). Other references used to develop the requisites that echo the need for profound socioeconomic transformation were Jackson (2011), Laszlo et al. (2012), OECD (2011),

Scharmer and Kaufer (2013), the United Nations' (2014) millennium development goals report and the World Bank (2013) report on poverty.

The resulting set of eight requisites were grouped into three categories—Beliefs and values, Diagnosis, and Responsibility. These categories broadly indicate an implementation model that suggests a possible sequence for embracing the requisites and associated changes in organizations that could, over time, move us closer to sustainability-as-flourishing. We started with Beliefs and values, as these have the potential to influence perception and thus shape the diagnosis and resulting behaviour. We considered beliefs and values in an organization to be reflected through Requisites 1 and 2. Second, we suggest a thorough Diagnosis in regards to the social/environmental problem that is to be solved. Diagnosis is represented by Requisites 3, 4 and 5. As a third step, we recommend adopting responsible behaviour—in other words, Responsibility, expressed through Requisites 6, 7 and 8. The next sections review research on SocE, EnvE and SustE relative to these requisites.

Beliefs and values

Requisite 1. Sustainability scholars contend that life on Earth cannot flourish until society recognizes and enables the best rather than the worst of human nature (Meadows, Meadows, & Randers, 1992). Those promoting sustainability-as-flourishing go so far as to say that this ideal state is not possible until human society is “transformed to foster love” (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013, p. 89). Such love would be a compassionate love and reflect an awareness of human interconnectedness (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). Consequently, scholars intent on sustainability-as-flourishing argue for a change in assumptions about human nature. Specifically, researchers object to the notion of homo economicus, which assumes humans act rationally and purely out of self-centeredness (Khozein, Karlberg, & Freeman, 2013; Welford, 1998). A move away from homo economicus is recognized by a growing body of research in sustainability, psychology and sociology, which indicates that selfishness is not integral to human nature but that humans exhibit positive traits like moral, social and caring behaviours (Ehrenfeld, 2005, 2012; Harré, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Increasing numbers of studies find that humans are emotionally rewarded for prosocial behaviour by positive pleasant feelings (Haidt, 2000; Harré, 2011). Additionally, recent research maintains that prosocial behaviour

promotes creativity and thus leads to the generation of ideas that are both novel and useful—particularly for others (Grant & Berry, 2011; Polman & Emich, 2011). And creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems are required if humanity is to move towards a flourishing future (Grant, 2012). This discussion reflecting humanity's capacity to care gives rise to our first requisite for a process that can bring about an ideal form of sustainability—*(1) human behaviour involves caring for others and for nature.*

Requisite 2. Scholars also point to notions of social equity and justice being enacted to ensure that all have the opportunity to flourish on Earth (Raworth, 2013). However, humanity is currently facing high levels of social distress (Raworth, 2013) with increasing social inequalities even in high-income nations (OECD, 2011). Although one of the Millennium Development Goals—dividing global poverty into half—was achieved ahead of the 2015 time frame (United Nations, 2014), extreme human deprivation, social exclusion and vulnerability remain acute for one-third of the population worldwide (The World Bank, 2013). Predominant causes of excessive resource use are the exorbitant consumption of the richest 10% of the world's population and the resource-intensive production practices of businesses offering products for their consumption (Raworth, 2013, p. 34). Scholars advocate transforming society to include principles of a fair, equal and balanced distribution of environmental and financial resources (Shrivastava, 2012). This view of social equity and justice suggests the second requisite for change that moves humanity towards sustainability-flourishing—*(2) principles of social justice and equity are enacted.*

Diagnosis

Requisite 3. Increasingly, scholars contend that complex systems thinking is vital for flourishing (Capra, 2002; Ehrenfeld, 2012; Levy & Lichtenstein, 2012; Roome, 2012) and would embrace the understanding that humans are embedded in the ecosystem (Davidson-Hunt & Berkes, 2003). Such thinking is in stark contrast to the Western-oriented reductionist and mechanistic view that has dominated business thinking and research (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Roome, 2012; Welford, 1998). Complex systems thinking acknowledges the interrelationship among multiple systems, such as the material economy, wider society and ecological life-support systems (Costanza et al., 2013). This interrelationship must be acknowledged through a holistic and complex

systems view of business and the wider economy (Costanza et al., 2013), a view that embraces nonlinearity, uncertainty and surprise (Berkes et al., 2003; Davidson-Hunt & Berkes, 2003). Additionally, complex systems thinking requires extremely long-term horizons for decision making (Laszlo et al., 2012), knowledge obtained by holistic experiential understanding (Shrivastava, 2012) and pragmatism (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). We thus propose the third requisite for enabling sustainability-as-flourishing—*(3) complex systems thinking and holistic approaches are adopted.*

Requisite 4. Sustainability-as-flourishing involves addressing root causes rather than symptoms of issues when consciously developing products and services¹⁰ (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Zahra et al., 2009). Identifying the underlying causes of *unsustainability* is an imperative first step for addressing them (Rimanoczy, 2013). People's beliefs and values are identified as a primary cause for *unsustainability* (Ehrenfeld, 2005; Rimanoczy, 2013). Getting at a root cause may involve identifying and transforming beliefs and values and their associated social structures so that structures and systems that support flourishing are possible (Pacheco et al., 2010; Zahra et al., 2009). This logic gives rise to the fourth requisite—*(4) root causes of issues are addressed.*

Requisite 5. There is a growing awareness that critical reflection by individuals on their habitual mental and emotional patterns can facilitate value creation for society and nature (Laszlo et al., 2012; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). First, critical reflection enhances a person's capacity to identify assumptions underlying decisions made and actions taken (Argyris, 1991). Identifying assumptions can lead to the realisation that they are inaccurate, providing an opportunity to change them and the decisions that result from them (Argyris, 1991). Second, critical reflection facilitates a deeper connection with intuition and insight (Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999; Rosenblatt & Thickstun, 1994), which enables humans to expand their connectedness to self, other humans and nature (Laszlo et al., 2012). In particular, this feeling of connectedness is essential for humans to address the challenge of establishing businesses that can contribute to sustainability-as-flourishing (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman,

¹⁰ In addition to the development of products and services—which is at the core of an organisation—other components of business should be incorporated in decision making for sustainability (Arvai, Campbell-Arvai, & Steel, 2012). Examples include embedding sustainability in the organizational culture (Haugh & Talwar, 2010), creating the corporate mission, human resource practices, business operations and business facilities (McKinsey-&-Company, 2010; Russo, 2010).

2013; Jackson, 2011; Laszlo et al., 2012). Researchers claim critical reflection enhances understanding of complex systems (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Laszlo et al., 2012; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Shrivastava, 2012), a consideration already identified as essential for sustainability-as-flourishing. Following this logic, we propose the fifth requisite for change to bring about sustainability-as-flourishing—*(5) processes of enactment are underpinned by critical reflection.*

Responsibility

Requisite 6. While profit is still vital, it has a role within sustainability-as-flourishing that is different from its role in much conventional business thinking. Profit shifts from being an almost exclusive focus of business to being a means whereby a more essential goal can be accomplished—development of “human well-being and quality of life” (Costanza et al., 2013, p. 126). Such a view is in contrast to the current concept of capitalism, which builds on a growth-dependent market system, encouraging business to grow in economic terms and seek to make profit without restraint (Costanza et al., 2013; Jones, 2011). Even the Brundtland conception of sustainable development retains economic growth and the resulting profit “as the operative concept” (Ehrenfeld, 2005, p. 23). What is needed for sustainability-as-flourishing is something closer to the notion of shared value,¹¹ wherein business’s first priority is to create social and environmental value, and profit serves merely as a means to create this value (Driver & Porter, 2012). We thus suggest moving beyond a paradigm of unbridled economic growth so that profit is viewed as a means to an end, and present the sixth requisite—*(6) profit is a means to an end, not an end in itself.*

Requisite 7. Sustainability-as-flourishing requires recognition of “planetary boundaries” (Rockström et al., 2009). Stated differently, Earth has a limited carrying capacity to support life, which must be acknowledged to ensure human and other life forms’ safety in the first instance (Folke, 2013; Rockström et al., 2009) and indefinite flourishing in the long run (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). Unfortunately, human activity is currently exceeding crucial biophysical boundaries (Engelman, 2013). Out of nine

¹¹ Critiques around the notion of “shared value,” introduced by Porter and Kramer (2011), exist. These critical voices suggest that “shared value” might not be as new and game changing as portrayed (Beschorner, 2013; Crane et al., 2014). Similar concepts had been explored earlier by other authors (e.g., Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Emerson, 2003).

interlinked planetary boundaries¹², three have already been crossed: climate change (Folke, 2013; IPCC, 2013; Rockström et al., 2009), rate of biodiversity loss and human interference with the nitrogen cycle (Folke, 2013; Rockström et al., 2009). This situation is particularly alarming, given that all life on Earth is critically dependent on and inextricably intertwined with the biosphere's functioning and life supporting services and resources (Folke, 2013; IPCC, 2013). Unless immediate and powerful action on a global scale is achieved, the trend of diminishing ecosystems is "measurably unsustainable" (Engelman, 2013, p. 12; N. Stern, 2007). We therefore suggest the seventh requisite with regard to societal transformation that would support sustainability-as-flourishing—(7) *planetary boundaries are respected and operated within*.

Requisite 8. Researchers encourage participative and collaborative approaches to business and other activities in order to manifest sustainability-as-flourishing. Competition tends to be rooted in an either/or logic that casts enterprises as rivals and separates them into winners and losers (Rimanoczy, 2013). Even where enterprises compete, they generally still need to collaborate, however. Competitive behaviour has been considered to contribute to social and environmental problems (Prayukvong & Rees, 2010). Therefore, scholars suggest a shift from egosystems based on competition towards ecosystems based on collaboration (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). Participative approaches enhance sustainability (Khozein et al., 2013) and resilience to absorb and adapt to change (Berkes et al., 2003) through collaborative innovation across sectors like business, society and politics (Hart & Sharma, 2004; Roome, 2012) and the co-creation of a flourishing future (Laszlo et al., 2012). Similarly, collaborative approaches build communities and nurture human relationships as well as natural ecosystems (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013, p. 67). We agree with these scholars and advance the eighth and final requisite for manifesting sustainability-as-flourishing—(8) *participative and collaborative approaches are embraced*.

¹² Nine interlinked planetary boundaries for Earth's vital biophysical processes have been identified. Crossing one or more of these boundaries may have severe consequences for life on Earth (Folke, 2013). Three of these boundaries have already been crossed. Further five processes (e.g., phosphorus cycle or stratospheric ozone depletion) have been significantly interfered with and compromised. For two processes (atmospheric aerosol loading and chemical pollution), the planetary boundaries have yet to be quantitatively estimated (Folke, 2013; Rockström et al., 2009).

Method

These eight requisites are used to critically review the existing literature on SocE, EnvE and SustE. This section describes first how articles were identified for this review and then explains how we determined the extent to which the three literature streams acknowledged the eight requisites. We began by casting a wide net, looking for all articles published on the three types of entrepreneurship. Specifically, the first author completed an extensive keyword search in ABI Inform (ProQuest) and Academic Search Premier (EBSCO), the two main online databases of published journal articles in business-related disciplines (Kolk, Rivera-Santos, & Rufin, 2014). She searched the *titles, abstract, and subject heading* for the following keywords: “social enterprise*” OR “social entrepreneur*”; “sustainab* entrepreneur*” OR “sustainab* enterprise*” OR “sustainability-driven entrepreneur*”; “ecopreneur*” OR “environmental entrepreneur*” OR “ecological entrepreneur*” OR “environmental enterprise*” OR “ecological enterprise*” OR “green ent*15” (for a similar approach, see Ucbasaran, Shepherd, Lockett, & Lyon, 2013). She imposed no time period but did restrict the search to peer-reviewed journals. This initial search located more than 700 items.

The next step involved reviewing the titles and abstracts of the 700 articles to screen out articles not relevant to our purpose. Examples of articles that were eliminated include book reviews and articles that addressed the search terms in only a minor way (similar to Kolk et al., 2014). Others were eliminated because they predominantly dealt with not-for-profit and nongovernmental organizations focusing merely on adding another income stream. About 200 articles remained after this screening-out process. The critical review of all articles yielded by this search was not practical. We, therefore, included articles to review against the requisites in three ways. First, we included ten review articles—articles that had as their main focus reviewing research in SocE, EnvE, or SustE. Eight were recent journal articles, and two were book chapters (Lenox & York, 2012; Thompson et al., 2011). A careful reading of these publications suggested that together they provided an excellent summary of the mainstream research on SocE, EnvE and SustE to date. These articles are identified by an asterisk (*) in the reference list. Six of the 10 publications are on SocE (Dacin et al., 2010; Hill et al., 2010; Lehner & Kansikas, 2013; Short et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2013; Zahra et al., 2009), one covers EnvE (Lenox & York, 2012), two review SustE (J. K. Hall

et al., 2010; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011), and one compares SocE, EnvE and SustE (Thompson et al., 2011).

Second, we read the abstracts of all the other nonreview articles identified by the database search and included those that had the potential to shed light on the entrepreneurial processes in relation to requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing. We looked specifically at whether the articles referred to key concepts we had distilled in the requisites (e.g., caring, complex systems thinking, or critical reflection) explicitly and through the use of other terms that would connote similar meaning. Third, a thorough reading of the review articles surfaced additional articles and book chapters that we deemed suitable to include because they were either frequently cited or very relevant to the research topic. All told, 31 articles in addition to the ten review articles were included for critical review relative to the requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing. The additional articles that spread out evenly across the fields of SocE, EnvE and SustE are marked with double asterisks (**) in the reference list.

For the purpose of the critical review and to assess the extent to which research on each of the three types of entrepreneurship acknowledged the requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing, we engaged in the following steps. First, we sorted all articles by type of entrepreneurship predominantly addressed. We highlight two instances in which categorization into one of the three types of entrepreneurship was challenging. The Gibbs (2009) article was ultimately classified in both in EnvE and SustE because it explores both types. The other instance was the Dean and McMullen (2007) article. We classified it as EnvE because it was essentially about an entrepreneurial response to environmental degradation even though it used the term “sustainable entrepreneurship” in the title. Our classification of it is consistent with that of other authors (Lenox & York, 2012; Pacheco et al., 2010).

Second, we read through the 41 articles selected to see whether each addressed any of the eight requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing. We considered the articles individually and collectively for each type of entrepreneurship and determined the extent to which the body of research acknowledged each requisite. The criteria used to determine the level of acknowledgement was as follows: (1) “*acknowledged*” meant many of the articles addressed a requisite, (2) “*partially acknowledged*” indicated only some of the articles addressed the requisite or a

requisite was incompletely considered, and (3) “unacknowledged” signified that there were (almost) no articles touching on the requisite.

Findings from analysis

This section reports findings from our analysis of research on SocE, EnvE and SustE with respect to the requisites. In particular, it reports an assessment of each type of entrepreneurship literature separately beginning with SocE. Table 1 summarizes the analysis and shows the extent to which each type acknowledges the requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing described above.

Social entrepreneurship research

The critical review suggested that four of the requisites are acknowledged within SocE research as follows: caring view of human behaviour (Requisite 1), principles of social justice and equity (Requisite 2), profit as a means to an end (Requisite 6) and participative collaboration (Requisite 8). The acknowledgement can be seen in the descriptions provided for each requisite in Table 1. We are not suggesting that there is no further research needed on these requisites; we are highlighting that the SocE research captured in the literature review adequately acknowledges these requisites. Notably, the other two types of entrepreneurship research did not fully acknowledge any of the requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing (see first row of Table 1).

Table1: Summary of analysis for entrepreneurship types using requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing

	Social entrepreneurship	Environmental entrepreneurship	Sustainable entrepreneurship
Requisite	Requisites acknowledged = 4 Partially acknowledged = 2 Unacknowledged = 2	Requisites acknowledged = 0 Partially acknowledged = 5 Unacknowledged = 3	Requisites acknowledged = 0 Partially acknowledged = 7 Unacknowledged = 1
Beliefs and values			
1. Caring view of human nature	Requisite acknowledged: Humans viewed as potentially caring (Miller et al., 2012)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Humans often viewed as self-centered with rational economic motivations (Lenox & York, 2012; Meek et al., 2010), but exceptions exist (Dixon & Clifford, 2007; Pastakia, 1998)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Human nature conceptualized beyond self-centeredness (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010; Parrish, 2010), but economic self-centered interests exist (Thompson et al., 2011)
2. Social justice and equity	Requisite acknowledged: Principles of social justice and equity central to SocE (Di Domenico, Haugh, & Tracey, 2010; Martin & Osberg, 2007), but competing demands between social and economic value creation are acknowledged (Lehner & Kansikas, 2013; Smith et al., 2013)	Requisite unacknowledged: Such principles rarely considered; focus is on environmentally relevant market failures (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Thompson et al., 2011)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Such principles considered as part of the triple bottom line (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010) but focus often on environmental and economic dimension, neglecting social issues (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Parrish & Foxon, 2009)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Diagnosis	Social entrepreneurship	Environmental entrepreneurship	Sustainable entrepreneurship
3. Complex systems thinking	Requisite partially acknowledged: Complexity incorporated through embeddedness of social issues in wider society (Nicholls & Young, 2008; Zahra et al., 2009), connectedness to other humans (Miller et al., 2012) and structuration theory (Short et al., 2009), but unanticipated negative results usually ignored (Dacin et al., 2010)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Techno-optimistic thinking (Gibbs, 2009; Isaak, 2002) and little focus on holistic operational approaches to environmental problems often limit complexity, but complexity incorporated by acknowledging connectedness to nature (Anderson, 1998; Kirkwood & Walton, 2010)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Systems thinking sometimes integrated through holistic cognition and extremely long-term horizons (Gagnon, 2012; Parrish, 2010), but focus on techno-optimistic solutions (Gibbs, 2009; J. K. Hall et al., 2010) underlines efficiency-based, narrowly focused, disconnected thinking (Shrivastava, Ivanaj, & Persson, 2013)
4. Root causes	Requisite partially acknowledged: Underlying social structure often addressed as root cause by “social engineers” (Driver & Porter, 2012; Hill et al., 2010; Zahra et al., 2009), but some SocE merely involves trying to create social value from a good idea (Corner & Ho, 2010; Zahra et al., 2009)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Addressing root causes limited by a focus on financially attractive opportunities and institutional forces shaping EnvE (Lenox & York, 2012), rather than EnvE influence on institutions (Thompson et al., 2011); underlying institutional issues sometimes addressed (Gibbs, 2009; York & Venkataraman, 2010)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Underlying social or economic institutions sometimes addressed (Pacheco et al., 2010; Parrish & Foxon, 2009) but sustainable development (J. K. Hall et al., 2010; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011) favours business-almost-as-usual
5. Critical reflection	Requisite unacknowledged: Critical reflection (e.g. on thinking patterns or connectedness to self, other humans and nature) rarely considered, but starting to be (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014)	Requisite unacknowledged: Critical reflection rarely considered in EnvE research	Requisite unacknowledged: Critical reflection rarely considered in SustE research

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Responsibility	Social entrepreneurship	Environmental entrepreneurship	Sustainable entrepreneurship
6. Profit as means, not an end	Requisite acknowledged: Profit described as a means for creating social value (Dacin et al., 2010; Short et al., 2009)	Requisite unacknowledged: Profit described as having equal or more importance to environmental value creation (Thompson et al., 2011)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Profit important for financial sustainability (Thompson et al., 2011), but social and environmental complementary to economic value creation (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011)
7. Planetary boundaries	Requisite unacknowledged: Such boundaries rarely considered, the focus is on social, not ecological value creation, but starting to be acknowledged (Patel & Mehta, 2011)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Planetary boundaries rarely considered due to the assumption of unbridled economic growth; limited resources and environmental degradation often examined from economic efficiency, not physical capacity of planet perspective (Isaak, 2002; York & Venkataraman, 2010)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Planetary boundaries rarely considered due to the assumption of unbridled economic growth, instead economic efficiency perspective applied (J. K. Hall et al., 2010) to examine resource scarcity and environmental degradation (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011), but exceptions exist (Parrish, 2010)
8. Participative collaboration	Requisite acknowledged: Collaborative behaviour (Alvord et al., 2004) acknowledged through examination of community-based enterprises and social capital (Montgomery, Dacin, & Dacin, 2012) but some research assume hero entrepreneur acting alone (Dey & Steyaert, 2010; Lehner & Kansikas, 2013)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Collaboration acknowledged (Keogh & Polonsky, 1998) but often focus on gaining competitive advantage (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010; Meek et al., 2010)	Requisite partially acknowledged: Collaboration often limited to occasions where competitive advantage can be gained (see for example Cohen & Winn, 2007; Pacheco et al., 2010); calls for more transdisciplinarity both for researchers and practitioners exist, endorsing dialogue and discussion (Shrivastava et al., 2013)

Note: SocE = social entrepreneurship, EnvE = environmental entrepreneurship, SustE = sustainable entrepreneurship.

It was found that two of the requisites are partially acknowledged within SocE research. As shown in Table 1, they included complex systems thinking (Requisite 3) and addressing root causes (Requisite 4). Table 1 indicates how each of these requisites are not yet fully acknowledged in SocE research. Finally, findings reveal two requisites that remain unacknowledged—critical reflection (Requisite 5) and planetary boundaries (Requisite 7). Critical reflection was unacknowledged by all three types of entrepreneurship research and thus appears as a limitation for them all. However, planetary boundaries are partially acknowledged in the EnvE and SustE literature. As such, the fact that research on SocE rarely considered Earth’s limited carrying capacity is more of a limitation for this research than for the other two types. This finding is not surprising given SocE’s focus on the creation of social value, particularly value for marginalized and disadvantaged people. Despite this limitation, it appears that SocE research, as compared to EnvE and SustE (discussed below), was the only one of the three types that evidenced requisites as fully acknowledged. Specifically, Table 1 reports in the first row that the SocE literature acknowledged four requisites in comparison to zero for both EnvE and SustE.

Environmental entrepreneurship research

The critical review indicated that none of the requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing are fully acknowledged within EnvE research. Again, the reader is referred to Table 1 for details supporting this conclusion. Findings show that EnvE research partially acknowledges five requisites, including a caring view of human behaviour (Requisite 1), complex systems thinking (Requisite 3), addressing root causes (Requisite 4), planetary boundaries (Requisite 7) and participative collaboration (Requisite 8). Taken collectively, these findings are consistent with other research which points out that EnvE research, despite its focus on solutions to environmental problems, has substantive limitations when considering sustainability-as-flourishing (Ehrenfeld, 2005, 2012). These limitations likely emanate from enterprises’ predominant focus on economic growth (Ehrenfeld, 2005; Welford, 1998) and an assumption that technology is the solution to environmental problems (Gladwin et al., 1997). Findings showed three requisites as unacknowledged within EnvE research. These are the following: principles of social justice and equity (Requisite 2), critical reflection (Requisite 5) and profit as a means to an end (Requisite 6). The finding regarding the social justice and

equity requisite was anticipated given EnvE's main focus on environmental issues (e.g., Kirkwood & Walton, 2010) as opposed to social or humanitarian issues.

Compared with research in SocE and SustE, EnvE was found to acknowledge the fewest number of requisites for sustainability. It is especially noteworthy that the EnvE literature does not acknowledge three requisites in comparison to one for SustE and two for SocE. This finding, in conjunction with the EnvE literature not fully acknowledging any of the requisites, points to substantive limitations with respect to EnvE as currently conceived contributing to sustainability-as-flourishing, according to existing research.

Sustainable entrepreneurship research

Our analysis suggested none of the requisites is fully acknowledged within SustE research. The reader is again referred to Table 1 for details. Seven requisites are partially acknowledged comprising: caring view of human nature (Requisite 1), principles of social justice and equity (Requisite 2), complex systems thinking (Requisite 3), addressing root causes (Requisite 4), profit as a means to an end (Requisite 6), planetary boundaries (Requisite 7) and participative collaboration (Requisite 8). As such, the SustE literature surpasses the EnvE literature in terms of partially acknowledged requisites (see first row of Table 1). This finding might be expected given SustE's explicit focus on the triple bottom line (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010), the creation of social and environmental value to complement profit (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011).

Nevertheless, partial acknowledgement does imply limitations for the SustE research with respect to a focus on sustainability-as-flourishing. This finding coheres with other research, which indicates that social and environmental value can be minimized within triple bottom line thinking to maximise economic value (Hahn et al., 2010). Scholars imply that trading off social and environmental value creation in favour of profit is due to the drive for continuous economic growth of enterprises that underlies much SustE research (Ehrenfeld, 2005; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Welford, 1998).

One requisite, critical reflection (Requisite 5), was found to be relatively unacknowledged within the SustE literature. The same conclusion was reached for both SocE and EnvE suggesting that this requisite is generally unacknowledged in

research on the types of entrepreneurship that explicitly incorporate value creation other than profit. Encouragingly, Table 1 does report one article that begins to bring critical reflection into SocE research.

Finally, SustE research does appear to have fewer limitations than EnvE when considering sustainability-as-flourishing because it partially acknowledges seven of the requisites compared with EnvE's five (see Table 1). This type of entrepreneurship research, however, arguably falls short of SocE since the latter type fully acknowledges four of the requisites. Nevertheless, we highlight that all three types of entrepreneurship research have limitations concerning sustainability-as-flourishing, despite their focus on value creation other than profit. The research agenda presented below summarizes areas of research that address these limitations and potentially furthers our understanding of entrepreneurship as a process for societal and economic transformation that can bring our world closer to sustainability-as-flourishing.

Discussion and a research agenda for transformational change

The purpose of this article was to critically review three types of entrepreneurship research to determine the extent to which they explicitly addressed sustainability-as-flourishing. We first developed eight requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing from the broad environmental and social scientific literature. We then reviewed the existing literature on SocE, EnvE and SustE—all types of entrepreneurship that embrace value creation beyond profit—relative to the requisites.

Our major finding was that research on all three types had limitations concerning sustainability-as-flourishing. Importantly, the juxtaposition of these types of entrepreneurship research and sustainability-as-flourishing suggested limitations that potentially retard progress towards sustainability-as-flourishing. The most fundamental limitation was that profit still dominates as the prevailing goal expressed in EnvE and SustE research. Our analysis called this view of profit into question, highlighting the notion of profit as a means to other ends. The analysis also pointed to a lack of acknowledgement in existing research regarding how critical reflection can inform and shape entrepreneurship that may contribute to a flourishing future. Our review gives rise to the following research agenda that may enhance our understanding of entrepreneurship's potential to engender the socioeconomic

transformation necessary to bring about sustainability-as-flourishing. While we do not suggest that all research papers focusing on the three types of entrepreneurship need to address all eight requisites, we discuss the four requisites that were least acknowledged to date. Moreover, we present issues of research methodology to be considered when designing suggested future research on sustainability-as-flourishing.

Research agenda

Critical reflection. Analysis of the existing literature revealed that the requisite of critical reflection largely remains unacknowledged in research on SocE, EnvE and SustE (Requisite 5, Table 1). Stated differently, there is scant research focused on entrepreneurs' contemplation and awareness of the habitual mental and emotional patterns that shape entrepreneurial processes and outcomes both intended and unintended. Similarly, very little literature in SocE, EnvE and SustE appears to consider how entrepreneurship reflects the connectedness of humans to self, other humans and to all of nature, a component of critical reflection (Laszlo et al., 2012). There is some promising research beginning to surface on this topic in SocE (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014) and commercial entrepreneurship research (Karp, 2006). Such research could identify the beliefs underlying entrepreneurship and shaping its outcomes (Ehrenfeld, 2012). Critical reflection and an awareness of connectedness are regarded as fundamental to transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Laszlo et al., 2012). We thus encourage scholars to research this topic including an investigation of questions like "How do habitual thinking patterns, and emotional reactions shape entrepreneurship?"

Similarly, researchers could explore how awareness of connectedness influences entrepreneurial behaviour and decision making. In addition, research on how entrepreneurs' feelings of connectedness inspire critical reflection on their thinking and emotional patterns could be useful. We also think that research on critical reflection could extend knowledge regarding the trade-offs inherent in achieving sustainability-as-flourishing. Such research could explore the extent to which reflection surfaces awareness of trade-offs between different types of value creation. This research would be consistent with that called for by scholars studying innovation given their conjecture that critical reflection or metacognitive capabilities help integrate the

competing demands inherent in innovation such as flexibility versus efficiency (Smith et al., 2013).

Planetary boundaries. The critical review uncovered limitations in the extant literature regarding planetary boundaries for all three types of entrepreneurship (Requisite 7, Table 1). Analysis suggested limitations emanate from a prevailing focus on economic growth of enterprises for EnvE and SustE and a somewhat exclusive focus on solving social issues for SocE. However, respecting Earth's limited carrying capacity is crucial for life to flourish (Rockström et al., 2009; Stead & Stead, 1994). As long as researchers remain fixed on notions of an enterprise's economic growth and profit for its own sake, incremental change towards less *unsustainability* seems likely to remain the focus of research on the broad topic of sustainability (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). We thus recommend future entrepreneurship research that explicitly explores how planetary boundaries are understood by entrepreneurs and how business decision making is affected.

There is auspicious research beginning to surface in this area. For example, Patel and Mehta (2011) offer a set of principles that could help ensure the planet's carrying capacity is explicitly recognized in entrepreneurship. Parrish (2010) advocates respecting planetary boundaries by enhancing the quality of natural resources like rivers used in production. Still, the analysis in Table 1 indicated that substantial future research is needed to understand the transformative role entrepreneurship can play in creating business that respects planetary boundaries. In particular, researchers could examine the entrepreneurial processes underlying value creation that do account for the physical limits of the planet and thus contribute to sustainability-as-flourishing. How do these processes differ from those that do not account for planetary boundaries? Which planetary boundaries are respected by entrepreneurs? Which ones are ignored and why? In addition, research could investigate the knowledge needed to engender entrepreneurial processes that acknowledge planetary boundaries.

Complex systems, holistic thinking. Findings revealed a limitation in existing research with respect to complex systems and holistic thinking, a requisite for sustainability-as-flourishing (Requisite 3, Table 1). In particular, existing research is criticized for a narrow focus on somewhat singular outcomes or issues that fail to reflect the multiplicity of issues inherent in a complex system (Shrivastava et al., 2013). A more holistic approach that acknowledges complexity is a necessity for

sustainability-as-flourishing (Ehrenfeld, 2012). We thus suggest future research that specifically investigates negative or unintended consequences of entrepreneurship. Are such consequences the result of a narrow focus in entrepreneurial processes? If so, then such research might also offer prescriptions regarding how to expand a narrow focus so that it better captures the complexity of the environment and the social and environmental issues that entrepreneurship attempts to address.

Perhaps research on SocE, EnvE and SustE failure could also reveal ways in which entrepreneurial processes failed to reflect complexity and holistic approaches to problem-solving. We also advocate the application of conceptual frameworks such as paradox theory when investigating entrepreneurship given its capacity to identify the seeming contradictions inherent in complex systems (Smith et al., 2013).

Root causes. Findings suggested a limited acknowledgement of root causes of *unsustainability* in SocE, EnvE and SustE research (Requisite 4, Table 1). Entrepreneurship research often addressed sustainability issues from the point of view of possible financial gain through social or environmental initiatives. However, the root causes requisite points to researching entrepreneurship to surface and understand the often hidden and complex underlying root causes (Ehrenfeld, 2005; Rimanoczy, 2013). Therefore, we suggest ambitious future research designed to identify the underlying issues that currently contribute to social injustice or environmental degradation and entrepreneurial means of addressing them.

One possible research avenue that could advance our understanding of root causes is on the topic of institutional entrepreneurship (Dacin et al., 2010; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011), the creation of novel institutions, or mechanisms of social order (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009), particularly in light of institutional voids (Mair & Marti, 2009). Scholars explore mechanisms that can address root causes by promoting institutional change (Desa, 2012; Parrish & Foxon, 2009; Zahra et al., 2009). Given the challenges SocE, EnvE and SustE face due to the lack of supportive markets and well-functioning social systems, we encourage further research that investigates the processes that SocE, EnvE and SustE engage in when changing current or creating new institutions to overcome *unsustainability*. We acknowledge that institutional entrepreneurship in some cases addresses mere symptoms of an underlying cause. Therefore, we also encourage additional research avenues to comprehend and adequately address the root of a sustainability issue.

Research methodologies. Our analysis implies methodologies that could enhance understanding of entrepreneurship's capacity to engender sustainability-as-flourishing. Given the limitations revealed in existing research, we encourage rigorous qualitative methodologies that allow for theory building that encompasses unconventional intuitive and subjective sources of knowledge (see also Gartner, 2007). More subjective research approaches seem especially useful given the need to explore issues such as critical reflection, while more holistic research that takes context into account appears important in expanding the understanding of complex systems thinking. In contrast, quantitative approaches often reflect a more reductionist, mechanistic worldview. Also, they often dissect components of the complex system, for example, by factoring out social and environmental consequences of entrepreneurial behaviour, and studying relationships between other selected variables. Understanding entrepreneurship that focuses on non-economic value creation from a purely positivist perspective has strong limitations (Lehner & Kansikas, 2013).

Shrivastava et al. (2013, p. 241) point out that “we business scholars need to open our minds, as well as our journals, and go beyond the frontiers of scientific rationality”. We advocate subjective and change-oriented research, which is in contrast to the more quantitative, objective research methodologies proposed in some of the articles included in the literature review (see Hill et al., 2010). Furthermore, like Shrivastava et al. (2013, p. 236), we promote transdisciplinary research approaches to entrepreneurship research, which enable non-reductionist inquiry embracing different forms of knowledge, including physical, social, emotional and metacognitive. In particular, we advocate working with scholars in social disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, and political science—in line with a similar suggestion made by Short et al. (2009). In addition, we endorse collaborating with researchers in the natural sciences since this field is fundamental for our understanding of planetary boundaries, and also, at times, root causes. Our analysis leads us to recommend the inclusion of these non-business disciplines in addition to traditional business disciplines like accounting, economics and marketing (in contrast to Short et al., 2009).

In conclusion, this article critically reviewed research on SocE, EnvE and SustE against requisites for sustainability-as-flourishing. The analysis revealed limitations in

the perspectives underlying SocE, EnvE and SustE research for moving towards sustainability-as-flourishing. The proposed research agenda offers suggestions for future research that could begin to address these limitations to gain further understanding of how entrepreneurship could bring about the fundamental socioeconomic transformation needed to ensure flourishing. We believe that the article also points to the transformative potential of the entrepreneurship process, a process that warrants attention by sustainability scholars. Entrepreneurship research can hopefully begin to fulfil its promise of envisioning what the future might look like (Gartner, 2007).

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Chapter 3 / Manuscript 2 –

How Social Entrepreneurs' Inner Realities Shape Value Creation

Preface

The introduction chapter identified key focal areas for future research at the intersection of social entrepreneurship¹³, inner reality/metacognition, and change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. Chapter 2 / Manuscript 1 highlighted that social entrepreneurs' critical reflection or awareness of habitual mental and emotional patterns remained under-researched in current literature on social entrepreneurship. This empirical manuscript focuses on the first two subordinate research questions of the thesis by qualitatively examining the role social entrepreneurs' inner reality (i.e. metacognition and ordinary thoughts and feelings) plays in shaping entrepreneurial decisions and actions at the individual level, and the social and environmental value creation process at the organisational level. To a lesser extent, it investigates research question 3 that explores how the value creation process influences the wider environment.

Abstract

This paper contributes to theory on the entrepreneurial value creation process by revealing how social entrepreneurs' inner realities shape entrepreneurial actions and ultimately social and environmental value creation. The qualitative approach examined eight cases of social entrepreneurship to provide a rich picture of entrepreneurs' inner realities and associated entrepreneurial outcomes. Findings show social entrepreneurs engaged in self-awareness practices, which increased their self-awareness of both positive and negative aspects of their inner realities. Positive aspects enabled generative value creation mechanisms leading to positive social and environmental outcomes, while negative aspects interfered, leading to unintended negative outcomes. A process model offers a more complete picture of the value creation process and displays the under-researched interplay of inner reality,

¹³ In this manuscript, I use 'social entrepreneurship' as an umbrella term that encompasses social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship.

mechanisms, and outcomes. As a practical implication, self-awareness practices may be a useful component of training programmes for social entrepreneurs alongside training in business start-up, marketing, and finance. A social implication is that generative mechanisms and outcomes inspired other people to create social value illustrating a further mechanism whereby, over time, a wider socioeconomic transformation can evolve. This study contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by revealing mechanisms that translate entrepreneurs' inner realities into value creation. Negative personal aspects and associated unintended outcomes call into question research that presents social entrepreneurs as heroic, exhibiting solely positive aspects.

