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Identifying cross-country key drivers of social entrepreneurial activity

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Abstract

Governments and philanthropy efforts alone are not sufficient to eradicate poverty. The world needs new frameworks that enable sustainable development by integrating and balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Social entrepreneurship is the attempt to solve social problems through entrepreneurial activities. The concept of social entrepreneurship is of great interest to governments, non-governmental organizations, and businesses because it has the capacity of facilitating societal change and building social cohesion by fostering innovative ways to address social inequality, unemployment, and climate change. However, precisely because social entrepreneurship lays at the intersection of the business and nonprofit worlds, it is a complex phenomenon, and there are many unknowns regarding how the convergence of these dimensions can be understood and managed at cross-national levels.

To investigate this complex phenomenon, this study used a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design to investigate the correlates of social entrepreneurship among a sample of countries for which sufficient data exists. Specifically, this study first identifies the significant socioeconomic factors that contribute to the social entrepreneurial activity in 55 countries; then, through in-depth individual interviews and focus groups with social entrepreneurs, the study explains how the findings of the quantitative phase manifest in the social entrepreneurial activity in two purposefully selected Latin American countries: Colombia and Mexico.

In addition to making practical and theoretical contributions to the field of social entrepreneurship by identifying and validating the socioeconomic drivers that affect the social entrepreneurial activity in various countries, the proposed study may help governments and international organizations manage social entrepreneurship more efficiently and more effectively, improving the rate of return on the resources invested in this activity.

Keywords: social entrepreneurship, socioeconomic drivers, Colombia, Mexico

Abstracto

Los esfuerzos gubernamentales y filantrópicos no son suficientes para erradicar la pobreza. El mundo requiere de nuevos marcos de acción que permitan el desarrollo sostenible por medio de la integración balanceada de las dimensiones económicas, sociales y ambientalistas. El emprendimiento social intenta aliviar problemas sociales a través de actividades emprendedoras. El concepto de emprendimiento social es de gran interés para gobiernos, organizaciones no gubernamentales, y empresas porque tiene la capacidad de facilitar el cambio social y la construcción de cohesión social al crear maneras innovadoras de atacar la inequidad social, el desempleo, y el cambio climático. Sin embargo, precisamente porque el emprendimiento social se encuentra en la intersección de los mundos corporativos y sin fines de lucro, es un fenómeno complejo, y existe incertidumbre acerca de cómo la convergencia de estas dimensiones puede ser comprendida y gestionada a nivel transnacional.

Para investigar este fenómeno, este estudio utilizó un método mixto secuencial explicatorio, para investigar la correlación del emprendimiento social en una muestra de países. Específicamente, el estudio identificó los factores socioeconómicos que significativamente contribuyen con la actividad socio-emprendedora de 55 países; y luego, a través de entrevistas a profundidad y grupos focales con emprendedores sociales, el estudio explica cómo los hallazgos de la fase cuantitativa se manifiestan en la actividad emprendedora de dos países latinoamericanos: México y Colombia.

Además de las contribuciones prácticas y teóricas al campo del emprendimiento social al identificar y validar los generadores socioeconómicos que generan actividad de emprendimiento social, los resultados del estudio pueden ayudar a gobiernos e instituciones a gestionar el emprendimiento social de manera más efectiva y eficiente, mejorando el rendimiento de los recursos que actualmente se invierten en esta importante tarea.

Palabras clave: emprendimiento social, indicadores socioeconómicos, Colombia, México

1. Purpose of the Study

The United Nations has established that governmental and philanthropic efforts alone are not sufficient to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions (United Nations Global Compact, 2012). In order to achieve sustainable development, the United Nations argues that three distinct dimensions must be considered and managed in a balanced and integrated manner: economic, social and environmental (United Nations, 2015). The concept of social entrepreneurship is of great interest to governments, non-governmental organizations, and businesses because it brings to the table the possibility of addressing social problems in an innovative and sustainable way, adding to the efforts of these other sectors. During the 2008 financial crisis, for example, social entrepreneurship demonstrated an ability to facilitate societal change and build social cohesion by fostering innovative ways to address social inequality, unemployment, and climate change (European Commission 2014).

In its broadest definition, social entrepreneurship is the attempt to solve social problems through entrepreneurial activities (Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern 2006). Not only is social entrepreneurship a fairly recent development, it also lays at the intersection of the business and the nonprofit worlds, making it a difficult phenomenon to understand (Dancin, Dancin, and Matear 2010; Mair and Marti 2006). Despite the growing interest, effort, and investment in social entrepreneurship (Brooks, 2009; European Commission 2014), the field is still evolving, and there are many unknowns regarding how this convergence of dimensions can be understood and managed at cross-national levels. This study examined the interaction of these dimensions through economic and social theories, seeking to identify the drivers of social entrepreneurial activity across 55 countries, and then explored how these drivers manifest in the social entrepreneurial activity of two Latin American countries: Colombia and Mexico. In addition to making theoretical contributions to the field of social entrepreneurship, by better understanding how the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship manifests, this study also contributes to improving the return of investment of social entrepreneurial programs across the countries sampled in this study.

1.1. Background of the Study

According to the European Commission (2016), social entrepreneurship exists at the intersection of three dimensions: social, entrepreneurial, and governmental. Several social and economic theories help explain what drives broad civil society activity and commercial entrepreneurship activity: like government failure theory, trust theory, supply side theory, stakeholder theory, interdependence theory, types of economies theory, and social origins theory. While social entrepreneurship activity may be part of civil society and/or commercial activities, the literature review shows that not all of the elements that may explain civil society activity or commercial entrepreneurship activity may be used to explain social entrepreneurial activity. Using the European Commission's (2016) framework, the theories have been separated into the three dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 1. The here mentioned theories are used to inform the data collection and analysis of the study, without exploring the theories themselves.

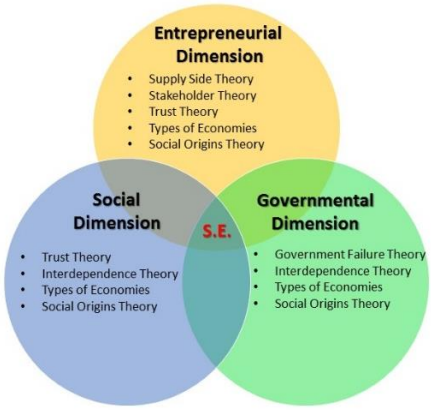

Figure 1. Allocation of the economic and social theories in the three dimensions of social entrepreneurship. Adapted from European Commission (2016).

