University of San Diego

Digital USD

Dissertations

Theses and Dissertations

2019-05-19

Social Innovators and Developmental Stages

Juan Carlos Rivas Espinosa
University of San Diego

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.sandiego.edu/dissertations>

Part of the [Developmental Psychology Commons](#), and the [Leadership Studies Commons](#)

Digital USD Citation

Rivas Espinosa, Juan Carlos, "Social Innovators and Developmental Stages" (2019). *Dissertations*. 145.
<https://digital.sandiego.edu/dissertations/145>

This Dissertation: Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital USD. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital USD. For more information, please contact digital@sandiego.edu.

SOCIAL INNOVATORS AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

by

Juan Carlos Rivas

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2019

Dissertation Committee

Cheryl Getz, Ed.D.
Lea Hubbard, Ph.D.
Moriah Meyskens, Ph.D.

University of San Diego

© Copyright by Juan Carlos Rivas Espinosa
All Rights Reserved 2019

University of San Diego
School of Leadership and Education Sciences

CANDIDATE'S NAME: Juan Carlos Rivas Espinosa

TITLE OF DISSERTATION: SOCIAL INNOVATORS AND DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

APPROVAL:

_____, Chair
Cheryl Getz, EdD

_____, Member
Lea Hubbard, PhD

_____, Member
Moriah Meyskens, PhD

DATE: April 25, 2019

ABSTRACT

The past two decades have seen increased interest in social innovation as a leading source of change. While social innovation literature experienced vast growth, particularly in the Western world, there is limited research on the individuals engaged in it, especially concerning their leadership practice. The extant research focuses mostly on identifying traits and competencies exhibited by social innovators. These individuals are often thought of as exceptional people able to think systemically to identify and solve problems in novel ways. The field runs the risk of perpetuating the idea that to be a social innovator one must possess a specific list of impressive qualities and that possessing such qualities is sufficient to be a successful social innovator. Consequently, there is an incomplete picture, a one-dimensional portrait of social innovators. There is a need for comprehensive insight and knowledge regarding how they think, operate, and make meaning of their experiences.

This study explored how social innovators make sense of their life and work, and how this meaning informs their leadership practice. Through qualitative interviews, the study investigated factors shaping participants' journeys into social innovation, as well as emerging patterns concerning how they make meaning. The study identified the developmental stage of each participant through the use of constructive-developmental theory, a stage theory of adult development, and the administration of Cook-Greuter's instrument, Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals. The research examined relationships between participants' assessed stages and the way they described themselves as social innovators.

The results revealed that participants clustered around four developmental stages, with the majority within stages representing the societal expectations for most adults, particularly in professional settings. The analysis identified four critical factors shaping their social innovation journeys, as well as four strategies participants used to make meaning of their experiences. The study examines how these factors intersect and proposes recommendations for those interested in developing future social innovators. The findings of this study add a nuanced, more comprehensive understanding of social innovators. Perhaps the most significant contribution of the study is its potential to help reframe the conversation about who social innovators are beyond the current exceptional trait narrative.

DEDICATION

Para Toñita, Victorino, Jose y Mary

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is hard to begin this section without relying on a cliché, but as hard as I try, I can only think it really took a whole village to get to this stage. I am in awe of the generosity and love I have felt throughout this journey. The words below probably do no justice to how supported I have felt, yet here is my humble attempt to honor everyone who was part of this experience.

To my family, this degree is for all of you. Thank you for supporting me and for providing the inspiration, opportunities, and resources that propelled me to live a life that is full of meaning. Los quiero.

To my partner, John, for your never-ending support and for believing in me, especially during the days when I felt like giving up. Thank you for loving me through the highs and lows of this journey. This degree is as much yours as it is mine. I love you.

Dr. Cheryl Getz, I can still think back to before I worked at USD when you were so kind as to make time and chat with me about my desire to pursue a Ph.D. I am so grateful for your time, wisdom, insight, and support throughout this whole experience. When I was ready to throw in the towel, you were there to provide guidance and motivation, whether through words of encouragement or a well-crafted bitmoji text. I could not have asked for a better thought partner and emotional companion to get this dissertation done.

Dr. Lea Hubbard: You helped me fall in love with qualitative data. Thank you for your time and insight into this process. I always walked away from our conversations feeling empowered and capable of completing this project. Thank you for your words of wisdom and for believing in me.

Dr. Moriah Meyskens: I am so glad our paths crossed. I have enjoyed learning from you and continue to be amazed at your ability to find unique ways of looking at research. Thank you for your insight and support throughout this experience.

Dr. Mike Williams: There is no way I would have made it to the end of this experience without your continuous support. I am so grateful we get to work together and learn from one another.

To Dr. Cook-Greuter: Thank you for your insight for this project. I hope this research helps to highlight the incredible work you have done over the years. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn from you.

To my Ashoka friends Marina Kim, Erin Krampetz, Brittany Koteles, and Emily Lamb: This research would not have become a reality if it were not for your support and trust in me. Thank you for helping me connect and build relationships with each research participant. I love that I get to walk alongside passionate people like you on our goal to improve the education and social innovation field.

Thank you to the 19 Ashoka Fellows who took a chance and participated in this project. Being part of this project required courage to share yourselves beyond what other people are comfortable doing. I will be forever grateful for your generosity. I continue to be inspired by the work you do. Your contribution to this research will make a difference in the lives of future students who express an interest in making a positive impact in the world.

To my writing partner and friend extraordinaire, Taylor Harrel: I can't imagine going on this journey without you. Thank you for everything: the late-night

encouragement texts, the never-ending moments of laughter, the constant words of wisdom, and the always-available shoulder to cry on when needed.

There are many more people who have been part of this experience, and without whom I wouldn't be here. Dr. Zachary Green, thank you for your mentorship, for believing in me when I didn't, and for pushing me to become who I am meant to be. Ale Vargas, thank you for bringing to life through your beautiful illustrations the nuanced complexities of leadership. Sean Horrigan, thank you for always checking in on me and giving me your time and insight on this theory. Sarah Kirk, thank you for helping me make my ugly drafts into something beautiful. Thank you to the many friends I had the chance to learn from and be inspired by in this journey: Dr. Azadeh Davari, Dr. Bo Bae, and soon to be Dr. Jennifer Freeman. Thank you as well to my work family: Austin Galy, Maria Silva, Chris Nayve, John Loggins, Bree P., Jen Lee, Stacey Williams, Manda Sayeg, Madeleine Krieger, Corin Thornburg, Emily LP, and Ilana Lopez, your love and support have been instrumental in helping me complete this research. I am forever grateful I get to work with people I love and admire. Jillian, Bradley, Ryan, Speta, Mikey, Erik, Brett, Jill, Erick and Patrick, no matter how far apart we live from each other, your support, often in the form of laughter, kept me going during the tough writing days. Dr. Marc Gotlieb and Darwin Vasay, the two of you made sure I made it to the end in one piece, thank you for caring for my physical wellbeing. Thank you as well to my yoga community (Emily, Ray, Erycka, Tess, JoAnn, Nikki, and Dustin); our practice helped me stay grounded and helped me remember to breathe and flow throughout the Ph.D. journey.

And finally, to the people who inspired me to do this whole thing in the first place, the wonderful students with whom I have the privilege of working and learning from every day, among them Charlotte, Isabelle, Katinka, Dylan, Madison, Sukhpreet, Kyle, Spencer, Will, Rachel, Reijer, Julia, Riley, Shelby, Hailey, Claire, Olivia, Kate, Madonna, Abby, Liz, Jayden, Sydney, Annabel, and so many more. Your passion for making this world a better place is what motivates me to be a better person every day. I love that I get to witness your developmental journeys and watch you become the best versions of yourselves.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xix
LIST OF FIGURES	xx
CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study/Research Questions	5
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	7
Introduction.....	7
The Concept of Social Innovation	7
An outcome and a process.	11
Social innovation models.	11
Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation	13
Social entrepreneurs and social innovators.	14
Social Innovation and Leadership.....	16
Constructive Developmental Theory	18
Adult Development.....	19
Vertical and horizontal development.	21
Ego development theory (EDT).	22
Developmental stages.	24
EDT measurement instruments.....	28
Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP).	30
EDT instruments' limitations.	32
Constructive Developmental Theory and Leadership	33

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	36
Introduction.....	36
Design Rationale	36
Theoretical Framework.....	39
Research Sites and Participants	39
Fellowship Program Selection Criteria.	39
Ashoka fellowship program.	41
Participant selection criteria.....	42
Participant selection procedures.	42
Data Collection Procedures.....	43
MAP instrument.....	44
Qualitative data gathering.	45
Formative Influences Timeline activity.	45
Open-ended interviews.	46
Data Analysis Procedures Overview	47
Qualitative data.	49
Exploratory coding.....	49
First round of coding.....	50
Individual case analysis.	51
MAP instrument and results.....	52
Cross Case analysis.....	53
MAP stage clusters and open-ended data.	53
Formative Influences Timeline.	53
Themes across all data.	54
Limitations	54

Instrument limitations.	54
Sample size and procedure.....	56
Potential researcher bias.	57
Significance of the Study	59
CHAPTER 4 PARTICIPANT PROFILES AND KEY FINDINGS	60
Introduction.....	60
Characteristics of the Sample Population	61
Profiles of Participants and Factors that Shaped Their Social Innovation Journey	63
Aleta Margolis	63
Social innovation journey.	63
Personal influences.	65
Ana Williams	66
Social innovation journey.	66
Personal influences.	68
Ben Powell	69
Social innovation journey.	69
Christa Gannon	73
Social innovation journey.	73
Personal influences.	76
Daniel Kish	77
Social innovation journey.	77
Personal influences.	79
David Castro	81
Social innovation journey.	81
Personal influences.	83

Gary Johnson	84
Social innovation journey.	84
Personal influences.	86
Imran Kahn	87
Social innovation journey.	87
Personal influences.	89
Jeff Dykstra.....	90
Social innovation journey.	90
Personal influences.	92
Jill Violet.....	92
Social innovation journey.	92
Personal influences.	94
Kathryn Hall-Trujillo	94
Social innovation journey.	94
Personal influences.	97
Lennon Flowers	98
Social innovation journey.	98
Personal influences.	102
Lynn Price	103
Social innovation journey.	103
Personal influences.	105
Patrick Struebi.....	105
Social innovation journey.	105
Personal influences.	107
Sascha Haselmayer	108

Suzanne McKechnie	111
Social innovation journey.	111
Personal influences.	113
Tanya Tull.....	113
Social innovation journey.	114
Personal influences.	116
Tomás Alvarez III.....	116
Social innovation journey.	116
Personal influences.	119
Trabian Shorters.....	120
Social innovation journey.	120
Personal influences.	122
Conclusion on Personal Profiles	122
CHAPTER 5 DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	123
Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) Results	123
MAP and Open-Ended Interview Key Findings	130
Conventional Tier Stages	131
Stage 3/4: Skill-Centric overview.	132
Findings related to the Skill-Centric Stage	132
Skill-Centric leadership characteristics.....	138
Stage 4: Self-Determining stage overview.	140
Findings related to the Self-Determining stage.	141
Desire to make an impact.....	141
Approach to work.	142
Goal driven.....	144

Reflection practice.	144
Dealing with feedback.	146
Systems thinking language.	147
Relationship with time.	148
Self-Determining leadership characteristics.	150
The Postconventional Stages	154
Stage 4/5: Self-Questioning overview.	154
Findings related to the Self-Questioning stage.	155
Relativism and context.	155
A holistic approach.	157
Relationship to Time.	159
Self-Questioning leadership characteristics.	162
Stage 5: Self-Actualizing overview.	164
Findings related to the Self-Actualizing stage.	164
Focus on development.	165
Vision and strategy.	167
Multiple perspectives.	168
Decision making and feedback.	169
Self-Actualizing leadership characteristics.	171
CHAPTER 6 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS FINDINGS.....	172
Factors Shaping a Social Innovation Journey	173
The Holding Environment.	173
The Impact of Socioeconomic Status.	174
Overcoming Hardships Growing Up	181
Experiences Living Abroad.	185

Meaning-Making Themes for Social Innovators	189
Reflective Practice	190
Curiosity.....	193
Bridging Different Worlds	197
Vision Setting.....	201
Leadership Metaphors.....	204
CHAPTER 7 OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS	205
Introduction.....	205
Research Question 1 Summary and Propositions	205
Proposition RQ1a: Socioeconomic Status is a Critical Factor Shaping a Social Innovator’s Journey	207
Proposition RQ1b: Travel and Hardship are Factors that Can Transform the Way One Makes Meaning	207
The Intersection of Critical Timeline Factors and Meaning-Making Factors	209
Proposition RQ1c: Experience is Not Enough; A Reflective Practice is a Key Strategy to Make Meaning.....	209
Proposition RQ1d: Researchers Should Focus Less on Individual Traits and More on Meaning-Making Mindsets like Curiosity	211
Research Question 2 Summary and Propositions	212
Proposition RQ2a: Social Innovators are Not Extraordinary; Their “Uniqueness” Stems from Displaying Traits Often Celebrated in Western Conventional Thinking.....	213
Research Question 3 Summary and Propositions	214
Proposition RQ3a: Social Innovators Strive to Achieve Goals and Aspire to Develop Others	215
Proposition RQ4a: Making Meaning for Others is a Key Behavior of Social Innovators	215
Proposition RQ4b: A Model for Social Innovators Journey and Meaning Making	216

Instrument limitations and methodological considerations.	218
Formative Influences Timeline activity.	219
Open-ended interview.	220
MAP instrument.	220
Sample size and participant selection.	221
Member checking.	222
Researcher bias and memo writing.	222
Implications of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research.....	226
REFERENCES	229
APPENDIX A Stages of Leadership Maturity	245
APPENDIX B Ashoka Fellowship Selection Criteria	247
APPENDIX C Email to Fellowship Program	248
APPENDIX D Email Invitation for Participants	249
APPENDIX E Participant Consent Form	250
APPENDIX F Participant Instructions to Complete the MAP Assessment	252
APPENDIX G <i>Formative Influences Timeline</i> Activity.....	255
APPENDIX H Participant Interview Protocol.....	256
APPENDIX I Code System	258
APPENDIX J Data Analysis Flow	261
APPENDIX K Memorandum of Agreement between Vertical Development Academy (VeDA) and Researcher	262
APPENDIX L Leadership Metaphors as Described by Participants	263

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	<i>Social Innovation Definitions</i>	9
Table 2	<i>Developmental Stages and Distribution Amongst the U.S. Population</i>	26
Table 3	<i>Participant Demographics</i>	62
Table 4	<i>MAP Results</i>	125
Table 5	<i>Participants List per Developmental Stage</i>	127
Table 6	<i>Summary of the Various Factors and Personal Influences Named Throughout the Interviews</i>	206

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The relationship between horizontal and vertical development.	22
Figure 2. A flow chart of the data analysis process employed in this study.	49
Figure 3. The distribution of MAP scores in study sample, by stage.	127
Figure 4. Participant score distribution by gender within the various developmental stages.	128
Figure 5. Examples of MAP stage ranges for four participants.	130
Figure 6. The Rivas Model of Meaning-Making for Social Innovators visually summarizes the interconnections between the identified themes and findings of the study.	218

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Research in the field of Social Innovation (SI) may be in its infancy, but there is no doubt that the past two decades have seen an increased interest in social innovation as a leading source of change in the world (Mulgan, Tucker, Ali, & Sanders, 2007; Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010; Grimm, Fox, Baines, & Albertson, 2013; Sharra & Nyssens, 2010; Avelino et al., 2014). A search for peer-reviewed articles published in academic journals between 2000 and 2018 using the search term “social innovation” yielded 1871 results, versus 121 results for the period between 1960 and 1999¹. A quick review of the results reveals most of the existing literature has focused on defining the concept (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010). Serrat's (2017) definition exemplifies the tendency to define SI as both a process and an outcome: "Social innovation from individuals, movements, and organizations tackles pressing social problems or new social issues, with a focus on problem-solving and experimentation to formulate new products, services, models, and approaches" (p. 695).

SI's rise in popularity reflects a belief in its potential impact on empowering people and communities to address today's societal problems (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010; Avelino et al., 2014). The growing number of academic programs, competitions, and incubators focused on SI are evidence of this belief (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Smith & Woodworth, 2012; Schöning, 2013). Interest in – and beliefs about – social innovation also are evident in the strategic initiatives created to address societal problems worldwide. Examples of this are the governmental strategic

¹ Search conducted on Academic Search Premier Database.

research projects developed by the European Union and the offices focused on SI created by former USA President Barack Obama (Tracey et al., 2011; Edwards-Schachter, Matti, & Alcántara, 2012; Grimm et al., 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, a variety of disciplines have studied SI ranging from public administration and political science to economics (Rüede & Lurzt, 2012; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). While these disciplines have explored different aspects of SI, there is limited research on the individuals engaged in SI, particularly concerning their leadership practice.

When leaders are discussed within SI literature, social innovators are often thought of as exceptional individuals who are able to think in systemic ways to identify and solve today's pressing problems in novel ways (Bornstein, 2007). A common approach to describing social innovators is through a historical recounting of their deeds, focusing on characteristics like creativity and determination (Dey & Steyaert, 2010). For example, researchers frequently reference social innovators of great renown like Nobel Peace Prize recipient Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank. Yunus and the bank he founded awarded microcredit grants to impoverished people and, in the process, created opportunities across the world for many individuals – particularly women – to break out of poverty (Mulgan, 2006). Unfortunately, within the heroic stories that have been recounted about highly recognized social innovators, there is much less emphasis on identifying the kind of thinking that led social innovators like Yunus to create and implement the ideas that resulted in positive and sometimes exceptional changes in the world.

During the decades following Schumpeter's seminal work on innovation, *Theory of Economic Development*, researchers focused on technical innovation (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010). In fact, those who wrote about innovation scarcely addressed the topic of leadership. The focus on leadership and innovation surfaced principally in the 1980s when Peter Drucker identified leadership as a crucial component for innovation management (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). A number of researchers followed Drucker's lead, but their focus often was on identifying the traits, behaviors, and leadership styles of social innovators. This type of research ranges from examining personality traits of recognized social innovators (Vasakarla, 2008; Sastre-Castillo, Peris-Ortiz, & Valle, 2015; Liang, Peng, Yao, & Liang, 2015) to case studies (Wongphuka, Chai-Aroon, Phainoi, & Boon-Long, 2017) conducted to identify competencies that those who wish to be social innovators need to possess or develop (Mathur, 2011). There is also some research aimed at identifying ways to teach and develop individuals with articulated attributes within the academic setting through academic curricula (Miller, Wesley, & Williams, 2012; Alden Rivers, Armellini, & Nie, 2015). Finally, other exploratory studies have focused on social innovators—such as Ashoka's fellows or Skoll Foundation Fellows—leading large-scale initiatives; one study, for example, explored the way selected social innovators created social value through their initiatives (Meyskens, Robb-Post, Stamp, Carsrud, & Reynolds, 2010) and another focused on their leadership style (Orr, 2016).

The bulk of the limited research on leadership and SI, however, has focused on identifying traits and competencies exhibited by recognized social innovators. This emphasis on describing and identifying the traits of and the competencies needed by

social innovators has resulted in what Cajaiba-Santana (2014) refers to as “the school of traits.” The kind of characteristics attributed to social innovators ranges from being incredibly resourceful, energizing, and determined, to being selfless, courageous, altruistic, inspiring, and visionary (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Mulgan et al., 2007; Schöning, 2013). As a result, the pervasive image of a "visionary leader" with specific attributes indirectly promotes the idea that innovation only comes from extraordinary individuals tending to the needs of society (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014).

