

## Research Article

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# Mapping of Academic Production on Social Enterprises: An international analysis for the growth of this field

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to identify, organize and analyze the international scientific production on social enterprises (SE). It presents the results of a bibliometric study combined with a systematic literature analysis. We analyzed 204 academic articles on the subject, from four different sources: (i) articles published in journals with high impact factors; (ii) most cited articles as per Google Scholar; (iii) articles addressing topics related to SE; and (iv) articles from the Social Enterprise Journal, specialized in the subject. Results point to remarkable recent growth in the field of SE, both theoretically and empirically. In addition, this study presents the main pieces of work, countries, institutions, research questions, methodology and results found in the SE literature. Studies have concentrated around six main categories: (1) understanding SE, through different approaches, concepts and models; (2) governance and relationships with stakeholders; (3) attempts to increase practical references and samples within the field; (4) organizational learning, structure and critical factors for success and failure of SE; (5) metrics, indicators and social impact generated by SE; and (6) legislation of different countries and how it relates to SE.

**Keywords:** Social enterprises; social businesses; inclusive businesses; organizational hybridism; hybrid organizations.

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## 1 Introduction

The amount of social and environmental change affecting the planet over the last decades has led to an increase in society's attention to such matters. There are many aspects of management involving social and environmental issues, such as a rising search for more inclusive business models, the need for an economy based on human principles (i.e. justice, longevity and diversity), and growing overlap between the public sector, civil society and business (Winkler & Schulman, 2012). This is the context for the subject of this article: social enterprises (SE).

Muhammad Yunus, also known as “banker to the poor”, was one of those responsible for the increased popularity of SE. The Indian economist became Nobel Peace Laureate in 2006, thanks to the social impact of his social enterprise, the Grameen Bank, which offers microcredit in Bangladesh (Yunus, Moingeon & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010).

SE may be seen as enterprises that solve social problems through market mechanisms. Such organizations seek to be financially sustainable while addressing a social purpose. As a result, the social objective is met by means of commercial activities – that is, the offer of goods and services (Holt, 2011; Bugg-Levin, Kogut & Kulatilaka, 2012; Grimes et al., 2013; Battilana & Lee, 2014; Battilana, Sengul & Pache, 2014).

A review of the literature points to three frequent approaches to SE. The first takes an economic perspective, starting from the works of Sen (2000) and Yunus, Moingeon and Lehmann-Ortega (2010), based on the idea of development as freedom. According to this viewpoint, social and economic problems related to poverty originate from deprivation of human dignity and freedom. In face of such challenges, SE may, for instance, generate conditions for socially vulnerable citizens to improve their quality of life.

The second approach concerns the interpretation of Prahalad and Hammond (2002), in which SE should

seek to improve the lives of people constituting what they termed as the “base of the pyramid”, encompassing the stratum of the world population living with annual income of less than 2000 dollars per capita – around four billion people (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002; Prahalad, 2006). In order to improve their living conditions, SE offer them goods and services previously available only to the more privileged segments of the world pyramid.

The third approach hails from the field of organizations and is related to the notion of organizational hybridism (Iizuka, Varela & Larroudé, 2015). In this outlook, SE are classified as hybrid organizations, regardless of industry, size, location or other features.

The concept of organizational hybridism is related to the activities, structures, processes and meanings of enterprises that combine multiple organizational forms. In the case of SE, there is a merger between the forms and purposes of traditional businesses and those of civil society. In other words, SE mix organizational traits originating from both the private and public rationale (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Battilana, Sengul & Pache, 2014; Doherty, Haugh & Lyon, 2014). The phenomenon occurs due to their efforts to be financially sustainable and simultaneously create social value (Lyons & Kickul, 2013; Kickul & Lyons, 2015).

Irrespective of the existing different approaches, scientific production on SE reveals increasing interest in the topic, both in the academic and business environments (Brower, 2011; Borzaga, Depedri & Galera, 2012; Grimes et al., 2013; Battilana, Sengul & Pache, 2014; Doherty, Haugh & Lyon, 2014). Rosolen, Tiscoski and Comini (2014) highlight that such growth in publications occurred chiefly from 2006 onwards.

Within the academic sphere, bibliometric studies on SE (Granados et al., 2011; Sassmannshausen & Volkmann, 2013) claim that there has been more international collaboration and investigation. The authors believe that this greater international collaboration involves more articles published by co-authors from other countries and, consequently, the publication of the theme in journals of different origins. In addition, the participation of universities from different countries (and their respective research groups) in the theme has increased in recent years. In addition, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) currently dominate this area of research, with notable authors such as Alex Nicholls and Johanna Mair (UK) and Gregory Dees and James Austin (US).

Despite the concentration in countries, the same does not occur with higher education institutions (HEI) and authors; in other words, there is great dispersion in these categories. The predominance of theoretical and

descriptive studies, as opposed to predictive papers, has also been noted (Granados et al., 2011; Rosolen, Tiscoski & Comini, 2014).

Regardless of the nature of the studies, a significant portion of them note that the discussion on SE is still deemed new and heterogeneous, and that its comprehension is considered complex and of difficult interpretation (Tracey, Phillips & Jarvis, 2011; Borzaga, Depedri & Galera, 2012).

As an effort to contribute to more robust theoretical understanding, this article proposes to analyze the attributes of the international scientific production on SE. To that end, we propose a bibliometric study followed by a systematic literature analysis, based on 204 academic articles from 24 countries. An additional motivation for this study lies in the fact that we have not found international bibliometric studies dealing only with social enterprises. As an example, studies by Granados et al. (2011) and Sassmannshausen and Volkmann (2013) were two bibliometrics that we have found that have been cited by the international academic community, but even in these studies the authors treated social enterprises in combination with social entrepreneurship. We follow, therefore, the precepts of Katz and Martin (1997) in order to generate a study that can collaborate with the community on SE.

Bibliometrics was chosen as a technique due to its pertinence in analyzing the behavior of scientific literature (De Solla Price, 1986; Araújo, 2007). Its use can identify information on a certain topic, such as: amount of articles, amount of authors, journals in which the articles were published, HEIs, countries of said institutions, year of publication and key-words.

