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Social Entrepreneurship and Shrinking Regions paper thoughts

“What motivates social entrepreneurs to be active in promoting sustainable social services in shrinking rural regions? A case study of Greater Twente.

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Abstract

There is an increasing realisation that advanced economies are suffering from a new wave of rural depopulation as a consequence of a 'perfect storm' of rural outmigration and falling birth-rates. The issue of managed decline (i.e. rural demolition) has actively been proposed as the only inevitable solution to this issue of rural decline, but experience shows is that it is not a solution to the question of where and how to live for the populations that inhabit these condemned places. In this paper we are concerned with whether expressions of rural populations can contest policy-makers' visions for these shrinking rural regions and address the central policy pessimism. In particular, we are concerned with attempts by residents themselves in these rural areas to address the issue of loss of vital services through their own interventions. In this paper, we focus on the process of "social entrepreneurship" as a means by which local communities can attempt to address the vicious circle of rural depopulation. We focus on the issue how can we characterise rural social entrepreneurs' different kinds of motivations as a starting point to develop policy approaches that seek to support rural communities. Drawing on a case study of the Twente region, we identify nine motivation narratives expressed by social entrepreneurs. These are primarily concerned with doing useful and rewarding things, and only secondarily with embodying various kinds of entrepreneurial identity. We conclude with a typology of rural social entrepreneur motivations and its potential applications in improving rural development policy.

Key words: social entrepreneurship, rural shrinkage, entrepreneurial motivation, demographic change, rural development.

Introduction

There is an increasing realisation that advanced economies are suffering from a new wave of rural depopulation as a consequence of a 'perfect storm' of rural outmigration and falling birth-rates (Delfmann et al., 2014). In the post-war Netherlands, there has been a substantial wave of decline in outlying rural areas that saw villages hit by the loss of both population, but also the community services that provided community fabric and vitality in these places (Mak, 1996). These changes may lead to a vicious cycle of deinvestment and depopulation, undercutting and undermining the attractiveness of these places, and undermining the scope that policy-makers have to productively intervene in these places (Haartsen & Vensterhorst, 2010). It is therefore perhaps disappointing - if not unsurprising - that the issue of managed decline (i.e. rural demolition) has actively been proposed as the only inevitable solution to this issue of rural decline (ANP, 2008).

Whilst managed decline might seem like a sensible answer to a policy question, what experience shows is that it is not a solution to the question of where and how to live for the populations that inhabit these condemned places. Pattison (2004) charts the rise and belated fall of the infamous 'Category D Village' in a UK coal mining region in which 121 villages were earmarked for demolition. What brought about the failure of this regional policy was deliberate resistance from those village residents, and likewise, the plan in the Netherlands in 2008 to demolish Ganzedijk was overturned after popular resistance (DvhN, 2008). This highlights the fact that local populations in these declining areas see themselves not as victims of inevitable secular trends but as active agents seeking to shape the environments within which they win.

In this paper we are concerned with whether expressions of this actorhood by rural populations can get beyond simply contesting policy-makers' visions for these shrinking rural regions and help to address the central issue that leads to policy pessimism. In particular, we are concerned with attempts by residents themselves in these rural areas to address the issue of loss of vital services through their own interventions. We consider that the service loss facing these communities has come about through on the one hand exclusion processes from particular kinds of markets (e.g. shops' growing service areas), and on the other hand austerity-based responses from local policy-makers attempting to deal with substantive central budget cuts (OECD, 2014). In this paper, we focus on the process of "social entrepreneurship" as a means by which local communities can attempt

to address the vicious circle of rural depopulation, by creating their own service activities that maintain rural liveability, something to which the Dutch tripartite Social-Economic Council has already drawn policy-makers attention (SER, 2015).

In particular, we focus on the issue of what motivates these rural social entrepreneurs, asking the question of how can we characterise rural social entrepreneurs' different kinds of motivations as a starting point to develop policy approaches that seek to support rather than root out rural communities. Drawing on a case study of one Dutch rural region, Greater Twente, we identify nine motivation narratives expressed by social entrepreneurs, and identify that they are primarily concerned with doing useful and rewarding things, and only secondarily with embodying various kinds of entrepreneurial identity. We conclude by proposing a typology by which to better understand rural social entrepreneur motivations and explore its potential applications in developing better policy responses to the current rural depopulation problematic.

Literature Review

The concept of social entrepreneurship has been widely embraced by a range of scholars and policy makers in recent years as part of a concerted shift towards developing holistic solutions to wicked policy challenges, often referred to as the 'Grand Challenges' of the 21st century (Cunha et al, 2015). These policy issues – such as local sustainability, energy security, resource scarcity and urban mobility – represent a new class of problems in representing 'multidisciplinary messes' (Ackoff, 1999), "complex, dynamic, multi-disciplinary problems that have scientific, technical, social scientific and humanistic dimensions" (Greenwood, 2007, p. 109). Developing solutions to these problems in turn requires which involve intense collaboration between stakeholders, not only to solve the problems *senso strictu*, but to set and oversee the 'rules of the game' to encourage new kinds of actor to emerge actively proposing solutions from the bottom up rather than top-down. Social entrepreneurs can be regarded as precisely part of this new class of actor, who because of a lack of exclusive motivation by the profit instinct are able to generate fresh solutions and being together different kinds of knowledges, services and activities together in ways that add to the liveability of particular places.

Certainly, the concept of social entrepreneurship has benefited from considerable recent interest in the media and from policy-makers interested in involving new agents in

delivering societal services, with the concomitant cost savings (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Cunha et al, 2015). But at the same time, despite the proliferation of policy reports promoting its value to policy-makers, there seems to be an important limitation to its adoption as a solution to the rural shrinkage problem. The idea itself is somewhat slippery (Mair & Marti, 2006), having initially emerged as cognate to ideas of corporate social responsibility, before only later in the 1990s acquiring the connotations of social activism (Chand, 2009; Gray, 2012). Given its conceptual slipperiness, an immediately urgent question from a policy perspective becomes how can policymakers use social entrepreneurship, and to answer that question, we firstly seek to produce a more robust definition and then highlight that very little is known regarding social entrepreneurs' motivations to be socially entrepreneurial.

