



Transitioning Towards the Economy of Tomorrow; Starting Today

An organizational approach to degrowth

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Abstract

This research's aim is to create a stronger connection between the degrowth movement's proposals and the social entrepreneurial environment in Skåne. This topic was explored through two different methods. Firstly, the relevant literature was brought together to the end of creating a framework for understanding what the implications for social enterprises that intend to transition towards a post-growth economy would be. The framework created consists in four different criteria blocks: sustainable practices, focus on growth, organizational structures and collaboration. The framework created allowed the research to develop further and identify the obstacles to their implementations of the degrowth criteria met by the social entrepreneurs in the Skåne Region (Sweden). After having conducted four interviews with secondary social enterprises (accelerators, incubators and other hubs) and six interviews with social entrepreneurs working in the region, the research was able to identify several different obstacles. Divergent views and approaches to sustainability, a current necessary focus on profit maximization, difficulties of managing non-hierarchical organizations and other obstacles regarding collaboration practices were identified throughout the data analysis. Despite the many obstacles identified throughout the research, there was an interest and understanding present of the necessity to shift towards a more sustainable economic system, meaning an opportunity for researchers to further study this subject and possibly find ways to overcome the obstacles identified.

Key words: *Degrowth, Post-growth, Sustainability, Collaboration, Social Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Organizational Structure, Skåne*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Given the urgent need of finding solutions to the current environmental crisis, many have been trying to find alternative, more sustainable, ways of living. The degrowth movement, among others, advocates for a transition to a more sustainable economic system, not based on profit maximization and economic growth. This argument comes from the idea that continuous economic growth requires the exploitation of an always increasing amount of natural resources, causing the depletion of natural capital. Moreover, high economic growth has been proven not to be related to general increase in wellbeing nor equality or social cohesion.

According to the degrowth movement, the pursuit of economic growth is not compatible with sustainable living and in order to reverse or mitigate the impact of climate change as well as social inequality, we should refocus our priorities on environment and society. The degrowth movement advocates for a series of objectives that mainly regard the institutionalization at a governmental level of policies that should limit and regulate excessive economic growth in order to prevent its negative societal and environmental impacts. However, there still seems to be a gap in the research when it comes to understanding what this shift would mean for private organizations, that in the current economic system can potentially act as change agents. The research's aim is in fact to explore the relevance of the degrowth arguments for organizations, focusing in particular on the social economy (or third sector), considered by scholars as a possible starting point for building the economy of tomorrow. In order to shed light on this topic, in the paper will be firstly identified the main criteria needed to frame what is to be considered as the ideal organization according to the degrowth argument. The criteria will be grouped in three different blocks regarding: sustainable practices, focus on growth, organizational and leadership structures and collaboration. Secondly, the researchers will identify the obstacles met by the actors of the social economy in the region of Skåne (Sweden) while implementing - intentionally or unintentionally - the criteria identified. The results of this research will therefore contribute to bring what is often considered to be an abstract academic discourse closer to people and organizations and possibly inspire other researchers to further explore the social economy sector from a degrowth perspective.

1.1. Historical background

The discourse around economic growth and its impact on environment and society touches on different fields of study. Three are the main intellectual sources that are believed to have shaped the modern ideology of the degrowth movement. First, are anthropologists and their critique of the idea that the Global South needed to follow the same development model followed by the Global North. Second, are economists and their critique of the close link among political system, technology, education and information system. Third, are ecologists and environmentalists and their defence of ecosystems and living beings in all

dimensions. The fourth source can be called bio economics of ecological economics, that are mainly concerned about natural resource depletion (Schneider, Kallis, Martinez-Alier, 2010).

The word *décroissance*, from which degrowth derives, roots back to the Latin verb *decrēscere*, which means ‘to decrease, become less, diminish’ (Sutter, 2017). The term was largely used during the 19th Century in different fields, from philosophy to economics, but only later in the 21st century it acquired an additional connotation: “*of aging and decline of institutions or individuals*” (Randers, 2012). A fundamental mile-stone of the degrowth movement was the publishing of the book *Limits of Growth* (1972), commissioned by the Club of Rome, a ‘think-tank’ based in Switzerland. The book was a report of a mathematical simulation of the economic and population growth within a finite supply of resources from which twelve different future scenarios were outlined. This study looked at the period between 1972 and 2100 and it concluded that delays in global decision making could have caused the economy to overshoot the natural limits before the growth of the human ecological footprint slowed (Randers, 2012). *Limits of Growth* received diverse reactions among the academic community. After the book was presented in Rio de Janeiro in 1971 many thought that the results of the mathematical model would have meant the end of the human race as we know it before 2100, while it encouraged others to look into how to avoid such an overshoot through forward-looking thinking. The scenario analysis that most inspired the degrowth movement is the number 12: a zero-growth action plan which, if implemented three years after the publishing of the book (1975), could have avoided the overshoot (Randers, 2012). Such plan was not implemented but inspired many scholars to hypothesize different strategies and brought the idea of planetary boundaries and economic growth to the international attention (Haapanen & Tapio, 2016). Despite the debate initiated by the publishing of the *Limits of Growth*, the idea of recession remained marginalized. In fact, in all the governmental summits and conferences that followed, the critical aspects of growth were still being ignored (Haapanen & Tapio, 2016).

Despite the degrowth movement ideology was already being discussed in the 70s, the expression did not appear in dictionaries of social sciences before 2006 (Herath, 2016). Only in 2008, in occasion of the first International Conference on Socially Sustainable Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity held in Paris, 90 scholars gathered and developed an idea which resulted in the “Paris Degrowth Declaration” (Schneider, 2015). The participants of the declaration laid down eight points through which they declared that the focus on economic growth signifies an increase in production and consumption and consequently an increase use of materials, energy and land as well as increasing the amount of waste and emissions produced. Furthermore, the declaration stated that economic growth failed in creating social sustainability and reducing poverty due to unequal exchange in trade and financial markets. In conclusion, the declaration reported that if global economic activity is not kept within the capacity of the natural ecosystems and if wealth will not be redistributed globally, an

involuntary and uncontrolled economic decline or collapse will occur (Research & Degrowth, 2010).

The declaration follows by calling for a paradigm shift from the pursuit of economic growth to the concept of “right-sizing” economies worldwide. This concept mainly aims to help the Global North, which is considered a powerful potential change agent, transitioning first to a degrowth and then, when a sustainable balance is found, to a non-growth stage (post-growth economy). This transition is believed to require communication and cooperation between nations, which could not be achieved through an involuntary economic contraction. Between the main concepts it is included to reduce the human ecological footprint within a reasonable time-frame. This shift could only be facilitated by policies promoted and reinforced on a national and international level. Right-sizing also means increasing consumption, in a sustainable way, in the least wealthy regions, even if this would mean increasing economic activity. In conclusion, the declaration states that the development of new, non-monetary indicators to measure and compare the costs of economic operations is necessary as GDP is believed to undermine the fulfilment of social and environmental objectives (Research & Degrowth, 2010). This declaration greatly contributed to frame the degrowth movement ideology and define its components, goals and methods, increasing credibility and resonance.

In conclusion, the degrowth movement has already undertaken different phases, adapting and shaping its arguments according to the changing times. In the last few years, the movement has become more cohesive and it has pinned down the main components and arguments of its ideology by publishing the Degrowth Declaration. To better understand the reasons that motivated these scholars to undertake this process, this paper should provide more information regarding the problems that come with excessive economic growth in the following paragraph.

1.2. Problems with growth

Growth, in all its forms, is considered as a predominant factor in measuring welfare and well being. The main indicator in this measurement is economic growth. In the next section we will describe several of the problems affiliated with this measurement and growth in itself. We will talk about the consequences on the economy and society as well as the critique on GDP.

1.2.1. Economy & Society

Economic growth became one of the main goals of public policy after the second world war. This was especially the case in the USA where the considered standard of living was so high that the consumption was not based anymore on satisfying the basic needs, but on creating artificial wants (Galbraith, 1958). These artificial wants constitute a demand for something, that would not exist if not pushed upon by the supplier, which stands contrary to the necessary demand for resources to

live which are called basic needs. Galbraith 1958, argues as a consequence for less spending on consumer goods and more spending on governmental programmes, since he perceives society as being rich in private resources, but poor in public ones. The assumption that general happiness is affiliated with unlimited growth and overconsumption is also questioned by Easterlin (1993) who predicted that a saturation would be reached when a certain income level is reached.

As a countermeasure for this economic growth, sustainable development was used to counter this growth through demands of ecological integrity (Mitchem, 1995). When looking at the critical growth aspects that are missing from the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 (UNEP, 2011), this counter measure seems to have been fruitless. There is a need for a broad economic analysis that goes beyond the simple terms of GDP. The critique on the GDP will be further attended to within the wellbeing paragraph.

“The myth of growth has failed us. It has failed the 1 billion people who still attempt to live on half the price of a cup of coffee each day. It has failed the fragile ecological systems on which we depend for survival.” (Jackson 2011)

When looking at growth as a phenomenon, we look at the concrete consequences of economic growth, which can be divided into environmental and well being effects.

Latouche (1984) is critical about the benefits affiliated with economic growth when considering the suffering that is caused through the inability of meeting one's basic needs. Other authors such as Jackson (2011) and Victor (2012) do not want to deny the past achievements of economic growth and admit that it has helped improving health and extending life, while they also take into consideration the problems of inequality, poverty and unemployment that had been a result of this economic growth (Jackson, 2011). Looking at several middle and low income countries you notice how high they rank within the more basic components of wellbeing. This suggests that there is no causal relationship between well being and economic growth. Jackson (2011) even concluded that economic growth had a while ago ceased to increase wellbeing and that after \$15,000 GDP per capita threshold is reached the wellbeing barely raises anymore.

Authors do not condemn all growth, they are in favour of the idea of selective downsizing the places of economic activity that have a negative effect on nature and wellbeing, while at the same time growing or at least sustaining the positive ones (Latouche, 1984).

If one takes into consideration that not all growth is necessarily bad you start looking at the areas to focus on. Firstly the western countries should make place for other regions economies to grow while they themselves abandon the economic growth that is affiliated with negative effects. In many countries the standard of living is comparatively low, which translates into an opportunity for the marginal utility of economic growth to raise the incomes as well as the wellbeing since the threshold spoken about earlier has not been reached yet.

To make this happen strong institutions are needed. They shape people's behaviour, since they are made by humans, which makes them open for change.

Currently institutions related to economic growth are growth dependent. Therefore these institutions just as the well being, stability of society and aspects like unemployment are all growth dependant. This is why a change in these institutions is necessary for a shift in the growth paradigm. In the current situation growth is unsustainable due to its negative effects, while at the same time degrowth would be unsustainable under the present conditions.

This possible change is set back by the effects of productivity and profit on investments. Due to the uncertain financial returns of investments in eco-efficiency and ecosystem services Hoffman (2011). Even though these eco investments have a more uncertain return on investment Victor (2012) suggests to redirect investments to human and nature capital. For example, to achieve status consumption and distribute income more equal, while also reducing working hours to fight unemployment. The salaries would be smaller, but the leisure time that will be accompanied by well being will increase.

Growth is according to Jackson the source of all good. Victor (2012) believes that society's belief in the benefits of growth are strong, even though the benefits tend to be mixed, which translates into a strong ideological commitment (Victor, 2012). In contrast the absence of growth is viewed as a disaster. This growth ideology is so strong that economic growth is used as the medicine for all our current problems such as environmental issues.

The values affiliated with a focus on economic growth are prioritised in decision making. The social and ecological perspectives tend to be secondary (Latouche, 2007). People are seen as merely consumer who needs to be satisfied by goods sold in the market (Jackson, 2011). This growth idea puts economic growth as the only viable option to solve the problems in the future and in such a way narrows down the views of the politicians and the personal view of the people. The logic of this ideology is not just mainstream, but also unites almost all of the political parties from right to left.

“The ‘absurdity’ of degrowth stems not from technical or economic infeasibility, but from what people consider possible (Latouche, 2007).”

When looking at the different books written about economic growth, few condemn the concept in a whole. Not necessarily to downsize the whole economy, but instead to promote selectivity through only downsizing the actions that have negative effects on the environment and well being. Degrowth is an ideology that puts the emphasis on social and ecological perspectives while taking the economic value into consideration secondarily. An emphasis is laid on the economies connectedness and dependence on the social and ecological world (Jackson, 2011).

Since none of the authors have access to the objective truth, Jackson, Victor and Latouche (2007) are also ideological. So when taking an ideological perspective: the opposition between growth and degrowth is an ideological rivalry. One that might translate in compromises or even a possible institutional shift.

1.2.2. Well being

Since the last part of the 20th century, it can be concluded that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the main indicator for the success and well being of a nation (Trebecke, 2017). The main concept behind this measurement is that the economic growth corresponds with an enhanced quality of life, not regarding the economic gains from natural social and human capital (Giannetti, 2015). For many people the idea of living a successful life has become associated with consumerism. Therefore the economic model as well as a dominant style of living supplement each other in a way that drives consumerism (Black, 2015).

When looking at the goals of this economic model and the research done in wellbeing there is a misalignment. When looking at the research of what really matters to people, the results show that the relationship with family, friends and communities, together with a good state of health is what matters to people most (Trebecke, 2017). This is in contrast to the GDP where materialistic (individual) consumption needs to make way for participation and relationships. Trebeck (2017) argues that a shift needs to be made in measuring well being for building an economy and society that supports the communities while addressing the consumer based economy and the impact it has on the planet. Jackson agrees with this and says that it is important to research further how health in combination with the relationships make up the sense of prosperity. Many authors agree that time with friends, being in nature, helping others and having control over one's life are stronger indicators for prosperity in comparison to just the GDP (Dunlop & Trebeck, 2012).

Even though there has been critique on the measurement of prosperity, the market is still focussed on consumption. Trebeck, (2017) puts the emphasis here on a pressure to consume. Even though the marketeers describe the products and services as functional and symbolic effects, they are often seen as a burden. This creates a vicious circle of market/stimulated over consumption whereas negative indirect effects are created. Think of status anxiety, which can be intensified by an ever growing debt, which leads to stress in combination with a poor diet that stimulates over consumption. These burdens fall heaviest on the families with the least amount of resources(Trebeck, 2017). Even though these people do not have the means to consume as much, they still do due to human instinct of fitting in and to avoid being 'visibly poor' (Hamilton, 2012).

These social effects can be seen among the less wealthy of our society, while when you look at the top level of income distribution you notice that this group does much more damage in terms of environmental impact (Kenner, 2015). This is partly due to a process of emulating the extreme consumption of high income groups(Kempf, 2008).

These things mentioned above contribute to an environmental as well as a social crisis. Without a shift from the 'I' to the 'we' , the neoliberal economic and social policies will continue to downplay the importance of society (Giannetti, Agostinho, Almeida, 2015). This shows that on a macro level there needs to be a shift away from measuring GDP, towards a measurement of social progress to assess

prosperity. An approach that does not just consult experts (in the formal sense), but reaches out to deprived communities and ask them *'What do you need to live well in your community?'* (Giannetti, Agostinho, Almeida, 2015) so that new metrics that develop further than income and material wealth can be implemented. In this process participation which is possible for all is very important. This will determine a different set of components and weighting to create a better measurement of prosperity. This new index should provide a description of how economic system fits works with environmental aspects while also attending the social demands. This means that there is no specific measure which can cover this full range of aspects, but a combination of different approaches should be a subject of further dealing within measuring prosperity.

1.3 Conditions for enabling the transition

Degrowth, as a philosophical concept, roots back to the '60s when Pierre Vilar introduced the word "décroissance" in his essay "Croissance économique et analyse historique" which translates to 'Economic growth and historical analyses''. The philosophical concept connected to the term later evolved and acquired an interdisciplinary acceptance, which was further developed and conceptualized throughout the rise of the movement. Economic degrowth, is today considered as an *umbrella vision*, which is constituted by several different components (Kallis, 2011). Many of these components, such as basic income, alternative measure of GDP and different taxation system can only be implemented by governmental agencies and are, for the time being, considered to be utopic (Kallis, 2011). The utopic trait of degrowth are acknowledged also in the literature, however, this has not discouraged scholars from looking into how such a transition may be initiated. In the article "The Prerequisites for a Degrowth paradigm Shift: Insight from Critical Political Economy" by Buch-Hansen, it is possible to find an insight into the conditions necessary for radically changing the current economic system. In the article the author looks at the three main prerequisites for undertaking this shift: crisis, an alternative political project, consent and support from a comprehensive coalition of social forces (Buch-Hansen, 2018). The author states that we are currently experiencing a multidimensional crisis since social inequality is growing and the climate change crisis is affecting millions of people around the world. Buch-Hansen identifies the degrowth movement as an alternative political project which presents a valuable alternative to neoliberal capitalism, but he also acknowledges that the project is still under development and that it is impossible to know how well its policies work until they have been implemented. The author also states that there is a growing support in the academic community, in particular he highlights the importance of the biennial international degrowth conference, where the academic community gets together and share ideas. Consent is therefore growing within the academic community as well as other small communities and grassroot organizations; however, the author states that 'the movement is nowhere near enjoying the degree and type of support it needs if its policies are to be implemented through democratic processes' (Buch-Hansen, 2018). It is in fact true that those who

advocate and support the degrowth movement do so within an ermetic academic environment, often detached from the real world. As a matter of fact, the degrowth argument does not seem to have been incorporated in governments nor assimilated by political decision-makers since capital accumulation is still considered a priority and driving force (Buch-Hansen, 2018). In fact, in the political environment the degrowth ideology seems to be advocated only by small fractions of left-wing parties and labour unions that do not possess instruments that enable them to influence decision-makers.

