

Motivation Among Social Entrepreneurs with Intellectual Disabilities: “Why They Act”

Abstract

Social entrepreneurship is a growing trend for people with intellectual disabilities (ID). This reflects a shift in contemporary policy towards entrepreneurship and self-employment as a viable employment option for people with disabilities in general; a strategy which is intended to promote autonomy and reduce dependence on entitlement-based services as well as to reduce employment disparities and stimulate business and job creation. However, it is not well understood what exactly this means for people with ID involved in social entrepreneurial ventures. This research approached the issue by conducting dyadic interviews to explore the motivations of people with ID who are participating and supported in social entrepreneurship – “why they act.” In exploring these motivations, this article investigates push-pull factors, the role of the social mission, and how support influences motivation.

*Keywords:* employment, entrepreneurship, motivation, support, policy, qualitative

## Introduction

The concept of motivation for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) is critical in employment as motivation explores the reasons *why* people become involved in a particular employment strategy. By understanding their motivation, we can learn what factors are driving people with ID to pursue social entrepreneurship as an employment option. Moreover, exploring motivation from the point of view of people with ID will help address concerns in the field regarding the potential co-optation of social entrepreneurship. In particular, concerns that the term can potentially be used to repackage employment practices that have historically been exploitative, or that social entrepreneurship may be used as a neoliberal strategy to remove responsibility for the provision of employment services from the public to the private domain (Caldwell, Parker Harris, & Renko, 2012). Learning how people with ID are participating and supported in their motivation to pursue social entrepreneurship, from their standpoint, provides critical insight into how choice and self-determination manifest and whether people with ID are choosing to become social entrepreneurs because they want to, or whether it is due to a lack of other employment options.

This research builds upon a synthesis of disability studies and entrepreneurship studies (Parker Harris, Caldwell, & Renko, 2014), incorporating ID scholarship, an intersection that has not been previously explored in empirical research (Caldwell et al., 2012). Bridging the two disciplines makes it possible for one to inform the other and thereby address gaps in each field attendant to the question of entrepreneurship for people with ID. The purpose of this interdisciplinary research is to explore how people with ID are participating and supported in social entrepreneurship, and their motivation for pursuing social entrepreneurship. Specifically, this research focuses on: (1) whether and to what extent push and pull factors affect motivation;

(2) what is the role of the social mission; and (3) how does support influence motivation? This article reports findings from a qualitative study that uses dyadic interviews with seven individuals with ID and their support persons. The objective is to offer new insights and information for practitioners, policymakers, and other professionals committed to the full inclusion of people with ID that will inform the expectations we set for entrepreneurship as a sustainable employment option, from the perspective of social entrepreneurs with ID themselves.

### **Background**

The discipline of entrepreneurship exists at the intersection of economic theory, the social sciences, managerial and organizational science (Swedberg, 2000); not only accounting for the rich and diverse nature of its development thus far, but also resulting in a fragmented research focus (Low & MacMillan, 2007; Schildt, Zahra, & Sillanpää, 2006; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The focus of entrepreneurship research echo these disciplinary divisions: motivation: *why they act*, management: *how they act*, and outcomes: *what happens when they act* (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Stevenson & Jarillo, 2007). In exploring the central research question of how people with ID are participating and supported in social entrepreneurship, this research was structured around the three foci above. This structure was chosen because not only are these questions at the core of entrepreneurship research, but also because they can be used to break down complex concepts into concrete, easily understandable, and accessible plain language sub-questions. The findings presented in this article focus on unpacking the first component: understanding why they act: what are the motivations of people with ID participating and supported in social entrepreneurship. Findings on management and outcomes will be published separately due to the depth of information.

### **Operationalizing Social Entrepreneurship**

While social entrepreneurship can be considered a subtype of entrepreneurship, it has also developed into its own distinct field of study. Yet, within disability employment research the terms self-employment, entrepreneurship, and microenterprise are used interchangeably (Yamamoto, Unruh, & Bullis, 2011). This presents problems in the development of effective policy, programs, and practices (see Parker Harris, Caldwell, et al., 2014 for detail). Self-employment refers to a customized employment strategy, intended to provide a job to employ an individual as an alternative to salaried employment. The goal is for that individual to become financially self-sufficient.

-- FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE --

Entrepreneurship differs in that its goal is not just job creation for one individual, but rather the creation of a profit- and growth-oriented business that has the potential to employ others in the future. That is, in order to be profitable a business must grow, and as that business grows it will need to hire employees. If entrepreneurs with disabilities hire employees with disabilities, then supporting entrepreneurship for people with disabilities and empowering them to hire others can have an exponential impact. Subsequently, entrepreneurship is both an employment strategy and an anti-poverty strategy, whereas self-employment is only an employment strategy. This is the way that entrepreneurship has been used successfully among other disadvantaged communities such as among ethnic, immigrant, and women entrepreneurs. However, while disability employment policy and programs support self-employment, research indicates it is not fully supporting entrepreneurship (Parker Harris, Caldwell, et al., 2014; Parker Harris, Renko, & Caldwell, 2013). There are many factors that motivate people to pursue entrepreneurship. It is unsurprising then that this focus has been referred to as causal, considering why entrepreneurs act (Stevenson & Jarillo, 2007). In general, entrepreneurs are driven by three