Papi-Thorton (2016b), in fact, suggested that the intense focus on seemingly only positive traits opened the door to viewing SI as the product of individuals she calls *heropreneurs*:

A founder who is greatly admired, as if a hero, and viewed as the main actor in social progress. A person who starts an organisation and who overemphasizes their role as founder, overshadowing teams, collective impact, and building upon the ideas of others. (p. 3)

The result of the emphasis on the positive "school of traits" and *heropreneurship* is an incomplete picture, a one-dimensional portrait of social innovators. Those studying SI run the risk of perpetuating the ideas that to be a social innovator one must possess a specific list of impressive qualities and that possessing such qualities is sufficient to successfully lead SI efforts. This sort of thinking inhibits efforts to conduct research designed to learn more about the way social innovators operate comprehensively. In particular, there have been no systematic studies that have focused on how social innovators think or make sense of their work.

Such a perspective on SI leadership presumably could be constructed by using a theoretical lens that, thus far, has not been utilized in the SI literature: e.g. constructive-developmental theory. This type of theory provides a framework through which to explore how individuals make meaning of the world and how different developmental stages influence the way they see, process, and interact with it (Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). Over the past 30 years, researchers such as Lovinger, Torbert, and Cook-Greuter have expanded Piaget's human development work focused on children by exploring ways in which adults' action logics and ways of processing experiences impact how they approach all aspects of their lives, including practicing leadership (Cook-Greuter, 2004).

To summarize, there is a need for insight and knowledge regarding how social innovators make sense of the world and how this meaning informs the work they do and the way they lead social innovation projects. Constructive Developmental Theory (CDT), a stage theory of adult development focused on exploring how adults make meaning of themselves and the world, could serve as a theoretical framework to explore this topic, as well as the assessment instruments aligned with this framework. To date, however, such theory and the instruments researchers who study adult development have developed have not been utilized in the SI field.

Purpose of the Study/Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand how social innovators make meaning of themselves and of their work in the social innovation field. A further purpose is to identify the stages of development of selected social innovators using constructive development theory and instruments consistent with this theory. The study will utilize the ego development framework developed by Loevinger in the 1960s and administer Cook-

Greuter's instrument, Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP), to identify the developmental stage of each participant, in order to understand the meaning-making framework from which they operate. In addition, the research will identify how social innovators see and make sense of the world and their work through a qualitative interview that asks them to discuss their life experiences, including their SI practices. The interview data will be used to explore any possible relationship between their assessed developmental stages and the way they describe themselves as social innovators and the work they do. The qualitative interview will also explore factors that have influenced each social innovator's development and growth, as well as look into various leadership aspects of these individuals such as self-awareness, coping strategies, and mental model and patterns. The study will then relate these factors to the assessed developmental stages of research participants.

The following research questions will be addressed by this study:

1. What factors, if any, challenged or supported their journeys as social innovators? How do these factors relate to the way social innovators make meaning?
2. What are the developmental levels of the social innovators participating in the study? Do social innovators cluster around a particular developmental stage?
3. What is the relationship between the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) instrument description of study participants' current developmental stages and their own description of how they approach their work as social innovators?
4. How do social innovators make meaning of themselves and their work?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Qualitative researchers aim to reach a deeper understanding of human beings: their behaviors, thoughts, beliefs, and all the facets of human experience. To provide a fuller picture of who social innovators are, the study will explore two specific bodies of literature. The first examines social innovation, and the second examines constructive developmental theory (CDT), with a particular focus on Ego Developmental Theory (EDT).

The Concept of Social Innovation

SI is not a new concept; it has played a role in economic development, in social movements, and in social changes throughout history. The expression can be traced to Benjamin Franklin's time. However, researchers disagree on when the SI concept emerged (Schöning, 2013); some suggest SI dates back 200 years, while others claim it came about in the 1970s. What is clear is that the popularity of the concept surfaced over the past two decades (Edwards-Schachter et al., 2012; Schöning, 2013; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2015). Even though research on innovation goes back to the early 1900s, the majority of literature does not use the term SI until the 1990s. In fact, SI literature gained momentum since the year 2000 in the form of academic papers, reports, and working papers (Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2015). Hence, when attempting to define and describe the concept of social innovation, it is not possible to use as reference the vast literature found on the concept of innovation by itself, but instead focus on the subset created in the last few decades (Larsson & Brandsen, 2016).

Mulgan et al. (2007) note that SI has slowly become mainstream over the years. SI appeared in various social science disciplines over the previous decades, ranging from public administration and sociology to social movements, and from economics to social psychology (Rüede & Lurtz, 2012; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). More recently, the concept became associated with local development and societal change (Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2015). Despite the growing interest, Bergman, Markusson, Connor, Middlemiss, and Ricci (2010) state SI literature is fragmented, lacking support mechanisms to explore across sectors and disciplines beyond technical and economy-focused innovation research.

The core of SI literature attempts to describe what SI is, which led to extensive literature reviews (Mulgan et al., 2007; Rüede & Lurtz, 2012) and scholarly works analyzing the concept as an emerging field of studies like van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016). Two literature reviews found for this study stand out for the depth of research they provide: Rüede and Lurtz (2012) and Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2015). Both their findings are discussed in this section.

Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2015) used a database of 252 SI definitions and over 2,300 documents published between 1955 and 2014. Their analysis grouped descriptions based on term repetition and outlined the development of the concept throughout time. By grouping definitions by terms and by period, they found that SI evolved from a managerial perspective, as defined by Drucker in the late '50s, to a manifestation of social critique on societal structures in the '60s. In the '70s, the concept expanded into social psychology practices as an experimental approach; in the '80s researchers temporarily stopped using the concept and shifted towards the work of the

social sector and social movements as catalysts of change. An interesting evolution of SI came in the '90s when the term surfaced as a normative concept and then, in the 2000s, it became linked to Social Entrepreneurship (Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2015). The authors note that within the last decade the use of the concept has diversified across various fields and disciplines, with increased growth in literature in the Western world, particularly Europe, Canada, and the United States.

Rüede and Lurtz (2012) took a different approach. They conducted a systematic conceptual literature review of over 300 publications to identify different SI categories. Their narrative approach analysis came up with seven groups, each with a set of assumptions based on what they describe as a "guiding question" which helped formulate SI categories. Their analysis showed that three categories encompass the majority of existing literature to date. These are "to do something good in/for society," "to change social practices and/or structure," and "to contribute to urban and community development" (p. 9). Table 1 lists definitions found in the reviewed literature in chronological order.

Table 1

Social Innovation Definitions

Definition	Author	Outcome/ Process
"A process of collective creation in which the members of a certain collective unit learn, invent and lay out new rules for the social game of collaboration and of conflict or, in a word, a new social practice, and in this process they acquire the necessary cognitive, rational and organizational skills."	Crozier/Friedberg 1993, p. 19	Process
"The generation and implementation of new ideas about how people should organize interpersonal activities, or social interactions, to meet one or more common goals."	Mumford, 2002, p. 253	Process

“Innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social.”	Mulgan et al., 2007, p. 8.	Process
“The process of inventing, securing support for, and implementing novel solutions to social needs and problems.”	Phills, Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008, p.36	Process
“A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals.”	Phills et al., 2008, p.36	Outcome
“Social innovation is about developing new ideas to tackle social problems or meet social needs.1 It may be a new product, service, initiative, organisational model or approach to the delivery of public services.”	NESTA briefing 2008, p. 1	Outcome
“New combination and/or new configuration of social practices ... with the goal of better satisfying or answering needs and problems than is possible on the basis of established practices.”	Howaldt and Schwarz 2010, p. 21	Process & Outcome
“Social innovation from individuals, movements, and organizations tackles pressing social problems or new social issues, with a focus on problem solving and experimentation to formulate new products, services, models, and approaches”	Kärkkäinen & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013, p	Process & Outcome
“Social innovation is any initiative product process, programme, project or platform that challenges and over time contributes to changing the defining routines, resources and authority flows of beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced; successful social innovations have durability, scale and transformative impact.”	Westley, 2013, p. 2	Process & Outcome
“Social innovations are associated with intended, planned, coordinated, goal oriented, and legitimated actions undertaken by social agents aiming at social change that will emerge in the establishment of new social practices.”	Cajaiba-Santana, 2014, p. 44	Process & Outcome
“A collective process of learning involving the distinctive participation of civil society actors aimed to solve a societal need through change in social practices that produce change in social relationships, systems and structures, contributing to large socio-technical change.”	Edwards-Schachten and Wallace, 2015, p.7	Process & Outcome

While this is not a comprehensive list compared to the two literature reviews mentioned, it is shared to provide some context on how the concept has evolved. There

are various reasons why reaching an SI definition has proven challenging; the following sections discuss some of them.

An outcome and a process. A fundamental challenge in defining SI is that there are two schools of thought on whether it is an outcome or a process (Phills et al., 2008; Sharra & Nyssens, 2010). Grimm et al. (2013) suggest this dilemma stems from the fact Social Innovation may refer to both “new products and services that address social needs” (p. 5). Mulgan (2006) found that most papers tend to focus on SI as an outcome while mentioning the process as an essential aspect of achieving the outcome. However, some definitions seemed to land in the middle of the two (see Table 1).

A comprehensive SI definition would take an integrative approach where SI is both a process and an outcome versus one or the other (Sharra & Nyssens, 2010). Researchers like Murray, Caulier-Grice, and Mulgan (2010) encourage the field to use a both/and approach, calling for innovations to be social "both on their ends and in their means" (p.3). Phills et al. (2008) mention three specific components of a both/and approach: the innovator, the process, and the outcome. They give as an example the split Noble Prize between Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank. Yunus is the innovating individual who helped develop microfinance, the bank is the organization that implemented the process of innovation and provided the solution, and microfinance is what they consider the outcome. Larsson & Brandsen, 2016) call for a focus on the complexity of SI as a process versus a simplified definition of an idea or action. This process has manifested in several models over the years.

Social innovation models. The Young Foundation spearheaded the development of SI models shaping the exploration of the process to date. Mulgan (2006), former CEO

of the Young Foundation, proposed a four-stage model which over the years has continued to change and evolve, including into a six-stage model proposed in *The Open Book of Social Innovation* by Murray et al. (2010). Other models over the past decade emerged based on projects funded by foundations or government initiatives (BEPA, 2010).

Although some models do not explicitly note it, a critical first step of SI is to identify a need or a problem (Mulgan, 2006; Sharra & Nyssens, 2010; Kärkkäinen 2013). The problem or need is considered the primary driver of the process, followed by a series of steps (Benneworth & Cunha, 2013; Kärkkäinen & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013). After identifying the need, the existing SI models explore new ideas and ways of solving the problem. The last steps involve testing said ideas and eventually scaling out the solution. While the step by step model may suggest a linear sequence, most SI processes do not conform to a linear sequence (Davies, 2014; Mulgan, 2007). Given that the SI process is more complicated and less predictable, some suggest thinking of the process as iterative instead of linear (Murray et al., 2010; Davies, 2014, Larsson & Brandsen, 2016). Beyond encouraging an integrative approach, researchers also suggest caution dealing with SI's normative tendencies, and also being aware of possible unintended consequences for organizations and communities experimenting with SI initiatives (Seelos & Mair, 2012)

SI literature grew vastly since the year 2000 alongside societal changes in technology, politics, and economics (Schöning, 2013; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). However, Benneworth and Cunha (2015) note that this growth also has resulted in SI becoming a "wish list" for a range of aspirations and ideologies. SI's orientation towards addressing long-enduring societal issues comes from the historical narratives of human survival and

the search for a sustainable world (Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2015). As a result, the term SI is often used as a "normative instrument" (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). This normative aspect carries expectations for SI to aid community development, as well as ultimately create a more socially just world (Benneworth, Amanatidou, Edwards Schachter, & Gulbrandsen, 2014). One of the consequences of SI's normative tendencies is the idealization of social innovators as the heroic leaders described in Chapter 1. This idealization has its roots in the interchangeable use of the terms *social innovation* and *social entrepreneurship*.

Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation

The decades-long interchangeable use of the terms SI and Social Entrepreneurship (SE), predominantly in management literature, is one of the main challenges facing the field of social innovation (Dees, 1998; Leadbeater, 2006, Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Sharra & Nyssens, 2010). While some authors take the time to differentiate the terms, others tend to group the concepts as umbrella definitions (Schöning, 2013). Maclean, Harvey, and Gordon (2013) summarize the commonalities between SI and SE in three aspects: Innovation is their foundation, they aim to create social value by addressing social problems, and both come from a fundamental inability of current systemic structures to solve existing social needs. Despite these commonalities, each concept has evolved in different ways over the past few decades.

The concept of SE came into existence in the 1990s through organizations like Ashoka, which used the term *social entrepreneur* to refer to their fellows (Ashoka US, n.d.; Mair and Marti, 2006). As SE continued to grow in popularity in the 2000s, some scholars focused on the social value brought about by businesses in collaboration across

sectors, and others emphasized the transformative work of social entrepreneurs (Mair and Marti, 2006; Smith and Woodworth, 2012; Schöning, 2013). One way in which scholars have often differentiated SI from SE is by referring to SI as the actual outcome or idea implemented by a social entrepreneur (Schöning, 2013). Furthermore, Cunha, Benneworth, and Oliveira (2015) argue the distinction between the terms is that social innovation is a process to create systemic change, whereas social entrepreneurship is the tool individuals use to make change happen. SI is considered a broader concept that occurs in many contexts and involves many actors and relationship shifts between stakeholders that may not have collaborated before, such as governments, nonprofits, and businesses (Mulgan, 2006). Despite some progress made to extricate the concepts, the current literature still presents a gap in language to speak of those that are involved in SI beyond the term social entrepreneur.

Social entrepreneurs and social innovators. There is considerable disparity in the literature surrounding the terms *social entrepreneur* and *social innovator*; most notably in the research describing and identifying the traits and characteristics of social entrepreneurs. The first definition of a social entrepreneur is attributed to Dees (1998), who described several of their behaviors, among them, "recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission... acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand" (Dees, 1998, p.4). This description set the stage for the surge of a dominant heroic narrative in the 2000s, as exemplified by authors like David Bornstein in his book *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* (2007). Bornstein uses the terms interchangeably and defines them as:

People with new ideas to address major problems who are relentless in the pursuit of their visions, people who simply will not take "no" for an answer, who will not give up until they have spread their ideas as far as they possibly can. (p. 1)

Social entrepreneur stories - and consequently social innovator stories - depict one-of-a-kind occurrences driven by the persistence of a one-of-a-kind individual, the consequences of which continue to unfold (Mulgan et al., 2007; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). One result is the dominance in the literature of an individual lens to look at anyone involved in the process of social innovation. The kind of characteristics attributed to these individuals are mostly positive, from being incredibly selfless and courageous to being creative, altruistic, and inspiring (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Mulgan et al., 2007; Schöning, 2013). The heroic description suggests there is a complying and easily persuaded society on the other end of the social innovation process. Dey and Steyaert (2010) note that holding on to the heroic narrative risks creating passive communities waiting for someone else to do the work.

Some researchers believe the heroic narrative stems from Western tendencies to focus on an entrepreneurial spirit, personal leadership, and individual success (Hjorth, Bjerke, Steyaert, & Hjorth, 2006; Sharra and Nyssens, 2010). The increased use of an individual lens is evident in the emergence of numerous certificates, degrees, and competitions to develop future social entrepreneurs found across academic institutions (Papi-Thorton, 2016b). These programs gave way to a wave of individuals that, despite not having any lived experience of the social issue they are trying to solve, believe learning a specific set of skills is enough to create systemic change (Papi-Thorton, 2016a).

The heroic narrative along with the "school of traits" (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014) described in Chapter 1 have created an unrealistic representation of social innovation, which, as described, is a complicated process involving many actors as well as organizational, institutional, and contextual factors (Habisch & Adai, 2013). The current research efforts suggest creating more comprehensive definitions to include other SI actors beyond the individual level, such as those working in the social sector or government agencies. I use the term *social innovator* for this study as an all-encompassing term to refer to the various actors involved in the process of social innovation, whether they are working in nonprofits, in government agencies, or as social entrepreneurs.

Through the decades-long research focusing on the positive traits and characteristics of a leader, leadership researchers perpetuated the idea that to be a leader one must possess specific attributes and qualities (Bryman, 2011). Examples of this abound in theories such as "the great man theory," charismatic leadership, and others. This could be a cautionary tale for those studying social innovation. The risk of not taking time to learn more about social innovators beyond the traits of individuals is exemplified by the many years in which leadership studies remained a concept available only to people in specific hierarchical positions or with a specific set of characteristics (Collinson, 2011).

Social Innovation and Leadership

The study of leadership within social innovation has received very little attention in the past two decades. A search for the terms "leadership" and "social innovation" on University of San Diego's database and Google Scholar yielded less than ten peer-

reviewed articles and six books. Some of these results focus on Corporate Social Responsibility, research and development, and nonprofit management. Mumford's (2002) research on leadership within the context of creativity and innovation identified three research pathways to innovation in general. The first pathway focuses on the life history of notable individuals throughout time, the second focuses on leadership competencies to address social problems in innovative ways, and the third explores innovation at the organizational level (Mumford, 2002).

While some of the research mentioned may be transferable to SI, the reality is that few papers have been written solely on leadership and SI. Among the SI literature addressing the topic of leadership, some researchers seem to shift from the traits-based lens to a process-based lens. This shift calls for leadership that allows for collaborative work resulting in systemic-wide change. One of the consequences of effective SI leadership is community empowerment (Moulaert, Martinelli, Swyngedouw, & Gonzalez, 2005; Sharra & Nyssens, 2010). Mulgan et al. (2007) argue that effective leaders support and encourage innovation in an organization and can think across disciplines, sectors, and fields. They note leaders need to provide tools, resources, and access for those facing the problems, empowering them to drive innovation within organizations. That said, it is worth noting that the intense focus on charismatic leaders and heropreneurs within the field has resulted in numerous cycles of failure at attempting to scale or grow initiatives (Mulgan, 2006).

The approach to SI used by some researchers resembles that of Adaptive Leadership Theory. Even though I found no paper connecting SI and Adaptive Leadership, it is worth noting the similarities in language used by both. Heifetz,

Grashow, and Linsky (2009) define Adaptive Leadership as "the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive" (p.14). They view leadership as a practice not defined by personality traits or position; as such there are some strategies an adaptive leader follows to be most effective, among them to "think politically," find allies, build relationships, and allow those with the problem to do the work (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Similarly, after reviewing seven SE cases, Alvord, Brown, and Letts (2004) propose social innovators require the capacity to be adaptive leaders and build relationship across stakeholders, establishing a shared vision for the transformational change they want to create. Furthermore, Lawrence, Phillips, and Tracey (2012) suggest social innovators go beyond thinking creatively to solve problems; they need to be adept at politics emerging from cross-sector dynamics threatening the success of an SI initiative.

The previous sections explored how social innovation has evolved as a concept over the years, and the need for further exploration of every aspect of the concept is evident. The current global and local social challenges continue to increase, and the demand for effective leadership will continue to grow as well. For SI to create the desired social change, it will require leaders that are more complex in their ways of thinking, being, and doing. Therefore, there is a need first to learn more about those currently leading within the social innovation field. Constructive Developmental Theory (CDT) and especially ego developmental theory can shed light in this regard. Thus, the next section of this literature review focuses on constructive developmental theory.