Towards a working definition of social entrepreneurship

The contemporary usage of the social entrepreneurship concept emerged in the late 1990s in the US and UK, to describe a new kind of phenomenon in which social activists were not merely campaigning or fund-raising but working to deliver societal services using a variety of business models. In the United States, Dees (1998) was concerned with describing the process in ways by which the dynamism of entrepreneurship was at the time transforming the economy with the emergence of the general information and communications technologies (1998). In the UK, Leadbetter (1997) sought to articulate a way to reinvent public services drawing on citizen activism and without resorting to traditional, top-down modes of service provision. Both of these perspectives are centred around the idea of entrepreneurship as providing a missing element in that solution, in Dees case the capacity for concrete action in solving societal problems, and to Leadbetter avoiding statism and bureaucracy in service provision. As the concept has evolved in the intervening 15 years, there have been new definitions each corresponding to other missing elements in particular problem diagnoses, whether the atomisation and market failures of traditional economic processes (e.g. Yunus, 2010), the lack of business nous in activists (Jackson & Harrison, 2011), or harnessing creativity and enthusiasm (Van Ham, 2011).

From this range of definitions, Cunha et al (2015) propose the following working definition of social entrepreneurship:

“Social entrepreneurship is a field of action involving different kinds of actors, in which sociocultural and historical contexts emerge as key features, where individuals, the social entrepreneurs, construct outcomes, using entrepreneurial alertness and motivation, to solve societal problems” (p. 619).

Clearly, from this definition, social entrepreneurship is cognate with and distinct from a range of other social economy concepts, particularly social innovation and social enterprise. In social innovation, the emphasis is far more on the nature of the change process by which solutions emerge (Leadbetter, 2007), whilst social enterprise emphasises the non-economic logic within which particular transactions are embedded, and the necessary underpinning institutional structure to facilitate those changes (such as companies limited by guarantee) (Reed & Stanley, 2005).

Agency in social entrepreneurship is provided by social entrepreneurs, someone actively building new concrete concerns which address existing societal problems using existing assets and capacities. The European Commission defines social entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs which “find profitable, innovative and powerful solutions for social issues worldwide, using a business methodology” and “it has to result in both social and financial returns” (European Commission, 2015). Using social entrepreneurship as a policy tool therefore in practice means influencing these social entrepreneurs, and finding ways to incentivise and stimulate their social entrepreneurship activities. This creates an immediate problem for policy-makers because social entrepreneurs are seeking to create both social and financial returns. Policy-makers seeking to use social entrepreneurship as a tool to solve social service provisions problems in shrinking regions are primarily interested in creating those social returns, yet there is also a financial dimension to those social returns. The policy problem can therefore be formulated as a tension in stimulating social service provision by agents not exclusively interested in that social service provision but at the same time not exclusively interested in creating a profitable business (the concern of non-social entrepreneurs).

The Motivations Framework

We therefore argue that what is necessary is to understand what motivates social entrepreneurs in shrinking regions to be socially entrepreneurial. If this is properly understood then policy-makers can design more rational policy intervention frameworks, which provide incentives more clearly linked to social entrepreneurs' motivations. Zahra et al (2009) argue that motivation is a key element of social entrepreneurs, and that "defining social entrepreneurship requires appreciating the motivations of individuals and groups who take the risks associated with conceiving, building, launching and sustaining new organizations and business models". Carsrud et al (2009) argue that a fundamental distinction is between extrinsic motivations, the external rewards that entrepreneurial activity brings, as against intrinsic rewards, which is that individuals find undertaking the particular tasks associated with entrepreneurship to be personally fulfilling. Despite this, there is very little actually directly written about what motivates social entrepreneurs, and despite the article's promising title, Zahra seek to argue that social entrepreneurs' motivations are complex, and the subject requires more study. There is much written about social entrepreneurs from which their motivations can - as Zahra et al indeed do, be inferred.

From Zahra et al.'s perspective (2009), social entrepreneurs are motivated by creating social value, and thereby filling gaps that emerge in social – often local needs. Seelos & Mair (2005) regard that social value as existing in part in terms of making a social contribution but also the personal rewards that flow back for that, with needs of both locality and individual filled, and both experiencing a greater satisfaction as a result. Mair & Marti (2006) point to the personal satisfaction that can be derived from making the existing situation better, taking existing assets and capabilities to create a solution to an obvious social need. Dees (1998) argues that social entrepreneurs are fulfilled by delivering a social mission of some form, and that mission displaces the standard entrepreneurial desire to create economic profits, something corroborated by Austin et al (2006). Wickham (2006) points to the social entrepreneurial valuing the benefits that others receive, such as the additional employment created, but also the personal intrinsic benefits in terms of self-improvement and understanding. Although 'local benefits' are often implicitly present in these definitions, Alvord et al (2004) argue that local pride and an intense feeling of local attachment can also play a role in motivating social

entrepreneurs. Both Bornstein (1998) and Drayton (2002) point to the importance of personal characteristics, their passion and their drive, whilst Arenius & Minniti (2005) argue that to social entrepreneurs, part of their motivation comes from a desire to identify with being an entrepreneurial person. Finally, Austin et al (2006) point to the similarities between social entrepreneurship, philanthropy and volunteering, a desire to fulfil a sense of mutual responsibility and interdependence being important in motivating social entrepreneurs.

The issue of entrepreneurial motivation is something that is increasingly explored in the literature, despite a long-standing neglect of motivation and its rapid reduction to opportunistic versus necessity-based entrepreneurs, reflecting a reality that entrepreneurs do not have simplistic motivations for starting their businesses (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Stephan et al (2015) highlight four key motivations that all entrepreneurs (not necessarily social) entrepreneurs have for starting their new businesses, namely (a) autonomy and better work (b) challenge and opportunity (c) financial and (b) family and legacy. We contend that these four classes of entrepreneurship motivation can be subdivided along two axes, namely related improving the nature of the work and who benefits from the creation of the business to the nature of the work and the benefits. The first two motivations are related to being able to do different things in ones work, either materially improving one's situation (autonomy) or making it more satisfying (challenge). The other two motivations are about the benefits of the business, either personally (c) or for a wider group of friends and family, namely (d).