motivations: 1) the desire for power and independence, 2) the will to succeed, and 3) the satisfaction of getting things done (Swedberg, 2000). Among marginalized populations, blocked social and economic mobility has acted as a catalyst for business activity and the acquisition of business skills (Bates, 1997; Waldinger, Aldrich, & Ward, 2000). Events such as traumatically acquired disability (Haynie & Shepherd, 2010) or perceived hiring discrimination on the basis of one's disability (Blanck, Sandler, Schmeling, & Schartz, 2000) may serve as the impetus driving an individual to pursue entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship is a distinct form of entrepreneurship that refers to a business that is intended to create both a monetary profit as well as address a social mission (Parker Harris et al., 2013; Parker Harris, Renko, & Caldwell, 2014). It is the social mission of the business that plays a key role in distinguishing it from commercial entrepreneurship. While a commercial business may be socially responsible, for a social enterprise the social mission must be central to the business itself (Austin et al., 2006). Social entrepreneurs are motivated by lived experiences; their mission related and interwoven with social value (Austin et al., 2006; Bornstein, 2007; Bornstein & Davis, 2010). Many social entrepreneurs are motivated by social problems and unmet needs they encounter in their community. In response, they generate creative ideas for solving these problems and meeting these needs (Shaw & Carter, 2007; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009). Because of their experience with marginalization and disadvantage, people with disabilities have the potential to create solutions based on problems they see in their daily lives and, in this way, to become social innovators.

### **Push-Pull Motivation**

Push-pull theory is one way of conceptualizing entrepreneurial motivation and served as a helpful cognitive tool for discussing motivation with participants in this research. Push-pull

theory provides an understandable and relatable concept: that someone might choose to pursue entrepreneurship either because of difficulty finding work and/or a lack of other options (push motivation), or because they have an interest and/or passion (pull motivation) for the work they are doing. Push-pull motivation has been studied with regard to gender (Hughes, 2003; Kirkwood, 2009) and the social mobility of immigrants and ethnic minorities (Bates, 1997; Clark & Drinkwater, 2000). It has been suggested that push factors are the result of blocked opportunities and status incongruence (Bates, 1997; Verdaguer, 2009), and that entrepreneurship has the potential to correct this disparity to achieve status recognition (Reynolds, 2002).

In their research, Haynie and Shepherd (2010) examined the career transition period for veterans with acquired disabilities in response to traumatic life events and observed a strong link between career and identity during this transformational period. During the course of the study two types of motivations emerged: entrepreneurship as a career path based on perceived or real obstacles to other career paths (Push Motivation) and entrepreneurship as a career path based on satisfying some psychological need rooted in trauma and transition (Pull Motivation). Pull factors are typically considered to be positively motivated whereas push factors imply that self-employment is chosen under duress, despite one's preference and due to a lack of other options (Bates, 1997).

Research looking at motivational and attitudinal factors of social entrepreneurs with disabilities, not specific to ID, found that disability-entrepreneurship is motivated by both push and pull factors (Caldwell, Parker Harris, & Renko, 2016). This finding is particularly important given the relationship between motivation and policy development. Push motivation often results in necessity-based entrepreneurship, whereas pull motivations often lead to opportunity-based entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship policy design has developed primarily in response to pull

motivations (Dawson & Henley, 2012). Conversely, disability employment policies develop primarily in response to push motivations. As a result, entrepreneurship has focused on creating opportunity-based policies, while disability-employment has focused on creating needs-based policies (Caldwell et al., 2016). Many entrepreneurs with disabilities are currently operating outside of both the disability and business service systems because neither are fully meeting their needs for both push and pull factors (Parker Harris, Caldwell, et al., 2014).

### **Methods**

Dyadic Interviewing is a methodology informed by a disability studies ideology, ensuring in-depth interviews are person-centered and self-determined (see Caldwell, 2014 for more detail). This technique for dyadic interviewing comprises three interviews: one with the person with ID, one with the individual that the person with ID has identified as being a key support to provide supplementary information, and a follow-up interview with the individual with ID:

[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

This structure of separate dyadic interviewing allows for comparisons, cross-checking, and triangulation of the data while still maintaining focus of the unit of analysis on the individual with ID (Caldwell, 2014; Eisikovits & Koren, 2010).

Seven dyadic interviews were conducted with individuals with ID participating in social entrepreneurship in the [Removed for review] area (n=7), and the person they identified as being most important in supporting their entrepreneurship (i.e. key support person, n=7). Purposive, criterion sampling was used to obtain information-rich cases that meet certain criteria (Patton, 2002), described below. A targeted recruitment strategy was used that began by identifying local employment service providers and asking them to share recruitment materials, dissemination via

a state-wide network of developmental disability organizations, and sharing recruitment materials via social media networks.

Of the seven individuals with ID, four had started their own social enterprises and three were working at a local social enterprise that employs people with ID, “Budding Futures” (see Tables 1 & 2). During data collection, two of the participants with ID working at Budding Futures revealed that they were in the beginning stages of starting their own business. All participants in this research have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Participants self-identified as having mild to moderate ID when contacting the researcher in response to the recruitment materials. Screening identified which of the potential participants met the inclusion criteria for social entrepreneurship in this research: 1) the business was intended to be profit-generating; 2) the business was intended to be growth-oriented; 3) the business had a social mission in addition to a profit-generating one; and 4) the social mission was central to the business. These criteria are the same as that used in a larger associated research project exploring the experiences of social entrepreneurs with disabilities that was not specific to people with ID (Caldwell et al., 2016; Parker Harris et al., 2013; Parker Harris, Renko, et al., 2014).

A semi-structured interview guide was used for each interview, which provided a flexible guideline for asking questions and facilitated in managing information between and among dyads. The interview guide was structured around the three foci necessary for answering the central research question of how people with ID are participating and supported in social entrepreneurship: motivation (why they act), management (how they act), and outcomes (what



happens when they act). The findings presented here focus on understanding the motivations of people with ID participating and supported in social entrepreneurship. Questions for participants with ID explored why they started their business, whether they started it because it was something they wanted to do (pull) or because of a lack of other options (push); how they came up with the idea; what the social mission of the business was when they started, why it was important, and whether it had changed since they started the business. The same questions were asked of the key supports, reworded to focus on the person with ID. This led to better understanding motivation from their perspectives.

