



**SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH ACROSS DISCIPLINES:
PARADIGMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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**SOCIAL INNOVATION THROUGH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN CIVIL SOCIETY**

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Abstract

Social entrepreneurship research has recently been presented in literature as a field of action in a pre-paradigmatic state, a field that lacks an established epistemology. Despite that important facet, several major qualitative and quantitative studies have already been undertaken on the sole base of some institutions' worldview. Structuralists and social constructivists approaches have found much ambivalence in these and even question social entrepreneurship's legitimization as a distinctive item of research generally.

Articles on the topic of social entrepreneurship apply a great variety of frameworks, borrowing for example from neo-institutional or dialectic theory, bringing with them many different research methods and views from other disciplines. Instead of proposing another conceptual approach and yet contributing to the ongoing discussion, the authors enact on a deductive journey by examining and clustering underlying paradigmatic assumptions found in current literature based on the framework of Burrell and Morgan. Prevalent paradigms in social entrepreneurship literature are thus identified and correlated to disciplines and schools of thoughts. The authors find that from a longitudinal perspective social entrepreneurship research has undergone several paradigmatic *leitmotivs* over the years 2005 to 2010 and the applied methods and approaches differ between researchers from various disciplines.

1. Introduction

Social Entrepreneurship (SE) as an emerging research field has been well received by authors from a variety of disciplines (Ireland and Webb, 2007; Short *et al.*, 2009) such as:

- *sociology* (Hockerts *et al.*, 2010)
- *entrepreneurship* (Chell *et al.*, 2010; Corner and Ho, 2010)
- *(public) management* (Bagnoli and Megali, 2009; Meyskens *et al.*, 2010)
- *ethics* (Cornelius *et al.*, 2008)
- *finance* (Austin *et al.*, 2006)
- *politics and institutions* (Hemerijck, 2002; Dey and Steyaert, 2010)
- *psychology and education* (Chand and Misra, 2009)

Academic journals have embraced this topic with an increasing number of special issues, and in addition, several newly emerged journals and conferences, focusing especially on social entrepreneurship, have paved the way for an ever-increasing body of social entrepreneurship research. Mair & Marti (2006: 43) introduce SE as a fascinating playground for different perspectives and diverse theoretical lenses:

“... the variegated nature and multiple expressions of social entrepreneurship make it a fascinating playground for different perspectives and literature, and at the same time, suggest that it should be studied through diverse theoretical lenses.”

However, a diversity in disciplines does not necessarily result in a likewise diversity of the meta-theories, as meta-theoretical underpinnings can cross and transcend boundaries (Gergen and Thatchenkery, 1998; Perren and Ram, 2004).

While there are several articles discussing paradigmatic implications in SE research, so far, a comprehensive analysis of the meta-theoretical assumptions in SE research has been missing. Such philosophical and societal foundations of a field are of high relevance if scholars search for *justification, consolidation or solidification* of their approaches (Grant and Perren, 2002; Jennings *et al.*, 2005) – issues of high importance in the field of SE research. To thus gain insight into the construction of paradigmatic *leitmotifs*, the authors explore scholarly literature on SE in the context of the paradigm-framework by Burrell & Morgan (1979).

Carefully selected SE literature from the years 2005 to 2011 was reflected onto this framework to shed new light onto the:

- paradigmatic and methodological choices in SE research
- influences from disciplines and theories
- longitudinal development of the field

The subsequent evaluation of the findings then explored:

- possible preferences and missing approaches
- domination of some disciplines and theories
- longitudinal changes
- signs of development and maturation
- possible criteria for a methodological fit in SE research

In order to achieve the set research aims, the authors followed well-established procedures of analysing literature, as demonstrated and seen in (Grant and Perren, 2002; Harden and Thomas, 2005; Kyro and Kansikas, 2005).

2. Existing paradigmatical discussions in SE research

Given the name of the field, one may derive the conclusion that research on SE is just another offspring of entrepreneurship research. However when reading through literature, it becomes eminent that research methodology and inherent paradigms somewhat differ from commercial entrepreneurship literature. Within the field of traditional for-profit entrepreneurship, most of the applied theory of research is located within the bounds of the “Functionalist” paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Grant and Perren, 2002; Burrell and Morgan, 2005), and thus characterized by an objectivist perspective and rooted in a regulation view on society (Chell and Pittaway, 1998; Jennings *et al.*, 2005).

In SE literature however, relatively few authors embark on quantitative, theory testing research from a positivist epistemology, within a realist ontology (Short *et al.*, 2009) - rather the opposite: definitions are called for with caution (Zahra *et al.*, 2009; Lehner, 2011), outcomes depend on the eye of the observer (Hill *et al.*, 2010; Hoogendoorn *et al.*, 2010), the individual is seen as an important hero-like actor in for example creating opportunities (Seelos and Mair, 2005; Drayton, 2006; Mair and Marti, 2009), and institutions are using different definitions of SE for their own, sometimes divergent and intrinsic agenda (Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Hervieux *et al.*, 2010; Nicholls, 2010; Steyaert and Dey, 2010).