These two axes provide a means to characterise the various narratives of social entrepreneur motivation set out above, and to provide a more general framework for answering our overarching research question. We make a distinction on these axes between doing entrepreneurial things and being an entrepreneur, and who the beneficiaries are, whether immediately personal or for a wider community. On this basis, we identify four basic types of motivation for social entrepreneur, each of which finds a degree of corroboration in the social entrepreneurship literature. We have labelled each of the four for the ease of reference, although the label is not a complete summary of the various motivations which that category involves:

- Pragmatism: the individual wants to be someone able through social entrepreneurship as a way to earn a living that they enjoy.
- Realism: the individual identifies with being someone that makes a living doing something that is socially useful
- Activism: the individual wants to be someone that is able to use social entrepreneurship as a means to make a difference to their community
- Idealism: the individual identifies with being someone that contributes to and improves the liveability of their community.

Table 1 below demonstrates how these four categories of motivation correspond to the various motivations set out in the extant literature. This typology would provide a means to understand social entrepreneurs, and from a policy perspective, to develop appropriate tools more specifically related to their underlying motivations. However, given that the field of entrepreneurial motivation remains relatively under-researched, and there has been almost no research undertaken on social entrepreneurs' motivation (cf Zahra et al, 2009), we argue that this typology needs further empirical validation before it can serve as such a foundation. Therefore we ask the operational research question in this paper of "what motivates social entrepreneurs in a shrinking rural region to undertake their activities, and to what extent does that correspond with a four-fold division between pragmatic, realistic, activism-based and idealistic motivations?"

Table 1 Towards a first motivation typology for social entrepreneurship

		Who benefits?	
		Personal profit	Wider community profit
Behaviour or identity	Enacting entrepreneurial behaviour	<p>Pragmatism:</p> <p>Reaching socially-useful goal delivers personal profit (Seelos & Mair, 2005; Wickham, 2006)</p> <p>Wanting to fill a gap in a market for social service provision (Zahra et al., 2009)</p>	<p>Activism:</p> <p>Working to solve community problem (Dees, 1998)</p> <p>Making a community contribution by working in partnership (Seelos & Mair, 2005)</p> <p>Rallying with others also attached to place to make the place better (Alvord et al, 2004)</p>
	Identifying with being an entrepreneur	<p>Realism:</p> <p>Pride that solution has contributed to making the place more liveable (Dees, 1998)</p> <p>Pride in making one's own locality more like the imagined ideal (Alvord et al, 2004)</p> <p>Personal satisfaction in filling market gap (Zahra et al., 2009).</p> <p>Pride in being someone who continually sees and reacts to social challenges (Drayton, 2002; Bornstein, 1998).</p> <p>Pleasure in using one's networks and connections to improve place liveability (Mair & Marti, 2006);</p> <p>Pleasure in using one's skills and characteristics to be 'the one' to make a difference (Arenius & Minniti, 2005)</p>	<p>Idealism:</p> <p>Being a volunteer or philanthropist out of a sense of wider social duty (Austin et al, 2006)</p> <p>A sense of responsibility for providing services that meet local needs (Zahra et al, 2009).</p> <p>A desire to give something back, and duty to use personal skills and characteristics to benefit local community (Arenius & Minniti, 2005)</p>

Source: authors' own design based on cited literature

Methodology

To answer that question, we use a case study of a single shrinking rural region, Twente, in the East of the Netherlands: more explanation of the case study region is provided in the following section. The case study seeks to develop behavioural understandings linked to personal decision-making by entrepreneurs in their decisions related to providing services in rural Twente. Our underlying perspective is of critical realism, that there are underlying regularities in their behaviours, and it is possible to create knowledge about those regularities, without necessarily assuming that the concepts and models we propose for understanding those regularities necessarily directly correspond to reality (Yeung, 1997; Sayer, 2000). In this perspective, “motivations” correspond to views articulated by individuals in retrospectively justifying why they have taken particular courses of action. We here make an assumption that there is a one-to-one correspondence between ex post rationalisations and the ex-ante decision-making process in order to here speak meaningfully of “motivations”, and assume that there is a regularity to the way that people make decisions that can be conceived of as a process with these regularities.

The foundation provided by the literature is insufficient to be able to develop a set of propositions linking decision-making to entrepreneur characteristics in an analytic way. The problem demands a more exploratory research, to explore the decision-making processes through which the entrepreneurs have justified their decision to behave in a particular way, namely to establish a social enterprise. We have therefore chosen a more intensive, qualitative research approach in which we are seeking to provide the research subjects, the social entrepreneurs, with sufficient latitude to express their motivations in ways that provide the least guidance in terms of expectations of what their motivations might be. We chose in particular for a narrative approach, with in-depth interviews in which social entrepreneurs talk about their experiences and reasons for being socially entrepreneurial in as neutral a way as possible, but with sufficient prompts by the researcher to allow comparability between the various interviews to develop a more general heuristic of the underlying process then amenable to a later process of extensive quantitative research (outwith the scope of this paper). The basis for the interview was

to talk through the social entrepreneurs' career to date, allowing the interviewee to identify the most important turning points in their careers.