By virtue of this information, authors indicate that bibliometrics is a quantitative research technique that helps to understand the state of the art in a given subject; different authors, however, point to the need of adopting qualitative research techniques together with bibliometrics, so as to deepen the analysis (Araújo, 2007; Galera & Borzaga, 2009; Granados et al., 2011). Bearing this in mind, we chose to conduct, in addition to the bibliometric study, a systematic analysis of the literature on SE; this involved separating studied articles into categories and seeking a deeper understanding of their issues, methodologies and results. By using these two tools, we intend to understand the state of the art on SE and thus contribute to production on the topic.

The article is structured into four parts, not counting this introduction. To begin with, the key concepts of organizational hybridism and social enterprise are approached. The second part details the methodological

path used to build the paper and the third brings our discussion on the results. We conclude with our final considerations, in which we recall the research objectives and their implications, as well as the work's limitation and proposals for future research.

## 2 Social Enterprises

Definitions involving SE have different outlooks, as noted by Iizuka, Varela and Larroudé (2015):

Several theoretical fields have been used to understand social businesses. Among others, the economic approach (Sen, 2000; Yunus, 2007) values human capabilities, as well as the possibility of a world without poverty; the corporate strategy field (Prahalad, 2006) points to wealth at the “bottom of the pyramid”, serving low-income consumers; organizational studies, more specifically on organizational hybridism (Billis, 2010; Grassl, 2012; Trexler, 2008), examine organizations that address both social and financial goals (Iizuka, Varela & Larroudé, 2015: 387).

The third perspective mentioned above portrays SE as hybrid organizations, that is, as enterprises that seek to simultaneously achieve two great objectives: social and economic (Iizuka, Varela & Larroudé, 2015).

According to Wood Jr. (2010) the term hybrid organization first arises in the literature of the fields of public management and nonprofit organizations in the decade from 2000 to 2010. This organizational phenomenon is also termed “hybrid”, “hybridism” and “hybridization”. Under this perspective, organizations may be seen as those operating between the public and private sector and that therefore mix public demands with commercial ones. The author provides examples: “[...] public universities that render consulting services for private companies and research centers that develop studies for pharmaceutical laboratories (Wood Jr., 2010: 242).”

The author also indicates that hybridism may refer to organizations that combine attributes of nonprofit organizations with those of commercial enterprises (Wood Jr., 2010). Within this classification, several different examples of SE can be found across the globe, such as Grameen Bank (Bangladesh), Aashtha Hospital (India) and Pearl Bank (Brazil). All of these businesses have a social purpose, akin to those of nonprofit organizations. In the case of Grameen Bank and Pearl Bank, this purpose refers to increasing income for a segment of the population; for Aashtha Hospital, it means providing health to the poorer population of Hajipur, in northern India. The three enterprises also have traits like those

of commercial businesses, since they offer products and services through a profit-seeking activity in their particular market.

Wood Jr. (2010) mentions that the formation of hybrid organizations may occur through the intended or unintended mixture of attributes of different organizations, or due to changes occurring within the organization. The author states that the appearance of this type of enterprise is related to globalization and its resulting effects on society:

[...] Among such changes, we highlight: first, the limits experienced by the State in serving the population, which led to the appearance and proliferation of nonprofit organizations (Salamon, 1994); second, the liberation of national markets, thus increasing competition and engendering privatization processes (Ramamurti, 2000), industrial consolidation processes (mergers and acquisitions) and organizational change processes, including radical changes (Gregoriou & Renneboog, 2007; Vasconcelos, Caldas & Wood Jr., 2004); and third, capital market growth, together with companies going public, which frequently entailed large changes in governance and management models, especially in family-owned businesses (Bhattacharya & Ravikumar, 2001; Ehrhardt & Nowalk, 2003) (Wood Jr., 2010: 243).

In other words, the author notes that the growth of nonprofit organizations, privatizations, mergers and acquisitions, organizational change or deciding to be publicly traded all led to the appearance of hybrid organizations (Wood Jr., 2010).

On one hand, hybridism can facilitate innovation on the part of SE, by virtue of also having an organizational form adaptable to changes in the external environment and, as a result, bringing the organization closer to effecting positive social change (Battilana & Lee, 2014); on the other, however, hybrid organizations undergo inherent conflicts, tensions and dilemmas (Tracey, Phillips & Jarvis, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013; Battilana & Lee, 2014; Battilana, Sengul & Pache, 2014).

Because of its multiple forms (such as for profit and nonprofit), this type of organization may make the mistake of deviating from one or more of them, which results in tensions between the combination of its forms (Tracey, Phillips & Jarvis, 2011; Smith, Gonin & Besharov, 2013; Battilana & Lee, 2014). According to Smith, Gonin and Besharov (2013) such tensions may occur regarding the organization's entrepreneurial performance, business arrangement, sense of belonging and learning. One of SE's greater challenges, thus, consists of managing such tensions so as to achieve its multiple objectives (Battilana & Lee, 2014).

According to Pache and Santos (2013), hybrid organizations may become confused and succumb to

their dilemmas. Battilana, Sengul and Pache (2014) state, for instance, that many SE fail when they prioritize their commercial clients over the beneficiaries of their social activities, which financially depend on the former. Such conflict between social and financial may lead the enterprise to deviate from its purpose (Lyons & Kickul, 2013; Kickul & Lyons, 2015).

Part of the literature states that SE appear as a manner of reducing social inequalities derived from the government's failure to serve social demands, particularly in developing countries (Yunus, Moingeon & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010; Holt, 2011; Halme, Lindeman & Linna, 2012; Plaskoff, 2012; Smith, Gonin & Besharov, 2013; Román-Calderón, Odoardi & Battistelli, 2015). Such demands include those related to health, education, transportation, income and security.

In this context, the term “social enterprise” was likely used for the first time in the 1980's – becoming more common in the 1990's – to identify innovative private initiatives voluntarily established by European citizens engaged in offering social services or managing economic activity geared towards assisting people in social disadvantage (Borzaga, Depedri & Galera, 2012).

Thus, although the subject of SE is recent in research, the empirical phenomenon is not (Dees, 1998). The concept of SE has been used at least since the 1990's to identify a specific type of enterprise found in different industries (Dees, 1998; Defourny & Kim, 2011; Borzaga, Depedri & Galera, 2012).