While some theories are found in only one dimension, other theories are found in several dimensions. As a result, social entrepreneurship can be viewed as a multilayered activity that must be understood and measured taking into consideration both economic and social factors within a country, an idea reinforced by the United Nations regarding the mandatory indivisibility of the dimensions required to achieve sustainable development (United Nations 2015).

1.2. Problem Statement

Social entrepreneurship is understood as the attempt to solve social problems through entrepreneurial activities (Austin *et al*. 2006). However, a review of the literature shows that there is no one single accepted definition, nor does there exist a single theoretical framework for the concept of social entrepreneurship (Certo and Miller 2008; Hill, Kothari, and Shea 2010; Nicholls 2010; Weerawardena and Mort 2006). Furthermore, different understandings of what social entrepreneurship is have been identified across different regions and nations (Defourny and Nyssens 2010: Dees and Anderson 2006). Without a clear understanding of what the driving factors of social entrepreneurial activity in the countries are, little can be done to adequately invest in and foster social entrepreneurship at the practitioner, policy, or educational level.

Research shows that substantial variations in the level of social entrepreneurial activity exist across nations, from 18% of the adult population in Senegal engaging in social entrepreneurship to only 1% percent of the adult population in Bulgaria (Bosma, Schøtt, Terjesen, and Kew 2016). Such variation cannot be easily explained using economic indicators in the same way that the development of commercial entrepreneurship may be explained, and some few studies have attempted to understand what drives social entrepreneurship at national levels, or analyze the differences in social entrepreneurial activity among different countries (Lepoutre, Justo, Terjesen & Bosma, 2013). As multiple dimensions play a role in the development of social entrepreneurship, identifying the economic and social drivers of social entrepreneurial activity may provide recommendations for government officials, policy makers and educational institutions to foster increased levels of social entrepreneurship.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

Informed by the socio-economic theories of civil society activity and commercial entrepreneurship activity, the study identified which macro-socioeconomic indicators significantly correlate with social entrepreneurial activity of the 55 countries studied by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. The explanatory findings of quantitative methods guided the in-depth inquiry that followed the real-life context of social entrepreneurship in Mexico and Colombia. The case studies of these countries provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell and Plano 2006; Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989).

1.4. Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

1. What is the relation, if any, between specific socioeconomic indicators and a country's social entrepreneurial activity?
2. To what extent do the perspectives of social entrepreneurs in the selected countries support the results of the explanatory quantitative data about social entrepreneurial activity predictors?
3. What results emerge from the comparison of the explanatory quantitative data about social entrepreneurial activity predictors with the perceptions of the Latin American social entrepreneurs?

2. Research Design Rationale

The study used an explanatory sequential mixed methodology. In the explanatory sequential design, the methods are implemented in a sequential manner, starting with the quantitative method in Phase I (QUAN), with data collection and analysis; followed by a Phase II of qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (qual) that helps explain the quantitative results (Creswell and Plano 2006). The quantitative phase provides a general understanding of the phenomenon being studied, and the qualitative phase explains the numerical results in more depth through the participants' perspective (Creswell and

Plano 2006; Ivankova, Creswell and Sticks 2006). A sequential explanatory method is recommended when the results from the quantitative phase may be unexpected (Ivankova *et al*. 2006), as was the case in this research.

2.1 Phase I (QUAN)

The quantitative phase of the analysis identified the socioeconomic factors that contributed to the social entrepreneurial activity (SEA) in 55 countries in 2015. Secondary data was used in this phase. The social entrepreneurial index was obtained from the 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor survey of social entrepreneurship, and the economic and social indicators were obtained from the World Bank and United Nations Development Program databases. The tested socioeconomic indicators were selected based on the theories that help explain civil society activity or commercial entrepreneurship activity. The study used the Social Entrepreneurial Activity index (SEA) as the dependent variable. In total 84 independent variables and its combinations were tested; the independent variables included: Gini coefficient, amount of government spending on social welfare, World Bank´s doing business report index, World Economic global competitiveness index, freedom of satisfaction index, total entrepreneurial activity (GEM), government spending on education, government spending on health, perception of ideal job, human development index, gender inequality index, gross national product, carbon dioxide emissions per person (environmental sustainability), among others. The results of Phase I guided the interview questions on the qualitative phase.

2.2 Phase II (qual)

The second phase of the study explained how the findings of Phase I manifest in the social entrepreneurial activity in two purposefully selected Latin American countries: Colombia and Mexico; the qualitative phase included group and individual interviews with social entrepreneurs. The rationale for following this design was to obtain an in-depth understanding of how the socioeconomic factors identified in Phase I manifested in the social entrepreneurial life in Colombia and Mexico. The focus groups provided insights into how the drivers are enacted in the everyday life of a social entrepreneur.

2.3. Population and Sample

The target population in this study were the 195 countries and territories recognized by the United Nations as of 2015. For the quantitative phase, the sample was made up of 55 countries identified by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2015 as having social entrepreneurial activity under the broad definition of the concept, and 31 countries identified under the narrow definition of the concept. For the qualitative phase, the study used purposeful criterion sampling. Purposeful sampling selects “information-rich cases for study in depth” from which the research questions can be best answered (Patton 2002: 230). The purposeful sampling selection was made based on three criteria: geographical (Latin America); language (Spanish), and intensity of social entrepreneurial activity (Caracelli and Green 1993; Invankova *et al*. 2006; Patton 2002).

The two Latin American countries used in this study, Colombia and Mexico, exhibit important similarities in their socio-economic structure. Both countries are considered upper middle-income economies with a similar growth (World Bank, 2016ac); however, they have slight cultural differences (Geert Hofstede, 2016ab) have managed the development of social entrepreneurship in different manner, and have different percentages of social entrepreneurial activity.

