**Community social innovation: Taking a long view on community enterprise**

**INTRODUCTION**

Communities are increasingly turning to social innovation to address challenges that impact them such as climate change, deindustrialization (or industrialization in the global south) and exclusion due to poverty, race or gender. Social innovation – the ‘creation and implementation of new solutions’ to social problems (Tracey and Stott, 2017, p. 51) – refers to the use of novel organizational vehicles, activities and strategies to facilitate change. Place-based community enterprises (an organizational form predating social enterprise) have been engaged in social innovation for over a century. In this way, community enterprises have attempted to build organizational models that emphasize the inclusion of people and places excluded from opportunities, resources or power. In this chapter, we explore the role of community enterprise in social innovation.

Communities are an important field to study with regards to social innovation. While they are seeking to create solutions and wrestle a degree of control over their destinies, communities are being encouraged to engage in social innovation by policy makers, funding bodies and more socially-oriented corporate organizations. Funders often attempt to fulfil their own social and economic inclusion agendas, believing community organizations can help achieve inclusion of the so called ‘hard to reach’. Community entrepreneurship is promoted as a means to preserve services or local assets, create wealth and to increase local resilience to global change through community control and ownership of capital (Peredo and Chrisman, 2006).

While community social innovation is promoted as a new idea, there is a long history of community organizations engaging in socio-economic change, through community economic development, that has largely been forgotten. Policy makers using communities as the proving grounds for strategy is hardly new; poor places in particular have seen waves of interventions that reflect government or foundations’ changing agendas. Community entrepreneurship is not a new phenomenon; many community enterprises have a deeply rooted and sustained relationship with particular places and, we will suggest, act as ‘anchor organizations’ providing a degree of consistency in the face of socio-economic change.

One challenge for organizational scholars studying community social innovation is that ‘community’ is notoriously difficult to define. Contemporary definitions tend to make a distinction between geographic (place-based) and elective (choice or affiliation-based) communities (Almandoz, Marquis and Cheely, 2017). Geographic definitions emphasise the combination of strong membership ties, small scale and boundedness (Marquis and Battilana, 2009). Geographic communities may well have numerous elective communities within them, such as a sports club, as well as members being part of external elective communities such as faith networks. Increasingly, technology is enabling numerous elective/affiliation-based communities (Almandoz, Marquis and Cheely, 2017), which need not be geographically bounded. In this chapter, we refer specifically to geographic communities.

Despite their current role in social innovation, and their long history, scholarly interest in community enterprises has declined in recent years (exceptions include Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Sommerville and McElwee, 2011). We see much potential for reinvigorating research and practice in community social innovation. How community organisations succeed or fail as resources wax and wane, can offer important insights.Their approaches to capital, inclusion, governance and how they manage institutional and organizational relationships are of particular interest to us.

We argue that community enterprises deserve renewed attention for the following reasons. First, they have been organizational precursors to social enterprise with a distinct role and history, and they experience similar organizational challenges and often survive for decades through the feast and famine of public policy attention. Second, as microsites of tenacious (if sometimes futile) resistance to macro change, they not only resist but proffer solutions. Third, as a consistent presence in many poor communities, they have substantial organizational memory and sense making capacity in the face of change. Finally, they support individual and collective action over generations. Taking a ‘long view’ offers ‘a rich vein of research opportunities that could reinvigorate the practice and potential of social innovation in poor places’ (Stott and Tracey, 2018, p.8).

Our aim in this chapter is to reinvigorate scholarly interest in community social innovation and community enterprise. We begin by reviewing literature on community economic development, including neglected work from the late 1970s onwards, to highlight the key debates and outline a longer view of organizational practice. We outline themes and issues and then suggest a framework for theory building in community social innovation drawing on our extensive experience of community development practice, and that of participants in our recent fieldwork.We conclude with an agenda for future research.

**2. COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE: THEORY AND PRACTICE**

## The neglect of community enterprise in social innovation research

Community social innovation can be understood as enacting social innovation at a micro, place-based level, to overcome social problems experienced by individuals or groups, many of whom are excluded. While interest in social innovation and enterprise has grown among contemporary organizational scholars, they have largely disregarded the extent to which this work happens in local communities (Stott and Tracey, 2018). Social innovation in communities has a long history that could provide researchers with a more nuanced perspective. Organizational and social enterprise researchers have paid sparse attention to the roles of local communities and places in social enterprise research (for exceptions, see Johnstone and Lionais, 2004; McKeever, Jack and Anderson, 2015).

Organizational research has not only ignored the role of communities and community enterprises but has also neglected its history. Contemporary social innovation builds on generations of interventions aimed at improving the lives of people and their communities, yet organizational scholarship rarely engages with the vast historical literature on past approaches. Certain approaches are particularly persistent and resurface in the policy landscape. For instance, social pathology approaches frame the problem as ‘diseases’ (such as welfare dependence) within particular populations, with interventions including (or often swinging between) punishment and prevention. Social planning approaches aim at systemic interventions to social problems and are usually orchestrated by the state or philanthropic foundations. Such interventions have been ‘done to’ and sometimes ‘done with’ communities (Stott and Tracey, 2018). In contrast, ‘done by’ interventions privilege the role of community members. They stem from conflict or social confrontation approaches (Rubin and Rubin, 1992) aimed to resist or revolt against oppression, neglect, or imposed change. Over time, radical traditions, such as community organising and Black Power, of the 1960s USA morphed, by and large, into social compromise approaches such as community development (Immerwahr, 2015; Purnell, 2012). Community development attempts to empower groups and communities to take a degree of control by working within democratic processes.

Community social innovation also builds on generations of organizations which aimed to transform people and communities. Most places have a complex organizational environment. There are outposts of public agencies, NGOs and charities. Numerous organizations shape community life without a physical presence, such as foundations. There are also home grown voluntary organizations, charities and not-for-profits. Most focus on providing advocacy or services and have traditionally raised income through public or philanthropic grants as well as donations or sponsorship. An alternative approach is to use grant or other income to invest in assets to deliver a sustained income through trading. In other words, this approach combines community, social and commercial logics to deliver community economic development.While community economic development and community enterprise are not the only ways to engage in community social innovation, these two approaches dominate the historical landscape, and are therefore our focus.