Field notes were instrumental in keeping track of information from interview to interview, for cross-checking, and identifying probe questions that would lead to information-rich responses (Caldwell, 2014). In particular, responses from the first interview with individuals with ID were cross-checked with their key support person during the second interview. The key support persons' response as well as the person with ID's response were then member-checked with them during the final interview to look for discrepancies and agreement as important points of information that allow for triangulation of the data. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed before being coded in ATLAS-TI using a process known as index coding, wherein a set of well-defined codes is produced from external sources (e.g. a literature review), field notes, and a quick reading of the transcripts (Deterding & Waters, 2018). Thematic analysis was used to categorize and interpret the coded data segments.

### **Findings**

Motivation was one of three foci of this research. The themes that emerged through interviews with participants included how push and pull factors affect entrepreneurial

motivation, the role of the social mission, and how support influences the motivation of social entrepreneurs with ID.

### **Push and Pull Motivations**

Both push and pull factors played a role in motivating the social entrepreneurs with ID in starting their businesses, in pursuing a social mission, and in continuing to work on their business. While all four social entrepreneurs interviewed (Nathan, Derek, Heather, and Julie) acknowledged the push factors affecting them, such as the state of the economy and difficulty finding a job, they expressed greater value for the pull factors, such as desire to start a business and passion for their social mission (see Table 3).

Regarding push motivations, Nathan and Derek were both dissatisfied with their previous jobs, which were not a good fit for their skills or interests. One of the central motivating factors for Heather and Julie's employment was to make the most of their talents and strengths. The pace of work can operate as a barrier to people with ID and thus serve as motivation to pursue social entrepreneurship. For instance, Nathan found the work he was doing too fast and stressful, whereas Derek found it too slow and he felt he was not involved enough. Working on their own businesses allows Nathan and Derek the control and flexibility to work at their own pace. Pace was also a concern for Julie. Her mother believed that Julie's health problems and physical disability limited the time she could spend working and the type of work that she could do, similar to how health problems had restricted Nathan's employment in the past. Living arrangement also emerged as an important push factor, with location affecting the type of work available. This research provides a strong indication that living at home with family may provide the support needed to start a social enterprise. However, it bears further consideration what role living arrangement plays in establishing a business. It was only after moving to a more

independent living arrangement, a Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA), that Nathan felt his business became legitimate. Up to that point, Nathan's business had been only a hobby and not a "real" business. When Julie was asked about what distinguishes her businesses from a hobby she said, "[a] hobby is like I could just do it for fun. A business, we're trying to run something."

One of the central pull factors identified by the social entrepreneurs with ID was fulfilling their dream of business ownership and being a professional. While Derek enjoys being the boss, in charge, and in control; he comes alive when talking about his customers and their enjoyment of a quality, ethically-sourced product. Indeed, Derek's customers' enjoyment of his product seems to be his chief motivation. Another pull factor identified was the desire to help others, contributing to their social mission:

Julie: When you're this small and people take you for granted, then you're stuck. When you see everyone else they're like oh I didn't think about that and now this is a chance to do this for you and for some of your friends.

People with ID are often portrayed as recipients of care, in dependent roles that do not recognize their capacity to help or to act as social agents. In this context, it is this very assumption that social entrepreneurship challenges. The social entrepreneurs with ID interviewed in this research got enjoyment and satisfaction out of helping others, expressing a sense of social responsibility:

Heather: I have been blessed with the privilege and use my voice because other people cannot use their voice so I'm here for them.

Indeed, Heather's primary motivation is to help people who lack the opportunities she had by teaching them to advocate for themselves and equipping them with the tools to help make that possible.

The social enterprise "Budding Futures" was established on push motivations, founded by a group of parents in response to the lack of opportunities for young adults with ID to gain job

skills, work experience, and receive minimum wage. The participants with ID interviewed who worked at the Budding Futures greenhouse (Andrew, Kimberly, and Wayne) stated their central motivating factor for working there was that their parents thought it was a good idea given the lack of opportunities to gain work experience elsewhere. Pull motivations identified by participants included not only a desire to work and for greater social inclusion, but also because their friends worked there and the job was “fun.” However, for all three of these participants, being a “Team Member” was not their ideal job. Budding Futures was described by all of the participants with ID working there and their key support persons as a transition job, building skills towards a next step in employment. Indeed, all three participants concurrently held other jobs more in line with their interests: Andrew is a janitor at a local college, Kimberly works at a retail store, and Wayne volunteers at a grocery store as well as the athletics department at his local high school. Andrew, Kimberly, and Wayne are all in the transition period from the child to adult service system where they are trying to figure out what options and opportunities are available, and where their parents are trying to set them up for the best possible outcome.

Andrew, Kimberly, and Wayne’s key support persons were all parents who volunteered at Budding Futures. The motivations identified by these key support persons reflected more their personal motivation than the motivation of their son or daughter. Further, the parents acknowledged a lack of pull factors in that they may not be interested in the type of work or that there were aspects of it their son or daughter did not enjoy. Push factors carried more value for the key support persons, underlying the temporary expectation of this job. For the key support persons, this job was intended to give the participant with ID work experience and something to do, amass enough work credits to qualify for disability benefits should their son or daughter need them in the future, develop skills for future employment and a strong work ethic, allow for some

flexibility in scheduling, and provide a modicum of job security while they looked for other employment opportunities. In comparison, the motivations of the social entrepreneurs with ID who had started their own businesses and their key support persons differed from participants at Budding Futures in that they were not concerned with work credits as they were already using disability benefits. The motivations of both groups of key support persons were similar, however, in recognizing a need for flexibility given competing demands for time among social entrepreneurs with ID and Team Members alike.