Academic pursuits began to grow once the topic was included in a key journal for the management field – Harvard Business Review (1998) – as well as with the inauguration of the British publication specialized in SE: the Social Enterprise Journal (2005). In the 2010's, SE started to appear more frequently in journals from Academy of Management, California Management Review, MIT Sloan Management Review and Organization Studies, among others, potentially demonstrating the subject's theoretical and empirical importance.

### 3 Methodology

This paper has embraced a mixed approach: a qualitative nature regarding bibliographic research and systematic literature analysis (including on methodologies and results) and, at the same time, a quantitative trait by virtue of adopting bibliometrics and calculating Lotka's Bibliometric Law. For Richardson (1999, p.79) “the qualitative method is the appropriate way to understand the nature of a social phenomenon.” This justifies the qualitative character of this research, since Social Business is framed in the definition of social phenomena. The quantitative method, in turn, allows greater manipulation of data, through statistical analysis, as occurs, for example, with the application of descriptive statistics.

As to purposes, this research is exploratory. This type of study is broadly used for budding subjects such as SE. This choice is apt in that this study performs documental and bibliographic research to define concepts and understand different views in the literature.

Our sources of evidence involved documentation and recording in files. The main documents used in this research were the articles effectively analyzed. In addition, we adopted bibliographic and documental research. Bibliographic research plays a fundamental role in the construction of science. According to Lima and Mioto (2007), it is not uncommon for bibliographic research to appear as a literature review. This is because there is a lack of understanding that literature review is only a prerequisite for conducting any and all research, whereas bibliographic research implies an orderly set of procedures for searching for solutions, attentive to the object of study, and that, therefore, can not be random. Following these precepts we start from this technique for the construction of this article.

The first step in building the study was defining the sample to be used. The study worked with intentional samples, by adhering to selection criteria for the articles. Table 1 shows the categories of papers (collected until July 2015):

**Table 1:** Classification of sample for bibliometrics

ARTICLE CATEGORIES		AMOUNT OF ARTICLES	RELATIVE FREQUENCIES (%)
(1)	BY JOURNAL IMPACT FACTOR	31	15.2%
(2)	BY AMOUNT OF CITATIONS	18	8.8%
(3)	BY RELATED TERMS	19	9.3%
(4)	SOCIAL ENTERPRISE JOURNAL	136	66.6%
<b>TOTAL SELECTED ARTICLES</b>		<b>204</b>	<b>100%</b>

We selected academic articles from four categories - five articles appear in more than one category and, in this case, we consider the article only for the previous category, to avoid sample overlap, and considering that this choice does not generate effects in the results of the study, since they represent less than 2% of the selected sample. The first category (1) refers to articles published in journals with high impact factor, according to the JCR (2013) list in force at the time - the list of the year 2013 was used because our study began in the first half of 2014 and a new list had not yet been published. With the threshold of 1.803 in impact factor, we selected the 51 main publications in management - The initial intention of our criterion was to raise the 50 journals of greatest impact factor that publish on Social Enterprises. We note that the journal of number 50 is the Harvard Business Review, and that, according to this list, has an Impact Factor of 1,831. We also note that the MIT Sloan Management Review, which has given prominence to this theme, has IF of 1.803. We then proceeded to no longer adopt the criterion based on the top 50, but rather based on IF equal to or greater than 1.803, with the purpose of including a journal that is at the border of the initial criterion and which is fundamental for the discussions of the theme.

This category (1) was chosen because it concentrates the largest number of articles on social enterprises (Sassmannshausen & Volkmann, 2013), and because it is the research area of the authors of the study. The publications can be seen in Table 2.

By searching in each journal, we found 31 papers on SE (distributed in 15 publications), which were effectively used in the study, as per Table 3. Each journal was further investigated in Google Scholar, applying the same research terms, so as to verify that all articles in those publications had been located.

The second category (2) encompasses articles selected for their citations as measured by the Google Scholar (2015) database. We have included in our sample articles with over 100 citations, in order not to stay strict to high impact factor journals, but also to understand the topic from articles from other journals that have been well accepted by the academic community. The number of 100 citations was used as a reference because we had the intention that (a) about 10% of our sample was composed of this category and (b) we reached articles that are effectively being cited by the community.

The third category (3) refers to papers found by searching in Google Scholar for terms related to SE, such as: “Low Profit Limited Liability Company”; “B Corp”; “Public Limited Company”; “Community Interest

Companies”. This criterion was adopted due to research on SE (Granados *et al.*, 2011; Rosolen, Tiscoski & Comini, 2014; Iizuka *et al.*, 2014) revealing these new terms as related and pertinent to the topic.

The fourth category (4) covers all articles published in the Social Enterprise Journal, the British publication specialized in SE. The papers were collected in the journal’s database, searching for pieces between 2005 (inaugural year) and 2015 (up to July).

As a synthesis of the methodological procedure adopted, the search for the articles, within the four exposed categories, occurred in the bases Ebsco, Proquest, Google Scholar and in the own site of the journals. After the location of the articles they were organized in folders for later extraction of the data in Excel worksheet. In the software were created columns with the article code, their authors (and number of authors), title, journals of publication, institution and country of origin, year of publication, keywords, research sub-theme, question (or objective) of research, methodology, results found and proposed future studies. Based on these data were constructed dynamic tables and graphs, were applied descriptive statistics formulas and Lotka Law. It was also carried out the re-reading of the results of the articles to improve the analyzes.

It should be noted that most bibliometric studies perform only quantitative analyses of a given subject. According to authors such as Saes (2000), Alvarado (2007), Araújo (2007) and Iizuka *et al.* (2014), it is preferable for said analyses to be carried out together with qualitative ones. In light of that, we adopted a model that contemplates both methodologies, as shown in Figure 1:

With this model, we not only collect information on the amount of authors, papers, journals and countries of publications on SE, but also carry out an analysis of research questions, methodologies and results, which allows for greater detail in appraising the state of the art on the topic.