According to Buch-Hansen, a more concrete and practical contribution is given by social enterprises that are believed to play a major role in the building the degrowth vision. Social enterprises are in fact actively involved in the market, they have a defined social, cultural and/or environmental purpose and they present a de-emphasis on profit maximization (Johanisova, Crabtree, Franková, 2013). Despite social enterprises still have a marginal role in a market, which remains dominated by profit-oriented businesses, they are now gaining political momentum internationally (Sepulveda, 2015). The relevance of these organizations in facilitating the transition towards a post-growth economy has inspired and motivated this research, through which will be identified the obstacles that social enterprises meet when - intentionally or unintentionally - implementing the criterias.

1.4 Degrowth and the social economy

Cherkovskaya, in her paper *'The Post-Growth Economy Needs a New Vocabulary!'* argues that despite the main components of degrowth such as basic income, alternative measures to GDP, and policies to limit production, require active participation of governmental agents, it is still possible to enter this terrain and radically transforming it for individuals and organizations. It is therefore necessary to understand what are the elements and terrain of the current economic system that could potentially present a starting point for transitioning towards post-growth.

Hazel Henderson's 'Three-layer cake with icing' model (Figure 1) of the total Productive System of an Industrial Society provides a good framework for gaining a holistic understanding of the expanded economic system. This model divides the economy in two main spheres: GNP monetized (top two layers) including private and public sector and cash-based underground economy (illegal markets) and non-monetized productive sector (lower two layers) including the sweat equity such as non-monetized work and sharing economy and mother nature (natural resources absorbing pollution, regeneration of resources, etc.) (Johanisova, Crabtree & Fraková, 2013).

Total Productive System of an Industrial Society (Three-Layer Cake with Icing)

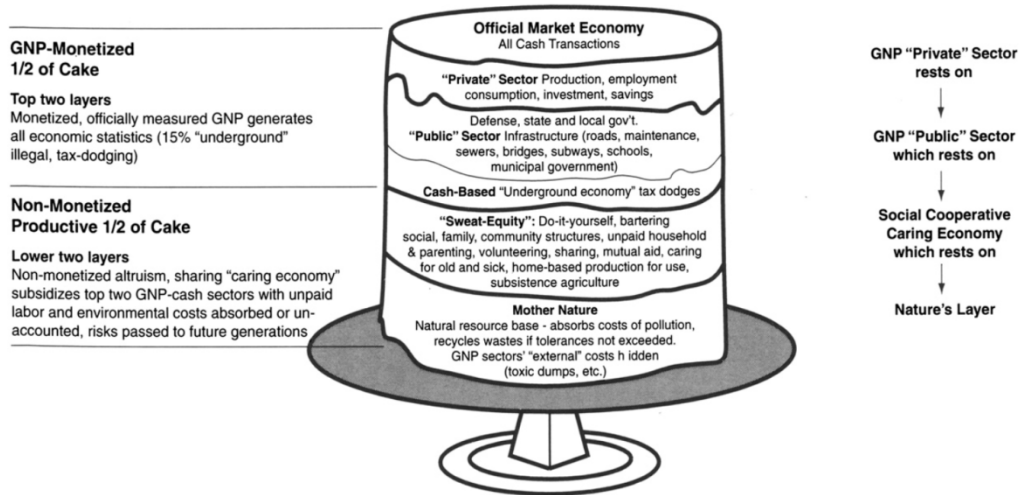


Figure 1. Hazel Henderson's expanded model of the economy: Three-layer cake with icing

Henderson, through this model, emphasizes that the monetized half of the cake lies upon and depends by the sweat-economy and that, most important, all of the layers depend on the environment's capacity to support human activity. However, this division of the economic system leaves out a liminal sphere between the monetized and non-monetized zone such a non-profit, not-only-for-profit enterprises, networks, umbrella groups, secondary social enterprises and other hybrid organizations (Johanisova, Crabtree & Fraková, 2013). It is in this liminal space left out by Henderson's model that we find organizations that can potentially be the very start of a new, more sustainable and well being focused, economic system. These organizations could potentially connect and balance the upper part of the 'cake' (official economic market) and the environment. What characterizes these organizations is a partial or full participation in the market, some degree of autonomy from public authorities and an explicit and genuine commitment to benefit society and/or environment (Johanisova, Crabtree & Fra Fraková, 2013). This liminal areas is better by Pearce in the *Three System of Economic Model* (Matei & Savulescu, 2016) that the author divides in three sections: *first system* (private and profit oriented), *second system* (public service and planned provision) and *third system* (self-help, mutual and for social purposes). The third system is split into organizations that trade products and/or services (social businesses), those that do not (charities, voluntary organizations) and it also takes into account the existence of hybrid organizations. (Matei & Savulescu, 2016). The third system can be considered as that liminal area that Henderson missed to include in the *two layer cake model*, of interest for post-growth organizational studies.

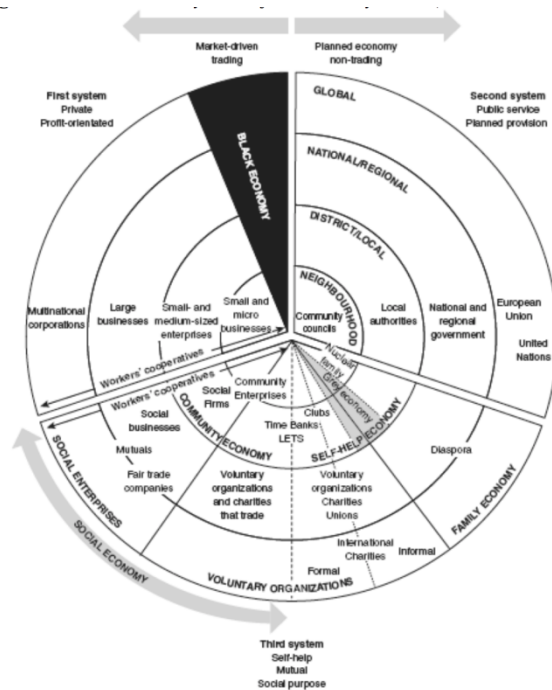


Figure 2: Three System of Economic Model

Pearce's third system is further discussed in Pestoff's *sectoral economic model* (figure 3). Through this model Pestoff suggests that the nonprofit sector is at the centre of the welfare triangle, separated from state, community and market. Moreover, Pestoff acknowledges the existence and importance of the liminar area - ignored in the *three layer cake model* previously described - by creating a grey circle where hybrid organizations lie. The author also divides the triangle in three areas, reflecting on the division between formal and informal (legal entity), public and private (fundings) and non-profit and for profit (use of financial surplus) (Johanisova, Crabtree & Fraková, 2013).

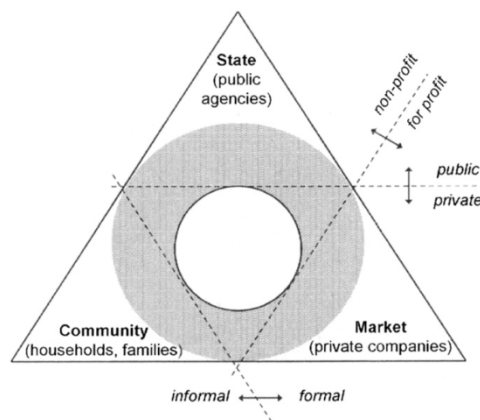


Figure 3: Pestoff's sectoral economic model

From the models described in this paragraph the third sector emerges as the most suitable economic terrain for a post-growth economy to happen. The liminal zone between monetised and non-monetised economies seems to be the most fertile for the development of organizations that are to some extent involved in the market - and therefore able to influence it - but are at the same time committed

to bringing about sustainable change. This terrain has been defined as ‘an important part of the degrowth research agenda’ (Johanisova, Crabtree & Fra Fraková, 2013) and it should therefore be looked at in detail in this paper. Despite the terrain for this shift has been identified, there seems to be a lack of information regarding how these organizations will look like and how can their growth be facilitated. This research aims to shed light on both points, contributing to build a more robust body of knowledge. After having stated the relevance of the social economy for the shift towards a post-growth economic system, this paper should provide information about such sector in the geographical area of study that the research has chosen to take into account for this study.

1.5 Social economy in Sweden and Skåne

Sweden is well known for its extensive welfare system and its strong centralised State. However, in the last decades, Sweden’s welfare system has become weaker and less inclusive. This shift is due to several different reasons including globalization, climate change, migration and unequal distribution, that challenged and stressed the traditional welfare system (Hansson, Björk, Lundborg & Olofsson, 2014). Consequently, a gap was left opened, which encouraged many social entrepreneurs to attempt to answer the needs of society and environment through social entrepreneurship and innovation:

The (Swedish) social economy can be seen as a reaction to - and result of - what some described as a dismantling or reshaping of the welfare state, a process which now has been on-going over the last couple of decades.

*(EFESEIS,
2014)*

This condition allowed the social entrepreneurship ecosystem to evolve rapidly and acquire recognition from the state. However, the political reaction to social entrepreneurship remains ambiguous. In 2011, the Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis conducted a research to understand whether social enterprises were in need of state founding and the result was that “none of the existing support structures for enterprises should be adjusted to make it easier to gain financial support” (EFESEIS, 2014). Hence, despite the state acknowledges the fundamental contribution of social enterprises to the welfare of the nation, getting financial support and ensuring the success of a social enterprise remains very challenging. Today, the Swedish social economy is mainly financed by fundraising, sponsorships and commercial activities.

However, there are many actors that are trying to help social entrepreneurs to the path of success. Incubators, accelerators, cooperatives and other sees- to be referred to as secondary social enterprises - are in fact a very strong reality in Sweden and they play a fundamental role when it comes to bringing social entrepreneurs together and combining the right resources at the right time to create social innovation (Hansson, Björk, Lundborg & Olofsson, 2014). These

organizations are in fact fundamental knowledge nodes that have been contributing to build the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Sweden.

The Skåne region in particular presents a suitable environment for the growth of social entrepreneurship. In 2010, an agreement between the third sector and the region was institutionalised with the “Agreement on cooperation between Region Skåne and the third sector in Skåne ” (Region Skåne , 2010). The agreement set a series of objectives to be achieved by 2014 and it stated that “social enterprises are to be regarded as a resource” since they “contribute to welfare development and benefit the national economy” (Region Skåne , 2010). Moreover, the region presents an extended network of secondary social enterprises and other support structures in place for helping social enterprises growing. These organizations are also to be considered as change agents as they contribute to connect innovators and enterprises, fostering growth in the sector.

After having framed the geographical area of research, will be provided information about the research problem that motivates this research.

1.6 Research problem

Degrowth is an ongoing discussion about alternatives. Too often, this discussion remains within the walls of a university or is discussed in small, isolated, grassroots communities. In both instances, the degrowth arguments and proposals end up far from being implemented. True is that many of the proposals of the movement can only be implemented by governmental organizations and policy makers, that are currently moving towards the opposite direction (Kallis, 2010). However, it is still possible to enter this terrain and radically transforming it for both individuals and organizations (Cherkovskaya, 2015).

The challenge which is today met by the degrowth community is therefore how to bring such a broad and multifaceted agenda closer to organizations and individuals. Giorgio Kallis brings up a series of arguments in his book *In Defence of Degrowth* where he responds to the critiques moved to the movement by defying degrowth as an *umbrella vision*, composed by different measurable components (Kallis, 2010). The components identified by Kallis remain very much relevant for policy makers but not for individuals and private organizations. Hence, we believe that there is an increasing need for outlining a selection of criteria that organizations can already start moving towards. Identifying these components and the obstacles and challenges that organizations could meet while implementing them could greatly contribute to transform the marginalized degrowth discourse into a practical guide for organizations.

Overall, it has been identified a gap in the research regarding the practices that an organisation that intends to transition to post-growth should implement. This research intends to cover this gap by first of all identifying these components through the relevant literature and then identifying the challenges and obstacles to the implementation of these components.

1.7 Purpose and aim

The overall aim of the study is to contribute towards the research gap of applicable degrowth and to explore the possibility of a partial degrowth shift by primary and secondary social entrepreneurs within the Skåne region. Our objective is to understand to what extent the current environment is suitable for a shift towards the economy of tomorrow and what the major perceived challenges are for this transition. Through specific degrowth criteria will be measured the possibility for the organisations best “sustainable” practices and internal culture to shift towards a (partial) degrowth paradigm. By identifying the obstacles that social enterprise meet while implementing the criteria identified we wish to encourage researchers to continue such research and understand how these obstacles can possibly be overcome, accelerating the transition towards a post-growth economic system.

1.8 Research question

To direct this study we have created a main research questions and two more questions.

RQ: To what extent is the social entrepreneurial environment in Skåne suitable for transitioning towards a post-growth economy?

- A. Which criteria can be used to measure degrowth within a social entrepreneurial context according to previous literature?**
- B. What are the obstacles encountered by social entrepreneurs within the region of Skåne when - intentionally or unintentionally - incorporating the degrowth criteria within their organizations?**

Chapter 2: Degrowth criterias for organization, a literature review

Despite the fact that there seems to be a general agreement on the need of shifting from neoliberal capitalism and the unsustainable practices that come with it, there is not a defined picture of what a post-growth world shall look like. As a matter of fact, the degrowth policy proposals are too numerous to be listed and in most cases these have not yet been put into practice and therefore their impact cannot be foreseen (Buch-Hansen, 2000). In particular, there seem to be many but fragmented ideas in regard to the way organizations should be structured and managed in a post-growth economy. In this literature review will be brought together the relevant literature regarding the topic in order to answer the research question A:

Which criteria can be used to measure degrowth within a social entrepreneurial context according to previous literature?

The criterias will be grouped into four main blocks. In the first block will be provided an overview of some of the sustainable practices that organizations would be expected to integrate into their operations. In the second block, are brought together and summarized the vision of economic growth and financial surplus that organizations should have in a post-growth economy. In the third block will be brought together the organizational and leadership structures that these organizations should adopt in a post-growth economy according to the current body of literature. In the fourth block, will be outlined the last criteria regarding collaboration.

2.1. Sustainable practices

Under the umbrella term *sustainability* are today included a broad range of practices, initiatives and approaches dealing with diverse issues. In the literature is possible to find different approaches to sustainability and different models for achieving sustainable development. Nowadays, the triple bottom line, illustrated on the left of the figure 4, is between the most widely used ways of representing sustainability. This model was also used to design the Sustainable Development Goals, a collection of 17 goals set by the United Nations, representing the main guide for nations as well as businesses for solving the global climate crisis. Both the TBL as well as the SDGs, however, still present traits of neoliberalism and endorse the possibility of solving the climate crisis without renouncing to economic development and capital accumulation (Adelman, 2017). Different models have emerged throughout the years, offering a different way of looking at the relation between the three fundamental spheres of economy, society and environment. Consequently, a different approach to sustainability has been developed, dividing

this broad term into two main subgroups: weak sustainability and strong sustainability.

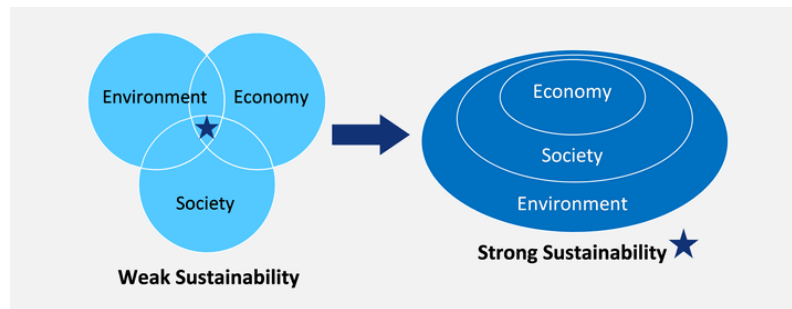


Figure N 4: Weak and strong sustainability,

Given the broad range of implications that the term *sustainability* has, scholars divided it into two main sub-groups: weak sustainability (wS) and strong sustainability (sS). The two approaches present a different way to look at sustainability, that are presented in *figure 4*. In the following paragraph will be better explained what weak and strong sustainability are and the approach that the degrowth movement considers to be closer to its agenda. By the end of this paragraph it should be clarified how organizations that aim to transition towards a post-growth economy should approach sustainability and how such an approach could be recognized and evaluated.