### **Sharing the Social Mission**

A key part of each social entrepreneur's motivation was the social mission of their business itself. Given that social entrepreneurs tend to be inspired by problems or needs they have experienced and that people with ID experience significant barriers in various areas of life, one might expect the social mission of participants' businesses to be related to their disability. However, the relationship between social mission and disability appears more complex. There may be multiple social missions for the social entrepreneur with ID, and not all of them directly related to the mission of the business itself. For example, the *direct social mission* for Nathan and Derek's businesses relate to fair trade, organic coffee. However, Nathan also has an *indirect social mission* that is motivated by his experience living as a person with ID. Conversely, the direct social mission for Heather and Julie both draw explicitly on their experiences with disability, although not necessarily ID specifically, and it is their indirect social missions that reveal ancillary motivations.

Three of the four social entrepreneurs had indirect social missions. For Nathan, it was important to show to others, with and without disabilities, that someone with ID could start a

business. This was motivated by a negative experience that he had while in school with a teacher who had discouraged him from following his dreams:

**Interviewer: Do you like owning your own business?**

Nathan: Yes, I do! I like it because people told me don't dream dreams so I want to show them that people with disabilities can do what we want. I want people with disabilities to know, especially intellectual disabilities, that if someone tells you don't do it, you just try... just try.

**Interviewer: So does that motivate you?**

Nathan: Yes. If people tell you because of your disability that you can't dream dreams, I tell them it's not true. You just try and try again and if it doesn't work, then it's not for you and you try something else. It's true for all the disabled community and we should have rights because we're human beings. I'm seeing a big change now because back in the day they said if you had Down Syndrome you had to be given away or if you had my disability, you had to be locked away.

Nathan's fear of segregation and institutionalization was similar to a sentiment expressed by Heather and, in both instances, the participants seemed appreciative of the opportunities they were afforded and were motivated by a desire to help people who did not have the same support that they had.

Heather's situation is distinct because, while her direct social mission has to do with disability issues and her educational experience as a student with ID, her indirect social mission is entrepreneurial. Heather wants to help others start businesses, whether it is as a part of her social enterprise or independently:

Heather: My dream is to have other people with Down Syndrome and other people with disabilities have clear voices to go out and speak.... I want to have all people just like me to speak and have their organization and be [advocates] for change.... I want everybody else to have a chance to speak and not just me. I want them to start their own business and they can come to me or my mother and we can help if they want to do that.

This motivation was particularly interesting (and surprisingly subversive) because it suggests an impact far beyond one social enterprise, to possibly catalyzing a social movement by entrepreneurs with disabilities.

In line with her direct mission, Julie's indirect social mission is to help service animals. Notably, Lisa (Julie's key support person) stated that Julie had difficulty understanding the more conceptual aspects of social entrepreneurship:

Lisa: I don't even know if she knows what [the goal and mission] mean. I'm sure you'd get answers across the board. I don't think she's in a place where she cares. For her, it's important to get out and help the service dog program, but she's such an in the moment girl so we never made sure she knew what those things were. We're not going out to get support so she doesn't need the script right now. It's never been a high enough priority to discuss that with her.

Yet, Julie articulated a vision for the larger social impact that helping her service dog program with day to day expenses could have. Not only did Julie believe that her contribution could help the service dog program provide for the animals in their care, but it could possibly enable them to take in more animals. It could perhaps help them serve more families or serve the families that they do more affordably, recognizing the financial difficulties that families impacted by disability often experience. In effect, by helping to support the service dog program, Julie's social entrepreneurship could help to support her community.

A composite of participant responses at Budding Futures provides rich information about the social mission in context and about the participants' motivations for why they work there. According to the participants with ID, Budding Futures "was started by parents of people with disabilities and it's a place that pays people with disabilities to come there and work" (Wayne). It is "a good opportunity to go and work, not sit around doing nothing (Kimberly) where "the goal is to train people with disabilities to give them jobs" (Andrew) and "give them a reason to believe in themselves and make their own living" (Wayne). "Their mission is to show people with disabilities that they can work just like a normal person" (Wayne).

According to the key support persons, Budding Futures is "a greenhouse that grows plants and flowers and sells them wholesale and retail" (Bill) that employs people with

disabilities. It gives them “the opportunity to work” (Bill), “real job opportunities... gainful employment, a sense of purpose, and skills they wouldn’t have if they didn’t have this job” (Deborah). It gives “job training skills to people with disabilities in a safe environment where they don’t have to risk losing their job over not doing it fast enough or correctly” (Sylvia). “It’s run by people who don’t have disabilities and employs people without disabilities as well” (Deborah).

It became clear during the interviews with people with ID working at Budding Futures, that they did not share the mission of the organization. However, the key support persons interviewed were more involved. The social mission of the organization overlapped substantially with their own motivations, which is likely because Budding Futures was started by parents and therefore parents were involved in the development of the social mission from the very beginning. It could also be attributed to the key support person’s justifying the time and effort expended volunteering at Budding Futures.

While the participants with ID were grateful for the opportunity to work there, they felt they were not a part of the organization and were motivated more by the opportunity to be paid above minimum wage for their work. This is a striking difference from the social entrepreneurs with ID interviewed, who developed the social mission and thus were integrated at the foundational level and who are integral to the business itself. Making money was an important motivating factor for both groups of participants with ID, as it was seen to have implications for their quality of life. Whereas the social entrepreneurs with ID gave greater importance to their social mission, the participants with ID working at Budding Futures were more money-motivated than by the social mission. They had their sights set on futures beyond Budding Futures. Andrew is thinking about going to college and has found through working at the greenhouse that he



would like to become a gardener professionally, although it was not clear if Sylvia (Andrew's key support person) is aware of this dream yet. Over the course of their first interviews, both Kimberly and Wayne revealed that they are in the process of starting their own business partnership along with three other friends. Kimberly has always dreamed of owning a restaurant and loves working retail. Wayne would ideally like to work in a full-time, paid office position:

Wayne: Because I think of myself as a businessman... that's why I like [the athletics department job] better. It's more of a business. I picture myself on the telephone taking calls for the company and running errands.