## Theoretical approaches to community economic development

Community economic development can be characterised as a localised (micro) response to macro social and economic change (Imbroscio et al., 2003) which attempts to stabilise, re-build and grow local economies by creating and anchoring wealth through community control and ownership of capital. While, as Soifer et al. suggest, consistent and concise definitions of community economic development are hard to find, and the ‘field has been given short shrift in the academic literature’ (2014, p.4), it is a resilient idea which has shaped policy and practice since the 1960s. While this is a neglected field, there is some significant scholarly and practitioner literature from 1970 to 2000, substantial (if largely forgotten) work on the cooperative movement, and a few significant recent contributions (Haugh, 2007). Most recent work suffers from what Cummings et al. call ‘attention decay’ - a focus on recent work and forgetting of earlier contributions (2017, p.5) from which contemporary scholars and practitioners could learn. In this subsection we provide an overview of largely forgotten work.

### *Failure and opportunity*

Debates on community economic development are frequently framed as a response to failure or opportunity. A failure focus views community economic development organisations as reacting to shortcomings of the state, market or particular social groups. Market and public sector perspectives focus on the ‘the non-existence, withdrawal or failure’ of private enterprise or public services, particularly in poor places (Spear et al., 2017, p.42). For Giloth (1998) community crises caused by events such as factory closures, are often triggers for interventions aiming to leverage social and physical capital in order to fill the gaps through trading rather than relying on philanthropy. Similarly, systemic economic shocks such as the 2008 financial crash have also acted as catalysts (Parés, Ospina and Subirats, 2017).

Another aspect of the failure focus is the tendency to view poor places, or particular groups within them , as a ‘liability’ with skill or resource deficits. This is a persistent theme in state place-based interventions such as regeneration schemes. In contrast, an opportunity focus emphasises the impact of public or philanthropic investment on stimulating activity as well as the potential for social change from within communities. So, the ‘liability’ perspective is countered by the ‘asset’ or ‘strengths’ view, which emphasises the latent skills and capital held within communities (Green and Haines, 2012; Perry, 1987).

The opportunity for social and economic change from within resonates across the political spectrum and, like the concept of community, offers something to everybody. Community economic development has been supported by communitarians, neoliberals and the utopian left alike (Amin, Cameron and Hudson, 2002). For the communitarian, it offers a self-reliant and ‘democratically active’ community, which acts as bulwark against the centralising state and the heterogeneity of corporate globalization. For the neoliberal, community economic development should engage local actors in the market by providing services for themselves, reducing over-reliance on the state. For the anti-capitalist utopian, it offers the potential for ownership of decision making and power to be held within communities, an important element of the solidarity economy.

### *Alternative and holistic perspectives*

Finding a balance between ‘commercial reality’ and ‘social idealism’ has ‘consumed considerable energy’ (Pearce, 1993, p.25) in community economic debates. We characterize two prominent perspectives as alternative and holistic. The strongest social idealist claims lie in the former, with roots in the radical groups of the English Civil War (1640-1660). For example, the Diggers advocated absolute equality, asserting that the earth was a common treasury for all. They occupied, farmed and built homes on common land (Gurney, 2017). Social idealism is also rooted in the nineteenth century cooperative movement. Robert Owen imagined villages of cooperation, a ‘complete community ideal’ producing goods to meet their own needs, supplanting the capitalist economy (Robertson, 2010, p.2).

The call for self-reliant places also emerged in black communities in nineteenth century America (Wallace, 1999), which informed later thinking on black nationalism and capitalism (Hill and Rabig, 2012). Community leaders in the 1960s began to see integration as a chimera and community economic development as ‘a concrete expression of a renewed interest in an old idea in the African American community, that of separate development’ (Halpern, 1995, p.129). The idea of autonomous places built on the principles of mutual aid, direct governance and local production was also central to the social anarchism of Peter Kropotkin (1974).

For Imbroscio, community economic development became ‘part of a larger grass-roots protest effort’, especially by marginalised groups who saw political conflict as integral to socio-economic change (1997, p.99). Such activity was a ‘challenge to the logic of capital accumulation’ (Soifer, 1990, p.250) and a means to achieve the ‘social emancipation of land, labor and capital from the competitive market’ (Bruyn, 1987, p.8). This radical mode of organization departed from corporate capitalism and bureaucratic socialism. It was a ‘blueprint for broad political-economic reconstruction’(Imbroscio, 1997, p.98); in other words, ‘reinventing capitalism’ (Halpern, 1995, p.142). Such ideas reappear in recent work on re-embedding economies within ecological systems, which argues that, to sustain life, community economies that are ethical, sustainable and local, need to replace capitalist economies (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy, 2013). The alternative perspective is also prevalent in recent social innovation literature, particularly in European and South American traditions of the social and solidarity economy - the creation of an alternative economy that fundamentally changes political, social and economic life (Laville, 2015).

The holistic perspective balances social idealism with commercial reality. It develops interventions to simultaneously tackle multiple problems. It presupposes a long term relationship between organizations and communities, and the latent potential of the community to mobilise, organize and nurture assets. It evolved as nineteenth century cooperators shifted from Owen’s ‘complete community ideal’ into what they felt was a more pragmatic ‘state within a state’ or cooperative commonwealth model, whereby cooperators built self supporting organizations within the capitalist system and therefore co-existed rather than posing a direct challenge (Robertson, 2010). This entails creating local institutions and buildings to provide employment, goods and services. The cooperative movement exemplified this approach and occupied ‘a central position in community life’ (Robertson, 2010, p.3). Rubin (1993) found that community entrepreneurs saw themselves as ‘activist community promoters’ in which their mission was one of holistic change in which ‘the equity consequences of development are as important as its profitability’ (Rubin, 1993, p.431).