Even the words *social entrepreneurship*, although constituting the essence of the field (Mair and Marti, 2006), are often regarded as spanning a tension-field, as being mutual exclusive. Two very different domains are combined through the dualistic aim of *creating social value* and at the same time achieving *economic sustainability* (Nicholls, 2006; Hockerts *et al.*, 2010). Therefore social entrepreneurship research has to cater for a dual logic, social and entrepreneurial, and often fails in delivering methodological robustness by omitting one or the other (Edmondson and Mcmanus, 2007).

Articles on social entrepreneurship are often seen as being grounded in a subjective ontology with an antipositivist epistemology and a voluntarist view of human nature (Burrell and Morgan, 2005; Hervieux *et al.*, 2010; Nicholls, 2010; Steyaert and Dey, 2010). Scholars apply qualitative coding schemes in thematic analyses, for example based on Denzin & Lincoln (2003; Di Domenico *et al.*, 2010), are using myth and metaphors (Cho, 2006; Trivedi and Stokols, 2011) to define the world of social entrepreneurs, enact on (critically) analysing discourse as presented in (Phillips *et al.*, 2007; Meyer and Wodak, 2009) (Downing, 2005; Jones *et al.*, 2008; Dey, 2010; Dey and Steyaert, 2010) and yet others start by defining social entrepreneurs as *change agents* a-priori in an advocacy point of view (Drayton, 2006). Due to the nascent nature of the field and its researchers' caution in finding a definition, as well as due to the on-going redefinition of the research agenda, several scholars such as Nicholls (2010) or Hervieux (2010) examine the process of legitimization. Nicholls (2010), following Kuhn (Kuhn, 1963; 1996) calls SE a field in a pre-paradigmatic state, a field that thus lacks an established epistemology. Through the lenses of the structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) Nicholls for example, identifies how institutions try to gain control over the field through their narrative-logic in an *reflexive isomorphism*. Hervieux examines the legitimization of SE through a discourse analysis. Short, Moss and Lumpkin (2009) further examine the field of SE research in a functionalist

fashion and consequently find a lack of formal hypotheses and rigorous methods. Suggestions in their article include the future inclusion of quantitative methods such as multivariate-analysis and the call to include well-established theories from strategic entrepreneurship. However this would imply that a) SE is grounded within the domain of entrepreneurship and b) that its definitions and boundaries are already carved out in a way to allow for quantitative theory testing. However, even in current years, most SE scholars begin with what seems a quest for definition and a careful exploration of the field, as can be seen for example in Zahra et al. (2009).

3. A choice of frameworks for the analysis

Burrell and Morgans' (1979) text *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis* has not lost its appeal and relevance to social science research. As Grant and Perren (2002) state, it is still one of the most widely disseminated paradigmatic frameworks. There are over 600 citations to Burrell and Morgan (1979) in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) from the years 1990 to 2000 (Grant and Perren, 2002).

While many disciplines and theories can be identified as contributing to the field, even sometimes competing with each other, the ultimate underpinnings in form of “a *philosophy of science and a theory of society*” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 1) are still of relevance if scholars search for justification, consolidation or solidification of their approaches (Grant and Perren, 2002; Jennings *et al.*, 2005). Based on the state of research in SE, such a call seems of a particularly high relevance.

To enable such a quest for the philosophical underpinnings of a research field, a closer look on philosophical assumptions within the prevailing literature seems appropriate. Such assumptions, including those on:

- Ontology: What exists in the world, what is the nature and structure of it,
- Epistemology: The nature of human knowledge and understanding that can be acquired through different means of inquiry,
- Methodology: How can we find out whatever it is believed to be known

- are either explicitly (openly stated) or implicitly (can be derived) used as a base by researchers. Within these, the extreme positions are reflected in “Positivism”, standing for a *realist ontology with a positivist epistemology, a deterministic view of human nature and nomothetic methodologies* and, on the other side, “Anti-Positivism” with a *subjective ontology, an anti-positivist epistemology, a voluntaristic view of human nature and ideographic methodologies* (see table 1).

	Objective View	Subjective View
Ontology	Realism	Nominalist
Epistemology	Positivist	Anti-positivist
Human Nature	Determinism	Voluntarism
Methodology	Nomothetic	Ideographic

Table 1. Assumptions in Objective/ Subjective View in Burrell and Morgan (1979)

Similarly, researchers hold differing views about the nature of society, for example whether they see cohesion or disintegration. This particular view has an impact on

the perspective and ultimately on the valuation and presentations of their findings. On the one hand the “Regulation” perspective explains *status quo, organization, coherence, structure, social order, consensus, social integration, solidarity, individual and actuality* and in contrast, the “Radical Change” perspective is concerned with explaining *structural conflicts, domination and subjugation, contradictions, emancipation and potentiality* (see table 2).