Wayne sees himself as a businessperson and has a desire to be seen as a professional in this capacity. Wayne hopes the experience of starting his own business partnership will teach him "... what it takes to run a business and I won't look at a business the same way... some think it looks easy, but it's not easy to do." Both Kimberly and Wayne are motivated by a desire to work with their friends, have an opportunity to make money so that they can stop working at Budding Futures, and live on their own or with friends in the near future. By starting their own business, Kimberly and Wayne may gain more control over their lives because, if successful, they will not have to depend as much upon someone else for their livelihood.

### **Support & Motivation**

There were discrepancies between what the key support person perceived as motivating factors versus what the social entrepreneurs with ID said motivates them. Markedly, the key support persons tended to emphasize push factors over pull factors. For example, when Derek spoke of his motivations he mentioned he held previous jobs that he did not like. However, Charlie (Derek's key support person) identified this as Derek's main motivation for pursuing social entrepreneurship rather than his dream to own a business:

Charlie: He's got disabilities and those don't allow him to qualify for a regular job that everyday people would be able to qualify for... that being said, there are jobs out there for people with disabilities. He's had a few or a couple jobs and it's his social side that

got in the way. He wanted to socialize a lot and nothing fit his personality. No job fit his personality so he wanted to start up his own thing.

In fact, when asked whether his previous jobs played a role in his decision to start a business Derek said, “Not really.” For Derek, the connection between his dissatisfaction with previous work experiences and his decision to start a social enterprise was tangential – Derek was motivated by the potential that new venture provides rather than by his past negative experiences. This effect, whereby key support persons emphasized push factors, was somewhat less among the two key support persons who were themselves entrepreneurs, James (Nathan’s key support person) and Mary (Heather’s key support person). However, it was still apparent.

Interestingly, the motivations identified by Lisa (Julie’s key support person) had little to do with the service dog program, which she spoke of as incidental. Rather, Lisa expressed that the business was primarily intended as a distraction from Julie’s health problems and a vehicle for social interaction:

Lisa: For me, it keeps me going. For her, it energizes her. If the jewelry ever gets boring to her, we’ll stop doing it. If she’s thinking about something other than her health, we can focus on that and that’s good.

**Interviewer: What do you think motivates her?**

Lisa: For speaking, she loves telling her story and telling people about [her service dog]. She likes telling people about the service dog program and how she does things. She likes the interaction with the community and getting out there excites her. For the jewelry, it’s like a show and tell for her. She enjoys the creative side and has always been artsy. I don’t think the feedback is what she would say, but when we’re out and people ask about it, she’s very excited to tell people about it and share it with them. She’s such a social creature that if it connects her with other people, it’s really what energizes her.

Lisa’s response indicates the possibility for key support persons to conflate their own motivations with the motivation of the social entrepreneur, illustrating the dangers inherent in proxy responding that dyadic interviewing addresses (Caldwell, 2014). More precisely, key support persons appeared to have difficulty distinguishing between their own motivations for

helping an individual to pursue social entrepreneurship and the actual motivating factors driving the individual with ID to pursue social entrepreneurship. This can be particularly problematic as it may signify a conflict of interest depending upon the support person's role in the business and the extent to which the social entrepreneur relies upon them for carrying out their vision. The self-determination of a social entrepreneur with ID will be inadvertently limited if their key support person has a different vision for the direction of the business.

For the most part, the social missions identified by the participants with ID were not as central to the business for the key support persons. This does not mean that the key support persons were unaware of the social mission, but that the social mission did not have the same value or hold priority in the key support persons' perceptions. The only exception was Mary, who is business partners with her daughter Heather. Like Heather, Mary is committed to the social mission of inclusion and self-advocacy, but from the perspective of a parent-advocate so there was still some differentiation in focus. Whereas Mary had a dual focus on both the social mission of the business and Heather's employment, for the other key support persons the central focus of the business was on employing the individual with ID. Although the discrepancies between the motivations and direct social missions identified by key support persons and social entrepreneurs with ID were clear, it was more difficult to discern the degree to which the key support persons were aware of or support the indirect social mission. Mary appears to share Heather's vision for developing future goals around helping others' start similar businesses. Both James (Nathan's key support person) and Lisa (Julie's key support person) appear aware of the indirect social missions, but that is not to say that they share the same vision in this respect. The social mission plays a significant role in distinguishing social entrepreneurship from self-employment. Discrepancies in this area can be problematic if the key support person is focused

on a mission of self-employment and not necessarily that of social entrepreneurship, in which case the social entrepreneur with ID may not be getting the resources, information, or support that they need. For example, when Lisa (Julie's key support person) stated earlier that she had not seen the need to discuss the goal or social mission of the business with her.

### **Discussion**

On the surface, the motivations of social entrepreneurs with ID may seem well intentioned, but unrealistic when compared to the motivations of people with ID working in a social enterprise. However, exploring the motivations of people with ID who work at a social enterprise and who also want to start their own business provides insight into deeper factors behind the motivations of social entrepreneurs with ID beyond those of people with ID engaging in other types of employment. Further insight can be provided through unpacking the structural environment within which motivations are socially constructed.