A holistic approach often privileges import substitution strategies; growing your own and expanding ‘local production for local consumption’ rather than purely exporting production or chasing inward investment (Persky, Ranney and Wiewel, 1993, p.28). ‘Growing your own’ includes housing, education and social service provision as well as training and employment; in other words, social-economic subsidiarity. Holism also includes political subsidiarity - decisions concerning the community being made by its members - advocating for devolution of power from the state to localities. Recently, the idea of holism has re-emerged with the concept of “collective impact”, a term which refers to broad cross-sector collaboration to tackle large-scale social change (Kania and Kramer, 2011).

### *Organizational approaches to community enterprise*

Community enterprise, and the scholarship focused on it, has a long and largely forgotten history, which includes cooperatives, community business, Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and development trusts. In this subsection, we compare social and community enterprises, and then provide an historical overview.

Social enterprises are commonly defined as organizations that pursue a social mission using business activities to sustain their operations and mission. While social and community enterprises share characteristics (such as a social purpose and trading) there are a number of differences (Tracey, Phillips and Haugh 2005) . The most obvious being community enterprise’s relationship to a specific location. Approaches to assets and profit also differ. Community enterprises generally hold assets in trust and commit to being ‘not for private profit’, while many social enterprises do not uphold these principles. Additionally, their approaches to community development and empowerment differ. While social enterprises may benefit disadvantaged groups, they do so ‘often without prior roots in that community or constituency’ (Pearce, 2009). However, the distinctions are far from clear cut. Many community enterprises position themselves as social enterprise. This is in part due to the legitimacy currently afforded to social enterprise business models.

What constitutes a community enterprise has changed over time. However, most definitions are built around three interconnected themes; place, intent and governance. Community enterprises aim to deliver social purpose through a combination of social, environmental, cultural and economic work. They tend to have grown from, and remain rooted in, a specific locality. Their purpose is to meet the needs and aspirations of a place, through sustaining the organization over time and actively involving the community in its governance. In doing so, they attempt to build and anchor community wealth, often through physical asset development. Community enterprises,therefore are deeply embedded in place. This is especially the case for those enterprises based in rural or depleted communities, where traditional for-profit businesses do not find it beneficial to locate (Shrivastava and Kennelly, 2013). They are ‘not for private profit’ incorporating a non-distributive constraint, and surplus is retained to be re-invested for organizational development, resource acquisition or community investment such as grants (Haugh, 2007). As Hayton (1996) suggests, such criteria place an organizational ‘big ask’- to be simultaneously economically credible, deliver social benefits and involve the community often in the most challenging contexts.

### *Early community enterprises*

Historically, community enterprises - or, more broadly, social purpose organizations delivering social and commercial outcomes - have existed in different guises since the first retail cooperatives, experimental anarchist communities and Tolstoyan movement enterprises in the nineteenth century (Alston, 2013). Inspired by Kropotkin, trading anarchist colonies were established near Newcastle and Sheffield (Wyler, 2009). Tolstoyan communes set up multiple enterprises such as in electrical work and carpentry (Alston, 2013).

The early cooperatives provided a holistic solution to community needs for decades. They often focused on developing shops to provide working class communities with affordable and safe products. Many diversified into the production of goods and services (Robertson, 2010). For example, the Desborough Cooperative Society had farms, mines, brickmakers, homes, savings bank sports and education facilities (Sanders, Marlow and Marlow, 1913).

### *The rise of community enterprise*

Community businesses blossomed in Scotland from the 1970s, providing employment and training (McArthur, 1986). In England, community business has recently re-emerged. Swersky and Plunkett suggest there are three new types: public asset managers, who take control of former public assets; business savers, who take on business of particular value to a community; and community startups, which start from scratch (2015, p.9). This new wave reflects the impact of public austerity and the withdrawal of the state from many services.

A holistic approach re-emerged in 1960s USA with CDCs and in the UK with development trusts - developing housing, ventures and social projects. The literature on CDCs, the ‘central institution in the theory and practice of community economic development (Simon, 2001, p.119), highlights the dilemmas of the ‘big ask’ enshrined in definitions of community enterprise. Most were set up in communities with crumbling infrastructure, abject housing, poverty and crime. The intent was expressed through a philosophy of holistic development’ and the ‘logic of joining physical and social development’ (Rubin, 1995, p.146). Housing was seen as the ‘economic engine’ to create jobs, homes and ventures, as well as a means to democratize expertise and control. They ‘positioned the neighbourhoods they represented as corporate entities, prepared to borrow money and finance professional housing and business development’ (Rabig, 2012, p.249).

Rubin saw CDCs as niche organizations which brokered links with capital and political power; bridging roles ‘to reconcile commercial and ideological goals of bringing about community empowerment and local economic transformation’ (1995, p.128). While the first wave of CDCs were overtly political, often the practitioner arm of Black Power movements (Purnell, 2012), subsequent generations focused on building alliances to achieve their missions.

CDCs legitimacy rested on community participation. This proved difficult and was ‘always tempered by some measure of elite control’(Immerwahr, 2015, p.162). They excelled in using the community participation requirements of other agencies to ‘insert themselves forcefully’ into decision making, by threatening to block development (ibid). CDCs rapidly became an agent of state welfare delivery. In doing so, they became third party bureaucracies and political actors. Their managers and board became accomplished lobbyists, exchanging votes for contracts (Marwell, 2007). In Boston, CDCs ‘superseded elected local politicians’ (Levine, 2016, p.1268) as the legitimate representatives. They negotiated directly with state and national government.This constituted a clear challenge to local representative democracy.

Development trusts emerged through protest or regeneration schemes. In the UK, citizen campaigns led to the formation of iconic development trusts such as Westway (1971) and Coin Street Community Builders (1984). Westway leased land under the motorway that ripped their community apart. Coin Street Community Builders were gifted land on London’s South Bank after they helped to prevent a hotel and office project.