	Radical View	Regulation View
Dynamic Nature	Change	Status quo
Decision and will forming	Conflict	Order
Participation	Power, Domination	Consensus
Capital	Emancipation	Solidarity
Time frame, scope	Deprivation	Need Satisfaction
	Potentiality, Future	Actuality

Table 2. Assumptions in Objective/ Subjective View in Burrell and Morgan (1979)

These independent ends then span a two-dimensional force field of:

(Subjective vs. Objective) --> (Regulation vs. Radical Change)

- thus setting the quadrants for four distinct paradigms (see figure 1): “Functionalist,” “Interpretive,” “Radical Humanist,” and “Radical Structuralist” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Burrell and Morgan, 2005) These paradigms enable clustering and identifying meta-theoretical assumptions of researchers that underpin the shared *philosophy, perspective, mode of theorizing, and approaches*.

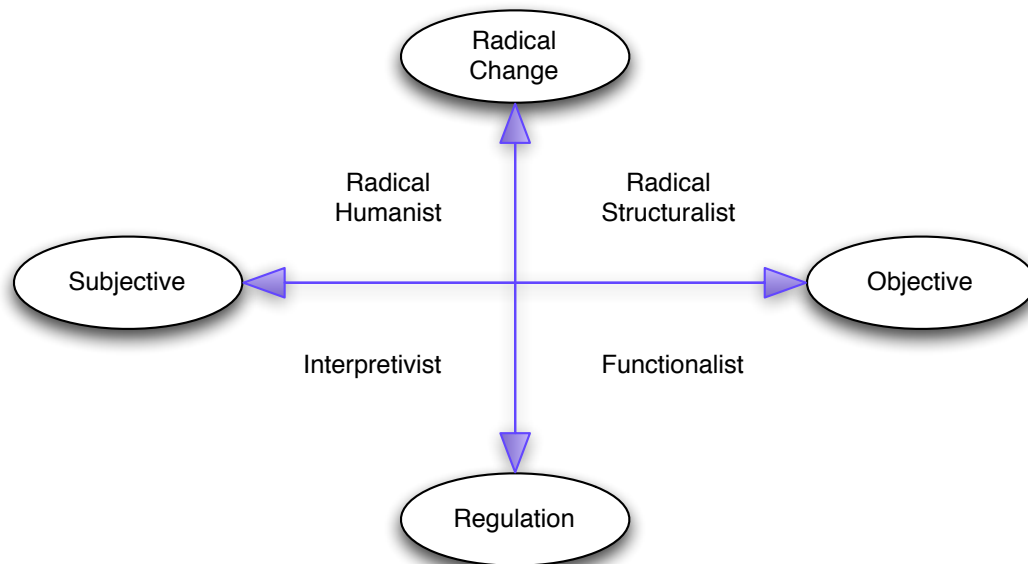


Figure 1. Paradigmatic Framework based on Burrell and Morgan(1979)

The “Functionalist” paradigm has been shown to dominate in commercial entrepreneurship literature (Grant and Perren, 2002; Jennings *et al.*, 2005), but what about the other three paradigms for the analysis of social theory, namely “Interpretive”, “Radical Humanist” and “Radical Structuralist” (see figure 1)? Can we identify these in social entrepreneurship research? If yes, and as these paradigms are typically more seen in research from authors rooted in other disciplines than

entrepreneurship or management, it would mean that SE research is distinctive in that matter - and as such, SE research may well influence the domain of entrepreneurship research as a whole in reflection. Ideological, epistemological and ontological dimensions of social entrepreneurship have already been critically examined in a variety of ways (Haugh, 2005; Cho, 2006; Nicholls and Cho, 2006; Chell, 2007; Peattie and Morley, 2008; Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Steyaert and Dey, 2010) and the applied methods were scrutinized (Short *et al.*, 2009), but so far, no systematic review of *underlying meta-theoretical assumptions* has been conducted. Burrell and Morgans' framework seems to be particularly suited for such a task, as it is widely accepted and the dimensions of *Change* and *Regulation* have a high significance in SE discourse. This framework, as seen in figure 1, became also a de-facto standard, given that several disciplines and research fields have made use of it to examine their own theoretical underpinnings. Thus adhering to this standard will also enable subsequent comparative studies and may thus provide additional insights.