2.4. Data collection and analysis

Existing databases were used for the first quantitative phase. These databases included the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Program. The information on the social entrepreneurial activity of the countries was derived from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor’s research. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor is an organization created with the explicit objective of facilitating the cross-country comparison of entrepreneurial activity (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2016). While every year the GEM performs a survey on commercial entrepreneurship activity, in 2009 and 2015, they included a special report on social entrepreneurship. To obtain a social entrepreneurial activity index, the organization combines the results of an adult population survey and a national expert survey. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor has been conducting this type of research for 17 years, and it is a trusted resource on entrepreneurship for organizations like the United Nations, the World Economic

Forum and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2016). The World Bank development indicators are collected annually from officially recognized international sources (World Bank 2016d). The United Nations Development Program dataset includes 101 socioeconomic indicators collected annually from officially recognized agencies and institutions (Yang 2014). The World Economic Forum Competitiveness Report measures the competitiveness of a country based on 114 indicators, and its methodology has not changed since 2007 (World Economic Forum 2016). To identify the relation between the Social Entrepreneurship Activity Index and other economic and human development indexes, the study conducted descriptive and inferential statistics analysis; the correlation among the variables were identified and then simple and multiple linear regressions were tried to predict the behavior of the social entrepreneurial activity index based on the other significant indicators. This study used Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 24 to work the statistical calculations.

For the qualitative part, focus groups and individual interviews were conducted in each country. In Mexico, 30 participants were interviewed, and 40 participants in Colombia. The participants were contacted via email or in person, and the data collection was done through observation and voice recording. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, voice recorded and then transcribed and translated into English. The integration of the analysis was written in a mini-case format for each country, and then as a cross-case analysis. Case studies provide for in-depth description of a phenomenon within a bounded system (Merriam 2009) using multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2008). The qualitative data was analyzed via a thematic network tool to organize, structure, and reveal the salient themes. A thematic network allows the researcher to uncover the basic, organizing, and global themes following three steps: (a) the reduction of the text; (b) the exploration of the text; and (c) the integration of the exploration (Attride-Stirling 2001). The qualitative phase used the software Atlas ti for data analysis, and to conduct this research in an ethical manner, the researcher followed the required process by the University of San Diego.

3. Findings

The purpose of this mixed-methods sequential explanatory study was twofold: to identify the macroeconomic and social factors that contribute to the broad social entrepreneurial activity in 55 countries, and to the narrow social entrepreneurial activity in 31 countries; and second, to explain how the findings of the quantitative phase manifest in the social entrepreneurial activity in two purposefully selected Latin American countries. Social entrepreneurial activity -in its broad definition- is understood as the percentage of a country's population engaged in "any kind of activity, organization or initiative that has a particularly social, environmental or community objective" (Bosma *et al*. 2016: 2). The narrow definition of social entrepreneurship related to an entrepreneurial organization that has a social objective, prioritizes the social goal over a financial goal, and self-generates income by producing goods or services (Bosma *et al*. 2016).

3.1. Quantitative Results

Descriptive statistics allowed for a description of the information by classifying and summarizing the data**.** The mean, median, and mode were calculated to identify the typical percentages of social entrepreneurial activity using the broad measure and the narrow measure. The statistics for the traditional entrepreneurship activity are presented to help the reader better grasp the dimension of the all-encompassing entrepreneurial activity and the social activity. The calculation of the mean shows that on average the broad social entrepreneurial activity is of 3.80%, the narrow social entrepreneurial activity is of 1.19%, and the traditional entrepreneurial activity is of 13.13%. The results are displayed in Table 1. The dispersion of the scores can also be appreciated in Figure 1, which displays the five-number summary for the three distinct types of entrepreneurship, including the minimum, the first quartile, the median, the third quartile, and the maximum value. The boxplot provides a quick way for the reader to observe the spread, symmetry and skewness of the data.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for social entrepreneurial activity identified by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2015.

Descriptive Statistics	Broad Social Entrepreneurial Activity	Narrow Social Entrepreneurial Activity	Traditional Social Entrepreneurial Activity
Mean	3.80	1.19	13.13
Median	2.90	.80	10.80
Mode	1.40	.40	12.80
Standard Deviation	2.95	.98	8.18
Standard Error	.40	.18	1.10
Sample Variance	8.72	.95	66.94
Range	13.60	3.30	35.70
Minimum	.40	.10	2.90
Maximum	14.00	3.40	38.60
Count	55	30	55

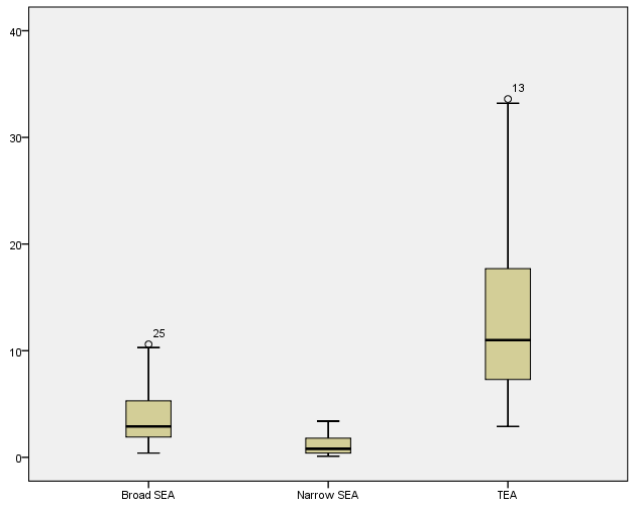

Figure 2 Box plot representing the five-number summary of broad social entrepreneurial activity, narrow entrepreneurial activity and total entrepreneurial activity according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor.

Inferential statistics were used to answer the first research question; specifically, the study used correlation and linear regression to analyze the data. The first step in data analysis was to identify what kind of relationship, if any, existed among the variables: broad social entrepreneurial activity and 83 socioeconomic indexes, and the narrow social entrepreneurial activity and 83 socioeconomic indexes. They study used a confidence level of 95%.

To investigate the broad social entrepreneurial activity, the study used the data from 55 countries, a correlation function was performed in SPSS. The r value indicated a positive correlation between 13 variables; the significant level was less than 0.05, indicating that the correlations were statistically significant. Using the data from the 31 countries, a correlation function was performed in SPSS. The r value indicates a positive correlation between 18 variables at a significance level of 0.05. Table 2 and Table 3 present the correlations for both definitions.