Keywords

Social entrepreneurship, social/environmental value creation process, inner reality, metacognition, self-awareness

Introduction

More and more, researchers and practitioners suggest business as a force for good that has the potential to help solve social and environmental issues (Laszlo et al., 2014; Mackey & Sisodia, 2013; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Schultz, 2013). In particular, scholars widely and optimistically consider entrepreneurship as a panacea for social and environmental issues, and as a process to generate social and environmental value beyond merely economic value (Driver & Porter, 2012; Gibbs, 2009; Tilley & Young, 2009; Zahra et al., 2009). Some go so far to propose entrepreneurship that pursues social and environmental goals as a process for disrupting established industries and transforming dysfunctional socioeconomic systems (Elkington & Hartigan, 2008). They maintain this optimism even though commercial entrepreneurship has been rebuked as fundamentally unequal and exploitative (Tedmanson et al., 2012).

A growing body of literature has provided useful insights into the process whereby entrepreneurs create social and environmental beyond economic gain, in management (Porter & Kramer, 2011) and in entrepreneurship in particular (Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Lumpkin, Moss, Gras, Kato, & Amezcua, 2013; Parrish, 2010; Wilson & Post, 2013). Previous empirical findings on the social entrepreneurial value creation process suggests that entrepreneurs engage in processes like social bricolage (Desa,

2012; Di Domenico et al., 2010), effectuation (Corner & Ho, 2010; Fisher, 2012), and collaboration (de Bruin, Shaw, & Lewis, 2017; Montgomery et al., 2012) in their endeavour to create social and environmental value. Research has also examined different process stages through which social entrepreneurial opportunities are recognised and exploited (Perrini, Vurro, & Costanzo, 2010). Social entrepreneurship has been conceptualised as a process that can promote social change (Mair & Martí, 2006).

There has been relatively little examination of how social entrepreneurs' inner realities – the interior conditions from which their behaviours originate (defined in more detail below) – affect the process of social and environmental value creation (Karp, 2006; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). The sparse research is somewhat surprising given that psychologists show there are strong links between people's inner realities and their decisions and actions (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007; Reynolds, 2006). Entrepreneurship scholars have called for exploration of entrepreneurs' interior dimensions to comprehend more fully the process of entrepreneurial value creation (Chu, 2007; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Karp, 2006). The purpose of this paper is to research the inner realities of individual entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurial process of creating value beyond economic value, and associated outcomes empirically. We¹⁴ investigate the following research question, *how do social entrepreneurs' inner realities affect their actions and shape social and environmental value creation?* We implement a qualitative, inductive research design to enhance our understanding of how entrepreneurs perceive their interior condition and how it affects entrepreneurial actions.

The paper is structured as follows. We review the literature on inner reality and social entrepreneurship and then describe the research method we employed. Next, we present our findings including five themes and a model that depicts the entrepreneurial process of value creation in relation to inner reality. We conclude by discussing implications for the wider entrepreneurship and sustainability literature and entrepreneurial practice.

¹⁴ This manuscript adopts the 'we' form as it has been written so as to be published as a jointly authored paper with my two supervisors.

Background

Inner reality

Scholars describe inner reality as an individual's interior state from which entrepreneurial actions originate (Karp, 2006; Scharmer, 2009). Inner reality involves two processes – ordinary cognitive and emotional processes as well as metacognitive processes (i.e. awareness of thoughts and feelings) (Nelson & Narens, 1990). Individuals' exterior realities (e.g. previous experiences, upbringing, cultural values and beliefs, societal norms) conditioned and continue to influence their inner realities, in particular their cognitive and emotional processes (e.g. perceptual filters, bias, assumptions). As psychology research attests, most often, individuals are not aware of their cognitive and emotional processes; instead, most decisions flow from habitual and reflexive processes without conscious awareness (Reynolds, 2006). Psychology research also examines the positive effects of self-awareness and self-regulation of thoughts and feelings, such as reduced stress and enhanced relationships (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown et al., 2007; Newberg & Waldman, 2008). Therefore, depending on individuals' previous experiences and their levels of awareness they interpret and experience their exterior realities, interact with and shape these realities (Boiral et al., 2009; Cook-Greuter, 1999; Karp, 2006; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). As a result, self-awareness affects human's decision making (Reynolds, 2006).

Also, research in psychology holds that positive, pleasant thoughts and feelings are beneficial for taking action towards social and environmental problems (Harré, 2011). Positive thoughts and feelings are regarded not only to broaden individuals' sense of their ability to act, but also to induce a wider focus, and therefore allow them to more systemically view complex social and environmental issues and come up with more creative solutions (Harré, 2011). In contrast, negative thoughts and feelings constrict an individual's view and sense of being able to act, potentially leading to feeling helpless (Harré, 2011).

Admittedly, this dualism may seem simplistic, given that humans not only experience a range of thoughts and feelings, but may also experience conflicting thoughts and feelings at one moment in time. Furthermore, humans may sometimes feel more or less neutral, showing that there are thoughts and feelings between the two extremes of positive and negative. However, recent work on leadership

development differentiates between positive and negative emotions (Watkins, 2016). It suggests that consistently brilliant leadership is determined by how much time actors spend in a state where they experience positive emotions as opposed to negative emotions (Watkins, 2016, p. 88). When feeling positive, individuals have more access to cognitive ability (Watkins, 2016, p. 91). Self-awareness can help us shift to more positive emotions (Watkins, 2016).

Within the organisational and management literature, scholars are beginning to explore the effect of inner reality on decision-making in organisations (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011). This research suggests that developing awareness of habitual patterns in thoughts and feelings is a form of metacognition (“purposeful ‘thinking about thinking’”) that can create better outcomes for organisations (Haynie & Shepherd, 2009). Psychologists define metacognition as individuals’ knowledge of their thoughts, thought patterns and feelings (Flavell, 1976) and the regulation thereof (Shimamura, 2000). Some management theorists regard metacognition as essential to identify and overcome habitual decision-making patterns and to improve value creation processes (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016) and business strategies (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011). Researchers conjecture that the development of metacognition can help resolve tensions or deal with conflicting information in decision-making (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011), as is common in social value creation beyond private economic gain (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016). Research suggests that metacognition facilitates innovation especially when tensions need to be overcome (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2010; Bledow et al., 2009), such as in the simultaneous creation of social/environmental and economic value.

Building on existing work, we *define entrepreneurs’ inner realities as their interior dimension that encompasses habitual patterns in thoughts and feelings, as well as self-awareness of these patterns. Inner realities shape entrepreneurial decisions and actions, which in turn shape entrepreneurial outcomes.*

Research on inner reality is beginning to surface in the broader entrepreneurship literature. This literature suggests the inner realities of entrepreneurs shape their decisions and actions at the individual level (Chu, 2007; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Karp, 2006). Scholars propose that in dynamic and complex contexts such as in entrepreneurship, metacognitive capabilities are required for effective decisions, and help entrepreneurs make sense of ever-changing input from an

ever-changing, dynamic environment (Haynie & Shepherd, 2009). Karp (2006) highlights that understanding entrepreneurs' inner realities is key to furthering our understanding of the entrepreneurial process and calls for more research in this field.

Social entrepreneurship

Scholars have not yet agreed on a definition for social entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010; Zahra et al., 2009). Some researchers maintain that, in contrast to commercial entrepreneurship centring on private economic gain, social entrepreneurship engages in social value creation beyond economic gain (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Mair & Martí, 2006). For the purpose of this research, we adopt a process perspective of social entrepreneurship (Mair & Martí, 2006; Perrini et al., 2010). Researching the phenomenon as a process serves our intention to illuminate how social entrepreneurs' inner realities shape social and environmental value creation. We understand social entrepreneurship more broadly as an umbrella term for the entrepreneurial process of creating *social and environmental value* beyond private economic gain. We build on scholars researching entrepreneurial processes of social and environmental value creation (Mair & Martí, 2006) from a subjectivist and constructivist perspective (Chiles et al., 2010; Karp, 2006; VanSandt, Sud, & Marmé, 2009) to propose that *social entrepreneurship involves subjective imagination, creative actions, and processes that enact and effectuate opportunities in order to create social and environmental value.*

Along with other scholars, we see the potential for social entrepreneurship to help solve humanity's most pressing social and environmental problems (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Thompson et al., 2011). Moreover, we suggest it may contribute to a socioeconomic transformation towards a socially just and environmentally sustainable (Driver & Porter, 2012; Elkington & Hartigan, 2008; Gibbs, 2009; Zahra et al., 2009), if not flourishing world (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). We acknowledge that researchers are only just beginning to understand how the social entrepreneurship process might contribute to such a transformation (J. K. Hall et al., 2010).

As indicated earlier, the majority of social entrepreneurship research has neglected the inner subjective world of the entrepreneur. The predominantly conceptual literature discusses social entrepreneurs' outwardly discernible facts, such as individual traits and characteristics, conjecturing social entrepreneurs are creative,

bold, compassionate (J. G. Dees, 2001), and altruistic (Martin & Osberg, 2007) without empirically considering entrepreneurs' subjective experiences. Some empirical research has started looking into social entrepreneurs' pro-social/-environmental motivational drivers and personal ethical values (Gagnon, 2012; Hemingway, 2005; Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). Others found that social entrepreneurs employ "unreasonable", creative ways of thinking about value creation and consequently challenge conventional business assumptions (Elkington & Hartigan, 2008). However, this work has not closely examined the process that enables ethical values, pro-social drivers and unconventional thinking, nor how the values and thinking shaped entrepreneurs' decisions and actions. There has been little work directly seeking to investigate entrepreneurs' subjective inner realities – which are, admittedly, harder to capture – and how they shape actions. We see it as a major omission since there is increasing recognition that inner realities shape entrepreneurs' actions (Chu, 2007; Karp, 2006). For example, a single-case study indicates that an entrepreneur's inner reality inspired her to become a social entrepreneur and strongly influenced the venture she founded (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014).

We have yet to explore fully how social entrepreneurs' habitual thoughts and feelings and self-awareness thereof influence social and environmental value creation and associated entrepreneurial outcomes. Such an exploration could extend theories on the value creation process (Dorado, 2006; Hitt, Ireland, Sirmon, & Trahms, 2011; Korsgaard & Anderson, 2011) as well as advise practitioners. Furthermore, this kind of research is needed to understand how a wider socioeconomic transformation may unfold (Driver & Porter, 2012).

Method

We used a qualitative inductive research design to induce theory (Edmondson & McManus, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989), examining cases of social entrepreneurship and identifying themes and patterns across cases. A criterion sampling method was applied to purposefully select eight cases of social entrepreneurship (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). The selection criteria required cases to evidence the following: (1) an environmental and/or social mission; (2) a business model that generates revenue; (3) financial (or near) sustainability; (4) relative youth, less than eight years old (Zahra, Sapienza, & Davidsson, 2006); and (5) the founder(s) still involved. Also, enterprise

founders needed to be willing to talk about their inner realities. Seven of the selected eight New Zealand entrepreneurs were of European descent and one was of Asian descent. For an overview of the eight social entrepreneurs, their reported inspiration to address social and environmental issues, and the value they created see Table 1. Participants were given pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

The main data collection method for the cases were eight semi-structured in-depth interviews with social entrepreneurs (for a similar approach see Brown, 2012a). In-depth interviews allow the researcher to develop a rich picture of interviewees' subjective experiences akin to that of interviewees (Johnson, 2002). Interviews were mostly conducted at the entrepreneurs' premises giving the first author a better understanding of the atmosphere, the context, and non-verbal cues (approach also used by Galunic & Eisenhardt, 1996). Interview questions prompted the entrepreneurs to focus on aspects of their inner realities regarding habitual patterns in thoughts and feelings, their awareness of these patterns, as well as on how they engaged in value creation. Interviews, which typically lasted between 50 and 100 minutes, were audio recorded and transcribed. Notes made after each interview documented the atmosphere of the interview and the interviewer's impressions of the entrepreneur. As an additional data source, the social entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to reflect on their inner reality and how it related to entrepreneurial actions and value creation in a follow-up email exchange (Ashby, 2006; Johns, 1995). Out of the eight entrepreneurs, only three took up this opportunity, providing information that confirmed the data previously collected in the interview.

We regarded the participants in this study as meaning-makers who self-report their interpretation of their inner realities and life experiences, in contrast to objectively observable facts (Warren, 2002). The collected data is therefore subjective. The entrepreneurs in this study reported their inner realities for different times in their entrepreneurial journey, e.g. in phases of struggle or success.

The first author reviewed secondary data from the enterprises' websites, YouTube-videos, articles, and a biography before conducting the interviews to get a better understanding of the context of the enterprises studied. These data were supplemental and predominantly used as background material and to verify the chronology of social enterprise cases.

Table 1: Social entrepreneurs' self-awareness practices, their reported inspiration, and the value their entrepreneurial work created

Entrepreneur age range	Inspiration	Type of service/product	Years in operation
Annie late 20s	Her former boss told her to “chuck away” the waste, but she immediately thought of repackaging it into a useful product.	Upcycled wasted material to be reused in an office environment	6 years
Brian late 50s	Travel to less developed countries inspired him to improve the livelihood of the people there but through fair trade, not aid.	Imported and sold organic, fair-trade products from less developed countries	6 years
Craig early 40s	The implications of the global financial crisis led to the realisation that his multi-national import business had destructive social and environmental impacts.	Established online business that supplied local and organic food	3 years
Dean mid-40s	Hanging out with neighbours, he realised the neighbourhood's potential to become a friendlier community.	Created a space that served as a social hub for people in the neighbourhood	5 years
Feli and Fabia* early 30s	Managing a not-for-profit organisation, they noticed it was not sustainable and so looked for new opportunities to develop the community sector.	Offered affordable, effective communication for community projects	2 years
Grant late 30s	A burnout and a subsequent path of self-discovery sparked his desire for a meaningful job. He engaged in a friend's social enterprise and realised the need for new technology.	Developed technology to support local food suppliers in selling their sustainable produce	3 years
Ian late 30s	A self-discovery journey initiated his emotional engagement with global unsustainability and optimising his consultancy's resources to promote change.	Established a collective that supports people in generating social and environmental change	4 years
Lee early 40s	When he thought about starting a family, he felt the need “to be working in something [he] truly, truly believed in” and searched for “commercial opportunities . . . around sustainability”.	Developed convenient system to recapture nutrients from food scraps and grow own food	3 years

* In the interview with Feli and Fabia, the two women agreed on almost everything they mentioned. Therefore, in the findings, we usually do not distinguish between them.

Through the analysis, we sought to identify themes or patterns in the data regarding how inner reality shaped value creation. The first author conducted a thematic analysis of the evidence. Analytic devices included open and expanded coding, margin notes, analytic memo-ing, and theme-ing (Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Richards, 2005; Singh et al., 2015), as detailed in Table 2. NVivo software was used as supporting data management tool (Patton, 2002; Richards, 2005) and assistance in the process of coding. The within-case analysis involved coding and then abstracting themes from codes which formed the basis for identifying patterns in the entrepreneurs' inner realities and mechanisms of shaping their value creation actions (for a similar approach, see Galunic & Eisenhardt, 2001; Parrish, 2010). In a further step, themes emerging within one case were cross-checked for their presence in the other cases. Themes reported in the findings were found to persist across multiple cases. Tables were used to track and summarise emergent themes and supporting data (Galunic & Eisenhardt, 1996, p. 261). A figure of a process model was used to summarise and integrate the identified themes (Creswell, 2013). During the theory-building process and interpretation of the themes, the case data, emerging theory, and extant concepts in the literature were iteratively compared (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

We had additional interview data from four other cases of social entrepreneurship because the present study was part of a larger project. However, these enterprises were older than the eight included in this study. The additional four cases were an opportunity to substantiate induced themes. We thus completed within- and cross-case analysis for these cases. Identified themes were the same as for the eight cases included in the present study. This suggested saturation had been reached with only a small sample, meaning the observed phenomena had been noticed with the eight included cases and incremental learning was minimal (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Table 2: Analytical process for thematic analysis

Analytical device	Description from literature	Sources	Examples from this study
Open coding	Reading through interviews and supplemental data, marking passages consistent with 3 broad codes representing major categories. Not all data gets coded. (Creswell, 2013; Richards, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research question • The first reads through the data (and resulting margin notes) 	3 open codes (in NVivo): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inner reality • Entrepreneurial decisions and actions • Positive outcomes/ created value • Negative outcomes
Expanded coding	Re-reviewing data to expand open codes into richer, more elaborated codes. Marking passages consistent with expanded codes. Using analytical memos to conjecture basic theory. (Creswell, 2013; Richards & Morse, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open codes and margin notes made during the first few readings of interviews • Some analytical memo-ing (memos about what is happening within open codes) • Ideas about what we might find 	Expanded codes for inner reality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reflection/awareness • Letting go of control • Seeing possibilities • Caring brings happiness • Connectedness to self and others • Loving their job • Feeling empowered • Worry/anger/frustration
Theme-ing	Abstracting expanded codes into themes/ patterns. Returning to data to test emerging themes captured in analytical memo-ing. (Creswell, 2013; Galunic & Eisenhardt, 2001; Richards & Morse, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memos of surprising/ interesting findings • Tables tracking themes within and across cases • Returning to data with questions to see if themes persisted across cases, continued to conjecture theory 	Inner reality themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness practices • Positive aspects of inner reality • Negative aspects of inner reality
Theorising	Interpreting larger meaning of themes and their interconnectedness. Representing/ visualising theories and process. Returning to data to “test” emerging theories. (Creswell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas generated while theme-ing • Key ideas from existing literature • Discussion between co-authors, feedback from conference presentations 	• Process model: Social entrepreneurs’ inner reality shaping social and environmental value creation (Figure 1)

Table adapted from (Singh et al., 2015, p. 155)

Findings

In this section, we report how social entrepreneurs' inner realities affected the social and environmental value creation process. Evidence suggested major themes which are presented in a series of tables with illustrative quotes from entrepreneurs (see Tables 3-7 below, and later discussion of each). Furthermore, evidence implied a process model that shows how entrepreneurs' inner realities shaped value creation.

Self-awareness practices

The first theme was self-awareness practices; each of the social entrepreneurs reported engaging in practices that enhanced knowledge of their habitual thoughts and feelings. Stated practices ranged from the informal to formal (see Table 3, column 2). The majority of entrepreneurs reported engaging in some form of regular practice, whereas a minority mentioned occasional practices. A few social entrepreneurs stated that they used to have a regular self-awareness practice, but engaged in it less at the time of interviews. These entrepreneurs were the ones who – at that time – seemed to be facing more problems with their enterprises. Craig described his self-awareness practice as engendering metacognition: “I start to focus on my breathing, and then the things that I am thinking about start to pop up.” When he was in that “reflection state”, he watched and scrutinised his thoughts, and then would “get to question” and change his thoughts, instead of following them blindly. Dean, who described himself as “a follower of Jesus”, mentioned that regularly “spending time reading scriptures, meditating on those, [and] praying” was “life-giving” for him.

Table 3: Self-awareness practices and types of positive value created

Entrepreneur	Self-awareness practice	Examples for types of positive social and environmental value created through enterprise
Annie	Self-reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed some perceptions: wasted material becomes fun re-useable product • Reduced waste and emissions • Created meaningful work with fair wages
Brian	Yoga, meditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand in New Zealand for organic/fair trade products • Empowered growers in less developed countries as a result of fair prices/respectful partnerships • Promoted non-toxic work environment for growers and organic agricultural practices
Craig	Meditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported local economy and empowered consumers by re-establishing sustainable local food supply chain • Created fair working conditions for local growers and employees • Promoted organic agricultural practices and reduced waste and pollution
Dean	Praying, meditation on scriptures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a supportive community and a sense of belonging within the neighbourhood • Created a meaningful, fair work environment including for “difficult to employ” staff • Fundraised money for and engaged the neighbourhood in an international charity
Feli and Fabia	Self-reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowered community sector, external partners, and staff to collaborate in social change projects • Challenged the creative communication sectors’ practices to offer more meaningful, emotionally safe work • Created demand for financially sustainable, creative work in the social sector
Grant	Yoga, meditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased consumer demand for local sustainable produce • Supported local economy and local farmers by catalysing local food movement • Promoted sustainable agriculture and helped to reduce carbon emissions
Ian	Self-reflection, meditation, spiritual work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built collaborative tools and processes that empowered people to build their livelihoods together • Enabled people to do meaningful social change work by creating a supportive, trusting work environment • Inspired other collectives to be more effective by building a culture of collective action, trust, freedom
Lee	Engaging with animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed some people’s perception: food waste becomes a resource to grow own food • Changed attitude of some investors to invest in green businesses as they created return on investment

Table 4: Positive aspects of inner reality as reported by the social entrepreneurs

Positive aspects of inner reality	Description	Quotes/Evidence from data
Feeling of inner strength	Entrepreneurial work from a general feeling of power-within (even in the face of challenges), contentment, and being centred in themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ian highlighted the importance of acting from a “position of strength”. In his view, only “then you can seriously start to consider how to serve. Until then, your mission should be to get strong”. - Annie remembered that when she encountered a challenge, she had the attitude, “Ok yeah cool, let’s just figure this out”. - Brian admitted that “everything is changing all the time, it’s new, things are happening all the time.” But he said, “We don’t get stuck in an old pattern or anything. . . . Everybody in business, everybody in life really is learning every day something new”.
Desire to express authentic and caring nature	Entrepreneurial work shaped by a yearning to act in line with own true and compassionate being based on a sense of interconnection with other humans and nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lee’s feeling that he “needed to be working in something that [he] truly, truly believed in” prompted him to start his enterprise. He said his enterprise was not about him “as a selfish kind of decision for [him] as a person, it [was] actually about us as a civilisation”. - Feli and Fabia agreed that “the biggest, biggest thing” for taking decisions is to “know your values” and act accordingly. - Dean said he wanted “to spend the bulk of [his] time doing good while making . . . money”. - Grant said he felt the need to follow his “soul purpose” in his work. - Annie shared her understanding, “environmental sustainability, social justice and well-being, and our own personal happiness and well-being . . . are all completely interconnected. And when you affect change in one, you affect it in all three, always”.
Ability to see promising possibilities when feeling positive	Experiences of strong positive feelings (excitement, joy, love) in entrepreneurial work enabled seeing auspicious opportunities for value creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Craig’s feelings around his entrepreneurial work “were largely pumped.” He continued, “Yeah. I was getting up in the morning, and I was so excited about this new idea, and new ideas were sprouting up all the time around that, ‘What if we did this and what if we did that?’”. - Ian reported oscillating and “sheer[ly] imagining of what could be” for hours throughout the whole time of setting up the enterprise. - Annie believed, “If you look for the positive, you’ll find the positive, and we are attracting that in all ways and directions”.

Table 5: Negative aspects of inner reality as reported by the social entrepreneurs

Negative aspects of inner reality	Description	Quotes/Evidence from data
Frustration	Feeling/thought of being upset or annoyed, often due to difficult relationships, e.g. with employees, external business partners, or fellow citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grant said his overriding feeling “until the end of last year was frustration around the team” within his enterprise. - Dean mentioned, “There was a frustration for those two years of working with someone who . . . was butting heads with the mission of why we set up” the enterprise.
Attachment to the outcome of their work	Thought of being fixated on creating a particular effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feli and Fabia mentioned, “We're self-confessed workaholics”. Especially Fabia admitted she always wanted “to help everyone”. - Annie highlighted she regularly realised that she was fixated on the idea that she and her team had to be perfect to contribute to a flourishing future.
Concern	Thoughts of worry or feeling of distress, e.g. due to difficulties in business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brian mentioned he sometimes was “concerned and worried about the associated risk” of introducing a new product range. - Craig expressed having “times of worry or concern that it's taking a long time [for the enterprise] to hit the scaling phase”.
Despondency and depression	Strong feeling of despondency or despair, possibly with physical symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annie remembered feeling “worn-out” at some point because of her incessant effort to “save the world” from “run-away climate change”. - Lee reported that he was prepared for his “luck [to] run out” and an occasional feeling of “despair” and “cynicism” due to the overwhelming ecological problems.

Table 6: Mechanisms generating social and environmental value creation flow from positive aspects of inner reality

Generative mechanisms	Description	Quotes/Evidence from data
Collaborating with and empowering others	Entrepreneurs worked with and enabled people to co-create social value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brian established equal and fair business partnerships with “third world growers”, instead of them depending on “aid”. - Feli and Fabia clarified “Creative collaborators. Co-conspirators. We use words that make people feel like they're part of the team.” - Dean said the enterprise employed “difficult to employ” staff, highlighting the inclusive work environment as empowering. - Grant and his team chose to “open-source the software” which was the intellectual property at the heart of the enterprise to enable a global “food movement”. - Ian stated “consciously handing over . . . power” to co-workers to create a supportive working environment based on “collective action”, “trust”, and “autonomy”.
Reconnecting people with each other and nature	Entrepreneurs created networks and communities, and connected people with nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annie articulated that they sought to regenerate customers’ “relationship with waste” and eventually with “the planet” and “other people”. - Dean mentioned their work was creating a sense of “belonging” and “neighbourhood”. - Lee created a product that allowed customers to compost scraps and “grow food” on own premises to enable “recapturing nutrients”. - Craig explained they were weaving a “community fabric” of “meaningful” relationships by enabling customers to communicate with suppliers or staff. He said they educated “the consumers and growers around the impacts of organic and non-organic practices”.
Celebrating and instilling positivity	Entrepreneurs saw celebration and engendering positive feelings of thriving/joy as part of their role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annie expressed when she and her team said, “‘Hey come and join us!’, people show up in a positive spirit where they are totally thriving and buzzing out with each other”. - Dean explained that they celebrated “street parties” within the neighbourhood. - Feli and Fabia regularly celebrated “little successes” with their team and established a work environment of “fun and joy”. - Ian supported “craziness and fun” in the co-working space.

Table 7: Mechanisms interfering with social and environmental value creation flow from negative aspects of inner reality

Interfering mechanisms	Description	Quotes/Evidence from data
Being self-centred	Seeking self-interest or pushing own ideas; neglecting enterprise's values or other peoples' well-being/empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Craig indicated that he first tried to push his own "agenda into the market", instead of listening to the real needs of customers and his business took off when he did listen. - Lee said his family had "been forced to make some pretty big sacrifices for this business" because he was so fixated on his entrepreneurial work. - Annie stated she and her team had "made decisions that [were] a bit more short-term because [they were] concerned about cash-flow and therefore not staying as connected to the bigger purpose" of the enterprise.
Passing own negativity onto others	Venting negative feelings and thoughts on others; creating difficulties in relationships with staff or business partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grant admitted he had "a tendency to blame other people and not take full responsibility for the failures" and that "most of the problems" they had in their enterprise were "team-based", suggesting that there might have been difficult relationships within the team. - Brian saw a potential for venting frustration on others when he stated, "You have to be very careful you don't rub that [being less positive] off on the people around you". - Lee adopted the combative perspective "that sustainability is battling advertising".
Depleting one's own resources	Putting others/nature first thereby not taking care of oneself, e.g. burn out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For Annie, the pressure of saving the world from "run-away-climate-change" led her to become "burned out". - Feli and Fabia stated that they are "self-confessed workaholics", and because they "didn't want to let people down" they risked spreading themselves thin.

Over time, the self-awareness practices gave entrepreneurs insight into their inner realities. The entrepreneurs became consciously aware of habitual tendencies that were regularly triggered when trying to create value through entrepreneurship. Annie mentioned self-reflection raised her awareness of the habit to “control” her team when being fixated on the enterprise vision. For Craig, meditation centred him and allowed him to question recurring thought patterns, e.g. when solving challenges regarding the design of business processes. Dean felt he understood himself better. He considered his self-awareness practice to have helped him recognise what “making a difference in the world” meant to him. All told, self-awareness practices enhanced entrepreneurs’ knowledge of positive and negative aspects of their inner realities as described in the next two sections.

Positive aspects of inner reality

Self-awareness practices enabled social entrepreneurs to become more aware of positive aspects of their inner realities (i.e. patterns of positive, empowering thoughts and feelings); see Table 4 for details. Positive aspects varied across entrepreneurs such as seeing novel possibilities to create ethical and environmentally conscious products and services or gaining a more complex understanding of the world. For Ian self-development work enabled him to see “the possibility” for his enterprise to create “something new”. Craig reported finding that meditation facilitated “access to ideas that are more global”.

Positive aspects of inner reality can be categorised into three sub-themes: (1) Feeling of inner strength; (2) desire to express authentic and caring nature; and (3) ability to see promising possibilities when feeling positive. Table 4 provides a rich description of these sub-themes. Most of the time, entrepreneurs saw their value creation activities emanating from these patterns of positive thoughts and feelings. They acted on a sense of being at peace with themselves when these positive aspects were triggered. They reported framing problems positively and having confidence in dealing with challenges. Commitment to their life purpose and entrepreneurial mission was frequently mentioned. They also saw themselves as seeking to make a positive difference for others and the environment. Some talked about listening to and trusting their inner voice or intuition when taking decisions and actions. Almost all communicated that they felt a sense of being close to other humans and the natural

environment. Their positive thoughts and feelings facilitated the identification of creative approaches to social and environmental value creation. The theme “positive aspects and generative value creation mechanisms” below discusses how the positive aspects of inner reality shaped value creation.

Negative aspects of inner reality

Most of the social entrepreneurs were aware of negative aspects of their inner realities (i.e. patterns of negative and limiting habitual thoughts and feelings), as summarised in Table 5. They spent less time talking about negative as opposed to positive aspects but clearly reported awareness of unpleasant feelings and thought patterns. These patterns ranged from a vague sense of being tense to the explicit realisation of a recurring negative thought pattern. Negative aspects encompassed both personal challenges entrepreneurs commonly faced in business and challenges uniquely related to social or environmental problems. Annie, for example, stated she found learning about financing the social enterprise stressful. She said, “I sometimes feel emotionally it really shakes me up and gets me - I will get really concerned, and I feel lots of pressure.” Lee lamented, “Whole populations just die off because there is not enough food; well, we are staring down the barrel of that reality.” Negative aspects of inner reality comprised four sub-themes: (1) Frustration; (2) attachment to the outcomes of their work; (3) concern; and – for three of them – (4) despondency and depression, as shown in Table 5.

As already stated, entrepreneurs mentioned negative aspects less than positive aspects. This might suggest the entrepreneurs were less aware of these negative patterns of thoughts and feelings that shaped their entrepreneurial actions. Being less aware of aspects of ourselves which we judge as less desirable is a common psychological phenomenon because humans tend to reject and suppress these negative aspects (C. G. Jung as cited by Schimel, Pyszczynski, Greenberg, O'Mahen, & Arndt, 2000). It could also mean the entrepreneurs dealt with negative patterns more constructively in light of their self-awareness practice.

The social entrepreneurs described strategies to deal with the negative aspects of their inner realities, often involving self-awareness practices. Grant admitted that regular yoga and meditation practice helped him get through “peak frustration times” and saw him “growing personally”. “Just sitting with” negative feelings and allowing

“solutions and ideas [to] bubble up” was another strategy mentioned by Annie and others. Many of the entrepreneurs expressed overcoming attachment through practising “letting go” of control or power. Brian recommended self-awareness practices for anyone in business trying to keep a healthy “life-work balance”. Below, the theme “negative aspects and interfering value creation mechanisms” describes how the negative aspects of inner reality shaped value creation.

Positive aspects and generative value creation mechanisms

Evidence showed that positive aspects of entrepreneurs’ inner realities were more often to the fore than negative aspects and gave rise to generative mechanisms that helped engender value creation. We report these mechanisms in Table 6: (1) Collaborating with and empowering others; (2) reconnecting people with each other and nature; and (3) celebrating and instilling positivity. For example, positive aspects of Brian’s inner reality led to him collaborating with third world growers to set up fair and equal partnerships.

The social entrepreneurs communicated that the generative mechanisms they employed positively affected their business environments, including staff, suppliers and customers. The mechanisms also enabled them to generate ultimately the social or environmental value they intended when founding their enterprise (for value created see above Table 3, last column). They contributed to manifesting a socially just and environmentally sustainable world by, e.g. enabling others to make a difference in the world, or encouraging collaboration within and beyond the enterprise.

The social entrepreneurs also reported value creation beyond their immediate enterprises. They raised awareness of more sustainable ways of living and running an enterprise. Their organisations were seen as exemplars of enterprises that simultaneously created economic as well as social and environmental value. Ian had started to see his social enterprise “directly inspir[e] other collectives of social entrepreneurs”. Brian highlighted his enterprise’s role as a prototype:

It is really important to be successful, and be a role model for other businesses. A lot of people think green business is about doing the right thing, but actually we like to demonstrate that it’s good business and it’s good for the bottom line.

Negative aspects and interfering value creation mechanisms

Sometimes social entrepreneurs communicated that the negative aspects of inner reality prevailed and induced interfering mechanisms that hindered value

creation (see Table 7). For example, Feli and Fabia commented that they sometimes had “a tendency to be control freaks” and push own ideas, instead of empowering their staff. Annie said she was “emotionally less stable” and acted in a “crazy” way when she was concerned about the enterprise’s financial viability. Mechanisms interfering with value creation comprised three sub-themes, as indicated in Table 7: (1) Being self-centred; (2) passing own negativity onto others; and (3) depleting one’s own resources.

Entrepreneurs implied a connection between them experiencing negative aspects of their inner realities and interfering mechanisms. Feeling frustrated or concerned, for example, led to experiencing entrepreneurial work as a battle or venting frustration off on others. Feeling attached to the outcomes of one’s work gave rise to pushing one’s ideas or controlling others, instead of asking for society’s real needs. And feeling overwhelmed by the need to solve social or environmental issues led – for some entrepreneurs – to neglecting their own well-being.

Process model of value creation

Evidence implied a process model of how social entrepreneurs’ inner realities shaped the social and environmental value creation process. This model is depicted below in Figure 1. The process comprises two distinct sub-processes, one emanating from positive aspects and the other flowing from negative aspects of inner reality. Both start with social entrepreneurs engaging in self-awareness practices (see left side of the model). The top row of the model shows self-awareness practices enhancing metacognition, or self-awareness of and engendering positive aspects of inner reality. The entrepreneurs mentioned experiencing positive aspects such as inner strength (theme “positive aspects of inner reality”). These positive aspects then engender generative entrepreneurial mechanisms. These mechanisms, in turn, facilitate the creation of positive social and environmental value (see Table 3, last column).