Constructive Developmental Theory

Social innovators display some behaviors and traits that help them find, create, and lead new ways of addressing social challenges. However, for as much as we know

about their competencies, we do not yet have a grasp on the way they see the world and how they make meaning of their experiences. The use of CDT for this study provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the lives of social innovators. This section reviews the existing literature regarding CDT with an emphasis on its uses and application on leadership.

A complete historical review of CDT is beyond the scope of this study; however, it is essential to acknowledge the foundational work aiming to understand how human beings develop. Baldwin's (1890) work in the late 1800s exploring the sequential development of children through adolescence (particularly documented in the *Handbook of Psychology*), as well as Vygotsky's work in the early 1900s, led to Piaget's seminal human development work in the 1950s. Vygotsky's research is important because it makes clear that learning is a socially constructed activity. Social interaction plays a fundamental role in an individual's development of cognition (McLeod, 2017).

Piaget focused particularly on studying the cognitive development of children, creating a framework to understand how children grow through a qualitative construction of the world around them (Kegan, 1980). Over the last 70 years, some theorists have elaborated on Piaget's work, giving way to what is now known as the neo-Piagetian framework.

Adult Development

The work of neo-Piagetian theorists expanded the human development framework by including the emotional, personal, and social components of the human experience beyond childhood, with a particular focus on exploring how adults develop. In Piagetian terms, adult development takes place at a cognitive level, where the structure through

which we understand the world changes or transforms (Moshman, 2002). Over the years, many theorists have contributed to understanding this development; among them, the work of Kohlberg on moral development, Loevinger's ego development theory, and Kegan's developmental orders stand out. Each of these theorists contributed in different ways to the understanding of an adult's internal experience, particularly in the way a person makes sense of their experiences (Kegan, 1980).

Kegan was the first to introduce the term "constructive developmental" to the exploration of how adults make meaning of their experiences throughout a lifetime (McCauley, Drath, Paulus, O'Connor, & Baker, 2006). His contribution to CDT theory is essential because he suggested that development comes from a person's process of interpreting, differentiating, and integrating between the self and the others, to which he refers to as subject-object relationship. It is this distinction that allows the individual to reframe their perspective on any experience from another viewpoint. His approach was less focused on the ongoing reframing process – the developmental order – that takes place as an adult makes meaning of new experiences (McCauley et al., 2006).

Moshman (2002) refers to development in adulthood as a series of advanced transitions, even though these changes may seem qualitatively small in comparison to what development looks like in childhood. At its core, CDT, in Cook-Greuter's (2013) words, "provides us with one possible account of how individuals navigate the straits of human existence" (p. 3). While neo-Piagetian theorists have focused on different aspects of the human experience, there are some basic tenets shared by CDT summarized by Cook-Greuter (2013) including:

- Development theory describes the unfolding of human potential towards deeper understanding, wisdom and effectiveness in the world.
- Growth occurs in a logical sequence of stages or expanding world views from birth to adulthood. The movement is often likened to an ever widening spiral.
- Overall, world views evolve from simple to complex, from static to dynamic, and from ego-centric to socio-centric to world-centric.
- Each later stage includes and transcends the previous ones. Each later stage in the sequence is more differentiated, integrated, flexible and capable of optimally functioning in a rapidly changing and ever more complex world.
- People's stage of development influences what they notice and can become aware of, and therefore, what they can describe, articulate, cultivate, influence, and change.
- A person who has reached a later stage can understand earlier world-views, but a person at an earlier stage cannot understand the later ones.
- The depth, complexity, and scope of what people notice can expand throughout life. Yet no matter how evolved we become, our knowledge and understanding is always partial and incomplete.

(p. 3)

Vertical and horizontal development. CDT continued to grow and evolve through the end of the 20th century and into the 21st. With further exploration, new ways of describing human development emerged. A useful way of understanding how human development takes place from a constructivist and developmental perspective is to visualize development in two different axes. The horizontal axis refers to the skills and

knowledge a person can obtain over time, and the vertical axis refers to how a person learns new ways of processing experiences and of seeing and interacting with the world (Cook-Greuter, 2005). Figure 1 shows the relationship between horizontal and vertical development (Cook-Greuter 2004, p. 277). The term *vertical development* provides a way of visualizing constructive development, and it has proven useful to differentiate the developmental stages measured by instruments like Loevinger's WU-SCT, Cook-Greuter's MAP, Torbert's GLP, and other CDT instruments. Cook-Greuter asserts vertical development "fosters the ability to see new perspectives by changing one's fundamental assumptions about the self, others, and life in general" (Vertical Development Academy, 2018).

Figure 1. The relationship between horizontal and vertical development. From "Making the case for a developmental perspective," by S. R. Cook-Greuter, 2004, *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 36, p. 277. Reprinted with permission.

Ego development theory (EDT). The theoretical framework for this study is based on Loevinger's ego development theory. Her work stems from the neo-Piagetian

framework, as well as the research on interpersonal psychiatry done by H.S. Sullivan in the late 1950s. The work of Loevinger stands out in the CDT field because it includes moral, cognitive, and interpersonal aspects of the adult experience (Westenburg & Block, 1993). In her earlier writings, Loevinger (1966, 1979) refers to ego development as an ambiguous term that encompasses a set of developmental typologies. Later on, she defined ego development as "the diversity of manifestations of the central core of personality" (Loevinger & Knoll, 1983, p. 205). Perhaps the most accessible way to describe ego development is provided by Gilmore and Durkin (2001): "The concept of a 'developing' ego refers to the progressive redefinition or reorganization of the self in relation to the social and physical environment" (p. 542).

Ego development becomes evident through changes in what Loevinger called the four essential domains of the human experience: cognitive style, interpersonal style, character development, and conscious preoccupations (Loevinger, 1966, Gilmore & Durkin, 2001). In the development of her instrument to measure ego development, Loevinger focused on what she described as milestone sequences—a range of possible behaviors that change over time—as these provide useful and distinct qualitative descriptions of an individual's cognitive and perception patterns (Hauser, 1993). It is these patterns and configurations that give way to what Loevinger calls ego developmental stages. Blasi (1993) suggests that Loevinger's most significant contribution to the constructive developmental field was the creation of ego development as a measurable construct delineated through stages; her contribution helped the field to start looking at individuals as a whole versus a set of traits that define only aspects of who they are.

Developmental stages. Neo-Piagetian theorists like Loevinger focused on identifying and describing stages to grasp the growth that takes place throughout a lifespan. The stages represent "a restructuring of the self-system toward greater self and interpersonal awareness, conceptual complexity, flexibility, personal autonomy, and responsibility" (Gilmore & Durkin, 2001, p. 534). The identified stages are grouped into three tiers or levels that mirror Piaget's language while at the same time expanding it. The developmental levels in use nowadays are Pre-Conventional, Conventional, and Post-Conventional. Each tier contains one to three sequential stages describing various aspects of adult development.

The Pre-Conventional tier is composed of the *Impulsive and Self-Centric Stages*; both stages comprise about 10% of percentage of adults in the workforce. Adults in this tier are often not fully in the mainstream or have not learned how to engage with society at large beyond tending to their own needs (Vertical Development Academy, 2018). The Conventional tier refers to three stages: *Group-Centric*, *Skill-Centric*, and *Self-Determining*, which comprise 75-80% of the population, according to Cook-Greuter's research. The Vertical Leadership Academy (2018) states that this tier "contains values, preferences, rules and scripts of behavior, notions of government and structure, power distribution, personal worth, and definitions of what is normal and what isn't" (p. 1). Kohlberg coined the term conventional to represent the linear way of seeing life held by most adults adhering to the social norms and roles that are expected of them (Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994). The Post-Conventional tier has four stages, comprising about 15-20% of the population, according to Cook-Greuter. The Stages in this tier are *Self-Questioning*, *Self-Actualizing*, *Self-Aware*, and *Unitive*, each stage increasingly more rare

than the previous. The stages in the third tier make meaning from a place in which cultural conditioning is examined with a deep sense of self-awareness and a broader perspective that goes beyond societal norms and expectations (Vertical Development Academy, 2018).

The initial six developmental stages theorized by Loevinger, as well as their names, have grown and changed over time; this is in part due to scholars' (like Torbert and Cook-Greuter) in-depth work over the past four decades. In 1994, Cook-Greuter suggested the possible existence of more stages beyond Loevinger's highest stage in the Post-Conventional tier. Analyzing data gathered from as far back as 1980, Cook-Greuter looked at unusual responses in participants scoring at the Post-Conventional tier (Cook-Greuter, 1994, 2013). After a rigorous process, her research led to identifying two more stages in the Post-Conventional tier in between stages 4 and 5, which Cook-Greuter now calls *Self-Questioning*, and between stages 5 and 6, the *Construct Aware* stage.

While the word "stages" may imply boundaries tied to a specific age, Kegan (1980) reminds us that the description of stages serves the purpose of identifying specific aspects of the process, and it is the process that is essential to the theory. CDT suggests said stages are hierarchical in nature; thus, an individual cannot skip a stage (Loevinger, 1966, 1979). Each stage is more complex than the previous; after an individual transitions to a later developmental stage, they continue to understand the perspective from the preceding one (Loevinger & Knoll, 1983; McCauley et al., 2006; Helsing, Howell, Kegan, & Lahey, 2008). Loevinger (1979) argued no stage should be numbered because there are prior stages not described or measured by her ego development instrument. While the value of describing existing stages is indeed quite a

contribution to the field of psychology, one detrimental aspect of CDT as a whole has been the many different ways of naming and describing developmental stages. Some theorists have used different names for the same stages in different publications, leading to confusion about the characteristics of each stage. As a result, there is an abundance of names and ways of looking at adult development through the EDT lens, which may make it difficult to apply to research studies (Table 2). Over the years, the language and number of stages have changed so much that often the sequential number is the primary way to compare across CDT theories.

Table 2

Developmental Stages and Distribution Amongst the U.S. Population

Tier	% of U.S. population	Stage number*	Loevinger	Torbert Action logics	Cook-Greuter (2013)	Cook-Greuter (2018)
<i>Preconventional</i>	~10%	2	Impulsive	Impulsive	Impulsive	Impulsive
		2/3	Self-protective	Opportunist	Self-defensive	Self-Centric
<i>Conventional Linear Reasoning</i>	~75%	3	Conformist	Diplomat	Conformist	Group-Centric
		3/4		Expert/Technician	Self-conscious	Skill-Centric
		4	Conscientious	Achiever	Conscientious	Self-Determining
<i>Post-Conventional Systems View</i>	~12%	4/5		Individualist	Individualist/Pluralist	Self-Questioning
		5	Autonomous	Strategist	Autonomous	Self-Actualizing
	<2%	5/6		Magician	Alchemist/Magician	Construct-aware
	<1%	6	Integrated	Ironist	Unitive	Unitive

Note. Table created with information available in Cook-Greuter (2000) and Cook-Greuter (2004). *Stage numbers used by Ego Development Theorists.

The literature on developmental models often use the terms "high" and "low" to depict a hierarchical nature of the stages. This practice led to an oversimplification of the entire process, assuming that stages in the "higher" tiers are better than those in the "lower" tiers. Cook-Greuter (2013) suggests using the terms "earlier" and "later" stages of development because it is more accurate to the sequential nature of development and it ameliorates the assumption that one stage is better than the other. She notes that later stages allow individuals to use a more complex lens to make meaning of the world but warns against believing everyone needs to exist in these stages to be a fully functional human being. Similarly, Loevinger (1966) cautioned against glorifying any particular stage noting "every stage has its weaknesses, its problems, and its paradoxes, which provide both a potential for maladjustment and a potential for growth" (p. 200).

Some EDT theorists emphasize the role played by contradictions, challenges, and (in some instances) pain in an individual's journey as a potential catalyst of change from one developmental stage to the next (Lewis & Jacobs, 1992; Weathersby, 1993; McCauley et al., 2006; Cook-Greuter, 2013). However, factors like dissonance, pain, or contradictions by themselves are not sufficient for development to occur. An individual's self-awareness is essential for potential growth to come to fruition; depending on their developmental level; two people may make meaning of the same challenge in different ways, thus leading to different levels of complexity in their worldview (Weathersby, 1993; Helsing et al., 2008). An individual's growth and awareness cannot take place in a vacuum. Development happens in relation to the language as well as the historical and cultural context; the "holding environment" is a driving factor of an individual being

challenged or supported in their current worldview (McCauley et al., 2006; Cook-Greuter, 2013).

One critical aspect of Loevinger's theory that has been challenged over the years is the belief that development only goes in one direction. McCauley et al. (2006) and Cook-Greuter and Soulen (2007) note that once an individual reaches a later stage of development, the previous stages remain available. There seems to be an implicit assumption that the individual can make a conscious choice to use previous stages. However, the data from some longitudinal studies have shown the occurrence of stage regression that goes beyond the individual's choice (Adams & Fitch, 1982; Redmore, 1983; Gilmore & Durkin, 2001; Livesay, 2013). The term “fallback” was coined by McCallum (2008); his dissertation research revealed that all of his participants experienced fallback prompted by challenges arising from ambiguity, complexity, and conflict. The acknowledgment of these regressions opened the door to a shift in the understanding of constructive development models as less linear, more fluid and bidirectional (Livesay, 2013).

EDT measurement instruments. Loevinger developed a sentence completion test, known as the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WU-SCT), to measure ego development in adults. The projective test is comprised of 36 sentence stems designed to draw out various aspects of ego development; the responses to the stems are scored and combined (Lilienfeld, Wood, & Garb, 2000). Based on the distribution of ratings of the responses, the test assigns an individual's ego developmental stage (Hoppe & Loevinger, 1977). Loevinger's rigorous research is reflected in the many cycles of test development to design her instrument. Among the steps taken were:

(a) preliminary scoring instructions were devised and applied to previous samples, (b) the data from these samples were used to revise the scoring instructions and, in some cases, the items and conceptualization of the ego development stages themselves, and (c) the revised scoring instructions and items were applied to new samples. (Lilienfeld et al., 2000, p.56)

The sentence completion approach allows for the participant's frame of reference to come forward, thus reflecting their ego developmental stage (Hauser, 1993). The ego level assessed by the WU-SCT provides insight into the way an individual perceives, processes, and organizes life experiences, the result of which impacts their personality development (Helson & Roberts, 1994). However, because the construct of ego development encompasses such broad aspects of human experience, some have difficulty with its approach (Gilmore & Durkin, 2001).

This broad approach resulted in some oversimplifications of what the WU-SCT measures. For example, a common misconception of the instrument is that it measures an individual's reasoning. Cohn & Westenberg's (2004) research dispelled the notion that developmental stages measurements are only measuring intelligence; this research showed that ego development and intelligence are not interchangeable constructs. Hauser (1993) notes the importance of the WU-SCT is that it goes beyond a simple test measuring attitudes that would later be labeled traits; from his perspective, the instrument provides a pattern of perceptions, cognitions, and feelings that ultimately provide a more vibrant picture of the way a person makes meaning of life.

Regarding reliability and validity, early on Loevinger conducted many inter-rater reliability tests that showed a 77% complete agreement between raters per item

(Loevinger, 1979). Over the years, many studies across varied populations found consistent inter-rater reliability (Adams & Fitch, 1982; Hauser, 1993; Westenburg & Block, 1993; Gilmore & Durkin, 2001). In addition, the WU-SCT has shown substantial correlation with other CDT instruments such as Kohlberg's moral maturity test (Loevinger, 1979). Gilmore and Durkin (2001) state there is substantial support for Loevinger's ego development as a construct in terms of "the unitary nature of the ego, the ego representing an integration of diverse personality characteristics (cognitive functioning, personal and interpersonal awareness, and character development), and the sequentiality of ego stages" (p. 561). Hauser (1993) attributes the widespread use of the WU-SCT to the way EDT connects and effectively integrates and measures components of developmental theory, psychoanalysis, and personality theory. By 2004, the WU-SCT had been translated into six languages, used in over 300 published and unpublished studies, and administered to more than 11,000 individuals (Loevinger, 1979; Hauser, 1993; Gilmore & Durkin, 2001; Cohn & Westenberg, 2004).

Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP). Following in Loevinger's footsteps, Torbert and Cook-Greuter were among the first to look into adult development in relation to leadership. They expanded developmental theory by exploring ways in which a person's mental models and ways of processing the world influence how they approach all aspects of their life, including practicing leadership (Cook-Greuter, 2004). With this in mind, they adapted the WU-SCT and created the Leadership Development Profile, which was the first assessment of its kind to focus on ego development in relation to leadership. After their collaboration ended, each developed their own ego development instrument: Torbert created the Global Leadership Profile, and Cook-Greuter created the

Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP). The MAP, similar to the WU-SCT, is a semi-projective technique comprised of 36 sentence stems designed to measure an individual's ego development stage. At the core of the MAP, the underlying assumption is that participants reveal their sense of what reality is through their written responses, given that language is part of our unconscious behavior (Cook-Greuter, 2013).

In an attempt to further differentiate the MAP instrument to other EDT instruments, Cook-Greuter refers to the MAP as the *measuring instrument* of what she coined as the Leadership Maturity Framework (LMF). This framework encompasses the work Cook-Greuter has done over 35 years to develop and deepen the work started by Lovinger (Vertical Development Academy, 2018). The results of the MAP provide a distribution of responses across nine stages of development identified in the LFM. Appendix A provides a short description of the ego development stages measured by the MAP as described by Cook-Greuter in the LMF.

Cook-Greuter (2013) suggests the ego can play different roles in an individual's daily life. On some occasions it is the storyteller narrating the human experience through a unique perspective; in others, the ego is the "central processing unit" through which a person makes meaning of their world. While an individual may have access to various developmental stages, they tend to operate from the one they have fully mastered. Cook-Greuter (2013) uses the concept of *center of gravity* to describe an individual's most commonly used framework to make meaning of their experience. Cook-Greuter (2013) cautions against assuming one person inhabits fully only one stage and suggests "the shape of the distribution is often more informative about a person's current propensities and potential for further growth than the final MAP score by itself" (p. 5). In other words,

beyond identifying one main stage from which an individual makes sense, the MAP provides a nuanced picture of the individual's complex meaning-making process by displaying what other stages they may operate from on some situations. Other CDT studies have used Torbert's term "Action Logic"; however, the word logic tends to connote only a cognitive aspect of the human experience whereas, according to Cook-Greuter, the LMF aims to integrate the experience of doing, being, and thinking into each stage (Cook-Greuter 2013).

EDT instruments' limitations. This section discusses some of the limitations which apply not only to the WU-SCT but also to the MAP. The first of these limitations is the role social desirability plays in the participant's responses to the sentence stems. Some participants may—intentionally or not—attempt to rate higher on characteristics that they see as socially desirable; specifically, with characteristics positively related to ego development, such as openness to experience and open-mindedness (McCrae & Costa, 1980, Westenburg & Block, 1993). Secondly, EDT instrument design and chosen sentence stems cannot avoid possible personal biases of the scorers of the instrument. While many studies have shown high inter-rater reliability, there are multiple possible reasons for variance, such as inadequate training of the scorer, the scorer's developmental stage and the scorer's understanding of the theory.

Another challenge applicable to EDT instruments is the use of longitudinal studies as a source of reliability and validity. Longitudinal studies are hard to do consistently; for example, the participant sample often decreases for example as participants drop out or the scorers change. More importantly, despite context being an essential factor influencing the human developmental process (Labouvie-Vief, 1993), the

design of longitudinal studies often cannot include other social contexts beyond the family, such as peers and school (Hauser, 1993). Further limitations particularly applicable to this study are discussed in Chapter 3. Given that the purpose of this study is to explore the developmental stages of social innovators and ultimately its intersection with their leadership practice, the next section explores the relationship between CDT and the field of leadership.