CDCs and development trusts succeeded by building asset portfolios. Community ownership and management were seen as fundamental to anchoring wealth within poor places. Assets became independent sources of income and a means to cross subsidize other projects. Much of the property acquired was marginal land and buildings, such as redundant public assets. It took ingenuity and perseverance to make them fit for purpose and financially viable. As CDCs and development trusts became proficient at managing asset portfolios they increasingly raised capital to deliver complex projects such as housing refurbishment. The success of CDCs, like Bedford Stuyvesant and development trusts like Coin Street, became powerful exemplars for the movement and, laterly, for government (Hart, 2010).

# 3. COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE: THEMES AND ISSUES

In this section, we outline two themes that emerged from our review of the literature. First, community enterprises are organizational precursors to social enterprise and so, a critical look at past literature can provide insights for contemporary research and practice. Second, collective action is an effective way of supporting the marginalised. Sustaining collective action over generations is challenging, but can have real benefit, albeit subject to the boom and bust of successive funding initiatives.

## Learning from past community enterprises

### *Myopia and sugar-coating*

In creating a new category and persuading others of its validity, boundaries are demarcated (Jones et al., 2012). When a new category, such as social enterprise, is foregrounded, the potential learning from older categories can be overlooked. We suggest that such myopia infuses the history of community and social enterprises. While social enterprise research is relatively new (Battilana and Lee, 2014), the long history of *community* enterprise is rarely acknowledged. An instance of this ‘myopia’ can be seen in the supporters of early Scottish community business who rejected the cooperative model, believing it to privilege economic over social objectives (Hayton, 1983). However, they overlooked the fact that cooperative movements sustained themselves at scale, and delivered much more than economic benefits. Such myopia can lead to unnecessarily long learning curves and even organizational failure.

Social and community enterprise scholars have a tendency to be ‘uncritically laudatory’ (Loxley, 2007, p.1) at best, ‘weak in method, atheoretical, ahistorical’ (McCulloch, 2000, p.397) at worst. The problem seems to be that activists exaggerate potential and achievement. The word ‘community’ can be ‘used as some sort of shield’ and therefore community enterprise is held as ‘above criticism’ (Hayton, 1996, p.18). Furthermore, the literature is ‘produced by enthusiasts and is characterised by an absence of critical appraisal’ (McArthur, 1993, p.222).

Such myopia and sugar-coating has led to recent social and community enterprise literature privileging the role of the entrepreneur or the community (e.g., Haugh, 2007, Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). If we take a longer view, it becomes clear that the origins, and subsequent boom and bust, of successive generations of community enterprises are as much the result of political and philanthropic attention as they are of the efforts of individual enterprises or communities (see Immerwahr, 2015). Community enterprises’ origin narratives often emphasise activist responses to events, particularly injustices or problems (e.g., Pearce, 2009). However, establishing a community enterprise is rarely a spontaneous event. It usually stems from decades of activism, as well as having been orchestrated by external actors such as the state, foundations and support organisations. For instance, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation was built on the activism of a coalition of ninety community organizations, yet its launch was due to the alignment of the political and philanthropic objectives of Robert Kennedy and the Ford Foundation (Purnell, 2012).

### *The struggle for legitimacy and sustainability*

Powerful stakeholders frame the expectations of community and social enterprises through their funding policies, which emphasise measurable impact. Therefore, there is the temptation to over-promise impact. Funders buy into the belief that social enterprise can deliver social, economic and environmental impact simultaneously. However, ‘reality can be dramatically different than the ideal’ (McArthur, 1993, p.229). A central problem has been the weight of expectations around empowering the poorest communities while creating jobs, wealth and opportunity. In order to survive, many community businesses found niches that did not require much capital or expose startups to competition, but also did not deliver much return, therefore ‘low pay was endemic’ (Hayton, 1996, p.15). While Hayton found that employees were positive, their situation was inherently precarious as many community businesses struggled to break even and relied on fresh injections of state support to survive. Both employees and the wider membership were rather passive. Managers talked the engagement talk, but sidestepped it in practice, as their energies went into trying to run viable businesses. Hayton concluded ‘the fault may lie with those promulgating the concept [of community enterprise] rather than the businesses themselves’ (1996, p.8). The problem, therefore, can be linked to overblown expectations and the idea that hybrid organizations in poor places can deliver change alone.

The idea of social enterprises as hybrids, managing the tensions between commercial and social logics, is foreshadowed in the community enterprise literature (e.g., Wallace, 1999). Organizations that fail to achieve a balance, compromise their legitimacy. Hayton’s (1996) research illustrates the perils: too much emphasis on a social logic puts financial sustainability at risk; increased commercialism puts community relationships at risk. Rubin revealed ‘economic and administrative fragility’ as isomorphic pressures from funders led to value conflicts in balancing efficiency with empowerment; technical and financial dependence with autonomy; and the temptation of quick, top down, neighbourhood uplift with community participation (1995, p.134). For Rubin, the issues began when CDCs chased funding or public contracts rather than the social problem (ibid.). Hayton suggests the only way to maintain autonomy and balance objectives is to include activities from which higher profits can be made, higher wages paid and more money spent on community projects’ (1996, p.18).

In lauding social and community enterprise, scholars have largely neglected organizational failure (Tracey and Jarvis, 2006). We can learn significant lessons from examples of operational and financial decline. Failure is often in the eye of the beholder, and it is important to acknowledge the differing measures of success of various stakeholders. As is often the case, in the Scottish 1980s evaluation reports, community businesses sustaining themselves with public funds were seen as failures (McArthur, 1993). Yet, they still provided key services to impoverished communities.

It could appear that community enterprises are destined to struggle, given the weight of expectations on them, including the imperative to build profitable businesses in poor places, where others have failed. Community businesses have tried to overcome this by creating niches which, unsurprisingly, return low profits, precipitating financial crises (McArthur, 1986). We can learn from the experiences of CDCs who, in making niches viable, also made them attractive to the private sector, leading to competition and ultimately financial failure of the CDC venture (Halpern, 1995). Yet, if local people still received the goods or service, it could still be considered as a successful outcome, even if taken out of community ownership.