## 4 Main Findings

The first assessment to be made concerns the growth of the subject (based on our sample) in past years, as demonstrated in Figure 2:

The illustration shows high concentration of publications between 2006 and 2015. Over half of the papers were published in the last five years, which may indicate how recent the topic is in academic literature. Considering that scientific interest in SE has been growing since the 1990’s, the latest growth is noteworthy.

**Table 2:** Management journals with greatest Impact Factor

<b>RK</b>	<b>IMPACT FACTOR</b>	<b>JOURNAL</b>
1	7,817	ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW
2	7,333	ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT ANNALS
3	6,862	JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT
4	5,405	MIS QUARTERLY
5	4,974	ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL
6	4,540	PERSONNEL PSYCHOLOGY
7	4,478	JOURNAL OF OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT
8	4,367	JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY
9	3,807	ORGANIZATION SCIENCE
10	3,789	JOURNAL OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
11	3,717	JOURNAL OF SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT
12	3,594	JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDIES
13	3,525	ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH METHODS
14	3,277	JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES
15	3,277	MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION REVIEW
16	3,262	JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR
17	3,190	OMEGA-INTERNAT. JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
18	2,993	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL
19	2,916	SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT-AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
20	2,897	ORGANIZAT. BEHAVIOR AND HUM. DECISION PROCESSES
21	2,886	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS LOGISTICS
22	2,877	BUSINESS STRATEGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT
23	2,826	ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES
24	2,742	ASIA PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT
25	2,704	TECHNOVATION
26	2,673	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT REVIEWS
27	2,598	RESEARCH POLICY
28	2,538	INFORMATION AND ORGANIZATION
29	2,524	MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
30	2,504	ORGANIZATION STUDIES
31	2,48	JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ORGANIZAT. PSYCHOLOGY
32	2,463	EUROPEAN JOURN. OF WORK AND ORGANIZAT. PSYCHOLOGY
33	2,423	HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT JOURNAL
34	2,394	ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE QUARTERLY
35	2,377	TOURISM MANAGEMENT
36	2,354	ORGANIZATION
37	2,322	INFORMATION SYSTEMS RESEARCH
38	2,121	ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT LEARNING & EDUCATION
39	2,111	LONG RANGE PLANNING
40	2,106	JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNO. MANAGEMENT
41	2,088	HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW
42	2,054	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPON. AND ENVIRON. MANAGEMENT
43	2,006	LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY
44	1,944	CALIFORNIA MANAGEMENT REVIEW
45	1,925	JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS
46	1,909	BRITISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT
47	1,897	INDUSTRIAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT
48	1,867	HUMAN RELATIONS
49	1,853	STRATEGIC ORGANIZATION
50	1,831	HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW
51	1,803	MIT SLOAN MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Source: Journal Citation Reports (2013).

**Table 3:** Articles by Impact Factor used in bibliometrics

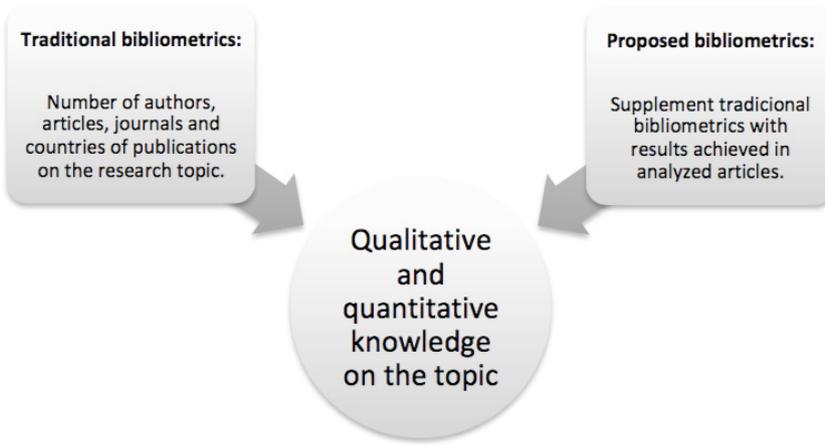
JOURNAL	ARTICLE TITLE
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW	1. Developing A Conceptual Framework For Comparing Social Value Creation
	2. Studying The Origins Of Social Entrepreneurship: Compassion And The Role Of Embedded Agency
	3. Venturing For Others With Heart And Head: How Compassion Encourages Social Entrepreneurship
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT ANNALS	4. Advancing Research On Hybrid Organizing – Insights From The Study Of Social Enterprises
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	5. Managing The Consequences Of Organizational Stigmatization: Identity Work In A Social Enterprise
ORGANIZATION SCIENCE	6. Inside The Hybrid Organization: Selective Coupling As A Response To Conflicting Institutional Logics
	7. Harnessing Productive Tensions In Hybrid Organizations: The Case Of Work Integration Social Enterprises
	8. Bridging Institutional Entrepreneurship And The Creation Of New Organizational Forms: A Multilevel Model
JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES	9. Innovation For Inclusive Business: Intrapreneurial Bricolage In Multinational Corporations
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	10. Social Intermediation In Base-Of-The-Pyramid Markets
BUSINESS STRATEGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT	11. Attention Allocation To Multiple Goals - The Case Of For-Profit Social Enterprises
ACADEMY OF MANAG. PERSPECTIVES	12. Where Are They Now? Tracking The Longitudinal Evolution Of Environmental Businesses From The 1990s
	13. Analysis Of Shared And Sustainable Value Creation Of Companies Providing Energy Solutions At The Bop
	14. Social Entrepreneurship In Sub-Saharan Africa
ASIA PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT	15. Legal Form Of The Firm And Overseas Market Choice In India's Software And IT Industry
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT REVIEWS	16. Social Enterprises As Hybrid Organizations: A Review And Research Agenda
ORGANIZATION STUDIES	17. The Dialectic Of Social Exchange
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT LEARNING & EDUCATION	18. Emergent Identity Work And Institutional Change: The 'Quiet' Revolution Of Japanese Middle-Class Housewives
	19. Social Business Education: An Interview With Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus
	20. The Effectiveness Of Social Business Plan Competitions In Developing Social And Civic Awareness And Participation
	21. Social Innovation And Social Enterprise In The Classroom
	22. A Paradoxical Leadership Model For Social Entrepreneurs
	23. Sustainable Development Through Service Learning
	24. Building The Heart And The Mind
	25. Educating Integrated Catalysts: Transforming Business Schools Toward Ethics And Sustainability
	26. Benefit Corporation Legislation And The Emergence Of A Social Hybrid Category
	27. Philanthropy's New Agenda: Creating Value
CALIFORNIA MANAGEMENT REVIEW	28. Enterprising Nonprofits
HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW	29. A New Approach To Funding Social Enterprises
MIT SLOAN MANAGEMENT REVIEW	30. Social Business: What Are Companies Really Doing
	31. Social Business: Shifting Out Of First Gear