Constructive Developmental Theory and Leadership

The use of CDT's framework presents an opportunity for leadership scholars to explore new aspects of an individual's leadership experience and effectiveness. Proponents of using CDT as a framework for the study of leadership argue that understanding the differences of how leaders construct their reality would in turn yield relevant insight into a leader's effectiveness (McCauley et al., 2006; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). For example, Luscious and Kuhnert (1999) claimed there is a need for going beyond surface traits to understand the underlying reasons behind the observable behaviors of leaders. They suggest that exploring the developmental stages of individuals would shed light on the underlying reasons why some people who may hold similar surface traits may behave in different ways. McCauley et al. (2006) conducted the most thorough review to date of CDT in the leadership literature, citing over 30 studies exploring the intersection of leadership and CDT research.

In the studies done over the past 30 years, the most frequently used CDT frameworks to explore how developmental stages impact leader effectiveness are Kegan's developmental order, Loevinger/Torbert's action logics, and Kohlberg's moral development (McCauley et al., 2006). Torbert was one of the first theorists to explore

CDT in relation to leadership, particularly in the management field. His collaborative work produced numerous research projects focused on management and organizational contexts (Merron, Fisher, & Torbert, 1987; Rooke & Torbert, 1998; Torbert, 2004).

According to McCauley et al. (2006), these studies explored organizational transformation concerning four main areas of exploration: how the developmental order influences managerial tasks, the relationship between leaders at later developmental stages and their capacity for transformational change, interventions to facilitate developmental change, and how CDT informs organizational development.

Studies using Torbert's framework all suggested a high correlation between the reported ego developmental stage of a leader and his/her approach to managerial tasks; a similar high correlation was found between higher developmental levels and a leader's success in implementing organizational change. For example, Merron, Fisher, and Torbert (1987) explored differences in how managers approached problem solving and collaboration. Their simulation showed that managers at later stages tended to redefine and reframe problems rather than accept them as they were; they also showed some propensity to working more collaboratively and effectively. Weathersby (1993) describes a couple of studies that explored developmental stages concerning managerial effectiveness. She asserts that managers need to be at a later developmental stage to be more effective and better leaders.

Kegan's framework was used in tandem with transformational leadership theory, developed by Bass in the 1980s (McCauley et al., 2006). The theory served to explore the relationship between developmental stages and whether the leaders displayed more transformational versus transactional behaviors (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Kuhnert, 1994).

While those using Kegan's framework found a relationship between higher stages and transformational leadership, later studies using Torbert's and Kohlberg's approach did not show the same relationship between the two (McCauley et al., 2006). Beyond assessing leader effectiveness, those using Kegan's framework also looked at how the developmental stages of followers impact their perception of an "ideal" leader.

More recent research includes many studies and dissertations looking at the intersection between CDT and leadership. Some of these studies explored topics like authentic leadership (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005), personality and leadership development (Strang & Kuhnert, 2009), leadership and sustainability (Brown, 2012), and leadership and higher education (Horrigan, 2016). McCauley et al. (2006) note a couple of limitations in the existing body of research. First, the studies so far have small sample sizes, no more than 30 for many of the studies. Second, the research designs for these studies often include only a selected number of developmental stages (e.g. focusing only on Post-Conventional stages). Third, the required training for many of the instruments and scoring of instruments tends to be very time intensive and laborious. Lastly, despite the fact that CDT instruments have been translated into several languages, most studies except for a handful were conducted in the United States.

There is still much more to be explored. This study will contribute a part of the larger puzzle by bringing together three intersecting fields that have much to share with one another: leadership, social innovation, and CDT. The next chapter details the methodology for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research emerged from my personal and professional interest in social innovation and its intersecting points with effective leadership; I am especially interested in understanding those who dedicate their lives to making a difference, i.e., the social innovators. The current research on social innovators has focused primarily on traits and behaviors (Orr, 2016), yet there is much to learn and know about this group of individuals beyond a list of skills and competencies to attain.

This particular study examines the developmental stages of social innovators through the use of constructive development theory (CDT) and instrumentation developed by constructive developmental theorists: i.e., the Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) instrument. The research also explores whether social innovators' developmental level(s) cluster around a particular developmental stage. Finally, the study employs qualitative interviewing to explore factors that may have influenced a social innovator's personal journey as well as to understand how they make meaning of their work as social innovators. The rationale for using a qualitative approach is described in detail in the following section.

Design Rationale

There are two parts to the methods used in this study. The first part includes the MAP, which is a sentence completion instrument designed to identify the developmental stage of participants; the second part employs qualitative interviews to investigate in greater detail how participants make meaning of themselves and their work as social

innovators, as well as the factors that influenced their journey into the Social Innovation field.

The use of an ego development assessment instrument sheds light on an aspect of the experience of being a social innovator that has not been previously addressed by other research. Ego Development Theory (EDT), however, has led to the development of at least four different instruments to assess the developmental stages of individuals. The first was Loevinger's Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WU-SCT) which, as discussed in the literature review, has been used extensively and has been validated by many studies that have established its psychometric properties (Hauser, 1993; Lilienfeld et al., 2000; Cohn & Westenberg, 2004). The Leadership Development Profile was the first of its kind to focus on ego development in relation to leadership; this instrument was developed by Torbert and Cook-Greuter, who each later developed their own instruments. Torbert developed the Global Leadership Profile and Cook-Greuter the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP).

While the instruments and their description of developmental stages are very similar, I selected the instrument developed by Cook-Greuter for three reasons. First, Cook-Greuter was one of Loevinger's initial collaborators exploring adult development, and given that her instrument is quite similar to the WU-SCT, it benefits from Loevinger's extensive work on construct and instrument validity. Second, the MAP instrument took longer to become commercialized than Torbert's Global Leadership Profile; during this development time, Cook-Greuter focused on assessing the reliability and validity of her variation of the original Loevinger instrument (Cook-Greuter, personal communication, April 30, 2018). Whereas Torbert's insights, particularly on the later

stages, were originally based on historical biographies of quintessential leaders and some interviews of people in executive leadership positions, Cook-Greuter's data accessed a wider and more diverse sample in age, occupation, and cultures (Cook-Greuter, 2013). Currently the MAP has the largest developmental database archived to date, with over 12,000 profiles, and the certified scorers for the instrument go through an intensive 18-month training plus an exam and ongoing training (Vertical Development Academy, 2018). Lastly, Cook-Greuter's work significantly expanded the understanding of human development as she identified two more Post-Conventional stages, which the MAP instrument reflects (Cook-Greuter, 2013). The use of the MAP instrument provides relevant data to explore how developmental stages may reflect social innovators' description of their social innovations work and identity. Thus, it helped me understand, in a comprehensive way, how a group of social innovators make meaning of their work at this point in their lives.

The qualitative portion of the study comprised two steps: first, the *Formative Influences Timeline*, an activity designed to identify factors that influenced the participant's journey as social innovators; second, an open-ended semi-structured interview to explore specific aspects of their work. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because, at its core, qualitative research is concerned with understanding and describing how a specific group of people makes sense of experience and the meaning they have constructed from it (Van Maanen, 1979; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) state that qualitative research aims to "describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (p. 520).

To summarize, this study provides insight and understanding at a greater depth than what is currently available in the field. It does this by focusing on the meaning participants give to their life journeys, in general, and their experiences as social innovators.

Theoretical Framework

The research used CDT—a theory from the subfield of developmental psychology—as a theoretical framework to bring insight into the way participants make sense of their world. I specifically used EDT, which extends Piaget’s work on the sequential stages children go through in the course of their development to the entire life span. Specifically, I used a theory developed by Loevinger and further expanded over the past 40 years by Torbert and Cook-Greuter. As discussed in the literature review, Cook-Greuter’s 1994 research resulted in identifying two more Post-Conventional stages, thus expanding the understanding of later stages of development.

Research Sites and Participants

LeCompte and Schensul (2010) refer to a criterion-based selection as the first step for qualitative studies using purposeful sampling. With this in mind, I developed criteria for both selecting (a) a social innovation fellowship program from which I could recruit participants, and (b) the actual social innovators who were the study’s participants. These criteria are discussed in the subsections below.

Fellowship Program Selection Criteria. There are over 50 fellowship programs currently available for social innovators. Programs differ in at least three main ways. First, the type of support a program provides can focus on one or more of the following: funding, mentorship, professional development, and/or networking. Second, the program

length can be as short as summer-long experience or as long as a lifetime of support.

Third, the type of individual a fellowship program supports ranges from recent college graduates and early-stage innovators to individuals with years of experience in the social innovation field.

The following five criteria were used for fellowship program selection: (a) The fellowship program focuses on providing leadership development in addition to resources such as funding and networking; (b) the fellowship program is recognized as a leading entity in the world of social innovation; (c) the fellowship program supports diverse social innovators, initiatives, and programs; (d) the program supports individuals with demonstrated social innovation experience; and (e) the fellowship program provides lifelong support.

The fellowship program selected for the study was Ashoka, a fellowship program founded in 1981. Ashoka supports social innovators primarily by providing funding opportunities to accelerate and deepen the social change work they are doing. To become an Ashoka Fellow, the candidates need to meet a set of criteria. The criteria set demonstrates the potential fellow's commitment, capacity, and dedication to social innovation (see Appendix B for a description of each criterion). The focus on the candidate as well as the social problem and solution are important aspects of this criteria. The Ashoka fellowship program is open to candidates doing work across the globe. Consequently, some of the selected fellows may be running initiatives in their home country and community while others are running programs outside of their native country. For this study, only fellows based in the United States were considered as potential participants for a few reasons. First, it made for a more efficient data collection

process, limiting the travel distances for in-person interviews and making scheduling online interviews easier. Second, it helped reduce the sample size to 235 people; considering the over 3000 social innovators operating across the world would have added unnecessary layers of complexity to data analysis. Lastly, social change efforts tend to be more effective when led by local people with knowledge of the problem and context (Papi-Thorton, 2016b), hence an effort to select only fellows working in their home country was made. The Ashoka fellowship program from which this study's participants were selected is described below.

Ashoka fellowship program. Over the course of the past 35 years, Ashoka has become the leading global network of social entrepreneurs. Listing over 3,000 fellows spread across the globe, Ashoka provides a lifelong fellowship for individuals selected in a rigorous process that may last up to three years. The selection process starts with a nomination of the potential candidate by staff, volunteers, or people in the Ashoka network. The fellowship is also open for self-nominations. The application is open throughout the year, and the number of fellows selected every year varies; in 2017, 120 fellows were selected globally, 14 of them U.S.-based. Once nominations are reviewed, an Ashoka venture team conducts a site visit to meet the candidate and learn more about their initiative. Candidates moving to the next phase are interviewed by a senior Ashoka representative for a second opinion. Next, a local panel of social and business entrepreneurs interview the candidate. The recommendation of the senior representative and the panel are then reviewed by Ashoka's board, which makes a final decision on the selection of the candidate as a fellow.

Once selected, Ashoka creates a timeline detailing the support it will provide to the fellow throughout their lifetime. Initially, Ashoka provides a stipend lasting up to three years; after that, Ashoka provides other opportunities to grow fellows' initiatives (Ashoka, n.d.).

Participant selection criteria. The following participant selection criteria was used for this study: (a) the fellow resides in the United States; (b) their project, venture, or initiative is preferably based in the United States; (c) the fellow has been a leader of a social innovation initiative for a minimum of 3 years; and (d) the fellow is willing to take part in a 90-minute interview (online or in person) and willing to take the MAP instrument (60 minutes).

Participant selection procedures. There were 19 Ashoka fellows who participated in this study. I recruited participants by enlisting the help of Ashoka staff, who sent invitation messages and facilitated introductions via email to specific cohorts of fellows (see Appendixes C and D). Throughout the process, a convenience sampling approach was used based on geographic location and availability. First, I sent out emails only to fellows that live within travel distance from San Diego to conduct interviews in person; this meant fellows in Southern California, San Francisco, and Arizona. This step yielded access to five participants with whom I led in-person and online interviews. This step in the process helped me realize the online interview could easily be done, and the online platform used for the interview provided the extra benefit of being able to directly record both audio and video of the interview, which would eventually be an asset during the data analysis of the research. Given the targeted sample size was 20 interviews, I expanded the search to include fellows from across the United States. The final sample

depended on fellows whose availability fell within the data gathering timeframe of the research, July 2018 to January 2019. I established contact via email and phone with those interested to provide information on the amount of time required for participating in the research, to share the participant agreement form (Appendix E), and to set up dates and times for the in-person or online interview. During these initial conversations, all participants were given the option of having their identities kept confidential by using a pseudonym, or they could choose to use their name and be identified. These two possibilities also were detailed in the IRB consent form all participants signed.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process included three protocols: a sentence completion assessment (MAP), a *Formative Influences Timeline* activity, and a semi-structured interview. Participants first received an outline of the purpose of the study via email, along with the informed consent form. I made myself available via email or phone to answer any questions. Once participants read and understood how the data collected from them would be used, I asked them to send back a signed copy of the consent form prior to beginning the study. Once consent was received, each participant was asked to complete the MAP assessment online, before the life timeline activity and interview took place. This order was deliberate and ensured that the fellows' MAP instrument answers were not influenced by the qualitative portion of the study. While the interview and timeline activity took place in the same session, each instrument/activity is described separately in the following sections. Two of the 19 participants declined doing the MAP assessment due to time constraints but were interested in doing the interview. Given that I was looking for as diverse a sample as I could find and that both of these participants were

males of color, I agreed to continue with the interview and did not include them in the data analysis pertaining to the MAP assessment results.

MAP instrument. The participants received instructions via email to complete the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) instrument developed by Cook-Greuter (see Appendix E). The MAP instrument is a 36-question sentence completion test that takes approximately 60 minutes to complete. The scoring was done by Dr. Cook-Greuter, the instrument developer, since this instrument is proprietary. The scoring of the MAP follows a particular sequence, starting with the rater assigning a score to each of the 36-sentence stems corresponding to one of the nine meaning-making stages; this provides a distribution of the 36 scores across all stages. Next, the distribution of the responses undergoes several statistical analyses, including simple and cumulative distributions as well as the total weighted score (TWS), which takes into consideration the weight given to a score (the higher a response, the more weight given). The rater then assigns a total protocol rating (TPR), which is the interpretation and score provided by the trained rater of an individual's MAP instrument based on "its overall complexity of reasoning, and the quality and diversity of its content and structure of responses" (Vertical Development Academy, 2018). The TPR is determined by a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessments based on developmental theory, as well as the ideas, beliefs, and concerns expressed in the responses (Vertical Development Academy, 2018). This step of the study addressed Research Question 2: *What are the developmental levels of the social innovators participating in the study; and, do social innovators cluster around a particular developmental stage?*

Qualitative data gathering. The qualitative data gathering portion of the study consisted of a *Formative Influences Timeline* activity and a qualitative interview that were administered in the same 90-minute session for each participant. The interview took place in person with two of the participants, and the remaining participants were interviewed online through Zoom, a video conference platform. The purpose of this portion of the study was to gather data to understand how social innovators make meaning of their work and to explore factors that they believe influenced their growth and current sense of meaning-making.

Formative Influences Timeline activity. This activity was developed by Jones and Castillo (2017) for their exploratory research on the developmental aspects of fundraisers. Participants were invited to draw a line signifying their life timeline, on which they noted critical moments, experiences, and personal influences that led them to become who they are today (see Appendix F). They were asked to focus specifically on moments that informed, challenged, or supported who they are as social innovators and their orientation toward social innovation work. Next, participants were invited to share the timeline and any insights they may have from looking at their *Formative Influences Timeline*.

The life story narrative approach has been used by many scholars to explore how people make meaning of past experiences and how it might relate to their development as leaders (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Jones & Castillo, 2017). A key component of this exercise was to identify not only the participant's critical experiences on their timeline, but to also explore how they processed these experiences and how this informs how they see themselves as a social innovator. The use of a *Formative Influences*

Timeline was critical to this study because the data provided insight on the way participants see past experiences with respect to their growth as social innovators and how they see themselves at the present moment. Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, & Adler (2005) have noted “in telling their life stories people construct a longitudinal version of self which explains and justifies the present self” (p.17). The total time allotted for this activity, including the sharing, was an average of 45 minutes.

The timeline activity was selected to emulate the biographic interviews part of the Ashoka Fellowship selection process. Conducting most interviews online had an impact on the timeline activity, presenting various challenges and outcomes. Participants were asked to send a picture of their timeline during the interview; however not all of them complied. Many of them decided not to draw the timeline but instead do bullet point lists of their life experiences. The third person willing to be a participant was blind; thus per his request, instructions on the timeline activity were sent ahead of time to allow him to prepare and type his answers. The richness of his interview led me to adapt and for all interviews that followed, I sent instructions on the activity prior to all interviews; as a result, the interview time was put to better use discussing participants’ timelines. In addition, some fellows sent notes ahead of time, which made the data analysis easier. Other participants simply did not want to spend much time on creating the timeline; they preferred sharing spontaneously without writing anything down. These various approaches presented other challenges to code and analyze the data, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Open-ended interviews. The second part of the 90-minute session was an open-ended semi-structured interview exploring questions directly related to how participants

make sense of the work they do as social innovators. The standardized open-interview protocol was developed based on Patton's work (2015), which requires a list of specific questions, possible probes, and transitions that will be used for all participants. This approach helped make the most of the limited time available, ensured all participants were asked the same basic questions, and ultimately facilitated an easier way to code the data collected. The open-ended questions instrument was designed to collect data on cognitive, interpersonal, and emotional aspects of interviewees' identities as social innovators and leadership practice (see Appendix G). Once the participants were selected, I prepared for their interview by reading each fellow's summary available on the Ashoka website, which describes their social change initiative and personal background.

The 19 90-minute interviews were recorded either on my mobile device or through the online video conference app with the participant's permission. During every interview, I took notes and recorded a voice memo after the session with my thoughts and impressions from the session. An online service was used to transcribe the interviews. The interview portion of the study helped answer Research Questions 1 (*What factors, if any, challenged or supported their journey as social innovators? How do these factors relate to the way social innovators make meaning?*) and 4 (*How do social innovators make meaning of themselves and their work?*).

Data Analysis Procedures Overview

This section describes the different ways in which the collected data was analyzed. I began the data analysis with an exploratory round of coding followed by a first round of coding, which will be explained later in this section. Next, I conducted an individual case analysis of the *Formative Influences Timeline* activity. Thereafter, I

accessed the MAP results provided by Cook-Greuter and her associates and identified whether participants clustered on any particular developmental stage. Next, I explored how the open-ended interview data aligned—or didn't—to the characteristics of each the four stage clusters in the MAP results. For example, if the *Skill-Centric* stage describes how an individual at this stage deals with feedback, I compared these descriptions with what the participants shared regarding dealing with feedback in their open-ended interview. Following this step, I conducted three different cross-case analysis of all qualitative data exploring possible insights. I concluded the analysis by exploring emerging themes related to the factors that shaped the participant's social innovation journey, their leadership practice, and their ways of making meaning.

Given there were many rounds of coding and data comparison at different times in the process, I created a flow chart of the entire data analysis process (see Figure 2 and Appendix J for a larger version of the figure). Each of the data analysis steps is described in the following subsections.

Figure 2. A flow chart of the data analysis process employed in this study.