2.1.1. Issues with Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and weak sustainability (wS)

The triple bottom line, also defined in the literature as weak sustainability, sees sustainability as the meeting point between three independent - but interconnected - circles: society, environment and economy (or people, planet, profit). The critiques moved to this model are several. Firstly, this model presents sustainability as a balance between three equally important spheres, portraying the economy, environment and society as independent realms. However, we know that an economy cannot possibly exist without natural resources to exploit and a society that consumes its products and circulates capitals. Therefore the TBL model lacks to faithfully represent the dependence of the economy upon both society and environment. Furthermore, this model assumes that trade-offs between the three sectors can be made, meaning that economic capital can possibly replace or substitute the natural capital (Giddings, Hopwood & Brien, 2002). However, it is hard or impossible to give economic value to natural capital - and make trades between the two - as “no number of sawmills will substitute for a forest and no amount of genetic engineering can replace biodiversity” (Giddings, Hopwood & Brien, 2002). However, this model is very much in trend nowadays since “it offers little or no challenge to business-as-usual” (Milne & Gray, 2012).

The approach to sustainability derived from this model is defined as ‘weak’ since it tends to impact only a limited amount of product lines and industries and it targets only some individuals and few lifestyle groups (Lorek & Fuchs, 2013). WS

practices have become increasingly popular in the last years since they offer low-cost opportunities to show an organization's sustainable commitment without having to undertake major business model changes, constituting “a win-win synergy between economic growth and environmental protection” (Hobson, 2013). Moreover, this approach is based on the believe that future technological innovations will be able to provide sustainable solutions to the global crisis and that the current environmental and social issues are “politically, economically and technologically solvable within the context of existing institutions and power structures and continued economic growth” (Hobson, 2013). In other words, wS justifies the exploitation of natural resources to the end of capital accumulation if part of this capital is reinvested in technological innovation, which is considered to be the key for ensuring good and sustainable living conditions for future generations.

2.1.2. Nested TBL model and strong sustainability (sS)

Given the limits of the TBL and the wS approach a series of different models have been developed to better guide organizations towards the achievement of sustainability. Between the many models that can be found in the literature, the nested sustainable development model was chosen because of its relevance for the degrowth argument. This model, which can be seen on the right in *figure 4*, still presents the same three circles but it places them in a different order. Economy is presented as a subset of society, which is itself a subset of the environment. The nested model therefore presents a more realistic view of the interrelation of the three systems where economic activity depends upon the society, and where both economy and society root and depend upon the environment (Giddings, Hopwood & Brien, 2002). To be remembered is that, despite the economy circle seems to be the core of the model since it is put in the centre, that does not mean that both nature and societal activity should revolve towards it. Rather, the economic circle is to be seen as a subset dependent upon the others.

From this understanding of the interrelation of economy, society and environment comes the strong sustainability approach, which aims at integrating the organization in the environmental and socio-ecological systems where it operates (Roome, 2011). This approach looks beyond the marketplace and the monetary value of products and services by taking actions strong enough to re-engineer the economic and social infrastructure (Spangenberg, 2014). In this context, the end goal of sS is a socio-political transformation that may bring about nonconsumption based wellbeing (Hobson, 2013). This approach can take different forms and have different outcomes, however, it is still possible to identify some common practices and frames that are used to integrate sustainability in an organization on such a deep level. In the paper ‘Sustainable consumption within a sustainable economy - beyond green growth and green economies’, the authors Sylvia Lorek and Joachim Spangenberg pinned down some examples of the sS practices for a sustainable

production-to-consumption chain. The authors divided these practices as it follows:

- ❖ Sourcing phase:
 - Efficiency: sourcing raw materials respecting the natural boundaries of the environment where the operations are taking place
 - Socially: respecting the indigenous population that inhabit the area where the material is being sourced
- ❖ Production phase:
 - Efficiency: using in an efficient way the resources needed for the production of the product (materials, energy, land) and minimize waste
 - Socially: designing products with the user, finding the most functional and sustainable design
- ❖ Product phase
 - Efficiency: offering an optimal service supply and allow smart and sustainable use
 - Socially: making sure that products are empowering for the users, allowing control and responding to a need, without creating a new one (avoidance of misleading advertising)
- ❖ Service phase
 - Efficiency: moving from product to service (e.g. sharing rather than individual ownership)
 - Socially: fostering social inclusion and allowing all income groups to access the service (e.g reduced fees for low income groups)
- ❖ Phase of human well-being
 - The service should contribute to create well-being of the consumer

These are only some of the general points that an organization should integrate within its operations in order to bring about strong and sustainable change. To be remembered is that the partial implementation of some of these practices would not give the same result, sS requires in fact a three hundred sixty degrees implementation of sustainable practices.

To be remembered, the operations needed to change the organizational structure and/or business model of an organization in order to bring about strong sustainability, may vary depending on the social or environmental context in which the organization operates. Systems thinking is considered to be the right approach to understand this interaction and act accordingly: *“Systems thinking predisposes managers to the contributions and ideas of others and promotes the participative approach to change that drives strong sustainability”* (Roome, 2011). Systems thinking is defined by Arnold and Wade as *“a system of synergistic analytic skills used to improve the capability of identifying and understanding systems, predicting their behaviors, and devising modifications to them in order to produce desired effects”* (Arnold & Wade, 2017). Through this approach organizations can in fact map out and understand the interactions between all the

social, economic and environmental systems in which the organization operates and find the most effective way to intervene, which - in some cases - may differ from the sS practices listed above.

2.2 Focus on Growth

In this paragraph will be brought together the contributions of different scholars in order to outline the ideal organization's understanding of growth and profit in a post-growth economy. The need of shifting focus from profit maximization is a fundamental criteria of degrowth and it is considered a necessary step to build a more sustainable and well being focused economic system.

2.2.1. Growth in sales is not a goal for the company

Nowadays, profit maximization is the fundamental aim and focus of most organizations. The degrowth movement takes the distance from this way of looking at profit by affirming that "at the heart of the failing growth-based, capitalist system is the 'for-profit' way of doing business" (Baecker, 2006). Not-for-profit and not-only-for-profit organizations, by the other hand, offer a way beyond the market-state dichotomy. Today, there are hundreds of thousands of not-for-profit entrepreneurial organizations that work with well structured business plans, make a profit and pay fair wages to their employees. What differentiates these organizations from for-profit companies is the way the profit surplus is distributed and invested. In not-for-profit organizations the financial surplus has to be reinvested in "mission-related uses" (Reichel, 2017), therefore, it cannot be shared between few shareholders. In a post-growth economy, the profit produced by an organization is in fact not supposed to be shared between a few, but reinvested in land, labour and manufactured capital (Johanisova, Crabtree & Frankovà, 2013) consequently maximizing qualitative - rather than quantitative - growth. Furthermore, the idea of land, labour and manufactured capital itself would shift in a post-growth economy. Organizations should in fact give back the ownership of these capitals (land, workspace, housing, equipment and knowledge) to the local communities and help them gain full control over them (Johanisova, Crabtree & Frankovà, 2013). The end of this transition would firstly be withdrawn from the dominance of the profit maximization logic and secondly a more sustainable management of the resources with possible consequential improvement of the quality of the product produced. Similar processes have already been partially undertaken through some of the fair trade certifications that succeeded in empowering producers, improving working conditions, transferring knowledge on how to sustainably grow or extract natural resources while at the same time improving the product quality.

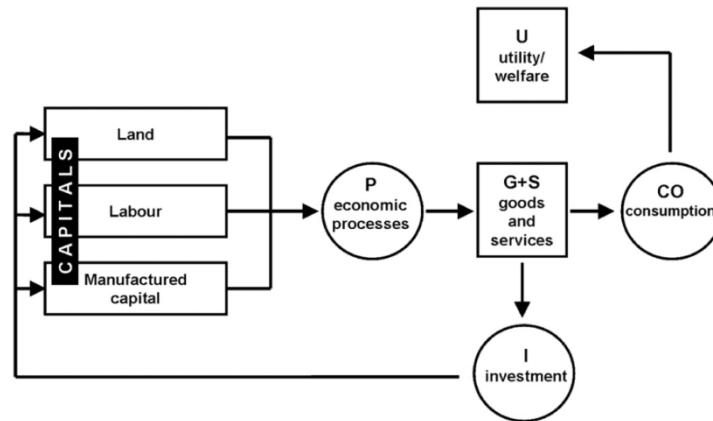


Figure 5: The production diagram (Johanisova, Crabtree & Frankovà, 2013)

2.2.2. Partial degrowth

The concept of degrowth might seem negative and dramatic to those who approach the topic for the first time. It is often the case that people look at degrowth as a tragic downscaling rather than a progressive transition to a more balanced way of living. This misconception often does not take into account that the movement does not advocate the regressions of all the economic space. On the contrary, the degrowth argument suggests that sectors such as education, medical care and renewable energy should flourish in the future, while others should shrink (Buch-Hansen, 2000). Moreover, given the inequality between the Global North and the Global South, sacrifices in the wealthier parts of the world are deemed necessary while poorer countries should be helped develop stronger economies (Buch-Hansen, 2000).

The implications of this criteria for organizations is of fundamental importance as it means that those organizations with a bold, sustainable mission and vision are supposed to grow and flourish. In other words, the movement advocates for qualitative - rather than quantitative - business growth. Technological innovation and research should also not retrocess, but redirected for the good and invested on. Research is in fact of fundamental importance for finding ways to consume less and better, allowing qualitative growth (Schneider, Kallis & Martinez-Alier, 2010)

2.3 Organizational and leadership structures

In this block have been collected the main trends identified in the literature for organizing and leading organizations in a post-growth economy. The following paragraph brings together these practices in five main criterias.

2.3.1 Organizational structure

Formulating an organizational form suitable for transitioning to a post-growth is not easy since the environment in which the organization will be operating is still not defined and many of the variables that characterize it can only be assumed. However, this has not stopped scholars from exploring the topic and theorizing possible organizational forms for post-growth. As a starting point, it is useful to look at the classic organizational form identified by G. Spencer-Brown in *The form of the firm* in figure 6. This model presents the form of the firm in respect to six distinctions and five re-entries. By distinctions the author intends the self-determination of the firm with respect to certain operations and contexts while re-entries define the level of self-description at which the organizations addresses distinctions and contexts (Beacker, 2006). This model presents the product as the fundamental unit of the firm, technology (technical or nontechnical, craftsmanship or instrumental knowledge) as the means to achieve production. Through work, technological knowledge is channeled towards the creation of the product and through organization 'understood as a nexus of decisions' (Reichel, 2017) the work is structured and divided. In this model, economy is considered as the notions of markets, clients, costs, benefits and profits, debts and assets. Business is what enables the product to sell allowing the firm to invent re-combinations of the product, of the technology needed to build it and to modify organizational processes and adapt to the economy. In this model, society shapes and differentiates the economy depending on its nature (capitalist, socialist, new, old, local, global). However, society does not only dictate what the economic conditions are, but it can be at the same time be shaped by the firm's operations:

Society accommodates the fact that companies invent new products which nobody at first considers useful, offer jobs and almost withdraw them at the same time, exploit natural resources that can never be replaced and so on. (Beacker, 2006)

In the same way, the corporate culture of the firm adapts and shapes the social context of different systems (consumers, governmental authorities, competitors). The very last component of this model is the individual, who constitutes the unit of society and is the one who has to handle its sense-making and structural constraints, giving it real meaning (Beacker, 2006).

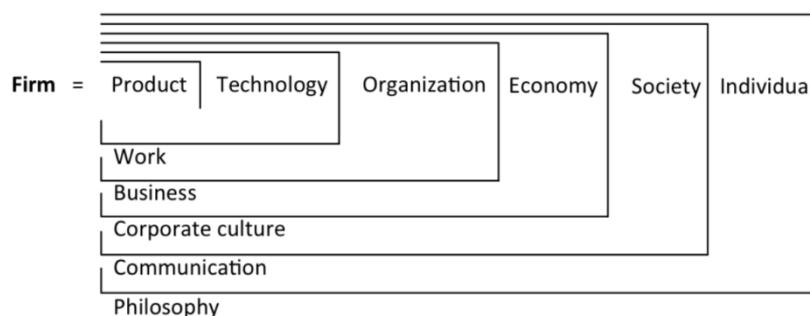


Figure 6: Baecker's Form of the Firm

In the book *Ephemera, theory & politics in organization*, Andre Reichel restructured the form of the firm 'by reintroducing the natural environment into economic reasoning' (Reichel, 2017). Nature has not been playing a significant role in economic thinking from the start of the 19th century, when it was looked at as an enabler, a resource to exploit (Reichel, 2017). Reichel takes a new perspective by looking at organizations not as exploiters of natural resources but as change makers and problem solvers. Consequently, in this new model, the product of a firm is not only intended to produce financial surplus but should contribute to tackle societal and/or environmental issues. In addition, the authors see the importance of internal and external collaboration and heterarchical networks that should replace mere organization and management. This new collaborative approach to organization is able to bring together value creators as well as technology to maximize the positive impact of the product produced. By technology the author does not only mean hardwares or craftsmanship as in the previous model presented; technology in fact acquires a new meaning which encompasses social arrangements, networking and shared knowledge. The creation of this network is encouraged and created by the necessity which comes from scarcity of natural and social resources, which are to be managed sensibly to avoid an overshoot. Moving away from the business-as-usual form also means applying problem solving to find innovative ways to deal with scarcity of resources, before thinking of economic profit. However, financial profit cannot be simply taken out of the equation since the organization needs to support its apparatus. 'Money' are to be made in an ethical manner and through ethical accounting; in other words, the firm should only produce and provide to the consumer what is needed, without encouraging overconsumption for profit sake. Such a firm will not be operating only within the financial market-place but it will be operating across sectors, from market-places of politics to those of science, from religion to art (Reichel, 2017). In such a model, the price of the products should be a transparent reflection of the real value. Consequently, price loses much of the emphasis which it has been acquiring in the capitalist economic system and it comes down to be an efficient way to transfer value from and agent to the other. A reentrant relation is also needed between the product and the market-place,

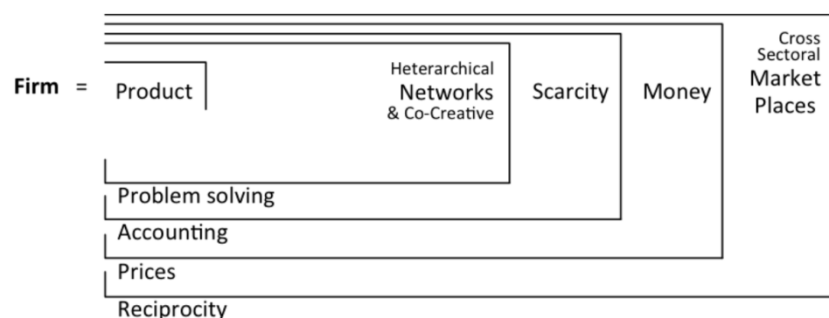


Figure 7: *The revised for of the firm*

In the article '*Social enterprises and non-market capitals: a path to degrowth*' by Johanisova, Crabtree and Franková, are studied alternative organizational structures to classic for-profit shareholding enterprises. In particular, the study

focuses on the relevance of not-for-profit and not-only-for-profit social enterprises for transitioning towards a post-growth economy. The study's focus on social enterprises is motivated by the fact that these forms of organization are usually characterized by a de-emphasis on profit maximization, which is valued since maximization is strictly related to economic growth (Johanisova, Crabtree, Franková, 2013).

2.3.2. Heterarchy

The traditional capitalist way of organizing and distributing decisional power among the organization often relies on authority (legitimate power) through which is created, coordinated and divided the labour (Adler, 2001). An organization structured in such a way can be very efficient in performing routine partitioned tasks; however, enormous difficulty can be met when performing innovation tasks (Adler, 2001). Hierarchical organizations can in fact be resistant to change and proficient at marginalizing those who attempt to initiate it (Uhl-Bien, Arena, 2017). High hierarchy has also implications on the internal level of trust in the organization as the employees might be intimidated by those with a higher authority and hold back precious information, ideas and contributions for fear of repercussions.

In a hierarchy, it is natural for people with less power to be extremely cautious about disclosing weaknesses, mistakes, and failings—especially when the more powerful party is also in a position to evaluate and punish. Trust flees authority and, above all, trust flees a judge.

(Caproni, 2012)

Shifting towards a post-growth economy would necessarily require higher adaptability from organizations and a different decision-making processes. As it has been previously mentioned, highly hierarchical structures are not suitable for addressing change, therefore, new ways of distributing authority should be adopted. The term used in the literature to define flexible hierarchies of agents is heterarchy. Heterarchy can be defined as a flat hierarchy where “functions rise to authority” depending on the context (Peter & Swilling, 2014). This framework allows the members of an organization to rearrange hierarchies according to the issues to be solved and the knowledge and skills of the team members. A heterarchical organizational structure is characterized by a dispersed leadership, horizontal communication and informal coordination (Nonaka, von Krogh & Voelpel, 2006). This organizational structure permits to the organization to make the most of the knowledge of its members, it allows faster reorganization, spin-offs and superior ability to create larger scale system-changes (Nonaka, von Krogh & Voelpel, 2006). Nowadays, the implementation of this structure is in most cases only partial and the organizations that have adopted heterarchy still present traits of the classic hierarchical form. Heterarchy can help organizations overcome great

challenges, however, it is extremely complex and very difficult to implement. In particular, competition and distrust between the team members often constitutes an obstacle to the implementation of a hierarchical structure. Trust then becomes of fundamental importance for creating and strengthening the relations between the different members, consequently allowing more knowledge to be produced and circulated throughout the internal organizational network. According to different sources found in the literature, trust is fundamental for decreasing competition and enabling collaboration and cooperation between different agents. In other words, trust is needed for building high-commitment vertical relations between management and employees as well as horizontal relations between employees (Adler, 2001)

For trust to become the dominant mechanism for coordination within organizations, broadly participative governance and multistakeholder control would need to replace autocratic governance and owner control.