3.1. Critical views

It has to be acknowledged that this framework has been criticized and adapted by several scholars (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996; Deetz, 1996; Scherer, 1998; Burrell, 1999; Scherer and Steinmann, 1999; Heugens and Scherer, 2010) to reflect changes and problems in their particular research fields. This can be seen however as a sign of great influence and impact of this framework and the authors still hold the merits of its original assumptions and propositions for the meta-theoretical analysis of SE literature, as most of the criticism and further developments are only based on individual observations and arising needs from special research applications.

3.2. Alternatives

Giddens structuration theory (1984) claims a *transcendence from paradigmatic meta-theories* and draws upon interpretative, structural and structuralist sociologies (Mouzelis, 2000). This framework has been used by Nicholls (2010) in the SE realm, but it was not chosen by the authors as the degree of success of the transcending strategies is still not commonly agreed (Mouzelis, 2000; Grant and Perren, 2002; Watkins-Mathys, 2005). Also Bourdieu (Steyaert, 2007; Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008) and with him philosophical foundations from Wittgenstein, Husserl, Weber or Marx would have been an option. However such a choice would have not provided a likewise commonly accepted framework and thus have counter measured the authors' intentions to allow for a field wide discussion based on common ground.

4. Methodological considerations

As stated before, to come up with valid findings, the authors followed well-established procedures of analysing literature, as demonstrated and seen in (Grant and Perren, 2002; Harden and Thomas, 2005; Kyro and Kansikas, 2005).

The method flow is displayed in figure 2 and holds to the standard stages of a systematic review as found in Harden & Thomas (2005):

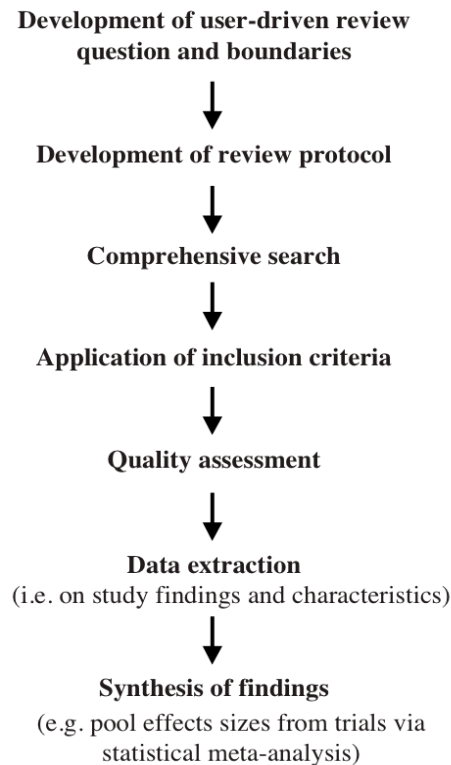


Figure 2. Stages for a systematic literature review Source: (Harden and Thomas, 2005)

One of the problems in relatively new research fields is a lower acceptance of corresponding articles in major journals, such that hidden gems, protagonists and well-cited articles are often found in not so well known journals or in conference proceedings. In addition, there are several journals that just emerged with the field themselves and are thus too young for an inclusion in any ranking list or the SSCI, the Social Sciences Citation Index. All these make it difficult to set out and create suitable boundaries within SE research literature.

Therefore the authors were using a two-step approach. First they selected and included scholarly articles that were searchable through the SSCI, from the years 2005 till 2011. In a second step, they identified journals, edited books and conferences in the references of these articles. The list of the journals, which were seen to contribute several cited articles to the topic, is compiled in table 3. Several more journals contributing only few articles to the field were included in the literature survey but not listed here.

Journals with articles of relevance	
Business Horizons	Journal of Entrepreneurship
Business Review, University of Auckland	Journal of Innovation Economics
Corporate Governance	Journal of Management
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	Journal of Public Affairs Education
Erasmus Research Institute of Management	Journal of Small Business and Enterprise
Handbook of Research in Social	Development
Entrepreneurship	Journal of Social Entrepreneurship
International Journal of Entrepreneurship and	Journal of World Business
Small Business	Transaction Society
International Small Business Journal	Socio-economic Review
Journal of Business Ethics	Stanford Social Innovation Review
Journal of Business Venturing	Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal

Journals with articles of relevance	
International Journal of Entrepreneurship Behaviour and Research	Journal of Enterprising Communities
Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	Social Enterprise Journal
International Journal of Emerging Markets	International Journal of Social Economics
Public Administration Review	International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations
Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly	

Table 3. Identified Journals with articles of relevance as compiled by the authors.