Table 2

Correlations significant at the 0.05 level between Broad Social Entrepreneurial Activity and social and economic indicators (in order of highest to smaller correlation)

Indicator	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed)
Labor force with tertiary education	.50	.00
Net official development assistance received	.47	.01
Carbon dioxide emissions per capita (% average annual growth)	-.42	.00
Unemployment long Term (% of labor force)	-.38	.02
Freedom of choice	.36	.01
Stock of immigrants	.34	.01
Confidence in judicial system	.34	.01
Labor Productivity output per worker (2011 PPP $)	.33	.02
Unemployment – Youth not in school or employment (% ages 15 -24)	-.33	.04
Gross National Income (GNI) per capita	.31	.02
Foreign direct investment, net inflows	.28	.04
Innovation index 2014	.28	.04
Primary education	-.28	.04

Table 3

Correlations significant at the 0.05 level between Narrow Social Entrepreneurial Activity and social and economic indicators (in order of highest to smaller correlation)

Indicator	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed)
Volunteered time	.56	.00
Freedom of choice	.56	.00
Overall life satisfaction	.52	.00
Carbon dioxide emissions per capita average annual growth (%)	-.51	.01
Unemployment long term (% of labor force)	-.51	.02
Standard of living	.49	.01
Taxes on income, profit and capital gain (% of total tax revenue)	.49	.01
Net migration rate	.43	.02
Foreign direct investment, net inflows	.42	.02
Stock of immigrants	.42	.02
Actions to preserve the environment	.41	.03
Employment in services	.41	.03
Domestic Food Price level volatility index	-.40	.04
Feeling active and productive	.39	.04
Global competitiveness index	.39	.03
Gross National Income (GNI) per capita	.38	.04
Ideal job	.38	.04
Private capital flows	-.38	.04

The study found 15 possible multiple regression models with a R^2 range from 37% to 8% of the variation. For narrow social entrepreneurial activity, the study found 61 significant multiple regression models, with a R^2 range from 56% to 20%. Using the stepwise function on SPSS, the study identified the multiple regressions with the highest adjusted R^2, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Multiple regression models for social origins theory with highest adjusted R^2

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Adjusted R2
Broad SEA	Labor force with tertiary education (+) and average annual growth of carbon dioxide emissions per capita (-)	0.37
Broad SEA	Long term unemployment as a percentage of the labor force (-) and stock of immigrants (+)	0.37
Narrow SEA	Taxes on income, profit and capital gains (% of tax revenue) (+), average annual growth of carbon dioxide emissions per capita (-), Perception of standard of living (+)	0.56

For broad social entrepreneurial activity, the interpretation of the output for the model is as follows:

Percentage of labor force with tertiary education, and the average increase of annual emissions of carbon dioxide per capita

$\hat{Y}$ = 2.05+(0.09) (Labor force with tertiary education) – (.041) (Average increase of annual emissions of CO2)

The multiple regression model with two predictors produced R^2 = .37, $F(2,34) = 10.15$, $p < .001$. The equation shows that the broad social entrepreneurship activity increases by 0.09 if the percentage of labor force with tertiary education increases by 1%, keeping the Average Annual Growth of Carbon Dioxide Emissions per Capita constant; and broad social entrepreneurial activity decreases by 0.41 for every unit increase in the Average Annual Growth of Carbon Dioxide Emissions, keeping the Percentage of Labor Force with Tertiary Education constant.

Long term unemployment (% of labor force) and stock of immigrants (% of the population)

$\hat{Y}$ =3.19 – (.15)(Long Term Unemployment) + (.15)(Stock of Immigrants)

The multiple regression model with two predictors produced R^2 = .37, $F(2,37) = 12.23$, $p < .001$. The equations show a decrease of 0.15 percentage with a one unit increase in the percentage of long term unemployment, keeping the Stock of Immigrants constant; and an increase of 0.15 percentage with a 1 unit increase in the Stock of Immigrants, holding the Percentage of Long term unemployment constant.

The interpretation of the output for the model with the highest explanation of variation in the narrow social entrepreneurial activity is as follows:

Taxes on Income, Profit and Capital Gain (% of tax revenue); average increase of annual emission of carbon dioxide per capita, and perception of standard of living

$\hat{Y}$ = -.80 + (.04)(Taxes on Income) – (.18)(Average Increase of Annual Emissions of CO2) + (.02)(Standard of Living)

The multiple regression with three predictors produced an adjusted R^2 = .56, $F(3,17) = 9.14$, $p < .001$. The equation shows an increase in narrow social entrepreneurial activity of 0.04 percentage for every 1 unit increase in taxes on income, profit and capital gains, holding the annual emissions of carbon dioxide per capita, and the perception of standard of living constant. The narrow social entrepreneurial activity decreases .18 percentage for every 1 unit increase in the average of annual emissions of carbon dioxide, holding the taxes on income, profit and gains; and the perception of standard of living constant. The narrow social entrepreneurial activity increases 0.02 for every 1 unit increase in the perception of standard of living, holding the annual emissions of carbon dioxide per capita and the taxes on income, profit and gains constant.

3.2. Qualitative Results

The goal of Phase II was to explain how the findings of the quantitative phase manifest in the social entrepreneurial activity of two purposefully selected Latin American countries: Mexico and Colombia. In each country, I conducted individual in-depth interviews, as well as focus groups to understand in more detail the phenomenon of social entrepreneurial activity.

3.2.1 Mexico

The social entrepreneurial activity in Mexico was studied through focus groups and individual interviews. A total of 30 social entrepreneurs participated in this case analysis. Through the interviews, I was able to hear their stories on what got them started in social entrepreneurship, what the journey has been like, and what were their thoughts regarding what may foster social entrepreneurship in Mexico. Most of the participants were female, in their late 20's, and had a university degree. Even though, I interviewed 30 participants, there were 22 social ventures, since some of the participants were represented by two or three people.

Most of the social entrepreneurs were focused on solving health and trade related social problems; however, all of them expressed that the project also addressed other issues by proxy.

Table 5
Social problems alleviated through social ventures in Mexico

Social problem	Count
Health related	5 (22.73%)
Fair trade related	5 (22.73%)
Education	4 (18.18%)
Employment	3 (13.64%)
Environment	3 (13.64%)
Other	2 (9.09%)

However, when specifically asked to choose from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which of the 17 goals was better served through their business venture, the results were somewhat different. Most of the answers related to goal number 12: responsible consumption and production (10 answers), followed by goal number 8: decent work and economic growth (8 answers), and finally with goal number 3: good health and well-being (6 answers).

Figure 3. Manifestation of sustainable development goals solved by social entrepreneurs in Mexico.