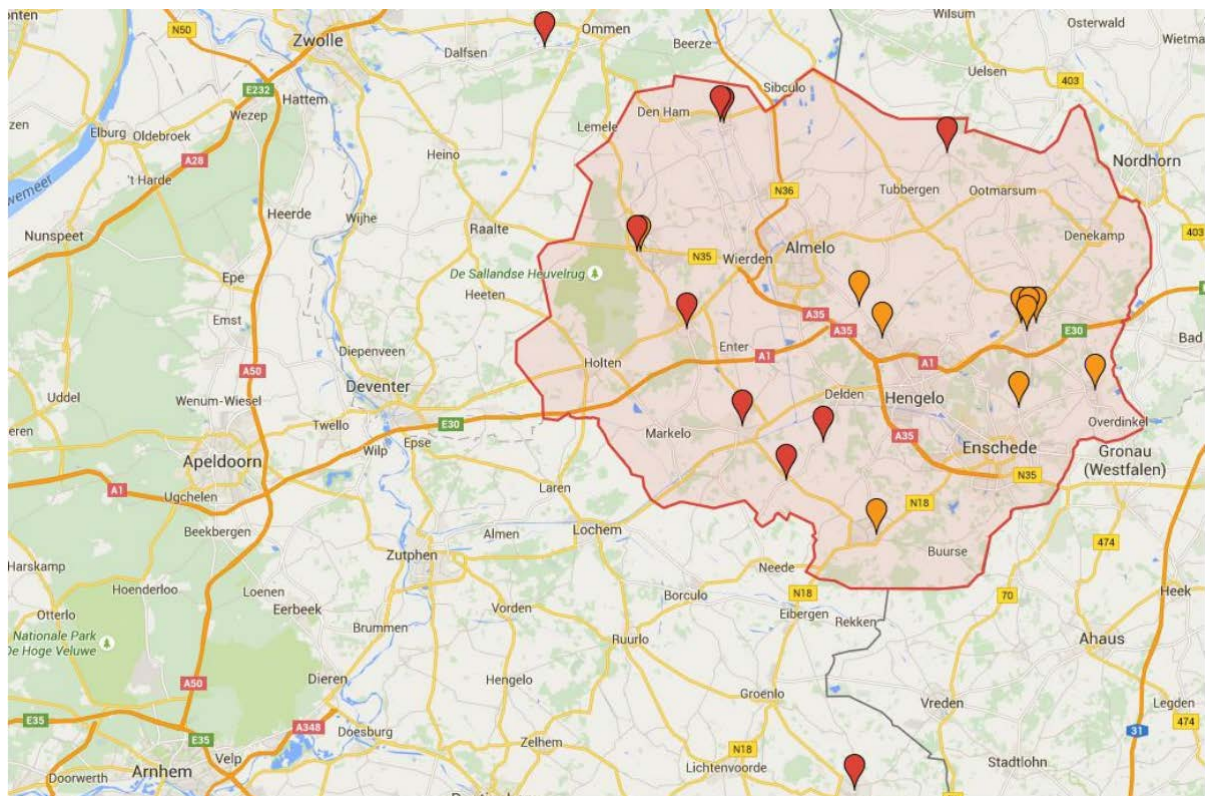
Because of the relative novelty of the concept of social entrepreneurship, and the fact that social entrepreneurs are active across a range of sectors, there was no comprehensive register of such entrepreneurs to contact. We therefore sought to identify a number of social entrepreneurs in rural Twente, in sufficient numbers to gain an overview of the underlying processes. We therefore made use of three sources, we contacted local municipalities, journalists in two local media organisations (the newspaper Tubantia and the provincial broadcaster RTV Oost), searching Google and social media for potential social entrepreneurs, as well as making use of our existing knowledge and contacts. We identified a total of 20 social entrepreneurs in the greater Twente region (because the distribution area of Tubantia and RTV Oost were wider than Twente, there were a number located in adjacent regions in rural regions similar to Twente. We contacted these 20 social entrepreneurs and asked permission to interview them, receiving a total of 10 positive responses, interviews taking place in June and July 2015. Some details about the interviewees are given below in table 2, highlighting also their location, whether in a small or large village, and whether the large village was also the municipality's administrative centre. The location of the social entrepreneurs is shown on the map below, with the orange dots indicating no interview and the red dots indicating they accepted an interview.

Table 2 The interviewees by date, type of social enterprise and location

Code	Date	Brief description	Locational class
A	02-06	Intermediate labour market cafe	Large village, administrative centre
B	04-06	Consultancy supporting other social entrepreneurs	Small secondary village in municipality
C	09-06	Youth work	Large secondary village in municipality.
D	22-06	Intermediate labour market supervision with integral training	Large village, administrative centre
E	01-07	Village store with additional services for older customers	Small secondary village in municipality

F	02-07	Vineyard with employees requiring intensive supervision	Small secondary village in municipality
G	03-07	Embroidery studio	Large secondary village in municipality
H	08-07	Intermediate labour market café	Large village, administrative centre
I	14-07	Consultancy supporting other social entrepreneurs	Small secondary village in municipality
J	15-07	Charity gift shop (without permanent single charity affiliation)	Large village, administrative centre

Figure 1 The location of the identified social entrepreneurs and those interviewed.