Funders and support agencies often advise on what ‘works’, and community enterprises mimic each others ‘successes’. Unfortunately, the business models promoted are often financially marginal from inception when operating in low income places. Until CDCs expanded their areas of benefit, building businesses in more affluent areas in order to survive (Halpern, 1995) - a strategy echoed by UK development trusts in the 2000s - financial survival without public or philanthropic support had often been an illusion.

Community enterprises need to achieve legitimacy within their communities. Often, the issues facing such places are so pressing, community enterprises feel beholden to confront the state and local elites. Yet ‘legitimacy in the eyes of the state’ can impact on organizational survival (Minkoff, 1993, p.890). Minkoff found significant difference in the life chances of those who challenge the state (ibid). How community enterprises manage legitimacy across multiple domains is not well understood. Again, a long view can provide insight. For example, Rubin’s (1995) research showed that while most early CDCs benefited from state support, they became increasingly confrontational as the pace of change seemed inadequate for the challenges they faced. In time, CDCs began to balance confrontation and conforming - the former to keep the ‘change agenda alive’ and latter to keep the ‘organization alive’(Rubin, 1995, p.139). They often undertook challenges in a ‘veiled fashion’ usually through coalitions (p.140), which included ‘campaigns of resistance to funder pressure ’and ‘preemptive campaigns’ (p.153).

The role of membership organizations, coalitions and networks has been neglected in recent community and social enterprise research. Ostensibly, such organizations provide peer support, technical support and promotion of the model to others. However, it is apparent that they also advocate, lobby and confront powerful institutions. We suggest they are also instrumental in creating, and building legitimacy in, concepts such as social enterprise. The cooperative movement was an exemplar of integrating action, education and promotion from the local to national level (Robertson, 2010). ‘Cooperative missionaries’ spread the message from town to town (Sanders, Marlow and Marlow, 1913). Cooperators traded with each other, built new enterprises collectively and provided support through funds, education, campaigns and, in the UK, creating a political party. Crucially, they built and sustained an environment in which cooperatives were seen as legitimate. Getting close to power can be advantageous. However, as many support organizations rely on state or foundation financial support - directly or through contracts - reliance can also lead to conflicts of interest or tensions between the needs of their members and funders.

## Learning from collective action

### *Micro-resistance to macro-change*

A central premise of community economic development is that micro-action can make a difference in the face of macro-changes, but to what degree this is achievable is contentious. Community enterprises are embedded in place, and action is enabled or constrained by local, national and global institutions. We lack a nuanced understanding of the microfoundations of place-based social action as well as the impact of different institutional contexts. We lack understanding of how place-based social action is enabled or resisted by more powerful actors, and the collective action required to overcome such resistance.

There are oft-repeated claims that community enterprise is effective in ‘addressing exclusion problems in the most severely disadvantaged inner city areas’ (Spear et al., 2017, p.41) and has substantially tackled poverty at a local level. Yet, numerous studies have highlighted the marginal impact of community enterprise in alleviating poverty (e.g., Hayton, 1996). Even well funded flagship community enterprises have been questioned. The Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, ‘the nation’s test case for creating private-public partnership to combat urban poverty failed to reduce poverty rates significantly’ (Purnell, 2012, p.236). Following experimentation with community enterprises in the UK, Community Development Projects came to the gloomy conclusion that local action was largely ineffective in the face of structural change in the poorest communities (CDP, 1977).

Some see community enterprise as a piecemeal, patchwork and particularistic approach rather a universal solution (Amin, Cameron and Hudson, 2002; McCulloch, 2000). For Gunn and Gunn, it is simply a mismatched fight; and in confronting capital, communities ‘do so on their knees’ (1991, p.2). Porter considers community entrepreneurs misguided, as they ‘treated the inner city like an island isolated from the surrounding economy and subject to its own laws of competition’ (1995, p.55). There appear to be ‘clear limits to what can be achieved at the local level’ (Tabart, Fulton and Clark, 2001, p.14). The impact of community enterprise has been underwhelming and even overstated at times. This is, in part, due to the weight of expectations placed on such organizations and a proclivity to over-promise impact to secure funds. However, it is important to remember that, for many places, the ‘fragile’ strategies of community enterprises are vital (Halpern, 1995, p.145). What critics often overlook is the ability of organizations to sustain communities through ‘long, despairing decades’ in ‘neighbourhoods that had been abandoned and denigrated by others’ (Rabig, 2012, p.265). Impact that may appear negligible can, in fact, be preventing further community deterioration. Another problem is that most metrics are blunt instruments which fail to capture the everyday interactions between an organisation and its community. Even small acts hidden from view can be hugely beneficial to those experiencing hardship.

### *Mobilising resources*

Community and social enterprises’ ambitions to tackle social needs often outstrip their capacity to deliver. To overcome constraints, organizations attempt to leverage others’ resources, from both within and external to the community (Perry, 1987). To mobilise resources, community enterprises adopt a variety of strategies, including: shared projects with external actors; building governance structures that include varied local constituencies; securing external political patrons; and maintaining strong social networks with beneficiaries (Vermeulen, Minkoff and van der Meer, 2016).

Balancing community needs with those of external actors can create significant legitimacy challenges as compromises are invariably made. Logan and Molotch described how early CDCs abandoned insurrection and were ‘tamed’ and ‘incorporated’ by powerful local elites (1987, p.139). Moreover, they built ‘turf and institutions’ which they then defended (ibid.). But, as Simon (2001) argues, community economic development is designed to be defensive and remedial. CDCs also learned that direct confrontation usually hurt the organization more than the target. They recognised that protecting turf, at the expense of others with equally depleted environments, was counterproductive. To achieve their objectives they turned to creating coalitions within the community, between CDCs and other advocacy organizations as well as building relationships at all levels of government (Perry, 1987).