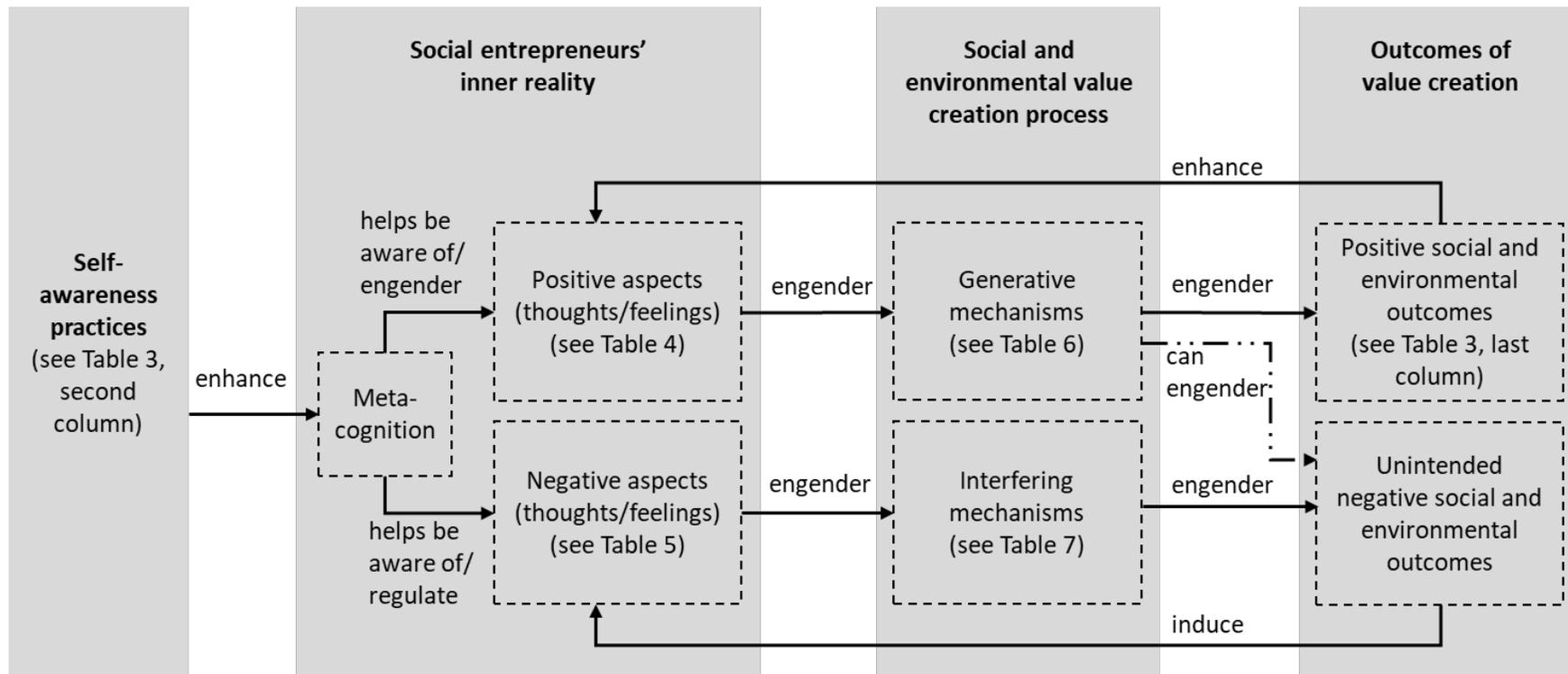


Figure 1: Social entrepreneurs' inner reality shaping social and environmental value creation

Similar to a virtuous circle, achieving the intended value creation can further enhance the social entrepreneurs' positive thoughts and feelings, as shown in the feedback loop on the top half of the figure. Examples include celebrating "little successes" that further heightened an entrepreneur's feeling of excitement, or experiencing "positive reinforcement" due to achieving a desired outcome that "lifts your energy and lets you go onto the next level".

In some cases, mechanisms that contributed overall to the creation of social or environmental value led to unintended negative outcomes, as represented through the dotted line between generative mechanisms (top row) and unintended outcomes (bottom row). Examples are most prominent for negative ecological side effects of enterprises seeking to create social value, such as harming the environment due to a lack of priority for responsible environmental practices. For instance, Ian said, regarding unintended consequences of their work, "We don't have good environmental reporting as a whole collective." Dean admitted, "We need someone to shame us into being the people that we want to be [around ecology]".

As shown in the bottom row of the model, self-awareness practices enhance entrepreneurs' metacognition and thus help to be aware of and deal with negative aspects of inner reality – including pressure, frustration, and attachment. At times, negative aspects of social entrepreneurs' inner realities led to interfering entrepreneurial mechanisms. These interfering mechanisms hindered the creation of social and environmental value and induced unintended negative social and environmental outcomes. Examples of these negative outcomes in the present study include neglected social needs or environmental responsibilities, disempowerment of people, difficult unhealthy relationships with staff/other business partners/family, and burnt-out social entrepreneurs. For a few social entrepreneurs, these negative outcomes in turn induced further negative thoughts and feelings. Examples are experiencing a feeling of "shame", due to creating unintended negative environmental consequences or frustration due to recognising repeatedly controlling or another restricting behaviour.

Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to examine how social entrepreneurs' inner realities influenced the creation of social and environmental value beyond economic

wealth. We contend that illuminating social entrepreneurs' inner realities is essential for understanding the entrepreneurial process of value creation. However, little research to date has explored this connection. This gap is somewhat surprising given that psychology research suggests strong links between people's inner realities and their actions (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown et al., 2007; Reynolds, 2006).

In this study, we identify three major findings. First, we uncover mechanisms that show how entrepreneurs' inner realities get translated into value creation and, ultimately, shape social and environmental outcomes. Thus, this research sites social entrepreneurs' inner realities at the heart of the social and environmental value creation process from which effects – both positive and negative – ripple outwards through value creation mechanisms. Second, findings show that self-awareness practices increased entrepreneurs' self-awareness of their positive and negative patterns in thoughts and feelings and that these patterns affected their entrepreneurial endeavours. Third, we find not only generative value creation mechanisms that lead to positive social and environmental outcomes but also mechanisms that interfere with value creation leading to unintended negative outcomes.

Findings have two implications for the wider literature, and one implication for practice. First, contributing to both the social and the broader entrepreneurship literature, our findings offer a more complete picture of the entrepreneurial value creation process. We shed light on often hidden and therefore under-researched aspects that shape the entrepreneurial process. We show that social entrepreneurs have negative as well as positive personal aspects they are managing when trying to create value and that negative aspects of inner reality interfered with value creation. Based on our findings we call into question some of the research that presents social entrepreneurs as experiencing mainly positive aspects (e.g. altruism, courage (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Tan, Williams, & Tan, 2005), or eco-consciousness (Pastakia, 1998)), and that focuses solely on desired entrepreneurial behaviour and intended outcomes (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Mair & Martí, 2006; Miller et al., 2012). We and others (Friedrich & Wüstenhagen, 2017) call for future research that particularly seeks to increase our understanding of negative personal attributes that entrepreneurs might have to cope with when creating social/environmental value because these negative attributes can lead to unintended negative outcomes.

Second, the generative mechanisms and positive outcomes inspired others to create social and environmental value which has implications for the social entrepreneurship and wider sustainability literature. Empowering people within and outside the enterprise, or encouraging other businesses to engage also in social or environmental value creation exemplify a further mechanism whereby, over time, a wider socioeconomic transformation beyond the immediate enterprise can develop (Driver & Porter, 2012; Mackey & Sisodia, 2013). A fundamental socioeconomic transformation is implicit in social entrepreneurship, which could be part of what is required to ultimately nudge society towards a world where an indefinite flourishing of humans and the planet is possible (Cooperrider & Fry, 2012; Ehrenfeld, 2008b; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Laszlo et al., 2014). In this way, the effects of social entrepreneurs' inner realities ripple out beyond their enterprises.

For practice, our findings imply that actors keen to create social and environmental value benefit from paying attention to and raising the level of awareness of their habitual thoughts and feelings. The value creation process appears to have unfolded more easily when entrepreneurs recognised and dealt with personal negative aspects effectively. Furthermore, self-awareness practices allow social entrepreneurs to sustain themselves in the face of entrepreneurial challenges (see also Waddock & Steckler, 2013). Effects of self-awareness practices have been conjectured by other researchers (Laszlo et al., 2012), but current findings provide rare empirical verification of these effects in the entrepreneurship domain. Findings are also in line with a broader trend in the literature that advocates metacognition for better business strategies and improved innovation (Bledow et al., 2009; Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011).

For policymakers interested in stimulating social entrepreneurship our findings suggest taking a more holistic approach to supporting entrepreneurs. More complete training programmes could pay more attention to social entrepreneurs' inner reality and enhance entrepreneurs' awareness of patterns in thoughts and feelings. Such training alongside training in business start-up, marketing, and finance might be beneficial.

The limitations of the present study are twofold. First, data were from a small sample of social entrepreneurs. While this approach provided for rich data enabling theory induction, it does limit the generalisability of the induced theory. Future

research can examine the surfaced mechanisms and the process model in large sample, hypothesis testing studies. Second, the research design made use of retrospective data potentially calling into question accuracy of participants' recall. However, research suggests that important events in an individual's life – such as founding an enterprise – can be remembered well, even after many years (Berney & Blane, 1997; Chell, 2004).

In conclusion, our study empirically expands extant research on inner reality for the broader fields of entrepreneurship and sustainability. We do so by describing how generative value creation mechanisms may help advance a socioeconomic transformation towards sustainability-as-flourishing on the one hand, and how personal negative patterns in thoughts and feelings may hinder social and environmental value creation on the other hand. We thus draw attention to how self-awareness practices enhance metacognition and positively influence individuals' habitual patterns in thoughts and feelings. We also highlight the role entrepreneurs' inner realities plays in creating the value they intend. Pope Francis (2015, p. 158) in his recent encyclical calls for an "interior conversion" and "a more passionate concern for the protection of our world". We conclude that individuals' inner realities and their potential to ultimately help manifest a flourishing world warrants a much more prominent position in discussions of entrepreneurship in academia and practice.

Chapter 4 / Manuscript 3 –

How Social Entrepreneurs' Metacognition Supports

Change towards Flourishing

Preface

This third manuscript builds on the previous two manuscripts. Manuscript 1 highlighted a need for further research on social entrepreneurs' critical reflection (or awareness of their mental and emotional patterns), as well as on complex systems thinking and root causes. Manuscript 2 showed that social entrepreneurs enhanced their awareness of both empowering and limiting patterns in thoughts and feelings through self-awareness practices. This self-awareness (or metacognition) supported the generation of social and environmental value at the enterprise level. This study, Manuscript 3, extends the previous manuscripts in two main ways. First, it examines in more depth patterns at the individual and enterprise level that flow from metacognition. Second, it investigates how metacognition is ultimately linked to socioeconomic change in the wider environment.

Abstract

This empirical study explores how social entrepreneurs' metacognition – awareness and regulation of thoughts and feelings – affects the process of social and environmental value creation, and ultimately moves society towards sustainability-as-flourishing. We¹⁵ used an inductive, theory-developing design that yielded patterns across multiple cases of social entrepreneurship at different levels of analysis – individual entrepreneur, enterprise, and wider environment level. Findings at the individual level reveal social entrepreneurs' metacognition facilitated insight and the letting go of limiting thought patterns. This then activated a social entrepreneurial response by engendering creative discontent about social and environmental problems. As individuals developed their enterprises, cases showed how they utilised

¹⁵ This manuscript adopts the 'we' form as it has been written so as to be published as a jointly authored paper with my two supervisors.

various metacognitive abilities such as perspective taking, suspending rushed judgment, seeing a bigger picture, reducing defensiveness, and openness to alternatives. These abilities engendered several generative entrepreneurial mechanisms that allowed participants to create effective social enterprises. The enterprises' responsible business models and caring cultures in tandem with entrepreneurs' creative and interpersonal conciliatory capabilities then finally facilitated positive changes within industries and communities. It is these kinds of changes that could perhaps bring about sustainability-as-flourishing in the long run. Thus, our empirical study extends existing predominantly conceptual research on the process of how enterprises could create the conditions for indefinite human and planetary flourishing. It develops theory by encompassing the individual, enterprise and societal level, thus drawing a more complete picture of the social and environmental value creation process. Our work gives detailed insight into how individual actors' metacognition engenders important generative mechanisms that not only facilitate the development of personal mindsets and social enterprises conducive to sustainability-as-flourishing, but that also induce socioeconomic changes in industries and communities towards flourishing.

Introduction

Sustainability-as-flourishing is an aspirational vision of a possible future where humans and the planet thrive indefinitely (Ehrenfeld, 2008b). The vision starts materialising through self-actualised individuals (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; Keyes, 2003; Maslow, 1943), positive relationships, prospering enterprises (Laszlo et al., 2014), and a thriving Earth (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). Flourishing is seen to offer a meaningful end to our act of sustaining (Ehrenfeld, 2012), and as such may function as an inspiring societal aim and target of business strategy (Cooperrider & Fry, 2012; G. B. Grant, 2012; Laszlo et al., 2014; McGhee & Grant, 2016). It appears especially pertinent at a time when the unsustainable state of the world can seem disenchanting (Worldwatch-Institute, 2013, 2015). Thus, the vision of sustainability-as-flourishing is seen to go beyond the more specific concepts of reducing social and environmental unsustainability discussed by most existing research (G. B. Grant, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Upward & Jones, 2016).

Researchers have begun to theoretically explore the changes required to advance sustainability-as-flourishing in society in general (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Moore, 2015), and in business in particular (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Laszlo et al., 2012; Upward & Jones, 2016). Although research has yet to provide empirical evidence, scholars maintain advancing sustainability-as-flourishing requires profound socioeconomic change that involves at least two aspects, transformational change at the roots of our modern unsustainable culture, and new ways of doing business (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; G. B. Grant, 2012; Kurucz et al., 2013).

A transformation of our unsustainable culture in favour of a flourishing world would involve a whole new mindset (Rimanoczy, 2013), and substantial change in social institutions in line with human and planetary thriving (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Harman, 1998; Kurucz et al., 2013). Such change would require the breaking of unsustainable habitual patterns in thinking and behaving (Moore, 2015; Senge & Krahnke, 2013). Scholars call for the development of metacognition – *awareness and regulation of patterns in thoughts and feelings* (Flavell, 1976; Shimamura, 2000) – to overcome habitual, no longer useful tendencies and to enable socioeconomic change (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016). Across individuals, there is a spectrum of aptitudes in being aware of and regulating thought processes and feelings (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; Haynie et al., 2010). Individuals may enhance these aptitudes through practice over time (Batha & Carroll, 2007; K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003). Metacognition is surfacing in organisational literature and commended to free oneself from habitual ways of cognition and related behaviour (Bledow et al., 2009; Kudesia, 2017; Lewis, 2000), and to self-regulate emotional responses (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011). It is seen to enable more effective cognition and decision-making, which entails the creation of better outcomes for organisations (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Haynie et al., 2012; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Kudesia, 2017). However, research has yet to explore actors' metacognition in the quest for sustainability-as-flourishing.

As to new ways of doing business, the literature considers the process of social entrepreneurship as a relatively novel and promising approach to business that may contribute to socioeconomic change (Driver & Porter, 2012; Elkington & Hartigan, 2008; Parrish & Foxon, 2009; Waldron et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009). Recent conceptual work suggests that an ideal enterprise geared to contribute to

sustainability-as-flourishing would not only do any harm, it would also generate social value while regenerating the environment, and be financially viable (Upward & Jones, 2016, p. 103). We acknowledge that few enterprises currently manifest all these ideal features across their operations.

We define social entrepreneurship as *a process to create social and environmental value beyond private economic gain* (Seelos & Mair, 2005). It has been heralded to have the potential to revolutionise industries and assist in bringing about positive transformational change in a society's culture (Driver & Porter, 2012; Mair & Martí, 2006; Montesano Montessori, 2016; Pacheco et al., 2010; Waldron et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009). To date, studies predominantly investigate social entrepreneurship's potential to stimulate socioeconomic change from an external, objective perspective at the organisational and societal level, as do social sciences in general (Karp, 2006). For example, research on the entrepreneurial process of social and environmental value creation has analysed and identified useful organisational approaches to socioeconomic change at the enterprise level: business model innovation (Yunus et al., 2010), hybrid organising (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014), or bricolage (Desa, 2012). At the societal level, collaboration (de Bruin et al., 2017; Huybrechts, Nicholls, & Edinger, 2017), an interplay of incumbents and new entrants in industry transformation (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010), and other ways of creating sustainable institutions (Mair & Marti, 2009; Pacheco et al., 2010) have been found valuable.

Previous work has praised social entrepreneurs for thinking differently and being unwilling to submit themselves to conventional economic beliefs, and seeing the bigger picture of unsustainable circumstances (Elkington & Hartigan, 2008). However, there has been little investigation into how the entrepreneurs achieved to think unconventionally or what enabled them to see a problem from a wider perspective. In particular, research exploring the role metacognition plays in the social entrepreneurial process of value creation in pursuit of sustainability-as-flourishing from an interior, subjective perspective at the individual level has been extremely sparse (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). This is surprising, given the potential metacognition holds for entrepreneurship in general, and for social entrepreneurship in particular. As mentioned before, metacognition supports overcoming no longer useful, habitual

tendencies in cognition and behaviour (Bledow et al., 2009; Kudesia, 2017; Lewis, 2000) and thus may contribute to socioeconomic change (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016).

Thus, there exists the opportunity to develop a more complete and theoretically rich understanding of the role social entrepreneurs' awareness and regulation of thoughts and emotions plays in the entrepreneurial process of generating socioeconomic change. In this manuscript, we ask, *how does social entrepreneurs' metacognition shape change towards sustainability-as-flourishing?* We do so by examining three subordinate research questions that elaborate on the overall research question at three different levels – individual, organisational, and societal:

1. *How does social entrepreneurs' metacognition shape their entrepreneurial decisions and actions at the individual level?*
2. *How do social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions affect the social and environmental value creation process at the organisational level?*
3. *How does the social and environmental value creation process contribute to wider societal level change towards sustainability-as-flourishing?*

To explore these “how” questions we employed an inductive, theory-building multiple-case study design that used field interviews and supplemental secondary data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Galunic & Eisenhardt, 1996). We selected five cases of social entrepreneurship that we considered worth studying for the change they had generated. The manuscript begins by reviewing the literature on sustainability-as-flourishing, metacognition, and social entrepreneurship. It then describes the inductive methodology we employed. Next, we turn to the findings, which reveal six patterns that capture how social entrepreneurs' metacognition shaped the process of generating socioeconomic change. These patterns emerged at the levels of the individual entrepreneur, the social enterprise, and the societal level. We conclude by discussing our findings on the process of how metacognition influenced change creation.

Background

Sustainability-as-flourishing and metacognition

Sustainability-as-flourishing has been taken up in the strategic management and corporate sustainability literature (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; G. B. Grant, 2012; Laszlo et al., 2012; McGhee & Grant, 2016; Upward & Jones, 2016). Creating the

conditions for flourishing is seen to imply a holistic and fundamental shift for society at large and business in particular (Upward & Jones, 2016). It requires a profound change in our cultural – including business – beliefs and values (Upward & Jones, 2016) and ensuing actions. Scholars contend two particularly important beliefs exist that undergird the possibility for sustainability-as-flourishing: The first belief is that authentic human behaviour rests upon caring for ourselves, other humans, and the natural environment (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Tolle, 2008). Caring implicates being aware of our connectedness to others and Nature (Heidegger, 1996; Laszlo et al., 2012; Pope-Francis, 2015). The second belief recognises that the world functions as a holistic, dynamic, and complex system (Capra, 2002; Collins & Kearins, 2010; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Gladwin et al., 1995; Levy & Lichtenstein, 2012). This understanding involves acknowledging that the material economy and society are nested in, and reliant on, the ecological life-support system (Costanza et al., 2013; Davidson-Hunt & Berkes, 2003; Upward & Jones, 2016).

However, there is a tendency in our modern culture to adhere to habitual ways of thinking and acting that in many cases differ strongly from the two beliefs described above (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Senge & Krahnke, 2013). Psychology research has found that routinised ways of perceiving and acting are resistant to change because of the greatly automatic nature of thought processes (Haidt, 2001; Reynolds, 2006). The majority of thought processes, feelings and ensuing actions flow habitually and reflexively without conscious awareness (Haidt, 2001; Reynolds, 2006). These ordinary cognitive processes have been and continue to be conditioned by individuals' context, including previous experiences in their childhood, cultural norms, and societal values and assumptions. In other words, the "socio-cultural milieu" that individuals are embedded in (Haynie et al., 2010) shapes their habitual perceptual filters and beliefs.

For individuals to overcome habitual cognition and associated emotions, psychology scholars currently recommend metacognition (K. W. Brown et al., 2007; Flavell, 1979; Ochsner et al., 2002). Formally, metacognition is defined as *awareness of cognitive content, cognitive processes and related emotions, and regulation thereof* (Flavell, 1979; Shimamura, 2000). Put differently, metacognition signifies the introspective monitoring or knowledge of patterns in thoughts and thought processes (Nelson, 1996), and related feelings (Ochsner et al., 2002). It can facilitate non-habitual

thoughts and the transformation of emotions (Ochsner et al., 2002). Management research has referred to metacognition as “second-order thinking” that involves critical self-reflection to re-frame one’s deep-seated assumptions (Lewis, 2000, p. 764).

Conceptual knowledge is accumulating in the literature about how metacognition can give rise to metacognitive abilities that may support socioeconomic change (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016). For example, research shows that metacognition enables the prosocial ability to empathise with other beings (Vago & Silbersweig, 2012). Empathy and the ability to take others’ perspectives is seen to enhance interpersonal skills (K. W. Brown et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2012) by enabling a “collaborative mind-set” (Williams, 2002) and finding “common ground for solution building” (Pavlovich & Krahnke, 2012). These capabilities are regarded as essential in co-creating large scale generative change for a flourishing future (Waddell et al., 2015; Waddock, 2013). Similarly, metacognition can facilitate the capability to take a more complex systems view (B. C. Brown, 2012b; Senge & Krahnke, 2013). Seeing the bigger picture of a large dynamic system can, in turn, enable identifying root causes of social and environmental problems, instead of just looking at the mere symptoms (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Senge & Krahnke, 2013). Therefore, in this manuscript, we argue that metacognition and resulting metacognitive abilities are important for change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. However, in general, little is known about how actors interested in working towards socioeconomic change employ these abilities in their work.

Sustainability-as-flourishing, social entrepreneurship and metacognition

Conceptual literature started discussing social entrepreneurship as a possible vehicle to promote socioeconomic change towards sustainability-as-flourishing by engaging new beliefs and practices (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). Recent work proposes that social entrepreneurship is based on novel beliefs and practices as it integrates a social and environmental mission with commercial activities (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Battilana & Lee, 2014; McMullen & Warnick, 2016; York et al., 2016). This unconventional entrepreneurial orientation, in turn, might pose challenges to, and engender change in historical assumptions and practices ingrained in strategic management literature and orthodox business (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). We see potential in social entrepreneurship being able to advance socioeconomic change

although others argue that social entrepreneurship can face challenges in scaling up their impact and be restricted in its potential to engender large-scale change (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Laszlo et al., 2014; Sud et al., 2009). While scholars have started to investigate how novel social entrepreneurial approaches may influence wider society (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Ruebottom, 2013; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Waldron et al., 2016), research on the origins of such novel approaches remains sparse.

Entrepreneurship literature on the role of metacognition in adopting new beliefs and practices has just recently emerged (Haynie et al., 2010; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Haynie et al., 2012; Lorenz et al., 2018; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). Researchers have begun to explore a self-aware and self-regulatory mindset and its part in empowering entrepreneurs to alter less useful ways of doing things (Haynie et al., 2010), and to think beyond preconceptions ingrained in prevalent cognitive patterns (Haynie et al., 2012). In regards to social entrepreneurship, there is initial qualitative work contending that an entrepreneur's awareness of her thoughts can influence the fostering of venture characteristics positioned to generate social and environmental value (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). Given the benefits metacognition holds for entrepreneurship in general and social entrepreneurship in particular, the scant empirical research on the role metacognition plays in the entrepreneurial process of social and environmental value creation is unexpected (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). We, therefore, seek to fill the gap by empirically exploring how social entrepreneurs' metacognition affects the value creation process and ultimately change towards sustainability-as-flourishing.

Method

Research design and setting

We analysed five cases of social entrepreneurship to contribute to theory (Galunic & Eisenhardt, 1996, 2001). Using multiple cases facilitated a replication logic whereby each case served to examine emerging theoretical insights (Yin, 1989). This research design enabled a close correspondence between theory and data, grounding the emergent theory in the case data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Galunic & Eisenhardt, 1996).

A criterion sampling method was applied to purposefully gather a sample of social entrepreneurship cases (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Cases were selected if

they met the following criteria: (1) an environmental and/or social organisational purpose; (2) a business model that generated revenue; (3) financial (or near) sustainability; (4) the founder still involved; and (5) visible changes at the socioeconomic level. To allow depth and in line with Creswell (2013), we limited the number to five selected cases. Table 1 offers expanded detail on the cases and lists the data sources. The unit of analysis is the social entrepreneurial process at three levels: 1) individual entrepreneur, 2) social enterprise, and 3) societal level.

The research comprised five social enterprises operating in Germany's social market economy (Engelke et al., 2016) during a period of growing neoliberalism of government policies within Europe more generally (Montesano Montessori, 2016). Contractions in public budgets coupled with rising public interest in social and environmental issues, including environmental degradation, growing social inequality, unemployment, or ethnic and demographic changes highlight the need for innovative solutions (Engelke et al., 2016; Fuchs, 2014). Social enterprises in Germany and many other countries around the globe have sprung up in the pursuit of more effective and affordable solutions to social and environmental issues (Scheuerle et al., 2013).

Table 1: Description of social entrepreneurship cases

Case	Founder(s) and age range	Founder(s)	Enterprise description	Focus of value creation	Age and size of enterprise at interview	Scaling-up of concept beyond initial location	Primary and secondary data sources
Eden	Emil late 50s	Emil	Platform for social integration between people with and without disabilities	Social	More than 25 years old, 10-15 employees	More than 20 franchisees in nearly 20 countries worldwide	1 interview with founder, field notes, enterprise website, report and promotional material, internet profile, several YouTube videos, 2 online articles
Apollo	Anton mid 50s	Anton	Citizen stock company for a regional, just and organic agriculture	Ecological, social	8 years old, 2 employees, more than 20 partner organisations	Several affiliated German regions and 1 European region	1 interview with founder, field notes, enterprise website, internet profile, several YouTube videos, 1 online article
Freyja	Frieda + 2 others, early 50s	Frieda and 2 others	Socioecological model for urban greening and social inclusion	Ecological, social	4 years old, 2 managing directors, a few contractors	Dissemination of knowhow to over 70 communities in Germany and several other European countries	1 interview with founder, field notes, enterprise website, internet profile, several online articles
Gaia	Georg late 60s	Georg	Organic mail order business, later: organic retail and wholesale business supporting a healthy nature and just world	Ecological, social	Almost 40 years old, 500-550 employees	Dissemination of knowhow to about 1000 independent organic retail outlets in Germany	1 interview with founder, field notes, enterprise website/documentation/promotional material, 5 online articles, 1 YouTube video
Hera	Heide + several others, early 60s	Heide and several others	Citizen-owned electricity supplier, later also green energy provider for nuclear-free, climate-friendly energy	Ecological	20 years old, around 100 employees	Dissemination of knowhow to many municipalities nationally and internationally, affiliation with other municipalities	1 interview with founder, field notes, enterprise website, internet profile, documentary film, 2 online articles

Data collection

The first author collected primary and secondary data (see Table 1, which introduces the five cases). The main source was semi-structured interviews with five German social entrepreneurs – one founder for each of the five selected social enterprises. Interviews were conducted (and later analysed) in German. The first author translated selected quotes for inclusion in the manuscript. The participants were all mature age individuals. All interviews but one were conducted on-site at the enterprises' premises. Interviews, lasting between 60 and 100 minutes, were audio recorded and transcribed. The founders were asked about their thoughts and emotions during the process of social and environmental value generation, spanning the time before enterprise foundation through to more recent events. Consequently, the interviewees' answers yielded retrospective and real-time data on the social entrepreneurial process.

This research regards participants as meaning-makers who self-report their interpretation of their thoughts, emotions and entrepreneurial experiences, in contrast to objectively observable facts (Warren, 2002). The participants' introspective reports of their internal processes are subjective and valuable (Nelson, 1996). Thus, we do not report the social entrepreneurs' actual metacognition, but how they made sense of their internal and external experiences and saw fit to share it at the time of the interview. We also acknowledge our subjectivity in interpreting the participants' accounts (Creswell, 2013).

Field notes supplemented interview data and comprised the first author's impressions of nonverbal cues and the general atmosphere at the organisational premises. In three cases, field notes also contained more detailed observations from tours of premises.

Secondary data included organisational documentation and publicly available articles, YouTube videos, and enterprise websites (see Table 1). These documents added rich insight into the cases and were used to verify the chronology of social entrepreneurship cases. The secondary data also provided further perspectives on the social entrepreneurial process, in particular at the organisational and societal level.

Data analysis

Data analysis employed familiar methods for inductive theory building (see Creswell, 2013; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009). It involved a thematic analysis of the interview data for each case (Singh et al., 2015), through the lens of the overall research question (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009), *how does social entrepreneurs' metacognition shape change towards sustainability-as-flourishing?* and the three subordinate research questions:

- 1) How does social entrepreneurs' metacognition shape their entrepreneurial decisions and actions at the individual level?
- 2) How do social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions affect the social and environmental value creation process at the organisational level?
- 3) How does the social and environmental value creation process shape change towards sustainability-as-flourishing at the socioeconomic level?

Secondary data were helpful in confirming events external to the social entrepreneurs (organisational/societal level).

For the thematic analysis, we proceeded through a set of analytical devices to progress "from the raw data to more abstract themes and patterns" (Singh et al., 2015, p. 155). These devices included open and expanded coding, margin notes, analytic memo-ing, and theme-ing (Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Richards, 2005; Singh et al., 2015), as detailed in Table 2. The initial open codes reflected the three subordinate research questions. The open codes sought to get up off the data (Richards, 2005) and see cumulative evidence mirroring a larger process (Richards, 2005; Richards & Morse, 2007; Singh et al., 2015). The analytical objective was to identify patterns within each case in regards to the research questions.

In the ensuing cross-case analysis, we cross-checked patterns emerging within one case for their presence in other cases. Patterns reported in the findings persisted across all five cases. Tables were used to track and summarise emergent patterns across cases (Galunic & Eisenhardt, 1996). As a final step in the data analysis, we generated a figure of a process model to summarise and integrate the identified patterns (Creswell, 2013). During the theory-building process and interpretation of the patterns, we iteratively compared the case data, emerging theory, and extant concepts in the literature (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Table 2: Analytical process for thematic analysis

Analytical device	Description from literature	Sources	Examples from this study
Open coding	Reading through interviews and supplemental data, marking passages consistent with 4 broad codes representing major categories. Not all data gets coded. (Creswell, 2013; Richards, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three research questions • The first read through the data (and resulting margin notes) 	4 open codes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metacognition shaping entrepreneurial decisions/actions • Entrepreneurial decisions/actions shaping value creation • Value creation process shaping change
Expanded coding	Re-reviewing data to expand open codes into richer, more elaborated codes. Marking passages consistent with expanded codes. Using analytical memos to conjecture basic theory. (Creswell, 2013; Richards & Morse, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open codes and margin notes made during the first few readings of interviews • Some analytical memo-ing (memos about what is happening within open codes) • Ideas about what we might find 	Expanded codes for metacognition, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to challenge own/others' beliefs • Taking others' perspectives • Reducing defensiveness • Empathy • Creative discontent
Theme-ing	Abstracting expanded codes into themes/patterns. Returning to data to test emerging themes captured in analytical memo-ing. (Creswell, 2013; Galunic & Eisenhardt, 2001; Richards & Morse, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memos of surprising/interesting findings • Tables tracking themes within and across cases • Returning to data with posed questions to see if themes persisted across cases, continued to conjecture theory 	Themes linked to metacognition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of a social entrepreneurial response • Seeking holistic understanding of problems • Shaping the enterprise foundation
Theorising	Interpreting larger meaning of themes and their interconnectedness. Representing/visualising theories and process. Returning to data to "test" emerging theories. (Creswell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas generated while theme-ing • Key ideas from existing literature • Discussion between co-authors, feedback from conference presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process model: Metacognition ultimately shaping socioeconomic change (Figure 1)

Table adapted from (Singh et al., 2015, p. 155)

Findings

Metacognition shaping socioeconomic change

Our overall research question focused on, *how does social entrepreneurs' metacognition shape change towards sustainability-as-flourishing?* Case data revealed five patterns linking metacognition to enterprise characteristics and capabilities, and ultimately to societal change. Figure 1 integrates the five patterns and briefly summarises the process model that emerged from analysis of the cases. The figure displays patterns in bold and mechanisms in italics. We offer a detailed description of the patterns (including Tables 3 to 7) after this section.

The model encompasses three different levels – the individual entrepreneur, the enterprise, and wider society. Evidence suggests the process of shaping societal level change started with social entrepreneurs' metacognition and ensuing metacognitive abilities at the individual level, as depicted in the two boxes in the top left corner of Figure 1. Although entrepreneurs' metacognition differed across cases, all entrepreneurs shared their ability to be aware of and to overcome some of their limiting thought patterns and biases. They also mentioned the awareness of some of their feelings, such as a feeling of antipathy towards conventional responses to social and environmental issues. Participants reported metacognition engendered an activation of their social entrepreneurial response. For instance, in the case of Eden, the founder Emil stated that his awareness of limiting thought patterns engendered insights and emotional discontent in the face of marginalisation of people with disabilities. He then responded creatively to his emotional discontent as he was inspired to found a social enterprise that addresses the social problem (pattern "activation of a social entrepreneurial response", Table 3). The creative response then led to social entrepreneurial actions. The second box in the top left corner of Figure 1 lists the metacognitive abilities (e.g. being open to other stakeholders' perspectives, or taking a wider view of social or environmental problems) that entrepreneurs mentioned shaped their entrepreneurial actions. Entrepreneurs gave insight into how these abilities influenced their social entrepreneurial actions, for example when they sought a holistic understanding of problems (Table 4) or shaped the enterprise foundation (Table 5).

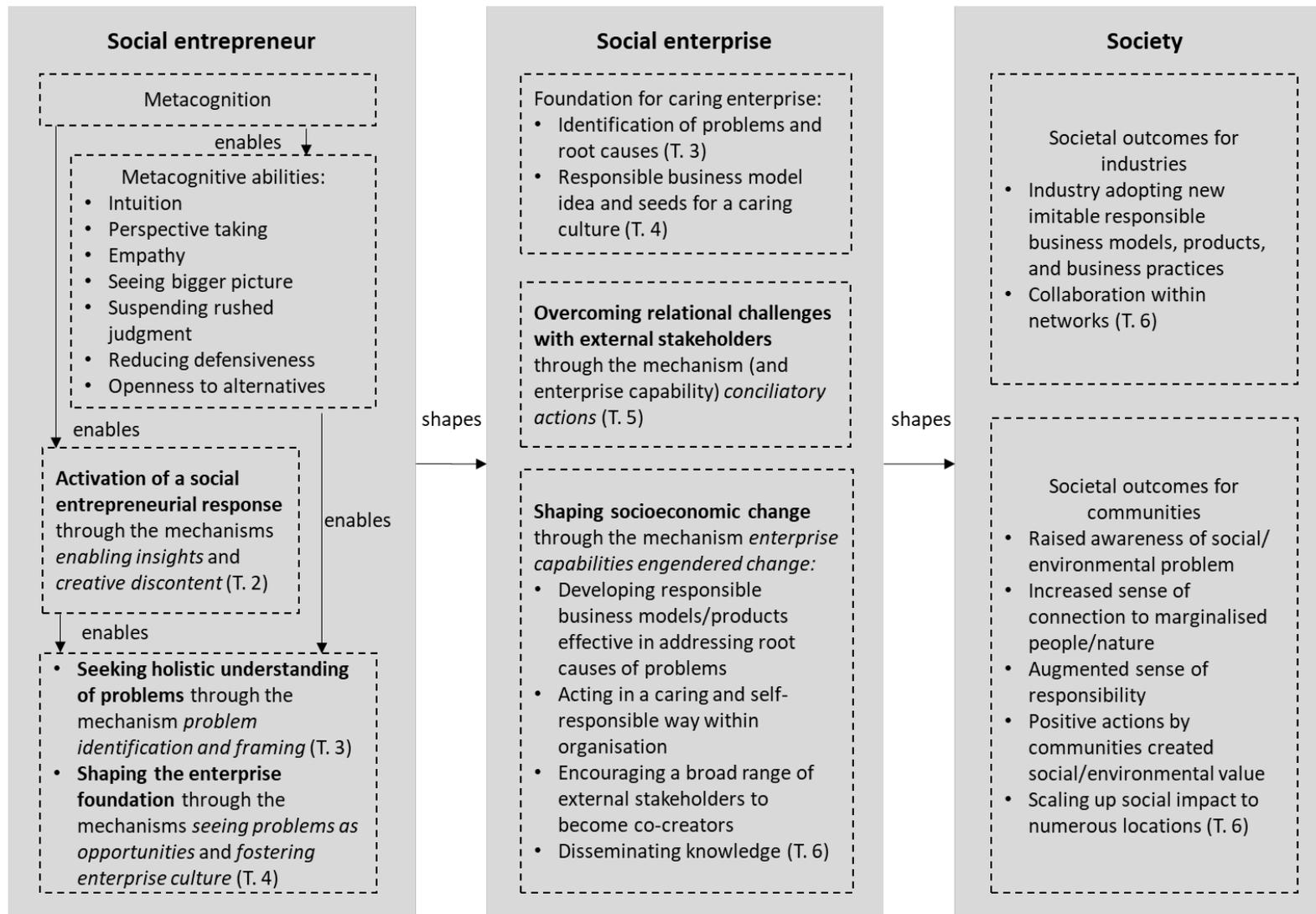


Figure 1: Metacognition ultimately shaping socioeconomic change

Data suggested in a next step entrepreneurial actions at the individual level affected the value creation process by shaping a foundation for the social enterprise (see top box in middle column of Figure 1). For instance, participants' nurturing behaviour, such as giving up control to empower team members, fostered a shared caring enterprise culture with a meaningful vision, other-oriented values, and responsible practices (pattern "shaping the enterprise foundation", Table 5). Furthermore, entrepreneurs mentioned how their actions established enterprise capabilities. For example, metacognitive abilities induced the mechanism and enterprise capability conciliatory actions (pattern "overcoming relational challenges with external stakeholders", Table 6). We note, sometimes individual entrepreneurial actions and enterprise level practices, and capabilities are not as clearly distinguishable as pictured in the diagram and tables, but overlap.