(Adler, 2001)

Moreover, heterocracy's implementation requires a well designed and coordinated network which should ensure alignment, connection and performance measures (Stephenson, 2009). In conclusion, heterocracy provides a framework that can allow companies to adapt quickly to change and produce and share knowledge, qualities that highly hierarchical organizational structures struggle to have. In a post-growth economy, where innovation and adaptation are of fundamental importance, heterarchical structures are to be adopted and implemented, fully or partially, by all firms.

2.4 Competition and collaboration

When looking at the concepts of competition and collaboration we will highlight a few important aspects. Firstly we will look at the competition and collaboration within the for profit market of traditional business. Secondly, we will continue with a possible institutional shift and the importance of infusing trust. Thirdly, the emphasis will be on the necessity of collaboration between different social entrepreneurs and finally we will take a look at the more practical steps that need to be taken when navigating the complexity of collaboration for social entrepreneurs.

2.4.1. Competition and collaboration for traditional businesses

There are many similar beliefs in which the traditional for profit businesses and social entrepreneurs approach collaboration and competition. In this section we will highlight the beliefs, which are initially present, even though not always implemented in a similar way. The idea that an organisation can develop and expand, is intertwined with the need to interact with other organisations. Competition is an interactive process where individual, and thereby organizational, perceptions and experience affect organizational actions, and thus affect

interactions between competitors (Bengtsson & Kock, 1999). Through this cooperation a company can gain competence, market knowledge, reputation, access to other products, and other resources of importance for its business (Bengtsson & Kock, 1999). Cooperation can be divided into vertical and horizontal relationships. The vertical relationships tend to be focussed on economic exchange while the horizontal ones are built mainly on information and social exchanges (Easton and Araujo, 1992). When looking at competition there is a degree of dependency which needs to be taken into consideration. Caves and Porter (1977) say that competition within strategic groups is less intensive than between strategic groups. They argue that strategic groups avoid rivalry, because they have a mutual dependence and are more easily understood by firms within the same strategic group. This mutuality can also be found in agreements within communication between competitors without a mutual interest to interact. Maxwell (2019) has used biological analyses when explaining the shift in today's business. He argues that businesses are part of an ecosystem that need to co-evolve as the economy consists of an environment in constant shift and unpredictable organisms.

2.4.2. An institutional shift with a necessary infusion of trust

When looking at our era of globalization, the dominant role of the market has been brutally brought back into focus. The strong position of the market limits the growth of hierarchy and community (Adler, 2001). The current form of capitalism undermines traditional trust and creates a modern trust, wherein a new form of society will likely emerge (Adler). These low-trust markets have been losing legitimacy and are making way for more participative and democratic notions on how organisations should be governed (Levine 1995), but also how society and economy in a whole should be run (Lodge 1975).

The new form of institutional framework briefly discussed above will be characterized by high levels of trust. When looking at this possible shift participative governance and multi stakeholder control would have to substitute autocratic governance and owner control. When comparing trust to pure authority and price, it creates an enlarged scope of knowledge generation and sharing (Adler, 2001). To reduce transaction costs through trusting each other. Replacing contacts with the shaking of hands and misrepresentation by mutual confidence. Of course trust is a lot more complex, but when institutionalised it can avoid a lot of unnecessary costs.

2.4.3. The necessity of collaboration

When looking at the embeddedness of the market economy Hazel Henderson (1999) echoes Polanyi's arguments that the private sector is dependent on the public sector, which in turn depends on the core economy. When looking at social enterprises it can be said that they explicitly exist to aid the community. This community, in its place control the organisation through its often democratic ownership structure. As a result, they are more inclined to satisfy the real community needs instead of externalising their costs as for-profit organisations

tend to do. Due to this democratic structure the enterprise is open to a wider spectrum of stakeholders and a one-sided commitment to growth is discouraged. The existence of these enterprises is problematic due to the current perfect competition model of economic growth (Beinhocker, 2006).

Taking this into consideration we have looked into the concept of non-market capitals. This phenomenon where institutions such as municipalities, local communities social umbrella groups take out capitals (such as land, premises, knowledge, financial capital) from the market and place them under local/member/democratic control (Johanisova, Crabtree & Frankovà, 2013). This all to satisfy the basic needs of the community and to allround serve the common good in a socially equitable and environmentally sustainable manner. In certain cases these institutions serve individuals or household, while in other cases they support other social enterprises. The latter function on a second-tier level. The former we call primary social enterprises and the latter secondary social enterprises (Johanisova, Crabtree & Frankovà, 2013).

Looking at this figure it is important to take into consideration that the principle is subsidiarity and democratic governance (Johanisova, Crabtree & Frankovà, 2013). The secondary enterprise should not annex the autonomy of the primary enterprise, but remain in a servant role. The relation towards each other should be based on the previously mentioned respect. Even though the services of the secondary social enterprise are not free, the fee should be carefully calculated to ensure the financial viability of the secondary enterprise. In such a way the relationship between the two enterprises is based on trust and they support each other.

When taking into consideration the introduction of the non-market capitals it is important to note that this social enterprise model does not necessarily introduce a new unheard-of institutional structure (Johanisova, Crabtree & Frankovà, 2013). It is meant to legitimate and acknowledge an already existing relationship of mutual collaboration which exist in the current co-operative movement in the economic discourse, which tend to focus upon growth and competition. In the hope that this discourse will further self-reflect, develop and be refined.

The incorporation of non-market capitals could be an important strategy for both primary and secondary strategies to survive, which because of their focus on the production of positive externalities, would not be viable to compete in a globalised market (Johanisova, Crabtree & Frankovà, 2013).

2.4.4. Navigating the complexity of collaboration for social entrepreneurs

If one wants to conduct an efficient strategy for its social enterprise Bagnoli & Megali have divided three factors of success: social success, financial success and institutional legitimacy. Institutional legitimacy focuses upon trust. More explicitly the ability to create awareness about the issue the enterprise is addressing and the level of satisfaction from the different stakeholders experience when interacting with the enterprise.

The way a social enterprise conducts its business is characterised by collaboration over competition (Hazenberg, 2018). When looking at the different actors the organisation decides to work with, one can make a distinction between the inner circle and the outer circle. The former meaning the co-creators who work intensively with the organisation and the latter consisting of other partners who work on a lower level of engagement. Since the issues social enterprises face tend to be complex, a broad range of partner is advised to be included into the decision-making process. A fine example of this, is the Triodos bank, who hold stakeholder meeting regularly to align all the parties with the bank's objectives.

As the collaboration get strengthened a partner is strengthened which makes him or her more involved and becomes a co-creator. A way to get the partners more engaged is to give them feedback on how their input has had an effect on the decisions that have been made. This creates inclusive governance through the use of participatory decision making.

When taking this into consideration it is important to keep in mind that a company goes through different phases and that this might also mean that different phases need different co-creators. An example could be a company that starts of with social awareness as one of its priorities, with in the future a shift towards becoming financially self-sustaining.

“We have a mixture of partners. One partner we use solely for realizing profits or solely for reaching our social mission, while we also have partners who we engage for both of our goals.”

(Rob Jansen, 2018)

Hazenberg (2018) claims that her research shows that decisions related to social goals demand for informal ad-hoc participation. While goals that relate to trust and profitability benefit more from a formalised and regular approach. There is a possibility for this to be the same partner participation, but using a different mechanism for other goals. Through inviting partners within the direct decision making the entrepreneur will benefit from the success factors.

Chapter 3: Methodological framework

After considering the study's research question and the overall aim of the research, this chapter will continue to elaborate on the research through a discussion of the methodology and the different methods. Within this chapter we will discuss the ontology and epistemology used, as well as the data collection technique, our analysis and the study approach chosen, while concluding with an ethical consideration.

3.1. Methodology

In the following part we will discuss our study's methodology. This methodology will include the ontology, epistemology, as well as the research approach, strategy, theoretical selection and overall validity.

3.1.1. The ontology

In this study it is important to research critically the study's phenomenon on how the different social entrepreneurs and business function within the growth paradigm in the Skåne region. Furthermore the emphasis will be put on specific indicators which are necessary for a functioning organisation within a post-growth economy. To take this shift into consideration, it is acknowledged that this research is a critique of capitalism and the unlimited growth accompanied by it. Therefore it is essential to discuss the starting point and what is believed to constitute the social reality regarding the shift made from the capitalistic norm regarding the research phenomenon.

The approach used within the research is based upon what Bryman and Bell(2015) call an interpretive approach. This has much to do with how the researchers view the world and the nature of its reality. Or better to say: how we construct its reality. When looking at the ontology spectrum the research tends to lean towards relativism and nominalism. What is important to note is that the research does not necessarily fit in one absolute position, but is an ever changing continuum between these positions.

This research is conducted under the belief that there are many truths and that they depend on the viewpoint of the observer. That there is not necessarily one perfect way to do it, therefore it is important to experiment with different constructs. Which is why the research is critical of capitalism, but at the same time takes a critical standpoint on a possible degrowth-shift.

An example in the research which underlines the relativist character is that, even though there is a use of similar degrowth indicators, different people are questioned about their experience with an argumentation for them. These positions are addressed with an open mind to keep a certain level of objectivity towards the answers. The organisations and their people that are being researched are not perfectly objective and logical actors which depend on exact and absolute reasoning. Their decision making process, their emphasis on priority or their preferred leadership style is based up-on ideas, feelings and thoughts, which make it problematic to create a statement about reality in this context.

3.1.2. The epistemology

When looking at the studies ontology, epistemology approach and how we research our research phenomenon, these based upon what Åsberg (2000) defines as a constructivist approach, which implies that social phenomena are only produced through social interaction, but also in a constant state of revision. Individuals are intricate and complex and different people experience and understand the same 'objective reality' in different ways. This provides options, different points of view, and this is 'healthy' for society (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Willis, 2007) In order to achieve an understanding of what the motivations and difficulties are to shift towards a non-growth economy, it is vital to view this shift through the eyes of the involved actors, such as the SE's within the Skone region. We do this to gain in-depth insight into the lives of respondents, to reach an empathic understanding.

For that reason we will use the qualitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell 2015).

When looking at our research question and taking into consideration the words of Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) we can conclude that we are dealing with a complex question which will most certainly have a complex answer, rather than a yes or a no. We decided to collect qualitative data through semi in depth interviews to achieve an answer on our research question. This is mainly due to a lack of interest or resources for companies to help us in our research through for instance focus groups, or a lack of time from our part when considering participant observation.

Besides these limitations, we are also aware that it is initially impossible for a researcher to enter a research completely blank when considering a social construct shift as the one from a capitalistic growth economy towards a non/post-growth one. Furthermore we have an initial bias due to our personal and educational background. None the less we both feel that we are learned and developed enough to take these limitations into consideration while simultaneously being critical towards them and objective towards the research.

After all, the ultimate goal of all research is not objectivity, but truth. (Helene Deutsch,1950)

3.1.3. The research approach

When considering our research approach we choose for an inductive approach based on the suggestion from Bryman and Bell's (2015) when there is not much existing research concerning a specific phenomenon. When looking at degrowth the spectrum tends to be filled up with academics and activist approaches along the spectrum, in contrast to the absence of actual applicable practises. We choose an inductive approach in order to achieve in depth information through the interviews to understand if a post-growth shift is a possible or already happening. Furthermore we want to create knowledge and understanding around this phenomenon to serve as a framework for our study. In our search for theories we used Google scholar as well as the academic databank from Malmö University. Understanding that we are not alone in this process, we sought out other

organisational professionals and academics within the degrowth sphere to offer us suggestions on how we should frame our research and what materials we should focus on. We analyzed how the interviewees described their organisations and their situation.

As our research involves a complex phenomenon we made use of an interdisciplinary approach. Initially we focus on the broad perspective, the macro economic relevance needed to be considered when dealing with degrowth, so that we could thereafter narrow it down and look at the indicators from a more meso and micro organisational and leadership scale.

Due to the inductive nature of the research, we understand that the validity of the studies outcomes can be questioned, since it is difficult to generalize and prove the studies outcome as is described by Bryman and Bell (2015).

3.2. Method

In the upcoming section the research techniques will be explained in the enquiry design, primary data and secondary data used for the study.

3.2.1. Enquiry design

The research questions led us to a field study, due to the benefits of understanding a phenomenon described in Bryman and Bell's (2015) research. This gave us the opportunity to collect in depth material as well as understand the social constructs within the growth paradigm of primary and secondary social entrepreneurs within Skåne .

Concerning the sample of our study, there are several limitations. Firstly we only had a limited amount of time to conduct our research, secondly not all organisations were willing to take time out of their schedules to make time for an interview, let alone a focus group or participant observation. Thirdly, not all organisations willing to cooperate had the resources to actually cooperate since they were barely keeping their head above water as it was.

Fortunately we succeeded in contacting a wide range of different social entrepreneurs in the region. When taking into account the respondents, most of them are non-profit and have a size form a minimum of 3 to 35 employees, while some make use of volunteers. Even though they all SE's, they differentiate in their focus on sustainability. We choose to interview all of these since they are important cogs in the contextual framework of Skåne's growth paradigm.

The respondents have been kept anonymous to avoid the leakage of possible sensitive information, but also to avoid a possible retentive position from the interviewees to disclose certain information.

3.3. Data collection technique

In this section will be discussed the data collection techniques used to collect empirical data from the field concerning the study's research question.

3.3.1. Semi structured in depth interviews

To gather the data needed to answer our research question we made use of ten semi structured in depth interviews. We choose a wide arrange of social entrepreneurs to create a representative view of the growth paradigm with relation to our chosen indicators. Since we are researching a social complex phenomenon which according to Bryman and Bell (2015) requires material findings from different perspectives.

Through these interviews we want to draw affiliations related to our research questions. According to Brotherton (2008) it is important to give informants the freedom that is available in semi structured interviews so that they can express their full opinion in a more complete way than for instance through a structured questionnaire. For this reason we make use of open ended questions, which according to Bryman and Bell (2015) allow new ideas to appear through the questioning that would in other research methods stay under the surface.

When used different templates for primary and secondary SE's. Since the SSE's are more responsible for the contextual dimension while the SE's focus more on the argumentation for their choices and their experience with them. The interviews were designed according to the degrowth criterias that have been selected.

We made sure to have some room left for the interviewees to come up with new ideas and have the ability to share what extra they would like to express. When looking at the writings from Bryman & Bell 2015, this line of semi in depth questioning will give us an insight into the interviewees values, worldview and way of thinking.

The semi structured interviews were conducted as face to face interviews. We considered these to be more favourable than written interviews, since they open up the possibility for more interpretation, including observations from body language according to Bryman and Bell (2015). An exception was made for one interview, which was conducted over Skype since the distance between the interviewer and the interviewee was a problem. During the interviews we wanted to make it the interviewee comfortable. Due to Smith's (2006) suggestions that once an informant feels comfortable, he or she will produce more reliable and useful information. That is why we let the interviewee choose the time and location of the interviews and made sure that they were comfortable with the subject of our research and the recording of the process. Our research is conducted in English and since many of the respondents do not have English as their native language we gave them time to reflect upon their answers and gave the time to freely express themselves.

3.3.2. Ethical considerations

Much of the current social constructs are focussed towards an unlimited growth paradigm with a strong capitalist presence. To critique this, or even offer an alternative is not some that is to be taken lightly, especially when different powerful actors have a lot to lose from a possible degrowth shift.

This is why we conducted our research with great care and made sure that we were as transparent as possible with the different organisations that cooperated. It is very important to us that we were open and respectful when dealing with the research participants (Andersen 2012).

It was decided among the research team to keep the interviewers and interviewees anonymous. Moreover, when contemplating Bryman and Bell (2015) writings, it is important to note that the fact that we made our participants anonymous, has had no significant impact on our study's outcome.

Moreover the participants understand that their cooperation has been voluntary and that our research does not have any direct economic benefit for their company specific. Nevertheless this does not take into consideration the indirect information valuable information that they could take out of the research within the spectrum of a possible degrowth shift.

3.3.3. Data processing, understanding and analysis

Bryman and Bell (2015) argue that a content analysis is a useful technique when you want to create meaning in the collected material as objectively as possible.