Map details ©2015 Geo-Basis-DE-BKG(2009), Google

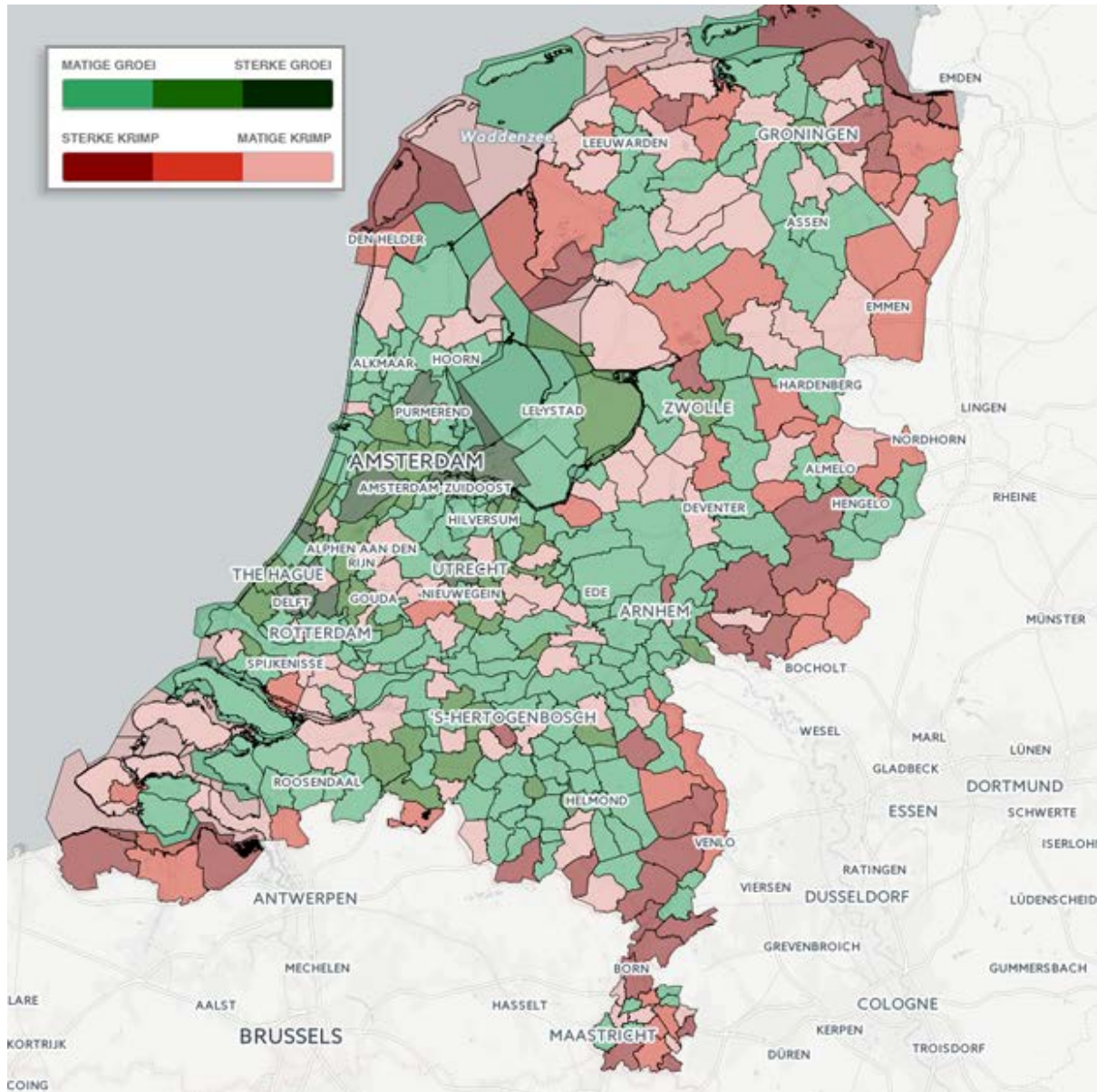
Each of these interviews was recorded and written up as a contemporaneous record of the discussion (rather than as a direct transcript). We have deliberately chosen this approach acknowledging that there is a loss of information (such as indications of uncertainty and hesitance) available in transcribed speech, as this information is not directly relevant to seeking to understand and identify social entrepreneurs' range of motivations. For each of the interviews, we identified all the points where they talked

about justifying their decision-making, and extracted a set of social entrepreneurship narratives corresponding to each entrepreneur. We then grouped similar entrepreneurship narratives and identified what we found to be 9 clusters of similar kinds of motivations, labelling each of these clusters with a short description of what appears to be the underlying motivation, shown in appendix 1. This provided a synthetic overview of the kinds of motivations of our sample which was then analysed with reference to our overall conceptual framework of the four types of motivations for social entrepreneurship. More information on the research method and analytic approach.

The case study region

The region of Twente is located in the East of the Netherlands, and has a strong division between an urban structure of six medium sized towns, and a distinctive rural hinterland (OECD, 2014). The total population of Twente is 626,000 of which around 360,000 are located in the five main urban municipalities (Enschede, Hengelo, Almelo, Oldenzaal, Borne). Immediately to the west and south of Twente are two fully rural regions, Salland and the Achterhoek (the 'back corner') which fall outside the spheres of influence of the largest towns. In the last decade, population growth has been limited to the larger towns (OECD, 2014) and majority of the rural municipalities of Twente are facing the prospect of slightly shrinkage, with Twenterand predicted to shrink by over 7% by 2030, and Dinkelland and Rijssen-Holten by more than 3% in the same period (TWIX, 2014). Recent population changes have seen a gradual reduction in the carrying capacity of these places for social services such as churches, schools, shops and other activities. There has been an active debate in Twente in these affected municipalities of how to plan for shrinkage, whether to try to resist it or instead to accommodate it and maintain these places' liveability in the face of falling populations. Past population trends have been added to by a future angst of shrinkage stimulated by a set of prognoses published by a number of government agencies that extrapolate on the basis of relatively small annual changes to create dramatic predictions of future population collapse.

Figure 2 Population change prognoses for the Netherlands, 2040



Visualisaties: Martijn Bekhuis Bronnen: Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, CBS¹

The region of Twente is a region with a long tradition of mutual support between neighbours, something which has been traced back to the need for collective action between farmers to make a living out of the thin, infertile sandy soils of Twente, referred to 'noaberschap' in the local dialect (Hospers & Van Lochem, 2002). Data from the European Values Survey indicated that people in Twente have a high propensity to be a

¹ <http://www.tubantia.nl/regio/achterhoek/prettig-leven-in-een-krimpende-achterhoek-1.5087575>

member of a club or association and to have a higher level of trust in their fellow citizens (Beugelsdijk & Van Schaik, 2005). In the face of recent local government funding reforms which have reduced overall expenditures, there is currently severe pressure on many rural municipalities to cut subsidies provided to public services in these municipalities. Although social entrepreneurship has not become part of the popular discourse as one solution for the maintaining of services in the face of declining populations, this underlying social structure appears to suggest that it is a region where social entrepreneurship could play a meaningful development role more generally. A final contextual note is to define three kinds of activities that have recently flourished because of extensive government subsidies for them (which are currently being dramatically reduced as a result of the previously named austerity:

- *dagbesteding* we here translate as 'daily activities', but refers to supervised structured activities provided to people with disabilities sufficiently severe to preclude any kind of work;
- *zorgboerderij* is a particular kind of daily activity, where clients go daily to a farm and do basic farm tasks, with the produce being sold at market prices, but with the majority of income coming from the government subsidies for daily activities.
- *thuiszorg* we translate as 'home care' and refers to social services ranging from intensive medical care, nursing and home helps to allow older people to live at home longer.

The findings

Identify nine empirical motivations for why the social entrepreneurs choose to be entrepreneurial.

Pragmatic motivations for being entrepreneurial (M1, 7, 8)

The first of the pragmatic motivations we identified for social entrepreneurship was the opportunity to be able to combine their hobbies and passions with their work. One example of this was 'A', who had worked in hospitality since her teens but had failed to graduate from their education. She had trained as a care worker but during her study was disenchanted with care and supervision for people with severe handicaps offered by existing organisations. What really convinced her to become a social entrepreneur

was when she was actively seeking work, she found the chance to combine these two passions of hers in a way that also created useful employment for herself.