In a second step these journals were then searched for articles with keywords “social entrepreneur*”, “social enterprise”, “social venture” or “social business” from the years 2005-2011. 2005 seems to mark a census, as most SE literature before appears to be based on success stories developed and narrated in an anecdotal way. Literature after 2005 started to include a much broader variety of approaches, several theoretical contributions and also more critical voices. Thus, to provide a theory based on the recent past and concurrently enabling future steps while keeping the sample size manageable, the authors chose to start with the years 2005 for their sampling. The found articles then had to pass a reflective, quantitative sort and selection criteria, based on the self computed citations count within the constant growing body of articles under review. To keep the sample of literature relevant, the authors only included articles with a citation count of at least two. This arbitrary low number was chosen as citation counts within this young developing field are generally not high (except for some highly influential and foundational articles that appear to be heavily cited) and even articles from top journals sometimes only counted for three or four citations. To validate the sorting based on the found citations, the authors were using Harzing’s “Publish or Perish” software (Harzing, 2008), which provides comprehensive statistics on journals, papers and authors.

For the classification within the framework of Burrell and Morgan, the authors were using the qualitative method of a thematic analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Methodical findings and paradigmatically relevant text fragments were explored. While the identification of the method was comparatively easy, as most papers had a section explaining the applied methods; the paradigmatic part turned out to be more sophisticated. For this the authors embarked on a deductive coding of the articles according to the constructs identified by Burrell and Morgan (see table 4 and 5) and thus reflected on the underlying paradigms (see figure 3).

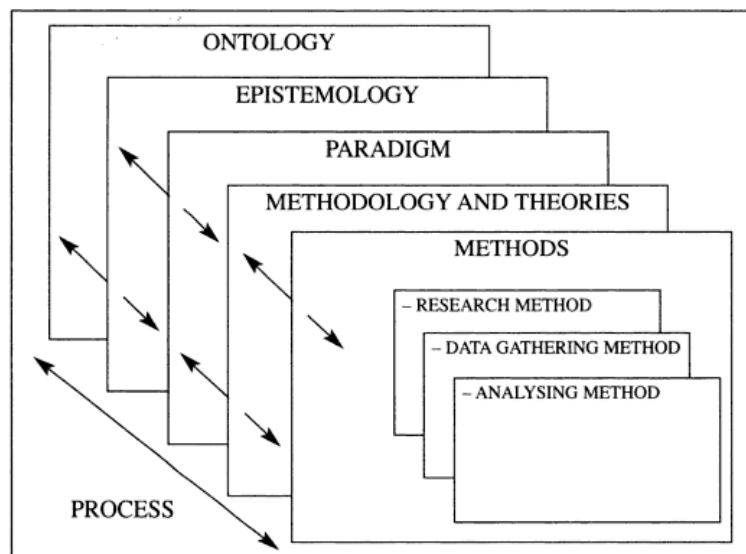


Figure 3. Interplay of Methods and Ontology (Kyro, 2003)

In addition, if applicable, applied theories and perspectives from outside SE research, especially from other disciplines were also identified. Finally, to differentiate “extraordinary research” from “normal science” in entrepreneurship (Kuhn, 1970) the authors chose to compare articles to Kuhn’s demands that authors doing extraordinary research:

- find difficulty in relating their work to existing published research studies in the field.
- demonstrate a heightened awareness of methodology and reflexivity that extends far beyond that typically exhibited in the Functionalist paradigm papers that dominate top journals.

4.1. Coding

The found articles were deductively coded to the framework by examining proxy artefactual evidence (Grant and Perren, 2002) and matching these to the paradigmatic positions as seen in Burrell and Morgans’ framework (see tables 1 and 2). The inherent meaning as well as the classification order is displayed in tables 4 and 5.

	Interpretation	Result
Ontology	Is reality existing detached from mind or a product of the individual Is reality given or a product of the mind?	
Realism	Realism assumes that the real world has hard, tangible structures that exist irrespective of our labels. The social world is separate from the individual’s perception of it and has the same hard structures as the physical world.	Objective
Nominalism	Nominalism assumes that social reality is relative, and the “social world” is built up mainly by names, concepts, and labels that help the individuals structure reality. These labels however are artificial creations, often only fully comprehended by the creator.	Subjective
Epistemology	What forms of knowledge can be obtained, how can truth and false be distinguished. Can knowledge be acquired, or must it be in-depth experienced?	
Positivist	Positivists believe knowledge to explain and predict what happens in the social world can be obtained by searching for patterns and relationships between people. They believe one can develop hypotheses and test them, and that knowledge is a cumulative process.	Objective
Anti-Positivist	Anti-positivists claim that observing behaviour cannot help one understand it. One must experience it directly and personally. In their extreme form, anti-positivists reject that social science can create true objective knowledge of any kind.	Subjective
Human Nature	Are humans determined by their environment, or do humans create their environment?	
Determinism	Plan or a	Objective
Voluntarism	"Free will"	Subjective
Methodology	How can we find out about what we believe exists?	
Nomothetic	Nomothetic M. relies on scientific methods as seen for example in physics and hypothesis testing, using quantitative tests like surveys, experiments, and standardized tools.	Objective
Ideographic	Ideographic inquiry focuses on "getting inside" a subject and exploring the background. This includes often involvement in people’s normal lives and observation.	Subjective

Table 4. Four socio-philosophical positions and their meaning (Burrell and Morgan, 1979)

In order to classify articles within the framework, the authors focused first on the single attributes such as Ontology, Epistemology, Human Nature, Methodology and the View on Society, and then matched the outcome to the corresponding paradigms (see table 5).