Cases evidenced that enterprise characteristics and capabilities engendered outcomes at the societal level (see right column in Figure 1). Being able to overcome relational challenges led, for instance, to positive relationships and collaboration with external stakeholders (pattern "overcoming relational challenges with external stakeholders", Table 6). Another example is the enterprise capability of developing a legitimate business model that is effective in addressing root causes of the identified problem. This capability led to new imitable business models for industry, which others adopted in several cases. In tandem with other capabilities, innovating socially and ecologically sensible products raised awareness of the addressed social or environmental problem (pattern "shaping socioeconomic change, Table 7).

In sum, the model depicts how social entrepreneurs' metacognition ultimately shaped substantial change in perceptions and practices of the wider public, apparently in line with sustainability-as-flourishing. The following sections answer each of the three subsequent research questions and describe the identified patterns linking metacognition to enterprise characteristics, and ultimately to societal change.

Activation of a social entrepreneurial response

How does social entrepreneurs' metacognition shape their entrepreneurial decisions and actions at the individual level? We label the connection of metacognition with entrepreneurial decisions and actions – "activation of a social entrepreneurial response". In all cases, the pattern emerged at the inception stage well before actual

enterprise creation, comparable to the “spark”, or “moment of insight” that initiated innovation in the cases examined by Corner and Ho (2010). Table 3 gives detail in support of the pattern.

Social entrepreneurs reported being aware of or becoming aware of some of their habitual ways of thinking and related feelings. Awareness of these ways of thinking reflects metacognition for participants. As an illustration, Apollo’s initiator Anton noted he became aware of a less useful habitual thinking pattern just before founding his enterprise. He described how he tended to think that he and his former organic agricultural business “had more or less become a victim of the process of making organic farming more conventional”. However, after looking for ways out of the situation, he recognised that he could “create a tool”, an enterprise that would give him “a lever in his hand . . . to really make a difference and generate change”. Metacognition prompted two mechanisms: “Enabling insights”, and “creative discontent”. Table 3 defines these mechanisms and shows how they engendered initial social entrepreneurial thinking and action.

The first mechanism “enabling insights” describes how participants’ ability to become aware of their own limiting habitual thought patterns facilitated challenging these patterns. New patterns of thought more in line with human and planetary thriving raised awareness of social/environmental problems. These newly acknowledged problems, in turn, created emotional discontent in participants. The Eden case offers an example of the first mechanism (see Table 3). Eden’s founder Emil recalled that he used to think, “Disabled people have no quality of life”. However, when Emil got to know a person with disabilities and “was blown away by his optimism”, he realised he had to “realign in this area [of thinking]” by scrutinising his stereotypes about people with disabilities. Emil stated, “The encounter with this gentleman with special needs was a kind of turning point in my life”. He began to see that people with disabilities “have strengths and needs” as he does. Emil’s realisation of a likeness between himself and people with disabilities then raised his awareness of discrimination more widely and led ultimately to a feeling of creative discontent about the situation more generally, the second mechanism that is discussed in more depth below.

Table 3: Activation of a social entrepreneurial response

Mechanisms labelled and described		
Case	Enabling insights	Creative discontent
Founder	Metacognition gave awareness of and enabled scrutinising limiting thought patterns, allowed insights, and engendered discontent regarding social/environmental problems	Emotional discontent initiated social entrepreneurial actions
Eden Emil	Interaction with an optimistic person with disabilities led him to scrutinise his thoughts about people with disabilities. He realised he had much in common with those people. → Uneasiness with discrimination and authorities' bureaucratic responses	Uneasiness led to the exploration of entrepreneurial options to generate inclusion.
Apollo Anton	Studying accounting led him to question his thought patterns about accounting rules. He came to see accounting rules as human constructs that could be changed. → Discontent with financial statements and the lack of representation of the generated environmental/social value	Discontent about unbalanced accounting rules and ecological and social problems led him to initiate further research with like-minded people.
Freyja Frieda	Observing life in nature helped her recognise that life did not need to be complicated but could flow effortlessly. → Unhappiness with ecologically harmful practices and people's inaction	Unhappiness caused her to develop ideas for environmentally sustainable urban planning.
Gaia Georg	Illness led to an awareness of eating habits and the relationship between nutrition and health. → Discontent with unethical practices in the food industry	Discontent led him to look for more mindful entrepreneurial alternatives.
Hera Heide	A nuclear catastrophe made her scrutinise thought patterns about authorities' appropriate response to an environmental crisis. She recognised she had to take action herself and became aware of the energy sector's detrimental practices. → Concern about energy suppliers' ecologically harmful practices	Discontent activated her and other citizens to develop a more environmentally friendly strategy.

The Hera case offers another illustration of the first mechanism. Heide said that before the nuclear catastrophe in Chernobyl she was “very naïve”. She used to believe that in the face of the reactor accident “politicians and energy providers would initiate change now that they saw how dangerous nuclear energy is”. When “nothing happened”, she became aware that responsible action and change had to come from individuals like herself. This awareness encouraged her to investigate the circumstances of the catastrophe more closely. The more she learned about the energy providers’ production practices, the more she became unhappy with conventional wasteful and potentially dangerous energy production.

The second mechanism “creative discontent” reflected participants’ ability to be aware of emotional discontent, which in turn initiated social entrepreneurial actions. The Gaia case highlights the mechanism (see Table 3). Gaia’s creator Georg described how the unethical practices in the food and agricultural industries led him to creative discontent. At first, he kept “thinking and was emotionally moved”. He remained consciously aware of and constructively engaged with his negative thoughts and emotional discomfort. This engagement ultimately led to something positive as he described in this quote: “I was discontent, and then something new and positive emerged.” What emerged was the social entrepreneurial decision to create a more conscious and responsible enterprise.

Similarly, before Apollo’s founding, Anton became aware of a “feeling of doom” in the face of investors who merely focused on the financial success of agricultural enterprises and neglected environmental and social value creation. This uneasy feeling prompted him to brainstorm with other passionate and knowledgeable people about the issue and possible solutions, which finally encouraged him to found a venture to address these issues. In combination, the two mechanisms revealed how metacognition shaped a social entrepreneurial response to social and environmental problems. This involved reflection on, and scrutinising of entrenched thought patterns, the emergence of new insights, as well as a creative and active response to emotional discontent in the face of social injustice and environmental degradation.

Affecting the social and environmental value creation process

How do social entrepreneurs’ decisions and actions affect the social and environmental value creation process at the organisational level? Cases revealed two

patterns that address this research question and that we describe below: Seeking a holistic understanding of problems and shaping the enterprise foundation. Together, these patterns reflect how individual entrepreneurs' metacognitive abilities and resulting decisions and actions influenced value creation at the organisational level (see Figure 1).

Holistic understanding of problems. The first pattern connecting social entrepreneurs' metacognition with the enterprise was "seeking holistic understanding of problems". Evidence shows how metacognition triggered this pattern. Table 4 documents the pattern across cases.

The pattern emerged following the activation of a social entrepreneurial response and involved that participants deeply analysed complex social and environmental problems. Across all five cases, data suggested that entrepreneurs' metacognition enabled them to utilise what scholars have referred to as metacognitive abilities (B. C. Brown, 2012b; Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011) (see Table 4 and Figure 1).

Table 4: Seeking holistic understanding of problems

	Mechanism	Intermediate outcome
Case Founder	Metacognitive abilities facilitated problem identification and framing	Foundation for enterprise: Identification of social/environmental problems and root causes
Eden Emil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking the perspectives of both people with disabilities and ‘normal’ people without disabilities 	Problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination and stifled interaction between people with disabilities and ‘normal’ people Causes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fears and stereotypes that disability is of “less worth than normal”
Apollo Anton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing more holistic picture of the regional agricultural industry • Suspending rushed judgment about causes 	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental degradation • Disintegration of regional social fabric Causes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on enterprises’ financial results in accounting and investment decisions • Externalised costs generated by large corporations • Neglect of environmental and social value generated by small organic producers • Lack of funding for small organic producers
Freyja Frieda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being empathetic with nature • Being empathetic with citizens • Taking authorities’ perspective • Seeing more holistic picture of ecosocial relationship in urban greening 	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental degradation • Compromised human well-being Causes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern urban surroundings estrange people from nature • Citizens’ lack of ownership towards public spaces • Lack of funding in communities for ecological projects
Gaia Georg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking consumers’ perspective • Seeing more holistic picture of human well-being, environmental sustainability and food industry 	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humans’ compromised health • Environmental degradation Causes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers’ lack of awareness about the relationship of health, food and nature • Food industry’s orientation towards profits and competition • Socially unjust and environmentally degrading practices in the food industry
Hera Heide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing more holistic picture of energy sector • Reducing defensiveness • Taking the perspective of citizens and large energy suppliers 	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental degradation (radioactive contamination and climate change) Causes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large energy suppliers’ energy production based on nuclear power and fossil fuels • Her own and other consumers’ wasteful energy consumption • Missing offer for consumers to choose energy from renewable resources

The pattern “seeking holistic understanding of problems” comprised the mechanism “metacognitive abilities facilitated problem identification and framing”, and the intermediate outcome “foundation for enterprise: identification of social/environmental problems and root causes”. The Hera case exemplifies the mechanism and ensuing intermediate outcome (see Table 4). Activated by concern about environmentally damaging energy production, Hera’s co-founder Heide used several strategies to examine the problem. Heide described taking a larger view of the energy sector to try to understand what caused environmental degradation. She realised energy loss during the production process was one of the main causes. Wasteful energy production created a high demand for cheap and abundant energy, and nuclear and coal conventionally seemed to be the solution. Heide expressed that she and her co-founders adopted a wider perspective to identify other underlying reasons for nuclear power to consider additional issues. As a result, they discovered a second factor:

When we looked for the [underlying] causes [of nuclear energy], we took a step back [from the immediate problem]. We saw that large utility companies enjoyed a monopoly in terms of price setting and product offers. . . . For a long time they could ignore the demand from customers for green products because they had no incentive to do so. Customers had no power to choose the source of energy for their electricity.

The awareness of her habitual cognition, as well as the abilities to become less defensive of her wasteful behaviour and more open to other consumers’ perspectives, allowed Heide to recognise a third underlying cause. She said, “We thought we had energy galore and didn’t need to be mindful of using it frugally. So our own wasteful energy consumption also contributed to the high demand for energy.”

The Freyja case gives a second example of how metacognitive abilities enable holistic understanding of problems. Frieda’s ability to be empathetic and to see things from others’ perspectives was reflected in the following statement. She said that some of the elderly people found growing edible plants in the city “totally awful because it reminded them of times of war [... when] people had to grow food within the city because otherwise, they would have starved”. Being empathetic allowed Frieda to see that these experiences contributed in part to an “urban development trend of controlling and even removing nature within urban settings”. She concluded, “modern urban surroundings estranged people from nature”, which could ultimately lead to

environmentally irresponsible behaviour and compromise human well-being. Overall evidence indicated that two metacognitive abilities were particularly relevant in holistically understanding social/environmental problems: Being open to others' perspectives and a more holistic view of main problems and underlying causes.

Shaping the enterprise foundation. We found a second pattern that connected participants' metacognition with the social enterprise – shaping the enterprise foundation. Table 5 gives detail for each of the five cases in support of this pattern.

The pattern occurred after having framed social and environmental problems. In this phase, social entrepreneurs created enterprises that embraced new and effective ways of addressing practical problems. "Shaping the enterprise foundation" consisted of two mechanisms: "Seeing problems as opportunities" and "fostering enterprise culture". Again, participants shared that their metacognition and resulting metacognitive abilities influenced their thinking and actions (see Figure 1), and thus affected both mechanisms. The mechanisms induced outcomes at the enterprise level (see Table 5)

The Eden case illustrates the first mechanism. Emil explained that his capability of being intuitive led him to the solution of "breaking down the barriers": "I had the sense that for people with disabilities and 'normal' people to meet, an intervention is required. It came to me that in a [special environment] people with disabilities are the [enabled] people, and the 'normal' people are the people with disabilities." When he told others about his approach of employing people with special needs in special environments, he met resistance: "People ridiculed it and said the idea was crazy." However, he was able to suspend premature judgment and maintain his commitment to developing the concept. He noted, "When everybody is against it, then there must be something about it. The idea had aroused people's curiosity" ..

Table 5: Shaping the enterprise foundation

Mechanisms		Outcomes at enterprise level	
Case Founder	Seeing problems as opportunities	Fostering enterprise culture	Foundation for enterprise: Responsible business model idea and seeds for a caring enterprise culture
Eden Emil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Saw that encounters of people with disabilities and ‘normal’ people in an unusual environment would be a powerful intervention to overcome prejudices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inspired and appreciated the team •Shared power and granted freedom •Encouraged others’ development •Embraced change •Acted authentically with humility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Platform for conversations between people with disabilities and ‘normal’ people giving jobs to people with disabilities •Values: Care for people, respect, trust, freedom, innovation •Practices: Empowerment of all staff, flat hierarchies, research and development, collaboration
Apollo Anton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Saw that direct involvement of interested citizens would inform them holistically about value creation •Developed accounting rules reflecting the complete value generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inspired and appreciated the team •Shared power and granted freedom •Acted environmentally and socially responsible •Acted authentically with humility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Transparent regional citizen stock company that secured long-term capital for sustainable small growers •Values: Care for people/nature, justice, transparency •Practices: Empowerment of staff/partners, ensuring organic quality, cooperation, balanced disclosure of all outcomes
Freyja Frieda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Recognised that directly involving a broad range of citizen groups was key to increasing green urban spaces, fostering social inclusion, and decreasing municipal spending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inspired and appreciated the team •Shared power and granted freedom •Acted responsibly •Challenged organisational practices •Acted authentically with humility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Urban gardening concept that included marginalised citizens • Values: Care for people/nature, equality, trust, freedom •Practices: Flat hierarchies, fair/flexible work, loyalty to staff, constructive communication within team, responsible action, collaboration

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

	Mechanisms		Outcomes at enterprise level
Case Founder	Seeing problems as opportunities	Fostering enterprise culture	Foundation for enterprise: Responsible business model idea and seeds for a caring enterprise culture
Gaia Georg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived selling high quality organic and naturopathic products as a sustainable alternative to conventional price-war driven grocery stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspired and cared for the team • Granted freedom • Acted authentically and consciously • Encouraged others' development • Acted proactively and responsibly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mail order business for organic/naturopathic products; later organic, socially aware retail and wholesale business • Values: Care for people/nature, fairness, equality, trust, freedom, creativity, proactivity, generosity, honesty • Practices: Training of staff, holistic management, ensuring high organic quality, innovation, generative dialogues
Hera Heide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saw that education about energy savings and climate protection fostered a nationwide community • Networking with experts and empowering citizens broke energy suppliers' monopoly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspired and appreciated the team • Shared power • Acted authentically with courage • Proactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen-owned cooperative for green electricity supply initially funded by climate activists and local citizens • Values: Climate protection, justice, citizen empowerment, fighting spirit • Practices: Climate activism, employee participation, nuclear-free climate-friendly energy production, collaboration

The Freyja case offers a further example for the mechanism “seeing problems as opportunities”. The enterprise’s co-founder Frieda engaged the metacognitive ability of perspective taking to create a well-rounded socioecological concept for communities. She shared that her ability to put herself in the shoes of citizens afforded the realisation that for “people to understand the importance of nature for their well-being” they needed to be actively involved in “civil society greening initiatives”. Understanding the perspective of municipal authorities led Frieda to find “decreased community spending on public green spaces” as an argument that convinced authorities to collaborate with her. Later, Frieda faced the practical problem that as a “lone fighter” she was becoming “overwhelmed” and felt ineffective in delivering the socioecological concept. For many years, she had enjoyed the “personal freedom” of being self-employed. Frieda’s ability to overcome her self-concept of needing great freedom now allowed her to become open-minded to the possibility that founding an enterprise with two like-minded people would make her concept more potent and therefore, it was worth compromising her freedom. Across the five cases, two metacognitive abilities seemed to be specifically important in imagining creative solutions and seeing a practical problem as an entrepreneurial opportunity to create value: Suspending rushed judgment and being open to alternatives. These metacognitive abilities ultimately affected foundational enterprise characteristics, as will be discussed further down.

Georg of Gaia presents an example of the different metacognitive abilities at work in the second mechanism “fostering enterprise culture” (see Table 5). Georg reported several metacognitive capabilities that shaped how he nurtured an enterprise culture and ultimately supported what he hoped to achieve through the enterprise. These capabilities included suspending precipitate judgment and his openness to viewpoints that conflict with his own. They led him to engage in constructive conversations that enabled collaborative problem-solving. His thoughtful approach ultimately allowed finding appropriate solutions and created a shared enterprise culture of trust and appreciation. He conveyed,

I know exactly what I want, and so do the others. . . . For example, when our managing director sees and thinks certain things differently, then I think, ‘I could shake my head’. Then I say, ‘I have to think about it once more.’ We have the courage to allow two opinions. The best solution should develop through dialogue. . . . That also leads to mutual trust.

Georg also commented that he made sure his staff had the opportunity for self-development and encouraged them to “work very, very independently”. He remembered an incident that captured well how his actions shaped a culture of fairness:

Fourteen years ago, I sent a new fruit and vegetable purchaser – who was very good at buying conventional [produce] – to an anthroposophical institution. It made a positive impact on him. [Afterwards] he said, ‘I want to change the terms of payment for our farmers. We need to pay them immediately, not after 90 days [of delivery]. That’s not fair.’ And now, we pay our suppliers the moment we receive the goods.

Similarly, in the case of Freyja, Frieda reported metacognitive capabilities contributing to a healthy enterprise climate (see Table 5). Her ability to be empathetic and reduce ego defence helped her to foster a culture of care and equality. She recounted,

We have an appreciation – that means appreciation of the interlocutor in all her facets and capabilities. We are consequently loyal to our employees. . . . I don’t know why I should pride myself in being any better than others. In our team, we work with everyone as equal partners, no differences.

Data suggested nurturing a responsible shared enterprise culture was an important capability in the process of social and environmental value creation.

The mechanisms “seeing problems as opportunities” and “fostering enterprise culture” ultimately led to outcomes at the enterprise level. The outcomes “Foundation for enterprise: Responsible business model idea and seeds for a caring enterprise culture” are presented in Table 5. The Apollo case illustrates the outcomes. The enterprise showed both a business model and an enterprise culture that supported the mission of tackling social and environmental issues in regional agriculture. As the managing director of a partner organisation commented in a YouTube video, “[Anton’s] highly social, environmentally conscious and innovative course of action” created a novel business model that allowed citizens to “bring in capital for their region”, “practically retrace their capital’s impact on the region”, and to “get a sense of formative capacity”. He noted the stock company’s vision of establishing a profitable regional ecological agriculture was visible in its annual meetings and novel accounting technique. They generated “transparency in cause and effect relationships in the

agriculture, . . . and a sense of responsibility and care in citizens.” Another partner praised Apollo’s social and strongly organic practices. He said, “Instead of subjugating seasonal workers, they qualify their staff and seek to retain them in the company.” He also mentioned, “When they label produce as ‘regional’, it means ‘produced in the region from seed to harvest, including nitrogen’ – and not just ‘cultivated in the region’ like in the case of other producers.”

Shaping change towards sustainability-as-flourishing

How does the social and environmental value creation process shape change towards sustainability-as-flourishing at the societal level? Evidence suggested two patterns that we describe below: Overcoming relational challenges with external stakeholders and shaping socioeconomic change. Together, these patterns reflect how the social enterprises affected a transformation at the socioeconomic level (see Figure 1).

Overcoming relational challenges with external stakeholders. The pattern connecting metacognitive abilities, an enterprise capability and outcomes beyond the enterprise was “overcoming relational challenges with external stakeholders”. Table 6 characterises the pattern for each of the cases and substantiates it with direct quotes.

Participants reported that the enterprise maintained high-quality relationships with stakeholders beyond organisational boundaries. Positive external relations are essential for different entrepreneurial phases, including founding, building, managing an enterprise, and particularly for shaping socioeconomic change (Corner & Ho, 2010; de Bruin et al., 2017; Montgomery et al., 2012). At times, the social enterprises’ novel and unconventional solutions triggered resistance from stakeholders at the socioeconomic level, which led to interpersonal tensions. Entrepreneurs and their teams resolved the tensions by engaging the mechanism (and enterprise capability) “conciliatory actions”. The cases revealed how, once again, participants drew on metacognitive abilities to respond constructively to conflict. The mechanism induced outcomes at the socioeconomic level (see Table 6).

Table 6: Overcoming relational challenges with external stakeholders

	Mechanism	Outcomes at socioeconomic level	
Case Founder	Conciliatory actions	Outcomes, e.g. positive external relations, acceptance of new ideas	Quotes
Eden Emil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding reasons for non-payment • Empathetic dialogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructive solutions for conflicts • High-quality relationships with franchisees • Collaboration 	“We try to really understand the [conflict] situation with much empathy and patience of a saint. Why is it that the individual cannot pay? We always try to reflect what is it that we neglected to help our customers. How can we help them? . . . As a result, we have created a network of franchisees who are friends with us.”
Apollo Anton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaceful conversations that consider others’ mindsets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusting relationships with investors • Investors scrutinising their habitual thinking patterns 	“When faced with questions that are so existential for an individual like money, capital, assets, and one does not fit into their thinking patterns, people [investors] become aggressive. . . . They cannot think it [grasp the concept]. . . . Sometimes, they felt let down because they received no money dividend. . . . I have to deal with them every day and explain that value is being built in the long run. And then, new images, new thoughts, new connections emerge within individuals. Awareness rises.”
Freyja Frieda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathetic questions and deep listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities’ resolving resistance • Trust in new pathways of designing the urban environment • Collaboration 	“When there is resistance, I always ask people, ‘You really have to tell me, what are your arguments?’ Then it is best to listen very closely to where the anxieties stem from. . . . Then I get a chance to show them that [my socioecological concept] works, and the resistance dissolves. . . . You have to love humans and nature, then it works.”
Gaia Georg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calmly explaining reasons for actions • Constructive dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bankers resolving their resistance to his investment in employees • Good relationship with bankers 	“When I had problems with the bank I explained, ‘I want to develop good employees, and that costs money’. Finally, they did understand it. . . . Now I don’t have to visit the bankers anymore; they come to see me. . . . 25 years ago they came and offered me 500 000 DM, although I had no collateral. We still work with the same bank.”
Hera Heide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful and friendly interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly climate in which competitors’ employees supported the social enterprise’s goals. 	“[The employees of large energy providers] are not bad people. . . . We had such good relationships with them that many of them helped us. They would have run into trouble if their boss had noticed that. But we simply were in contact with each other on a very good human level. We fight structures, . . . but we do not fight people.”

Hera's case exemplifies the mechanism "conciliatory actions". Metacognitive capabilities allowed interpersonal skills, which helped Heide and her co-founders to avoid creating interpersonal problems in the phase before enterprise founding. When the entrepreneurs won two plebiscites, the citizens were entitled to acquire the energy grid. However, some of the citizens initially did not support the idea of buying the local grid from the monopolist energy supplier. By reducing their ego-defence and taking the perspective of those citizens, the entrepreneurs were able not to offend them. Heide recalled,

We made a big effort not to flaunt that we were the winners [of the plebiscites] because we had to live with the other part of the population [who voted against the citizens' acquisition of the energy grid]. We really tried to be fair winners, not to be triumphant, and instead to get them back on board. . . . We walked from household to household and talked to all people.

She mentioned that in her conversations with citizens, she showed up authentically and vulnerable. She highlighted what was at risk for her and her family in case she was not telling the truth. Her behaviour convinced many fellow citizens to trust her and embrace the plan to buy the grid.

Similarly, the case of Apollo illustrates the mechanism, how metacognitive abilities engendered conciliatory actions and communicative skills. Anton reported that in highly emotional arguments with external stakeholders who, sometimes, became personal and unfair in their attacks, he decreased his self-centred cognition and premature judgment. Instead, he based his dialogues on more objective factual reasoning. Anton shared,

I have achieved a lot in public debates for example with economists, who at times can be aggressive. I have developed an ability to persuade based on objectivity with dispassion. When I explain my ideas, I aim to stay calm, not to apportion any blame.

Conciliatory actions facilitated outcomes at the socioeconomic level – positive external relations and acceptance of new ideas. Case Hera exemplifies how constructive dialogues were critical in achieving public acceptance of the novel idea that ordinary citizens could own and run an energy company. In the end, Hera enterprise was able to gather a "strong base of support in the local community". This, in turn, facilitated successfully building the citizen-owned energy enterprise in the municipality. Also in the Apollo case, interpersonal and communicative skills had

positive outcomes at the socioeconomic level. They achieved that stakeholders challenged their preconceptions about accounting. Anton reported, “In the last three years, I have not had any conversation with an auditor, tax consultant, or economist in which they didn’t agree with me that we need to internalise [externalised social and environmental costs]”.

Overall, entrepreneurs reported self-transcendent capacities – a disengagement from self-concern – including perspective taking and empathy (K. W. Brown et al., 2007; Pavlovich & Krahnke, 2012). The capacities were useful to overcome interpersonal challenges by enabling relational skills, such as the ability to engage in peaceful and constructive dialogues. Through these dialogues, social entrepreneurs were able to build trust and positive relationships with external stakeholders, particularly at times when the new business model or product was not yet seen as legitimate. Evidence shows incidences in which entrepreneurs were successful in their attempt to alter wider public perceptions. Participants skilfully and gently invited people beyond the organisation’s boundaries to scrutinise their limiting thought patterns and then gradually embrace new patterns of thought apparently more in tune with a flourishing world.

Despite the data in support of participants’ self-transcendent abilities, the cases also evidence occasional moments when social entrepreneurs applied unhelpful tendencies of thinking and related emotions, such as frustration that did not lead anywhere positive. For example, Anton admitted,

When it comes to concrete implementation [of a new balance sheet valuation], I am sometimes a lone wolf. Although people understand that internalisation is vital, they don’t follow through on their understanding to consequently re-evaluate the annual financial statement. This is when I reach a point of despair. [... Them] not following through agitates me again and again.

Participants shared instances of resorting to old cognitive habits that predated their metacognitive abilities that kicked off all these processes described in the findings. However, they did not mention much about enacting these old cognitive tendencies.

Shaping socioeconomic change. Case data suggested another pattern that links the enterprise with the socioeconomic level. We labelled the final pattern “shaping socioeconomic change”. Table 7 documents this pattern across cases and gives quotes in support of it.

Table 7: Shaping socioeconomic change

Mechanism	Quotes	Outcomes
Enterprise capabilities engendered change	Examples of how capabilities were implemented	Outcomes from capabilities at societal level e.g. for industries, communities
Developed business models or products that addressed root causes of social and environmental issue	Apollo (Anton): “I intensively researched several alternative ways to raise capital for organic agriculture. I talked to many experts and we had long, . . . sometimes philosophical, discussions. . . . Finally, we decided to use a simple market mechanism – a legal holding company with publicly available shares. This accessible financial investment opportunity is changing the structure of the agriculture industry. It creates transparency for social and environmental issues . . . and reconnects citizens to their region. . . . People feel more in charge [of their region].”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •New imitable responsible business models/products •Raised awareness of problem •Increased sense of connection to marginalised people/nature •Overall augmented sense of responsibility •Responsible business models/products adopted by industry and positive actions by communities created social and environmental value
Team acted in a socially/ environmentally caring and self-responsible way within organisation	Freyja (Frieda): “We created jobs that offer fair pay and full flexibility, in particular for employees with young children, but with self-responsibility. As a result, our staff work wholeheartedly on their [environmental] projects. . . . Also, we don’t have hierarchies; we are all equal partners, including our cleaning lady who has her say as well.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fully engaged and empowered staff created social and environmental value •Industry adopted imitable responsible business practices
Encouraged a broad range of external stakeholders to become co-creators	Freyja (Frieda): “I am an absolute networker. . . . As much as I have a coffee with the president of the German Central Bank or the Federal Chancellor to talk about a project, I meet my long-term unemployed people to have a coffee . . . and listen to what is going on for them.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strong network with trusting external relationships that collaborated towards the enterprise’s mission •External stakeholders’ buy-in to new ideas
Disseminated knowledge	Hera (Heide): “We have invested in similar ventures and shaped their business model, for example in that they also engage citizens or only sell renewable energy. . . . Every week we have visitors from Japan, and we encourage them to change direction [away from nuclear energy] after Fukushima.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Scaling up social impact to numerous, in most cases international, locations

The pattern consisted of a mechanism called “enterprise capabilities engendered change” as well as resulting outcomes in the wider environment. Every case showed four enterprise capabilities that were key in facilitating change and creating social and environmental value (listed in the first column of Table 7).

For example, Gaia’s case offers insight into how the staffs’ ability to act in a socially and environmentally caring and self-responsible way helped to create value and shape societal level change. Georg said that the freedom staff were enjoying led to high employee “satisfaction” and “genuinely motivated staff”. These motivated employees then ensured the “highest quality of organic produce in the sector”, for instance by regularly visiting growers. He cited an industry member that confirmed, “Your organisation offers the best quality of organic fruits and vegetables”. Moreover, Georg reported his enterprise’s capability of developing retail customers and suppliers into strong co-creators by engaging positively with them. He shared that Gaia invested in their customers by offering extraordinary free education and holistic management advice. Georg said, “It is fun to observe that new customers, who switch from one of our competitors to us, usually improve their balance sheet within two years”. In addition, Gaia strengthened suppliers by maintaining long-term trusting relations with them as well as planning purchase quantities well in advance to “be a predictable partner for suppliers”.

The case of Eden sheds light on the enterprise’s ability to disseminate knowledge. An executive team member declared (in a report) that the enterprise spread knowledge through an “innovative” franchise structure. She said, “We give the franchisees our know-how, and then there’s a local translation. We are not important any more. . . . We give up control of the concept. This local strength is one of the key factors of our success”. As a result, the enterprise was able to entrust more than 20 independent franchisees to propagate the concept internationally.

Regarding the first capability, please note that having a legitimate socially/environmentally responsible business model or product qualified the case for inclusion in this study in the first place. Therefore, it is not surprising that all cases showed the capability of developing such a business model. Nevertheless, it seemed valuable to report this capability, as it was shaped by metacognition and led to positive societal outcomes.

Capabilities in Table 7 engendered various societal level outcomes for industries and communities. The outcomes were often a result of more than one capability. For simplicity, the table attributes outcomes to the capability that appeared to have the most influence. Case Eden exemplifies how the enterprise's capability to develop a socially responsible product generated change at the socioeconomic level. Some of Eden's end customers who encountered people with disabilities testified to the enterprise's ability to model a product that effectively addressed root causes of marginalisation. Their product (i.e. 'enabled' people meet people with special needs in a special environment) elevated awareness and changed stereotypes around disability. End customers stated (in YouTube videos) how "life-changing" this "experience of humanity" was, or that it helped them "empathise and connect with others in the community".

The Gaia case also offers an example of how the enterprise's capability to advance a legitimate, responsible business model engendered positive outcomes for industry and communities. Georg reported that he received feedback reflecting that "[Gaia] caused other wholesalers [in the industry] to become more customer oriented and to raise their organic standards". Georg added that their staff's ability to act in a caring and self-responsible way led to "the reputation in the industry that [they] have the friendliest personnel and the lowest staff turnover." He continued, "I sense that suppliers, for example, also have the longing to act like that." Furthermore, he was pleased that their ability to encourage retail customers to become co-creators led to them having about 1000 largely successful organic retailers in Germany at the time. The visibility of organic food stores throughout the country then promoted Gaia's mission by contributing to an increase in awareness of and demand for organic produce.

In addition, the case of Freyja highlights environmental outcomes of the enterprise capability to engage different citizen groups. Frieda shared the fact that in the edible gardens "with diverse wild plants and butterfly meadows" "vandalism and pollution" almost completely disappeared. This evidenced a heightened sense of responsibility for the gardens. She underlined that citizens, in particular, the long-term unemployed people who were educated as permaculture assistants, looked well after the urban gardens. Overall, the social entrepreneurs reported that their enterprises had achieved to create more social inclusion of marginalised people, a wider spread of

organic agriculture as well as fair and respectful working conditions, and broader use of renewable energy. Their achievements seem to be in line with progress towards sustainability-as-flourishing.

Discussion and conclusion

We intended this manuscript to examine empirically the role social entrepreneurs' metacognition plays in shaping entrepreneurial value creation and engendering change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. In particular, this work explored how awareness of thought patterns, feelings, and associated behaviours engendered mechanisms and outcomes at three levels – individual, enterprise, and wider societal level. We used a multi-case study design to induce theory given the current lack of empirical research investigating the connection of social entrepreneurs' metacognition to the value creation process (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014), and to wider socioeconomic change (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016). Understanding the patterns for socioeconomic change is important to both advance theory and practice that address the planet's social and environmental issues (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). Moreover, this understanding may develop theory and practice that manifest sustainability-as-flourishing (Laszlo et al., 2012).

We identified patterns connecting metacognition to social enterprise characteristics and capabilities, and ultimately to changes in industries and communities. These patterns can be summarised as three major findings. First, participants' reported awareness of limiting thought patterns and emotions played a significant role in the inception phase at the individual level. Metacognition activated a social entrepreneurial response by allowing insight and engendering creative discontent about social and environmental problems. Second, social entrepreneurs described three patterns that show how different metacognitive abilities (e.g. suspending rushed judgment) engendered individual entrepreneurial actions which then shaped the value creation process at the enterprise level (see Figure 1). The patterns describe how metacognitive abilities enabled important generative mechanisms. These mechanisms then led to positive outcomes at the enterprise and societal level. Third, through nurturing a responsible enterprise culture and developing valuable enterprise capabilities, social entrepreneurs' metacognition ultimately shaped positive wider socioeconomic change for industries and communities including a shift

in deep-seated beliefs and practices, as shown in Figure 1. Positive outcomes encompassed, for example, raised awareness of social or environmental problems, as well as an increased sense of responsibility and ensuing positive action that creates social and environmental value. These outcomes are apparently in line with change towards sustainability-as-flourishing.

Findings have implications for literature and practice. First, of interest to both the sustainability-as-flourishing and social entrepreneurship literature, evidence links individual social entrepreneurs' metacognition to the entrepreneurial value creation process, and ultimately to socioeconomic change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. Metacognition enabled social entrepreneurs to gain several important insights and drop some of their limiting thought patterns. Participants were able to emancipate themselves from the "socio-cultural milieu" that they were embedded in, and that influenced their cognition (Haynie et al., 2010). This emancipation from limiting and biased thought patterns allowed participants to create responsible social enterprises with novel business models. The social enterprises with their caring culture as well as creative and interpersonal capabilities then finally engendered positive socioeconomic change, such as an increase in awareness of problems and responsible actions within industries and communities. Findings extend current literature (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Upward & Jones, 2016) by encompassing the individual, enterprise and societal level, thus drawing a more complete picture of the value creation process in line with sustainability-as-flourishing. In addition, these empirical findings support conceptual work suggesting that, for sustainability-as-flourishing to start manifesting, substantial changes in our cultural beliefs and practices are necessary (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; G. B. Grant, 2012; Kurucz et al., 2013). They indicate mechanisms of how individual actors' metacognition facilitates changes in limiting thought patterns, which then can induce such cultural changes in industries and communities. Thus, this empirical study lays the ground for further research that seeks to investigate the role internal, individual-level transformation plays in contributing to a substantial shift in cultural perceptions and actions in line with the possibility of thriving humans and a thriving planet.