Qualitative data. Coding for both the *Formative Influences Timeline* and the open-ended interviews took place side by side as the coding of one type of data informed the coding of the other data set. I reviewed over 28 hours of interviews and coded the transcripts into 405 codes. Parallel to the entire coding process, I recorded voice memos on any questions, observations, and insight I had about the data, myself, or the study. These memos helped me identify two important aspects of the study: potential themes emerging from the data and any issues of positionality or researcher bias. All coding rounds and data analysis was done with the help of MAXQDA software.

Exploratory coding. I conducted some exploratory coding with two interview transcripts to understand which coding method would be most useful to the study. In the exploratory round I used only In Vivo coding and Provisional coding. Saldaña (2015) states In Vivo Coding is a useful method to capture the voices of participants by using a word or short sentence with their language. Given that I was interested in understanding the way participants make meaning, In Vivo coding allowed me to understand it more

readily. In the words of Stringer, In Vivo coding is “more likely to capture the meanings inherent in people’s experience” (2014, p. 140). Provisional Coding (Saldaña, 2015) allowed me to use codes based on the questions part of the timeline activity and the open-ended interview. While the Provisional coding was a helpful way to structure the exploratory coding, it soon became apparent there were other codes not included in the list that would become relevant. Saldaña (2015) warns researchers that “you run the risk of trying to fit qualitative data into a set of codes and categories that may not apply” (p. 170). Therefore, I decided to continue to expand the list of codes as I read the data for the first round of coding in order to avoid trying to fit data to the present categories and codes from the Provisional coding list.

First round of coding. I conducted an individual case analysis as the first step in the data analysis of the individual timelines as well as open-ended interviews. For the first round of coding, I chose Eclectic Coding because it combines two or more purposeful coding methods that help make sense of data, especially when the study is comprised of varied methods of data forms (Saldaña, 2015). The selected methods for the eclectic round of coding were In Vivo (for the whole transcript), Descriptive Coding, Process Coding, and Structural Coding; each method was selected for specific reasons. I used Descriptive Coding for the *Formative Influences Timeline* Activity because Descriptive Coding helps identify topics across varied data forms with similar content (Saldaña, 2015). Given the nature of the timeline activity, it was important to first identify how each participant described their formative experiences; secondly, Descriptive Coding would help me link these topics across participants. I chose Process Coding for questions related to how participants make meaning because this method

helps identify specific actions, routines, or rituals of how participants approach life and work and how they experience life in general (Saldaña, 2015). Lastly, I chose Structural Coding (Saldaña, 2015) for questions related to Developmental Stage characteristics because, according to Saldaña (2015), Structural Coding is appropriate for interview transcripts, allowing for proper categorization and comparison between data segments. Structural Coding seemed to be pertinent to the study given that it helps identify “large segments of text on broad topics; these segments can then form the basis for an in-depth analysis within or across topics” (MacQueen, McLellan-Lemal, Bartholow, & Milstein, 2008, p. 125).

The first round of coding focused on exploring the various experiences, critical moments, and personal influences that participants identified as factors that shaped their journey into social innovation as well as ways in which they described their meaning-making framework. This step included reading the transcripts while listening to the recorded audio to pick up nuance and emotion in their answers to help me understand the deeper meaning of what they shared. (See Appendix H for a full list of codes and sub-codes used in the study, as well as the themes that emerged from these codes.)

Individual case analysis. Following the first round of coding, I conducted an individual case analysis focused on the *Formative Influences Timeline* portion of the data. This step seemed appropriate given I was interested in drawing out the experience each participant went through to become a social innovator. Using narrative analysis as a method allowed the meaning of the individual’s experience to emerge inductively (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The analysis used a psychological approach, which is considered a holistic method by Rossiter (1999) because it “acknowledges the cognitive,

affective, and motivational dimensions of meaning making. It also takes into account the biological and environmental influences on development” (p. 78). The analysis consisted of segregating data into categories by codes or labels, to understand participants’ experience and shed light on the factors that shaped their journey as social innovators. This approach helped me discern patterns and themes emerging from each participant’s responses. The Personal Profile narratives and findings result of this analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

MAP instrument and results. All completed MAPs went directly to the Vertical Development Academy (VeDA), Cook-Greuter’s global social enterprise. Through a memorandum of understanding (Appendix K), certified MAP scorers from VeDA scored each instrument. The results of the MAP were provided in an aggregated log of all the MAPs in the project. The log listed the participant’s age, gender, education, and profession, as well as a unique ID for the participant. The results showed the distribution of stages within a single MAP; the statistical score; the total weighted score; and a final score, the TPR, based on both quantitative evidence and a qualitative reading of the sentences.

As noted, I used the TPR as the basis for the data analysis of the results and did not access the MAP results for any of the participants until after I finished transcribed and analyzed the qualitative portions of the study. This was an important step in the data analysis, given that the MAP results provide insight on specific characteristics to each developmental stage and I wanted to avoid being influenced by the MAP results while completing the analysis of the qualitative portion of the research. Once the individual profiles were done, I was able to access the MAP instrument results provided by Cook-

Greuter. This step consisted of identifying any existing cluster of participants around a particular developmental stage. The data was then split into the four clusters indicated by the MAP results.

Cross Case analysis. The next step in the data analysis was to conduct three separate rounds of cross-case analysis. The first explored the relationship between MAP stage clusters and the open-ended interview data; the second cross-case analysis examined the *Formative Influences Timeline* data; and the third explored possible themes across all data in relation to how participants make meaning of themselves and their work.

MAP stage clusters and open-ended data. This step explored the relationship between the characteristics of each identified MAP stage clusters, as described by Cook-Greuter's Leadership Development framework, and the participant responses to the way they process things and how they make meaning. This step allowed further exploration of any possible relationship between the MAP description of the cluster's current *center of gravity* and the participant's own description of how they approach their social innovation work. The analysis aimed to highlight areas in which the qualitative data was or wasn't consistent with the LMF description of the stage. These findings are presented in Chapter 5, along with a separate section per cluster to discuss how the leadership practice of participants in the cluster aligns – or doesn't – with their stage.

Formative Influences Timeline. The cross-case analysis of all *Formative Influences Timeline* data provided sought to provide insight on possible emerging themes connected to how participants became involved in the social innovation field. This step first identified themes or categories across all codes. My hope with this analysis was to

shed light on the factors that influenced the development and the impact such experiences had on the participant's lives as social innovators. The categories that were present in at least 50% of the participants are presented in Chapter 6.

Themes across all data. In the final step in the data analysis process, I examined all interview data and searched for themes to provide insight on the social innovators' way of making meaning, the relationship between their stage of development, and their description of themselves and their work.

Limitations

This study had limitations in three main areas: instrument limitations, sample size and procedure, and potential researcher bias.

Instrument limitations. As discussed in the instruments section of the literature review, the use of any instrument to assess human development presents challenges and limitations (Jackson, 1993; Hauser, 1993). The MAP instrument relies on Loevinger's Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WU-SCT), which has been validated numerous times over the past 40 years (Loevinger, 1979, Hauser, 1993, Cook-Greuter, 2013). As mentioned in the literature review, the MAP's underlying assumption is that participants reveal their sense of what reality is through their written responses (Cook-Greuter, 2013). However, the insight is only about a particular moment in the life of one individual.

The cross-cultural applicability of the EDT instruments like the MAP has been under criticism for a long time because some the stages are described under what would be considered an individualistic, future-oriented lens, more applicable to Western countries (Loevinger, 1979; Loevinger & Knoll, 1983). Jackson (1993) suggests caution,

given that the measurement of ego development implies a move from less to more development and these assumptions need to take into consideration that different societies and groups may reflect a different perspective of what it means to develop and have a more developed frame of mind.

A related criticism is that the MAP was developed in English; thus, its applicability to people for whom English is a second language may vary given that some languages are less linear than English. Ultimately the frame of reference reflected in the MAP may depend on the English fluency of the person. Furthermore, it bears mentioning that ongoing globalization influences the way language is used across the world, which also influences the way people answer sentence completion tests. While the MAP has been translated into six languages, it is reasonable to consider that both the assessment and training needs to respond and update its content to reflect and align the instrument to current times. In this regard, Cook-Greuter (2013) acknowledges that any developmental measure instrument needs to remain flexible and adaptable to the ongoing global changes, yet the challenge to do so is somewhat paradoxical. She states:

The world of psychometricians prefers variables to remain static, immutable and repeatable over long periods. What once may have been an indicator of later levels of development because of its erstwhile rare occurrence – such as referring to diversity or soul – has now become part of the common parlance of many people. These concepts have been adopted in all kinds of contexts at various levels of understanding. (p. 11)

Lastly, while the instrument has explored how different variables such as age or level of education impact the developmental stage of an individual, there are very few

studies exploring gender differences. The studies I found focused on other aspects related to ego development and gender. For example, Bursik (1995) explored gender-related personality traits in relation to developmental stage level. Her results indicated women at later developmental stages were more likely to subscribe to non-traditional gender roles than men. Cohn (1991) found that while ego development scores seemed higher in girls than boys in middle and high school, in adulthood this difference was not as apparent, suggesting that girls' ego development may happen at an earlier age than boys before leveling out later in life (Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). This topic became of importance, as some of the findings suggested the possible existence of gender differences in both the MAP scores as well as in the emergent themes from the open-ended interviews.

Sample size and procedure. Two limitations influenced the sample size of the study. The first is that even though the Ashoka fellowship programs support fellows from across the globe, the research focuses only on U.S.-based social innovators. Therefore, the pool of available fellows in the organization was reduced, from 3,500 Ashoka fellows globally to 224 U.S.-based fellows. A fundamental limitation is that I was not able to study all of the U.S.-based fellows, only a small percentage of them was represented in this study. A second challenge in sample size was the time investment required to participate in the study. Each participant was required to participate in a 90-minute interview plus a 60-minute test with an optional 30-minute review of their results. The lives of social innovators tend to be quite busy, considering many of them hold leadership roles as founders or executive directors of their initiatives; hence, for some, time is a

limited resource. This limitation became evident as I had a number of fellows decline to participate in the study due to the amount of time required.

This research was an exploratory study of a particular population that has not been studied in regards to human developmental stages. As such, a small sample of participants was expected, given that for some social innovators the topic may be too foreign or not of interest. Self-selection amongst the population sample is something to consider, given there is a chance some fellows may not ascribe to the idea that self-reporting instruments add personal insight. There is also a possibility that any fellows expressing interest in participating in the study may represent or operate at a later developmental stage. On this topic, Cook-Greuter suggests that a lack of interest in learning more about one's developmental stage may be in itself a reflection of their earlier developmental stage. For example, in a study that took place at Boston College with students who had completed a sentence completion test as part of their admission process were offered the opportunity to learn more about their results; those who were in the earlier or lower developmental stages chose not to take advantage of the learning opportunity (Cook-Greuter, 2013).

Potential researcher bias. Personal bias and positionality was a challenging aspect to manage in this study for two reasons. First, my employment for the past seven years has been at a university designated as an “Ashoka U Campus,” and while my job does not involve any direct interaction with Ashoka Fellows staff, I have met and learned from several Ashoka Fellows over the years. Second, my understanding of social innovation is based on what I have learned over the course of my employment, and there are biases (some of which I may not be fully aware of), such as my own understanding of

what I see as effective versus ineffective social innovation work, or my preconceived notion that social innovators' traits tend to be exaggerated.

Peshkin (1988) suggests the researcher needs to take an active role to remain aware of subjectivity by identifying moments when feelings get involved and documenting those moments. Monitoring and taming subjectivity was an ongoing process throughout the study. I paid particular attention to a phenomenon called "situational subjectivity" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18), which means that different aspects of my persona, and hence different aspects of my subjectivity, emerged depending on the context and setting. To mitigate this bias, I recorded voice memos throughout the process to identify how my identity and personal biases may have impacted such processes as sampling and interviewing and analyzing data. Further exploration of how these data played a role is discussed in the final chapter of the study.

While entirely avoiding personal bias was not possible, I was committed to exploring ways to minimize subjectivity. Consequently, I used two of Wolcott's (1990) tools to decrease subjectivity and bias. The first was being candid, revealing personal reactions, particularly in light of on any preconceived notions I had of their work as social innovators. I noted these reactions in the form of analytical memos. The second tool was to let the readers "see" for themselves by featuring quotes in the findings section in which the participants' words showcase their lived experience.

Regarding my positionality, I am what Banks's typology (2006) would describe as an external-outsider, which means my understanding of the communities I am researching is partial. This circumstance required I remain observant of my assumptions and biases as I further explored data; one way to do this was by continuing the practice of

analytical memos. The level of engagement I had during my professional career—first in nonprofit social change work and, in the past seven years, in leading efforts to engage students in social innovation opportunities—also influenced the way I perceive and understand the work participants are doing in their communities. Lastly, I was also conscious that the developmental stage from which I make sense of the world today could also influence and play a role in the study. As part of the research process I took the MAP instrument to identify my own developmental stage. I did this for two reasons. First, it provided me with the experience of taking the assessment so that I better understood what I was asking participants to do, and secondly, it shed light onto the potential ways in which my own developmental level could influence the study. My MAP results and how I dealt with the aforementioned bias challenges are further explored in Chapter 7.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have the possibility of substantially contributing to the emerging field of social innovation. First, what we learned about those that have already been recognized in the field of social innovation may help those who are interested in further developing future social innovators, such as universities and community initiatives. For example, by gaining a better sense of factors that supported current fellows' growth, we may be able to incorporate this learning into creating better development programs for future social innovators. The study provided some insight on how these factors intersect and more importantly on the way participants made sense of those experiences. The study revealed participants clustered around four developmental stages, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. These findings have the potential to deepen the

current understanding of who social innovators are, how they see the world, and ultimately how they lead.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANT PROFILES AND KEY FINDINGS

Introduction

The objective of this study was to understand how social innovators make meaning of themselves and their work in the Social Innovation (SI) field. Using qualitative interviews, a life timeline analysis, a stage development instrument, and a cross-case analysis, this research identifies how social innovators make meaning of their work. First, as a result of in-depth interviews where participants discussed their life experiences and SI practices, the study explored factors that have shaped each social innovator's journey. Next, using Cook-Greuter's constructive development instrument, the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP), the study identified the developmental stages of 17 social innovators. In addition, the interview data was used to investigate any possible relationship between participants' assessed developmental stages and the way they describe themselves as social innovators. This chapter presents the findings on each of these components of the study. Four research questions were at the center of the study:

1. What factors, if any, challenged or supported their journey as social innovators? How do these factors relate to the way social innovators make meaning?
2. What are the developmental levels of the social innovators participating in the study? Do social innovators cluster around a particular developmental stage?

3. What is the relationship between the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) instrument description of study participants' current developmental stages and their own description of how they approach their work as social innovators?
4. How do social innovators make meaning of themselves and their work?

Characteristics of the Sample Population

The participants (N=19) in this study are people who founded organizations and ventures dedicated to social change. All of them have been recognized for their work as an Ashoka Fellows, which means they are individuals with demonstrated experience in the field of Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship. Table 3 provides an overview of the participants' demographics, including gender and age, education, and year in which they were selected as an Ashoka Fellow; race was not available for all participants. Given the delicate nature of the work many Ashoka Fellows do, tackling difficult and sometimes divisive topics where being identified can pose a risk for them as they share many details of their life, all participants were given the option whether to be named and identified in the study. Many participants expressed an interest in being named as they considered this study a part of their legacy by sharing their life journeys, while others simply did not mind being mentioned; however, two participants selected to use a pseudonym for this study for the safety of themselves and their organizations. Thus, the participants' first and last name will identify all but two of the participants. There were ten men and nine women based in the United States; three of them were born in Europe and two of the three were raised there. Four participants founded and lead organizations

outside of the United States in Latin America and Africa, and the rest founded organizations located across the United States.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Name	Gender	Age	Education	Profession	Fellowship Year
Lennon Flowers	F	33	BA	Co-Founder, Exec. Dir	2016
Ana Williams	F	44	MA	Non-profit Exec. Dir	2016
Suzanne McKechnie	F	45	JD	Social entrepreneur	2006
Christa Gannon	F	47	JD	CEO, founder	2009
Aleta Margolis	F	51	Med	Educ. changemaker	2001
Jill Vialet	F	54	BA	Social entrepreneur	2004
Lynn Price	F	63	BA	Social entrepreneur	2005
Katherine Hall-Trujillo	F	70	MPH	Founder, managing dir.	2007
Tanya Tull	F	75	ScD	Social entrepreneur	2009
Imran Kahn	M	30 +	MA	Educator	2016
Ben Powell	M	41	MBA	CEO, founder	2009
Tomás Alvarez III	M	41	MA	Social entrepreneur	2014
Sascha Haselmayer	M	45	AA Dipl.	CEO, social entrepreneur	2011
Jeff Dykstra	M	48	Post Grad	CEO non-profit	2016
Patrick Struebi	M	40 +	MA	Social entrepreneur	2008
Trabian Shorters	M	40 +	BA	Author, founder	2015
Gary Johnson	M	50 +	BA	Social entrepreneur	2008
Daniel Kish	M	52	2xMA	Dev. psychologist	2017
David Castro	M	57	JD	CEO, author	2009

The following section serves two purposes: introducing the reader to the study's 19 participants and exploring the factors that shaped their journeys into social innovation. The insight shared in this section is the result of the timeline activity that each participant did as part of their open-ended interview. Each narrative highlights each participant's

critical experiences and influences as told during their interview. To help ensure an accurate narrative, this section of the study was shared with each participant, and they were provided an opportunity to make any recommendations or clarifications. The descriptions below serve to answer the first portion of Research Question 1: *What factors, if any, challenged or supported their journey as social innovators? and how do these factors relate to the way social innovators make meaning?* The second part of this research question will be answered in depth in the final chapter of the study.

Profiles of Participants and Factors that Shaped Their Social Innovation Journey

Aleta Margolis

“I didn’t want to be the one crazy teacher. I realized that I wanted to change the system.”

Social innovation journey. Growing up, Aleta recalls being very good at following rules and doing what she was expected to do while in school: “I got very good grades because I was really good at playing the game.” Her theater teacher in high school modeled for her what was possible when she stepped out of the teacher-pleasing game by challenging her to expand her skill set and push herself: “it was very uncomfortable and also very joyful because I knew that I could trust her.” That experience played a role in her understanding of the importance of teachers, creativity, and breaking the rules - all themes that would be present in the organization she founded later on.

Aleta’s faith played a role in her journey into social change. She is Jewish and believes that her faith influences her in two ways. One is the idea of service to community, *tikkun olam*, a Jewish concept defined by acts of kindness performed to perfect or repair the world (<https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/tikkun-olam>), from which she understood her responsibility to contribute to the place where she lived.

Secondly, growing up around Jewish people in her community that always questioned everything, mainly when they saw a problem, inspired a similar mindset in her.

Aleta studied to be an actor and a performing artist from the time she was very young through her mid-twenties, therefore a lot of her time was spent auditioning. Two key insights stem from this experience: She learned a lot about dealing with rejection, and she also realized that in her future she wanted to create something without needing the approval or validation of other people. She said, “Part of what has driven me to forge my own path was really not wanting to have to ask permission to do the work that I cared about that was of value to me.” She had identified how important a sense of agency was for her. This theme of agency and doing things outside the expected became more critical in her college career. During her time studying abroad in London, she realized the power of theater as a tool for social change through the fringe, political theater in the height of South African apartheid.

A lot of things converged at that moment in helping me realize that social change wasn't just like this nice concept that was kind of words. It was about bringing together a group of people and offering them an opportunity to take action where they might otherwise have felt helpless.