Regarding the size of the business, most of the ventures were reported to being constituted by 2 and 5 people. Of the total group, 4 businesses reported being larger than 20 people: two businesses reported to have 20 people, and other 2 business reported to have more than 100 people. The largest organizations are NGOs, which funding is generated through grants and donations. This question led to investigating about the legal form used by the entrepreneurs. Most of the entrepreneurs said that their organization is legally constituted as a *sociedad anónima*, which is the equivalent of sole proprietorship in the United States. Within sociedad anonima, there is a more specific type of sole proprietorship called *sociedad anonima de capital variable,* which is allows the organization to have easier access to funding from other investors. Of the 13 organizations using sole proprietorship, 4 of them are using the more defined form of *sociedad anonima de capital variable,* showing a more sophisticated use of the legal entity, and a clear intent for scalability. Five entrepreneurs expressed that they do not have their business legally constituted a yet, but that they will create a *sociedad anonima* in the future. No one expressed their idea about not legally constituting a business. Among the focus group, there were 4 foundations.

All of the entrepreneurs have their office in Mexico City; for half of them, their beneficiaries are only in Mexico City, and for the other half, the beneficiaries are in other states of Mexico, and in Central America. The scalability and replicability of the project may be a hurdle for some of these businesses.

Regarding their business model, most of the interviewed entrepreneurs have a product or service that they sell in order to be financially sustainable. Even the organizations that currently depend on grants and donations, expressed their interest in being able to develop a product or service to sell; however, they expressed that this change is not always easy. It is important to add that even though, most businesses are charging for their product or service, only 4 of the interviewees generate enough income to live only of that business venture, the rest must handle multiple jobs.

> *"I wish I would sell something in order to make money, and not depend on donations or grants, but I just don´t know what…" - Paz*

Regarding the opportunities for starting up and growing the ventures offered by government programs or other parts of the ecosystem, all of the entrepreneurs responded that they are familiar with the Instituto Nacional de Emprendedores (INADEM) and the Fondo para el Desarrollo Social de la Ciudad de Mexico (FONDESO), but only one third responded that they felt sure about being able to access any funds from INADEM or FONDESO. All the participants were familiar with entrepreneur incubators from universities and privately funded ones, as well as entrepreneur competitions such as Televisa's Posible. In terms of perception, the entrepreneurs believe it is easier to get funded through a contest or an incubator, and then become financially sustainable, than to get a loan from INADEM or FONDESO.

As a final stage in the interview and focus groups, the researcher shared with the entrepreneurs the economic and social indicators that, according to the quantitative analysis, have an impact on the social entrepreneurial activity of a country. Of the six indicators, three of them were easily understood as generators of social entrepreneurial activity -even though none was specifically mentioned during the interviews-, and one driver was not easily understood. Some excerpts of the entrepreneurs' perspectives on the drivers are shared below:

Average Annual Growth of Carbon Dioxide per Capita:

> *"The pollution in Mexico City is terrible, maybe we, the younger generations, are finally realizing that we have to do something about it… Is like, it starts with paying attention to the environment, and then you are also paying attention to the other social problems… " -(Annie 2016, personal communication)*

Labor force with Tertiary Education:

> *"Many of us here have some relationship with a university, or with Tec Monterrey. The universities are trying to get their students to pay more attention to what is going on in the rest of the country and do something about it. It is not perfect, but from what you say, it might have an impact…" - (Laura 2016, personal communication)*

Perception of standard of living:

> *"I guess that the better a society is, the more it is willing to share. For example, when I am driving around the city and I see people that are really poor, I want to help. I might not have much, but there are so many others that have nothing…" - (Laura 2016, personal communication)*

Taxes on income, profit and capital gains:

> *"Oh, I don't know about that one... We don't need more taxes, we need the government to stop taking our taxes on their pockets and the put them to work". – (Unknown 2016, personal communication)*

> *"More developed countries, like Scandinavian countries have very high taxes, and they have less inequality. If we knew our taxes were going to the right places, I guess I would be more willing." – (Rafa 2016, personal communication)*

3.2.2. Colombia

A total of 40 social entrepreneurs where interviewed in Colombia, in two separate instances. Both groups were very different among each other; and therefore, must be considered separate. The first group of social entrepreneurs was mostly female, in their late 30s, with some college education. Most the social problems addressed dealt with improving education and citizenship activity in the community. Most of these social entrepreneurs are engaged in another job, either as their main or secondary source of income. The second group of entrepreneurs was also mostly female, in their late 40´s, with no college education. These group of people are engaged in social entrepreneurship in the bottom of the pyramid, and they are part of that social group. This bottom of the pyramid businesses attempted to provide gainful employment for themselves and the community.

When specifically asked to choose from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which of the 17 goals was better served through their business venture, the results were somewhat different. Most of the answers related to goal number 16: peace and justice (28 answers), followed by goal number 8: decent work and economic growth (22 answers), with goal number 1: reduce poverty as the third goal (18 answers).

Figure 4. Manifestation of sustainable development goals solved by social entrepreneurs in Colombia.

Regarding the size of the business, 80% of the respondents have a nascent business employing 3 people or less. Also, 70% of the participants responded that their business is not legally constituted, yet. Six participants reported to run a foundation, and 5 participants commented that their business is a sole proprietorship (*sociedad anonima* or *sociedad limitada*). When asked about the reasons for not being legally constituted yet, only a handful of participants answered. Reluctantly, they responded that it is easier to start working informally and then to become legal, once you have a steady base of customers. They are aware of the benefits that may come with forming a sole proprietorship, like grants and bank loans; but they rather wait for the time being.

Thinking about their current and future customers, all the entrepreneurs manifested that their idea could be scaled and replicable; however, not necessarily by them. Most of the entrepreneurs serve a local market (28 participants) and they do not foresee themselves scaling or replicating for now; a 30% of the participants are located in Bogota, but their beneficiaries and customers are in Bogota and other areas of Colombia. The entrepreneurs that have been able to reach broader audiences were more confident about their ability to scale and replicate their business model.

> *"The office and the beneficiaries are in the south of Bogota. We cannot replicate this model, the community has unique characteristics, even though the problems on the surface seem the same*." (*Rocky 2016, personal communication)*

> *"Ay licenciado, may God hear you! In in the community of … in the South… and my clients are from there. I wish I would make the business bigger, but it is not possible for financial reasons, I can*

barely make it, as it is, and I cannot have access to a loan or any of those things… "- (Lady 2016, personal communication)

Regarding the knowledge of the government program on social innovation, I was surprised to hear that none of the entrepreneurs could specifically talk about it. They have heard about some initiatives, but they have not seen anything tangible, yet, at least not for their type of business. Some entrepreneurs reported an interest in incubating and fostering medical and technology businesses, but not social businesses. In that sense, I was referred to the work that the city of Medellin is doing; Medellin was the first Latin American city to have a social innovation policy, and they have been able to get it to work across civil society, academia and businesses.