Second, of interest to both the wider entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship literature, the study extends theory on the entrepreneurial process by offering rich detail on a particular entrepreneurial mechanism in the start-up phase

(and beyond) – creative discontent. Evidence suggested that participants’ metacognition enabled them to endure emotional discontent in the face of pressing problems. Research acknowledges highly complex, social or environmental problems can seem daunting for they have many interrelating elements and lack verified solutions (Metcalf & Benn, 2013). The social entrepreneurs in this study appeared to be able to see the problems and experience much of the resulting emotional discontent without suppressing it. Despite the cultural bias that tends to avoid unpleasant experiences (Hayes, Villatte, Levin, & Hildebrandt, 2011), the entrepreneurs used their uneasiness as a “healthy call-to-change” that initiated social transformation (Davies, 2012). In the analysed cases, awareness of thoughts and feelings allowed actors to be vulnerable to and moved by social and environmental distress. The vulnerability seemed supportive in the activation of a creative pro-social response to the problems instead of glossing over them.

Interestingly, the mechanism of becoming creative as a response to emotional discontent is somewhat unexpected given commercial entrepreneurship research that finds negative emotions influence both opportunity evaluation, and opportunity exploitation negatively, in other words, dampen entrepreneurial activity (Grichnik et al., 2010) and encourage rigid thinking (R. A. Baron, 2008). Furthermore, the empirical finding of creative discontent is in line with theoretical work conjecturing that pro-social behaviour like compassion can encourage social entrepreneurship (Miller et al., 2012). Considering metacognition in the early social entrepreneurship process expands theory around factors that can contribute to pro-social motivation and to starting a social enterprise (Miller et al., 2012). Future research could investigate the mechanism of creative discontent in more depth. For example, it could be interesting to examine whether the concept of creative discontent is more prominent in social entrepreneurship than in commercial entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it seems worth exploring in more detail the interplay of metacognition and creative discontent in the inception phase of a social enterprise.

Third, we extend theory about sustainability-as-flourishing by identifying patterns that link metacognitive abilities with a caring enterprise culture and other characteristics that constitute a responsible enterprise. Our identification of generative mechanisms leading to important enterprise characteristics and capabilities expands literature, which theorises about the requirements to advance sustainability-as-

flourishing in business (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Laszlo et al., 2012; Upward & Jones, 2016). Our empirical evidence gives detail on several of the involved organisational mechanisms, such as problem identification and framing, seeing problems as opportunities, and fostering enterprise culture. In particular, participants' reported metacognitive abilities seemed to be an important factor in engendering generative mechanisms. Cases suggested several metacognitive abilities that the sustainability-as-flourishing literature to date has rarely discussed, including suspending rushed judgment, reducing defensiveness, and openness to alternatives. These metacognitive abilities supplement other abilities mentioned in earlier sustainability-as-flourishing literature, such as care or empathy, and seeing a bigger picture (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Laszlo et al., 2012), and confirmed in this study. We have yet to explore, if certain metacognitive abilities are specific to social entrepreneurs successful in generating change, or if other less successful social entrepreneurs and commercial entrepreneurs show similar abilities. Future research could compare metacognitive abilities across different types of entrepreneurs.

Fourth, the cases in this study propose conciliatory actions as a mechanism through which metacognitive abilities facilitated the resolution of interpersonal challenges at the socioeconomic level. This finding suggests implications for theory around cooperation in both the wider sustainability and social entrepreneurship literature. Overcoming interpersonal tensions then enabled social entrepreneurs to effectively generate change across enterprise boundaries (Williams, 2002). This finding is in line with psychology literature (K. W. Brown et al., 2007) and confirms conceptual, organisational research stating that metacognitive abilities such as empathy can enable actors to improve interpersonal skills and solve problems (Pavlovich & Krahnke, 2012; Waddock, 2013). The studied enterprises' unconventional business models and products provoked initial resistance in external stakeholders. Entrepreneurs' ability to be empathetic and understanding appeared to "create fertile ground" for others to overcome resistance (B. C. Brown, 2012b, p. 571). They exposed stakeholders to new ideas, challenged old thought patterns, and invited others to let go of limiting thought patterns in line with earlier organisational sustainability research by Brown (2012b). Our evidence highlights the importance of metacognitive abilities for positive relationships with external stakeholders to create socioeconomic change. Our finding that metacognitive abilities support positive external relationships gives insight into

the foundations of collaborative behaviour beyond organisational boundaries (Montgomery et al., 2012). In line with Waddell and colleagues' (2015) conceptions, our evidence suggested healthy strong external relations contributed to the effective co-creation of larger scale socioeconomic change. We thus call for further research that empirically investigates the role of metacognition, ensuing relational capabilities and resulting socioeconomic change towards human and planetary flourishing.

For practice, our findings indicate that social entrepreneurs who create socioeconomic change capitalise on their awareness of thought patterns and associated feelings. This manuscript identified several mechanisms that connect metacognition with the enterprise and ultimately socioeconomic change. As mentioned before, these mechanisms include problem identification and framing, seeing problems as opportunities, fostering enterprise culture, and conciliatory actions. Existing literature maintains for social and environmental value creation to be effective, systems understanding (Waddock, 2013), creativity (Bacq, Ofstein, Kickul, & Gundry, 2015), and collaborative skills (de Bruin et al., 2017; Montgomery et al., 2012; Waddock, 2013) are important qualities. Our findings move beyond that literature by offering insights for practitioners as to how metacognition enables such qualities. Our findings suggest that metacognition engenders metacognitive abilities such as seeing the larger system, openness to alternatives and taking others' perspectives. These abilities then help actors to see root causes of problems, develop novel business models and an effective, responsible enterprise, as well as build a strong social network to leverage social and environmental impact. Actors who feel they might benefit from an increase in their awareness of less useful thoughts and feelings may consider developing their metacognition through practices, over time (Batha & Carroll, 2007), such as yoga or mindfulness meditation (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; Corner & Pavlovich, 2016).

This current manuscript has two limitations. First, findings from an inductive study of five cases may be limited in generalisability, however revelatory (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). The reader may want to reflect on our findings as provoking thought and new ideas (Siggelkow, 2007). Case data served to help extend the mostly conceptual existing theory by offering a more complete description of the role of metacognition in the social entrepreneurial process towards sustainability-as-

flourishing. The possible interrelationships of elements in the revealed patterns can then be tested in future research (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014).

Second, the study's design built in part on retrospective data. In three cases, the enterprise foundation reached back several decades (between 20 and 39 years). We acknowledge that particularly in these cases the retrospective research design might lead to doubts regarding interviewees' ability to recall accurately. However, like others, we do not consider this potential recall bias as "overly problematic" (Cope, 2011; Singh, Corner, & Pavlovich, 2016, p. 22). Studies indicate that critical events in an individual's life can still be remembered well, even after many years (Berney & Blane, 1997; Chell, 2004) and we maintain that founding an enterprise with a meaningful social/environmental purpose can be considered as a critical event. Furthermore, the disadvantage of retrospective data must be considered in light of the benefit of knowing what outcomes the mechanisms generated over a longer time span. In this instance, we knew that successful enterprises emerged which engendered change at a wider industry and community level.

In conclusion, we aimed to expand theory around the role social entrepreneurs' metacognition plays in shaping the entrepreneurial value creation process and ultimately change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. We thus studied five social entrepreneurship cases that were successful in shaping socioeconomic change. This work contributes to the literature on sustainability-as-flourishing and social entrepreneurship by revealing patterns that link metacognition and metacognitive abilities to prudent entrepreneurial actions, which in turn shaped a responsible, caring enterprise culture and valuable enterprise capabilities. These enterprise characteristics and capabilities then engendered positive socioeconomic outcomes for industries and communities. To conclude, our most important contribution is providing insight on how an individual's awareness of habitual limiting thought patterns and ensuing metacognitive abilities can play a substantial role in change towards sustainability-as-flourishing.

Chapter 5 / Manuscript 4 –

Towards a Coaching Framework that Enhances Social Entrepreneurs' Metacognition

Preface

The two preceding empirical manuscripts employed a case study approach to contribute to theory. I discovered positive and negative aspects of social entrepreneurs' inner reality and related generative and hindering behaviours, which highlighted the benefits of metacognition. These findings encouraged me to study how metacognition could be enhanced through intervention. For the intervention, this study employs action research and conducts a series of coaching conversations with a social entrepreneur. It allows me not only to develop theory but also to engender "desired change as a path to generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders" (Bradbury-Huang, 2010, p. 93). I build on previous findings in that I seek to encourage metacognition in the coaching conversations for the entrepreneur to overcome challenges. In manuscript 2, I identified aspects of social entrepreneurs' inner reality that either enabled or hindered social value creation. Manuscript 3 showed how social entrepreneurs' metacognitive abilities engendered several generative mechanisms that allowed participants to create effective, responsible enterprises and to induce socioeconomic changes in industries and communities towards wider flourishing. I was mindful of these aspects in the coaching sessions and sought – where it seemed suitable and relevant – to bring these aspects to the social entrepreneur's awareness.

"It isn't what you don't know that will hurt you,
it's what you do know that isn't true." — Will Rogers

Abstract

This paper explores how coaching can enhance a social entrepreneur's metacognition – awareness and regulation of thoughts and feelings – to enable individual and organisational flourishing. It adopts an action research approach that involved a series of coaching conversations between the author (coach) and a social entrepreneur to empower the entrepreneur to reach her goals. The coaching was found to enhance metacognition enabling the social entrepreneur to recognise and regulate limiting thoughts, unpleasant feelings, and unhelpful behaviour. This transformation at the individual level improved her work effectiveness and relationships at the organisational level, and so might enable the entrepreneur to contribute to a socioeconomic transformation. Coaching tasks, such as manifesting unconditional acceptance and being present facilitated a holding space that allowed the entrepreneur to shift some limiting beliefs and feelings. By exploring coaching of social entrepreneurs with a lens to individual, organisational, and potentially wider flourishing, this empirical study extends largely conceptual social entrepreneurship and sustainability research on flourishing and research on “coaching for social change”.

Keywords

Metacognition, self-awareness, reflection, coaching, social entrepreneurship, flourishing

Introduction

There is popular interest in self-awareness and reflective practices across a wide spectrum of human activity. One aspect of these practices is the enhancement of metacognition, or the awareness and regulation of habitual limiting thoughts and feelings (Flavell, 1979; Shimamura, 2000). Organisational scholars have ascribed numerous benefits to metacognition (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Kudesia, 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Benefits include becoming more consciously aware of their confining assumptions, restraining feelings and resulting habitual actions. This awareness is said to enable organisational leaders to take wiser, more socially and environmentally responsible, collaborative decisions and actions (Rimanoczy, 2017; Smith et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2016). Such a shift at the individual level towards more responsible, ethical and collaborative decisions and actions contributes to the creation

of ethical, even caring organisations, like social enterprises (Laszlo et al., 2012; Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Zhu et al., 2016). Metacognition is seen to be able to support entrepreneurs in solving challenges that come with founding and growing new responsible social enterprises (Laszlo et al., 2014; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014; Zhu et al., 2016). Social enterprises, in turn, may contribute to a socioeconomic transformation in the wider environment that makes the possibility of indefinite human and planetary flourishing more likely (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Zhu et al., 2016). Along with others, I suggest that metacognitive practices might support a mindset in social entrepreneurs that is in alignment with the flourishing of individuals, organisations and ultimately the Earth (Laszlo et al., 2012; Schaefer, Corner, & Kearins, 2015; Waddock & Lozano, 2013).

Coaching interventions are an approach that scholars and practitioners have discussed as enhancing individuals' metacognition (Flaherty, 2010; D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Wasylyshyn, 2003; Witherspoon, 2014) and improving individuals' functioning in organisations (de Meuse, Dai, & Lee, 2009; Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2013). Coaching can be defined as a "process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective" (Peterson & Hicks, as cited in Feldman & Lankau, 2005, p. 830). While coaching interventions in organisations have significantly increased in the last two decades, research is lagging behind (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Mosteo et al., 2016; Theeboom et al., 2013). While some case studies conclude that coaching interventions in organisations are effective, there are few empirical studies on mechanisms underlying effective coaching (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Mosteo et al., 2016; Segers et al., 2011). In particular, despite the practitioner literature claiming increased metacognition as an outcome of coaching (Flaherty, 2010; Moen & Kvalsund, 2008; Whitmore, 2009), the mechanisms of how metacognition can be enhanced remain under-researched in the coaching literature. The psychology literature offers much more insight on this (K. W. Brown et al., 2007; Hayes et al., 2011; Pieterse, Lee, Ritmeester, & Collins, 2013; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

Furthermore, literature that links coaching to entrepreneurship (Halkias & Denton, 2015; Kutzhanova, Lyons, & Lichtenstein, 2009) or social entrepreneurship remains extremely sparse. While practitioners have encouraged utilising coaching as a means to contribute to a transformation towards a better world (Lasley et al., 2015;

Outhwaite & Bettridge, 2009), research on coaching as a process for social change is not widespread (Shoukry & Cox, 2018). So far, research has mostly focused on coaching in corporations, primarily with senior managers (A. M. Grant, 2011b; Shoukry & Cox, 2018). Coaching has therefore been critiqued as a tool that may perpetuate the unsustainable status quo that serves people with power and privilege (Lasley et al., 2015; Shoukry & Cox, 2018).

Given that social entrepreneurs may benefit from enhanced metacognition and that there is limited empirical research on how coaching develops metacognition and how it can contribute to socioeconomic change, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, I explore the extent to which coaching develops metacognition. I do so through a series of coaching sessions with a social entrepreneur and explore the effects of the coaching process on her metacognition and behaviour. Second, I investigate what mechanisms in coaching are particularly relevant in heightening a social entrepreneurs' metacognition. I adapt and apply a coaching framework geared to heighten social entrepreneurs' self-awareness and self-regulation of thoughts and feelings. The coaching aims ultimately to support social entrepreneurs in reaching organisational goals that – if happening across numerous organisations – may make the possibility of human and planetary flourishing more likely. Specifically, I explore the research question, *how can coaching enhance metacognition to enable social and environmental value creation that brings about socioeconomic change?*

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I present a literature review on the benefits of metacognition for social entrepreneurs. Second, I detail practices that can heighten metacognition in executives and leaders and offer a model for the process of enhancing metacognition. Third, I present literature on coaching and introduce a metacognitive coaching framework that I adopted from current academic and practitioner-oriented coaching literature. Next, I explain the method of this intervention study during which I applied the framework to coach a social entrepreneur in the organisational growing phase. I then illustrate the findings from the coaching sessions. Finally, I discuss the findings and give some concluding remarks as to how the coaching enabled social entrepreneurial work towards flourishing.

Literature review

Benefits of metacognition for social entrepreneurs

Metacognition signifies the knowledge of patterns in thoughts and thought processes (Nelson, 1996), and related feelings (Ochsner et al., 2002). It can enable the transformation of habitual thoughts and feelings (Ochsner et al., 2002). Individuals have different abilities in being aware of and regulating their thought processes and feelings (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003; Haynie et al., 2010), and these abilities may be enhanced through practice over time (Batha & Carroll, 2007; K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003). The development of metacognition seems valuable, given that most thought processes and accompanying feelings flow habitually without conscious awareness (Cunliffe, 2004; Haidt, 2001; Reynolds, 2006). That means that people often automatically interpret experiences through the filters of their previous conditioning (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007, p. 212). The vastly biased nature of habitual cognition highlights the importance of metacognitive capabilities for overcoming inefficient or less useful habits in thinking (including subconscious biases), feeling and resulting behaviour (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

Metacognition is seen to be related to business success (Watkins, 2016) and various benefits for effective organisational processes (Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Kudesia, 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2011). In particular, some scholars consider it beneficial in enabling social entrepreneurs to overcome a variety of hurdles faced when founding and growing new ventures (Laszlo et al., 2014; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014; Zhu et al., 2016). For instance, self-awareness and self-regulation can enhance adaptive responses to changing environments (B. C. Brown, 2012b; Haynie & Shepherd, 2009; Kudesia, 2017; Ruderman & Clerkin, 2015). Metacognitive abilities are seen to help individuals notice and let go of outmoded strategies of responding to certain environmental cues and thus to become more flexible in thinking and behaving (Haynie & Shepherd, 2009). Being able to adapt seems particularly important for social entrepreneurs who face complex dynamic environments (Goldstein et al., 2008; Waddock, 2013). Similarly, being able to open up to new ways of perceiving and responding can increase resilience in individuals and thus help to recover quickly from difficulties (Brendel & Bennett, 2016).

Metacognition may also foster innovativeness (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2010; Lorenz et al., 2018). It has been argued that metacognitive capabilities, such as seeing nuances outside of habitual thinking processes or intuition, may help generate new ideas (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016). Innovativeness seems to be essential for entrepreneurs who aim to develop novel business models and products to address social and environmental challenges (J. K. Hall, Matos, Sheehan, & Silvestre, 2012; Phillips, Lee, Ghobadian, O'Regan, & James, 2015; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

Moreover, self-awareness and self-regulation can support the resolution of tensions (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Lewis, 2000; Smith et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2016). Social entrepreneurs can benefit from resolving tensions such as those inherent in the simultaneous creation of social/environmental benefits and economic value (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Smith et al., 2013; Zhu et al., 2016). In addition, metacognition can enhance interpersonal skills as it is seen to both reduce self-interest and enhance the ability to take others' perspectives (K. W. Brown et al., 2007; Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Pavlovich & Krahnke, 2012). Interpersonal skills appear relevant for entrepreneurs seeking to co-create positive change beyond their organisations, as they need to interact with many different stakeholders and maintain good relationships with them (Meyskens, Carsrud, & Cardozo, 2010; Montgomery et al., 2012).

While the literature attests to the benefits of metacognition for social entrepreneurs, how metacognition can be enhanced in these entrepreneurs is under-researched (Smith et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2016). However, enhancing the entrepreneurs' metacognition is important as it may empower them to tackle the challenges of working towards a flourishing world.

Practices to heighten metacognition

Knowledge about practices to heighten metacognition is advancing in the organisational literature (L. Baron, Rouleau, Grégoire, & Baron, 2018; Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Mirvis, 2008; Petriglieri et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012; Ustav, 2016). Studies on leadership development and management education have moved beyond a historical, more predominant focus on developing conventional cognitive and practical business skills (Quatro, Waldman, & Galvin, 2007; Waddock & Lozano, 2013). These more recent studies investigate leadership and executive development programmes that aim to enhance participants' awareness and regulation of thoughts, feelings,

bodily sensations, and ultimately encourage transformative learning and behavioural changes (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Zhu et al., 2016).

Development programmes that allow leaders to increase self-knowledge and self-regulation of their thoughts, feelings, sensations and actions integrate a variety of different approaches (Mirvis, 2008; Rimanoczy, 2017; Smith et al., 2012). The literature suggests that the different programmes have in common a broad underlying process, which I summarise in simplified form in Figure 1. I caution the reader that the process might not always follow the neat sequence displayed in the figure.

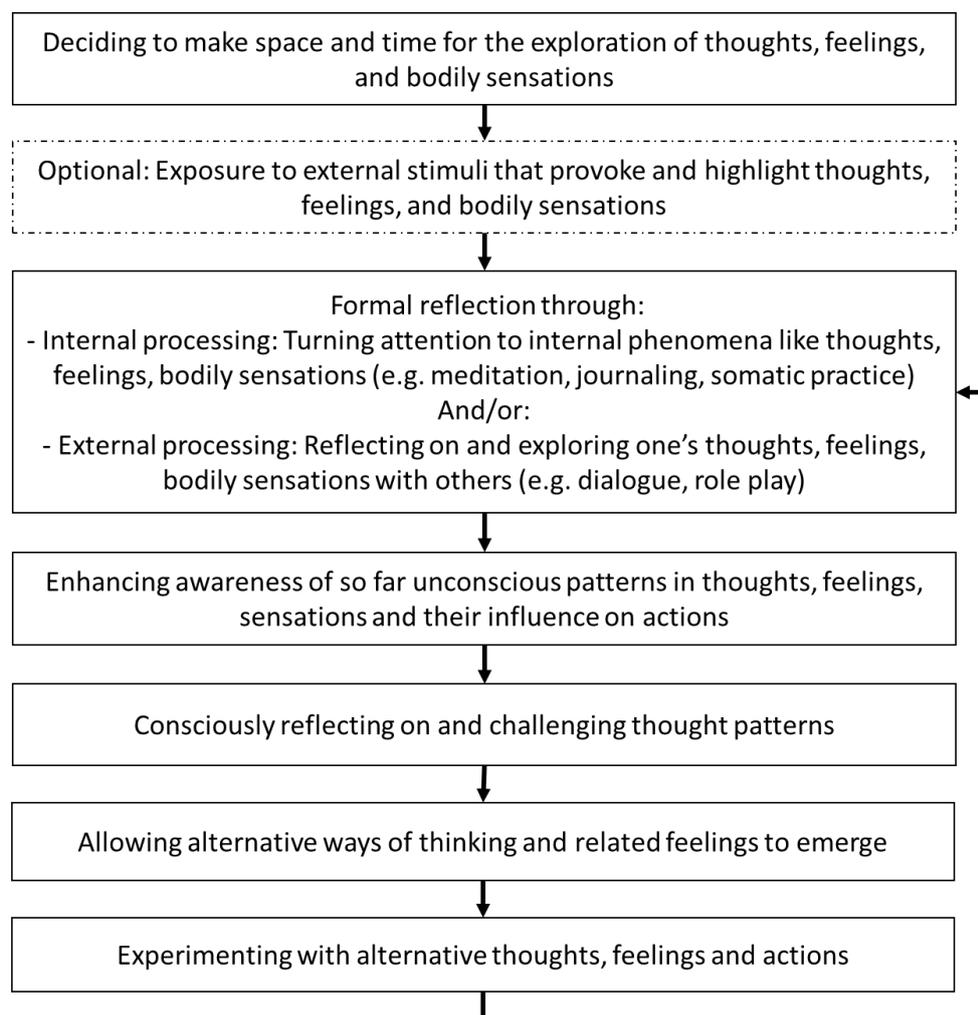


Figure 1: Process of enhancing metacognition

The first step in a development programme seems to be taking a conscious decision to make space and time for the engagement in self-development (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Mirvis, 2008; Zhu et al., 2016). Depending on the approach of the programme participants choose, the programme may then expose them to situations

with external stimuli that trigger and emphasise habitual, limiting thoughts, feelings, and sensations, such as in unfamiliar, challenging environments at the edge of the participants' comfort zones (Mirvis, 2008; Petriglieri et al., 2011; Rimanoczy, 2017). The reasoning behind exposure to such experiences is situations that clash with our meaning structures (e.g. interpretations, values, and assumptions) activate a process of reflection. Such reflection entails a "critique of our assumptions (their origins, nature and consequences) to examine whether our beliefs remain functional" (Gray, 2006, p. 488).

A next important step is the practice of structured reflection either on the purposely-triggered experiences or other relevant experiences. There seem to be two complementary pathways that several of the development programmes integrate. The first one involves solitary practices and a conscious decision to turn the attention to internal phenomena like thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations (De Haan et al., 2010; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007; Segers et al., 2011; Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Zhu et al., 2016). Commonly applied solitary practices to heighten introspection range from mindfulness meditation and reflective journaling to engagement with poetry and art (Cunliffe, 2004; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Laszlo et al., 2014; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007; Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Zhu et al., 2016). The second pathway uses external, shared interactive practices and relates to structured reflection on biased assumptions and related feelings. Examples of such approaches are public reflection through dialogue, group discussion, and role-play, as well as nature immersion (De Haan et al., 2010; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Laszlo et al., 2014; Mirvis, 2008; Moen & Kvalsund, 2008; Petriglieri et al., 2011; Segers et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012; Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Shared reflection and dialogue, such as applied in executive coaching are said to be particularly effective in enhancing self-awareness and self-regulation (De Haan et al., 2010; D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Moen & Kvalsund, 2008; Poelmans, 2009; Segers et al., 2011; Wasylyshyn, 2003).

These techniques then allow the participants to heighten their awareness of so far unconscious thoughts and feelings (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Laszlo et al., 2014; Moen & Kvalsund, 2008; Poelmans, 2009; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007; Smith et al., 2012). Over time, participants may notice patterns in thoughts and feelings, as well as habitual actions that flow from those thoughts and feelings (D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Petriglieri et al., 2011). In a next

step, participants may consciously reflect on and scrutinise their thought patterns (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Poelmans, 2009). Then, to support the identification of alternative ways of thinking, participants may engage in solitary (e.g. journaling) or collaborative (e.g. dialogue) techniques (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Laszlo et al., 2014; Poelmans, 2009; Smith et al., 2012).

Most of the programmes, in particular those that involve coaching, emphasise action learning through behavioural experiments (Petriglieri et al., 2011; Zhu et al., 2016). Behavioural experiments can be carried out, for example, in role-play (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Roglio & Light, 2009) or the work environment (D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Poelmans, 2009; Smith et al., 2012). Action learning enables people to experiment with new, more appropriate thoughts and corresponding new actions that have sprung from previous reflection (D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Laszlo et al., 2014; Mirvis, 2008; Moen & Kvalsund, 2008; Petriglieri et al., 2011; Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Zhu et al., 2016). The idea is to test new assumptions and actions and to see whether they yield results different from the past. Another round of reflection on one's new thoughts, actions and their results follows the behavioural experiments (Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Zhu et al., 2016). In line with theories on adult development and transformative learning, such a repeated sequence of critical reflection and action propels growth in adults and increases metacognition (Gray, 2006; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006).

In keeping with the earlier mentioned benefits of metacognition for social entrepreneurs, immediate outcomes of participants' enhanced self-awareness and self-regulation are seen to be:

- Reduced unpleasant feelings and related defensive behaviour (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Petriglieri et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012),
- Heightened resilience and equanimity (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Poelmans, 2009; Zhu et al., 2016),
- Enhanced open-mindedness, creativity, and innovation (Mirvis, 2008; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007; Zhu et al., 2016),
- Increased other-awareness, empathy, and other relational skills (D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Laszlo et al., 2014; Mirvis, 2008; Wasylyshyn, 2003), as well as

- Amplified systems-awareness and holistic thinking (Rimanoczy, 2017; Roglio & Light, 2009; Waddock & Lozano, 2013).

The ultimate, more long-term outcomes of enhanced metacognition are the transformation of mindsets – including values, perceptions, and judgments (De Haan et al., 2010; Gray, 2006; Smith et al., 2012). An individual's transformed mindset often leads to more socially responsible, flexible, and effective behaviour in organisations (D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Laszlo et al., 2012; Roglio & Light, 2009). Some researchers even go so far as to suggest that such transformation may, in the long run, support human and planetary flourishing (Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Zhu et al., 2016).

Coaching

Coaching has been gaining increasing attention from practitioners in the last two decades, and from scholars more recently (De Haan et al., 2010; D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Mosteo et al., 2016; Segers et al., 2011; Wasylshyn, 2003). Some suggest it is emerging as one of the most important methods in professional leadership development (Gray, 2006, p. 475). In many cases, coaching is deemed to be a highly effective developmental intervention leading to improved personal and organisational performance (De Haan et al., 2010; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; D. T. Hall et al., 1999). Coaching is seen as *a systematic process of providing a coachee with the opportunities, means, and knowledge she needs to transform her mindset, in order to improve her professional performance, personal well-being and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of her enterprises* (Peterson & Hicks, as cited in Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Segers et al., 2011, p. 204). It can be carried out by external coaches, or internal to the organisation including when managers coach their subordinates (Flaherty, 2010; D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Moen & Kvalsund, 2008; Whitmore, 2009). Coaching is complementary to regular business mentoring where an experienced individual supports a novice by transferring experience, specific business management skills and knowledge (Ozgen & Baron, 2007; St-Jean & Audet, 2012).

There seem to be various factors affecting the success of a coaching intervention, such as characteristics of the coach (e.g., psychological skills, competencies), characteristics of the coachee (e.g., readiness to be coached, industry sector), the coach-coachee fit (e.g., demographic similarity) (Poelmans, 2009; L. R. Stern, 2004), and the approach to coaching (Segers et al., 2011). Existing coaching

research has offered us a wide range of coaching models, providing options on how a coach can approach and structure the coaching process (De Haan et al., 2010, p. 607; O'Connor & Lages, 2004; Segers et al., 2011; Whitmore, 2009). There seems to be a spectrum in coaching approaches from those that focus primarily on achieving a particular practical goal as fast as possible to those that aim for broader and more long-term personal development to fulfil one's potential (Ives, 2008; Stober, 2006). On the one end, methods that predominantly centre on a coachee's growth in terms of learning particular practical skills and achieving a performance goal (without necessarily revising existing deep-seated beliefs), engage more the rational and behavioural side of coachees (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Ives, 2008; Segers et al., 2011). Such approaches are referred to as rational/cognitive approaches, following the activity school (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Segers et al., 2011). On the other end of the spectrum are methods that primarily aim at transforming the way a coachee thinks and makes sense of experiences (Braham & Wahl, 2013). They stress the importance that the coachee becomes more aware of certain feelings and thoughts and then acts on that awareness (Segers et al., 2011; Stober, 2006). Such approaches are referred to as humanistic approaches, following the emotionality or awareness school (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Segers et al., 2011).

Much of the executive coaching literature and many executive coaches seem to focus more on rational and behavioural approaches (Brooks & Wright, 2007; Segers et al., 2011). Approaches with an over-reliance on rational problem-solving have been criticised for neglecting the emotional factors in problem-solving (Brooks & Wright, 2007). That means many executive coaching interventions focus to a lesser degree on revising and adjusting an individual's beliefs and related feelings. The focus on more rational problem-solving might explain why there is limited empirical research exploring how executive coaching may increase metacognition. Nevertheless, some scholars and practitioners in executive coaching propose that coaching can heighten individuals' awareness and regulation of thoughts and feelings (De Haan et al., 2010; D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Moen & Kvalsund, 2008; Poelmans, 2009; Segers et al., 2011; Wasylyshyn, 2003). However, how coaching interventions transform the meaning-making of the coachee that then leads to improved performance and effectiveness remains under-researched (De Haan et al., 2010; Hanssmann, 2014; Mosteo et al., 2016; Sammut, 2014). In particular, in the executive coaching literature, limited

attention has been paid to the underlying mechanisms of coaching conversations that may enhance metacognition. Furthermore, literature linking coaching to social entrepreneurship remains extremely sparse.

In light of the benefits that heightened metacognition entails for social entrepreneurs' capabilities to contribute to change towards a flourishing world, the study embraces a coaching approach geared to heighten a social entrepreneur's metacognition. The pragmatic coaching framework I used in the one-to-one conversations borrowed heavily from the theoretical underpinnings of the humanistic approach (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Segers et al., 2011; Stober, 2006). The underlying assumption of the humanistic method is that all people strive for self-actualisation in that they seek to reach their natural potential fully (Stober, 2006). The coach honours coachees as the expert in their life and work and believes that every coachee is creative, resourceful, and whole (Stober, 2006). Humanistic coaching aims at enhancing coachees' awareness of their experiences (i.e. thoughts, feelings, sensations) as an initial step towards coachees' desired result of action (Whitmore, 2009). While such self-awareness is not an end in itself, it is regarded as an ingredient for successful action (Stober, 2006, p. 19).

The International Coach Federation (ICF, 2017, 2018), the leading global organisation that seeks to assure the highest quality in professional coaching, endorses several core competencies that are required for an accredited coach. Many aspects of these competencies seem to reflect the key principles guiding humanistic coaching as offered by Stober (2006, pp. 30-37). From the core competencies suggested by the International Coach Federation and key aspects of humanistic coaching (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Flaherty, 2010; Ives, 2008; Segers et al., 2011; Stober, 2006; Whitmore, 2009) I generated an overview of those capabilities that appeared particularly relevant to this study, which I detail in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of core coaching competencies and coaching tasks

Core coaching competency 1: Co-creating a trusting and intimate relationship	
Coaching tasks	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being empathetic • Demonstrating integrity, confidentiality, respect and support • Cultivating acceptance and suspending judgment • Establishing collaboration • Maintaining coaching presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stober (2006) • ICF (2018); Stober (2006) • ICF (2017); Stober (2006) • Stober (2006) • ICF (2018); Stober (2006)
Core coaching competency 2: Communicating effectively	
Coaching tasks	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening actively for understanding and empathy and supporting coachees' self-expression • Powerful questioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICF (2017, 2018); (Moen & Kvalsund, 2008); Segers et al. (2011); Stober (2006) • Segers et al. (2011); Stober (2006); Whitmore (2009) ICF (2017, 2018); Moen and Kvalsund (2008)
Core coaching competency 3: Facilitating development and results	
Coaching tasks	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating awareness • Goal setting • Facilitating experiential learning through action and reflection • Managing progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICF (2017, 2018); Stober (2006) • Feldman and Lankau (2005); Stober (2006) • ICF (2018); Kaiser and Kaplan (2006); Moen and Kvalsund (2008); Petriglieri et al. (2011) • ICF (2018)

Table 1 follows the core competencies proposed by the ICF (2018). It shows three core competencies and related tasks that coaches need to express to enhance metacognition. The first competency, co-creating a trusting and intimate relationship, is vital in generating a safe, supportive environment for change and self-growth (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Flaherty, 2010; Gray, 2006; Ives, 2008; Segers et al., 2011; Stober, 2006). The second coaching competency, communicating effectively, encourages coachees' exploration, expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, and physical aspects (ICF, 2018; Segers et al., 2011; Stober, 2006). It also helps coachees to reflect, consider, evaluate, and make decisions (Moen & Kvalsund, 2008,

p. 108). While active listening is suggested by the ICF (2018) as a task related to communicating effectively, it could also be seen as a core competency in itself, as the experience of being listened to is vital for a transformational experience (BarHava-Monteith, 2018). The third competency, facilitating development and results, enables coachees to discover their underlying worries, habitual perceptions of themselves and the environment, a mismatch between the facts and coachees' interpretations, as well as differences between their thoughts, feelings, and actions (ICF, 2018). Furthermore, this coaching competency encourages a shift in coachees' perspectives and enables them to find new options for action aligned with their goals (ICF, 2018).

I propose this coaching framework as a way to enhance social entrepreneurs' metacognition to enable socioeconomic change. As this approach to coaching was deemed to heighten coachees' self-awareness of feelings and thoughts, there was the potential to trigger intense feelings within the coachee and consequently the coach. Practitioners, therefore, recommend safety mechanisms for the coachees, such as a referral to a mental health professional when coaches reach the boundaries of their professional expertise (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006). Coaches benefit from seeing a supervisor to become aware of and challenge own thoughts and feelings that may be triggered during difficult conversations (A. M. Grant, 2012).

Method

Research design and introduction of social entrepreneur

To answer the research question, *how can coaching enhance metacognition to enable social and environmental value creation that brings about socioeconomic change?* this empirical study used an action research approach. It involved a series of one-to-one coaching conversations carried out by me as the coach, and a social entrepreneur. Action research takes "a transformative orientation to knowledge creation" (Bradbury-Huang, 2010, p. 93). It has been proposed as a promising methodology for social sciences (Crane, Henriques, & Husted, 2018), in particular for those who would like to research meaningful matters, like those significant for change towards human and planetary flourishing (Bradbury-Huang, 2010). It is intended to address both the immediate practical issues of people in a challenging situation and the objectives of social science by shared collaboration within a reciprocally acceptable ethical framework (Rapoport, 1970, p. 499). This study involved a social entrepreneur

and me as coachee and coach to co-create knowledge. I also sought to empower a social entrepreneur to take actions that could help shape socioeconomic change by enhancing her metacognition (Bradbury-Huang, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). As described in the previous section, the coaching approach emphasised enabling the entrepreneur to identify a meaningful goal for the intervention and supporting the entrepreneur to come up with her own solutions. When inviting the entrepreneur, I clearly articulated my objectives of the study: To empower the entrepreneur by enhancing her metacognition in the context of her social enterprise. I perceived both the entrepreneur and myself as “change agents”. In line with Bradbury-Huang (2010), I was mindful of being regularly reflexive about how the change efforts were unfolding and the impact that the intervention was having.