The analysis consisted of using several degrowth indicators. These indicators are made up by four blocks. The first block focuses on the sustainable practises, the second focuses on growth, the third on the organisational structure of the company and the fourth focuses on collaboration and competition. These blocks are based on theories that we have found during our theoretical research and consists of several sub-indicators which we relate to questions for the interview.

Since we interviewed SE's and SSE's we decided to adapt the questions into two categories.

Keeping in mind Bryman and Bell (2015) writings, we aimed to achieve an understanding of the growth paradigm in Skåne , therefore compared and contrasted the results from the content analysis with the theories and relevant concepts that we found. Through cross-referencing the findings and theories, we created a context which produces several conclusions about the perceived obstacles for possible non-growth shift in Skåne .

3.3.4. Study approach

Concerning our study approach we will start by contextualising the obstacles perceived by the SE's and SSE's in the section voices from the field. This will be followed up by a summary of the main findings from the SE interviews and will conclude with a summary of how the SSE's perceive their own role within the market.

Chapter 4. Analysis

In this chapter will be brought together the data collected throughout the research process in order to answer RQ B. In the first section, will be brought together in four blocks the approaches and criteria for degrowth that are relevant for organizations. In the second section, there will be summarized the results of ten interviews conducted with social entrepreneurs and other experts from the field in order to identify obstacles to the implementation of the degrowth criterias.

4.1 Social Entrepreneurship in Skåne

The focus of this study on Sweden and the region of Skåne is motivated by the strong commitment of both the nation and the region to respond to the current environmental and social crises through social entrepreneurship. In this paragraph will be provided information about Sweden and Skåne in relation to the development and growth of social enterprises. This section will be built through relevant literature and expert voices from the field collected through four semi-structured interviews.

4.2 Voices from the field

In the following paragraph will be given a comprehensive summary of how some of the main secondary social enterprises (incubators, accelerators and other hubs) present in Skåne view the current social entrepreneurial market. The secondary social enterprises will be referred to as: SSE A, SSE B, SSE C and SSE D.

SSE	Title of the interviewee	Description
SSE A	Business developer	A non-profit organization whose aim is to tackle unemployment through entrepreneurship
SSE B	Business developer	An incubator that helps students developing business ideas. The focus of the organization is on social innovation.
SSE C	Project manager	A member network that brings together for-profit and non-profit enterprises with a focus on sustainability.
SSE D	Founder	A member network that brings together for-profit and non-profit enterprises that work with climate change related issues. Focus is mainly on environmental sector.

4.2.1 Sustainable practices

All the interviewees agreed that there is a growing interest in social entrepreneurship. When asked, many explained that this shift is driven by the urgency of finding effective solutions to the current climate crisis. Others added that sustainability is becoming more 'mainstream' and that media are uncovering many more issues that were not taken into account just a few years ago, opening new opportunities for social entrepreneurship. The founder of SSE D (2019) says: *'so long as I have lived I have not seen or heard about a change in the industry as big as this, in Swedish history'*. From the interviews was revealed that the Global Agenda for 2030 and the SDGs have been a major tool for organizations to start

changing their way of operating and this made a big difference in how people and businesses to think about sustainability.

However, when the interviewees were asked to better define their approach to sustainability and to share the indicators that are used to categorise a truly sustainable business or enterprise there seemed not to be any. In particular SSE C (2019) and D (2019), that deal respectively with businesses that tackle climate change and so called 'sustainable businesses', did not seem to have strong indicators to measure the commitment of the organizations they work with. Mostly, this is due to the fact that the members of both organizations operate in different industries and are of different sizes. The project manager interviewed for SSE C(2019), a SSE that brings together businesses with a focus on sustainability, states that no action is really required by the business to become a member, as far as the organization shows interest in the subject and covers the cost of the membership fee. SSE D (2019) expects a bold sustainable mission and vision from its members, but it also lacks of indicators to evaluate the organizations' commitment to sustainable development. In conclusion, these organizations do not seem to have a defined idea of what strong sustainability is and they certainly do not demand from their members to take strong sustainable actions. On the other hand, this framework present in the Skåne region allows all enterprises to access the services provided by the SSEs and learn more about how to bring sustainability within their business. In addition, the project manager of SSE C (2019) states that the confusion between strong and weak sustainability is not limited to the third sector. In fact, it is also a problem when it comes to the public sector, that often chooses to finance projects that have short-term results (weak sustainability) compared to those that have less measurable economic value and only long term impact.

4.2.2 Focus on growth

The interviewees agreed that focus on growth is still one of the main aims of both businesses and social enterprises and that the pursuit of growth is often a question of survival. Growth, however, is looked at and measured in different ways by the different SSEs. SSE A (2019), whose main aim is to help young businesses growing, uses as only indicator for growth the number of employees. This way of measuring success is in line with SSE A's mission of tackling unemployment in Skåne through entrepreneurship. Similarly, SSE C (2019) and D (2019), whose aim is to bring together and tighten the network between organizations with a focus on sustainability, measure success and growth through the number of interactions between their members, and through partnerships, collaborations and agreements that are created thanks to the activities that take place at the SSE. SSE B (2019), whose mission is to help students starting up their business, measures success by looking at the number of start-ups that succeed in finding paying clients within one year after having left the incubator. Three out of the four seen do not only SSE growth as an increase in financial profit. Therefore, it can be said that qualitative growth is often preferred over quantitative growth.

Throughout the interviews often came up the role of the public sector in relation to the social entrepreneurial context. Some of the interviewees mentioned that focus on profit maximization for social enterprises may be in some cases determined by the need of the organizations to create a capital to be used in case the fundings from the municipality, region or EU would stop being assigned. To better understand what the role of the public sector is when it comes to focus on profit maximization more questions were asked. The findings show that the Skåne region seems very keen on financing initiatives and projects with a bold sustainable mission; however, the main financial contributions keep coming from the European Union. The project manager of SSE C (2019) states that *“Since there is a lot of money from the public sector floating around, it should not be too difficult to get a bit of money to get started if you have a good idea”*. The interviewees for SSE A (2019) and B (2019) continued by saying that it is easier to get fundings when the projects are at a very early stage, often fundings stop being assigned after the first or second year of activity.

Overall, the interviewees describe the Skåne region as a suitable environment for social enterprises to grow. However, none of the interviewees stated that it is simple for social entrepreneurs to run a successful social entrepreneurship and get continuous fundings. Hence, focus on profit remains absolutely fundamental for social entrepreneurs in order to ensure long-term survival of the organization.

4.2.3 Organizational and leadership structures

The information gathered through the interviews about organizational structures in social enterprises in Skåne were not extremely relevant since none of these directly advised the members of their organization about such matter. However, the business developer of SSE A (2019) shared that many of the organizations with a sustainability focus that SSE works with are started by highly motivated people that invest their own capital into the project. According to the interviewee, this often leads entrepreneurs to take up on themselves all the responsibility as well as the decisional power. Consequently, hierarchical organizational structures are often created. The founder of SSE D (2019) confirms what previously stated by saying that in his experience the organizational structures of enterprises with a focus on sustainability do not tend to be more democratic and inclusive than other organizations. Moreover, the founder states that shared leadership and heterarchical structures are not necessarily a good thing: *“If the CEO thinks sustainable, but the employees don’t, the organizational structure does not have to be democratic. CEOs can function as a role model”*. Employee wellbeing, on the other hand, seems to be increasingly important for enterprises in Skåne and both SSE C (2019) and D (2019) mentioned it throughout the interview.

Overall, small-medium value driven enterprises still seem to present classic hierarchical organizational structures, possibly because of the instinctive need of the entrepreneurs to keep everything under control or because of a lack of knowledge of / trust in alternative organizational models.

4.2.4 Collaboration

Since encouraging collaboration, exchange of ideas and resources is one of the main aims of the SSEs interviewed, it was possible to collect a wide range of information regarding this block. The interviewees all agree upon the importance of collaboration between organizations that intend to bring about sustainable change, social enterprises in particular. Small-medium enterprises in particular seem to be keen to engage stakeholders and find opportunities for collaboration with both the private and public sector. The business developer of SSE B (2019) argues that collaboration is almost compulsory for its members since the start-ups they work with, the ones with a strong sustainable missions in particular, have none or very little resources available. The interviewee continues by saying that *"none of the entrepreneurs ever says no to new contacts"*, since this may bring new opportunities. The business developer of SSE A (2019), reinforces the previous statement by saying *"collaboration comes easy when everyone is in the same boat"* referring to the young enterprises she works with and their similar situation in terms of resources availability. The interviewee expands by saying that collaboration at such an early stage not only happens within the same industry and she continues by saying that throughout her career she has seen many examples of cross-sectoral collaboration. The project manager of SSE C (2019) brings a different insight, coming from his experience with medium-large sustainability focused organizations and social enterprises. The interviewee states that larger enterprises are often keen to meet with other companies, but he also draws a line by saying *"One thing is for an organization to organize a networking event, another is to share technical information about their operations."* However, the interviewee concludes by stating that *"Even though competition forces people to become better at what they do, it is kind of wasteful to do exactly the same thing. It is much smarter to share resources and to be more effective in supporting the target group"*. The founder of SSE D (2019) brings again a different type of contribution to the research by stating that *"There are more and more companies that focus on coexistence instead of unlimited growth to beat the competition, which creates a growing market. Even though at this moment the amount is small, they are nonetheless important, because they will eventually create a change for the whole industry"*.

In conclusion, it can be said that collaboration is becoming increasingly relevant and it can be hypothesized that sustainability has contributed to building trust across sectors, which is leading towards higher resources and knowledge exchange.

4.3 Social enterprises in Skåne

In the following paragraph will brought together the data collected through the interviews conducted with six social enterprises. The information will be clustered in the three criteria blocks previously identified and relevance will be given to the obstacles identified by the interviewees. In the following table it is possible to access a small description of the organizations interviewed, more information is available in the appendix:

SE	Title of the interviewee	Description
SE A	Founder	Non-profit rescued food-catering. The first of its type in Scandinavia. Size: Small-medium
SE B	Founder	A small grocery where a wide range of products, ranging from food to health & beauty, are sold exclusively without packing. The shop was the very first of this type to open in Sweden. Size: Small
SE C	Funder	SE C facilitates the integration of refugees in Sweden by helping them understand the different business culture through workshops and classes (held both in Swedish and Arabic). Size: Small
SE D	Project manager	SE D offers one workshop per week where 10 bike repair stations are available for people to use, free of charge. Volunteers help the participants. Size: Small, grassroots
SE E	Founder / chairwoman	Work-integrating SE directed to refugee women. The SE offers different services such as catering, cleaning and sewing and it only employees refugee women. Size: medium/large
SE F	Founder	Design and consultancy studio that helps fashion brands move towards sustainability and develops sustainable product lines. Great focus on circularity. Size: small

4.3.1 Sustainable Practices

All the SEs interviewed present traits of strong sustainability integrated within their business model. Furthermore, most of the organizations aim to achieve their sustainability mission through innovation. However, according to SE B (2019) and SE C (2019), innovative formulas are often accompanied by uncertainty. The founder of SE B (2019), which is the first zero-waste grocery shop in Sweden, states *“it is very hard to keep all your operations sustainable when you’re the first to do what you do. For example, it is not easy for us to find suppliers that only sell unpackaged products”*. This obstacle can be hard to overcome and, in some cases, can compromise the sustainable operations of the SE or/and damage its reputation.

Moreover, some of the organizations consider trade-offs between weak and strong sustainability necessary to fulfil their main sustainability mission. The founder of SE E (2019), states that in order to fulfil their mission to employ only foreign-born women and help them entering the job market effort must be put into creating partnerships with multinational companies that are not sustainable. However, these agreements and partnerships allow the organization to raise more awareness about the issues that it is tackling and, most important, train and employ more women that are outside the job market.

In addition, a challenge identified by both SE C (2019) and SE D (2019) is the difficulty met while measuring the impact of their operations. The founder of SE C (2019) explains: *“The impact of our operations is hard to calculate, and we use a number of soft indicators for that [...] We usually try to get in contact with the participants in order to ask them how the job search is going but we do not always have response”*. Measuring long-term impact of strong sustainability can in fact be challenging and so it is to prove that the service/product works, which, according to SE D (2019), is necessary to access public funding.

Overall, strong sustainability seems to be the main focus of the SEs interviewed. However, weak sustainability practices remain necessary for some of the SEs to continue functioning within a market which is mainly unsustainable. Furthermore, strong sustainability and the long-term impact that it has on the environment and society seems to be challenging to measure and prove, in particular on the short-term.

4.3.2 Focus on growth

The SEs interviewed have a similar view of growth and when asked, identified similar obstacles. All the organizations stated that their focus is not on profit maximization but on increasing the positive impact on society and environment. SE D (2019) in particular states that the organization cannot possibly produce financial surplus since it is completely financed by the municipality and it has to reinvest all profits into its operations by contract. Being SE A, B, C, E and F only partially or not at all financed by the region / municipality, need to prioritize financial growth in order to survive. Referring to the balance between financial profit and sustainable impact the founder of SE A (2019) states: *“Our focus is on both, because you cannot have one without the other. Economy is going that way!”*. Both SE A (2019) and SE B (2019), that heavily rely on the labour of the volunteers, express the wish of growing financially until able to afford at least one

or two full-time employees. The founder of SE B (2019) says that if the organization could rely on higher and more stable income the first step to take would be to employ a full-time member of staff. The founder of SE B (2019) confirms by saying *"I'd also very much like to be able to afford an employee that could be always here, with no need of being trained every two months like the volunteers"*. The founder of SE C (2019) also states that focus on profit is fundamental for the development of new services and states that limited resources have forced the organization to focus only on one unique service. The founder of SE E (2019) continues by saying *"of course we try to make as much money as possible so that we can help more people"* and she continues *"all the money we make goes into salaries, rent and suppliers"*. The founder continues explaining that focus on profit is necessary within a capitalistic system, even for social enterprises. The founder of SE F (2019), which is a for-profit enterprise, continues by saying: *"We are a for profit organization, but our main focus is to bring value to society through the work that we do"*.

Overall, focus on profit seems to be fundamental for organizations that are not fully financed by a public institution. Hence, the current economic system limits and obstacles the shift towards a post-growth economy.

4.3.3 Organisational and leadership structure

The different SE's all put an emphasis on a flat organisation structure. SE A, D and F (2019) set the tone when talking about a decentralized self-management practice defined as *holarchical*, which should empower the members of the organization to become instant decision makers so that everybody's voice is heard. Without using the same phrases, the other SE's are shifting towards this decisional structure. Which according to SE C (2019) is a logical choice for SE's who wish to keep the organisation flat after growing, this according to SE B (2019) also creates obstacles since many SE's created their SE from scratch and are used to hold all the decisional power in their own hands. As a consequence, the structure as seen within the case of SE B (2019) cannot be purely flat, since the founder still holds a central role in the decision making. This aspect of seniority and unwillingness to give up decisional power also plays a role in SE D (2019). Which is a common growing pain among SE's according to SE C. SE D (2019) states: *"I believe that sometimes the top-down approach is needed because often decisions have to be made quickly and I cannot possibly wait for everyone to get back to me"*. This is also the case for SE C (2019), although in the daily operations they apply shared leadership. For SE C (2019) this means that whoever has the knowledge and skills needed to carry out a task automatically takes up the leadership. SE C (2019) argues that even though this creates a dynamic team, the structure should be revisited if the company were to grow. SE E (2019) argues that equal decision power is of fundamental importance to get the participants to gain self-confidence and develop a sense of ownership over the organization and their work. SE E (2019) states: *sharing leadership also means sharing responsibility [...] Making people responsible for their own work makes them respect it more"*. Although SE E admits that this process can take a long time and has the potential of being inefficient.

A problem that all of the SE's have in common is that they do not have a stable revenue stream, specifically when looking at the long term. This creates the need for unpaid workers such as volunteers. SE A (2019) and B (2019) state that even though volunteers can bring a great and necessary contribution to SE's they often come and go, or show a selective lack of interest and motivation, which creates an unreliability that alters the rhythm of the business.

4.3.4 Collaboration

The common denominator among SE's is that they experience collaboration as a fundamental aspect. SE A (2019) states that there is a necessity to collaborate if you want to survive on the long term, due to the SE's high dependence on other actors. According to SE C (2019) and A (2019), SE's focus on partners, not competitors, since this dependence is mutual. In accordance to this SE A (2019) states that they do not aim to grow or overtake the competition as the founder explains: *"our size is just fine, we need to grow only the idea. There can and should be other similar social enterprises in Malmö!"*.