These interviews were conducted during a time when disability advocates in the state of [Removed for review] were in the midst of fighting for deinstitutionalization and integrated employment legislation. In 2011 the "Ligas Decision" was entered, a class action lawsuit on behalf of individuals residing in private, state-funded Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (ICF/DD). The consent decree ensures that individuals who do not want to live in these facilities will not be forced to for lack of resources and supports. In 2013, [Removed for review] passed the "Employment First Act," which will contribute substantially towards the inclusion of people with disabilities in employment across the state. The Employment First Initiative is a national policy strategy being implemented at the state level. States that have adopted Employment First policies mandate that service providers who receive federal funding give priority to integrated employment options, affording everyone the

presumption of employability, before directing consumers to center-based and day habilitation services only if necessary (Martinez, 2013; Niemiec, Lavin, & Owens, 2009). This shift in policy would make segregated and sheltered work arrangements the exception rather than the rule. The increasing number of people with ID being able to live in community-based settings will increase the demand for employment services and supports in a disappointing labor market. People with disabilities, their families, and service providers have increasingly been looking towards social entrepreneurship as an innovative solution. It bears further consideration whether, at the structural level, social entrepreneurship is going to be motivated by the lack of other available options in a market that has been saturated by discriminatory labor practices, or whether it is going to be motivated by the opportunities created in the wake of recent advancements in policy.

### **Entrepreneurial Motivation & Disability Employment Policy**

Overall, motivation has been understudied in the context of disability employment and intellectual disability in particular. The goals of economic independence and self-sufficiency are central to discussions on disability employment. This phenomenon has much to do with how we define, value, and recognize work in our society (Lysaght, Ouellette-Kuntz, & Lin, 2012). Most people with ID and their families want to be employed, working towards the goals of economic independence and self-sufficiency (Nord, Luecking, Mank, Kiernan, & Wray, 2013).

Employment confers a status of community integration and social participation that is essential for social mobility from the margins to the mainstream.

Wayne: If you make money, you have money to do things like go out with friends, go on vacation, go out to eat... all sorts of fun things. Yes [having a job is important]. It helps pay the bills. It takes up time so I'm not always at home doing nothing. It helps keep me involved and get out there and meet people and learn what I can and can't do and that's about it."

Work, however, should also be meaningful, productive, and gainful, leading to higher job satisfaction and retention. Research has found that people with ID want to work not only for pay

and other economic benefits, but also because it provides an opportunity for affiliation with others, to stay busy and meaningfully occupied, for pride and satisfaction, and for new learning and experiences (Lysaght, Ouellette-Kuntz, & Morrison, 2009). Motivation appears to play a pivotal role in determining whether people with ID gain entry to employment and retain employment for three months or more (Hensel, Kroese, & Rose, 2007). If this is indeed the case, then one would expect more research conducted in this area.

Motivational factors for entrepreneurs with disabilities are often couched in the language of “benefits” of self-employment and entrepreneurship as an employment alternative (Blanck et al., 2000; Lind, 2000; McNaughton, Symons, Light, & Parsons, 2006). These stated benefits comprise seven categories: 1) participation in the mainstream economy; 2) promotion of economic growth; 3) promotion of attitudinal change; 4) improved quality of life; 5) independence, autonomy and empowerment; 6) accommodations and flexibility; and 7) integration and social participation (Parker Harris, Caldwell, & Renko, in press). However, these benefits do not equate to entrepreneurial motivation *per se*.

Push-pull theory was first applied to entrepreneurial motivation in the 1980's (Amit & Muller, 1995; Kirkwood, 2009). Whereas pull factors are typically considered to be positively motivated, push factors imply that entrepreneurship is chosen under duress, despite one's preference and due to a lack of other options (Amit & Muller, 1995; Bates, 1997; Dawson & Henley, 2012; Gilad & Levine, 1986). Pull factors are widely believed to be more prevalent among entrepreneurs than push factors (Dawson & Henley, 2012; Gilad & Levine, 1986; Kirkwood, 2009). However, push factors play a stronger role during economic recession due to rates of unemployment and work-related insecurity (Dawson & Henley, 2012; Giacomini, Janssen, Guyot, & Lohest, 2011; Hughes, 2003). In 2001, the push-pull dichotomy was re-

conceptualized as “opportunity-based” and “necessity-based” entrepreneurship (Dawson & Henley, 2012; Giacomini et al., 2011; Hessels, Gelderen, & Thurik, 2008; Reynolds, Camp, Bygrave, Autio, & Hay, 2001).

Clarity in motivational factors is important to entrepreneurship policy design, which “tends to be framed around the predominance of ‘pull’ motivations” (Dawson & Henley, 2012, p. 714). Conversely, disability employment policy has been primarily framed around push motivations. This raises a significant dilemma as policy developed to address pull factors and promote opportunity-based entrepreneurship will not adequately address push factors or support necessity-based entrepreneurs. In other words, social entrepreneurs with disabilities are located at an intersection where both entrepreneurship and disability employment policy come up short in meeting their needs (Caldwell, Parker Harris, & Renko, 2014).

### **Key Issues with the Social Mission**

There is concern regarding the influence of the charity-model of disability on the social mission. Disability has long been used as the justification for social enterprise development, invoking a charity-model approach rather than recognizing the agency of people with disabilities (Parker Harris, Renko, et al., 2014). Because we are familiar with this approach to social entrepreneurship, people with disabilities may be susceptible to employing a charity-model approach or having that model ascribed to their social mission and thereby misrepresenting it. For example, Derek does not have a social mission that is related to disability. Yet, when he received media attention for his business in a newspaper article, it spoke only of him as a disabled business owner who “overcame” his disability and said nothing about his work or the quality and ethical sourcing of his coffee.