A criterion sampling method was applied to purposefully choose a social entrepreneur (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). An entrepreneur who seemed open to being coached and whose organisation fit the following criteria was invited to participate in the study: (1) an environmental and social organisational purpose; (2) a business model that generated revenue; (3) financial sustainability; and (4) the founder still involved. In the invitation to participate in a series of coaching conversations, I indicated that the sessions would not only involve working towards a practical goal but also some exploration of the entrepreneur’s awareness of thoughts and feelings.

Alma, the entrepreneur who agreed to participate, is a co-founder and co-director of the New Zealand social enterprise Artemis (names changed). Artemis is a financially self-sustaining and growing organisation that strives to encourage children to be more aware and respectful of themselves, other people and the natural environment. Ultimately, the organisation aims to contribute to children’s well-being as well as a socially and environmentally sustainable world. It does so by offering programmes where children get the opportunity to play freely in nature and pursue their interests. The enterprise works across multiple locations in New Zealand.

To prepare myself for the coaching conversations I familiarised myself with the coaching and other executive development literature. Furthermore, before the study, I had gained coaching experience by receiving regular coaching for one year myself and conducting two pilot coaching sessions with my personal coach that involved feedback on my coaching skills.

Data collection

In collaboration with the social entrepreneur, I collected primary and secondary data. Four coaching sessions and one final feedback conversation conducted over the course of eight weeks were the main data source. Online conversations are seen as an effective method of coaching (Bus, Ellingson, Welk, Peyer, & Bai, 2018). Thus, for convenience, we performed the coaching sessions via video conference (Skype). The sessions lasted between 50 and 60 minutes, the feedback conversation 25 minutes. All communication was audio recorded and transcribed.

The coaching sessions proceeded as follows. Before each coaching session, I as the coach did a 15-minute mindfulness meditation to increase my self-awareness (Whitmore, 2009) and to create the mental space for the upcoming session (Passmore, 2017). I endeavoured to remind myself during the coaching sessions to observe my thoughts and feelings to help me remain present and emotionally detached (Kemp, 2016; Passmore, 2017).

The coaching conversations embraced the structure of the GROW model, originated by Whitmore (2009). The model offers a common structure for coaching conversations (Brooks & Wright, 2007; Segers et al., 2011; Whitmore, 2009). It builds on the coach's skills to increase the coachee's awareness through thought-provoking questions and the coachee's acceptance of self-responsibility for her thoughts and actions (Whitmore, 2009). The GROW model suggests that a coaching conversation may pass through different phases – setting a Goal, exploring Reality, finding alternative Options, and choosing the Way forward (Whitmore, 2009). In the actual coaching sessions, the sequence of the phases was more flexible and less ordered as the following description might suggest.

Setting a goal – The first step in the first coaching sessions was to establish the issue on which Alma, the social entrepreneur, wanted to be coached. Given the social entrepreneurship context of this study, I invited Alma to come up with an issue related to her social enterprise. At the same time, I acknowledged that solving business-related challenges might require personal growth and affect Alma's personal life. Once the issue was clear, a goal for the session was determined. I, for example, encouraged Alma to think about the issue and to imagine what her ideal reality would look, feel, and sound like when the issue was miraculously resolved. Setting an inspiring goal

helped to keep the focus on change. I refer the reader to Appendix I for examples of questions in each phase of the GROW model.

Exploring actual reality – In the next phase, I invited Alma to explore her current reality. I asked her thought-provoking questions, challenged her assumptions, reframed her interpretations, and reflected back to her how she reported experiencing and making sense of her present situation. This phase involved Alma exploring some of her habitual limiting thoughts and feelings to enhance her metacognition (Whitmore, 2009). Through paying attention to Alma’s language (O'Connor & Lages, 2004), I was able to identify some of her limiting beliefs. Powerful questions were used to heighten Alma’s awareness of limiting beliefs, to help her challenge and move beyond them.

Finding alternative options – In this phase, I prompted Alma to come up with alternative ways of framing the situation and alternative courses of action (Whitmore, 2009). Again, I used active listening and powerful questioning to enhance Alma’s awareness of possible, restricting assumptions about herself or the situation. At times during brainstorming, I came up with options for actions, such as a self-observation exercise for Alma to observe herself without judgment (Flaherty, 2010; O'Connor & Lages, 2004).

Choosing the way forward – In the final phase, I guided Alma in her decision as to which of the discussed options she wanted to choose and what action she would like to take in her everyday life to move her closer to her goal (Whitmore, 2009). Possible obstacles to the action steps were also explored (Whitmore, 2009). Lastly, in conclusion of each session, I asked Alma about her major take away from the conversation, to encourage her reflection on her insights gained.

Reviewing the learnings – In subsequent sessions, the conversation began with a process of “reviewing and evaluating the learnings and actions completed since the last session” (A. M. Grant, 2011a, p. 124).

After each of the coaching conversations, I summarised the essence of the session and sent the summary to Alma. Despite the limited amount of time Alma and I had during four coaching sessions, I hoped for a noticeable positive impact on her metacognition and for Alma to gain practical insight. In addition, I hoped to yield metacognition data in a real-time fashion. In journaling field notes, I captured my personal reflections on my own metacognition, the results of the coaching process, and the effectiveness of certain coaching questions and behaviour.

Throughout the coaching sessions with Alma, I had two personal coaching sessions myself and conversations with my supervisors. Talking to my coach and my supervisors helped me reflect on the coaching interventions with Alma, become aware of and challenge my thoughts and feelings that were triggered during the sessions, and hone my coaching skills.

In the final feedback interview, I encouraged Alma to reflect on her experience of the coaching sessions. Most importantly, this interview shed light on how the intervention had heightened her awareness of thoughts and feelings and how it created change. Supplementary secondary data included organisational documentation, such as a newsletter and the enterprise website.

Data analysis and presentation

Data analysis employed a pragmatic method to develop theory. It involved examining the conversations through the lens of the research question, *how can coaching enhance metacognition to enable social and environmental value creation that brings about socioeconomic change?* I started by reading the transcripts of the conversations and my reflections. Then, I created tables that summarised important moments of interaction between Alma and me during the conversations, and the outcomes of the interactions achieved moment by moment (De Haan et al., 2010, p. 607f). I paid particular attention to Alma's self-reported realisations regarding her awareness of thoughts and feelings, as well as my intervention techniques that appeared to help or hinder the enhancement of Alma's metacognition.

To present the findings, I condensed the tables and wrote a narrative with "thick descriptions" (Tracy, 2013) that recounts Alma's journey of self-growth throughout the four coaching sessions. I weaved in various useful coaching techniques, which facilitated Alma's explorations of her thoughts, feelings and behaviour. I also offer general comments on the coaching process and its outcomes that Alma offered during our final feedback conversation. Finally, I reflect on coaching techniques that seemed less effective in heightening Alma's self-awareness. Alma was invited to read the manuscript and to make any suggestions, in particular, on the findings to ensure they accurately reflected her experiences and insights during the coaching process. For validation purposes, two professional coaches not previously involved in the study checked the method and my interpretations of the findings. I reflected on their

feedback and integrated it in the manuscript – for the most part implicitly, but explicitly in the limitations.

Findings

Useful coaching techniques to enhance metacognition

Qualitative data from four coaching sessions and a final feedback conversation showed various coaching techniques heightened Alma's self-awareness and transformed some of her limiting beliefs, feelings and behaviours. Table 2 offers examples of particularly useful techniques to heighten metacognition. Numbers (1), (2), (3), and (4) indicate the number of the coaching session.

I started the first coaching session by sharing with Alma that I saw her as a resourceful, healthy and effective person. Alma's goal was to detach from and delegate some tasks at Artemis to focus on meaningful things. When I clarified if Alma would or would not like to keep doing administrative tasks, she said detachment from some tasks would be "good". She admitted, however, that sometimes she found it "really hard . . . to detach and to delegate." My invitation to imagine what it would look like if she had resolved all the issues, led her to envision, "I would be a better role model for what we are selling. On rushed days, I'm not doing what I'm selling, which is, 'Be playful, connected with nature'." However, she found it "hard" to find a work-life "balance". My question on how Alma's thoughts about creating a new organisational structure were holding her back prompted her to talk about restraining beliefs about herself (see Table 2).

Table 2: Examples of particularly useful techniques to enhance metacognition

Techniques enhancing metacognition	Example	Alma's responses and insights
Noticing underlying limiting beliefs from Alma's language; asking direct questions	(1) I asked, "How is your idea, 'Creating an organisational structure that allows me to delegate involves a bureaucratic process' holding you back?" This triggered Alma to bring up restraining beliefs about herself.	With a sigh, she said, "Sometimes I start reading things, and I get really really bored because I don't understand most of the words. I know that it is my fault. . . . I am dyslexic. Sometimes, it is hard for me to read."
Affirmation through words and gestures; attentive listening	(2) When Alma was concerned that she did "not take any notes" during her self-observation exercise, I said that she did "not need any notes" to allow her to relax and feel accepted. This affirmation and my attentive listening through gentle eye contact and matching Alma's facial expressions created a safe space for Alma to reflect on her experience.	Alma found observing her thoughts "was a great exercise": "I was quite aware every time I was trying to sabotage myself. My first thought was, 'No, I cannot do that.' But then, I stopped, and I asked, 'Why am I saying this to me?'"
Emulating Alma's gestures; prompting positive responses	(3) When Alma said with a smile that she wanted to explore her jealousy, I smiled back and asked, "What would be a way for you, a very gentle and self-loving way, to look at it? How could you explore that side of you?"	She wanted to learn how to overcome the jealousy by embracing an enabling thought: "I have to make a way to see that I can grow with two very powerful people beside me, instead of having feelings of competition and jealousy. Even loving them. And becoming more aware of my strengths."
Noticing shifts in Alma's mood; asking questions that help her recognise her own strengths	(4) While talking about her critical inner voice, Alma became very serious. I then aimed to change her perspective: What would be a good thought about yourself that will enable you to reach your goal?	She took a deep breath, and with a sigh, she accepted, "Sometimes my process is slower than the process of other people, but that doesn't mean that I am not going to get to the point that everyone is getting to. Maybe accepting that my process is not going to be the same as everyone else's. But, trust that it's possible, yeah!"

When Alma decided she wanted to “look at the beliefs and feelings” that were holding her back, I reaffirmed her, “That’s very brave.” She recollected that she had previously successfully managed an administrative process involving lots of reading, which made her “so proud”. I listened attentively through emulating Alma’s facial expressions (smiling) and asking for more clarity on whether she was “part of the process” that her colleagues were involved in. This attentive listening encouraged Alma to explore detachment in more depth. Alma said she wasn’t involved in the process and then compared “the detachment process” at Artemis to the “growing up” of her “kids”, making her feel like she was “not required or valued anymore”. At the end of the coaching session, I asked whether being more mindful of her limiting thoughts would interest Alma. She embraced the idea: “Oh, cool. Looking at my inner speech is going to be helpful. . . . Especially, if you are aware that you have to make some notes, then you are going to think more about your thoughts.”

In the second session, we worked out Alma’s goal to be feeling “fully present and connected to this moment.” I created the space for Alma to reflect on her self-observation experience. Alma found observing her thoughts useful as it enabled her to notice and challenge limiting thoughts (see Table 2). Asking if she had taken different choices encouraged her to reflect:

Usually, when there is something wrong in one of the venues, I think, ‘It would be better if another person went because they . . . know better than me how to deal with the situation.’ But two or three times I thought, ‘No, I can deal with the situation. I will go there, and I will resolve the problem.’

My invitation to reflect on what she was doing well to find a work-life balance led Alma to go deeper into her challenges. She said she felt uncomfortable because someone who might become involved in the enterprise was stirring “competitive and primitive” feelings in her. When I showed empathy with her uncomfortable feelings, Alma reframed the challenging situation: “I am trying to look at it like, ‘I am going to learn. [This person] is going to help with the structure of the company. And I am going to be able to do what I like to do.” After a while, Alma acknowledged she was “not living” what she was “selling”: “We are trying to raise [aware] children, but I am not [aware] about my days.” I encouraged Alma to identify her own path to achieve her goal of “being fully present in the moment”. She was clear “deep”, “conscious breathing” could support her in becoming more “present” and “connected to the

moment". She noticed, "[Currently] I am not doing that in a conscious conscious way. . . . It's like a light at the end of the tunnel. I forgot about that."

In the third coaching conversation, Alma's goal was to deal with and accept her feelings of jealousy, competition, and lack of confidence. As in the previous session, I gave Alma space and time to reflect on the past week. She reported after the coaching she felt "very very confident", "strong", and "trusted [her] feelings." So she "consciously decided" to undertake a delicate conversation with a staff member, despite her "usual" tendency to ask another member of the team for "support". In response to being asked what she "would like to explore today", Alma noted that her jealousy interfered with the relationship with other members of the team. "Now realising" she could "not take all the decisions", she wanted "to learn how to deal with those feelings" to be able to detach and delegate. When I supported Alma's notion that she deserved recognition for her "invisible" work, she realised it was not only important that "others" valued her "background work", but also how she felt about her herself. Alma reaffirmed she wanted to explore her jealousy. I asked how she could do it and she reported an enabling thought (see Table 2). I inquired how she could become more aware of her strengths. Alma reported her ability to "understand" other people's perspective meant she was "quite good at analysing [their] feelings" and "holding the space" for them. She confessed, however, this strength "usually" did "not work for [her]self". When I challenged her to apply her ability to be empathetic to herself, Alma laughed out loudly, noticing the resistance of her unpleasant feelings:

Try and see myself while I am doing that? . . . Some of the time, I know, and it's not a beautiful feeling, and I don't want to go deeper. . . . It comes from feelings we try to avoid. Maybe that's why I don't try to analyse myself.

In the fourth conversation, Alma set the goal, "I validate my feelings of empowerment and invest in my personal development". Again, I began by encouraging Alma's reflection on her experiences since we last talked. Alma was "relieved" that in the last session, she was able to express feelings she "didn't want to deal with" before. She noticed, "As I already acknowledged my [uneasy] feelings [during the session], it's [now] easier to identify when I start feeling them." I asked if Alma had experienced more jealousy or competition in the previous week. In a happy mood, she reflected many of her "not so good feelings" had dissipated, "maybe" because of her "awareness of them". After Alma had shared her reflections, I clarified if she was

finding it “easier” now to discern what was “important” to her. With a sigh of relief, she affirmed she was better able to detach from some entrepreneurial tasks, enabling her to do more important, satisfying work:

I am strong in my decisions. . . . I met [with other members of the team] last week, and I really wanted to finish my design and other things. . . . I said, ‘No guys, you can stay here, but I have to go home and do other things.’

Building on Alma feeling empowered, we explored professional development options. I sensed Alma favoured studying child psychology, but she was advocating more hands-on studies. I probed what her “strongest desire” was. Alma wondered if she was “trying to sabotage” herself. While studying psychology would be “very satisfying” for her, she was “worried” if she would “be able to read all the books, do all the essays, and get all the [science] terms.” With a sigh, she noted, “I kind of put myself back. . . . Yeah, my inside voice is loud. It’s loud.” I encouraged Alma to explore her “inside voice” by inviting her reflection on her thoughts. She realised, “Once I engage with it, it’s good. It’s connected with a lack of confidence that I can do it . . . [and] with being not determined enough.” I gave Alma a chance to go deeper by asking how she experienced herself in situations when she did “not feel determined enough”. Alma recognised she could only win by trying out psychology studies: “Really, it doesn’t matter if I am not determined. I am going to give it a go. I have nothing to lose. Everything I tried just helped me build my personality and who I am.” I then asked Alma what she thought the positive intention of her critical inner voice was. She identified “the voice that [was] holding [her] back”: [It] tries to protect my feelings of failure, not being successful, and not being accepted.” My encouragement to identify a good thought about herself that would enable her to reach her goal, finally led her to notice that she can trust her own pace and process. She concluded, “I just have to be kind and gentle with myself, saying ‘Ok, I need time to do that.’”

In addition to the useful coaching techniques described above in important coaching moments during the four conversations, Alma emphasised some generally helpful approaches and aspects in her final reflections on the coaching process. She observed it was important that she “made time” for herself to take part in the coaching.

Furthermore, she indicated the coaching conversations enabled her to reflect on her “not very nice feelings” when she reported, “I had the insights before . . . about

the sabotaging that I do with myself, the lack of confidence, the jealousy, but I never stopped, or I never was brave enough to stop and talk to someone about it.” She noted that feeling “really comfortable” during our conversations right from the first session, made it “really easy to express [her] feelings and concerns.” Alma pointed out that both my non-judgmental “face expression” and my reflections back to her showing understanding of what she was trying to say, were “really good” and supported her “to bring up” certain thoughts and feelings. She noted, “You helped me to go a little bit further in my thoughts, in my feelings.” Alma described our conversations as well as the coaching notes I summarised for her after each session increased her awareness of uneasy feelings and lessened their intensity not only during but also after the sessions:

It’s hard to admit, or be aware that I am jealous or sabotaging myself. That’s a big one, yeah. I think to be aware of those feelings and reflect on those and to apply on a day-to-day basis. Just thinking at the moment that I have the feeling, ‘Ok, I spoke about that with [my coach], I am going to try just to be aware.’ It’s just the awareness that helps a lot. It looks like it makes the feeling smaller or not that important.

Alma also reflected on the overall results of the coaching process. She shared her increased self-awareness had reduced the intensity of unpleasant feelings. This enabled her to “act in a different way” in the enterprise: “As the feelings become smaller, it’s easier to go over them. . . . My meetings with [other members of the team] are much lighter because I am not going into a defensive mode. I am much more open to learning and collaboration than competition.”

Furthermore, she reported increased well-being and satisfaction in her work: “I am much calmer during my days, not trying to do everything, and [instead] do what I like to do.” Alma proclaimed she wanted to be more aware of her feelings and focus on her strengths:

Awareness . . . when I am feeling jealous, when I am feeling competitive. Yeah, just stop and think about it. Awareness of my strengths as well, I think those are really important. And my weaknesses, not to focus on my weaknesses. It’s not a big deal, because I have strengths as well.

Alma concluded the coaching process was “a really good experience” for her.

Less useful coaching techniques

Some of the coaching techniques I applied did not appear to enhance Alma’s metacognition or empower her to reach her goals. Table 3 offers examples of less

useful techniques across the four coaching sessions and suggests presumably more useful alternatives. Again, numbers (1), (2), (3), and (4) indicate the number of the coaching session.

Table 3: Less useful coaching techniques across the four coaching sessions

Less useful coaching techniques and alternatives	Example	Alma's responses
Premature conclusion about Alma's goal	(1) When trying to identify a goal with Alma, I jumped at a conclusion of what her goal was too soon. By calling, what I thought was her goal, a "beautiful goal" I missed the chance to be patient and identify a more meaningful goal that could inspire her.	Without enthusiasm and in a low voice, she replied, "Yeah. Maybe yeah."
Attempt to rescue and make Alma feel better; not exploring underlying feelings or beliefs	(2) When Alma judged herself that she felt "very selfish today", I tried to talk her out of her feelings: "Oh, no. That is perfectly fine. It's important to balance your energy and be aligned with your goals." Instead, I could have explored her underlying beliefs."	Alma did not seem convinced or uplifted by my attempt to take the uneasy feeling from her.
Rushing Alma to embrace new mental and emotional patterns; steering the conversation too much	(3) I tried to help Alma accept herself and become more self-confident by giving direction: "I wonder if it could be helpful for you to come to terms with [your dyslexia] and embrace it more." Alternatively, I could have gone with Alma's flow and given her the opportunity to find her own solution, which finally happened in the fourth session.	Alma responded confused. She was not encouraged to identify her path towards becoming more self-confident.
Maintaining assumptions about the meaning of Alma's experiences	(4) When Alma said it would be good to "treat" herself, I tried to guess what she meant: "Be gentle and kind to yourself?" Asking her what treating herself signified for her could have inspired more reflection and insight.	She replied, "Yeah, no." without further explanation of what she actually meant.

The examples in Table 3 show that at times being impatient and directive in the coaching approach was neither beneficial in encouraging Alma's exploration of her experiences nor in generating insights. The examples highlight the importance of making an effort to understand Alma's experiences from her perspective and the ability to trust and go with her flow and pace. Furthermore, I realised that some of the questions that encouraged insights for Alma (described in the previous section) were directive or loaded – attributes that others see as less beneficial (Stober, 2006). For example, in the first coaching session, when I asked Alma how an idea was holding her back, I implied that the idea was restrictive. At the end of the first session, I suggested to her a self-observation exercise. Although Alma embraced my suggestion, I could have given her the chance to identify her way of addressing her critical inner voice. In the following coaching sessions, I was better at letting Alma set the direction and pace, as well as find her own solutions.

I noticed that an initial lack of trust in my coaching abilities to enhance Alma's metacognition, particularly in the first session, might have induced some techniques that were less useful, such as those where I tried to control the coaching process. Between sessions, I reflected on my restrictive beliefs about myself – that is I attended “to the grounds (justification) for [my] beliefs” (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223) – to become more aware of and overcome them. Also, regular meditation, as well as conversations with my coach and supervisors, supported my metacognition. Throughout the four coaching sessions, I felt more present and confident in my abilities, which allowed me to relax more into the moment and let Alma set the direction for her journey. Meditating before each coaching session helped me to become aware of and suspend some of my limiting thoughts. Still, I perceived myself as asking leading questions from time to time, such as in the fourth session, when I inquired whether Alma had experienced more uneasy feelings in the previous week.

Nevertheless, Alma reported she did not see me as “giving advice” or directing her. Instead, she reported my approach made her “think about a different perspective” or “go deeper” into sensitive topics. In the future, gaining more coaching experience might allow me to become more confident and comfortable with silences so I can let go of the need to provide answers and be seen as competent through the suggestions I make. More experience will allow the coachees to explore for themselves.

Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to examine empirically, *how can coaching enhance metacognition to enable social and environmental value creation that brings about socioeconomic change?* I used an action research approach that involved a series of one-to-one coaching conversations between a social entrepreneur and me as the coach. The goal of the conversations was to empower the entrepreneur to reach her goals by heightening her metacognition, and to develop theory.

In this study, I identify three major findings. First, the data reveal the coaching process enabled the social entrepreneur to enhance her awareness and regulation of limiting thoughts and unpleasant feelings. She shifted her lack of self-confidence in some areas to the belief that she can trust her “process” or way of reaching her goals in her own time. She also reported leaving behind some feelings of jealousy and competitiveness and feeling more calm, effective, and cooperative in her entrepreneurial work, even if temporarily. Second, the data highlight examples for several coaching techniques that were useful in enhancing a social entrepreneur’s metacognition. The co-creation of a trusting coaching relationship through holding the entrepreneur in an “unconditional positive regard” (ICF, 2017, p. 3) seemed particularly important to enable a non-judgmental holding space in which the entrepreneur felt safe to become aware of shunned unpleasant thoughts and feelings. Beyond, the social entrepreneur seemed to benefit merely from the commitment to engage in a coaching process, as it made exploring and attending to habitual unpleasant thoughts and feelings a priority. Third, I found my ability to stay present and be aware of and regulate my thoughts and feelings before and during the coaching conversations positively influenced my coaching skills.

Findings have implications for the broader literature and practice. First, of interest to both the social entrepreneurship and sustainability literature, evidence links coaching to enhanced metacognition that enables a positive change in a social entrepreneur’s mindset and resulting behaviour. Through coaching, the social entrepreneur heightened her self-awareness and self-regulation. The heightened metacognition empowered her and increased her self-confidence and personal well-being at the individual level. This shift then self-reportedly improved her work effectiveness and the relationship with her colleagues at the organisational level.

Improved effectiveness and relationships within the enterprise might support the entrepreneur in working for change that increases the possibility of a sustainable world by encouraging more socially and environmentally aware children. The study, therefore, suggests a connection between coaching, enhanced metacognition, and individual as well as organisational flourishing. If we assume that a cumulative positive shift across numerous organisations is required for a wider shift to happen, then increased levels of flourishing in one organisation can potentially – even if in a seemingly small way – contribute to wider change towards human and planetary flourishing. This study extends current mostly conceptual research on how we may contribute to socioeconomic change towards flourishing (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Schaefer et al., 2015; Upward & Jones, 2016). Future action research could build on this work and conduct a series of coaching sessions over a longer timeframe. Such research could explore in more depth the impact of coaching on the social enterprise and potentially a positive change in the wider environment by interviewing people within and beyond the enterprise about the effects of the coaching interventions with the entrepreneur (Bozer & Sarros, 2012; Swart & Harcup, 2013).

Second, I add to both the social entrepreneurship and coaching literature by researching the new and promising field of “coaching for social change” (Shoukry, 2016). By bringing coaching into the world of a social entrepreneur, I move coaching beyond people with “power and privilege” operating in the conventional corporate context (Lasley et al., 2015; Shoukry & Cox, 2018). The study emphasises the enhancement of metacognition in a coaching process as an important initial step to empower a social entrepreneur, facilitate her critical reflection on limiting assumptions, and encourage alternative actions that may contribute to positive social change (Shoukry, 2016). Thus, I extend current conceptual research promoting coaching as “an enabler of change that empowers everyone”, and that may improve “organisations and communities” (Shoukry & Cox, 2018, p. 13).

Third, by providing empirical evidence that enhanced metacognition may empower social entrepreneurs to experience greater well-being, effectiveness, and resilience, I expand the current social entrepreneurship literature on how entrepreneurs may overcome challenges and generate “personal sustenance” for their social change work (Waddock & Steckler, 2013, p. 285). This understanding is

important as social entrepreneurial work “can be exhausting”, “frustrating and difficult” (Waddock & Steckler, 2013, p. 286). Thus, this study helps lay the ground for further research that examines the role of coaching in internal, individual-level transformation that may then contribute to a shift at the organisational level and – to a small degree – in the wider environment in line with the possibility of human and planetary flourishing.

Fourth, I advance executive coaching and leadership development practice by increasing knowledge about the role metacognition plays for transformative learning that revises habitual limiting beliefs. The executive coaching literature and executive coaches seem to focus predominantly on rational and behavioural approaches (Brooks & Wright, 2007; Segers et al., 2011) which have been criticised for neglecting the emotional factors in problem-solving (Brooks & Wright, 2007). This empirical study links the awareness and regulation of limiting thoughts and unpleasant feelings to improved interpersonal skills and work effectiveness. It supports others’ findings who see the ability to experience and reflect on one’s thoughts and feelings as important in coaching (De Haan et al., 2010). I thus call for more practice and research attention to coaching techniques that enhance metacognition. It seems worthwhile to compare coaching approaches focusing on heightening self-awareness and the effects of these approaches to more rational and behavioural approaches and their effects.

Fifth, this study extends executive coaching literature by highlighting the importance of several coaching techniques that can generate a non-judgmental holding space in which the entrepreneur feels “comfortable” to become aware of avoided unpleasant thoughts and feelings. These techniques are 1) holding the entrepreneur in unconditional positive regard while respectfully challenging her, and 2) creating a trusting coaching relationship. While existing literature has mentioned an intimate relationship as essential for successful coaching (D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Segers et al., 2011; Stober, 2006), this study may shed light on the reason why it is essential. The entrepreneur shared she knew about her sabotaging thoughts and feelings before but had not been “brave” enough to explore them and therefore, had avoided them. Feeling “comfortable”, supported and not judged during the coaching sessions seemed to enable her to find the courage “to bring up” unpleasant thoughts and feelings and remain aware beyond the sessions. This awareness enabled her, in turn, to at least temporarily dissolve the unpleasant feelings. I conjecture that my non-judgmental

accepting awareness triggered the entrepreneur's accepting awareness. According to Ken Wilber (2016), mindful accepting attention to thoughts and feelings without judging whether they are right or wrong can help turn hidden thoughts and feelings of which an individual is unaware into an object that one can focus the awareness on. My empathetic presence thus might have heightened the entrepreneur's ability to stop and look at her unpleasant feelings and thoughts. It might have helped her break the habit of identifying with those feelings and thoughts and, instead, recognise them as one possible lens to look at a situation. By making the thoughts and feelings an object of awareness, the entrepreneur was able to slowly dis-identify with them (Wilber, 2016) and to decrease the intensity of the unpleasant feelings. Finding that non-judgmental acceptance of thoughts and feelings was key in the social entrepreneur's transformation of her thoughts and feelings is somewhat surprising, given previous research that suggests "critical reflection" is required for transformative learning (Gray, 2006; Mezirow, 1994). Future work could explore the roles that mindful awareness and critical reflection play in transformative learning through coaching.

This study has practical implications for organisational leaders, including social entrepreneurs. It supports existing research showing the importance of awareness of one's thoughts and feelings for leadership effectiveness and organisational performance (D. T. Hall et al., 1999; Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006). Such self-awareness is important as most leaders focus predominantly "on what they need to do in their business and spend very little time thinking about who they are being", or about how they interact with other people, their thoughts, feelings and awareness (Watkins, 2016, p. 2). Along with others, I call for a shift in leaders' focus from "their outside tangible world" to more balanced attention that includes "their inside world" (Watkins, 2016, p. 2), given this study's findings that enhanced metacognition can support individual and organisational flourishing.

Furthermore, being aware of and regulating their thoughts and feelings is essential for organisational leaders if they want to coach employees. As this study shows, maintaining coaching presence is essential for coaching to be successful in enhancing metacognition and eventually work-effectiveness. Meditation before the coaching sessions and reflection on my thoughts, feelings, and coaching approaches between sessions helped me overcome limiting beliefs and improve my coaching skills. Those who find it difficult to be aware of own thoughts and feelings might also want to

try mindfulness meditation and reflection to become more aware of their inner worlds, assumptions and agendas. Future research could empirically examine the effects of meditation and other mindfulness practices before coaching someone on the outcomes of a coaching intervention.

The present study has limitations. First, I had very limited experience in coaching. Seeking feedback from two professional coaches on the method and interpretations after the fact was an attempt to provide greater learning. While research conducted by professional coaches might yield even stronger results, I am pleased that despite my lack of experience the social entrepreneur reported she benefitted from the coaching interventions. In addition, both professional coaches commended my “great self-reflection” and transparency that I am a novice coach. One of the coaches said, “Most beginner coaches struggle with being impatient and directive.” Second, given that the study involved just one participant, its generalisability is limited. Future research could do action research with more participants. Third, as the conversations were carried out via online video conferences, nonverbal cues could get lost more easily than with face-to-face meetings. Nevertheless, I was able to pay attention to Alma’s facial expressions over the screen. Also, I had met Alma in person several times before the coaching sessions, which allowed us to “test the chemistry between us”. In the future, to be able to compare face-to-face with online conversations it would be useful to supplement online sessions with in-person contact, as one of the professional coaches suggested. Fourth, much of the coaching sessions focused on how Alma perceived herself. For coaching in an organisational context, it is also valuable for the coachee to get a better understanding of how colleagues and staff perceive the coachee, one coach pointed out. Questions for self-reflection on the impact she has on other people could serve this purpose. Fifth, the social entrepreneur is female and works in the childcare and education sector, which might make her more open and primed to being coached, as one coach mentioned. Future work could explore the impact of gender, industry and other environmental factors on the coachee’s coaching readiness and ability to be vulnerable.

In conclusion, my empirical study expands extant research as it links coaching to heightened metacognition, individual and organisational flourishing and potentially – to a small degree – to socioeconomic change towards human and planetary

flourishing. It might encourage researchers and practitioners to embrace and explore coaching as way to empower entrepreneurs who seek to make a positive difference in the world.

Chapter 6 / Manuscript 5 –

Social Entrepreneurs: Creating Positive Change from the Inside Out

Preface

This final short manuscript targets a practitioner audience. It builds on the previous manuscripts as it summarises earlier findings and makes the identified implications for social entrepreneurs explicit. This manuscript draws from Manuscript 2 the importance to become more aware of and pay attention to negative aspects of inner reality, such as limiting thoughts and negative feelings. Implications from Manuscript 3 spelt out here include the relevance of metacognitive capabilities to become more creative and empathetic, and better understanding complexities and controversial perspectives. Effects of metacognition on entrepreneurs' ways of shaping effective social enterprises and contributing to change on a wider level are also included here. An inference from Manuscript 4 is the knowledge that metacognition can be practised, and that coaching interventions can be an effective way of enhancing self-awareness and self-regulation.

Manuscript

If you are a social entrepreneur on a mission to change the world for the better, your good intentions likely come with a fair few challenges.

Creating social and environmental value at the same time as staying financially afloat can be tough. Developing innovative, responsible business models and products that resolve these fundamental tensions requires a good deal of creativity and an ability to see the bigger picture. Growing social enterprises and bringing enthusiastic collaborators on board calls for interpersonal skills such as empathy to create good and often enduring relationships. Responding quickly to constant changes common in enterprises' environments necessitates being flexible and adaptable.

What help is out there for social entrepreneurs? Practical help on business models, legal forms, and funding is available through incubating and support organisations as well as from business mentors. But what about the cognitive and

emotional support you need to see the bigger picture, be creative, empathetic, and adaptable to create and run a social enterprise?

Social entrepreneurs' awareness of their thoughts and feelings plays a vital role in developing those capabilities and achieving their enterprises' social or environmental missions. My research on social entrepreneurs in New Zealand and Germany found it was beneficial for entrepreneurs to be aware of some of their habitual limiting thoughts and negative feelings. Such an awareness helped them to scrutinise and transform hindering thoughts and feelings into more empowering and positive ones. This transformation enabled the entrepreneurs to make better decisions and take actions aligned with their organisational missions. When being self-aware, the social entrepreneurs were better able to think creatively, understand complexities, explore controversial perspectives, and show greater empathy with people and nature.

The social entrepreneurs' enhanced way of being had positive flow-on effects on their enterprises. In their enterprises, they developed innovative, responsible business models and products, fostered a culture of care for people and nature, created thriving relationships, and engaged people outside the enterprise to become effective collaborators. These successful social enterprises had a positive impact on industries and communities. They raised people's awareness of social and environmental problems, encouraged collaboration within networks to address issues, and inspired positive community actions. In some cases, other industry members even adopted similarly responsible business models, products, and business practices. Overall, the social enterprises and their collaborators ultimately created social and environmental value and contributed – even if only to a small degree in these few cases – to positive change in communities and for the natural environment.

It wasn't always easy though. Most of the social entrepreneurs in this research also reported that at times they acted based on unchallenged limiting beliefs and associated negative emotions. These beliefs and feelings often led to unhelpful behaviour that interfered with their missions. They then generated unintended negative outcomes, such as personal burnout, excessive stress for the entrepreneur's family or team, and neglected environmental concerns. Acting based on habitual beliefs is not uncommon. According to psychology research, the majority of thought processes, feelings and ensuing actions flow habitually and reflexively without conscious awareness.

Increasing awareness of and transforming our restrictive beliefs, judgments and unpleasant feelings are instrumental in developing a mindset that is aligned with individual, enterprise and wider flourishing. You might ask, ‘how can I increase my self-awareness?’ Many people find solitary practices useful, such as meditation, journaling, time spent in nature, and prayer. An increasing number of people find reflection with another person, like a coach valuable. A good coach can co-create a safe and trusting relationship with the coachee, where the coachee feels accepted and valued. Such a relationship can make it easier for individuals to face their limiting thoughts and unpleasant feelings and to transform them into more empowering ones.

It might be useful to think of creating positive change in terms of nested circles – from the inside out (see Figure 1). The self-aware social entrepreneur is in the middle and with intention creates a successful, responsible enterprise, which then may shape a thriving and caring wider community. A more considerate community ultimately can positively affect the natural environment and increase the possibility that life flourishes on Earth indefinitely.