Another analysis refers to distribution of the articles by country of publication, as illustrated by Figure 3:

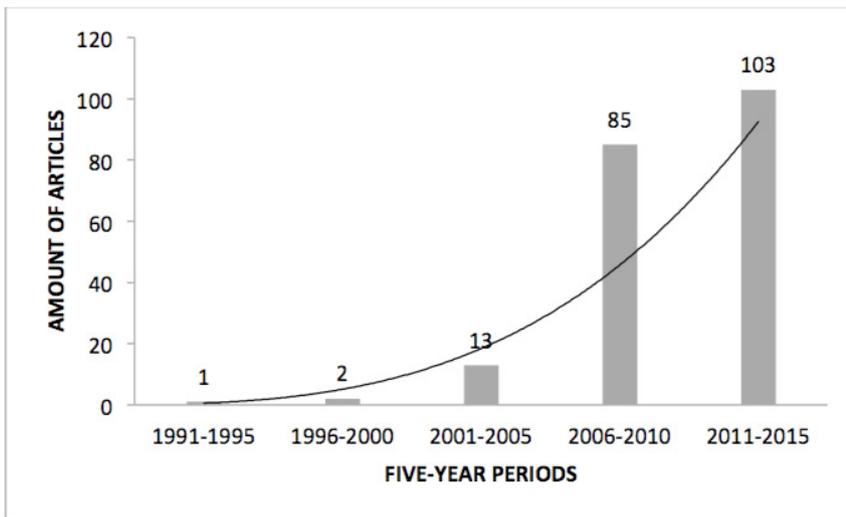
It is plain to see that the United Kingdom (UK) concentrates a good deal of the articles used in the research (47,05%). This may occur due to different factors, such as the subject of SE being indeed more present in the UK and/or the specific publication Social Enterprise Journal, of British origin, having been broadly used in the study, thus increasing the state's representation.

It should be noted that the search criteria did not yield any papers published from Latin America or Africa. This indicates that publications on SE from these countries have not yet reached the main international journals, which may be seen as a research opportunity.

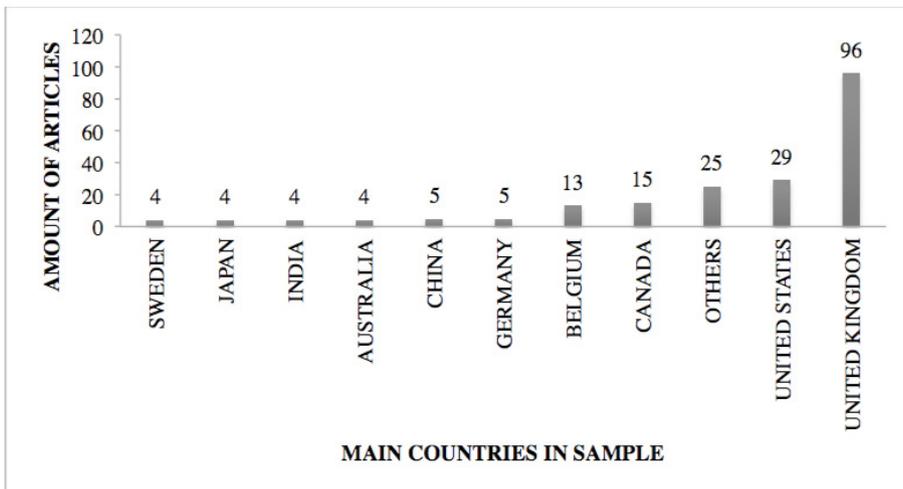
In addition, the graph's classification of "Others" represents countries with less than four articles on SE between 1991 and 2015: Bangladesh (3), France (3), Ireland (3), Italy (3), Spain (2), Finland (2), Pakistan (2), Denmark (1), Greece (1), Poland (1), Sri-Lanka (1),



**Figure 1:** Adopted bibliometric model  
Source: Adapted from Saes (2000); Alvarado (2007); Araújo (2007); Iizuka et al. (2014).



**Figure 2:** Growth of sample



**Figure 3:** Distribution of sample by country

Switzerland (1) and Thailand (1). Despite concentration in the United Kingdom and the United States (which together represent 61,27% of the sample), we can see that the topic of SE is present in 24 countries, demonstrating worldwide presence and importance.

A further analysis may be conducted on the HEIs of the sample that most publish on SE. The threshold here was to consider institutions that published at least three papers on the subject, as seen in Table 4:

Once again, it is evident that most (66,66%) of these institutions are located in the UK, further demonstrating a concentration in that state, with the University of Huddersfield as most salient (eight articles).

Despite the majority of British organizations, there are four other countries in this classification, which may demonstrate not only an individual interest in SE, but also an institutional one. These 15 institutions collectively represent 30,88% of the 204 papers, allowing us to infer that the national concentration is not reproduced in HEIs.

An additional analysis of results yields the articles most cited by the authors in the sample, as listed in Table 5:

The table shows that the most cited pieces are less recent and correspond to the period between 1998 and 2010. Some of the main titles, such as “The meaning of social entrepreneurship” and “Social entrepreneurship research: A source of explanation, prediction, and delight”, allow us to observe that discussions on the topic begin in papers related to social entrepreneurship, and

from 2001 onwards become more specific to SE, as in, for instance, “The Emergence of Social Enterprise”, by Carlo Borzaga and “Social Enterprise in Anytown”, by John Pearce.

It should be noted that authors such as David Bornstein and Peter Dacin are already listed, despite having more recent work than other authors in the table. This may indicate a tendency of growth in citations of these authors over the coming years.