People with ID working in social enterprises, such as Budding Futures, face a different concern regarding the social mission. Typically, organizations that employ and/or serve people with ID do not involve them in the business development process. For social enterprises, this means that the social mission is often created without the voices and perspectives of people with disabilities. Indeed, a study examining social enterprises serving people with disabilities in the UK found that few service users or caregivers were aware of the existence or purpose of the social enterprise (Secker, Dass, & Grove, 2003). Subsequently, even though people with disabilities and their families may be the subject of the social mission, it is not necessarily their mission or motivation for working there. That is not to say that each employee needs to be a part of business creation, as that would be impractical operationally; but there should be representation in the process – *nothing about us without us*. Absent this representation, a social enterprise working with people with disabilities cannot reliably actualize their social mission if the development of the mission itself is not an inclusive process.

### **Choice & Self-Determination**

The social entrepreneurs with ID interviewed were motivated by a desire for self-determination: to control the direction of their own lives, to have the freedom to follow their dreams, to do work that they enjoy, and to help people/society. Participants with ID working in a social enterprise had a different motivation for self-determination: they began working at Budding Futures because their parents thought it was a good idea, their friends also worked there, and they needed something to do. While their decision to start working at Budding Futures was not necessarily self-determined, their motivation to continue working there was. Participants saw it as a step towards the achieving the quality of life they wanted.



Choice and self-determination play an essential role in the decision to pursue social entrepreneurship because it is, first and foremost, a decision. A distinction should be made between the “decision” and the “desire” to start a business. There is an element of selection bias inherent in this sample because it involves people who had the support necessary to make their choice a viable option, and their decision an actionable one. There is a connection between self-determination and having access to adequate supports and accommodations in community-based working environments, which affects the amount of choice and opportunities one feels they have (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 1999). Individuals with ID who have a desire to be social entrepreneurs may not see it as a viable choice or have the support necessary to act on their motivations. We do not know how many latent social entrepreneurs with ID exist. Nor do we know whether their ideas are viable, marketable, or their chances of success. Regardless, it is clear that this pathway to employment may be blocked at the motivational level if the individual is not supported in making the entrepreneurial decision and does not feel as though they can effectuate that decision.

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is important not just in the decision to start a business (McGee, Peterson, Mueller, & Sequeira, 2009), but also in entrepreneurial persistence, wherein an entrepreneur continues to pursue an opportunity despite opposing motivational forces (e.g., counterinfluences and other enticing opportunities). Persistence decisions vary depending upon individual values and the level of adversity experienced (Holland & Shepherd, 2013). Social entrepreneurs with ID need to be supported in making the decision whether or not to start a business and whether or not to persist over time. Both the individual with ID and their support person(s) need the information and resources to make informed decisions. Not all people with ID will want to become social entrepreneurs, nor should they all necessarily. The decision should be the individual with ID’s choice, and they should have equal opportunity to succeed or fail based

on their own merits, not purely on the basis of their disability. The decision to start a social enterprise should be one that is self-determined and person-centered; particularly if one is motivated to sustain social entrepreneurship as an employment strategy in the long-term.

There are limitations to this study that can help inform us in moving forward in this area. There is a great need for more research on entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship in our employment efforts with people with ID. The research presented here is intended to start a conversation about why people with ID are motivated to participate in social entrepreneurship, from the perspective of social entrepreneurs with ID themselves. Given this focus, more information has been provided in other manuscripts regarding the management process for participants, in particular the barriers they experience, business models, and detailing the specific supports that others provide ([Removed for review]); as well as the outcomes for participants, in particular perceptions of profit/self-sufficiency, growth, and social innovation to challenge how outcomes have been traditionally assessed ([Removed for review]).

### **Conclusion**

This research indicates that social entrepreneurs with ID are motivated by many of the same factors that motivate social entrepreneurs in general, such as a desire to help society, closeness to the social problem, and a nonmonetary focus. However, these motivating factors are inextricably influenced by the experience of disability. That is, by the social entrepreneurs with ID's experience as a person with a disability (physical, intellectual, and/or psychological) and by the socio-cultural and political-economic barriers attendant. Disability may manifest directly or indirectly through the development of one's social mission.

Social entrepreneurs with ID were motivated by both push and pull factors, but placed greater value on the pull factors. The participants with ID who are working at a social enterprise

(Budding Futures), but who are not themselves social entrepreneurs were also motivated by both push and pull factors. However, this motivation did not appear to be as strong. In talking with the social entrepreneurs with ID about their businesses, there was a sense of excitement and a drive for the future, both for themselves and for their business. Conversely, the conversations with participants with ID working at Budding Futures were indicative of the transitory nature of the position and relatively noncommittal. Participants with ID working at Budding Futures were motivated to earn work credits and then to move on to more desirable employment, signifying the role that pull factors play in motivation for seeking other employment, including entrepreneurship as Kimberly and Wayne demonstrate.

In moving forward with social entrepreneurship as an employment option for people with ID, it is essential to bridge the divide between the approach to entrepreneurship policy and the approach to disability employment policy. Motivation has served as a key component in determining these approaches to policy development. While disability employment policy has focused on providing equal opportunity by addressing the barriers identified by push motivations to support necessity-based entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship policy has focused on stimulating the economy by leveraging pull motivations to promote growth and innovation through opportunity-based entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship policy should take into consideration the barriers affecting people with disabilities in employment and in entrepreneurship in particular. More importantly, this research indicates a need for an ideological shift in disability employment policy away from focusing on push motivations and necessity-based entrepreneurship, towards an approach that integrates pull motivations and promote an environment to facilitate opportunity-based entrepreneurship. Doing so would mean not simply looking to entrepreneurship as a last option for people with disabilities who are unable to find other work,

but also recognizing the potential for people with disabilities to act as social innovators. Subsequently, implementing social entrepreneurship as an effective employment strategy would require policy that 1) addresses the barriers identified by push motivations in addition to 2) facilitating and incentivizing pull motivations to 3) employ not only the individual, but also to 4) sustain a business over time that 5) has the potential to create jobs for others with disabilities and 6) address a social problem/need in the community.