“I was coming into contact with special care supervisors. I thought people weren’t being challenged sufficiently, it was pathetic...Combining care work and hospitality had always appealed to me, and with a good enthusiastic network around me, it really motivates you to get down to work”.

The second of the pragmatism-based motivations for social entrepreneurship reported by the interviewees was to be persuading others to do the ‘right’ thing by sharing knowledge and experiences with them. A good example of this was social entrepreneur D, who had a long professional experience as a consultant in labour market re-integration, namely helping people lacking suitable formal qualifications to find employment. Her idea was to work with local firms to lower their barriers to recruiting individuals with particular labour market problems. She was in part motivated by a desire to be proved correct in her belief that there was an indifference threshold at play rather than these individuals being inherently unemployable. She noted that

“We contacted a number of local businesses and we put it to them ‘you’ve got somewhere to employ these people, I don’t any more but I’ve got contacts, so can we find a way to work together in a win-win way?’ It was a few local farms and care farms, and thankfully they were willing to co-operate, and so it was a way to move these worker experience ‘projects’ into the firms themselves. And having those trainees wasn’t a problem for the firms, indeed it was a boost for them”.

The third of the motivations was the most predictable of them, namely using the social enterprise as a means to generate turnover and hence a salary for the social entrepreneur. ‘E’ was an entrepreneur who saw running a village store in a small village as a means of making a livelihood, but at the same time realised that the recent changes to home care provided an opportunity to generate income through tailoring the service to people living at home longer, and facing reduced subsidy for home helps to do their shopping.

“It’s growing, particularly the people unable to cook for themselves. We responded to the changes in the home help regulations by offering a home meals service. Municipalities still have support people to live in their own homes, but

are facing increasing cuts to their budgets, and the home meals service fits perfectly with this...that lets you offer a new product, and then you create a new source of turnover for yourself’.

Activism-driven motivations

The first of the activism-related motivations was a desire to be active in facilitating people in their personal development, whether their employers, volunteers or clients of the social enterprise. C for example wanted to work with young people who had problematic relationships with their parents and carers. C had been arrested for a number of crimes whilst younger, something C ascribed to losing his parents at an early age and being bullied; he decided to use this experience positively to help young people, their parents and also the relevant authorities. C argued that

“That is my mission, I can do many things but I can really help bridge the gap between troubled young people, their parents and the authorities. Whilst parents tend naturally to be protective, my role is different. I have to build trust. The authorities typically need a year to get that position, but I’ve noticed that with my experience and background I can build that trust much quicker, and that’s something vital for my work...I really want to give them a chance in life, that really motivates me, and it’s good for me to do that, and particularly to help the parents.”

The second of the activism-based motivations for social entrepreneurship reported by the interviewees was to be involved in creating long-lasting social contacts (social ‘glue’) between others in the social entrepreneurs’ contact circle. This was particularly evident in those social entrepreneurs who were involved in the kinds of activities which were directed towards people who through their own social situations lived largely isolated lives, and through the entrepreneurial activity creating opportunities for others to broaden their own experiences. One good example of this was a social entrepreneur who created the needlework & embroidery studio oriented towards young people with relatively limited work prospects. Her idea was to offer creative courses in the afternoon, and help develop suitable social skills in her customers, as well as creating opportunities for their handicrafts to be recognised, and to help bring them closer to other labour market opportunities. In her own words:

“It’s somewhere for my clients to meet and just get on with that. You can see that you’re filling a huge social vacuum with it, I have got volunteers in the project and they are using the experience to help themselves get back on track... for me, it’s facilitation that I’m doing, because the actual craftwork is done by guests. You get to see people leaving at the end of an afternoon with people that they’d never met before. It’s nice, people finding each other, that’s a really special thing to be able to do”.

The third of the activism-based motivations was in being someone who liked to take on a challenge and make a situation better in their judgement. H was an experienced manager who in his previous work experience had been very experienced in seeing disorganised processes and practices, and helping to reorganise it to bring it under control and work more smoothly, and he was strongly motivated by making taking often amateuristic, sloppy and haphazard efforts to sustain rural quality of life quality, and making them run more effectively and more directed to dealing with the underlying problems.

“I am now part of a business unit dealing with daily activities within [business name]; we are trying to make these activities more commercial; it was never done previously, but no it really has to happen. And of course I can really see the challenge in a disorganised mess... and then I want to sort out all the messy bits, so you can make a few additions, and it makes everyone happier. Making someone else’s job a bit easier, that’s how they experience it”

Realism-based motivations for being entrepreneurial

There was really only one realism-based motivation for being entrepreneurial, and that was articulated by a number of entrepreneurs who had wanted more than anything else to be their own boss. B was someone who grew up in a family of entrepreneurs and had always been looking for a way to start her own business. She had been working for a municipality dealing with project management, and then saw an opportunity to work as an external expert for five years on a European project for a few hours a week, and she saw a chance to then use that opportunity and income stream to set up her own business. “And then I saw this and saw my chance to set up on my own. My parents had also always had a business and I wanted to be working for myself so I got involved in the selection process”. This she did in providing advice in project management to both

social and commercial projects, and with the mix of projects was able to offer more favourable tariffs to social projects. So this desire to be her own boss in turn led her to be someone who was then in a position to help other social activists to create useful activities in her own locality.

E had always wanted to be his own boss, and to have the chance to do business. He became disenchanted with the developments in his own sector, construction, and so rejected the idea of opening a construction wholesalers. At the same time noted that urban supermarkets were increasing in size but losing the human touch, so he wondered if that would provide an opportunity to create a more relaxed work environment.

“I didn’t choose for [supermarket chain], it was just I wanted to start for myself. I looked at construction, but these big superstores were springing up everywhere. The unit used to belong to my parents-in-law and their had rented it to [supermarket chain] so that is really how I ended up doing that.