Upon her return to the U.S., in her senior year of college, she decided to direct and produce a play written by Steven Berkoff that was an adaptation of Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Despite minimal support from the theater department, she went ahead and raised money, put a team together, and had a successful experience with the production. “I guess I was not a big fan of being told ‘no’ all my life, but this was sort of a moment when I was like, ‘Hah, so they're saying no, so I'm going to do it anyway, but

how?” For her, this experience was critical because she found a way to do something outside of the usual structure that ended up being better than she imagined.

After college, she took a job running a program in playwriting for a group of high schoolers in the juvenile justice system. That experience convinced her to become a teacher, and she taught in what she would now call a conventional school. While she loved teaching, she was disillusioned by the complacency of her colleagues, many of whom she felt had given up on some of the children ever being able to learn. This would be the critical incident that ultimately led her to start her organization:

I was so at the same time thrilled with my experience teaching. Kids’ parents were telling me ‘My child has never loved to read before. Now he loves to read!’

But I was the crazy teacher in my school where the others were the normal teachers... I didn't want to be the one crazy teacher. I realized that I wanted to change the system.

Personal influences. A common theme across the personal influences in her social innovation journey was the encouragement she received to change things when she faced something she didn’t like or was unhappy with an outcome or a situation. First, she mentioned her parents, from whom she learned to operate with integrity and honesty and who always taught her to do “what is right.” She was influenced by seeing her mom work throughout her life, while also focusing on raising her children. Later on, her husband would take a major role in helping her see opportunities where she may have seen only issues within the system: “He continues to be a voice in my head that says: ‘Yeah, complaining and looking at the problem is valuable for a moment then you have to make a choice and take action.’”

One of the reasons Aleta's high school theater teacher was so influential in her life was, because to Aleta's recollection, she never answered a question, she only asked them, and she would push her students to solve problems.

She sent a very clear message: I fully expect you to solve this problem or to figure this out for yourself. I'll help you. I'll be here. I'm going to work very hard by your side. But I'm not going to do the thinking for you because you can solve problems on your own.

To this date, this teacher continues to be a mentor for Aleta and her organization.

Ana Williams

"Success for us in a lot of what we do is invisibility."

Social innovation journey. Ana grew up in the South in the U.S., an experience that continues to serve as both an identity and a lens she uses for her work.

I would say being Southern is a big part of my identity as a social innovator because I've lived between these two worlds? I've lived in, what is not a small town but it's a small town when you compare it to any of the cities that I've lived in, and I come from a family that is large farmers and hunters.

Even though she was pretty entrepreneurial from an early age, the environment in which she grew up did not particularly encourage engagement in social change; people were not involved in such matters throughout her schooling. Thus, reading became one way she would find inspiration: "I remember being very inspired by those stories of people who were not afraid to do things that were hard or different or rebellious, you know, against the status quo." She recalled one instance in which after reading a book about factory farming, she tried to start an animal rights group to address what she now understood as a problem. Her efforts were not very successful, but she recalled this

experience as a learning opportunity in which she understood how important communication is to get people on board for a cause.

It was during her college days attending a Southern university that she decided to go abroad. As she describes, “I had this hunger to see different places and to see different things and I think I ended up getting the education that I desired, you know, kind of very instinctively knew that I needed to get out.” Her experiences abroad in Morocco and France led her to travel more, and eventually she got a job as a journalist in Chile at a time when there were many angry protests against Pinochet’s dictatorship. Ana covered protests, interviewing people who had been tortured with the help of the United States government. This experience helped her see the U.S. through a more critical lens and better understand the complexity of its role internationally. She said,

It was really like a holy shit moment like, wow. Not this frame that we have of American exceptionalism and all that. We've done a lot of bad things around the world, and it really was a kind of a critical thinking prism that I had not gotten from college and or my high school and so it was for me that was really a game changer.”

Once back in the states, Ana continued to pursue her journalism career and ended up covering local government and crime. This job was another perspective shifting experience, where she realized the complexity concerning what owning guns means in the U.S. It was during this time that she became a mother, which was critical for her in two ways. First, Ana mentioned her perspective and understanding of the world broadened when she had kids. Second, becoming a mother made Ana shift her career to have more time available to be with her family; she stopped being a journalist covering

news and became a columnist. This change opened up time for her kids, but it also created an important shift in how the way she made sense of her work. Being a columnist required she had an opinion and voice on matters, whereas that was not the case when she was reporting the news. This transition was part of what would eventually take her into the social innovation space. Perhaps the most critical event to Ana's career as a social innovator was when she heard the news about the shooting massacre of 20 kids at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012:

I could remember this like wave of cold and almost like nausea like just wash over me and I just said I can't take it anymore. I don't know what I'm going to do but I'm to do something.

This event changed the career path Ana would follow for the last 6 years, founding an organization focused on non-political, non-legislative, local, power-bottom up solutions to gun violence. As she explains,

I didn't say one day I'm gonna go work on social change on this nonprofit. It was very much like it was something that a series of things happened and then there was this sort of event that really was the thing... like, I can't take it anymore. And I woke up the next day thinking I'm going to do something... I don't know what I'm gonna do but I know it's going to be on gun violence”

Personal influences. Ana's parents played an essential role in her life by modeling the values and principles by which she approaches her work today. From her dad, she recalls his hardworking, -no-ego approach to help others. He didn't care much for getting the credit; he just wanted the right thing to get done. Her mom was a deeply compassionate, outspoken, and passionate artist, always caring for and saving animals.

To this day, Ana's mom is her best friend, often one of the people with whom Ana feels comfortable processing life experiences. Ana's partner has also been a significant influence in her social innovation journey; his curiosity, dedication, and passion often help Ana process things too. His support of Ana's decision to embark on a new career meant a lot to Ana, particularly given that the timing for founding an organization was very challenging while raising their family.

Beyond her immediate family, a former journalism professor has been a long-time mentor. He was a tough professor who inspired her and taught her not only about journalism but also about learning from critical feedback. He expected a lot from her, challenged her and pushed her. He became a friend and is still part of her life. He was instrumental in helping her shift out of her journalist identity into her social innovator identity; when she shared with him what she wanted to do, he was very supportive, stating, "You're going to do so much good in the world; you're gonna do more good than you could have as a journalist." Today, Ana is influenced and supported in many ways by the Ashoka Fellows in her cohort. She enjoys having constant contact with them, as this helps her to see problems through the lens of new solutions.

Ben Powell

"I didn't want to just be writing about stuff. I wanted to do stuff."

Social innovation journey. Ben grew up with parents who were from very different social class backgrounds, but both were academics with a strong focus on education. "I would say that one of the great gifts that my family has given me is the importance of community and family." Coming from an old, upper-class family, Ben had access to excellent educational opportunities growing up. He attended one of the best

boarding schools in the U.S., what he described as an “ivory tower” experience, which led him to want to get out and experience the world upon graduation from 12th grade:

You leave these elite institutions, and then you get out into the real world, and you realize that the real world is kind of collapsing and falling apart and nothing is as good as you would hope it would be unless you kind of stay in certain industries where you can stay in that bubble.

However, things did not always come easy for him as he realized there were all kinds of opportunities that he thought he wanted and then did not get and then had to decide to settle or to do something different. Ben was dealing with dyslexia, which had an impact not only on his grades but also on not getting in the colleges he wanted and other personal challenges. Ben’s critical experience happened after he graduated high school when he moved to live in Mexico with a host family: “I learned to think in a different language. I just was dealing with a totally different culture and obviously a very, very, very different environment from this extremely elite boarding school that I came from.” His experience in Mexico gave him a broader understanding of social injustice, as well as an opportunity to both recognize his privilege and experience what privilege looks like in a foreign country. He was teaching at two very different schools in Mexico, one with impoverished kids, the other with wealthy kids. He recalled,

The entitlement of the wealthier kids and the way they treated me really did not sit well with me because I also considered myself someone of privilege. And I did not like how I was being treated or how the other teachers were being treated. So, I got some empathy, I don't think I would have gotten if I had not seen that

experience and experienced it myself viscerally. And also, a sense of just injustice and a sense of disrespect.

During his time in Mexico, Ben started a business with his host brother; this business lasted for 14 years. After a couple of years of being back in the USA, Ben went back and realized the impact this small business had on the community by creating local jobs and opportunities. "I had some powerful experiences seeing how some of my employees had been able to get apartments and establish credit histories and transition from the informal to the formal economy." This realization would later inform the work he did over the last decades.

Ben's career shift came after a couple of jobs in government; realizing they were not entrepreneurial enough and somewhat bureaucratic, he decided to go to business school, which led him then to the creation of his social venture, Agora. He based this venture on what he had learned from his experience in Mexico watching people be lifted out of poverty:

I didn't know if that was starting a business or expanding a business or if it was creating a venture capital fund or if it was creating a nonprofit organization. I had no idea. But I knew that there was a desperate need for entrepreneurs to be supported to level the playing field.

A common theme throughout Ben's experiences was his awareness of the privilege in which he grew up, his ability to take risks, and his constant desire for others to have access to their agency. An example of how agency and risk-taking showed up in Ben's social innovation journey was in his business school experience. While attending Columbia Business School, he decided to dedicate his time to research Agora, the social

venture for which he became an Ashoka Fellow. He stated, “We had a ton of people working on this idea because the goal was to get some funding, gain some traction before I left school because I was not looking for a job after business school. And I had no plan B.” After finishing his MBA, Ben met his organization’s partner Ricardo, who happened to be from Nicaragua. Ben originally planned to create his venture in Mexico because of his previous experience living and working in Mexico; however, he felt Ricardo was the right partner for him, thus, he opted to take the risk and start the social venture in Nicaragua.

The role of privilege in his journey and ability to take risks did not escape Ben: “I’ve been very fortunate to have had an amazing education, and I’m not talking about just formal, I’m talking about everything, I’ve been incredibly lucky to have had a lot of opportunities to learn and grow, and see different things.” It was his self-awareness that seemed to have kept him grounded and focused.

Personal influences. Ben’s parents emphasized the importance of community and family, as well as a sense of responsibility and agency that he believes may be influenced by long family history connected to the founding fathers. Ben clarified that while his family may be considered cultural elites they are not necessarily financial elites. This was an important distinction for him, because he saw how his family’s approach helped him question the system not from a position of oppression but more of a position of curiosity. “I was not educated to go and be an investment banker. I was educated to be extremely knowledgeable and thoughtful about how the world works and build out critical mindset.”

Other influences Ben mentioned were writers and historical figures with whom Ben connected through books. Among them, Quaker writer and 1946 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rufus Jones, from whom his vision of conscious leadership was a significant influence, and Benjamin Franklin. He studied Franklin for a long time and explained, “I love Franklin because he was a genius but he was able to wear multiple hats and do multiple things, and he was sort of the Renaissance man.”

Christa Gannon

“I want the effin torch.”

Social innovation journey. Over the years, Christa faced many personal challenges that shaped her journey into social innovation, from having a horse accident as a young child that left a significant scar on her face; to being bullied in school and moving several times while growing up, thus experiencing being the “new kid with no friends”; to wanting to beat the odds and be a female college athlete. Each of these instances played a role in her understanding of her work. Christa referred to an ongoing theme throughout her life as the “underdog” and at first “not fitting in” to many school or community environments. “I think a theme in that for me is the underdog; things didn't go easy right away in school or sports and people did not always believe in me, some things were not handed to me and I had to fight for things while being a very non-confrontational person.” Although these hardships were challenging factors in her social innovation journey, they also informed the lens through which she sees her work today. At the same time, Christa also had the benefits of many privileges, growing up white in a middle- to upper-class family with two parents who were committed to the family, community, and service. Her father was an Air Force Academy Graduate, served as a pilot in two wars, and later worked full-time in business while also flying in the Air Force

Reserves. Her mother, in addition to caring for the family, also worked in the field of special education and volunteered in the community. Both parents instilled the value of hard work and services and always made sure Christa had what she needed to thrive. These experiences informed her sense of empathy, agency, and purpose.

Gender and privilege are two of the themes that showed up in Christa's interview as factors that both challenged and supported her journey as a social innovator, from living at one point in a smaller town where she experienced some sexism as a female athlete, to later understanding how her gender, race, and privilege impact the work she wants to do:

I don't think I can underestimate the impact it had on me to grow up as a female athlete in a time when female athletes weren't as valued or respected as they are today. You know, I had to learn how to play the game. I had to learn how to code switch. I learned how to be the polite, sweet, unassuming young woman in the athletic director's office, trying to convince them that I should be able to take a weightlifting class one day, and then a badass on the court a few hours later.

While she didn't grow up in an affluent family, over time and through her parents' hard work, her family's socio-economic status changed and economic privilege manifested in interesting ways in her journey. Her family went from being blue-collar, living on military bases, to living in a large house the family designed and then living in a company owned property in England by the time she was in college. She referred to this as an "interesting economic journey." It was this self-awareness of both aspects of her identity that also brought about insight for her work in social change:

I will never forget at one point where I said to the youth I was serving, “Look, am I really a person who can do this? I'm a white woman from the suburbs. I have had all these privileges. I don't come from here. I don't look like you. I haven't had the same experiences as you,” and the group of young boys I was working with said, “Look, as long as you deeply listen and you care, we don't care what package you come in. You have to do something.”

One of Christa's pivotal moments in exploring her purpose in life was when her best friend was raped when they were sixteen: “Being in a law and order and justice and military family I decided okay that's it. I'll make the world a safer place. I'm going to prevent other people from having this experience.” This incident became the driving motivation for her career choice. Over the years, she used to operate under a binary lens, a “black, and white” approach to how she viewed the world. It was the encouragement of one of her college professors, who was a lawyer, to expand her mind that led her to gain an understanding on the complexity of the legal system: “He didn't push his beliefs on me at all and essentially said go take sociology classes and criminology classes, learn about the prison industrial complex.” Her experience taking a broader range of classes, working in the summers at law firms and criminal justice offices across three cities, and ultimately volunteering to teach kids the law in juvenile halls in Chicago and San Jose led her to rethink how she could fulfill her purpose of making the world a safer place.

There was one instance where they asked me to call somebody to tell her that the person who had raped her years ago was being released from prison, he had done his time, and it was just awful. I had nothing to say. I couldn't say, “Don't worry he's better now.” Those moments I think really stuck with me, like what is

happening in our system? It's not working. And how would I really want to be a part of that, what is my role?

The pivotal experience came when she volunteered, as a first-year law student, to teach incarcerated kids about the law. There she realized that incarcerated kids were still kids: kids with potential and so much to offer the world; kids who didn't get the support, skills, and opportunities to thrive. Her various experiences with youth in the juvenile legal system led her to create an organization working with young people that society tends to write off: "People were saying they were... they weren't worth it, they were beyond hope, there was no redemption. And I had a different view of that, and I think there's been a lot of beauty in that." Christa recalls a critical moment in which she committed to her social innovation work when listening to a keynote speaker and civil rights lawyer at a women's conference at the end of her law school career,

She said, "I've been carrying a torch of justice for years, and I'm tired. Who will take my torch?" And I literally grabbed my husband's leg and said "I want the effin torch," out loud, it's just kind of this moment where I think all of the inner turmoil and bubbling just sort of bubbled up and I just had this confidence courage. I don't know now, naïveté, brashness, and I was like eff it; I got to try to make this work.

Christa then went back to juvenile hall to ask the kids if and how they thought she could help. Their ideas became and remain the foundation of FLY, the organization she then created and has been serving at for the past 20 years

Personal influences. Christa mentioned her parents as two of the primary sources from which she learned the values she has lived by: i.e., doing what is right and

serving others. Her parents provided complimentary perspectives and approaches to life. “I had this hard-nosed, very hard-working, authoritative dad, and then I've got this very hard working and also softer, more touchy-feely Mom. Some of her early experiences with her mom (who worked in special education) allowed her to connect with people from different backgrounds, which led her to greater compassion and empathy. There was an interesting ethos in her family that she described as a commitment to service and country and justice, which is very much a part of who she is and how she shows up in the world. Beyond her parents, throughout her career Christa identified professors, coaches and mentors that were critical in her journey as well, saying, “A lot of why I've gotten where I've gotten is because people have mentored me and nurtured me and stimulated my thinking.” This was the case of her basketball coach, who believed in her skills as an athlete and empowered her to achieve her goals on the basketball court and beyond.

Daniel Kish

“If a single act could seed a world, I might choose that one.”

Social innovation journey. From a young age, Daniel seemed to have an innate ability to empathize with people in vulnerable situations, perhaps a result of witnessing his mother’s struggles leaving an alcoholic husband at a time when domestic violence was not grounds to grant a divorce by the courts and socio-economics favored neither single women nor blind children. Daniel mentioned always being drawn to kids who were the underdog and looking out for them:

It's a little tricky to try and figure out what led me in the direction of wanting to socially innovate. I know that I was quite concerned about people who were struggling in some way. People who faced a significant challenge of some kind.

And that's always been an issue of mine particularly, ... if they are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable, or if there is the vulnerability that's imposed.

Daniel's blindness played a role in his involvement in social change, but not for the reasons one would assume. His blindness was treated very casually, in a very relaxed way, by both his mom and stepdad, as well as the community in which he grew up. "I was not regarded as particularly unusual really, and I was neither celebrated nor diminished." He attended neighborhood schools starting in the fifth grade. He recalls an experience in grade school in which he was trying to help another blind kid to learn how to navigate the school by himself: "I began teaching him, but was told to stop. Ever since I wondered about the many blind people who couldn't get around. It eventually led me to take action on behalf of this concern." When he left for college away from home, he met a blind man twelve years his senior who had spent most of those years wandering the country on his own, making a living via odd jobs; this encounter shifted Daniel's perspective. "His spontaneous and renegade approach to the world was both refreshing and uncomfortable for me, and his techniques like none I'd ever encountered." Daniel felt his no-limits approach to life was already established but largely untested. This man's often confrontational influence challenged Daniel to reach to embrace his dreams of mountaineering, traveling, and other strange ventures to discover vulnerabilities and strengths within himself he had never realized. Daniel recalled,

The world, which I had kept at arm's length, now lay before me in my mind's eye, both stark and shining with its joys and sorrows, struggles and achievements, despair and hope. It seemed to call to me for help, cries from the dark filling both

sleep and waking hours with anguish and longing. How to help? How to bring light? How not to be shut out or consumed?

Even though Daniel intended to go into child welfare as a career, he eventually studied echolocation² and wrote his master thesis on teaching human echolocation while working with 24 blind children. “Before that, I had no interest to enter the blindness field at all, but that experience showed me the need, and also that I seemed to be uniquely good at it.” In 2001, Daniel went on his first hiking and camping trip alone, which turned out to be a test of his approach to life and would end up transforming him deeply:

I’d always lived by the philosophy that I could do anything I wished, but it’s easy to live by a philosophy that one doesn’t fully test. This hike was an advanced test of my ability to teach myself to trek through rugged mountain forest and to deal effectively with severe dehydration and getting lost and recovering myself. I experienced my first sunrise alone in the mountains as the earth drew her breath of morning, and dawned her garment of day. Although I did not see it, I felt entirely fulfilled. All This catapulted me into a new era of strength of character, as well as strengthening my determination to help foster such growth in personal strength, self-determination, and self-assurance in others.”