Regarding areas for future research, there is a need for research on motivation in employment for people with ID across various types of employment, including but not limited to entrepreneurship. This includes longitudinal research on motivation for entrepreneurial entry, business creation, growth, and entrepreneurial persistence. Future research should also focus on exploring the motivations of various support persons and key stakeholder with regards to how they affect the employment decisions of people with ID.

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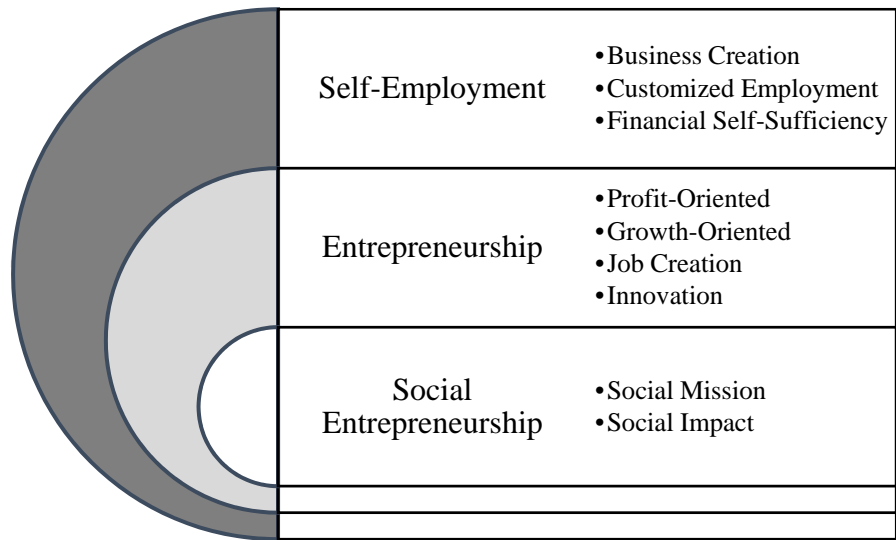
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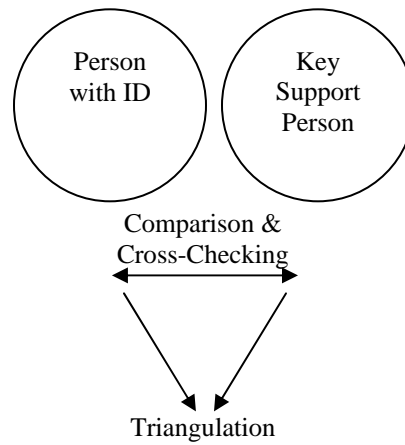
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**Figure 1: Operationalizing Social Entrepreneurship**



**Figure 2: Dyad Interview Structure**



**Table 1: Demographics of Participants with ID**

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Other Work</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>
1. Nathan	Fair Trade, Organic Coffee	Artist	40	Caucasian
2. Derek	Fair Trade, Organic Coffee		29	Multiracial
3. Heather	Public Speaker & Consulting	Clinic Intern	25	Caucasian
4. Julie	Public Speaker & Jewelry Design	Student	20	Korean
5. Andrew	Greenhouse	Community College Janitor	24	Multiracial
6. Kimberly	Greenhouse & Baked Goods Start-Up	Goodwill	19	Caucasian
7. Wayne	Greenhouse & Baked Goods Start-Up	2 Volunteer Jobs	20	Caucasian
Average Age			25	

**Table 2: Demographics of Key Support Persons**

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Position/Title</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Other Work</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>
1. James	Job Coach	Job Coach	Entrepreneur	40	Caucasian
2. Charles	Co-Manager	Cousin		24	Multiracial
3. Mary	Partner	Mother		59	Caucasian
4. Lisa	Empowerer	Mother	Writer	52	Caucasian
5. Sylvia	Job Coach/Volunteer	Mother		58	Caucasian
6. Deborah	Job Coach/Volunteer	Mother		52	Caucasian
7. Bill	Job Coach/Volunteer	Father	Sales	61	Caucasian
Average Age				49	

**Table 3. Motivational Factors of Social Entrepreneurship**

*Social Entrepreneurs with ID  
(Nathan, Derek, Heather & Julie)*

*Working at Budding Futures  
(Kimberly, Andrew & Wayne)*

*Wanting to start a Business  
(Kimberly & Wayne)*

Push Factors

- Boredom with other options, lack of interest, don't like other options
- Productivity, feel time would not be well spent
- Not a good fit, pace is too fast or too slow, too stressful
- Health problems limit options
- Difficulty finding other jobs due to economy and disability discrimination
- Actual & expected disability discrimination
- Lack of social interaction
- Want to change living arrangement

Pull Factors

- Dream or desire to start a business
- Interest and passion for social mission
- It is fun, want to do something they like
- Want to be productive, contribute, to help
- Born or chosen, have a talent
- Self-advocacy/advocacy, social responsibility
- Had an opportunity
- Flexible, not confining or limiting
- To have a "real" job or profession
- Counteract stigma that someone cannot do something because of their disability
- Social interaction with community, because they like people

Push Factors

- Hard to find a job, build skills to find another job
- Need work credits
- Transition or temporary job, want a new/different/more permanent job
- Need/want to make money, not just to volunteer
- Need to fill up time, want something to do
- Want to change living arrangement, go to college

Pull Factors

- Have friends working there
- Parents want them to, heard about through social network
- Work is fun and easy
- Disability-friendly environment, security and flexibility
- Want to do something productive, good work ethic

Push Factors

- Other work is not matched to interests/talent
- As a side job while look for other work
- Lack of choices, don't want to overlook opportunity to be paid

Pull Factors

- Dream or interest in starting a business
- Being a boss, running a business
- Working with friends
- Interacting with customers, like working with people in customer service/retail