The study shared with the entrepreneurs the economic and social indicators that according to the quantitative analysis have an impact on the social entrepreneurial activity of a country. Of the six indicators, all but one was easily understood as generators of social entrepreneurial activity. Some excerpts of the conversation are presented below:

Average Annual Growth of Carbon Dioxide per Capita:

"I know there are many people in my community that have found jobs related to recycling: either they collect the recycling material and then sell it, or use the recycling material to create new products. In that sense, I can see how the more aware we are of the importance of the environment, the more social innovation there will be" – (Flor 2016, personal communication)

Labor force with Tertiary Education:

This topic was somewhat difficult. While on the first focus group, most of the participants held a university degree, o where in the process of obtaining a university degree; the second focus group, most of the participants had not complete elementary school.

"My biggest regret is not to have finished elementary school… I started my business with 50,000 pesos, and now -just for fun- I tried to sell it. It can sell for 3,000,000. I would be doing so much better with more knowledge from school, you know?" – (Mabel 2016, personal communication)

Perception of standard of living:

"The better I see myself and my family the more I would like to help out. We didn't really feel the conflict on this side of the city, you know? It is very difficult to grasp". – (Academico 2016, personal communication)

Taxes on income, profit and capital gains:

"No, no, no, no. If the government hear you say that, they will immediately increase our taxes. More money for them!" – (Andres 2016, personal communication)

3.2.3 Colombia and Mexico

Throughout the case analysis, the study used a thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001), Excel and Atlas TI to help the themes emerge from the data. The initial coding framework was based on the interview protocol; then with the use of Excel and Atlas, patterns and meaningful statements helped identified the basic themes; these themes were then grouped together to obtain organizing themes, and finally global themes.

3.2.3.1 Basic themes

The study identified 22 basic themes emerging from the qualitative data in Mexico and Colombia. While most basic themes were the same in both locations, the frequency and strength of the themes vary in both locations. As shown in Figure 5, the participants in Mexico formed a more homogeneous group than the one encountered in Colombia, and while their realities present major differences, several themes kept coinciding in both countries. See Table 6.

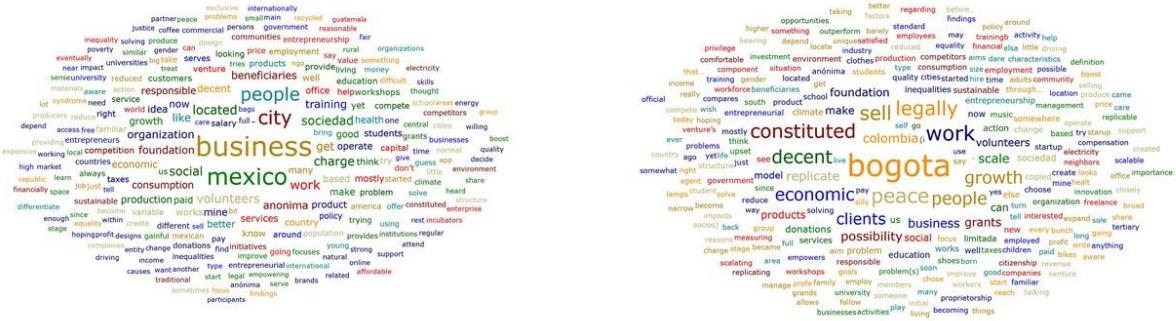

Figure 5. Comparison of word clouds for all participants in Mexico and Colombia.

Table 6
Basic themes in entrepreneurial activity in Mexico and Colombia, organized alphabetically

#	Basic themes	Organizing theme
1	Access to ecosystem	Access
2	Access to financial aid	Access
3	Access to market	Access
4	Age	Entrepreneur's social identity
5	Education	Entrepreneur's social identity
6	Financial knowledge	Entrepreneur's skills
7	Gender	Entrepreneur's social identity
8	General business knowledge	Entrepreneur's skills
9	Initial investment	Social business
10	Legal Constitution of organization	Social business
11	Location of beneficiaries	Social business
12	Motivation	Entrepreneur's social identity
13	Organization of the ecosystem	Ecosystem
14	Presence of public institutions in the ecosystem	Ecosystem
15	Presence of universities	Ecosystem
16	Replicability	Social business
17	Risk	Social Entrepreneur
18	Scalability	Social business
19	Socioeconomic status	Entrepreneur's social identity
20	Struggles	Social Entrepreneur
21	Transition from commercial to social business	Social business
22	Type of social problem	Social business

3.2.3.2 Organizing themes

According to Attride-Stirling (2001), the basic themes must then be organized in organizing themes. From the basic themes, The study extracted 5 organizing themes: access, characteristics of the social entrepreneur, skills of the social entrepreneur, nature of the social problem, characteristics of the ecosystem. Table 6 shows the connections between the basic themes and the organizing themes. Finally, from the organizing themes, global themes must be extracted to help answer the research questions and create the final thematic network.

3.3 Summary of Findings

3.3.1 Research Question #1: What is the relation, if any, between specific socio-economic indicators and a country's social entrepreneurial activity?

The quantitative phase of the analysis used inferential statistics to identify the socioeconomic factors that contribute to the social entrepreneurial activity (SEA) in 55 countries for the broad definition,

and for 31 countries under the narrow definition. The social entrepreneurial activity indexes were obtained from the 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor survey of social entrepreneurship, and the economic and social indicators were obtained from the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Program databases. The socioeconomic indicators to be tested were selected based on theories that help explain civil society activity or commercial entrepreneurship activity.

This study found that the socioeconomic drivers for the broad definition of social entrepreneurship and for the narrow definition of social entrepreneurship are different. The socio-economic indicators that may help predict the social entrepreneurial activity of a country are: labor force with tertiary education, the average annual growth of carbon dioxide emissions per capita, the percentage of long term unemployment, the percentage of the stock of immigrant, the percentage of taxes on on income, profit and capital gains, and the perception of standard of living.

For the broad definition of social entrepreneurial activity, the two models with the best prediction score are:

- Model 1Broad: Labor force with tertiary education (+) and average annual growth of carbon dioxide emissions per capita (-), with the equation: $\hat{Y} = 2.05+(0.09)$ (Labor force with tertiary education) – (.041) (Average increase of annual emissions of CO2). Table 7 presents the results for Mexico and Colombia with this model and compares the result with the GEM score.