CDCs and development trusts are often portrayed as ‘community anchor organizations’ which secure wealth and opportunity within localities (Henderson, 2014). Pearce (1993; 2003) envisaged ‘core’ community enterprises which would build and support other community groups and broker connections with the state and private sector. For Henderson and McWilliams, community anchor organizations build ‘a viable organization and sector’ while committed to ‘sustaining an egalitarian, progressive social vision’ and empowerment (2017, p.7). Henderson argues that community anchor organizations can lead on ‘highly localised’ service design and delivery, and related local economic, social and democratic developments’ (2015, p.1).

The idea of community anchors increasingly resonates with community organizations and the state. The former seek legitimacy and resources, the latter aim to save resources and reduce liabilities. It is prominent in Scottish debates on the future of public services and may become a focus of social policy elsewhere. Yet the idea, practice and implications of community anchor organizations has not received much scholarly attention. While an attractive concept, we are concerned that such an all-encompassing notion of the community anchor organization can lead, yet again, to unrealistic expectations.

Community enterprises that have survived for decades tend to have a land and property portfolio. Asset transfer and development have become integral to many community organizations’ strategies, and are promoted by government. However, land and property are not necessarily assets. Many of the assets offered to today's community enterprises are ones which other organizations could not sustain. Location, cost of capital, the potential to generate income and external change can impact on viability. For example, Coin Street’s success has been, in part, due to rising land and property values on London’s South Bank. Westway made use of marginal land under a flyover and built a leisure complex, but financial success may well be due to gentrification of the surrounding area. There is a paucity of research on community enterprise asset portfolios performance and the impact on organizational sustainability.

Cross-sectoral partnerships are perceived as essential in tackling complex problems, yet creating and sustaining them is an inherently difficult process (Bryson, Crosby and Stone, 2006). Long standing community enterprises have experienced the trials and tribulations of myriad partnerships, and ‘partner disillusionment’ when they fail (Le Ber and Branzei, 2010). In addition to this, ‘community disillusionment’ arises when promises are not delivered. External relationships and resource mobilization are clearly important for community enterprise. Therefore, we suggest that, to achieve sustainability, they must develop a repertoire of knowledge, practices and values for navigating the ever changing external landscape. There appears to be untapped knowledge within long-standing community enterprises that could provide insights for contemporary practice.

How community enterprises survive over time is not well understood. Sustainable revenue from assets is seen as crucial (Tracey, Phillips and Haugh, 2005). While assets are important, other factors emerge from our ongoing fieldwork: the patience and effort required to build and sustain relationships; rebuilding relationships among the changing external organisational landscape; and bringing partner projects to fruition (Stott, Fava, Tracey and Claus, 2018). Some of our respondents demonstrate the ability to shrink to a sustainable core when resources are hard to find and remain poised to take advantage of opportunity. The significant factor is the ability to sustain collective action over time. To do so, community enterprises must maintain community and external legitimacy through feast and famine, pass the organizational torch from generation to generation and maintain a committed and resilient cadre of activists. Mature community enterprises exhibit a wealth of community and organizational knowledge and have developed the mechanisms to capture and communicate it over time.

# 4. A COMMUNITY SOCIAL INNOVATION TYPOLOGY

In this section, we adapt Tracey and Stott’s (2017) framework for conceptualising social innovation - social entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and extrapreneurship - to *community* social innovation (see table 1). We draw on our current fieldwork with community enterprises to illustrate the concepts of community entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and extrapreneurship. Through our fieldwork, we have witnessed the tenacity and creativity displayed by community enterprises, who need to adapt over time, with limited resources, in some of the most challenging places. We suggest that to overcome these challenges, community social innovation organizations must be simultaneously entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs and extrapreneurs.

*Table 1: A Typology of Community Social Innovation*

(Adapted from Tracey and Stott, 2017)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Community Entrepreneurship** | **Community Intrapreneurship** | **Community Extrapreneurship** |
| *Definition:* | Process of creating and growing not for private profit ventures and projects, where the motivation of the entrepreneurs is to address challenges within a specific community | Process of addressing challenges with community partners, including community groups and organizations | Process of cross sector work which facilitates alternative combinations of ideas, people, places and resources to address community challenges |
| *Approach to social change:* | Creates change through the founding, development and maintenance of community organizations | Creates change by leveraging the resources and capabilities of individuals, groups and organizations located within the community | Creates change through platforms that support collective effort and by partnering with organizations outside the community |

## Community entrepreneurship

Community entrepreneurship is largely concerned with creating and sustaining community enterprises. What is clear from our fieldwork is that community enterprises, particularly long standing ones, spend considerable time and effort in leveraging their own resources and capabilities within a specific locality to make change and respond to shifting circumstances.

For example, the Shorefast Foundation operates social enterprises, including the Fogo Island Inn, in Newfoundland. Shorefast has found ways to draw on community traditions and assets to find what it calls “new ways with old things” (Slawinski, 2016). Using asset-based community development, Shorefast discovered through extensive interactions with community members Fogo Island’s most important assets and found novel ways to leverage them. Recognizing that quilt making and rug hooking were declining yet defining traditions, Shorefast decided to include locally-made quilts and hooked rugs in every guestroom of the Inn. In addition to creating jobs, the Inn distributes its surpluses back into the community.

## Community intrapreneurship

Within organizations there is constant debate between stakeholders - staff, board and members - on what should and could be done. Social needs often outstrip organizational resources. Prioritization is a daunting process when up close and personal to the plight of community members. We suggest that, in delivering local action, community intrapreneurship - usually characterised as an internal process - alsospills out of the organization, to leverage the resources and capabilities of other groups and organizations in the community. This could mean partnering with existing groups or organizations, or helping to create new ones. It also includes building relationships within the community to leverage expertise, time and commitment to the organization in other forums such as local political and governmental organisations.

For example, development trusts like Goodwin (Hull) and Central Halls (Glasgow) provide seed support to local people wishing to set up activities such as youth work. The Fogo Island Inn relies on supporting services such as eco-tourism products and local food producers. Shorefast started a micro-lending fund to incubate local businesses that could support tourism. Community intrapreneurship of this sort is now framed as ‘community anchor’ work by some practitioners, but appears to have a much longer history and is integral to the practice of community enterprise.