SE E (2019) mentions the importance of collaboration to create a stable revenue stream, which allows long term planning. However SE F (2019) states that long term collaboration takes time and resources, which is a luxury not every SE has. SE A (2019) finds different organisations who struggle with similar challenges. SE D (2019) focuses on getting like minded people together to share ideas and knowledge through hosting network events. According to SE C (2019) and E (2019) the municipality plays an important role when it comes to collaboration. SE C (2019) relies on the municipalities collaboration, mainly due to the fact that it's his main investor. SE E (2019) who has existed for a longer time has built a good partnership over the years in which the municipality acknowledges SE E (2019) social contribution due to previous successes. SE F (2019) is convinced that cross sectoral collaboration is needed to achieve sustainable development in the future. SE F (2019) states that: *"One of our goals is to spread the knowledge in order to generate innovation, [...] if more people are involved and share data an idea we can then create products that can change society for the better"*. In accordance to this SE C (2019) and other SE's SSEk to add new partners from the private sector. Within this process they have perceived several barriers. According to SE E (2019) it is difficult to establish a relationship with the private sector since they have strict standards that are hard to bend. Furthermore SE's tend to have a strong not complementary value set and they lack a certain business mindset. SE C (2019) also experienced the private sector being more focussed on duplicating the product or service instead of collaborating.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The initial part of the research explored the degrowth phenomenon in relation to its possibility for practical implications. Within the process of exploring the literature and reviewing the practical feasibility of our research in relation to the limited time frame and availability of resources we decided to focus on social entrepreneurship in the Skåne region. Consequently we formulated the following research question:

To what extent is the social entrepreneurial environment in Skåne suitable for transitioning towards a post-growth economy?

When looking at our findings we can conclude that we have only partially answered our research question. A practical degrowth strategy is currently non-existent, which meant that we had to formulate our own indicators from the literature. Within the research's limited timeframe we had to differentiate from the notion of one specific industry and types of organisations within a similar phase of their life cycle. As a consequence we had a lower amount of specific information, which meant that we choose to take a broader view on the different primary and secondary social entrepreneurs within Skåne and what their perceived obstacles were for implementing a partial non-growth strategy. With this we formulated a theoretical framework of degrowth indicators which creates a bridge towards their affiliated practises with a main focus on the obstacles. To give a more well-rounded answer to our initial research question we would need a further narrowed down and representative poule of interviewees and a stronger focus on the environmental dimension of the market. These limitations will be discussed further in the chapter.

When looking at the phenomenon degrowth it became clear that there was an absence of a practical implementation strategy due to the fact that it currently is an umbrella term which includes a wide arrange of theoretical notions for a future post-growth economy. We started of by doing a literature review to create a division between the different dimensions, from which we formulated different blocks that existed of categorized degrowth indicators. Based on these indicators we formulated questions that came back in the interviews with different SEs and SSEs within Skåne. These interviews were conducted with an emphasis on organisational practises and context building. Within this framework we will discuss the perceived obstacles in relation to the literature. The structure of the following discussion will be based on blocks mentioned before. Note that due to the multidisciplinary aspect of the research there will be some overlap between the blocks.

5.1 Interpretation and implications

In the following paragraphs we discuss the perceived obstacles in relation to the literature within the sustainable practises blocks.

5.1.1 Sustainable practices

When looking at the current market for sustainable business, the main model and indicators affiliated with this sector are TBL as well as the SDGs. Both of these present traits of neoliberalism and endorse the possibility of solving the climate crisis without renouncing to economic development and accumulation of capital (Adelman, 2017). Giddings argues that The TBL assumes that trade-offs between the three sectors can be made, which means that economic capital could substitute natural capital. In contrary to this Trebeck 2017, argues for a successful degrowth practise to be realised, a step away from the emphasis on economic growth needs to be made. Since this is in the current situation is not the case, it goes in the same line of thought as of SE F, (2019) B (2019) and A (2019) about the predominant part of the market being very unsustainable. Spangenberg argues that without creating institutions that focus on strong sustainability factors and looking beyond the monetary value of products and services, business like SE C (2019) will not be able to upscale without having a negative impact on the quality of their service. Milne & Gray (2012) argue that the TBL is a current trend that offers not enough challenge to business-as-usual. This, in combination with the fact that degrowth is abstract and difficult to communicate according to SSE D (2019), makes it difficult for SEs to think beyond their own perception of sustainability. It can be concluded that a more understandable version of degrowth needs to be explored and communicated. SE B (2019) mentions that exploring strong sustainability through innovation is not easy, and the market does not make it easier. The new formula that the SE has developed (no-packaging grocery shop) requires and demands a change in shopping culture, which is not easy to obtain. Furthermore, SE D (2019) and C (2019) identified an obstacle in showing long-term impact of their operations since strong sustainable value cannot always be measured or translated into economic value and therefore often fails to get fundings from the public institution. This obstacle brings us back to the need of finding different ways of assessing the value of organizations and distribute resources accordingly (Lorek & Fuchs, 2013) These issues often brings public fundings and private sponsors to focus on a more tangible short term project which takes a weak sustainability approach over strong sustainability. Weak sustainability practises have become popular in the last years since they offer low-cost opportunities to show a sustainable commitment without undergoing any major changes in the business model (Hobson, 2013). SSE C (2019) mentioned this obstacle in the form of competition due to competitors choosing greenwashing over long term strong sustainability changes. SSE C (2019) argues that since sponsoring for sustainable entrepreneurship has become more structured, in combination with the practise becoming more mainstream, a higher level of competition for financing has arisen. As a result this creates organisations

with a different view on sustainability. These wide variety of entrepreneurs do not necessarily meet to collaborate or exchange knowledge either since the SSEs' main focus on one specific form of SE (SSE A (2019), SSE D, (2019). Hobson (2013) argues that many entrepreneurs in the market believe that future technological innovations will be able to provide sustainable solutions for the current and future environmental and social issues within the context of existing institutions. As a result, SSE D (2019) argues that organisations focus on surviving while taking only the strictly needed steps towards sustainability.

When looking at this approach from a political perspective SSE C (2019) & D (2019) argue that even though different political parties in power can create a temporary halt in the development of sustainable businesses, the power for real change will come from the people and the companies who have the power to make a difference. Giddings (2002) argues that when looking at society, environment and economy, the economic dimension is to be seen as a subset upon the others. Taking this notion towards SE practises within Skåne the problem arises that the entrepreneurs' skillset is not balanced enough. SSE B (2019) and A (2019) mention several times that even though the entrepreneurs have a big heart and an affinity for sustainability in the form of ideas, they lack the necessary amount of business sense to keep their company healthy in the long term. SSE D (2019) puts the emphasis on attracting entrepreneurs with a skillset that balances between sustainability and business sense solely for this reason. As a consequence many SEs contain a learning curve which is not feasible for all employees, let alone the resources needed for training from the organisation. One of the major trends that we have come upon during the interviews is a necessity for third party verification. Johanisova (2013) argues that these certifications can create a process that succeeds in empowering producers, improving working conditions, transferring knowledge on how to sustainably grow or extract natural resources, while at the same time improving the product quality. Since SSE A (2019) works closely with the municipality they have to submit a similar report every quarter. These life cycle assessments are becoming more common which also creates troubles for smaller SEs who do not have the resources to produce such a report. Furthermore, as previously mentioned it is difficult to monetize certain sustainable practises, this is for example the case when measuring the impact of the workshop that SSE B (2019) offers.

5.2.2 Focus on growth

Latouche (2006) argues that not all growth is necessarily bad. At the heart of this failing growth-based, capitalist system is the 'for-profit' way of doing business" (Johanisova, Crabtree & Franková, 2013). SSE A (2019) complains about the norm being for-profit, while social entrepreneurship is welcome, arguing that it should be the other way around. Even though SSE A (2019) and D (2019) are favourable toward more degrowth practises, they agree that the current capitalistic system does not offer a realistic environment for these practises. SSE D (2019) mentions that as a result of the current institutional framework SEs have more trouble attracting external financial resources such as sponsors, due to their main focus

not being profit-driven. This is also a problem when implementing sustainable growth, as mentioned before. In other words, the degrowth movement advocates for qualitative - rather than quantitative - business growth. Which creates a problem since the main indicator for organisations is currently growth and a focus on turnover according to SSE A (2019). Hoffman (2011), argues that investments towards sustainability practices tend to have an uncertain financial return on investment. SSE D (2019) confirms this by mentioning that due to difficulties with monetizing their ROI, SEs have trouble attracting sponsors. This is especially the case for smaller SEs who are more dependant on sponsors, since their revenue tends not to be stable in the early phases of their life cycle. SE E (2019) states that the more money they get the more good they can do, but this is also the case the other way around. Moreover, because of a lack of financial resources, SE C (2019) is forced to focus on one discipline, while they would create more value and possible qualitative growth if they would be financially able to further develop their services. Buch-Hansen (2018) mentioned that despite the numerous degrowth policy proposals, most of them have not yet been put into practise, which means that their impact cannot be foreseen. This is in line with several obstacles that the SEs and SSE´s have encountered. The current market is complex and multifaceted and does not seem to get any clearer according to SE A (2019). SSE D (2019) argues that only a small amount of SE have adapted the degrowth structure/vision, which leaves little successful reference.

5.2.3 Organizational structure

When looking at the obstacles from degrowth implementation through the lense of organizing and leading there are several perceived obstacles. SE C (2019) and D (2019) mention that there exist difficulties in attracting financial resources. As previously mentioned these are funest for the sustainable growth of a SE, which already have a wider range of stakeholders relative to the normal for-profit enterprise according to SSE C (2019). Stakeholders' engagement and involvement in the operations of a SE is fundamental and it can potentially benefit the organization as mentioned by SE A (2019), B (2019) and C (2019).

Similarly, sharing responsibility with new shareholders can, beside the sharing of knowledge also create a distribution among decisional power according to SE B (2019). It is also the case that Stakeholders become members of the board, which will give them decisional power and result in them influencing the direction of the company, possibly towards a direction they would not have taken if the founder would have still been the sole decision maker. Several degrowth scholars argue for a transparent decision making process where all members of the organisation are consulted. This structure is referred to as heterarchical and consists in a flexible organizational design that allows those with the most suitable skills set to solve a task, to automatically take the lead (Peter & Swilling, 2014). SE E (2019) has partially implemented this structure and even though it makes the decision making process substantially slower, it does put the employee more central and affiliates the organisational culture of that SE more closely to its vision. To conclude on this one could argue that this type of decision making is only suited

for companies with a relatively small amount of employees, when approaching it from a solely efficiency perspective. However, the obstacles to the implementation of an heterarchical structures come up when the organization heavily relies on volunteers. In fact, SE A (2019), SE B (2019) and SE D (2019) explain that, despite the effort to create a flat hierarchy and distribute the decisional power within the organization, seniority still plays a big role and important decisions are still taken by the board only. Overall, there might be a connection between lack of financial resources - which is to be linked to the use of voluntary labour - and power distribution within the social enterprises interviewed.

5.2.4 Collaboration

Bengtsson (1999) argues that through cooperation a company can gain competence, market knowledge, reputation, access to other products, and other resources of importance. This is, according to SE A (2019), SSE B (2019) and C (2019) also the case for SEs, due to a high dependance on partners. Hazenberg (2018) affirms this by stating that: *'Since the issues social enterprises face tend to be complex, a broad range of partner is advised to be included in the decision-making process'*. This is where the crux lies for SE B (2019), since they have a necessity for new shareholders, but to get in touch with them is a draining process, which according to SSE D (2019) does not necessarily have to have a fruitful outcome. Consequently SEs are often hesitant to contact each other and are not willing to take the risk.

Moreover, SEs such as SE E (2019) are very mission driven which creates difficulties in collaborating with companies who have a different not flexible value set. Especially when the concept of sustainability is viewed from a different perspective as mentioned before. SSE C (2019) explains that sponsors want to have a say in the companies core mission (SE C, (2019). Therefore Johannisova (2013) argues that SSEs and other stakeholders should not annex the autonomy of the primary enterprise, but remain in a servant role. Looking at it from the other side of the spectrum, a SE can not be very successful from the financial spectrum, because it procures these positive externalities. This could even mean that the SE would not survive on the long term without non-market support. It can therefore be concluded that true decisional autonomy within a SE in the long term is not feasible. As a result Hazenberg (2018) pleads for collaboration over competition for SEs. Strategic groups should avoid rivalry, due to a mutual dependency which is more easily understood between members of the same strategic group. SSE C (2019) mentioned on this that there is a danger of losing innovation due to a lack of competition and that true collaboration on internal best practises is rare and hard to measure. SE D (2019) furthermore talks about similar enterprises, but for profit who prefer to develop to similar business models instead of collaborating due to possible financial gain.

Wenger(1998) argues that when a high trust level transforms in communities of practise, it becomes an organisational principle most effective in generating and sharing new knowledge. This adds directly to SE F's (2019) interview where they emphasis the fact that long term collaboration within the social entrepreneurial market does not just take time and resources, but also a high level of trust.

Maxwell 2019) argues that due to a lack of financial resources a SE tends to be dependant on volunteers. Several of the SEs and SEEs that have been interviewed make use of volunteers within their organisations. According to SE A (2019) and B (2019) this is due to their unstable revenue streams, that the use of volunteers, instead of personal has become a necessity to survive. Even though volunteers are one of the main resources on what many SEs survive on, they do not come without their obstacles. SE D (2019) explains that many of them do it part-time and come and go when they can, which creates a level of unreliability. According to SE A (2019) and B (2019) they lack the needed expertise and need to be trained. SE D (2019) takes it further by mentioning that the level of interest and motivation from the volunteers differs with each project.

When looking at the interSSE-collaboration there seems to be no clear structure. Even though they all admit the possibility for added value they tend to be quite sceptical. According to SSE C (2019) most of their collaboration is more ad hoc than structured. Which Hazenberg (2018) defends by stating that decisions related to social goals demand for informal ad-hoc participation. While also mentioning that goals related to trust and profitability benefit more from a formalised and regular approach. While SSE B (2019) is sceptical on interSSE collaboration, they argue strongly for a more structured and intense collaboration with the educational institutions, specifically towards a focus on degrowth. Furthermore SSE B (2019) mentions that after the initial phases of business development, resources for the next steps are missing in Skåne.

5.2 Limitations of the study

Taking into the limitations of our research into consideration we can conclude that there are several. We started by researching the phenomenon degrowth, which is an umbrella term for a set of theories. Since an institutional change is needed for a practical implementation of degrowth our research shifted towards partial non-growth within companies. This choice, even though closely connected to degrowth, is still an assumptive leap based to the practical blocks we have constructed from the literature.

Furthermore there was a limitation in the amount of information that was available for our research. Due to the fact that not every organisation was willing to cooperate, an issue in representativity was created. This meant that we could not reflect the degrowth criteria directly to the enterprises, since they were not clustered in one industry, the same size or the same phase in their life cycle. This problem was also caused by the time constraint that we had to work with. The organisations that were willing to cooperate, gave us little to no access to sensitive information which meant that we had to shift our approach to a more narrowed down obstacle focussed research. There is a chance that our social and personal characteristics could have had a potential effect in collecting the data. Therefore the data should not be viewed as being handled from a purely objective position. Furthermore we did not take the full complexity of the municipality into the equation. Specifically towards its role in the future, since there will be an increased supply of financial resources for SE's from the EU, when looking into the 2030 agenda. This upcoming change will create enough complexity for a thesis on its

own, which is why we suggest to further explore this in future research. Besides this we have encountered several conundrums which are interested to look into, but not relevant enough to our main RQ to delve in to. When interviewing the SSEs they asked us if there is a necessity for an organisation culture to be a reflection of the sustainable mission of the organisation, when the person who makes all the decisions is already doing this through a sustainable motivation. Furthermore, we would suggest that more research should be put into the tipping point where SE competitors become dependant on one another and choose to collaborate. Lastly we would like to suggest further research with a focus on the ongoing shift of formal and informal institutions towards degrowth.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to create a practical implication for the degrowth movement, its values and arguments, within the social entrepreneurial context in Skåne. In order to navigate such a complex and multifaceted area of study, the research team decided to narrow down through a literature review the relevant principles of degrowth into four distinct criteria. The four criteria set the sustainable practices, view of growth, organizational structure and understanding of collaborations of an organization suitable for transitioning towards a post-growth economy. These criteria were built through a literature review and covered a gap in the previous research affiliated to the topic.

These criteria helped the research team frame and structure the second part of the research. In this last section the research aims to understand what the obstacles to the integration of the previously mentioned criteria were. Since an overview of a practical degrowth implementation would be too complex and multifaceted for one thesis the decision was made to focus on the obstacles. This would not give a full solution to the research problem, but would be an important piece of the answer. In order to narrow down the research and increase internal validity it was decided to focus on the social economy sector which is believed to be the most suitable terrain for initiating a transition towards a post-growth economy. The focus was aimed at primary and secondary social enterprises in the region of Skåne, chosen for its social economy friendly environment as well as the geographical proximity of the research team.