Table 7
Comparison of broad social entrepreneurial activity using the model 1Broad and the results on the GEM report

Country	Model using Labor force with tertiary education and average annual growth of carbon dioxide emissions per capita	Broad social entrepreneurial activity as reported by GEM
Mexico	4.26	1.4
Colombia	4.11	5.9
Average	4.50	3.8

Comparing the results of Model 1Broad with the GEM results, it shows that the social entrepreneurial activity for Mexico and for the average is higher than the index calculated by the GEM; the forecast for Colombia, however is lower.

- Model 2Broad: Long term unemployment as a percentage of the labor force (-) and stock of immigrants (+), with the equation: $\hat{Y} =3.19 – (.15)$(Long Term Unemployment) + (.15)(Stock of Immigrants). Table 8 presents the results for Mexico and Colombia with this model and compares the result with the GEM score.

Using this model, the calculation for the Colombian and the average social entrepreneurial activity is lower than the index calculated by GEM, as shown on Table 8.

Table 8
Comparison of broad social entrepreneurial activity using the model 2Broad and the results on the GEM report

Country	Model using Long term unemployment as a percentage of the labor force and stock of immigrants	Broad social entrepreneurial activity as reported by GEM
Mexico	3.31	1.4
Colombia	3.08	5.9
Average	3.64	3.80

Using the narrow definition of social entrepreneurial activity:

- Model 1Narrow: Taxes on income, profit and capital gains (% of tax revenue) (+), average annual growth of carbon dioxide emissions per capita (-), Perception of standard of living (+), with the model: $\hat{Y}$ = -.80 + (.04)(Taxes on Income) – (.18)(Average Increase of Annual Emissions of CO2) + (.02)(Standard of Living)

Table 10
Comparison of narrow social entrepreneurial activity using the model 1Narrow and the results on the GEM report

Country	Taxes on income, profit and capital gains, average annual growth of carbon dioxide emissions per capita and perception of standard of living	Narrow social entrepreneurial activity as reported by GEM
Mexico	N.A.	N.A.
Colombia	1.48	2.7
Average	1.22	1.19

3.3.2 Research Question #2: To what extent do the perspectives of social entrepreneurs support the results of the explanatory quantitative data about social entrepreneurial activity predictors?

The participants of Mexico and Colombia exhibit very different characteristics; however, after a thorough analysis of the qualitative data, similarities emerge when it comes to the reasons on why these people decided to start a social venture; the most salient differences, however, show up in the how, and in what lies for them in the futures. The common reason for starting a social business is to alleviate a social problem that is close to them. The social problem is present in the daily life of the entrepreneurs themselves, a family member or close community.

When the participants were informed of the socio-economic drivers that may affect the social entrepreneurial activity in their country, most of them were understood all of them, except one. The driver that was more easily accepted by the social entrepreneurs was the one regarding tertirary education in the labor force; the one driver that was not understood was the one on taxes on income and profit and capital gains.

3.3.3 Research Question #4: What results emerge from comparing the explanatory quantitative data about social entrepreneurial activity predictors with the perception of the two Latin American countries?

The study used quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand what drives the social entrepreneurial activity in a country. The quantitative methods suggest that social entrepreneurship require a combination of tertiary education in the labor force and a decrease on the average annual increased of carbon dioxide emissions; of a combination of higher taxes on income, profit and capital gains, a lower average increase of annual emissions of carbon dioxide per capita, and a higher perception of standard of living.

From the qualitative findings, the study found four emerging themes that may influence the social entrepreneurial activity of a country: characteristics of the social entrepreneur, characteristics of the social business, access, and development of the ecosystem. The quantitative data was not easily explained by the qualitative findings (see Figure 6); however, much like social entrepreneurship itself, the similarities were there, although not easily grasped.

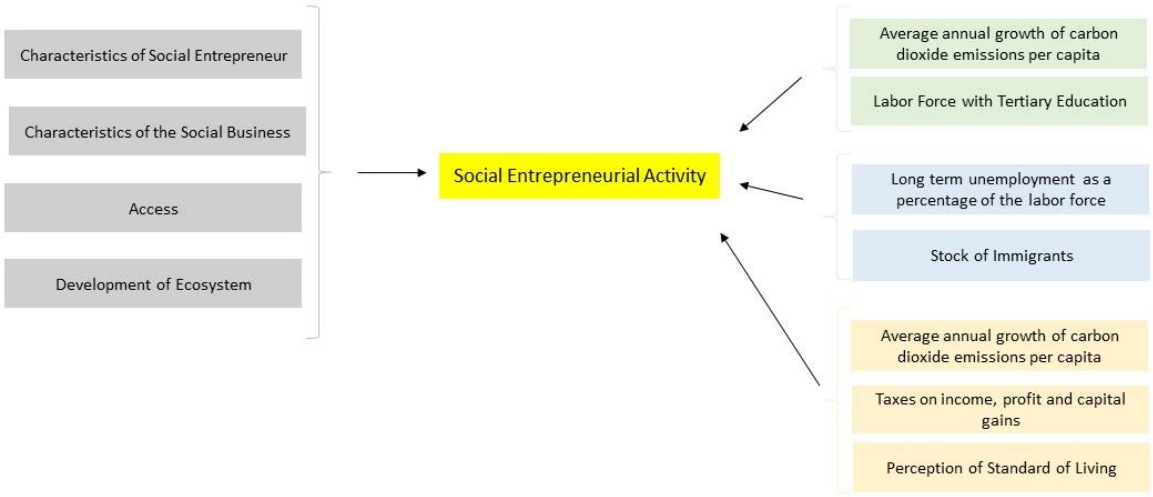

Figure 6. Comparison of qualitative (left) and quantitative (right) findings.

Joining the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data, as figure 7 depicts, it shows that the organization of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the characteristics of the social entrepreneur hold most importance as responsible for the social entrepreneurial activity of a country.