## Community extrapreneurship

Community extrapreneurship refers to the process of cross-sector work that facilitates alternative combinations of ideas, people, places and resources to address community challenges. It may be assumed that community enterprises lack the capacity to engage in extrapreneurship, but it appears to be ‘integral to micro-organizational practices and vital to survival and impact’; those organizations which ‘build complex relationships, influence, and power locally are likely to be most effective in addressing deep-rooted social problems’ (Stott and Tracey, 2018, p.12).

Shorefast has partnered with organizations outside the community to promote its social mission of “cultural and economic resilience for Fogo Island”. For instance, the Fogo Island Shop, another of Shorefast’s social enterprises, partnered with design retailer in major centres to carry the Shop’s line of high-end locally created furniture, and to promote Shorefast’s Economic Nutrition Label which provides consumers with a breakdown of the impact they are having on the local economy. Five community enterprises in Glasgow have recently created a cooperative to collectively bid for city-wide contracts to improve employment prospects for their beneficiaries.

We see the typology as an analytical tool, with which to question, problematize and investigate the practices of community social innovation. The typology enables researchers to look separately at three strands of practice, understanding the role of each and how they contribute to the whole.

# 5. A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR COMMUNITY SOCIAL INNOVATION

In this section, we suggest avenues for future research. In particular we look at how community enterprises can provide a useful context for extending social enterprise research and organizational theory more generally. We then examine methodological considerations for such research.

## Moving the research agenda forward

### *Building on the community social innovation typology*

The framework above may be a useful way to take community social innovation research forward. Research on community entrepreneurship could be further developed. We would like to see more longitudinal and historical studies, to understand how enterprises form, adapt to, decline or weather external macro changes. Broad studies would also be useful to ascertain what constitutes success and failure from multiple stakeholders’ perspectives. Further to this, most research has focused on the global north, yet community entrepreneurship is a worldwide phenomenon. There is therefore a need to examine community enterprise in other geographic and cultural contexts. Many questions remain. How do different contexts influence the emergence and spread of community enterprises, and how do they respond? When is community enterprise an expression of local needs and aspirations, and when is it imposed by the agendas of foundations, powerful international actors or self interested funders? What difference does community enterprises make, and how do they function in situations of extreme poverty?

The other two types of community social innovation in our framework - intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship - have received less attention, and opportunities are ripe for research. More research around intrapreneurship would shed light on how enterprises partner with others in the community. In particular, it would be beneficial to look at how new organizations are created, and how they build effective and supportive ecosystems, especially in the context of specific communities facing resource constraints. For example, a recent study by Pret and Carter (2017) closely examined how niche entrepreneurs manage relationships with competitors in order to ensure the most value for their communities. A new area of research would be examining the role of community enterprise members in brokering relationships through their membership of other local organizations. Also, future research could examine how organizations perpetuate themselves over generations by nurturing future activists.

Finally, research on community extrapreneurship has been limited. Little is known about the processes involved in partnerships between community actors and outside actors, particularly across sectors. Yet, such partnerships are critical for attracting resources and for building legitimacy. Research on cross-sector work is a promising domain which has begun to examine practices that enhance collaboration and impediments such as goal conflict (Selsky and Parker, 2005). Further research on how community enterprises build and sustain trust, leadership and legitimacy (Bryson, Crosby and Stone, 2006) through cross-sector work would be of great utility to practitioners.

### *Taking a long view*

As this chapter has argued, organizational and social enterprise scholars have taken a rather myopic look at social and community enterprises, virtually ignoring the long history of community social innovation, and the role of community enterprises as precursors to today’s social enterprises. Some of the gaps in the literature we discussed earlier may be addressed by taking a long view. Indeed, as Cummings et al. noted, ‘more history rather than less could promote innovation’ through generating a plurality of ideas, challenging assumptions and overcoming dominant logics (2017, p.4). Taking a long view of community enterprise, including the institutional environments in which community and social enterprises emerged, changed or were maintained, may provide rich opportunities for research on hybrid organizing, institutional work and other areas of organizational theory. Given the longevity of some community enterprises, particularly cooperatives, one area that is ripe for future research is the wealth of organizational memory - community knowledge, history and collective sensemaking - in older organizational forms. There are rich opportunities to study cooperatives longitudinally, given their long histories and archival resources.

Taking a long view also exposes the numerous challenges faced by community enterprises over the past decades. In such research it remains important to maintain a critical perspective, to avoid sugar-coating the past. More work is needed to avoid the tendency in current research of being excessively laudatory. There is a need to temper the uncritical research produced by enthusiasts. A more balanced account of challenges and failures could also inform social enterprise practitioners, organizations and other institutional actors who support social enterprise.

The social innovation zeitgeist is embraced by the public, corporate and social sectors alike. However, there is a danger of overlooking the potential for resistance to arise when the social sector grows to a point at which it challenges the state or corporate sector. There are historical precedents for this. In the 1920s, the UK cooperative movement experienced significant resistance from business and political leaders. Co-operatives achieved financial success, captured local consumers and espoused the participation of working class people. Co-ops were then deemed to be undermining local competition and capitalism as a whole, and were seen as a harbinger of class conflict (Killingback, 1988). More recently, there have been examples in which strong partnerships between community enterprises and the central state have been seen as a threat to local government, perceived as undermining local democratic processes, as with CDCs (Levine, 2015). Further historical research on resistance to social change at micro and macro levels can provide salutary lessons for contemporary practice.

### *Understanding the role of place in organizational scholarship*

Scholars have recognized that organizations are ‘simultaneously embedded in multiple environments’ (Marquis and Battilana, 2009, p.295) including local, organizational and transnational fields. Research on community enterprise is an ideal context for studying the role of place in shaping organizations, and indeed to understand how communities are shaped by organizations, and vice versa (Elmes et al., 2012). Such research could extend the efforts of scholars who have argued that organizational research is lacking contextualization and who call for organizational research on place (e.g., Shrivastava and Kennely, 2013).