Based on a qualitative analysis of the data the research showed that some of the degrowth criteria have been partially integrated by social enterprises. Strong sustainability practices in particular appeared to be already integrated in many SEs, despite this weak sustainability practices remain widely used because of their short-term impact and the low-cost of their implementation in combination with the low impact on their business as usual. This coincides with the belief that true sustainable change will be triggered through future technological innovations. Focus on profit maximization, remains important for many SEs given the capitalistic market in which the organizations operate. A market in which economic turnover is the main indicator for success. As a result SE who do not have a certain

amount of business savvy have a small chance of surviving on the long term. In some cases, however, SEs declared that their social or environmental mission remains stronger than, and is not compromised by, their focus on growth. They also focus on qualitative or quantitative growth, but are held back by their difficulties of attracting financial resources due to the difficulties of monetizing sustainable practices and an absence of successful partial degrowth references. SE's are more dependant on stakeholders than for-profit entrepreneurs. As a result SE growth creates a shift in the decision making process which tends to be difficult for the founder/initial decision maker in relation to the infeasibility of decisional autonomy after organisation growth. Since the issues social enterprises face tend to be complex, a broad range of partner is advised to be included into the decision-making process. Collaboration is important to gain necessary resources, due to unstable revenue streams which creates a high dependance on partners. These collaborations can be difficult due to the mission driven focus which requires a flexible value set of the partner. Heterarchy and other flat organizational structures seem to be challenging many of the social entrepreneurs, in particular those who rely on volunteers. The volunteers are in need of training and are not reliable due to their variable level of motivation and ability to work. However, many SEs have expressed the will of transitioning towards such structures in order to get more input into their projects and share responsibilities. The research team concludes that the amount of organisations willing to take this shift will increase once the concept of degrowth becomes more practical and therefore more easy to communicate.

In conclusion, degrowth remains a vision of the future, for which first an institutional, formal as well as informal, is needed. The research team sees social entrepreneurs as the future of a sustainable society and believe that the already partial non-growth implementations that have been encountered are a good sign towards this future. There are still obstacles that are needed to overcome, but through a collective, altruistic and strong sustainable outlook the future feels within an arm's reach.

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Appendix

Interview transcript SA A (2019)

Could you please tell us about SE A? Is it a for-profit or non-for-profit? How many staff members do you currently count?

Rude food is set up as a non-profit organization. We had two choices at the start, to set it up as a for profit or a non-profit. At the time I was keen on seeing how collective citizen groups could have come together as a self-running organization where the impact of our work is as much as the intention and resource that those whom are actively involved can bring in. And this is how we set it up. The board is active and meets once a month to do everything from public communication to making organizational decision.

The only person who gets paid is the cook who gets paid based on the catering, not salary. In start-up language if you were to look at the size and impact of an organizational structure you immediately start to look at how many people work and how many hours as well as your revenue. I do not identify the success of the organization on the term of living wedges as I think we should rethink this. I think it is important especially when it comes to our resources, meaning the food we save and redistribute. Can we even use the word resource?

Over the last four years we have also been shifting of terminology depending on our changing perspective – from rescued food to surplus food - here we are trying to reinvent the economy even when it comes to language!

How is the decisional power distributed within your organization? Are volunteers also involved in the decision making process?

Everyone here has the same decisional power. We do not describe ourselves as a vertical organization. But it also very much depends on how much you are involved and how much you know. You need to be present at the moment of the decision to have a say!

Volunteers are also involved in decision making and their opinion is also taken in.

How hard is to implement such structure? Have you met any obstacles to its implementation?

Well, in the first year it was very hard because the ones who were part of the initial phase were coming from different discourses, start uppers, students from Lund, dumpster divers that come with their own discourse. After 4 years, I would say that the discourse has become more cohesive, the general vocabulary and whoever comes with this kind of philanthropic “do good” mentality. At the end is all about getting people together and explain them our vision. For example, when dumpster divers come in and we tell them that we don’t need to go to the dumpster to collect food but the store rooms they say “wow, we can do this too!”.

Employee wellbeing, how important is this to you? How do you enrich the volunteers?

Let’s say that an 18 year old student comes and work with us she starts realizing that she could talk to farmers for instance and she would also be free to move into recruiting suppliers where she sees the opportunity. This has not always worked perfectly because there are

different people that are involved in this process and sometimes it is not possible to implement such a project. We are not successful every time and sometimes we really struggled. We have some people that come and just want to come in and observe us to write their thesis and this is also fine! We always try to keep the avenue open to get internal and external perspectives and there is an implosion of ideas that sometimes is good and sometime is also bad.

What about financial profit? What is your view of it and how do you reinvest it or divide it?

The profit is not much, sometimes none. We need to pay the rent for the kitchen, the wage of the chef and if there is more then it goes to food rescues, that usually work as volunteers.

What is your view of competition and collaboration? Do you have any private or public partners? And competitors?

This has been part of our internal dialogue: what is competition for us? Well, we aim to shoot our self in our foot, we aim not to exist anymore. Competition does not exist when you have a mission like ours. About collaboration it is seen as a question of solidarity and sharing resources. 60% of what we rescue goes to soup kitchens for free, so we basically help each other because most of the time we do not manage to sell all the food we collect. We share our ways of working with those who intend to work with food surplus and much as possible.

What is your understanding of growth? Do you think that SE A needs to grow and expand?

No we do not! We need to grow the idea. Our size is just fine. There can be several SEs in Malmö! We are happy to SSE similar initiatives and projects growing around us.

Do you think that your organization would exit in a post growth direction? Would you evolve into something different then?

Transition is about asking the uncomfortable question and I feel like the work we are doing in very much in transition, and that is the only way to be. The only way to be is to stay in the problem.

What do you think about Sweden and Skåne when it comes to social entrepreneurship?

I am very aware that Sweden and Skåne has a mentality and upper culture that helps organizations working well. But our idea of economic growth is different from other organizations, and different from the one of the nation and region.

Would you define yourself as a role model?

We have to be humble, because the minute we use these type of term means that we are the blueprint while this is not true. There are many different ways to set up post-growth responses. We are a conversation point. A way to allow dialogue.

Summary of the SEEs interviewed:

Secondary Social Enterprise A

SSE A is a non-profit foundation which is funded for 50% by malmo municipality and the other half through private investors. They work with companies in the region of Skone that have paying customers for a specific product or service. They work together with for-profit organisations as well as social entrepreneurs. The main focus is for-profit, but when a company has a 'big heart' and they convince the SSE with its vision they are more than willing to accept the organisation within their SSE. They normally work with organisations that have 10 to 15 employees. The aim of the SSE is to double the number in entrepreneurs in 3 years. The focus right now is growth through employment which reflects in the main indicator used to measure their success: indicator on growth. The turnover is taking into consideration here, but they stated clearly that the focus might change in the future if the market and environment demand it.

Like previously mentioned a positive feeling with the organisation is very important for SSE A. When a company gets a 'no' from the bank for one of several reasons they still have the possibility to get to SSE A and ask them if they can help them out to assure their survival and a possible employee upscale. *The main focus of SSE A at this moment is not to make a good turnover, but to battle unemployment.* Through getting people jobs, they want to raise the well being of these people. When reporting to the municipality every quarter they submit a growth analysis that is not just profit driven, but has a centralised focus on attaining employees and making sure that they are cared after.

Decisions that are being made within the SSE are transparent and able to be easily democratic due to the small amount of employees within the SSE. People contacting SSE A tend to have good ideas, but not necessarily too much business experience. Since starting an organisation is very different from keeping it healthy or growing it. They tend to do everything themselves and are afraid to delegate due to a loss in quality. This is why the SSE has created Q&A seminars where people learn about for instance delegating issues and achieving a high level of employee wellbeing. The money they ask for this is not a high amount, since they do not want to financially strain the entrepreneurs in question. They are also honest in the service that they offer and when they feel that upscaling through employees numbers is not the best option, then they send the entrepreneur to another SSE.

SSE A meets every friday with representatives from the other SSE in the region to talk about current affairs, challenges and opportunities. Since they work with many different investors, they have several get togethers throughout the year where different people meet and discuss collaboration. *'The atmosphere is like one big family'*. This is also due to the fact that everybody is interested in helping each other since they are in the same boat. The emphasis is on being open, transparent and not afraid to also share your main challenges. There is for instance an example of a pizza delivery company who collaborated with electric scooters for the elderly. Initially unlikely partnerships can be formed if people collaborate. There is still plenty of growth in the market and the emphasis is being put more and more on

sustainability. Many entrepreneurs are still afraid to pick up the phone and call their potential partners, but many businesses see the opportunities in the sustainable business market.

Quote: Every company shouldn't necessarily grow, since they might have something they need to solve within the company first. It has to be a balance between the two things

Secondary Social Enterprise B

SSE B is a business incubator in Malmö, Sweden. In contrast to their sister companies throughout Sweden they have a main focus on social innovation. Due to the close collaboration with Malmö university, they focus mostly, but not excluded to, helping the students from this institution developing their social entrepreneurial potential. When looking at last year's statistics the projects that they consulted have comprised for 55% on social innovations ideas. SSE B has constructed three different stages to guide them through the entrepreneurial funnel. Their aim is to meet them, get to know them and make them launch a strategy to become successful in order to go to link for the first clients. When building an entrepreneurial team they put the emphasis on having one as diverse as possible, without putting a stamp of social on it. The way in which they coach the entrepreneurs differs from individual guidance to group workshops. These workshops are emphasised by a specific theme like female entrepreneurship or social innovation. Besides these workshops there are also class lectures, Friday breakfasts and social media activities which translates into a wide arrange of events towards awareness of the incubator.

When looking at the value proposition from SSE B the word inclusion has an important role. They are a political and help any business idea, even though there is an atmosphere of putting a preference on social entrepreneurial ideas. The SSE is value driven, yet open to everybody. This creates an inclusivity which is framed by a set of strong socially inclined morals, that even though important to the SSE, is not forced unto the entrepreneur. The approach tends to differ with the different coaches, but on the long term their aim is to create a toolbox which incorporates the SDG's into a more formal sustainability report. This value based framework comes back to the idea that the coaches cannot have guidance with people that don't align with their morals. The framing of sustainability within the incubator is ever changing and thought of as an interaction between the sponsors like the university, Drivhuset own moral framework and the other sponsors.

Quote: With the idea that you consult, you can SSE it either way. Is our value shaped by our sponsor, who has a value in social innovation? Is it because we specifically say half of our ideas should be social.

Quote: I think municipality investments increased but that doesn't necessarily mean that the businesses become more sustainable because a lot of international start-ups come here, for example. And they are more inspired to collaborate rather than saying on our sustainable.

Quote: Because a lot of international start-ups come here, for example. And they are more inspired to collaborate rather than saying on our sustainable.

With Malmö university's shift from Högskola to university a necessity arose to create a vision that would make them stand out from the other educational

institutions in the region. The focus for social innovation in affiliation with strategic papers was chosen. When you look at Malmö as a city, SSE B argues that they are environmentally sustainable, but not necessarily socially sustainable yet. Even though Malmö has an existing ecosystem for sustainability, people who want to launch their product here still have trouble choose where to go, in contrary to for instance Stockholm who have a more entrepreneurial ecosystem. Malmö's social entrepreneurs tend to be more local and organise an event once or twice and leave it at that. SSE B tries to facilitate game-changer, the ones who actually think of traditional entrepreneurial scalable product. These people know how to build a business and a very mission driven with a strong affiliation to the good of society. The link between a social mission and the potential of having a product that would function well in the market creates a game-changer. *Quote: I do not know if Malmö is really becoming that more sustainable. don't think so. I think I'm too much in my sustainability bubble, to be honest, like I keep seeing referrals of friends and friends of friends.* From the different educational institutions SSE B collaborates mostly with Malmö University, which also hosts and funds them. Right now they are connected to an EU organisation focussed on sustainability and they hope to do a collaborative project together in the future. SSE B collaborates less with other accelerators than in the past. Drivhuset helps the entrepreneur as much as possible, but if their product or service has another focus or is in another phase they are sent to another SSES. *For instance when a company Has moved from Helsingborg to Malmö with 100 paying customers we send them to one of the other seesthat can help their product or service in that particular phase better.* These collaborations can be very formal from a contract that is signed which states that there needs to be a collaboration several times a year, to very informal collaborations through the form of parties where the business gets intertwined through casual small talk. *The different seesin Malmö all have different expertise and we send our entrepreneurs if necessary to the most relevant SSE for their product or service without actively working together with these SSES.* The process of collaboration is not a closed system and tends to be more complex which leads towards uncertainty for the entrepreneurs next steps. When looking at collaboration SSE B explains that the less financially sustainable you are (due to difficulties in monetizing a return on investment), the more financial stakeholders you will need to bring in through projects and crowdfunding. *This makes it more complex and creates the question if the collaboration is more voluntary or a dependence?* None of the entrepreneurs ever says no to new contacts, especially when their company is in an early stage want to SSEk out new opportunities. *This does not mean that all new connections are fruitful.* SSE B does not SSE a big difference between the commercial and the social entrepreneurs when it comes to collaboration, besides the fact that social entrepreneurs tend to have more stakeholders involved.

Quote: Generally the social entrepreneurs are really keen on collaborating.

Secondary Social Enterprise C

The mandate of SSE C is to support the development and deployment of environmental and energy technologies in Skåne, but also in the rest of Sweden. To achieve this they offer a networking platform. On these platforms they connect

potential partners, end users and bigger companies to help manage collaborative projects where different stakeholders work together. SSE C is a non-profit that is owned by its approximately 100 members from the public and private sectors, including research institutions, of which about 85% are private sector. The members range from start-ups to large energy multinationals. The SSE is financed through membership fees as well as some basic financing from the region. The fees for the members are kept low to not encumber them financially. The main goal of the SSE is to share new knowledge. To accomplish this they convene different stakeholders around this challenge. These stakeholders are not excluded to their members, but also the broader community. Since they are partly financed by the region, their meetups such as circular economy themed seminars are open to everyone. Even though they would prefer to focus on paying members, this is not allowed, since public money has been put into the equation. *Since there is a lot of money from the public sector floating around, it should not be too difficult to get a bit of money to get started if you have a good idea.* There exist different programmes in schools, but also on a national and European level that support sustainable business ideas. When you look at the municipal level you notice that they are getting better in terms of organizing their procurement processes in a way that is more friendly to startups and new technology so that they can take risks and implement pilot projects in certain areas, which lets companies demonstrate that technology works, and they have a reference case for the next sale. *Entrepreneuring sustainability has become so popular that it has become mainstream.*

If one looks at the future of the market, in terms of resources, one could say that they will increase. There will be more resources at the European level with the next budget is supposed to have 25% of the entire budget devoted to climate action. This is mainly due to a strong political push. Even though, looking from a political level, this has at times been a setback due to a different administration such as the current Danish political party in power. The SSE likes to have support from a political level, but does not need it to survive. When taking into consideration transparency there has been a shift towards more third party verification. there is a system called environmental product declaration which is being pushed on a European level. The system is starting to get bigger here in Sweden, which means that companies have to conduct a life cycle assessment of their products, and then have that verified by a third party. Afterwards it gets certified based on how much information or what kinds of information it includes, and that is starting to be used to evaluate the level of sustainability.

Collaboration is important to the SSE. These joint efforts do not always fit, but when they do, the SSE is open to it even though this is more on an ad hoc basis instead of something structured. Since the service of the SSE exists more on a complementary level with a specific service they do not compete with the other seen in Malmö. There is not much focus on competition due to the fact that they work with public money. *Even though competition forces people to become better at what they do, it is kind of wasteful to do exactly the same thing. It is much smarter to share resources and to be more effective in supporting the target group.* The SSE works with different other parties, which can be really effective when you bring them all together, but that does not always happen. When looking at the different companies that come to the SSE, it becomes clear that the smaller ones are much more resource constrained. This is where a necessity for

collaboration appears. In contrary to the bigger companies who have a lot more confidence from a resource perspective. *The SSE helps companies in different areas to meet with stakeholders in the value chain. Think of relevant researchers, the end users, companies or other suppliers with complementary products or services.* Since many of the companies that the SSE works with have an innovative product and do not necessarily compete with anything that already exists, there is not much talk of competition. They do meet at the same networking events and share their knowledge. *In the end the entrepreneurs want to build a better future which creates kind of a collaborative spirit to solve the big challenges.* Even though the vision is there, it is hard to measure how far the collaboration really goes, since it's one thing for companies to get together and sponsor an event for startups and it's another thing for them to share some of the things that they're doing internally.

Secondary Social Enterprise D

The SSE creates a place where small and big companies can build a network with a main focus on, but not excluded to tackling climate change since several organisations affiliated to the SSE put their attention on the social aspects of sustainability. To join this network organisations have to pay an annual fee that is of such an amount that it in no way encumbers the financial health of the company. The SSE have around 30 members. This number times our low fee gives the SSE enough financial resources to run the website, have ten meetings every year and a christmas mingle. Furthermore: climate change deniers are welcome to attend the meetings for free. The companies that the SSE works with do not necessarily have a sustainability department, but they have their heart in the right place when working with the kind of questions that battle climate change. With this strong value proposition, young entrepreneurs are attracted to the SSE. *So long as I have lived I have not seen or heard about a change in industry as big as this in Swedish history.* The agenda of 2030 has made a big difference in how people think about sustainability. This is because the goals have been made in a way that companies understand. Right now we live in a capitalistic system where companies are motivated to grow bigger and bigger, taking over smaller companies and in such a way creating a monopoly. An answer to this system would be companies that focus more on the social aspects. This will take time, 30 or 40 years and going from one system to another, it's very hard and difficult to communicate, you can SSE that when you read the history. It could create big problems, on the short term you will have problems with unemployment and social problems, but in the long term it will create another, more social society. There are more and more companies that focus on coexistence instead of unlimited growth, which creates a growing market. Even though at this moment the amount is small, they are nonetheless important, because they will create a change for the whole industry. Looking at employees in the current market the SSE does not think that they are more involved in the decision making process, but many social enterprises are relatively small which makes it easier to discuss the companies strategy with the few employees. But democratic, according to the SSE does not necessarily have to be a good thing. If the CEO thinks sustainable, but the employees don't, it does not have to be democratic. CEO's can function as a role model. The SSE sees no shift towards employee well being, but they do SSE a shift towards keeping the employees motivated, since the company otherwise won't survive.