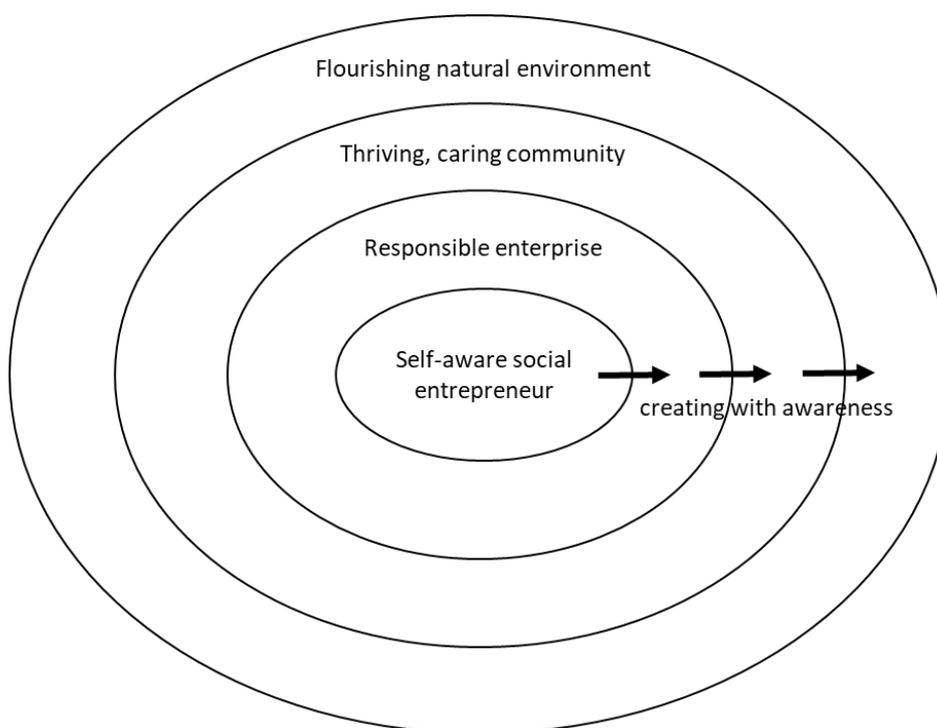


Figure 1: Social entrepreneurs creating positive change from the inside out

Katrin Schaefer is completing her PhD at Auckland University of Technology. Her research explores how social entrepreneurs' self-awareness may shape transformational change towards human and planetary flourishing.

Chapter 7 / Discussion and Conclusion

This final chapter includes a summary of the thesis and addresses the subsequent research questions as well as the overall research question. I present academic and practice contributions, and discuss limitations of the thesis. I conclude with reflections on my own learning and areas for future research.

Summary of the thesis

In this doctoral thesis, I examined social entrepreneurship as a vehicle to promote transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing, and the role entrepreneurs' metacognition plays in this context. In line with others, I argued that the possibility of human and planetary flourishing requires a transformational change at the roots of our modern culture and underlying collective beliefs, ideas, and attitudes. While others (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; G. B. Grant, 2012) and I believe this change is possible, it is by no means a simple task to achieve it. As inner realities influence individuals' decisions and actions¹⁶, and in particular their awareness and regulation of habitual thoughts and feelings, I examined social entrepreneurs' self-awareness and self-regulation and how it affected the entrepreneurial value creation process and socioeconomic change. Lastly, I explored coaching as a way to enhance social entrepreneurs' metacognition, thereby providing a practical approach to stimulating individual-level change in line with flourishing that could influence change more broadly. The research design incorporated five interconnected manuscripts.

Manuscript 1 (Chapter 2) constituted a review of literature about sustainability-as-flourishing and three types of entrepreneurship (social, environmental, and sustainable). The study achieved two main goals. First, it distilled a set of eight requisites for change that experts believe could potentially move humanity towards sustainability-as-flourishing. These requisites encompass, for example, the belief that human behaviour involves caring for others and nature, and the adoption of complex systems thinking and holistic approaches. Second, the manuscript presented a critical review of three types of entrepreneurship relative to these requisites through which I

¹⁶ As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 3, I originally used the concept of inner reality (i.e. metacognition and ordinary thoughts and feelings). Over the course of the research, I noticed that, in particular, metacognition played a key role in the process of shaping change.

identified a gap in the literature. Significantly, I highlighted that social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurs' critical reflection or awareness of habitual mental and emotional patterns remained under-researched in current literature. From this understanding I developed the thesis' overall research question, *how does social entrepreneurs' metacognition ultimately shape transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing?* This overall research question was broken down into four subsequent related questions, which I address later in this chapter.

In recognition of a lack of research on social entrepreneurs' inner realities, Manuscript 2 (Chapter 3) examined how social entrepreneurs' metacognition and patterns in ordinary thoughts and feelings shape entrepreneurial actions and social and environmental value creation. Qualitative analysis of eight New Zealand cases of social entrepreneurship revealed entrepreneurs pursuing a variety of self-awareness practices. These practices increased their self-awareness of both positive and negative patterns in thoughts and feelings. Positive, empowering patterns enabled generative value creation mechanisms that led to positive social and environmental outcomes, such as recycling of material and support of rural or local communities. In comparison, habitual limiting thought and emotional patterns interfered with value generation. Such patterns led to unintended negative outcomes, including burnt-out social entrepreneurs, disempowerment of staff, volunteers and people beyond the enterprise, and neglected social and environmental responsibilities. A process model illustrated the interplay of inner reality, generative/interfering mechanisms, and positive/negative outcomes.

Building on the understanding that social entrepreneurs' self-awareness impacts how they go about generating social and environmental value, Manuscript 3 (Chapter 4) was designed. It explored, in more depth, patterns at the individual and enterprise level that flow from metacognition. It also investigated how metacognition ultimately linked to socioeconomic change in industries and communities that can move society and nature closer to sustainability-as-flourishing. Qualitative analysis of five German cases of social entrepreneurship yielded patterns at different levels of analysis – individual entrepreneur, enterprise, and wider environment. Findings reveal a pattern with two mechanisms at the individual level. First, social entrepreneurs' metacognition facilitated insight and the letting go of limiting thought patterns. Second, this enabled the mechanism of creative discontent about social and

environmental problems, which then activated a social entrepreneurial response. As individuals developed their enterprises, they utilised various metacognitive abilities. These abilities engendered several generative entrepreneurial mechanisms that allowed individuals to create effective, caring enterprises. The social enterprises' responsible business models and caring cultures in tandem with creative and interpersonal conciliatory capabilities engendered within these enterprises facilitated positive socioeconomic change in industries and communities. Examples of such change include an increase in awareness of problems, industry adopting new responsible business models and practices, more caring communities and industries in regards to humans and nature, as well as scaling up social and environmental impact to other locations. A process model summarised the aforementioned mechanisms at the level of the individual, enterprise, and society that flow from metacognition and the mechanisms' outcomes.

The findings in previous studies encouraged me to explore, in Manuscript 4 (Chapter 5), how metacognition can be enhanced through a coaching intervention. How can coaching improve metacognition and ultimately enable social entrepreneurs to create social and economic change that can lead to flourishing? A series of four conversations between a social entrepreneur (as the coachee) and me (as the coach) showed that coaching enhanced the social entrepreneur's metacognition. The heightened metacognition, in turn, enabled the social entrepreneur to recognise and regulate limiting thoughts, unpleasant feelings, and unhelpful behaviour. This transformation at the individual level reportedly improved the social entrepreneur's work effectiveness and relationships at the organisational level and might have enabled her enterprise's contribution to change towards wider flourishing. Coaching approaches, such as manifesting unconditional acceptance, being present, and challenging assumptions, facilitated a holding space that allowed the entrepreneur to shift some limiting thoughts and feelings.

Lastly, Manuscript 5 (Chapter 6) was a short paper that targeted a practitioner audience. It gave an overview of the contribution to practice from all three empirical manuscripts (2, 3, and 4). It highlighted the benefits of metacognition for social entrepreneurs (particularly paying attention to limiting thoughts and negative feelings). It explained how metacognition affects decisions and actions at the individual level, such as through being more creative and empathetic, and better understanding

complexities and controversial perspectives. The manuscript also described how there is a flow-on effect to innovative and responsible organisations that may contribute to change towards wider flourishing. It offered ideas for social entrepreneurs to enhance metacognition through practices like coaching.

Figure 1 integrates the overall findings of the separate manuscripts. The model includes three different levels, the individual (social entrepreneur), the organisation (social enterprise), and the wider environment (society and nature). It also comprises two distinct sub-processes divided by a dashed horizontal line. One sub-process flows from a generative mindset, and the other emanates from habitual, negative and limiting thought and emotional patterns (Manuscript 2).

Evidence suggests the process of shaping change in industries and communities can involve social entrepreneurs using metacognitive practices, such as coaching, meditation, yoga, prayer, and time in nature (see left-hand side of the model). The upper part of the model shows metacognitive practices enhance metacognition, which engenders a generative mindset (Manuscripts 2, 3¹⁷, 4). A generative mindset comprises metacognitive capabilities (e.g., creativity, seeing a bigger picture, perspective taking, and empathy) (Manuscript 3), as well as empowering, positive thought and emotional patterns (e.g., sense of inner strength) (Manuscript 2 and 4). The generative mindset can enable individual-level mechanisms for developing a social enterprise. Examples of such mechanisms are creative discontent that activates a social entrepreneurial response as well as problem identification/framing that supports holistic understanding of social/environmental problems (Manuscript 3).

¹⁷ Data analysis for Manuscript 3 did not focus on metacognitive practices explicitly, because Manuscript 2 had addressed this aspect. Nevertheless, all but one German social entrepreneur reported having metacognitive practices, including regularly taking time out, immersion in nature, conscious reflection, and discussion with other people.

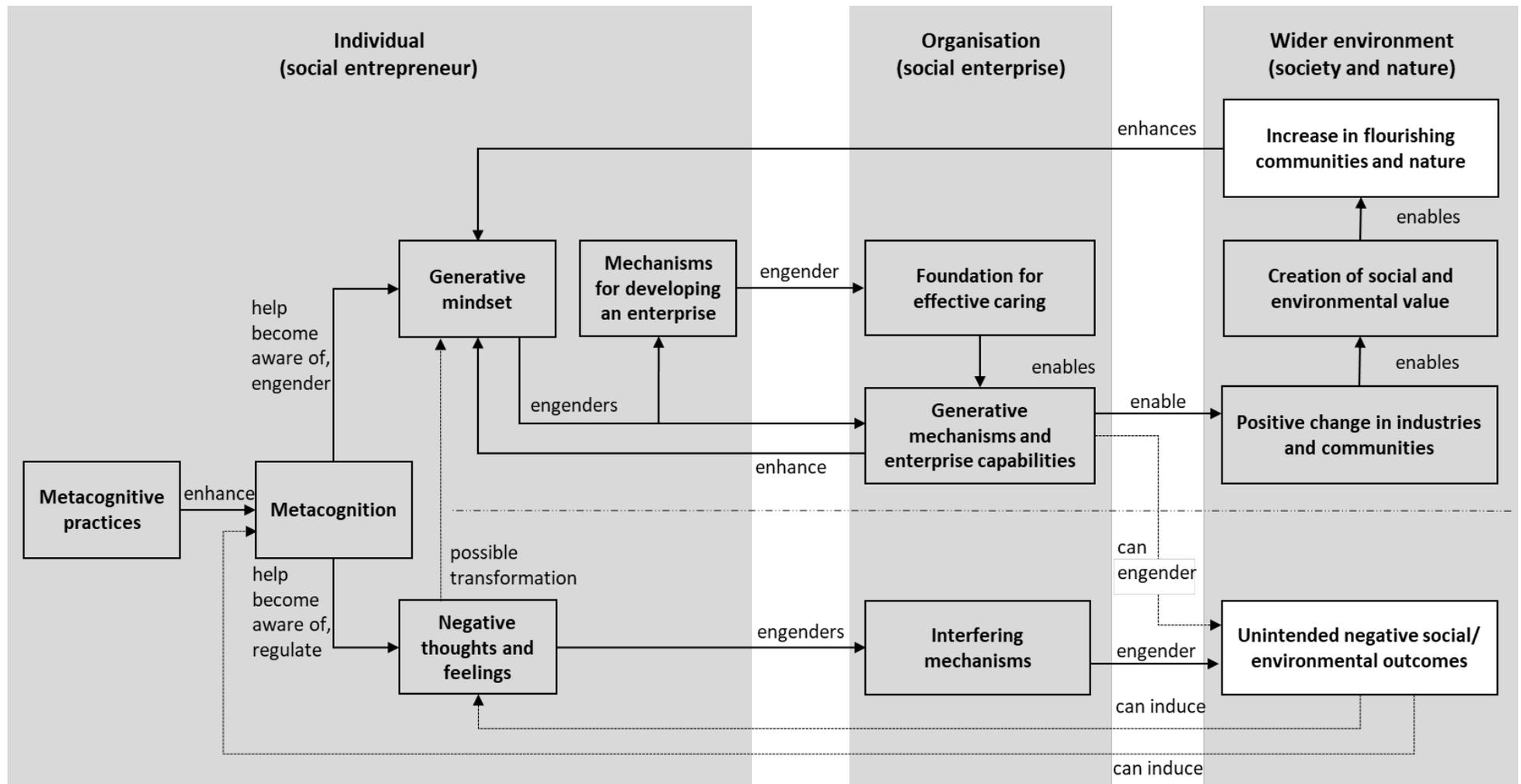


Figure 1: Social entrepreneurs' metacognition enabling a multi-level process of change towards sustainability-as-flourishing

The mechanisms for developing an enterprise can engender an organisational foundation for effective caring (Manuscript 3). Outcomes of these mechanisms that contribute to an organisational foundation for effective caring are a holistic identification of problems and root causes, responsible business model ideas and seeds for a culture of care. This organisational foundation in tandem with an individual's generative mindset can enable various generative mechanisms and capabilities at the organisational level (Manuscripts 2, 3, 4). Examples for generative mechanisms include reconnecting people with each other and nature, celebrating and instilling positivity, conciliatory actions, and engendering change through enterprise capabilities (e.g., developing a responsible business model and products, encouraging all stakeholders to co-create change).

The generative mechanisms and capabilities were shown to enable a positive change in industries and communities. The change involved, for instance, overall more awareness of social and environmental problems, more responsible and caring industry and community actions, as well as effective collaboration within networks (Manuscript 3). Such a positive impact can enable the creation of social and environmental value (Manuscripts 2 and 3). Examples of value generated in communities and nature include a wider spread of social inclusion of marginalised people, fair working conditions, organic agriculture, and the use of renewable energy. I consider these achievements as putting us on a path towards flourishing communities and nature (Manuscript 3).

Similar to a virtuous circle, generating the intended social and environmental value and paving the path towards flourishing may further enhance social entrepreneurs' generative mindset (Manuscript 2). Moreover, receiving positive feedback from the enterprise capabilities, such as maintaining positive relationships and improving effectiveness, may enhance entrepreneurs' generative mindset (Manuscript 4).

In some cases (Manuscript 2), mechanisms that overall had a positive impact on industries and communities led to unintended negative outcomes, as represented by the dotted line between generative mechanisms (upper part of the model) and unintended outcomes (lower part). Examples are most prominent for negative ecological side effects of enterprises seeking to create social value, like harming the environment due to a lack of prioritisation of responsible environmental practices.

The lower part of the model shows metacognitive practices can enhance self-awareness and self-regulation of habitual negative thought and emotional patterns. Such negative and limiting cognitive and emotional patterns involve, for instance, frustration, depression (Manuscript 2), lack of empathy, inability to see a bigger picture (Manuscript 3), jealousy, and lack of confidence (Manuscript 4). Data show that metacognition helps entrepreneurs to self-regulate and to transform some limiting thoughts and negative feelings into more empowering thoughts and positive feelings as indicated by the dotted line between the negative thoughts and feelings (lower part) and the generative mindset (upper part) (Manuscripts 2, 3 and 4). However, at times, when social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions flow from habitual limiting thoughts and feelings, they engender interfering mechanisms, such as being self-centred, depleting one's own resources (Manuscript 2), and competing with colleagues (Manuscript 4). These interfering mechanisms hindered the creation of social and environmental value and engendered unintended negative social and environmental outcomes. Examples of these negative outcomes include difficult unhealthy relationships with people within the enterprise and family members, disempowerment of stakeholders, as well as neglected social needs and environmental responsibilities. For a few social entrepreneurs, these negative outcomes in turn induced further negative thoughts and feelings such as shame (Manuscript 2) and frustration (Manuscript 4). However, evidence also shows that negative social and environmental outcomes in the wider environment can induce awareness of one's own limiting beliefs, a generative mindset (e.g., empathy), and prompt creative discontent with the problems leading to a constructive entrepreneurial response (especially Manuscript 3).

Overall, the model depicts how social entrepreneurs' metacognition can play a key role in engendering a positive individual level transformation. Such a transformation could enable positive change at higher levels that could ultimately move us closer to the possibility of sustainability-as-flourishing. Also, the model illustrates how negative limiting patterns in thoughts and feelings, if left unnoticed and unchallenged, can, unwittingly, lead to negative outcomes in society and nature. These unintended and harmful outcomes may, in turn, increase individuals' recognition of unhelpful thought and emotional patterns and induce helpful responses. The next section answers each of the research questions.

Addressing the research questions

Overall research question

My overall research question was, *how does social entrepreneurs' metacognition ultimately shape transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing?*

Qualitative evidence from 18 social entrepreneurship cases¹⁸ in Manuscripts 2, 3, and 4 suggested metacognition as an enabling factor for a multi-level process of change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. Findings indicate metacognition can facilitate social entrepreneurs to emancipate themselves from the “socio-cultural milieu” that they were embedded in and that influenced their cognition (Haynie et al., 2010). Entrepreneurs identified and overcame limiting patterns in thoughts and feelings that had been shaped by wider influences, including collective habitual unsustainable tendencies of thinking and behaving (e.g., economic growth, competition, and control) (Rimanoczy, 2013, p. 99). Metacognition engendered a generative mindset in entrepreneurs apparently more in line with sustainability-as-flourishing that then shaped effective, caring enterprises. Enterprise capabilities enabled value creation and positive change – including in some deep-seated beliefs and practices – in industries and communities. Ultimately, the changes facilitated an increase of flourishing in communities and nature.

Therefore, I suggest the hope that researchers, including myself, have placed on social entrepreneurship to help solve intricate social and environmental problems is justified (Gibbs, 2009; J. K. Hall et al., 2010; Seelos & Mair, 2005; Walton & Kirkwood, 2013). This thesis goes further by identifying generative mechanisms (e.g., collaborating with and empowering others, reconnecting people with each other and nature, enabling insights, problem identification and framing, and enterprise capabilities engendered change) whereby social entrepreneurship can contribute to transformational systemic change (Driver & Porter, 2012) that increases the possibility of human and planetary flourishing (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). The social entrepreneurship cases provided evidence for the creation of some new collective beliefs and values that contributed – even if to a seemingly small degree – to the

¹⁸ I use the term “cases” here for simplicity of language. I acknowledge that the social entrepreneur who participated in the coaching intervention is not necessarily considered a “case”.

emergence of a new culture and social institutions more in line with sustainability-as-flourishing (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Harman, 1998; Kurucz et al., 2013).

However, while I believe there is a good reason to be hopeful, the study also suggests that social entrepreneurs' good intentions of creating social and environmental value and positive change are not necessarily a guarantor that the outcomes of their actions are positive. Findings suggest that social enterprises may create unintended negative consequences, which previous research has not discussed much. According to the findings, such negative outcomes can occur when social entrepreneurs show a lack of self-awareness and self-regulation of habitual limiting thoughts and negative feelings. When social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions flow from limiting reflexive thought and emotional processes without conscious awareness (the default human condition according to Reynolds (2006)), interfering entrepreneurial mechanisms are triggered that can unwittingly produce unwanted outcomes. I conclude that social entrepreneurship's potential to generate positive change depends – among other factors – on the entrepreneurs' ability to pay attention to their inner reality and become aware of their thought and emotional patterns. If entrepreneurs notice automatic negative and hindering patterns, they potentially can then transform them into helpful, positive patterns. In other words, metacognition seems to be the decisive factor whether an individual challenges past assumptions and conditioning and thus can consciously and efficiently respond to the encountered unsustainability challenges, or adheres to past conditioning and potentially being stuck in limiting patterns in thoughts and feelings.

Thus, I argue that embracing metacognitive practices, like most social entrepreneurs in this study have done, increases the potential for creating even more positive change. In this context, I would like to differentiate the purpose of the social entrepreneurs' self-awareness practices from some capitalist misappropriations of Buddhist mindfulness practices (Scherer & Waistell, 2018). Scholars have criticised organisational research for the reduction of (Buddhist) self-awareness practices "to a self-help technique that is easily misappropriated for reproducing corporate and institutional power, employee pacification, and maintenance of toxic organizational cultures" (Purser & Milillo, 2015, p. 3). This thesis offers a counterexample of how the

application of self-awareness practices can contribute to the generation of caring enterprises and positive change in industries and communities. This does not prevent social entrepreneurs from potentially (mis)using self-awareness practices for unhelpful outcomes.

Overall, the findings in the different national contexts in this thesis were quite similar, albeit that the selected German social entrepreneurs were generally operating with more established enterprises, and at greater scale, than the New Zealand entrepreneurs. This is – to a large degree – due to the differences in one of the criteria for case selection, which evolved as the research progressed. One criterion for Manuscript 2 (New Zealand) was “youth” of enterprises. However, for Manuscript 3 (Germany), I added a criterion for enterprises around “visible changes at the socioeconomic level”. Therefore, in most cases in this study, German enterprises were bigger and more established than New Zealand enterprises. German entrepreneurs were on average about 20 years older than their New Zealand counterparts. I noticed a tendency in the German entrepreneurs to be more practised in metacognition. However, a few New Zealand entrepreneurs were quite practised in self-awareness and self-regulation before they founded the social enterprise examined in this study.

Social entrepreneurs’ ability to transform limiting thoughts and engender empowering ones, which they can enhance through practice, seems to be an important factor at the individual level. This factor appears to have the potential to make a difference in industries and communities. I propose if social entrepreneurs can use their metacognition and notice they are neither at the mercy of their habitual limiting patterns, nor of difficult external circumstances, many more humans can do it (if they choose to and have the discipline). I suggest that utilising our self-awareness more and more and responding constructively to challenges will help us to fulfil our human potential, to live more from a being dimension (Fromm, 1976; Hermes & Rimanoczy, 2018; Rimanoczy, 2017), and to care for our own selves, other humans, and the Earth’ (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Fromm, 1976; Tolle, 2008). Such caring could ultimately contribute to a change process towards a better world.

The seriously unsustainable state of the planet seems indeed to reflect a turning point (Cooperrider & Fry, 2012; Moore, 2015; O’Sullivan, 2008; Wilber, 2017). With the awareness that we have some choice to either react in habitual unsustainable ways or respond in new and useful ways comes the responsibility to make better

choices. While I acknowledge that enhancing metacognition and internal self-development is not always easy and just one approach to change large and complex systems (Waddell et al., 2015), I suggest, if we can develop the discipline and self-awareness to act in more caring and thoughtful ways, we can increase the possibility for human and planetary flourishing. The responses to the subsequent research questions that follow offer more detail.

Subsequent research question 1

Qualitative evidence from Manuscripts 2, 3, and 4 contributes to answering the first subsequent research question, *how does social entrepreneurs' metacognition shape their entrepreneurial decisions and actions at the individual level?*

Findings show metacognition helped social entrepreneurs to become aware of their generative and limiting patterns in thoughts and feelings. A generative mindset involves empowering thought patterns and positive feelings (e.g., desire to express authentic and caring nature), as well as various metacognitive abilities (e.g., suspending rushed judgment, reducing defensiveness, and empathy). Entrepreneurs' limiting thoughts and negative feelings include, for example, attachment to the outcome of their work, and despondency. Self-awareness facilitated insight into patterns of limiting thought and negative feelings and enabled a transformation of some of these unhelpful patterns into more empowering thoughts and positive feelings. Metacognitive abilities engendered the individual-level mechanism creative discontent, which activated a social entrepreneurial response.

Interestingly, despite much literature that focuses on social entrepreneurs' heroic aspects (e.g. altruism, courage, compassion (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Miller et al., 2012; Tan et al., 2005), or eco-consciousness (Pastakia, 1998)), this research reveals a more balanced view of entrepreneurs. This thesis portrays them more like humans who have both aspects of a generative mindset *and* habitual limiting patterns in thoughts and feelings. Social entrepreneurs reported that they, at times, had experienced, for example, frustration, worry, self-concern, and jealousy triggered by challenging situations in their entrepreneurial work. Findings suggest that sometimes in these instances, entrepreneurs were less aware of habitual unhelpful patterns in thoughts and feelings. Entrepreneurs sometimes left these reflexive patterns unchallenged and reacted automatically to the trigger in their environment. The

literature recognises that addressing complex social or environmental problems can seem discouraging at times (Metcalf & Benn, 2013). Due to cultural bias, humans tend to avoid unpleasant experiences (Hayes et al., 2011) and to gloss over the problems that cause these experiences.

In other instances, evidence suggests social entrepreneurs' experience of emotional discontent in the face of challenges, such as pressing social and environmental problems, enhanced their awareness of reflexive limiting and unsustainable patterns in thoughts and feelings. Metacognition supported social entrepreneurs in this research to become aware of and accept habitual constraining thoughts and feelings and the wider environment that triggered the negative experiences. Awareness of thoughts and feelings allowed entrepreneurs to be vulnerable to and moved by both social and environmental distress in the wider environment, as well as difficulties within the enterprise (such as unhealthy relationships or deviation from the social/environmental mission). In such moments, social entrepreneurs were able, at times, to use their uneasiness as a "healthy call-to-change" that initiated a transformation of thoughts and feelings and activated creative and constructive social entrepreneurial responses to the problems (Davies, 2012). It seems the degree to which entrepreneurs let themselves be constrained by their wider environment decreased as they increased their metacognition and became more aware of habitual responses triggered by their wider environment.

Subsequent research question 2

The second subsequent research question was *how do social entrepreneurs' decisions and actions affect the social and environmental value creation process at the organisational level?*

The data from all three empirical manuscripts indicate that social entrepreneurs' mindset has flow-on effects to the organisational level. A generative mindset with empowering thoughts and feelings as well as metacognitive abilities (in particular, being open to others' perspectives, a more holistic view of problems and underlying causes, suspending rushed judgment, being open to alternatives, and empathy) can engender generative entrepreneurial mechanisms and enterprise capabilities. Helpful entrepreneurial mechanisms include celebrating and instilling positivity, problem identification and framing, seeing problems as opportunities, and

fostering enterprise culture. Supportive enterprise capabilities encompass collaborating with and empowering others, developing responsible business models or products, acting in a socially and environmentally caring and self-responsible way, and disseminating knowledge. While some of these capabilities have been discussed in the literature before, such as collaborating (de Bruin et al., 2017) and disseminating knowledge (G. Dees & Anderson, 2004), little has been mentioned about antecedents of the capabilities. This research gives evidence that metacognition at the individual level can play a key role in engendering these capabilities useful in an entrepreneurial context.

On the other hand, evidence in particular from Manuscripts 2 and 4 shows habitual limiting patterns in thoughts and feelings, if left unchallenged, can engender interfering mechanisms at the organisational level. Examples for interfering mechanisms include being self-centred, passing own negativity onto others, depleting one's own resources, difficult relationships and decreased work effectiveness. Little social entrepreneurship research to date has mentioned entrepreneurial mechanisms that hinder the generation of social and environmental value.

Subsequent research question 3

As a third subsequent research question I asked, *how does the social and environmental value creation process shape transformational change towards sustainability-as-flourishing at the societal level?*

Qualitative evidence in particular from Manuscript 3 suggests through nurturing a responsible enterprise culture and developing various valuable enterprise capabilities, social entrepreneurs' metacognition ultimately shaped positive change for industries and communities. Positive outcomes encompassed, for example, raised awareness of social or environmental problems, as well as an increased sense of responsibility and resulting positive actions by industries and communities that created social and environmental value for communities and nature. I consider these outcomes to be in line with change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. However, at times, interfering entrepreneurial mechanisms hindered progress towards flourishing as they resulted in negative outcomes. Unwanted results included, for instance, difficult relationships with internal and external stakeholders and environmental pollution.

Two enterprise capabilities seemed particularly important: 1) the ability to develop innovative, responsible business models effective in addressing root causes and 2) interpersonal skills of social entrepreneurs and their team. Developing new business models afforded the ability to be creative, for instance in “internalising social and ecological systems”, and move beyond traditional business models that externalise these systems (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014, p. 229). For example, conventional organisations do not account for positive or negative social and environmental impacts of the organisation. However, in the case of Apollo, its founder Anton created accounting rules reflecting the complete value generation (and destruction) of the enterprise.

Interpersonal skills involve self-transcendent capacities and disengagement from self-concern – including perspective taking and empathy (K. W. Brown et al., 2007; Pavlovich & Krahnke, 2012). Such self-transcendent capacities can enable peaceful and constructive dialogues that are useful to overcome interpersonal challenges. These capacities were especially important when social enterprises’ novel and unconventional business models and practices triggered interpersonal tensions with stakeholders and wider resistance to solutions. While there were exceptions, most entrepreneurs in this study seem most of the time to have balanced challenging external stakeholders’ conventional assumptions through creative, innovative skills (such as new business models and unconventional practices) and nurturing the stakeholders through interpersonal skills (such being empathetic, caring and empowering). Overcoming relational challenges, building trust, and creating positive relationships appear to have facilitated a space where external stakeholders reportedly felt safe and inclined to scrutinise – and sometimes change – their limiting assumptions (similar to coaching skills that support metacognition). In several cases, gradually some stakeholders embraced new patterns of thought in line with the enterprises’ social and environmental missions. This approach seemed useful to induce a generative, collaborative atmosphere for co-creating large-scale positive change (Waddell et al., 2015) apparently more in tune with flourishing.

While cases provide some evidence that social enterprises generated social and environmental value and to some degree change in society and nature, findings from Manuscript 2 especially indicate that at times enterprises engage interfering mechanisms that can not only hinder the creation of value and change but can

engender unintended negative social and environmental outcomes. This is an important finding, given that there is little research on negative outcomes of social entrepreneurship.

Overall, positive outcomes of various generative mechanisms and enterprise capabilities give evidence for how entrepreneurs in this research were successful in their attempt to alter some perceptions of the wider public. I argue, therefore, that social entrepreneurs and their enterprises in this study contributed to a change in some of society's deep-seated beliefs and values, even if only to a small degree. Thus, to some extent, they acted as a vehicle for a socioeconomic transformation towards sustainability-as-flourishing.

Subsequent research question 4

The final subsequent research question was, *how can coaching enhance metacognition to enable social and environmental value creation that brings about socioeconomic change?*

A series of coaching conversations between a social entrepreneur (coachee) and me (coach) (Manuscript 4) showed that the interventions heightened metacognition. The coaching supported the entrepreneur in becoming aware of and trying to shift some habitual and limiting thought and emotional patterns (e.g. feeling of competitiveness, lack of self-confidence) and related unhelpful behaviour towards a more generative mindset (feeling of calm and cooperation) and behaviour. This transformation at the individual level towards greater self-confidence, self-care, and personal well-being improved her work effectiveness and relationships at the organisational level, and so enabled the entrepreneur to contribute to wider positive change. In other words, findings suggest a connection between coaching, enhanced metacognition, breaking free from habitual conformist thoughts, individual as well as organisational flourishing, and potentially – even if in a seemingly small way – a transformation towards human and planetary flourishing. I thus offer proof that coaching could help social entrepreneurs in changing the status quo and power structures (Shoukry & Cox, 2018) by fostering “creative thinking that is capable of breaking existing patterns” (Tabarovsky, 2015, p. 77). This is in contrast to some research that critiques coaching for reinforcing individuals’ “inability to break free from hegemonic discourses such as neoliberalism” (Shoukry & Cox, 2018, p. 5).

There were several coaching techniques useful for creating a holding space that allowed the entrepreneur to experience more positive thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Especially useful techniques were manifesting unconditional acceptance (ICF, 2017; Stober, 2006) while respectfully challenging the social entrepreneur, and being present. I conjecture that my non-judgmental, accepting awareness triggered the entrepreneur's accepting awareness. According to Ken Wilber (2016), mindful accepting attention to thoughts and feelings without judging whether they are right or wrong can turn hidden thoughts and feelings of which an individual is unaware into an object that one can focus the awareness on. My empathetic presence thus might have heightened the entrepreneur's ability to stop and look at her unpleasant feelings and thoughts. It might have helped her break the habit of identifying with and using those feelings and thoughts as a lens to look at a situation. By making the thoughts and feelings an object of awareness, the entrepreneur was able to slowly dis-identify with them (Wilber, 2016) and to decrease the intensity of the unpleasant feelings. Finding that non-judgmental acceptance of thoughts and feelings was key in the social entrepreneur's transformation of her thoughts and feelings is somewhat surprising, given previous research that suggests "critical reflection" is required for transformative learning (Gray, 2006; Mezirow, 1994). I conclude by suggesting coaching that generates a non-judgmental holding space for the coachee to access shunned habitual patterns of thoughts and feelings can be useful to contribute to human and planetary thriving.

Thesis contributions

Academic contributions

This doctoral thesis makes five contributions to academic literature:

- 1) the recognition and application of a bottom-up multi-level entrepreneurial process model of change towards sustainability-as-flourishing that includes inner reality;
- 2) the fleshing out of the distinct elements of the model;
- 3) a more nuanced view of social entrepreneurs and outcomes of the entrepreneurial process;
- 4) the expansion of the recognition that metacognition can support social entrepreneurs to notice that they have some choice in how they respond to

unpleasant individual experiences and challenging circumstances in the wider environment; and

- 5) the identification of coaching for social entrepreneurship as a driver for wider change;

I detail each of these contributions below.

First, this thesis contributes to the social entrepreneurship literature as well as the business and sustainability literature by suggesting a bottom-up multi-level perspective for the social entrepreneurial process of contributing to change towards sustainability-as-flourishing. As this model integrates three levels of analysis and links individuals' metacognition to positive socioeconomic change, it offers a more complete picture of some of the factors involved in a transformation of industries and communities compared to previous research. Although scholars have called for a multi-level perspective to examining sustainability-as-flourishing (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Laszlo et al., 2012), previous work has been focusing on just one or two levels at a time, without linking all three levels (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012; Cooperrider & Fry, 2012; Fry, 2003; Naess, 1973; Seligman, 2011). The study offers an initial empirical exploration of sustainability-as-flourishing from a multi-level perspective. Such empirical research is, to my knowledge, non-existent. I still acknowledge that in this thesis, the link with change outcomes in industries and communities is not very strong regarding evidential data (mostly self-report data, small scale). It is a difficult task to connect all three levels in a small scale, single researcher study. The multi-level model I offer could serve as a foundation for further empirical work in the field.

Furthermore, the study adopted the relatively neglected perspective of a bottom-up process that has its "theoretical origin" at the individual level (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000, p. 5). Much organisational research has been done from a top-down perspective, examining how contextual factors at higher levels (e.g., industrial or institutional forces) limit and impinge on lower level phenomena (e.g., individual social entrepreneurs) (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000, p. 5; Lenox & York, 2012). I showed how social entrepreneurs' metacognition, feelings, perceptions, decisions, and interactions can give rise to higher-level phenomena (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Thus, this bottom-up approach added to theory on sustainability-as-flourishing.

Beyond, by including social entrepreneurs' deeper, subjective and transcendent experience of self, or their being-dimension (Rimanoczy, 2013), this thesis went beyond the literature's historical focus on the external reality of entrepreneurs (Karp, 2006). It thus offers a more comprehensive understanding of the process of creating social and environmental value and change. This inclusion is in line with a change in social science literature in general from a focus on mainly objectively observable facts in the exterior dimension of people's realities to people's inner, subjectively perceived and constructed realities (Corner & Pavlovich, 2016; Cunliffe, 2011; Karp, 2006; Nelson & Narens, 1990; Steingard, 2005; Weick & Putnam, 2006).

Second, this study fleshes out the distinct elements of the multi-level model. Offering rich detail on the process of how social entrepreneurs create value and change extends current mostly conceptual research on how business actors can contribute to transformational change (Ehrenfeld, 2012; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Upward & Jones, 2016). I provide insight into the elements that make social entrepreneurship more prone to contributing to human and planetary flourishing. These elements encompass:

- metacognition and strategies that heighten metacognition (including meditation and coaching);
- metacognitive abilities;
- generative entrepreneurial mechanisms at all three levels (individual, organisation, wider environment); and
- enterprise capabilities.