Idealism-based motivations for being entrepreneurial (M4, M5)

There were two motivations for being entrepreneurial that related to idealism, namely wanting to create social added value, and being someone who wanted to do something fundamentally good for society. As already noted, C wanted to make a social contribution by working with young people, D wanted to improve hard-to-employ people’s employability and I wanted to bring people together to make their communities more resilient. Perhaps the clearest expression of this motivation was given by F, who ran a vineyard according to the care farm model) together with her partner. She had trained as a care worker because she wanted to make a difference to society, and was now able to deliver this through her vineyard.

“I couldn’t have it any other way...if I went bust tomorrow then I’d set up another care business – it’s got to be social if I am doing it, but what is more important for me is for the business to really project positivity to the outside work. And more important again is really helping the clients; if you can take someone and really give them a purpose in society, you really help develop their self-confidence, their self-image and their social skills. It gives them a reason to get up in the

morning. And finally, it really offers you the opportunity to do things that a typical entrepreneur would never have the chance.

The second idealism-based motivation was in being someone contributing in helping others contribute to deal with problems related to service loss in shrinking rural regions, and to contribute to their hamlet, village, locality and/ or region's quality of life. I for example was concerned with improving the resilience of hamlets outside the main villages, and in particular to get people to work together to do things that replace the public services that have more recently become unaffordable. I argued that what motivated him was driven by the observation that:

“Social added value comes through residents typically living in ways that they value, and that makes the place socially and practically attractive to live...it's a real challenge to make people aware of this, to want to solve problems themselves, and then to offer them the chance to make a difference... the best is when you can set things up in my premises where other small entrepreneurs can become involved in these activities, so even if they just use me as somewhere to meet, then it's fulfilling its purpose. I really like it when these 'real' entrepreneurs end up feeling socially involved and feel responsible to being more pro-active in dealing with these problems”.

Analysing social entrepreneurs motivations using the typology

The typology proposed in section 2 provides a means to further refine the typology, and in particular to refine the particular axes along which social entrepreneurial motivations vary. Table 3 brings together the short descriptions for the nine motivations set out in the previous section as a means to reflect on those four categories, the current descriptors and the motivational axes.

Table 3 Analysing social entrepreneurs reported motivations using our proposed motivation typology

		Who benefits?	
		Personal profit	Wider community profit
Behaviour or identity	Enacting entrepreneurial behaviour	<p>Pragmatism:</p> <p>To be able to combine hobbies and passions into gainful employment</p> <p>Persuading others to take the 'right' or 'ethical' choice by persuading them through their actions</p> <p>Using the social enterprise as a means of generating a private income</p>	<p>Activism:</p> <p>Active in facilitating people to be developing themselves to better contribute to the quality of life in their local environment</p> <p>Creating connections between other people within the SE's social circle, to give others more opportunities and raise social capital</p> <p>Seeing a situation where quality of life problems are caused by existing activities being badly organised and to solve the problems by making things run more smoothly</p>
	Identifying with being an entrepreneur	<p>Realism:</p> <p>To be one's own boss, to be able to do the same tasks but to be more in control of who benefits, as well as controlling one's own work environment more closely</p>	<p>Idealism:</p> <p>Being someone who creates social added value, using one's existing skills and working around existing clients but with a new more social/ personalised approach</p> <p>Being someone at the heart of a local social movement, motivating other people to take more of an interest in themselves taking steps to improve local quality of life</p>

Source: authors' own design based on Table 1

The first of the categories, initially described as pragmatism, includes three main areas; firstly is the unsurprising extrinsic motivation, the desire to generate private income from doing good deeds, but there are also two other kinds of benefit that individuals reap, that are more intrinsic in their nature. Part of the intrinsic motivation is in finding the entrepreneurial tasks themselves desirable (where the tasks equate to hobbies and passions), but another part appears to be the satisfaction in being 'right', in persuading other people to make ethical choices. Here, our social entrepreneurs reported not that they were pleased that the people they influenced were more behaving more ethically, but they specifically appreciated being the person that persuaded others to behave differently. The dimensions of personal profit and entrepreneur behaviour are appropriate here, albeit with much wider versions of what counts as personal profit, notably where that personal profit is generated by a justified feeling from seeing other people reaping the benefits of the activity. Secondly, the definition of entrepreneurial behaviour here seems slightly different, with the emphasis on the assets here being people, rather than on finance, premises, or stocks of supplies. The social entrepreneurs seem to regard the social entrepreneurship as getting people to do different things and thereby to raise quality of life in the shrinking region.

The second of the categories is what we described as activism, which we identified as comprising three distinct elements, developing other people, connecting people together and making things run more smoothly. Just as the personal pragmatic motivation described above included an element of doing the 'right' thing, activism involves helping others to do more of the right thing. In this case, those motivated by activism appear to be using social entrepreneurship to rebuild local structures in ways that others build from. They may play different roles in this, improve the actors, improving their relationships, and improving the ways in which they interact to create services. In this case, the social entrepreneur is motivated as a kind of 'social mechanic', taking local assets and making them work better than those outside the locality, embedded in their own larger organisations, cannot appreciate, with the satisfaction and reward being derived from hearing the 'hum of the engine', as Robert Pirsig put it in *Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance*.

The third of the categories was realism, those who derived a personal benefit from identifying with a (social) entrepreneurial identity. Our interviews made this more

explicit and operational than we were able to identify elsewhere in the literature in terms of the benefits derived from being one's own boss. Part of this was the feature identified elsewhere of being able to control one's work environment more closely, to control the daily, weekly and long-term task allocation, and to spend more time doing tasks found pleasurable or satisfying. What was perhaps interesting in terms of the social element of social entrepreneurship was that another important reported element of this was the ability to dictate who benefited from the provision of the service. A number of interviews noted that they derived utility from being able to deliver a service to worthy recipients that perhaps others did not; this does have analogy in traditional entrepreneurship narratives² although this did seem perhaps more foregrounded in the social entrepreneurship narratives.

The final motivation was what we described as idealism, being someone who derives satisfaction from an identity of being a person who helps others, particularly in terms of providing access to quality of life in a shrinking rural region. There were two elements to that; firstly, was a motivation based on valuing having the personal capacity to use their other skills and competencies to create social added value for others. As well as deriving utility from delivering the particular activity – such as social care – they also derive utility from the capacity to deliver that in a more personalised (social) way. The second element was that there was a motivation of identifying being a leader of a social movement, in this case not directly campaigning on important issues, but rather motivating other people to change their behaviour, and thereby to improve the quality of life in the shrinking rural region.