We emphasize that in this study we did not distinguish between authors and co-authors, that is, all the members of the articles were considered authors, because in several articles there is mention in which the authors affirm that they contributed equally to the construction of the researches. In addition, we understand that in order to map the subject, we must include the authors who have dedicated themselves to research on SE as broadly as possible. Another analysis concerns the relationship between the amount of authors published and the amount of articles they produced, as per Table 6:

The relationship portrayed in Table 6 leads to Figure 4, which illustrates the Law of Lotka: From 1906, this law states that a large proportion of the scientific literature is produced by a small number of authors, and a large number of small producers equals, in production, the small number of large producers. In this sense, Lotka formulated the inverse square law: where is the frequency of authors publishing number of works and is a constant

**Table 4:** Institutions most publishing in sample

RK	INSTITUTION	COUNTRY	ARTICLES
1 <sup>o</sup>	University of Huddersfield	United Kingdom	8
2 <sup>o</sup>	Manchester Metropolitan University	United Kingdom	6
2 <sup>o</sup>	University of Liege	Belgium	6
4 <sup>o</sup>	Cardiff University	United Kingdom	5
4 <sup>o</sup>	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	5
6 <sup>o</sup>	Liverpool John Moores University	United Kingdom	4
6 <sup>o</sup>	Middlesex University	United Kingdom	4
6 <sup>o</sup>	Open University	United Kingdom	4
9 <sup>o</sup>	Harvard University	United States	3
9 <sup>o</sup>	Beijing Normal University	China	3
9 <sup>o</sup>	Catholic University of Leuven	Belgium	3
9 <sup>o</sup>	Sheffield Hallam University	United Kingdom	3
9 <sup>o</sup>	University of East London	United Kingdom	3
9 <sup>o</sup>	University of Southampton	United Kingdom	3
9 <sup>o</sup>	York University	Canada	3

**Table 5:** Works most cited in sample

WORK	CITATIONS
DEES, J. Gregory et al. The meaning of social entrepreneurship. 1998. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School, 1998.	51
DEES, J. Gregory; EMERSON, Jed; ECONOMY, Peter. Enterprising nonprofits: A toolkit for social entrepreneurs. John Wiley and Sons, 2002.	40
MAIR, Johanna; MARTI, Ignasi. Social entrepreneurship research: A source of explanation, prediction, and delight. Journal of world business, 2006.	36
AUSTIN, James; STEVENSON, Howard; WEI-SKILLERN, Jane. Social and commercial entrepreneurship: same, different, or both?. Entrepreneurship theory and practice, 2006.	36
PEARCE, John; KAY, Alan. Social enterprise in anytown. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2003.	35
DART, Raymond. The legitimacy of social enterprise. Nonprofit management and leadership, 2004.	30
BORZAGA, Carlo; DEFOURNY, Jacques (Ed.). The emergence of social enterprise. Psychology Press, 2001.	29
ROB PATON. Managing and measuring social enterprises. Sage, 2003.	26
NICHOLLS, Alex (Ed.). Social entrepreneurship: New models of sustainable social change. Oxford University Press, 2006.	23
DEFOURNY, Jacques; BORZAGA, C.; DEFOURNY, J. From third sector to social enterprise. London: Routledge, 2001.	22
BORNSTEIN, David. How to change the world: Social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas. Oxford University Press, 2007.	22
KERLIN, Janelle A. Social enterprise in the United States and Europe: Understanding and learning from the differences. Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 2006.	21
PEREDO, Ana Maria; MCLEAN, Murdith. Social entrepreneurship: A critical review of the concept. Journal of world business, 2006.	21
DACIN, Peter A.; DACIN, M. Tina; MATEAR, Margaret. Social entrepreneurship: Why we don't need a new theory and how we move forward from here. The academy of management perspectives, 2010.	20
LEADBEATER, Charles. The rise of the social entrepreneur. Demos, 1997.	19

**Table 6:** Amount of articles produced by each author in sample

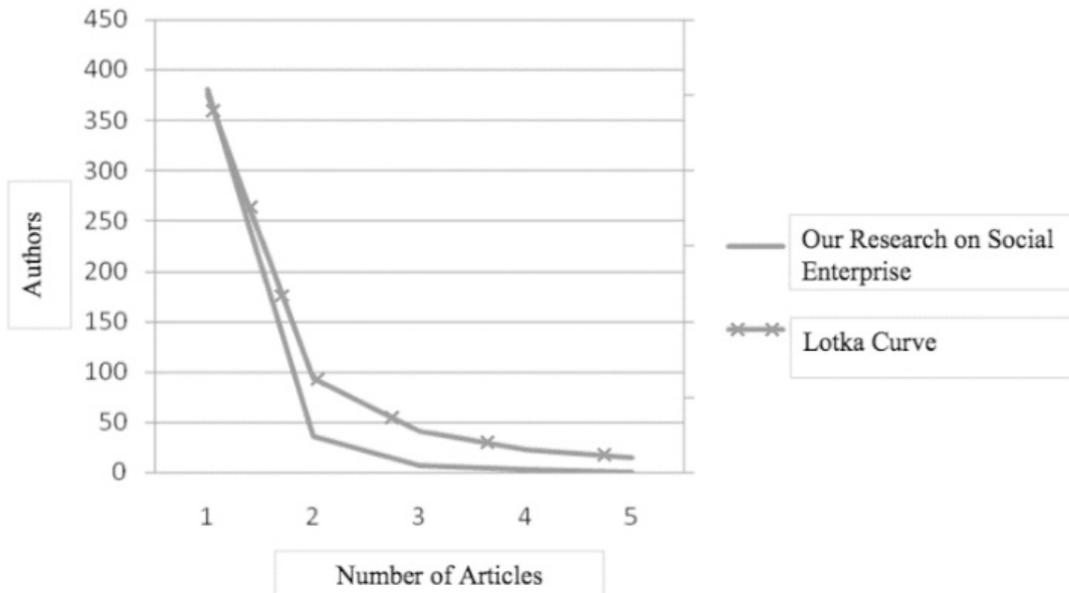
Total authors	Amount of articles written
381	1
36	2
7	3
3	4
1	5

value for each scientific field: 2 for physicists and 1.89 for chemists, for example (Araújo, 2007; Guedes & Borschiver, 2005). It should be noted that Lotka's Law seeks to identify the largest contributions of researchers in different fields of knowledge and that was applied in this research.