Organizational scholars have recently taken a greater interest in studying grand challenges, such as climate change. These are often experienced more acutely in poor communities, who suffer the direct impacts. It is in these communities that we feel the most fruitful avenues of research lie, as they must deal with the immediate reality.

## Methodological considerations

The research agendas outlined above indicate a need for more detailed knowledge about the ways in which community enterprises engage in social innovation. Negotiating local power structures is a major challenge facing community organizations, particularly when dealing with large scale or powerful stakeholders, and when there are conflicts of interest or differing measures of success.

### *The importance of taking a relational view*

We propose that further research into inter-organisational relationship management can inform and support the practice of community and social entrepreneurs. Critical resources exist beyond organizational boundaries and are embedded in others’ complementary capabilities and ‘knowledge sharing routines’ (Dyer and Singh, 1998). However, our knowledge of this ‘relational view’ is limited (Hampel, Lawrence and Tracey, 2017).

Such relational dynamics are key to understanding the success and longevity of community organizations, but can prove slippery subject matter for researchers. Qualitative evidence in this arena contains much room for ambiguity and ‘sugar-coating’. Learning from people’s experiences is key, but there is likely to be a blurring of boundaries between the personal and professional lives of those who dedicate their lives to community development. Personal accounts can be very insightful, but also differ in regard to the same events. Participants may feel inhibited, omitting sensitive information or negative experiences. They might select episodes that paint their organisation in a favourable light. This is especially true when the contributing to case studies in which their organisations are to be named.

For these reasons, we anticipate a need to go beyond conventional modes of discovery, in order to gain more nuanced understandings of the relational aspects of community enterprise. Doing this means acknowledging the varying ways in which communities, organisations, and those in their broader contexts, perceive themselves and each other. How multiple actors construe their own and each others’ roles is key, as it can provide important insights, such as their differing measures of success. But this is enmeshed with how individuals *feel about* those roles and their performance: how roles fit (or do not fit) with their values (Lok et al., 2017). Recognising the place of emotion in motivating individuals (Pinder, 2014) can help us understand organisations as complex ‘emotional arenas’ (Fineman, 2000) in which needs, values and aspirations influence choices and behaviours at every level. How something ‘feels’ to a certain group can be a valid inquiry for organisational research, for example, fear can play an important role in motivating employees to remain in unjust employment relationships (Fineman, 2000, p.268).

### *Slow research*

For the reasons outlined above, inter-organisational research becomes tricky subject matter for researchers as it strays beyond the realm of the factual and into the affective. It therefore requires a greater level of trust between researcher and participant, and benefits from a longer process of relationship building; a slower kind of engagement. Alternative modes of knowing - visual, arts based and dramaturgical - which are gaining popularity in organisational research (e.g., Mullen, 2003; Clarke and Holt, 2017), can embrace ambiguity and affective dimensions. They therefore offer useful ways of eliciting and analysing richer personal accounts, addressing the ‘crucial need to undertake detailed observation’ (Unsworth et al., 2011, p.189), combined with approaches to “[m]ulling over the data in multiple ways to draw out meanings” (p.186). Alternative modes of presentation (that rely less on lengthy texts) can also provide more engaging ways of presenting findings to stakeholders.

### *Participatory Action Research*

One solution to the problem of participant inhibition can be for research to be conducted by stakeholders themselves, but this requires the additional skillset of research methodologies, and the problem of piecing together partial and ambiguous accounts remains. What’s necessary is a re-imagining of the relationship between researchers and participants. This can be provided by participatory action research models, which entail ‘a significant shift in the epistemology of action, replacing a view of actors and action as objects of research, to one in which the relationship between researcher and researched is a subject-subject relationship’ (Fals-Borda, 1991). Such research actively involves stakeholders, blurring boundaries between research and action. This model is particularly beneficial when seeking to understand bottom up change.

A deeper sense of ownership of the research can lead participants to speak more candidly and to participate with a greater sense of purpose. Ideally, this would include shaping research agendas and questions. Likewise, with deep engagement it is expectable that researchers involved become acutely aware of the challenges faced by those they study, and share the desire to actively participate in the development of the organizations. With mutual vested interest, it is easier for research partners to become critical friends.

# CONCLUSION

Community enterprises offer rich opportunities for organizational research and great potential to inform practice. As precursors to social enterprises, community enterprises (and especially co-operatives) have a long history of addressing societal challenges at a local level, yet this history has been largely neglected. Researchers and practitioners have a tendency to embrace the emancipatory and entrepreneurial narratives surrounding community enterprise. However, this is sometimes over-emphasised to achieve organisational legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders. Proposals may over-promise, while reports sugar-coat results. This is ultimately counterproductive, as it leads to disenchantment and loss of legitimacy.

We need authentic narratives of community enterprise which account for their own, context dependent, measures of success. These narratives should also include the important (and largely ignored) roles of the state and external support organizations in creating and sustaining community enterprises. Realistic perspectives on what local action can actually do in the face of macro-change are also essential, and gaining this understanding will require thinking not only of community entrepreneurship, but also how organizations enact intrapreneurship and extapreneurship. It would be especially useful to reconsider the alluring concept of ‘community anchor organization’, with respect to the issues mentioned here, as we are in danger of repeating the ‘big ask’ on place-based organizations. While land and property are integral to long term viability, we feel that patience and the capacity to sustain collective action over generations are equally important.

Taking a long view allows us to see the practices and processes involved in sustaining the benefits resulting from community social innovation, including how organisations survive lean times. To expose the practices and processes involved in this, we recommend that researchers consider alternative, slow, and arts-based methods of data collection, analysis and dissemination. We also advocate participatory approaches, which value the deep knowledge and expertise of community practitioners. In taking this approach we hope that future research can enrich the field of social innovation, by harnessing the wealth of experience of community innovators, to avoid myopia and repeating mistakes.

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