In each of these cases, we see that there are 'social' and 'entrepreneurship' elements of the motivation, and we summarise them in Table 4 below.

² See for example Loebel, 2001, a Jewish refugee who became a high-technology entrepreneur, who derived enormous satisfaction from the power to refuse to sell his microdensitometer measuring devices to the then apartheid-regime of South Africa.

Table 4 Distinguishing social and entrepreneurship elements of social entrepreneur motivations

		Who benefits?	
		Personal profit	Wider community profit
Behaviour or identity	Enacting entrepreneurial behaviour	Pragmatism Social: stimulating ethical behaviour in others Entrepreneurship: creating things that changed others behaviour	Activism Social: getting others to do more of the 'right thing' Entrepreneurship: taking particular local elements and making them work more efficiently together
	Identifying with being an entrepreneur	Realism Social: widening the circle of 'worthy' recipients for a 'good life' Entrepreneurship: controlling one's own working environment	Idealism Social: being in a social movement changing one's own local environment (QoL) Entrepreneurship: using personal qualities to apply professional skills differently

The discussions

In this paper we have been concerned to address the research question “what motivates social entrepreneurs in a shrinking rural region to undertake their activities, and to what extent does that correspond with a four-fold division between pragmatic, realistic, activism-based and idealistic motivations?” On the basis of the qualitative research, we have found evidence that suggests that indeed all four kinds of motivation are evident, and form quite distinct clusters of the reported motivations. We thereby find at least preliminary evidence to support Stefan et al’s (2015) distinction between different motivations for entrepreneurship, and concur with Carsrud & Brannsbach (2011) that there is a need for greater, more systematic research into what motivates (social) entrepreneurs. On the basis of table 4 above, we highlight a number of particular dimensions – the ‘social’ dimensions of social entrepreneurship which should be included in any further analysis. We in particular contend that social entrepreneurship and its motivations need broaden its perspective wider than beyond creating a new profitable activity, to encompass a more neo-Schumpeterian perspective on entrepreneurship of making existing assets function more effectively.

From this, we can infer that social entrepreneurship is not just about providing services, but ultimately it is about getting other people to behave differently, and we see here resonances with ideas of institutional entrepreneurship, which is where actors within existing organisations persuade others to behave differently. Social entrepreneurship may represent a specific form of ‘institutional entrepreneurship’, where organisations are made to function differently by institutional entrepreneurs who remake and rework relationships, processes and connections in those organisations (cf Dorada, 2005). In that sense, social entrepreneurs in shrinking rural areas can be considered as rebuilding social institutions in ways that raise or sustain the overall quality of life in those regions. If social entrepreneurs are regarded as much as institutional entrepreneurs than as traditional ‘start-up’ entrepreneurs then that suggests there are other non-traditional forms of support that rural policy-makers might give them to encourage, stimulate and support their activity. And the direct incentives offered might also reflect these different kinds of motivations of social entrepreneurs, particularly the need to do and embody doing ‘good things’ as much as earning profit, and the opportunity to change the way things are done as much as simply delivering useful services.

Returning to the wider context within which we asked this paper, it is clear that this also has clear implications for the stimulation of local engagement to retain service provision in shrinking rural regions. But at the same time, we also note a risk that this approach brings; if the core assets of social entrepreneurship are primarily people rather than ideas, properties, inventories and machines, this raises a challenge for how to allow the failure mechanism to operate. When entrepreneurial activities fail, then particular activities are devalued and sometimes written off, with the assumption that these assets will be taken up again somehow – people will find new employment. But there are clear social consequences in simply allowing people to be written down or off simply because a social entrepreneur on a highly uncertain process has themselves failed. And likewise, in shrinking rural regions, where there are already very sparse markets providing jobs and services, such failures may prove more devastating, and so clearly one cannot expect social entrepreneurship to have a panacea effect; rather it can provide one element of a more concerted effort to prevent the outflow of different kinds of resources from shrinking rural regions.

Our caveat to this paper is that this has been a relatively small piece of exploratory research which has sought to illuminate decision-making mechanisms by social entrepreneurs as a means to better understand the significance of this new phenomenon - social entrepreneurship – for shrinking rural regions. Although we have identified and nuanced four kinds of motivation for social entrepreneurship, more extensive research is needed to understand how these function in particular contexts. A following step could therefore be the development of a validated list of criteria for social entrepreneurship motivation emphasising both the traditional and institutional elements of entrepreneurship that social entrepreneurship demonstrates which could then serve as the basis for a survey to test more rigorously what in practice motivates ‘social entrepreneurship in shrinking rural regions’.

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Appendix 1

The nine motivations for social entrepreneurs in rural Twente.

In the research method we extracted all motivations from the ten interviews in alphabetical code order, and then grouped them according to their similarity, and then allocated them to one are of the typology. Motivation 1 was therefore the first motive reported by social entrepreneur A, and motive 9 the last motive reported in the analysis, in this case by social entrepreneur H.

Motivation 1: To be able to combine hobbies and passions into gainful employment

Motivation 2: Active in facilitating people to be developing themselves to better contribute to the quality of life in their local environment

Motivation 3: Persuading others to take the 'right' or 'ethical' choice by persuading them through their actions

Motivation 4: Being someone at the heart of a local social movement, motivating other people to take more of an interest in themselves taking steps to improve local quality of life

Motivation 5: Being someone who creates social added value, using one's existing skills and working around existing clients but with a new more social/ personalised approach

Motivation 6: To be one's own boss, to be able to do the same tasks but to be more in control of who benefits, as well as controlling one's own work environment more closely

Motivation 7: Creating connections between other people within the SE's social circle, to give others more opportunities and raise social capital

Motivation 8: Using the social enterprise as a means of generating a private income

Motivation 9: Seeing a situation where quality of life problems are caused by existing activities being badly organised and to solve the problems by making things run more smoothly

The Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) is a research institute (WHW, Article 9.20) located in the Faculty of Behavioural and Management Sciences within the University of Twente, a public university established by the Dutch government in 1961. CHEPS is a specialized higher education policy centre that combines basic and applied research with education, training and consultancy activities.

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