Cases suggested several metacognitive abilities that the sustainability-as-flourishing literature to date has rarely discussed, including suspending rushed judgment, reducing defensiveness, and openness to alternatives. These metacognitive abilities supplement other abilities mentioned in earlier sustainability-as-flourishing literature, such as care or empathy, and seeing a bigger picture (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Laszlo et al., 2012). I found generative entrepreneurial mechanisms, like creative discontent, reconnecting people with each other and nature, as well as celebrating and instilling positivity, which have not been emphasised to a great extent in the sustainability or social entrepreneurship literature. This is somewhat surprising given that people's sense of inter-connectedness with each other and the natural environment (Laszlo et al., 2012), as well as celebration and positivity, seem to be

linked to the creation of flourishing. Interestingly, the study not only identifies generative mechanisms and enterprise capabilities that can act as a vehicle for flourishing, but it also suggests that metacognition is an antecedent for these mechanisms and capabilities. This recognition extends current social entrepreneurship research that examines mechanisms and capabilities but does not investigate the foundation of capabilities such as interpersonal skills and collaborative behaviour beyond organisational boundaries (Montgomery et al., 2012).

Third, the thesis adds to the entrepreneurship literature in that it provides a more nuanced view of social entrepreneurs and the outcomes of the entrepreneurial process. Social entrepreneurs at times witnessed habitual limiting patterns in thoughts and feelings and some unwanted negative outcomes. Therefore, my work complements some of the research that portrays social entrepreneurs as heroes who experience mainly positive aspects (e.g. altruism, courage (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Tan et al., 2005), or eco-consciousness (Pastakia, 1998)), and that focuses solely on desired entrepreneurial behaviour and intended outcomes (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Mair & Martí, 2006; Miller et al., 2012). While it is not necessarily surprising that social entrepreneurs would have negative aspects, given the human tendency to adhere to old, often less useful patterns in thinking, feeling and behaving, there is little research to acknowledge this in social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs in this study reported behaving – at times – in ways that were neither heroic, nor contributing to flourishing, but rather detrimental to the creation of social and environmental value.

Fourth, this study contributes to the literature by expanding the recognition that metacognition can support social entrepreneurs to recognise more often the choice they have in how they respond to unpleasant individual experiences (such as negative feelings and restraining thought patterns) and unsustainability challenges in society and nature. Instead of clinging on to old ways of thinking and behaving when triggered by such challenges, social entrepreneurs were not so locked in old patterns but often acted to create new paths (Garud et al., 2010). Metacognition seems to be an enabling factor for entrepreneurs to notice that they can overcome the cultural bias that tends to avoid unpleasant experiences (Hayes et al., 2011) and choose to grow out of negative limiting patterns and respond in new, more positive ways. This recognition might help shift our conversations about uneasy experiences and pressing wider problems, away from seeing these as only inflicting unhappiness and harm but also as

an opportunity and a wake-up call to initiate a transformation at the individual and ultimately the wider environment (Davies, 2012). Enacting a “deep spiritual response” with compassion and resilience (O’Sullivan, 2008, p. 27), as well as perceiving challenges as a “blessing in disguise” is in line with the optimistic, inspiring vision of sustainability-as-flourishing (G. B. Grant, 2012). Perceiving challenges as opportunities and responding consciously, wisely and creatively to them might well be in order, as our planet is faced with increasing challenges and risks of the Anthropocene era (Crutzen, 2002), so that our individual and collective behaviour shifts from creating unintended negative consequences towards the intended possibility of flourishing (Upward & Jones, 2016).

Fifth, I add to both the social entrepreneurship and coaching literature by researching the new and promising field of “coaching for social change” (Shoukry, 2016). By bringing coaching into the world of a social entrepreneur, I move coaching beyond people with “power and privilege” in the conventional corporate context (Lasley et al., 2015; Shoukry & Cox, 2018). Manuscript 4 emphasises the enhancement of metacognition through a coaching intervention as an important initial step to empower a social entrepreneur, facilitate her critical reflection on limiting assumptions, and encourage alternative actions that may contribute to positive social change (Shoukry, 2016). Thus, I extend current sparse and conceptual research promoting coaching as “an enabler of change that empowers everyone”, and that may improve “organisations and communities” (Shoukry & Cox, 2018, p. 13).

The thesis enriches social entrepreneurship research by applying a more generative research approach that incorporates the vision of sustainability-as-flourishing. The approach that explored the pathway to a potential desired future differs from much of the present social entrepreneurship research that focuses on problem-solving.

Practice contributions

Three contributions to practice are identified in this thesis. They are:

- 1) the understanding that social entrepreneurs can more easily create intended socioeconomic change when they capitalise on their metacognition;

- 2) the insight that metacognitive abilities enable the development of important tangible entrepreneurial mechanisms and capabilities for shaping positive change in communities and nature; and
- 3) the knowledge that metacognition can be heightened through both solitary and shared practices, including coaching.

First, social entrepreneurs can benefit from the understanding that they more likely contribute to positive socioeconomic change when they use their metacognition. As this study indicates, habitual limiting thought and emotional patterns can induce unintended negative outcomes. Therefore, social entrepreneurs might want to pay more attention to and challenge habitual patterns in limiting thoughts and unpleasant feelings that can interfere with their social and environmental missions. Furthermore, given that social entrepreneurial work can be tiring and daunting (Waddock & Steckler, 2013), metacognition seems to offer an antidote to becoming overwhelmed and desperate. Entrepreneurs' enhanced self-awareness and self-regulation reportedly enabled greater self-care, well-being, effectiveness, and resilience. They reported being able to more easily overcome challenges and generate "personal sustenance" for their social change work (similar to Waddock & Steckler, 2013, p. 285). Transforming restrictive beliefs, judgments, and unpleasant feelings seems instrumental in developing a generative mindset that is aligned with individual, enterprise and wider flourishing.

Second, the thesis adds to practice through offering the insight that metacognitive abilities enable the development of relevant entrepreneurial mechanisms and enterprise capabilities that help, for instance, to find novel effective solutions to unsustainability problems, foster caring enterprise cultures, and encourage a broad range of external stakeholders to become co-creators. This thesis suggests that precursors of these mechanisms and capabilities are metacognition and resulting metacognitive abilities, including being more creative, empathetic, as well as an understanding of complexities and controversial perspectives. It gives a possible albeit partial explanation to how qualities like systems understanding (Waddock, 2013), creativity (Bacq et al., 2015), and collaborative skills might arise (de Bruin et al., 2017; Montgomery et al., 2012; Waddock, 2013).

Third, social entrepreneurs can profit from the knowledge that they can heighten their metacognition through both solitary (e.g., meditation, journaling, yoga,

prayer, immersion in nature, taking time out for reflection) and shared practices (e.g., discussion with others or reflecting with the support of a trusted coach). In particular, the understanding that coaching interventions can be an effective way of enhancing self-awareness that can enable the conscious shaping of change towards individual, enterprise and potentially wider flourishing, can open up a less known avenue for social entrepreneurial support that goes beyond practical help on business models, legal forms, and funding.

Limitations

This thesis has several limitations. First, it is limited by the small and selective samples of cases that consisted of 18 social entrepreneurship cases (12 in New Zealand, 5 in Germany, 1 coaching intervention in New Zealand). The research participants selected were all social entrepreneurs. I closely followed empirical evidence and findings to generate theory and I tried not to overgeneralise beyond the context and cases studied.

Second, it might seem like a limitation that I started this research assuming that inner reality/self-awareness could play an important role in shaping change in the wider environment and I mostly found what I was anticipating. However, interviews with social entrepreneurs showed somewhat unexpected findings, like patterns of limiting thoughts and unpleasant feelings and hindering mechanisms for value generation. Furthermore, data suggest these limiting patterns and unhelpful mechanisms findings were related to a lack in metacognition. I thus argue that while I did not anticipate some of the findings, they still offer empirical evidence for self-awareness being a key factor in helping individuals to move beyond their habitual thought and emotional patterns and enable positive change in industries and communities.

Third, this thesis embraced a bottom-up perspective (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). It described the transformational change process as originating at the social entrepreneurs' metacognition (individual or micro level). I saw metacognition as having emergent properties at the higher (or more macro) levels – the enterprise and the wider environment. While such a perspective is relatively neglected in organisational research, it by itself cannot “adequately account for organizational behaviour” as “micro phenomena are embedded in macro contexts” (Kozlowski &

Klein, 2000, p. 6). There is a two-way relationship between humans and their wider environment (i.e. humans are influencers of their environment and are influenced by it). Therefore, not paying much attention to how phenomena at the enterprise and wider environment levels (i.e. the more macro levels) shape and potentially constrain individuals' patterns in thought and behaviour is a limitation.

Fourth, the data – from social entrepreneurs' inner realities to their entrepreneurial actions, enterprises and impact on communities and nature – rely heavily on the entrepreneurs' self-reports. While this method is relatively inexpensive and efficient, its accuracy has been questioned (Ciuk, Troy, & Jones, 2015) due to intentional or unintentional bias (Baldwin, 2009; Connelly, 2013). I could have gathered data from other sources to capture observable facts like entrepreneurial actions and information on enterprises, their capabilities, and impact. However, using self-report data seemed “not only justifiable but also probably necessary” when exploring phenomena that were self-referential (Brannick, Chan, Conway, Lance, & E, 2010, p. 416), such as subjective thoughts and feelings in an entrepreneurial context. Non-self-report methods are often regarded as “inferior in validity when compared to self-report measures” (Brannick et al., 2010, p. 416), such as for the examination of inner reality phenomena. For example, indirect inferences from others' observations are not necessarily useful, because an individual's inner reality might not translate into observable behaviour, and inferring inner reality from the observation of other's behaviours might be inaccurate (Brannick et al., 2010). Also, while physiological measurements (e.g., heartbeat, sweating) may provide some information about immediate emotional reactions to triggers in the environment (Ashkanasy, Humphrey, & Huy, 2017, p. 182), such measurements might not offer much insight into how individuals subjectively felt during an event in the past, what they thought about it, and how they made sense of it. Others go so far as to say self-report data is the only source for “information no one else knows (Baldwin, 2009). Admittedly, subjective, introspective reports of individuals' interpretations of their internal processes have been considered as an imperfect measuring device of individuals' cognitions, but are seen as valuable (Nelson, 1996). I, therefore, argue that self-report data through in-depth semi-structured interviews, despite its drawbacks, was necessary and useful in this study to get insight into entrepreneurs' subjective inner reality.

In addition to the interviews, as a data gathering method, I offered entrepreneurs to take further reflection time and respond to an email with reflective questions. However, few entrepreneurs took up that option. Furthermore, especially in Manuscript 3, I considered secondary data beyond the interviews to provide further perspectives on the entrepreneurial process at the organisational and wider environment level. Nevertheless, it would have been useful to refer to conversations with people in the social entrepreneurs' immediate and wider business environment. This could have added more nuanced and detailed perspectives on how others perceive the social entrepreneurs, their change efforts, and outcomes. However, the project was already becoming sufficiently complex for a single PhD thesis.

Fifth, my data on metacognitive practices is somewhat limited. Entrepreneurs mention strategies such as meditation, yoga, journaling, prayer, nature immersion, taking time out, making time for reflection, deep conscious breathing, discussion with other people, and coaching. Apart from the last two mentioned strategies, they are solo practices. Given that humans are relational beings, many people prefer learning from and with others (e.g., our families, our work colleagues, our friends). Other possible strategies that take more of a shared and interactive approach are public reflection through dialogue, group discussion, and role-play, as well as nature immersion in groups (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006; Laszlo et al., 2014; Petriglieri et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012; Waddock & Lozano, 2013). These strategies could be considered in future research.

Sixth, the research setting was in New Zealand and Germany, two developed countries. Although it would seem entrepreneurs in other contexts could also benefit from gaining metacognition, solving unsustainability issues in less developed countries might involve a different dynamic. The social and environmental issues might be even more severe and complex and, therefore, constrain the social entrepreneurs in more telling ways.

Areas for future research

This thesis opens several avenues for future research. I present four main areas. First, prospective studies could examine effective metacognitive practices in social entrepreneurs and other advocates for socioeconomic change. Such studies could advance our knowledge of how we can achieve the shift in mindsets that enable

co-created change (Hermes & Rimanoczy, 2018; Kania, Hanleybrown, & Splansky Juster, 2014) towards flourishing (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013). What kind of support could heighten social entrepreneurs' self-awareness and self-regulation (Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Zhu et al., 2016), metacognitive capabilities such as empathy and understanding controversial perspectives, as well as related inter-personal skills of creating trusting, long-lasting relationships with other actors? How can we support entrepreneurs in developing the capacity of perceiving their work in the "context of a broader system" and of solving complex problems creatively and adaptively (Kania et al., 2014)?

Another possibility beyond exploring the effect of metacognition on individuals' thinking, is examining how metacognition enhances "the being dimension" (Hermes & Rimanoczy, 2018; Rimanoczy, 2014). Studies could look at how self-awareness affects social entrepreneurs' "personal values, aspects related to purpose, life mission, sense of transcendence and making a difference" (Hermes & Rimanoczy, 2018, p. 461).

Second, future work could pay particular attention to social entrepreneurs' and other sustainability advocates' limiting thought and emotional patterns. Such work could increase our understanding about the aspects of inner reality that are not easily seen because of our tendency to not wish necessarily to acknowledge and report them, but that still unwittingly can lead to unwanted results in enterprises and beyond. A better understanding of our sensitivities (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006) and other negative feelings and reactions (Friedrich & Wüstenhagen, 2017), in tandem with self-awareness practices could boost entrepreneurs' ability to become more aware of and transform restraining thoughts and unpleasant feelings. Such a transformation could increase actors' resilience, effectiveness, and efficiency in their work.

Beyond, it could be useful to investigate the further entrepreneurial mechanisms that hinder the generation of social and environmental value and that can result in unintended negative outcomes. A better understanding of interfering mechanisms could enable practitioners to analyse their value creation process and recognise potentially unhelpful behaviour and unwittingly created unwanted outcomes. Such recognition could help identify underlying factors (including a potential lack of metacognition), address these factors, and, hopefully, ultimately increase actors' potential to contribute to intended positive change towards flourishing.

Third, this thesis suggests coaching for social change as a fruitful avenue for further study. It helps to lay the ground for research that examines the role of coaching in internal, individual-level transformation that may then contribute to a shift in other people's ways of thinking and being at the organisational and wider environment levels in line with flourishing. I would be interested in carrying out research that draws on developmental psychology literature (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Wilber, 2017). This research maintains that human meaning-making systems (i.e. the mental, emotional, and value structures of how one interprets the surroundings and reacts to them – another term for 'mindset') can develop and become more complex over time (B. C. Brown, 2012b; Rooke & Torbert, 2005). As individuals develop more advanced stages of meaning-making, novel metacognitive capacities arise (B. C. Brown, 2012b; Cook-Greuter, 2004). Scholars suggest individuals who operate at higher stages of meaning-making are better able to take conscious, wise, and caring decisions that are more in line with a sustainable world (Boiral et al., 2009; B. C. Brown, 2012b; Schein, 2015). It has been maintained that an increase in self-awareness and self-reflection can help people move towards more effective levels of meaning-making (Rooke & Torbert, 2005). Given that coaching can enhance metacognition, as this study confirms, I suggest it would be worth investigating the potential for coaching to help individuals transform their meaning-making structures and move to more advanced and inclusive stages of meaning-making over time (Coughlin, 2015) that can enable transformation in organisations, and ultimately a sustainable world (Outhwaite & Bettridge, 2009).

Fourth, researching the link between individuals' metacognition and wider positive socioeconomic change from an integrated bottom-up/top-down perspective could be another option (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). One could trace back change in society and nature to key actors in the change process and examine actors' metacognition and resulting helpful actions. It could be interesting to find out how and what contextual factors shaped social entrepreneurs' mindsets (Zahraie, Everett, Walton, & Kirkwood, 2016). How did entrepreneurs free themselves of constraining mental patterns, and how did they influence change in others' mindsets in industries and communities. Also, what supported agents in heightening stakeholders' metacognition and transforming their mindsets? It would be important to capture the perspective of several external stakeholders in such integrated research. What do

external stakeholders say were the most influential techniques of the change agents that enabled stakeholders to scrutinise and transform restraining assumptions?

Personal reflections

For me, the process of writing this doctoral thesis signified not only advancing academic research, but also a self-exploratory journey. The research process required me to become aware and let go of my strong assumptions, for example, that all social entrepreneurs have advanced metacognition, and that increasing metacognition is *the* solution to *all* unsustainability challenges. I had to be careful that these assumptions were not becoming limiting beliefs and a self-fulfilling prophecy in my data collection and analysis.

In the course of the research process, I drew on several metacognitive abilities myself and thus, over time, increased some of the following abilities. Embracing openness to others' viewpoints enabled me to take into account and remain open to my supervisors' suggestions, go back to the data, and not push the data too far. Reducing my defensiveness facilitated engaging with critical feedback from my supervisors, reviewers for manuscripts, academics at conferences, and professional coaches in a constructive way. Empathy with the participating social entrepreneurs (especially the one I coached) was indispensable in understanding their perspectives and feelings and making sure that the analysis and interpretation of the data reflected their experiences. Seeing the bigger picture supported my resilience in times of doubt and difficulties, such as a considerable lack of sleep for the last three years because of an adorable, but nocturnal baby.

By completing this doctoral thesis, I gained the wonderful and powerful insight that I can trust in my ability to overcome obstacles and reach my goals even if my journey might take longer than I anticipated and others might take. My insight is summed up in social entrepreneur Alma's realisation during our last coaching conversation: "Sometimes my process is slower than the process of other people, but that doesn't mean that I am not going to get to the point that everyone is getting to. Maybe accepting that my process is not going to be the same as everyone else's. But, trust that it's possible, yeah!"

The research process not only shaped my academic understanding of how metacognition can contribute to sustainability-as-flourishing, but it also enabled me to

respond to life more authentically. I became more aware of some reflexive limiting thoughts and negative feelings, such as lack of self-esteem and a feeling of helplessness in the face of seemingly overwhelming unsustainability problems. I also noticed some of my own interfering mechanisms, such as passing my negativity onto others and depleting my resources. Importantly, I gradually deeply embraced the understanding that I am neither a victim of my restraining thoughts, unpleasant feelings, and unhelpful habitual behaviour nor helpless regarding pressing problems. Instead, I can choose to transform my mindset and actions and thus can contribute to change towards human and planetary flourishing. I believe that "humanity is good and has unlimited potential, and that social transformation starts with personal transformation" (Humanity's Team, 2018). My goal is now to become a certified professional business coach to support others who wish to enhance their self-awareness, become more authentic, and co-create a flourishing world.

"I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. . . . The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker." – Helen Keller

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Appendices

Appendix I: Ethics approval (Manuscripts 2 and 3)



A U T E C
S E C R E T A R I A T

16 April 2014

Kate Kearins
Faculty of Business and Law

Dear Kate

Re: **14/87 Towards sustainability-as-flourishing: Social entrepreneurship to promote transformational change.**

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. I am pleased to confirm that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has approved your ethics application for three years until 14 April 2017.

AUTEC suggests that the Information Sheets could be re-written in simpler language. The AUTEC Faculty Representative for Business and Law has offered to assist with this.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 14 April 2017;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 14 April 2017 or on completion of the project;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Katrin Herdering katrin.herdering@aut.ac.nz

Participant Information Sheet for Social Entrepreneurs



Date Information Sheet Produced:

14 April 2014

Project Title

Towards Sustainability-as-Flourishing: Social Entrepreneurship to Promote Transformational Change

An Invitation

Hello,

My name is Katrin Herdering. I am a PhD student at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. I am undertaking my PhD research with the supervision of Professor Kate Kearins and Professor Trish Corner, Faculty of Business and Law, Auckland University of Technology. The research is confidential and non-commercial.

I would like to invite you to take part in my doctoral research because you are considered to have valuable knowledge as social entrepreneur. With your support I wish to explore mechanisms by which social entrepreneurs can create change towards sustainability.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to be involved.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to explore how social entrepreneurs' thoughts and emotions shape enterprises that may contribute towards sustainability. The research outcomes seek to provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms by which change towards sustainability can be created. The findings of this research will form the basis for a complete doctoral thesis, conference papers and presentations, and various articles in academic journals.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You are a social entrepreneur who has been referred to me by people who work in the social entrepreneurship field. To find out more about the business model, the vision and mission I looked for example at your enterprise's website.

What will happen in this research?

If you choose to participate in this research I would like to conduct an interview with you which will take between 1 and 1 ½ hours. In the interview I will ask you about what you do as an entrepreneur and what difference you think it makes. The questions will also explore your thoughts and emotions, for example: What can you recall about your emotions and thoughts when you worked through a challenge you faced in setting up the social enterprise? How did your emotions and thoughts affect your decisions about the social enterprise?

A couple of days after the interview, in a follow-up email, I will give you the chance to reflect on your thoughts and emotions once more and how it relates to your entrepreneurial actions.

What are the discomforts and risks?

No risks are anticipated. However, you might find it slightly discomforting to share personal information, for example when I ask you about your perception of your thoughts and emotions.

You might potentially be concerned about commercially sensitive information you provide. Please note, I am not interested in this type of information. Therefore, I will neither ask for it in the interview nor will I publish this information.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

To alleviate a potential slight discomfort during the interview I will take care that you feel comfortable and at ease - in particular when I ask you to share your thoughts and feelings. I will pay close attention to potential personal issues arising and will offer to stop the interview if need be.

You will be given the chance to check the transcript of your interview and delete information you deem commercially sensitive.

What are the benefits?

This project is a PhD study. It will help me understand how social entrepreneurs' thoughts and emotions ultimately translate into transformational change towards sustainability. It will enable me to develop a rich understanding of how entrepreneurs' thoughts and emotions shape their entrepreneurial actions and decisions; how these actions and decisions shape the characteristics of the organisations they found; and ultimately how these organisations create transformational change towards sustainability. Finally, it will help me to write my PhD thesis.

You as a participant may benefit from the outcomes of this research in terms of an enhanced understanding of the mechanisms by which change towards sustainability can be created. Also, you may find helpful the guided reflection on your thoughts and emotions and how they shape your entrepreneurial actions and results in the society. You might gain an increased understanding of the role you can play in the creation of change towards sustainability.

The wider community might benefit from the research since it seeks to highlight the mechanisms by which change towards sustainability can be created.

How will my privacy be protected?

To protect your privacy and to keep information confidential, no names of participants or their organisations will be made public. Instead, fictitious names of the participants and their organisations will be used. No information will be shared between participants. Also, the interviews will take place in a private space in your office premises. Results of this research will only be published in an aggregated manner, to prevent you from being recognized by others.

However, given the size and nature of the participating population, people reading the results might potentially identify a participant. Although every attempt will be made to keep information confidential in this research, the information you share is subject to limited confidentiality.

You may withdraw your data from the study at any time prior to completion of data collection.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There will be no cost for you to participate in this research except time. The interview will take between 1 and 1 ½ hours. The place for the interview will be in a convenient location for you, so no travelling costs will be involved.

Reviewing the transcript of your interview for approval is estimated to take up to another hour - but is optional.

The follow up email that you will be asked to answer a couple of days after the interview might take you another 15 minutes.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will be given time to read this Information Sheet for a week. Within this week you have the chance to respond to my email and either accept or refuse the invitation. In case you have not responded to my invitation after one week, I will give you a follow up phone call.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

In order to participate, please respond to this email. Then we can decide on a date and place to conduct the interview. When we meet face to face for the interview, I will bring a Consent Form which you will need to fill out prior to the interview to confirm your consent in writing.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will receive feedback on the results of the research in the form of a practice focused journal article that seeks to summarise all findings in a concise way. I will send it to you via email.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Kate Kearins, email: kate.kearins@aut.ac.nz, phone: +64 9 921 9999, extn. 9711.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999, extn. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Katrin Herdering, email: katrin.herdering@aut.ac.nz, phone: +64 9 921 9999, extn. 6713.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Professor Kate Kearins, email: kate.kearins@aut.ac.nz, phone: +64 9 921 9999, extn. 9711.

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16 April 2014,
AUTEK Reference number 14/87.*

Appendix III: Participant consent form (Manuscripts 2 and 3)

Consent Form



Project title: **Towards Sustainability-as-Flourishing:
Social Entrepreneurship to Promote Transformational Change**

Project Supervisor: **Professor Kate Kearins**

Researcher: **Katrin Herdering**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Participant Information Sheet dated 14 April 2014.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I understand that, while every attempt will be made to keep information confidential, the information I supply is subject to limited confidentiality.
- I voluntarily agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's name:

Participant's occupation:

Participant's signature:

Date, Place:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16 April 2014, AUTEK Reference number 14/87

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix IV: Indicative interview questions for New Zealand social entrepreneurs (Manuscript 2)

1. (Name), please tell me how you got started with *your enterprise*?
2. Please think about the time before you founded the enterprise. Tell me about an experience (e.g. a challenging time) that made you aware of - and maybe lead you to assess critically - your assumptions and beliefs that you developed through your life experience (your upbringing/culture).
 - a. What kind of assumptions did you discover?
 - b. In what way did you change your assumptions and related behaviour?
 - c. How did this experience move you into the direction of founding a new enterprise?
3. Please think back to the time when you first got involved in the enterprise and sorted out initial challenges. What can you recall about your emotions and thoughts?
 - a. You described a challenging situation. What were you thinking? What were you feeling?
4. How did your emotions and thoughts affect your decisions about the enterprise?
5. Please think about more recent success with your enterprise. What can you tell me about your emotions and thoughts?
 - a. You described a situation in which you were successful. How did it feel? What did you think?
6. Describe any emotions and thoughts that come up again-and-again in your role with *your enterprise*.
 - a. You said that you “always believed” or “always felt that...”. What do you mean by that?
7. Anything you have learned during your work with *your enterprise*?
8. What keeps you going day-after-day in this business?
 - a. What do you do for yourself apart from the job?
 - b. How does your (yoga/spiritual/mindfulness/religious) practice affect your thoughts and emotions?

9. Please think about the results of your work. How has your enterprise changed things for the better? Any unintended outcomes you hadn't anticipated?
 - a. Any negative results your enterprise created?
10. What does sustainability mean for you?
11. What do you see as your role and that of your enterprise in relation to sustainability?
12. Is your enterprise financially self-sustaining? What other sources of funding do you tap into to keep you going?

Appendix V: Indicative interview questions for German social entrepreneurs (Manuscript 3)

(Questions were originally asked in German and are translated back into English here)

1. *Mr. xxx*, please tell me how you got started with *your enterprise*?
2. Please think about the time before you founded the enterprise. Can you remember an experience (e.g. a challenging time) that made you aware of - and maybe lead you to critically assess - your assumptions and beliefs that you developed through your life experience (your upbringing/ culture)?
3. Please think back to the time when you first got involved in the enterprise. What can you recall about your emotions and thoughts?
4. Did you have moments when you faced challenges or difficulties? If so, what thoughts and emotions can you recall? How did you act on them?
5. Please think about success with your enterprise. What can you tell me about your emotions and thoughts?
6. Please describe any emotions and thoughts that come up again-and-again in your role as an entrepreneur.
7. When you take decisions about the enterprise, how do your emotions and thoughts affect your decisions?
8. How would you describe the core values/characteristics of your enterprise, e.g. in regards to purpose, culture, stakeholders, leadership style?
9. When you think of the characteristics of your enterprise, e.g. in regards to its purpose or its culture – how would you say have they been shaped by your thoughts and emotions you hold?
10. What do you consider to be your purpose in life? How is it connected to your enterprise?
11. What are the most important things you have learned during your work with *your enterprise*? Where did you grow personally?
12. What keeps you going day-after-day in this enterprise?
13. Do you sometimes take time out to reflect about you or your work? Do you have particular practices, e.g. yoga, or religious or spiritual practices to help you reflect?

14. How would you describe your relationship to yourself, to other people, and to nature? Do you feel connected to yourself, others, and nature?
15. Have you ever thought about how the quality of your consciousness shapes how you act and how you create your reality?
16. Please think about the results of your work. How has your enterprise changed things for the better (social – environmental value)?
17. Any unintended negative outcomes you hadn't anticipated?
18. What do you see as your role and that of your enterprise in relation to a social and environmentally sustainable world?

Appendix VI: Acknowledgement for progress report



AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

28 November 2017

Kate Kearins
Faculty of Business and Law

Dear Kate

Ethics Application: **14/87 Towards sustainability-as-flourishing: Social entrepreneurship to promote transformational change.**

At their meeting of 6 November 2017, the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) received the report on your ethics application. AUTEC noted your report and asked me to thank you.

On behalf of AUTEC, I congratulate the researchers on the project and look forward to reading more about it in future reports.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact me by email at ethics@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 6038.

Yours sincerely

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: katrin.herdering@aut.ac.nz

Appendix VII: Approval of amendments to original ethics application (Manuscript 4)



AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

6 March 2018

Kate Kearins
Faculty of Business and Law

Dear Kate

Re: Ethics Application: **14/87 Towards sustainability-as-flourishing: Social entrepreneurship to promote transformational change.**

Thank you for your request for approval of amendments to your ethics application.

The minor amendments to the recruitment (single social entrepreneur) and data collection protocols (four conversations) is approved. The amendment to the research aim is noted.

I remind you of the Standard Conditions of Approval.

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEK prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEK Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEK Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEK grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. If the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all locality legal and ethical obligations and requirements.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: katrin.herdering@aut.ac.nz

Appendix VIII: Participant information sheet (Manuscript 4)

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:
5 March 2018

Project Title
Towards Sustainability-as-Flourishing: Social Entrepreneurship to Promote Transformational Change

An Invitation

Hello,

My name is Katrin Schaefer. I am a PhD student at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. I am undertaking my PhD research with the supervision of Professor Kate Kearins and Professor Trish Corner, Faculty of Business and Law, Auckland University of Technology. The research is confidential and non-commercial.

I would like to invite you to take part in my doctoral research because you are considered to have valuable knowledge as social entrepreneur. With your support, I wish to explore mechanisms by which social entrepreneurs can create change towards sustainability.

Participation is voluntary. You are not obliged to be involved.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to explore how social entrepreneurs' thoughts and emotions shape enterprises that may contribute towards sustainability. It also aims to examine how social entrepreneurs' awareness of thoughts and emotions could be enhanced through goal-oriented coaching, and how this enhanced awareness could contribute to achieving enterprise-related goals in line with sustainability. The research outcomes seek to provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms by which change towards sustainability can be created. The findings of this research will form the basis for a complete doctoral thesis, conference papers and presentations, and various articles in academic journals.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

I know you as an entrepreneur who is working to generate social, environmental and economic value.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

In order to participate, please respond to this email. Then we can decide on a date and place to conduct the conversations. When we meet face to face for the conversation, I will bring a Consent Form for you to fill out prior to our conversation to confirm your consent in writing.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time prior to completion of data collection. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

If you choose to participate in this research, I will invite you to fill in an About You questionnaire. Then, we will have four conversations, which will take about 40 minutes each. First, we will identify an issue together that you currently face regarding the social enterprise. To address that issue I will invite you to set a goal towards which we can work. While we work towards the goal, I aim to facilitate a reflection on your thoughts and emotions. I might ask questions like, What is happening at the moment in your entrepreneurial venture? How are you feeling about the way things are going? What's preventing you in moving your social enterprise dreams to the next stage? What could be a positive, exciting goal that you would like working towards? What could you do to move yourself one step closer to your goal? During our conversations, I will reflect back to you what you say. At the end of each conversation, you are free to decide if you would like to do a reflective exercise between conversations, such as journaling. A couple of days after our conversations, I will summarise what we explored.



AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

What are the discomforts and risks?

No risks are anticipated. However, you might find it slightly discomforting to share personal information, for example when I ask you about your perception of your thoughts and emotions. You might potentially be concerned about commercially sensitive information you provide. Please note, I am not interested in this type of information. Therefore, I will neither ask for it in the interview nor will I publish this information.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

To alleviate a potential slight discomfort during the interview I will take care that you feel comfortable and at ease - in particular when I ask you to share your thoughts and emotions. I will pay close attention to potential personal issues arising and will offer to stop the interview if need be.

You will be given the chance to check the final manuscript I write based on our conversations and delete information you deem commercially or personally sensitive.

What are the benefits?

This project is a PhD study. It will help me understand how social entrepreneurs' thoughts and emotions and awareness of those thoughts and emotions ultimately translate into transformational change towards sustainability. It will enable me to develop a rich understanding of how entrepreneurs' thoughts and emotions shape their entrepreneurial actions and decisions; how these actions and decisions shape the characteristics of the organisations they found; and ultimately how these organisations create transformational change towards sustainability. This study will also help me to explore a way to enhance a social entrepreneur's awareness of her/his thoughts and emotions. Finally, it will help me to write my PhD thesis.

You as a participant may benefit from the outcomes of this research. You might find it useful to work with me towards overcoming an entrepreneurial challenge and achieving a goal you identified. You may find helpful the guided reflection on your thoughts and emotions in relation to entrepreneurial actions. Also, you might gain an enhanced understanding of the mechanisms by which change towards sustainability can be created.

The wider community might benefit from the research since it seeks to highlight the mechanisms by which change towards sustainability can be created.

How will my privacy be protected?

To protect your privacy and to keep information confidential, neither your name nor the name of your organisation will be made public. Instead, a fictitious name for you and your organisation will be used. Also, the conversations will take place in a private space. Results of this research will only be published in an aggregated manner, to prevent you from being recognized by others.

However, people reading the results might potentially identify you as a participant. Although every attempt will be made to keep information confidential in this research, the information you share is subject to limited confidentiality.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There will be no cost for you to participate in this research except time. The About You questionnaire will take about 15 minutes and the four conversations about 40 minutes each. The place for the conversations will be in a convenient location for you or via Skype, so no travelling costs will be involved.

The potential reflective exercise you might like to do between interviews would take you another 5 minutes each day.

Reviewing the final manuscript for approval is estimated to take up to another hour - but is optional.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will be given time to read this Information Sheet for a week. Within this week you have the chance to respond to my email and either accept or refuse the invitation. In case you have not responded to my invitation after one week, I will give you a follow up phone call.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will receive feedback on the results of the research in the form of a practice focused journal article that seeks to summarise all findings in a concise way. I will send it to you via email.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Kate Kearins, email: kate.kearins@aut.ac.nz, phone: +64 9 921 9999, extn. 9711.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Katrin Schaefer, email: katrin.schaefer@aut.ac.nz, phone: +64 9 921 9999, extn. 6713.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Professor Kate Kearins, email: kate.kearins@aut.ac.nz, phone: +64 9 921 9999, extn. 9711.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 6 March 2018, AUTEK Reference number 14/87.

Appendix IX: Participant consent form (Manuscript 4)



Consent Form

Project title: **Towards Sustainability-as-Flourishing: Social Entrepreneurship to Promote Transformational Change**

Project Supervisor: **Professor Kate Kearins**

Researcher: **Katrin Schaefer**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 5 March 2018.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the conversations and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time prior to completion of data collection without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's name:

Participant's contact details:

Participant's signature:

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 6 March 2018, AUTEK Reference number 14/87.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix X: Indicative coaching questions for a social entrepreneur (Manuscript 4)

I present example questions for the coaching sessions in line with the GROW model.

Setting a Goal

- What is the issue you would like to work on today?
- What do you want instead of the issue?
- What would you like to get out of this coaching session?
- What is behind your goal that motivates you?

Exploring Reality

- What is happening now that tells you that things are going less than ideal?
- What have you done so far that improved things?
- What do you feel right now as you talk about this?
- What thoughts are going through your head?
- How is this thought affecting your work? Where is it holding you back?
- What obstacles are in your way that prevent you from moving forward?
- What would be possible if this was not an issue?
- What was an experience proving this assumption is not always valid?

Finding alternative Options

- How do you intend to move yourself closer to your goal?
- If you knew you could do it, what would be the first step?
- What do you need to feel supported in embracing this new perspective?
- What, would you do if that obstacle did not exist?
- What, if you knew the answer? What would it be?

Choosing the Way forward

- What are you going to do?
- How will this action get you closer to your goal?
- What might stop you from taking this new perspective?
- Reviewing the learnings in subsequent coaching sessions?
- What did you learn about yourself since our last conversation?
- What have you done that you are really proud of?
- What new choices did you take?
- How would you like to build on your achievements?