The importance of climate change and global warming is a predominant sound in the current market. This predominance does not just reflect in the political, but also in the economic landscape in which organisations and people are understanding the necessity for change. *This change will come not from politicians, but from the people and the companies who have the power to make a difference.*

Many municipalities talk about changing the world, also in the choices of products they purchase from industry, but it ends up being mostly talk. As a reaction to this around 7000 mayors throughout the whole world have signed a document that says that they are working on with climate change goals which will be ahead compared to the ones put forward from the state. Some of the companies related to our SSE have also signed a similar agreement with the municipality. This generates more money to create a more environmentally friendly society which is a small amount relative to the total industry's investments. That is why the SSE creates an environment where the focus is 50% on business environment and 50% on sustainability. This is decided by a steering committee that determines in which direction the SSE should go. Even though the SSE finds collaboration very important, they do not collaborate with other SSES. The companies that are affiliated with the SSE have made a conscious choice to be a member of this particular SSE because of the way it is built and how they work. *They are not members there because they want contact with five other hosts or networks.* When an external party comes up with an idea the SSE has to think of the added value to the members. There is a stigma around the fact that you can never have enough network meet-ups where people talk about how good they are and that they work for the companies. SSE D is focussed on what is best for their members, so they are not against the other SSES, but they are very critical if the services that they have to offer actually has any added value for their own members. There are too many organisations that are focussed on surviving, instead of giving their best for the companies. Another problem is that some of these SSES, even though being very familiar with sustainability, do not understand business, even though they think they do. *But that is not enough, you need to understand business as well as sustainability, otherwise you will not succeed.*

SSE D thinks it is better to have some companies that are not on the top level of perfect climate entrepreneurship, but want to work with companies that understand that they want to be involved, but do not know how. With a diverse range of companies there is also a difference in involvement. Some of them make an annual report of their sustainable practices which the SSE looks at while others just come to the meetings and listen. This collaboration over competition is very important, otherwise there will be a breakdown of the system. That is why transparency has become an important tool to delete secrecy and create an environment where the emphasis is put on sharing best practises. This collaboration is relevant for companies, but also research institutions like the university where there is a lot of knowledge that need to get out in real life. The SSE want to be the bridge to make these collaborations possible.

Summaries social enterprises interviewed

Social enterprise A

Social enterprise A is a non-profit rescued food-catering that operates in the city of Malmö. The organization was founded in 2014 by one founder who was concerned about the amount of food wasted by supermarkets and restaurants. The organization was the first rescued food catering service in Scandinavia.

Sustainable mission

This social enterprise approached the complex and multifaceted food waste issue in a creative way by making of waste a resource. The company has a network of partners (supermarkets, bakeries, catering) that donate uncooked surplus food, which is then prepared and sold to the clients. Moreover, the company discourages single plastic use and it has phased out disposables (thermoses, plates and cutlery) throughout all its operations strengthening its already bold sustainable mission. In addition, the rescued food that the organization does not sell is again donated to local soup kitchens, avoiding waste.

Organizational structure

According to the founder, the organization presents a very flat organizational structure, where *'everyone has the same decisional power'*. The organization is run by a board, which meets once a month and covers all types of functions, from public communication to sales, human resources to marketing. Since the social enterprise's incomes depend very much on the orders received, the company does not have a stable revenue to count on. Consequently, the organization can only afford to have one part-time contracted chef and for all the other tasks and duties it has to rely on volunteers. The founder continues by stating that the organization is currently following a decentralized self-management practice defined as *holarchical*, which should empower the members of the organization to become instant decision makers. However, the limits of such a structure when the workforce is not-paid and often not properly trained are many: *"The decisional power that you have as a volunteer very much depends on how much you are involved and how much you know [also,] you need to be present at the moment when the decision is taken"*. The volunteers are mainly students that share the

mission and vision of the organization and, according to the founder, they can bring a great contribution when it comes to new ideas and inputs but they often 'come and go', depending on school assignments and holidays, altering the rhythm of the business.

Focus on profit

The social enterprise reinvests all its revenues into its operations in order to rescue more food and maximize its beneficial impact on environment and society. In case of financial surplus, explains the founder, the volunteers that collect the food get paid for their work. The founder continues by explaining how she sees the company in the future: *"we aim to shoot ourselves in the foot, we aim not to exist anymore"*, highlighting the commitment of the company to solve the issue that it is now battling with.

Collaboration

Collaboration also comes to be fundamental for this organization as it relies on the complementary contribution of its partners (supermarkets, bakeries, catering) in order to be able to produce and sell its products. Furthermore, this social enterprise partners with other organizations that are also dealing with similar issues and often donates the food that it is not able to sell to local soup kitchens. The company does not aim to grow or overtake the competition as the founder explains: *"our size is just fine, we need to grow only the idea. There can and should be other similar social enterprises Malmö!"*.

Social enterprise B

Social enterprise B consists of a small grocery shop located in Malmö where a wide range of products, ranging from food to health & beauty, are sold exclusively without packing. The shop was the very first of this type to open in Sweden but there are now similar 'zero waste' shops across the Scandinavian region.

Sustainable mission

This zero-waste shop has a well defined mission to decrease the amount of plastic that ends up in landfills and the ocean. In the shop the clients can bring their own reusable containers and, thanks to the "gravity seals" used, choose the right amount of product needed and avoid plastic use. The shop thus contributes to create a more sustainable shopping culture while raising awareness in the community about the issues deriving from plastic food packaging. Between the challenges identified by the founder is that it is hard to find like minded suppliers that work with no-packaged products.

Organizational structure

The social enterprise is now undertaking a period of organizational and leadership transition as the founder has recently decided to take on board two shareholders to help her with the shop. The founder states that before the two shareholders came into place the decisional power was concentrated only in her hands, but now,

since the two shareholders joined the decisional power has become more distributed. The founder also states that she decided to look for potential stakeholders after three years of business activity that she describes as “*energy draining*”. Also, the founder states: “*I choose to bring more shareholders in to have more energy and ideas to invest in the shop. I would like to organize more events and bring in new products*”.

The shop relies very much on the help of a team of volunteers that cover a different range of tasks, from welcoming and helping the customers to help running the social media channels. The founder explains that volunteers are a necessity for the shop - as its revenues do allow her to hire full-time staff - and that volunteers are both great at bringing in new ideas but sometimes not completely reliable. Overall, the shop’s organizational structure cannot be considered as flat given the central role of the founder as well as the lack of long-lasting relationship and established trust with the employers.

Focus on profit

The founder of social enterprise B states that financial profit is not the main focus of the organization but she also states that “*it is hard to get the message out and engage people on a tight budget*”. For the time being, the shop does not produce any economic surplus and all the revenues coming from the sale of the products are enough only to pay the suppliers and the rent of the shop. The founder continues by saying that she would like to increase the profit mainly to be able to afford at least one full-time employee. When asked whether she has ever considered opening a franchising the founder answered by saying that at the moment she is not thinking about it.

Collaboration

Competition seems not to be a problem for this social enterprise as it is the only ‘zero-waste’ shop in the city of Malmö. However, a similar shop is present in Copenhagen and the relations between the two shop owners are excellent. At the start of the business activity, states the founder, the two shops considered collaborating with local producers also seems important for the founder; as she explains, she recently partnered with a chocolate store next door that now provides, only for her shop, no packaging chocolate bars.

Social enterprise C

Social enterprise C is a small enterprise based in Helsingborg. This social enterprise offers different workshops and classes to help refugees and other newcomers in Sweden to find their place within the society. The company has now concluded a first pilot cycle and it’s now looking into improving its methods, gaining new funds and finding new partners - both public and private - to collaborate with.

Sustainable mission

Social enterprise C has a bold sustainable mission integrated within its business model. In fact, the company facilitates the integration of refugees in Sweden by helping them understand the different business culture and by helping the participants overcoming possible barriers that can be met while looking for a job. One of the main strengths of this social enterprise is that it provides all the workshops in Arabic, helping the participants better understanding the topics addressed and facilitating the interaction. Between the main challenges met by the organization is to measure the impact of their work, which can only be measured through soft-indicators.

Organizational structure

The organization is run by three people: two founders and a co-founder. Given the small size of the organization the decision making process is very much distributed as one of the founders states: *"Legally speaking, the founders have more decisional power, however, in the daily operations we apply shared leadership"*. According to the interviewee, the three members of the organization consult each other before making important decisions and, whoever has the knowledge and skills needed to carry out a task automatically takes up the leadership. This model allows the team to be dynamic and quickly carry out tasks; however, states the founder, *"if the company should grow its organizational structure should also be revisited"*.

Focus on profit

The social enterprise is now aiming to expand its operations to the three biggest cities in Sweden. However, as the founder explains, this is not to maximize profit but to have a wider impact across the nation. Moreover, the founder acknowledges that the model used at the moment still needs to be improved and he states that *"we are not willing to sacrifice the quality of our work to gain quantity. Getting our model right is priority number one for us"*. To conclude, it can be said that the focus of this organization is still on creating an effective and replicable model more than on profit maximization.

Collaboration

Collaboration is of fundamental importance for this social enterprise as the founder states *"We do want other organizations as partners, not competitors."* The organization in fact relies on the collaboration and partnership with the municipality, which is its main investor. Moreover, the team is now looking into finding new partners in the private sector and add to their services 'tours' and internships in Swedish companies in order to provide the participants with some hands on experiences.

Social enterprise D

Social enterprise D is a non-profit grassroots organization that offers free bike repair workshops in Malmö in the premises of a larger host organization. At the moment

this social enterprise offers one workshop per week where 10 bike repair stations are free for people to use.

Sustainable mission

Social enterprise D contributes to build a more sustainable transportation culture in Malmö by offering a free space for people to come, borrow tools and get to know other cyclists.

As the project manager states *“this initiative fills in a gap”* by providing, free of charge, a service which can often be expensive for the citizens. Hence, this project offers for free a service which is for some unaffordable, helping those who have small bike mechanic problems to get cycling again and building a stronger sense of community. Between the main challenge of the organization is to get a constant flow of users of the service and measure the impact of its operations.

Financial surplus

This bike repair service has been financed by different entities throughout the last eight years. After finishing the project for the first three years, the municipality completely stopped its contribution to the project which remained without base funding and it now only survives thanks to short term funds from the municipality and donations from privates. Consequently, the organization does not SSE financial profit as a possible outcome of its operations. Given the vision of the host organization, the project cannot sell neither products (bikes) or services (workshops) in order to support itself as the project is not meant to generate profit nor grow economically.

Organizational structure

The interviewee affirms that the organizational structure that characterizes the organization is mainly flat, meaning that *“everyone is free to come up and propose ideas”* and that *“everyone's voice is heard”*. However, the project manager continues by saying that, despite the efforts to keep a flat organizational structure, seniority still plays a fundamental role in decision making processes, in particular when it comes to manage the budget of the organization. The reasons for doing so are that most of the workforce is composed of volunteers that are often not reliable. The project manager states that despite its efforts to engage the volunteers into the brainstorming process needed to organize the activities and events, he has been experiencing a lack of interest and motivation which has led to him taking all the decisions. He argues: *“I believe that sometimes the top-down approach is needed because often decisions have to be made quickly and I cannot possibly wait for everyone to get back to me”*. Furthermore, decisional power is often given to those who are present in the team meetings happening once per month, where decisions are made.

Collaboration

The project manager of the initiative states that *“this organization is all about collaboration”*, and continues by saying that one of the main outcomes of the workshop is to get like minded minded people together to share ideas and knowledge. SE D is also very much willing to collaborate with other similar

organizations and initiatives. For instance, the organization hosts within its premises a networking event once per year for similar organization across Sweden to come, meet and share ideas. The project manager continues by saying “we would like to SSE other bike repair initiatives opening in Malmö, possibly in other areas and neighborhoods of the city”.

Social enterprise E

Social enterprise E is a Malmö based organization which is dislocated in five different locations across the city and that currently counts 36 employees. This organization can be defined as a work-integrating social enterprise directed to refugee women. The social enterprise offers different services such as catering, cleaning and sewing and it only employees refugee women.

Sustainable mission

The mission of the social enterprise E is “to create jobs and increased economic independence for foreign-born women who are far from the labor market”. The organization does so by helping the women monetizing skills such as cooking, cleaning and sewing, that they often possess but do not know how to transfer to the job market. The organization not only gives a paid job to unemployed women, but it also helps them understand the value of their work and of their person, facilitating their integration in the society, boosting their self-confidence and encouraging emancipation. Social sustainability is therefore the main focus of the organization, however, environmental sustainability is also taken into account as the chairwoman explains: “we are committed to use local products as much as possible when it comes to cooking and use sustainable and long lasting materials when sewing even if this is more expensive and weights on our finances”.

Focus on profit

The social enterprise is set up as a non profit organization and the greatest majority of its revenues come from their commercial activity. The founder states that “of course we try to make as much money as possible so that we can help more people” and she continues “all the money we make goes into salaries, rent and suppliers” . In case of financial surplus, the founder explains, the organization employees more refugee women and a proof of this is the fact that the organization went from having 6 employees at the start of its activity to 36 today. The founder also explains that focus on profit is necessary within a capitalistic system, even for social enterprises.

Organizational structure

The organization is structured as a cooperative, meaning that all its members have equal decisional-power. As the founder explains, this is of fundamental importance to get the participants to gain self-confidence and develop a sense of ownership over the organization and their work. The founder continues by highlighting the importance of a safe space where all the women feel comfortable to say what they think, without worrying about being judged by others. As the founder explains, this

process can in some cases be very long and not always the fastest way to take decisions, however, the founder states that this is the only way to achieve the organization's mission. The founder continues by saying that *“sharing leadership also means sharing responsibility [...] Making people responsible for their own work makes them respect it more”*.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a fundamental part of the operations of social enterprise E. As the founder explains, the successful establishment of a partnership with two multinational groups has allowed the organization to rely on a stable revenue stream, consequently allowing long-term planning. Furthermore, the organization has built over the years, thanks to its success and reliability, a good partnership with the municipality of Malmö, which has acknowledged the beneficial social contribution of the organization. The founder also mentions some of the difficulties met while establishing relations with profit-focused organizations. She continues by explaining that coming to an agreement with one of the multinational companies in particular was very challenging as they often have very strict standards that are hard to bend.

Social enterprise F

SE F is a design and consultancy studio which helps fashion brands move towards sustainability and develops sustainable product lines. The organization is based in Malmö and it is run by one founder and two other members.

Sustainability mission

Both the design and the consultancy branches are strictly intertwined with the sustainable mission of the company to bring about sustainable change in the fashion industry. All the designs presented by the studio are carefully studied in order to minimize environmental impact and change the consumer's shopping habits. For instance, the studio created an entire collection of bag designs that can be downloaded, laser cut on recycled material owned by the consumer and easily assembled. As the founder states *“We are bypassing supply chains, we are no longer producing the products. We are encouraging consumers to produce the product themselves”*.

The consultancy branch of the social enterprise also contributes to create a new, more sustainable fashion industry by educating brands on circularity and help them redesigning supply chains through workshops, talks and other forms of collaboration.

Focus on profit

SE F is a for-profit organization; however, this does not mean that the profit maximization is the first priority of the enterprise. As the founder states: *“We are a for profit organization, but our main focus is to bring value to society through the work that we do”*. The organization's focus seems in fact to be on sharing knowledge with other brands as well as consumers in order to radically change the

current fashion industry and the overconsumption that characterizes it. Attention to financial profit however, is needed to maximise positive impact and bring about change.

Organizational structure

As it has been previously mentioned, SE F counts three members. As the founder states, the decisional power within the organization is well distributed and everyone's opinion is always welcome and taken into account: *"We have a flat hierarchy, no one is the boss of no one"*. The founder continues by saying that she is in charge of dividing the different tasks and projects among the team but other than that, the team does not present other hierarchical structures. According to the founder, this flat organizational structure has so far been working very well and no problems have yet been met.

Collaboration

Collaboration seems to be very important for SE F; however, the founder explains that creating long-term collaborations or start projects with other studios or NGOs takes time and the company has not yet been able to invest time and resources into this. The founder explains: *"One of our goals is to spread the knowledge in order to generate innovation, [...] if more people are involved and share data an idea we can then create products that can change society for the better"*. The founder continues by highlighting the importance of collaboration within the industry as well as cross-collaboration with other entities for the achievement of sustainable development and concludes by saying the company intends to work on this point in the future.