Personal influences. A key influence in Daniel’s life was his mother, who showed him to make tough choices and modeled the ability to take action, a sense of agency for Daniel, after she left his alcoholic father. “If you don’t like the situation you’re in, change it, or change yourself” was the lesson to him; he explained, “Whatever

² Echolocation, a physiological process for locating distant or invisible objects (such as prey) by means of sound waves reflected back to the emitter (such as a bat) by the objects. Echolocation is used for orientation, obstacle avoidance, food procurement, and social interactions.
<https://www.britannica.com/science/echolocation>

strength of focused determination and personal dignity and integrity I have, I draw from that pivotal act of courage and self-determination, and unwavering integrity toward her children.” Later in life, Daniel mentioned two critical experiences that helped him improve and solidify his commitment to his work. These experiences happened while interacting with two blind children, Daniel from Mexico and Danyl from Scotland. Given that the story about Daniel from Mexico seemed most pivotal in his social innovation journey, I have included it below:

I can't put my finger on a single moment that convinced me to embark on this course, but this is perhaps one that convinced me to remain true to it. It has been fraught with much difficulty, and I have often questioned my suitability to continue. But in the very early years of World Access for the Blind when things were most bleakly challenging, there was a 10-year-old boy named Daniel in Mexico who made such an impression on me that, whenever I wonder about the course I've chosen, a thought of him serves as my compass of conscience.

Daniel was upheld by all as the star of his community until he was struck blind by a truck at age six. Overnight he fell to the bottom of everyone's esteem, spurned by his peers who called him "circus clown", and lamented by his family. Once angry, bitter, and bewildered, after eagerly devouring our instruction he returned all smiles to the soccer field and play yard where he forcefully regained the respect of his *compañeros* and community – hailed as a shining example.

One day Daniel, his friends, and I played furious soccer on his neighborhood *cancha*. In addition to our FlashSonar, Daniel and I benefited from a plastic bag tied around the ball, which crackled and crinkled with the ball's movements.

Although I'd taught Daniel how to do this, I was no match for him on the field. Yet, he held his own in every position with and against his sighted peers. When the bag finally broke, to my amazement, Daniel continued to play about 75% as well without the bag as before. Still, the lack of the bag dulled his competitive edge. After a while, a boy named Kevin bicycled breathlessly up, a spare bag rustling in hand. While on an errand Kevin had noticed Daniel's compromise, and rushed home to replace the bag. The bag changed hands casually through the wire fence and the game resumed matter-of-factly, but words fail to express how deeply this moved me. My cupboards were bare and my utilities off at the time, but how could I be more honored or pleased. If a single act could seed a world, I might choose that one. In a way, it has seeded my world, as I might have taken a different path many times were it not for that moment to remember, a humble yet bright moment of rightness – to the Daniels and the Kevins of the world...

David Castro

"I would call it my moment of truth."

Social innovation journey. David's understanding of social injustice began at an early age as he grew up in Brooklyn in the '70s with two parents dealing with "an enormous economic anxiety" in a tough neighborhood with many challenges. He studied hard to get out of that neighborhood. He always knew academic success was the ticket out and so he focused on it: "I could see what was happening to my peer group of people who I could see they were on the corner killing each other... and I was like: that's not going to be me." David spoke about a sense of obligation to the community to do something for people stuck in similar circumstances, he felt after getting out of his community. He also mentioned the role faith played in his life. First attending a Jesuit

school and later a Quaker college. “Equality and the quest for equity have been a real motivator. Like a deep sort of spiritual motivation underlying my work something that I like I asked myself where does that come from? And probably it comes from my faith.”

After college, he successfully practiced law for a number of years, but a couple of experiences shifted his career focus into social change and eventually social entrepreneurship. A theme throughout David’s career shifts is his constant search for meaning through his work. While he was involved in pro bono work through the Young Lawyers Division, David met community activist Jim Adams, the president of a local civic association, and started to see law as another way of making a difference.

I had been practicing law for six years and I was like this is the most meaningful thing I've ever done in six years of practice. So, it was very moving for me and made me think hard about what I want to do with my life.

He then was invited to become a prosecutor for the Department of Homeland Security office. This was a challenging decision to make since it meant not only giving up half his income to help people but leaving the path he was on to become a partner in a law firm in Philadelphia.

What happened was I began to experience I would say, which again I don't think was anything atypical for lawyers, a feeling of disconnection from my work and soul searching like is this what I want to do with my life?

After taking part in the Kellogg Foundation Fellowship Program, David’s self-perception changed from seeing himself as a problem solver to seeing his work and purpose under a different light, and he realized his work was about building community leadership.

A common theme across David's journey is the role money played in his life from experiencing economic distress growing up to the professional challenges of leaving his very lucrative career as a lawyer to not being able to take a salary from his organization for seven years. His journey leading the organization he founded went from being a non-profit organization to pivoting and developing a business model to shape into his current social venture: "the other really pivotal thing that happened to me was I walked away from the grant funding and I created... we created an earned revenue model through our higher education program." Money seemed to be quite present in his process of deciding what to do with his life; he mentioned it was significant to him that his life partner encouraged him to follow his path regardless of the financial situation. While money may have been a challenging factor throughout his journey, he did not see it as a key motivator for his work, saying,

If you ask me what was my life about, like why did I do the things I did?

Obviously, I wasn't trying to make money because I could have made so much more money than I made. Like it would have been very easy for me to make much more money than I made. So that's not what motivates me. Why do I care about those things? Because when you look in the mirror you have to say what is this life about? And I had to answer that question for myself and I had to give myself an answer that I could respect.

Personal influences. David mentioned a couple of people he met through his working experiences who were pivotal for his move to the social innovation field. One of the most critical moments was meeting Tim LaSalle during his Kellogg fellowship program:

I would call it my moment of truth. I'll never forget this. I was in a seminar in Indianapolis with the Kellogg Foundation and I was sitting, there was the speaker. I said to myself, "I'm going to give up being a lawyer. I'm just going to stop. I'm going to create a nonprofit organization that does leadership development, and I'm going to stop being a lawyer." And it was like, really are you going to do that? I was like "Yeah, I'm going to do that." And I just made the decision at that point. It took me like ten years to actually get it to happen but I made the decision like sitting there in this seminar.

It was not until years later when he was nominated to become an Ashoka fellow by Matt Bergeiser who was at the Knight Foundation, another critical influence in his life, that he finally could put language that made sense for him regarding his work and identity through the lens of social entrepreneurship.

Gary Johnson

"We fail as social entrepreneur when we think our social innovation is the best thing since sliced bread."

Social innovation journey. Travel seems to be the one experience throughout Gary's life that played the most significant role in his journey to social innovation. The first of the trips that made a big impact in his life was in college, when he studied in Europe in 1989. He was there when the Berlin Wall came down and had the opportunity go to East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. During this time, he recalls meeting many people who expressed a desire to find a better life for themselves and their families. He remembers feeling a lot of empathy as well as kinship with them:

That was the big turning point and I think that guided me to when I graduated from college not wanting to go and sort of find a seasonal job that all my friends were but rather to get a little bit more of that.

After college he went on to live in Japan, for three years where he had some success running a local language school. Gary gained confidence in working in a different and challenging environment and continued to be inspired to seek more of those kinds of experiences. Later on, as he was immersed in a career in banking, he was inspired by David Bornstein's book *The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank*. This book was the final motivation to leave the banking career and start his social innovation career. He stated,

I think that was sort of the final push because I saw a different way of doing things and how I could apply some business acumen to maybe doing some things that were creating some social impact in the world and maybe a way that I could find my passion. And so, microfinance was very inspiring to me at that point in time.

Gary also spent some time living in Guatemala where, after hearing many people complain about there not being anything to do or anywhere to go, he decided to open up a restaurant to create jobs and help to stimulate the local economy. Even though he didn't know anything about restaurants, it worked. The experience helped him to gain confidence and learned that even when he was not an expert on a subject matter, as long as he worked hard, he could make something work. Later on, he noticed the profound need that people in Guatemala had for cookstoves and decided to try to create a local business selling cookstoves. That was what started everything with the micro

consignment model he would later become well known for and eventually recognized for by Ashoka. He called becoming an Ashoka fellow a huge pivot point in his journey because he found a community of like-minded people.

Growing up his parents were always very focused on service, be it through the church or just service in the community. He felt very grateful to grow up around a community of really supportive people in a very loving and caring environment. Gary seemed very cognizant of the privilege in which he grew up and how it positively impacted every aspect of his journey. Regarding his privilege he stated, “I felt a profound sense of obligation to do something positive to create some type of a positive impact with this with this privilege that I've been, I was born into.” Gary clarified that his approach to work has never been driven by a “romantic notion of changing the world.” He believes his drive more often than not comes from a place of “should”:

I see something that some social injustice or some problem that's affecting people and it pisses me off and it frustrates me, and then I say okay, is there something that I can do about this? and I should try to do something about it if I can.

His approach to social change is to focus on how he can help and how he can play a positive role in people becoming empowered. “We fail as social entrepreneur when we think our social innovation is the best thing since sliced bread.” Gary sees his work as an opportunity to bring some tools to communities but is aware that those communities need many more tools than those in his toolkit.

Personal influences. His parents had a big influence on him, specifically his mother: how she talked to people, how she treated people, how she led people and influenced people. “She had most definitely the most massive impact on my life.” Like

other fellows, he did not have any mentor or professor who was influential during his time in college.

Another influential figure in his life was meeting Ashoka founder, Bill Drayton. He recalled a key conversation he had with Bill during the process of becoming a fellow:

I was telling him about my strategy and he was poking holes in it left and right. I got frustrated with him a bit and I was like: “Okay well Bill, how would you do it?” and he said, “I don't know.” That was a really great thing because I was like “Wait a second nobody's really got this thing figured out. I've heard all these different opinions from different people.” And then I asked Bill who's supposed to be the guru in this stuff and he doesn't know what to do. So. You just gotta be true to yourself and figure it out for yourself because there's no right answer. And that was that was very liberating for me.

Lastly, but very important for his social innovation journey was the people in the many communities with whom he has worked. He stated, “Everything that they've taught me and every way that they've influenced my own personal and professional growth and my desires to do something. It comes from all of them.”

Imran Kahn

“I felt like, ok I have to make an impact in this world and what would be the best way to do that?”

Social innovation journey. The son of immigrant parents from India, Imran grew up experiencing economic hardship, from coming home from school and finding out they had been evicted to often eating what was available at food pantries. Both his parents worked hard to be a good example for him, “I remember the simple joys of being... of not having very much but having a good family.” He didn’t know a lot of other

Indians growing up; he recalled having a sense of “otherness,” of realizing he was a person of color. It was in school where he noticed how often he had to explain why he was different, from the lunch meals he brought to school to other family and cultural traditions that were different to the other kids in his class. He understood from an early age that things operated differently in other settings: “I would say one of the critical lessons it taught me was to... basically, I learned to fight pretty early on with my words and even sometimes with my fists.” Imran recalled not being a model student; he found school rather boring as he was full of energy and interested in mischievous things as well as creative endeavors.

While Imran was in college going to business school, his mother had multiple strokes and was sent to hospice care to pass away. This was one of the most critical moments of Imran’s life, pushing him to grow up dramatically. His mother ultimately survived; however, through this experience he realized that he did not have any interest in business school or any interest in the direction he was going. His mother had been a great role model, always trying to make a difference in the lives of others, even when they had little for themselves. His mother would open up their home, feed others, volunteer at shelters, etc. He felt then called to make an impact in the world and decided to switch to an English major to become an educator. He recalled asking himself, “What would be the most powerful way to carry on the legacy and to fulfill myself and to be in the place that I felt was meaningful and to not waste this one life and all the opportunities that I’ve been given?”

His teaching career took him to a school in the South side of Chicago, an experience that shook and shifted his identity as an educator. The kids he was working

with faced different hardships than what he grew up with; he started to see what the cycle of poverty looked like in his city. After a couple hard and compelling experiences in the classroom, he realized his approach to work needed to change and focus not only on academics but on managing behavior. “I had to be so strong as an educator that I needed to protect the kids from their own bad from themselves and to own their behaviors.”

During his time teaching, Imran gained many skills that would become critical for his success as a social innovator: from observing other teachers and teaching five classes a day, he learned the power of storytelling and connecting with others. A part of his new approach was to start exposing students to other parts of Chicago, given he noticed so many of them never left the few blocks beyond their home and school. He spoke of one critical moment when a student said he didn’t want to go on one of the local field trips that Imran had planned. The student was refusing to go because he didn’t want to make a fool of himself. He told Imran, “You know we don’t belong there and you know they’re going to laugh at us.” This conversation brought a new realization that would ultimately take Imran on the path to create the organization for which he was recognized as an Ashoka fellow, Embarc:

He gave me the insight that segregation and the isolation that our communities face and our students face I think are far more an internal thing than they are an external thing, and that internal divisions and internal borders are way more powerful than a physical fence.

Personal influences. Imran’s parents were his biggest influences growing up. His father worked extremely hard and was a constant reminder of the importance of pursuing success, money, and, ultimately, the American Dream. His mother would

always make room for more people at their home, whether they were refugees from Afghanistan or women dealing with domestic abuse. His mom was an example of what persistence can look like as she faced her medical challenges. While Imran could not recall any teachers or mentors growing up, he believes many of his students have been strong influences in his work as he spent many hours, days, and years listening to them, learning from them, and being challenged by them. “I spent a lot of time like pulling students aside and talking and just listening deeply to their stories and trying to piece together the world in which they lived and the context in which they saw the world.”

Jeff Dykstra

“I realized that, much to my chagrin, I was purpose driven.”

Social innovation journey. Jeff was born in Grand Junction, Colorado, where the front of his house was a neighborhood, and the back was open space that ran into the mountains. The open environment with little physical boundaries in which he grew up for the first 15-20 years of his life helped Jeff become very comfortable taking risks and shaped a lot of how he continues to think today. Jeff seemed acutely aware that growing up privileged played a role in his ability to accomplish much of what he has done throughout his life: “I was born on third base. I didn't hit a triple. I know a lot of people who were born on third base thinking they hit a triple.” He first realized the challenges life can present when his parents divorced while he was in high school, explaining, “It was sort of the first rock in the pond that, you know, all was not well in the world.” It was during this time that he started to pursue his faith through Young Life Church Ministry, and faith became a driving factor for much of his involvement in making a difference and for his life in general.

Jeff had a pivotal career shift in 2001 after spending some years working in youth ministry and doing business. A series of conversation with friends and with his wife led him to realize he needed to leave his current job and find something more fulfilling. “I did some heavy self-reflection and realized that much to my chagrin, I was purpose driven.” This led him to take the big risk of resigning his job at a time in which he already had two kids and his wife was pregnant with a third kid. Jeff considered this challenging time a jumping point to what took place over the last 18-19 years. He got a job working with World Vision and traveling internationally quite often, an experience that provided him with a better understanding of the complexities of international development. They decided to move to Zambia for a couple of years, hoping to provide for an experience for their kids outside the privileged bubble in which they lived in Minnesota. During this time Jeff started to realize the limits of traditional aid:

I was working on probably the biggest USAID funded HIV AIDS program with six of the world's biggest NGOs doing really good work. But I was thinking: if this is what folks back home think is going to address 70 % unemployment, which is what Zambia's unemployment rate was when I lived there, then everyone's gonna be disappointed.

It was at that time that a friend from General Mills approached him inviting him to play a role in exploring ways for General Mills to engage in Africa. During his time in Zambia, Jeff had noticed the lack of local industry, and this opportunity seemed a great match and a natural step for his next chapter. To him this was just the right idea, meeting the right people, at the right time, in the right global environment for it. This opportunity would eventually lead Jeff to create Partners in Food Solutions, the organization for

which he was recognized as an Ashoka Fellow in 2016. Throughout the years, Jeff's faith and values have continued to support his journey into social change:

I think I've always believed, and my faith has shaped this, I think I believe that there's purpose and that that we are living a story that we are living in narratives that despite the chaos there's order and design in the universe.

Personal influences. Jeff mentioned he always had people, friends, and mentors who showed up just at the right time when he most needed role models and positive influences in his life, particularly during his parent's divorce. "At the point of understanding what it means to be a healthy man, a husband, and father, as that role model was falling, a number of people came into my life that showed me an alternative path and healthy fatherhood." His family has always been a significant influence in Jeff's life; his perspective of the world changed greatly when he had kids, and his wife has always been part of his work, reflection, and exploration of opportunities and life choices.

Jill Vialet

"I think there's a real tension in doing the work because on some level our job is to sell the hype without buying it ourselves."

Social innovation journey. Three main factors that shaped Jill's journey into social innovation showed up in her timeline and interview: sports and play, travel, and family. Jill grew up in privilege in Washington, D.C., in a well-educated, upper middle class, white liberal family that also had their challenges with a parent struggling and eventually recovering from alcoholism. She had a keen sense of empathy and insight on how things could be broken even when one had privilege. Jill continued to be very self-aware of how aspects of her privilege, like having access to excellent education and

attending Harvard, allowed her to do things that other people wouldn't have been able to do.

Playing sports throughout her school years was the first thing she noted in her timeline as a factor that shaped who she is as a social innovator: "I was struck by the extent to which I was given more opportunities to be in all sorts of really diverse groups of humans of diverse, from economic backgrounds, diverse by ethnicity, diverse in terms of interests." Jill believes that play is an incredible way to get to know other people and to be in touch with really essential human qualities that transcend other sorts of visible differences.

Travel was the second factor she mentioned as critical. Particularly the experience of writing her thesis on reproductive healthcare in South Africa during Apartheid, was a transformative experience for her, not only in witnessing deeply entrenched racism but also in learning from what felt like a very hopeless experience. Later on, as Nelson Mandela was freed and rose to a leadership role, Jill was inspired by living in a world where such a thing could take place. "Doing the timeline I was struck by the different points of feeling like, 'Oh my God we are so screwed.' And like, 'oh there's reason to be hopeful!'" A big influence in Jill's life was a friend in college that invited her to get engaged in working on social change; she was amazed to notice how "whole life trajectories are impacted by one person inviting you to engage." Jill also noted that the various experiences and critical moments on her timeline ultimately influenced the culture at her organization, Playworks, for which she was recognized as an Ashoka Fellow.

Jill came out of the closet at age 20 and, given the environment in which she grew up, she felt safe and supported to do so. While this identity played a role in her journey, it was when she had kids with her then-wife that she experienced a shift in her way of perceiving the world and particularly how she approached her job at Playworks. Once she became a mother, Jill better understood the challenges families with kids face and developed a more profound sense of empathy for the hardship others face. These lessons remain at the core of the culture she aimed to establish at her organization. Her divorce was also a pivotal moment that impacted her social change work, “It was a smaller life, and I think there was a moment where I’d I just realized I wanted more both, personally and professionally.”

Personal influences. Jill mentioned a number of people during her professional career leading her organization, Playworks, as key influencers for her journey, among them Bill Drayton, the Ashoka founder, and one of her board members who helped her realized how shifting her role in the organization would lead to growth and further transformation. “I want to win. If winning means that I have to get the hell out of the way and there's still a role for me to play then I'm going to do that.” Lastly, Jill has a blended family with five kids, and her partner is the current president of her organization. Her partner plays a role in keeping her humble throughout her journey.

Kathryn Hall-Trujillo

“At that point something inside of me felt like redemption like I didn't know that that was what was driving me.”

Social innovation journey. Kathryn’s journey into social change started at an early age as she noticed the many social injustices surrounding the two communities she grew up in, the Los Angeles housing projects and Arkansas. Kathryn was raised primarily

by her grandmother, who died when Kathryn was 15 years old. She noticed how her grandmother didn't have any treatment because no doctor would come to their neighborhood. Kathryn realized from this experience how common an occurrence this is in communities of color. Her grandmother's death, beyond being an unfortunate moment in her life, also gave Kathryn critical insight that would become a driving force for what she would eventually create as a social venture. She stated,

I didn't know that I needed to have a clinic that took care of people regardless of who they were and what their circumstances were when I went to my grandmother's funeral... I actually didn't even think about that until the day that we actually opened our clinic. At that point something inside of me felt like redemption.