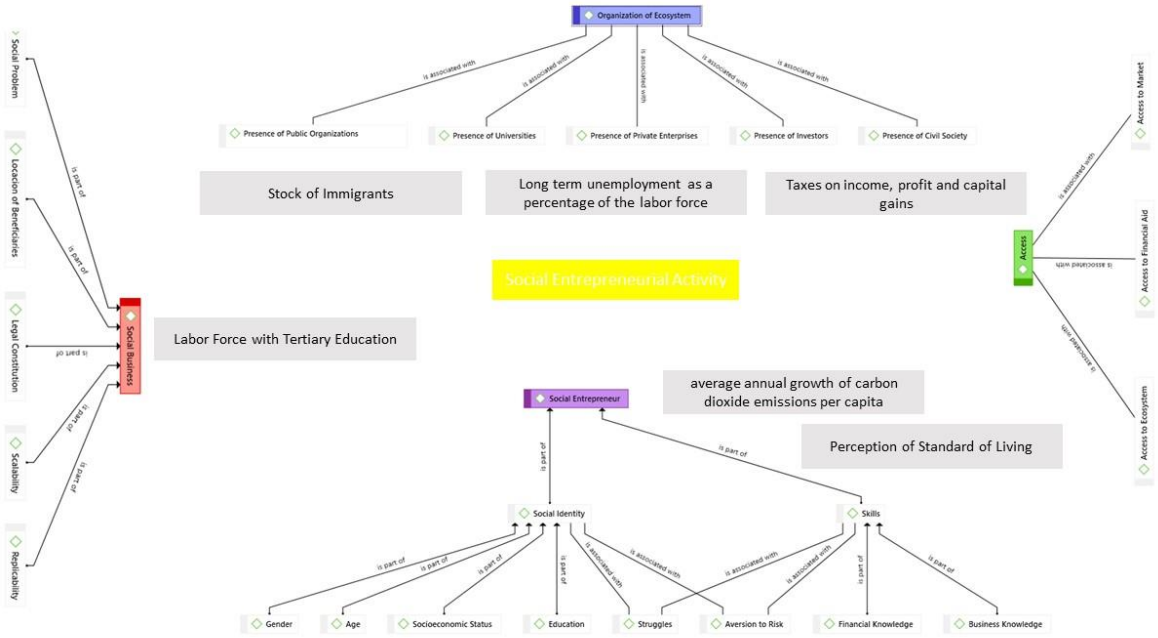

Figure 7. Joining of basic, organizing and global themes with quantitative findings.

4. Limitations of the Study

While attempting to be methodologically rigorous, the study has important limitations to consider when examining the results, and when preparing for future studies.

1) Growing field: It is possible that the literature review might have overlooked some important literature, thus affecting the study's findings. It is important to note the literature review must be updated to consider new evidence, for social entrepreneurship is a young and growing field, and new findings are being discovered every day. The review of this study only examined articles written in English and Spanish; many European countries are fast developing this field; therefore, it may be possible to have overlooked important findings published in other languages.
2) Sample size: This study uses quantitative methods on only 58 countries, not the 195 countries listed in the United Nations. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor database only has information on the social entrepreneurship activity on 55 countries, the largest dataset in social entrepreneurship that currently exists. It is plausible that some significant differences exist between those countries included in the GEM report and those countries not included in the GEM report; these selection bias present a constraint to my findings.
3) Language: The interviews and the focus groups were conducted in Spanish, transcribed, and then translated into English. While I while attempted to do a close translation, it is possible that the spirit of the interviews may be affected by the translation.
4) Generalizations: The scope of the qualitative phase included only two countries. Due to the specific nature of the experience of social entrepreneurs in Mexico and Colombia, the generalizability of this study is limited. Similarly, as in the quantitative phase, selection effects also influence the results of this study, since the social entrepreneurs that accepted the invitation to the study are more likely to be inclined towards social entrepreneurship than others.
5) Self-Reported data: All the perspectives collected in this study were self-reported. It is possible that some of the answers given by the participants reflect an aspirational view of social entrepreneurship, and not necessarily the actual view of what drove them towards social entrepreneurship.
6) Homogeneity of participant: Finally, the study aimed to select participants, who were heterogeneous in industry, gender and, possibly, socio-economic status; however, that was not always possible.

5. Practical Implications

Through quantitative and qualitative methods, this study has identified possible drivers of social entrepreneurial activity across nations, and how these drivers may manifest in the daily activities of social entrepreneurs. The findings may have implications for government, organizations and universities that are working towards the increasing of social entrepreneurial activity in their countries.

Government, business and civil society play important parts in social entrepreneurial activity. All of the identified socio-economic indicators that may affect social entrepreneurial in a country can be fostered from the collaborative work of these dimensions. The study would like to provide recommendations regarding policy, environment, stock of immigrants and higher education.

Policy: It is recommended for policy makers to define what social entrepreneurship looks like for each country, and to identify which government institution will take the lead in the development of social entrepreneurs. This study shows that the drivers for broad social entrepreneurship and for narrow social entrepreneurship are different; therefore, the policy must be explicit, in order to obtain a better use of the invested resources.

Stock of immigrants: The quantitative findings suggest that a higher stock of immigrants as a percentage of the population may increase the broad social entrepreneurial activity of a country. United Nations have identified international migration as a positive driver for development with adequate policies (United Nations, n.da); as the stock of immigration rises; governments may take the opportunity to channel the rise of immigration into a rise in social entrepreneurial activity, by providing the immigrants with training and access to the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Environmentally aware population: The lower the average annual growth of carbon dioxide emissions per capita, the higher the social entrepreneurial activity in a country, both broad and narrow, which may imply that a higher awareness of the importance of the environment on both the government dimension, the business dimension, and the civil society dimension will work towards generating an array of environmental and social benefits (United Nations, n.db) . The recommendation for practice is to develop education and training at all levels regarding the role of environmental management, with the objective of building the communities' awareness and empowerment to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions.

Higher education: The importance of tertiary education manifested in the quantitative and qualitative studies suggests that tertiary education may help prepare the students to be more alert on ways to alleviate social problems in their countries, but also to have the business skills required to start a social business. The inclusion of programs that help students understand the problems behind the United Nations sustainable development goals, as well as tools and techniques to foster innovative thinking and the understanding of business skills may prove useful in fostering social entrepreneurial activities in our countries.

6. Significance

By identifying and validating the drivers that affect the social entrepreneurial activity in various countries, the study provided empirical evidence regarding the different drivers for broad and narrow social entrepreneurial activity. They study agrees with Kerlin's (2010) study about the complementarity aspect of what affects social entrepreneurship: social entrepreneurship is more than an economic activity; therefore, it is likely to be affected by social and economic variables. The complexities of social entrepreneurship are evidenced in this study, cautioning not to view the phenomenon under one single lens. The case studies in offered practical insights into the realities of being a social entrepreneur in Colombia and Mexico, enhancing the theoretical practical contributions to the field of social entrepreneurship. The recommendations of the proposed study may not only help encourage greater amounts of social entrepreneurship in the countries, but also help the governments, international organizations and universities generate a better return on investment on the money allocated to developing social entrepreneurship.

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