Paradigm		Examples from SE Literature
Interpretivist Focuses on how individuals create, modify, and interpret the world, and see things as more relativistic.	Nominal Anti-Positivist Ideographic Voluntarism Regulation	(Steyaert and Dey, 2010) (Nicholls, 2010)
Radical Humanist Same as Interpretivist, but with aspects (low threshold) of a radical view as seen in table 2	Nominal Anti-Positivist Ideographic Voluntarism Radical View	(Dey and Steyaert, 2010) (Mair and Marti, 2007)
Functionalist Examines relationships and regularities between the elements. They search for concepts and universal laws to explain reality.	Realism Positivist Determinism Nomothetic Regulation	(Korosec and Berman, 2006) (Bagnoli and Megali, 2009)
Radical Structuralist Same as Functionalist but but with aspects (low threshold) of a radical view as seen in table 2.	Realism Positivist Determinism Nomothetic Radical View	(Chand, 2009) (Murphy and Coombes, 2009)

Table 5. Paradigms as seen by Burrell and Morgan (1979) and sample occurrences within SE literature.

In order to transparently display the coding process based on the textual proxies, a sample coding is presented here as a pars-pro-toto based on two articles. The first one was later classified in the "Interpretivist" paradigm (Steyaert and Dey, 2010), and in contrast the second one in the "Functionalist" paradigm (Korosec and Berman, 2006) The samples show only some textual fragments, while in the complete process a categorical fit was only derived after several redundant occurrences of the codes in the articles. The coding itself was based on established methods by Denzin and Lincoln (2003).

4.2. Interpretivist example

As Steyaert and Dey (2010) write:

(2010: 231) "... Taking a theoretical view of research as 'enactment', this paper explores research as a constitutive act and explores a range of ways of relating with and constructing the subject of inquiry..."

Research is seen as a constitutive act, and relates with the subject.



Nominalism

(2010: 232) "... Research agendas are more than just negotiations that pinpoint potential directions for accommodating the careers of scholars; they can also be seen as political and ethical tools for considering other possible worlds ..."

The subject of inquiry is seen as hermeneutic, as being constructed.



Anti Positivist

(2010: 244-245) "... that if social entrepreneurship aims to counter social injustices, poverty, disasters or diseases at source, there is also a need to invent research practices that are able to 'match' this complexity, that are critical of the research process and that also consider how research can contribute to the ongoing enactments of different social words to increase the interventionist dimension of enactive research."

Researchers are seen to not only consider social change but also to initiate the process through their research.



Voluntarism

(2010: 235) "... Critique as denaturalizing operates on the basis of a linguistic paradigm (Deetz, 2003) that conceives of social entrepreneurship as being the product of particular social or dialogical practices (Cho, 2006)."

This displays a focus on analysis in terms of agency and structure thus being interpretive of the language.



Idiographic

The view on society of this paper was not easy to derive. While there are several hints to a more *Radical view* (e.g. calling research "dangerous", identifying intervening potential) the authors finally concluded to categorize it in the **Regulation view** as most of these hints were merely used to explain how society and individuals reflect on SE research. Matching the attributes as seen in table 5, the underlying meta-theories of the paper were thus identified as belonging to the **Interpretivist** group.

4.3. Functionalist Example

As Korosec and Berman (2006) write:

(2006: 448) "This study examines how cities help social entrepreneurship the activity of private individuals and organizations taking initiative to address social challenges in their communities."

Social Entrepreneurship is seen as being existent irrespective of any names.



Realism

(2006: 448) "This study examines activities through which municipalities support the development of programs and efforts by private individuals in their communities, and how these activities affect social entrepreneurship in their communities."

A search for patterns and relationships can help explain the world.



Positivist

(2006: 450) "A survey was mailed to city managers and chief administrative officers (CAOs) of 544 U.S. cities with populations over 50,000 during the fall of 2003 ..."

Use of statistics and large-scale surveys.



Nomothetic

(2006: 453) "We also examined correlates of the aggregate measure of municipal support. For example, we assessed the prevalence of concerns about municipal support for social entrepreneurship and their impact on that support."

The environment has an influence on the actors.



Determinism

(2006: 449) "Of course, social entrepreneurs are also expected use modern management practices in their efforts"

The view on society is on regulation and management.