The Figure 4 shows two curves: one drawn from the proposed concept (Araújo, 2007), that is, an asymptote

curve  $f(x) = 1/x^2$ , in which  $x$  represents the amount of papers published by an author and  $f(x)$  the amount of authors within the scientific community publishing on a certain subject, and another drawn from the empirical results found in this research.

The 204 articles had 428 authors in all, most of which (381) wrote only one article on SE; 36 published two papers



**Figure 4:** Law of Lotka applied to sample

and a single author composed five pieces – reproducing the expected proportion of few with many publications and many with few. The research curve does not correspond precisely to the Lotka curve; it does, however, come quite close, which suggests Lotka’s principle may be accepted for the subject of SE, as portrayed in Figure 4:

The proximity between the Lotka and research curves indicates that a small group of authors has published a lot on the topic: only 2,57% of the sample has written over two articles on SE, leaving 97,43% with at most two papers. Such lack of concentration may be due to the relative novelty of the topic. This may indicate that the subject is currently maturing and offers opportunities for new authors to publish in SE.

#### 4.1 Research questions and methodologies

The sample contains articles with theoretical and empirical questions, as well as papers combining the two, as shown in Table 7:

Theoretical questions were the starting point of 139 articles (68,13%). A mixed approach was the second most frequent classification, with 38 papers (18,62%). Only 13,23% of the pieces were exclusively empirical. We may infer that studies on SE have been starting from questions that help to understand the phenomenon (by, for instance, analyzing existing theories and models and proposing new ones).

**Table 7:** Distribution of types of questions in sample

TYPES OF QUESTIONS	AMOUNT OF ARTICLES
<b>THEORETICAL</b> – Authors presented ideas, suggestions and recommendations with theoretical focus, using existing theories and theoretical models to explore analyses	<b>139</b>
<b>EMPIRICAL</b> – Issues related to increasing samples and the need to learn more on experiences	<b>27</b>
<b>MIXED</b> – A combination of theoretical focus, with theories and models, and empirical focus, with practical knowledge	<b>38</b>

Based on Iizuka et al. (2014).

Regarding the methodologies adopted in the sample, our first assessment concerns the types of research that were selected, as seen in Table 8:

The sample contains mostly qualitative papers (86,8%), with quantitative and mixed approaches jointly representing only 13,2% of the pieces. It should be noted, however, that over 80% of the mixed and quantitative studies were carried out in the past five years, which suggests increased interest in this type of research. Table 9 lists the techniques preferred by the authors:

**Table 8:** Types of research in sample

TYPES OF RESEARCH	AMOUNT OF ARTICLES	RELATIVE FREQUENCIES (%)
Qualitative	177	86.8%
Quantitative	11	5.4%
Mixed	16	7.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 9:** Research methods and techniques in sample

MAIN TECHNIQUES / METHODS USED	AMOUNT OF ARTICLES	RELATIVE FREQUENCIES (%)
Bibliographic research	189	92.64%
Case study	87	42.64%
Interviews	68	33.33%
Documental research	35	17.15%
Direct observation	13	6.37%
Descriptive statistics	6	2.94%
Correlation analysis	6	2.94%
Regression analysis	5	2.45%
Content analysis	2	0.98%
Ethnography	2	0.98%
Cluster analysis	2	0.98%
Structural equations	1	0.49%
Bibliometric study	1	0.49%

Bibliographic research appears overwhelmingly predominant, with 189 papers (92,64%) adopting it, usually accompanied by other techniques, such as case studies (42,64%) and interviews (33,33%). Within the case studies, 32 articles (15,68%) examined a single case of SE while 55 pieces (26,96%) worked with multiple cases.

These results may indicate a need for empirically understanding the subject, that is, to distinguish the attributes and circumstances that are part of the SE environment; in this context, multiple case studies may be more pertinent. It is worth mentioning that the case studies were present in publications from countries such as the United States, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Thailand, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand.

Within the 11 quantitative papers, there is a predominance of basic statistics, such as descriptive statistics (2,94%) and correlation analysis (2,94%), both present in six articles.

## 4.2 Results Reached by Articles

This section investigates the papers' key contributions to the subject of SE, by analyzing their results. After analyzing the papers and adapting from Iizuka et al. (2014) and Barki et al. (2015), studies were organized into six categories, as follows: (i) different approaches, concepts and models for understanding SE; (ii) corporate

governance and stakeholder relations; (iii) increasing practical references and samples; (iv) organizational learning, structure and critical factors for success and failure of SE; (v) metrics, indicators and social impact generated by SE; (vi) legislation of different countries and how it relates to SE.

Within category 1, authors argue the need of reaching adequate theoretical knowledge on SE and that existing theories are not always successful in understanding the phenomenon. As an example, Tandon (2014) highlights the importance of theoretical development in organizational learning in order to further develop the field of SE.

In corporate governance and stakeholder relations (category 2), Van Hulle and Dewaelheyns (2014) contend, for instance, that external pressures from different stakeholders may deviate SE from their original purposes, making them closer to those of traditional companies. Regarding governance, Yu's study (2013) on SE in China revealed that they have various forms and structures, but often lack laws ruling relationships with the community and other stakeholders. These SE adopt three governance formats: supervised by the government; controlled by shareholders; regulated by members (Yu, 2013). The results from this category indicate the need for systemic knowledge on SE and are not restricted to their internal environments.

The results of category 3 (increasing practical references and samples) indicate that the topic requires

replicating studies and including new SE as research objects. One example here is Williams and Nadin's (2011) empirical study in different organizations, which allowed them to conclude that social entrepreneurs tend to be more focused on social aspects when in more rural and distant areas, whereas urban settings concentrate more commercial approaches. In addition, Chan Kuan and Wang (2011) examined SE in Hong Kong and Taiwan, thus increasing the existing samples of SE. Said authors conclude that such organizations are in a phase of growth and increasing recognition, diversifying in both regions. Most SE pursue objectives related to unemployment and combatting poverty; in such places, institutional context and governmental policies seem to greatly influence the development of activities.