Regulation

According to the framework in table 5, this article was classified as belonging to the **Functionalist** paradigm group.

4.4. Outcomes and authors' inter-coding

At the end of the coding of each article, there were three outcomes to deal with as displayed in table 6. Several articles showed tendencies to deviate in one attribute from the classification framework. Methodology for example was found to be of a qualitative nature, e.g. a case study, whereas the underlying meta-theory would have been one from Positivism and Realism. Such occurrences were then dealt with as seen in table 6, outcome 3 and it was individually examined whether these deviations were voluntarily emplaced (e.g. due to the nascent research field) or whether these can be seen as erroneous, as contradicting a methodological fit.

Possible outcome of the coding process	Steps
1. Agreement on the individual attributes between the authors.	On to classification as seen in table 5
2. Disagreement on the individual attributes.	Discussion & possible Re-Evaluation -> Decision -> On to classification as seen in table 5
3. Conflicting or inconsistent individual attributes seen by both authors.	Discussion & possible Re-Evaluation -> Examination whether approach was chosen voluntarily and documented within the article -> then either a) or b) -> a) On to classification using a "best-fit" approach. Remarks b) Classifying paradigm as Pragmatist through induction. Remarks

Table 6. Possible Outcomes of the coding process and subsequent steps

In addition, the articles were explored by the authors whether an already established theory (Ireland and Webb, 2007; Schendel and Hitt, 2007) was applied explicitly as a base and a connection to a research discipline could be made. The found theories are displayed in table 8.

5. Findings and Evaluation

Literature was identified and examined through the processes described in the previous sections and subsequently clustered, based on the criteria of Burrell and Morgans' framework (see tables 4 and 5). The emerging data was then

- a. statistically evaluated as presented in tables 7-9, and
- b. reflexively put into the context of existing literature.

In total there were 323 articles analysed. As earlier reviews on commercial entrepreneurship literature would suggest, the authors expected the majority share of papers as being classified in the "Functionalist" paradigm (Grant and Perren, 2002). In SE research however, the majority of the articles was found to be based on the philosophy of the "Interpretivists" and as such literature differs from commercial entrepreneurship and management research.

Paradigm	Count/ Percentage
Functionalist	146 (45%)
Radical Structuralist	4 (1%)
Interpretivist	161 (50%)
Radical Humanist	12 (4%)

Table 7. Classification of SE literature, N=323

Also themes and theories from different disciplines were examined (Ireland and Webb, 2007; Short *et al.*, 2009). The found themes and their relative occurrence were displayed in table 8.

Found Themes	Occurrence (+ to +++)
Innovation	+++
Bricolage, Improvisation	+++
Opportunity Recognition & Creation	+++
Strategy	++
Politics/ Institutionalism	++
Change	+++
Leadership	+
Behaviourism/ Psychology	++
Finance/ Accounting	+
Culture	+
Networking/ Social Capital	+++
Public management/ Welfare	++
Resource Based View	++
Critical Discourse	++
Management	++
Ecology	+
Public Relations (CSR)	++
Growth/ Scaling	+

Table 8. Identified theories

What was found missing for example were the role of risk, technology, experience, and education (Schendel and Hitt, 2007). Also the finance, accounting, operational research and organization management canon appears sparsely populated. Ecology however seems to have recently found its way into SE as more and more papers emerge since 2010 (Trivedi, 2010). The transformation of social entrepreneurs into more managerial oriented social enterprises and sub sequential scaling, for example through franchising (Tracey and Jarvis, 2007), is still an almost un-researched and promising field that was called for in literature.

The found data offers remarkable insights into the state of SE research, which will be explored in-depth underneath table 9. Over 20% of the articles showed inconsistencies in the classification attributes, most of the literature was using qualitative methods in data evaluation and 48% of the articles were of a conceptual nature, describing and explaining social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurial processes.

Statistics to induce further exploration	Percentage
Articles with inconsistencies between Paradigm (Burrell and Morgan) and Methods	70 (22%)
Conceptual Papers	155 (48%)

Statistics to induce further exploration	Percentage
Qualitative Methods	258 (82%)
Quantitative Methods	61 (19%)

Table 9. Emerging irregularities and peculiarities, multiple entries possible, therefore sum > 100%

A reflection of the found data onto existing research came up with the following findings:

1. Many articles can be classified within the “Interpretivist” paradigm, this is different to commercial entrepreneurship literature where most of the research can be classified within the “Functionalist” paradigm (Grant and Perren, 2002).
2. Several articles (22%) showed inconsistencies during the classification in the framework of Burrell and Morgan. While pleading for an objectivist perspective, authors were for example using ideographic methods and paying careful attention to individuals and phenomena (Lehner, 2011). While some may see these approaches as erroneous and a disregard of methodological fitness, others may find a necessary pragmatically mixed method approach, suiting the complex field of SE research (Creswell, 2009). Also, whether to use nomothetic or idiographic approaches in the social sciences, whose subjects are unique individuals (ideographic perspective), but from whom certain general properties or behaviour, according to general rules (nomothetic perspective) shall be derived, can pose a difficult challenge and has thus being taken into account in the analysis of methodological fitness (Molina-Azorín and Cameron, 2010).
3. Paradigmatical leitmotifs can be identified from a longitudinal perspective. Early literature between 2005 and 2007 is full of contradictions and inconsistencies, traditional “Functionalist” thinking is being challenged by the need of *constructional awareness*, and attempts to *derive generalization* through, sometimes inadequate, means. 2008 to 2011 saw a dawn on self-confidence in the field and several endeavours to argue critically on the construction of SE and its legitimacy. Scholars seem to have become more alert to the paradoxes of SE research (Peattie and Morley, 2008). Attempts include new conceptualizations through for example schools of thought (Hoogendoorn *et al.*, 2010) or the adoption of theories such as neo-institutionalism to find explanations. In addition 2008 to 2011 sees an increasing number of linguists, constructivists and structuralists, examining the politics and narration of SE (Jones *et al.*, 2008; Dey and Steyaert, 2010).
4. The body of literature so far rises exponentially. 2008 - 2010 has seen almost triple the amount of new journal articles compared to the numbers in 2005 – 2007.
5. While in classic entrepreneurship literature a societal view of “Regulation” is very common (Grant and Perren, 2002), SE literature also includes more “Radical” views on conflict, power, emancipation, potentiality and future. SE literature seems to be a playground for advocacy and political agendas, much more than commercial entrepreneurship. However, possibly through adverse preconceptions towards radical approaches, this view is not as obvious as for example in classical Marx and often offers itself almost subliminal on a low threshold in the articles.
6. Research purpose leads to either explorative, descriptive or causal research designs, depending on the maturity of a field and the corresponding research questions. Thus as SE research is still in its early stages (Nicholls, 2010), its literature often needs to employ explorative research designs based on qualitative strategies of inquiry due to the nascent character of the field. However, the exact interplay between purposes, fitting strategies of inquiry and methodology, and the

baseline paradigmatical assumptions need to be further questioned to derive implications.

6. Conclusion

The high percentage of conceptual papers may be seen as a sign that SE research is still in flux, searching for direction and legitimacy, and that commonly accepted theories are still rare. Some scholars from the management sciences argue that only when a *theory* has been found and research (meaning data gathering and analytical) methods are typically quantitative, only then the field gains legitimacy (Cummings, 2007). However, paradigms as well as methodological fits (Edmondson and Mcmanus, 2007) in SE literature has been shown to differ from commercial management and entrepreneurship literature. Thus, Cummings legitimacy criteria may not be applicable in SE.

While some may see the found mixed approaches as erroneous and deny methodological robustness in these papers, others may embrace them as a new dawn on how research in SE should be done. It may be interesting to see whether these approaches will hold only in a seemingly constructed field with such a divers background in theories and disciplines, or may actually reflect back on commercial entrepreneurship and management research and thus break the dominance of the “Functionalist” paradigm in these.

Literature itself suggests some reasons for the difference of SE research to commercial entrepreneurship and management that may be based on:

- the structural dichotomy between *social* and *entrepreneurship*, a tension field both dividing and fertilizing (Chell, 2007).
- SE being a *voluntarily constructed phenomenon* through narration and politics, that fails to be understood from a positivist view, as it actually is constructed (Hervieux *et al.*, 2010; Steyaert and Dey, 2010)
- the early state of the research field, as it needs to borrow qualitative methods to explore and build its theories (Nicholls, 2010).
- a paradigmatical shift in the researchers’ communities themselves, as there is a growing understanding on how to employ for example mixed mode methods in a pragmatism approach and how to look out for different contexts (Creswell, 2009; Molina-Azorín and Cameron, 2010; Lehner, 2011; Welter, 2011)

To finally answer the question on extraordinary research following Kuhn, the authors saw the following paradigmatic approach frequently in highly influential SE literature such as (Dees and Anderson, 2006; Mair and Marti, 2006; Weerawardena and Mort, 2006; Zahra *et al.*, 2009; Nicholls, 2010). This approach actually however transcends the paradigmatic boundaries as presented by Burrell and Morgan, and may as such be further examined whether it can be used as a signpost in SE research:

- Ontology: A constructivist view with some realism
- Epistemology: Hermeneutics and Structuralism
- Methodology: Interpretive Structuralism, Focus on the analysis of cases in terms of agency and structure
- Social action: Voluntarism with structural constraints.

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