Within organizational learning, structure and critical factors for success and failure of SE (category 4), topics include tensions and dilemmas faced by SE and how to overcome them. For instance, Plaskoff (2012) argues that business schools have an essential role in developing new generations of entrepreneurs and that a social conscience is a critical success factor for SE (Plaskoff, 2012).

Another example is from Gupta, Beninger and Ganesh (2015), who identified five key capabilities for the success of SE addressing extreme poverty: (1) understanding their context; (2) innovating in products, services, markets, scales and infrastructure; (3) connecting with various stakeholders; (4) engaging in capacity-building and education; and (5) cultivating trust in the communities they serve. To these authors, a SE is unlikely to be successful if entrepreneurs do not pay enough attention to these capabilities.

One of the greatest challenges of studying SE lies in category 5 (metrics, indicators and social impact generated by SE), due to the complexity of measuring social impact when compared to financial results generated by an enterprise. Mcloughlin et al. (2009) have stated that the assessment model Social Impact for Local Economies

(SIMPLEs) provides positive learning experiences to SE. This model is comprised of five steps: conceptualizing the impact (scope it), identifying impact to be measured (map it), developing systems and measurements (track it), reporting the impact (tell it) and incorporating the impact (embed it). The authors contend that this tool helps measure the impact of SE.

Finally, within legislation of different countries and how it relates to SE (category 6), one example comes from Galera and Borzaga (2009), who state that legal recognition is essential to disseminate SE-related concepts in different places. In their view, SE challenge the idea that companies serve only the interests of their owners, based on a logic where profit maximization ceases to be a requirement for business. With similar rationale, Snaith (2007) claims that legal structure in SE is relevant to facilitate growth and dissemination of this type of organization.

O'Shaughnessy (2008), on the other hand, argues that the rural location of SE and the merely prescriptive nature of legislation (in some places) may create a barrier for the development of SE in the long run. For instance, regulation may restrict what they may employ for their activities and where they may offer their services. Other examples of this category also address the positive and/or negative influence of legislation (and the government's role) on SE.

Around half (106) of the papers suggest 124 research agendas in these six categories. As portrayed in Table 10, categories 1, 2 and 3 heavily outweigh the others, covering 72.58% of all suggestions. Having thus presented our main results, we proceed to our final considerations.

## 5 Final Remarks

Given the increased popularity of SE, both academically and commercially (Grimes et al., 2013; Battilana, Sengul & Pache, 2014; Doherty, Haugh & Lyon, 2014) and challenges in scientifically interpreting the subject (Tracey, Phillips

**Table 10:** Category distribution in sample

Categories	AMOUNT OF ARTICLES	RELATIVE FREQUENCIES (%)
1 – different approaches, concepts and models for understanding SE	45	36.29%
2 – corporate governance and stakeholder relations	23	18.54%
3 – increasing practical references and samples	21	17.74%
4 – organizational learning, structure and critical factors for success and failure of SE	16	12.90%
5 – metrics, indicators and social impact generated by SE	13	10.48%
6 – legislation of different countries and how it relates to SE	1	4.03%

& Jarvis, 2011; Borzaga, Depedri & Galera, 2012), we proposed a study to identify, organize and analyze the international scientific production on SE, so as to further the growth of this field. Through a pioneering bibliometric and systematic analysis of 204 academic papers on SE, we deem this purpose to have been fulfilled.

This article brings two key contributions. The first (i) concerns the methodology – specifically sample and bibliometrics. Due to our comprehensive selection criteria – based not only on impact factor but also on most cited papers, related terms and presence in a specialized publication (Social Enterprise Journal) –, researchers and managers of SE may have simpler access to the most relevant works on the subject, enabling them to understand the topic through various perspectives. Our methodology also combined bibliometrics with a qualitative model of systematic content analysis, an approach as yet unheard of in SE - Although in Social Entrepreneurship there are studies that combine content analysis with a bibliometric approach (Granados et al., 2011), we do not find this junction in specific studies on Social Enterprises. Aiming to take a step forward in understanding the topic's state of the art, we examined not only papers' main attributes (authors, publication, institution, country of origin etc.) but also their research questions, methodologies and results. The second key contribution (ii) concerns our findings. These include publications on SE being present in 24 countries (again chiefly in the UK and US), with a preponderance of British HEIs, and lack of studies from Africa and Latin America – despite these regions' need for ample social investment.

Results were also supportive of applying Lotka's Law to SE, since we observed that only 10,98% of the sample authors published more than once on the topic, which suggests its yet maturing stage in academic research. Furthermore, most research questions were theoretical and most methodologies were qualitative (with quantitative studies using elementary statistics); recently, however, quantitative and empirical studies have shown impressive development.

In addition, this article contributes with categorizing results of studies on SE. Based on Iizuka et al. (2014) and Barki et al. (2015) we managed to extract categories of analysis for them; after analyzing articles, we supplemented said categories with organizational learning, critical factors for success and failure and the relationship between legislation and SE. This increases possibilities for future research on the subject.

The study's main limitation may arise from the sample: the subject of social entrepreneurship, due to its broad range, was not directly researched; its inclusion

may contribute to better understanding of SE and would benefit from being accompanied by a more extensive examination on both topics.

Future research may elect to approach bibliometric softwares more profoundly than this study, which may yield further analyses such as author co-citation maps and key-word count. In addition, as contended by most authors, new investigations on SE must allow for different conceptual approaches and theoretical models, as there is not yet a broadly accepted definition or classification in academia's intense ongoing debate.

Results also point to research opportunities in specific aspects of SE, including organizational learning, critical factors for success and failure and the relationship between legislation and SE, as well as corporate governance and stakeholder relationships. Part of the literature argues, for instance, that the understanding the structure of SE is required to facilitate their accountability to different interested parties. Another prospect involves comparing SE to traditional businesses regarding relations with stakeholders (Newth, 2016).

Finally, by completion of this study, we did not identify any articles by African or Latin researchers in high impact factor publications. Our suggestion is for papers from such locations that provide international repercussion to local realities and further encourage research on social enterprises.

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