However, it would take many years before she would get to this redemptive moment. Kathryn married during her teen years and started having kids. She left this relationship after experiencing domestic abuse, which led her to a short period living at a bus station in LA with her two kids. At that time, Kathryn was obtaining her Masters in Public Health at UCLA's first Educational Opportunity Program, where she learned many lessons in agency beyond the classroom. She soon realized UCLA residencies were not prepared to accommodate single mothers. Advocating for her rights, and ultimately suing UCLA for her and others to be treated equally, showed Kathryn how important it was to create real transformation in any community. Later on, her work at the California State Department of Health provided a thorough understanding of the issues surrounding childbirths in impoverished communities. She ran a pilot of what would become the organization for which she became an Ashoka fellow, the Birthing Project, and this pilot

was a pivotal experience leading her to commit the rest of her life to his cause. Andre, the baby of one the mothers in her pilot program, died after being born with several medical conditions. While his passing was extremely sad, it also made clear for Kathryn the clarity of what needed to be done in order to prevent future child deaths like this. “I consider myself a person that really encourages people to stand up for themselves. You know and you just need someone not to tell you what to do but to be there for you.”

Kathryn mentioned that becoming an Ashoka Fellow was a significant experience because it validated the work she had been doing and opened the door to other opportunities. As an Ashoka fellow, Kathryn had another experience that very much informed her role as a social innovator, becoming a professor of practice, a social innovator fellow at Tulane University. When she took the position, she didn’t realize the school was not a historically black university, so she was surprised when she realized it was a majority white student population. “What I realized is that the white kids needed me a lot more than the black kids needed me because they never had a grandmother like me.”

Two main themes emerged from Kathryn’s timeline interview: gender and race, and the intersectionality of these two aspects of her identity. She described her primary identity as a grandmother to her community and to the works she does. With it, she has experienced both the joy of playing that role for others as it happened during her time at Tulane University, as well as the discomfort and discrimination of people who do not know her full story.

If I'm talking to someone who is trying to make me appear like I don't know anything because I'm a black grandmother, then I'm gonna pull out every

academic title, every whatever and I'm gonna tell you about your financial administration okay? So it's like I consider myself very bilingual and very bicultural.

The majority of her work has focused on women, even the personal influences she mentioned were mostly women.

I think that I'm probably more woman's centered. I trust women. I trust women's intuition. I trust a discussion process in terms of not just saying this is what we're going to do, maybe the word I would call is reasoning, like let's reason together let's come up with something together that's a shared responsibility... shared leadership.

Her journey working for people of color causes has also gone through several phases, going from being a person who was interested in making things better for black people to having an interracial family and broadening the Birth Project's work to an international level. She reflected,

I think that God really played a joke on me because I started off as a radical 'Power to the People' sort of person. Now I feel that it's more around... I care about people in general. And that really does put me at odds with a lot of communities because the way we're so divided. You're supposed to choose your community and only do that. And there's a lot of anger and a lot of things... and that is not where I am. So, in my life I've learned to love and embrace humanity and I want all the children to be healthy I want all the families to be healthy.

Personal influences. Throughout her life, Kathryn was exposed to and influenced by many different people. At an early age, it was her family members who

were involved in the civil rights movement in Arkansas; her sense of agency was strongly influenced as she participated in many protests with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Later on, she would find mentors and teachers that informed and supported her social innovation path. Among them, Kathryn mentioned Miss Lillian Mobley, who was considered the grandmother of Public Health in South Los Angeles. She inspired her and played a crucial role in being there for Kathryn when she needed encouragement and support. During her time living at the bus station, she recalls having experienced the extreme kindness of strangers, among them Miss Mary Henry, who gave her bus fare and cared for her kids while Kathryn went to college to take a test. Another woman who was a crucial influence in Kathryn's work was Congresswoman Maxine Waters; her support of the organization when they started from nothing and her ongoing words of encouragement were critical to the Birthing project's survival and development.

I never saw myself as being without a family without a community, without a church, a home... I've always had a big family... I think that sense of being a part of a family that you may not like everybody in the family, you don't always agree with them... I'm applying that template to the bigger and bigger world that I live in, it helps me survive.

Lennon Flowers

"The learning laboratory and the questions that it asked provoked a different set of questions in me whereby I responded to my own life differently."

Social innovation journey. Lennon recalls January 20, 2003, as the specific moment that led her to reprioritize her life, and the moment that explains what she does in the world. During her senior year in high school, her mom and stepdad shared that night that her mom's cancer diagnosis was terminal. Having been focused on pursuing a

theater career, Lennon decided to change course after learning about her mom's diagnosis. At that time, she met a friend of her mom who encouraged her to go into theater since she had the skills for it, but also invited her to reflect on whether theater made her come alive and gave her driving energy. "I was able to articulate pretty quickly that that wasn't true for me. It was a place where I came alive, but it wasn't THE place."

Lennon's education played a factor in her journey into social innovation as well with a couple of experiences throughout college at the University of North Carolina, which had an incredibly active student social justice community. The first was volunteering at a juvenile detention center where she witnessed the many challenges faced by these kids; one particular instance was pivotal in her understanding of what social change could look like:

I remember one night there was a woman, I don't remember her name but she was in solitary and they let me go in and hang out. And it turned out it was her birthday and she was in solitary because she tried to run away that day. I got to hear her story and she'd been called a cunt by one of the women who worked there for talking back or whatever. And it was just this moment where I realized how I felt completely inadequate to the task, that the single most important thing that I could do was be present. that moment, I don't know that I could have named it at the time, but it has completely influenced my work in the world. It gave me a profound belief that what we don't need is more services and programs and things handed out. It is the ability to like witness one another...and be present with one another.

Among other key experiences for Lennon was a trip she took to Tanzania over a summer during college to work with the Green Belt Movement in Tanzania as well as with a small non-profit created by what she called well-intentioned U.S. Midwesterners. This experience exposed her to two different approaches to social change work; on one hand, the Greenbelt Movement was effecting actual change with the power of local-led initiatives, on the other hand the small non-profit was doing work that seemed founded in deep condescension and an inability to see people for potential and to only see them for what they didn't have. This experience helped her see “the difference between good intentions and effective work in the world.” The trip also gave her insight on how powerful collaboration can be for everything from advocacy and awareness to events and fundraising, which was a feeling that Lennon got “pretty addicted to.”

Similar to other fellows, Lennon's career took a turn after a critical experience that led her to explore a social venture on her own. In September of 2010, a friend invited Lennon and a group of women over for dinner, all of who had lost somebody. In this particular group, all had lost their parents, from earlier that summer to up to five years before. This experience would eventually lead her to develop The Dinner Party, the organization for which she was recognized as an Ashoka Fellow. The creation of her organization was the result of her desire to fulfill what she saw as a need, not only for others, but also for herself. “I needed that table; I needed that group of friends, I needed to be able to claim my own story and to put language to something that I had become extremely adept at avoiding.” Similarly, the next organization in which she got involved was in partnership with another Ashoka Fellow, “The People's Supper.” She saw a pattern of what she calls “accidental arrival and a willingness to jump in” throughout her

life, which she attributes to having an “unusual capacity for risk, and an unusual comfort at not knowing, and distinguishing between what I do know and what I don't know.”

One of Lennon's themes throughout her timeline is socio-economic class and an awareness of the lack of access that deep poverty creates for communities. Her mom's upbringing in deep poverty led Lennon and her brother to “embrace and live into her story in some ways more than our own, and identify very strongly with the poor and with economic absence and struggle.” The impact of this experience led Lennon to see herself as being a bridge between worlds, both when it comes to socioeconomic status and the experience of poverty as well as political views from liberal to conservative. “The most formative identities that I carry are probably that of a Southerner between economic worlds and woman.” Money was never a motivator for Lennon to do the work she does; she never associated career with money, so the “normal” kind of metrics by which others evaluate success and choose career paths simply were not on her radar.

I think it was partially because we grew up at that freakish spot of having exactly enough and the kind of economic struggles that my mom and stepdad went through were ones that were invisible to me, or that they hid it pretty well... I think it led me to think in systems from an early age.

Her thoughts and beliefs about money and career continue to play a role in the way she has approached the past five years of building her organization.

I didn't give a shit about the standard about hitting what others define success at the age of 33, particularly as a person from the south and a woman would look like...I reject wholly the kind of premise that that I could ever be paid what I'm worth, I can't be.

Personal influences. Lennon mentioned her immediate family as the biggest influences in her life. Her mom, a complex woman who grew up in deep poverty in eastern North Carolina, helped Lennon recognize early on in life that there is so much more to a person's story than what you initially see. Her stepfather was deeply invested person in their lives, especially as her mother's cancer got worse and after she passed. He was a role model for Lennon embodying principles like kindness and selflessness. "He was the first person to show me that family isn't biology and that family can endure." Lennon's brother has been an example of resilience, joy, and deep compassion, as well as someone always able to call Lennon out on her "B.S."

Two people Lennon interacted with in her late-college-early-professional-career came to mind as hugely influential for her: Donna Caledon, the chief business officer at Global Giving, and current Ashoka staff member Tim S. She met both of them while doing an internship with Global Giving. Donna Caledon was influential for many reasons:

One, she's hilarious, she doesn't take herself seriously but does really serious work, two, she's an extraordinary leader, a builder of teams, one of the smartest most badass human beings that I've ever encountered with this kind of unique capacity to disarm whomever she's talking to because she doesn't front.

Donna's support was instrumental during Lennon's internship as that was also the time when her mother passed. Tim S., then a staffer at Global Giving, became a lifelong mentor for Lennon; his insight eventually led her to take a job with Ashoka where she developed a desire to follow the social innovation career path.

Lynn Price

"It all stems from the fact that you can't tell me it's not happening because I am in it. I experienced it."

Social innovation journey. Learning that she was a foster child at eight years old and finding out she also had a sister from whom she'd been separated by the foster system shook and shaped Lynn's identity and her understanding of the world. This new identity proved to be very challenging for her growing up,

I kept my identity as a youth in foster care a secret. I didn't want to tell anybody because I didn't want them to think any different of me. When I had to go and visit my birth mother and my sister, I would just make up excuses as to why I was missing school, I didn't even want to get to know my sister and that whole separate family.

Another critical moment in her journey was when her sister invited to visit her in college; through this experience Lynn's perspective on her life as a foster child changed. When Lynn arrived, her sister ran up to the car hugged her and asked if she could introduce her as her little sister. This was a beautiful moment for Lynn because all that time she had not told anybody about her sister:

I realized the way we took on our journey into foster care was not to be that bitter, but make life better and not to be victims to be \victors. And so that was a critical point of realizing that you could build a relationship based on a sibling connection.

Faith played an important role in helping Lynn make sense of her journey. She grew up in a predominantly Jewish community (Skokie, Illinois) and went to Hebrew school four nights a week after regular school. "I think part of that faith helped me

through those transitions because I had school. And I had a Hebrew school, so I had places to escape and in the Jewish religion.”

One of the themes present in Lynn’s timeline is the idea of agency as a response to having other people make choices for her while in the foster care system. “I lived a life based on everybody making decisions for me. Seventeen social workers in all the years that I was in foster care, not even really being asked or mentored.” Once Lynn was out of the foster care system, it became very important to her to have the ability to make decisions for herself. whether it was leaving Chicago after college and moving to Atlanta, marrying a man that was not Jewish and being disowned by her family, or eventually quitting a very successful career in cable television to be a full-time Mom and move to Las Vegas with her then-husband.

A critical experience that sparked Lynn’s imagination to create her organization was volunteering as a court-appointed special advocate and at a children’s shelter. She had two big realizations: one, that after many years the system had not changed much, as siblings were still being separated and many of the kids believed a familiar foster youth narrative of failure; and two, she needed to do something about this. She realized these kids were like who she was; they were telling her that they were not going to amount to anything, perhaps never going to college or ending up in prison or homeless. Her sense of agency kicked in that particular moment:

This light bulb went on that instant. “Holy cow, I am one of them. They are one of me, and they're thinking they can't be anything.” And they're separated from their siblings too... Somebody has gotta do something about that. I'm going to do something about that.”

Personal influences. Lynn mentioned she is a pretty private person, cautious in choosing who she shares her life or her ideas with because she doesn't want “naysayers” in her circle. Her four kids, one of whom she adopted when he was 19 years old because he was in the system and wanted a family, “are some of the biggest influencers in my life where our mutual pride for each other is outstanding.” Other influences mentioned in Lynn’s timeline are people who have been there for her without necessarily knowing her full story but showing support along the way: for example, a science teacher who let her stay after school because she noticed that Lynn didn't want to go home so she would do lab studies for her. Another example was the executive at CNN who told her she was too qualified for being an assistant but offered to look out for her; the executive introduced her to somebody who was opening an office for ESPN and needed a more qualified person to come in and help build the organization. For Lynn, the circle of influencers is small, and she is selective of whom she lets in: “Really choosing the people that you feel will make you grounded even if they don't know your story.”

Patrick Struebi

“It started off by a feeling of injustice in others.”

Social innovation journey. Patrick remembers being very entrepreneurial from an early age, always thinking about things to invent or improve. It was no surprise to find himself in a successful business career later in life, working in a large trading company dealing with minerals and oil. It was an experience with this company that led Patrick to what he refers to as his “epiphany,” the moment that changed everything in his life. During one of his travels to Peru, he witnessed the harsh living conditions for the Peruvian miners working for the same company; “I realized I was making the rich richer and the poor poorer with my job... and I cannot stand behind it anymore.”

As a consequence, he decided to leave his very lucrative job and also left Switzerland, his home country. He wanted to reconsider what to do with his life in a “neutral place”. He decided to go on a one-year sabbatical in Mexico, a country he had never visited before. Three months into his sabbatical, while he was reassessing his life, career, and future Patrick realized he always liked international trading, but it needed to be *fair* trade in order to bring value to society. This was also the time when the fair-trade movement had started very slowly in Europe. Patrick got interested in understanding the root cause of poverty and learning more about the various struggles farmers faced. He saw how the low prices farmers charged for their produce kept them trapped in poverty. Out of this arose an opportunity to use his business and trading skills to provide farmers access to a new and fair-trade market. By the end of his sabbatical, he had started the first global organic and fair-trade avocado company, so he decided to stay and replicate the model across Latin America as he felt a moral obligation to give back to society. Patrick ended up living in Mexico for seven years and grew his organization to many countries in Latin America from there.

He started his organization in a foreign country, in a foreign language, in a foreign sector to him; he never wanted to go into agriculture, it was just the sector where he noticed there was a need and a match for his business skills. For Patrick, being a perfectionist coming from Switzerland, his work in social entrepreneurship in Mexico brought inherent challenges. “Overcoming the cultural hurdle was one of the biggest challenges for me, but also for my team, you know, working with me for them was really super difficult and we needed to find a way.”

Patrick's career as a social innovator took an unexpected turn when he had to leave Mexico due to safety concerns; it had become too dangerous to continue operations there because the state where his organization was located was one of the epicenters of the drug cartel wars. This was a critical moment in his life as it put his life project in danger. Although it was never his plan to live in the U.S., Yale University invited him as a fellow, which brought him to New York City, where he currently lives. This transition followed the 2008-2009 financial crisis which heavily impacted the market; people were no longer buying the same amount of fair-trade products, so he was forced to revisit this business approach. Patrick had a responsibility to the farmers and the communities with whom he was working. Looking at the entire supply chain, he saw that the importer, his current customer, was in fact also an intermediary. Accordingly, to rescue the company, he decided to establish his own import company in Europe. This important decision allowed for further scale, reach, and transformation of the work he started in Mexico.

Patrick is currently launching a new company called *Bloom*, a company that uses technology to lift an exponential number of farmers out of poverty, a manifestation of how his work continues to evolve and adapt as times change and technology advances. The most salient theme throughout Patrick's journey into social innovation was the role his travels across the world played as a source for what he became today. It was the many experiences of witnessing struggle and social injustice that shaped his journey as a social innovator: "If I would always have lived in my country I would not have that same understanding."

Personal influences. Patrick's parents were powerful influences in his life. On the one hand, they taught him the values he lives by to this day, such as fairness and

doing what is right. On the other hand, their conservative beliefs, Catholic faith, and rigid ideas on what success looks like were factors that eventually led Patrick to want to leave the country and explore new career paths. Aside from mentioning Gandhi's leadership and life as a role model, Patrick did not mention any other direct influences in his timeline. However, Patrick referred to being an excellent observer and paying constant attention to the different bosses and leaders throughout his life. This habit has helped him learn from both sides, from the bad and the good bosses:

A lot of my what drives me is I have a responsibility for the planet because I've been given a lot in life. So, I need to give back a lot in life. I'm going to live up to the responsibility I've been given in life. And that it has also to do with the core values that I inherited, basically.

Sascha Haselmayer

"We never really learn about all the things we could be."

Social innovation journey. Growing up in Germany, Sascha often felt he was different; he found school challenging, but not at the academic level. Rather, he felt limited by all the rules and regulations that seemed to be imposed on him: "I look back at my childhood and youth largely thinking like, ugh. I was not really making people around me feel better for being there. I was certainly deeply frustrated with what was around me." He recalled many instances throughout his childhood and youth which he felt like he did not fit in and struggled with what he perceived as a very rigid educational system. Sascha's most transformative moment in his journey into social innovation was at 19 years old when he moved to London to study architecture after high school. This college provided him with a challenging environment that he felt did not limit him. "I'd gone through twelve years of school hating learning, hating the environment and arrived at this

school that changed everything for me.” This school’s environment provided the space for him to grow, explore, and be a bit more entrepreneurial.

Sascha grew up in a fair amount of privilege in Germany, a factor that brought both opportunities and challenges for him, like access to opportunities such as traveling and education and a common sense of discomfort. From his upbringing he recalls,

We were kind of very grounded and pretty, in some ways, unpretentious but we had access to social circles that were very privileged, and I really felt uncomfortable in those. I felt uncomfortable with the norms that require the kind of preppiness, the kind of clubs it created, that you'd have to join through some ritual. I think I felt uncomfortable not so much because I couldn't or wouldn't do it. I just felt that was deeply wrong.

One of the opportunities provided by this privilege was the chance to travel both alone and with his parents over the years. The exposure to many of these places allowed him to not only see things that were wrong abroad but also, returning home, gave him a sense of social injustice and an understanding people had different values: “The impression is you can't walk away from seeing poverty or other things firsthand.” Seeing how some doors open for some and not for others became a vital inspiration for what social issues he would eventually aim to tackle through his organization.

Through traveling, Sascha was able to identify and refine his approach to the work he wanted to do. He ended up working in a university in Soweto, South Africa just after apartheid ended, and in Caracas, Venezuela, becoming interested in urban conflict. However, also, somewhat disillusioned with the universe of charities and NGOs that he felt were deeply ideological, first and foremost and less practical in actually bringing

about change. While learning more about alternative approaches, he became interested in privatization, and his current work emerged from exploring the intersection of how the government tries to do things, how NGOs claim to do good, and how urban conflict works, all while communities operate under challenging circumstances.

Sascha mentioned a couple of critical experiences that influenced his social innovation journey. The first was when his first daughter was born while he was traveling on business in China. This experience had an important function in terms of his priorities and his family's determining what was important to them, "a very practical way of prioritizing and planning." The second critical experience came as he split from his organization's co-founders. He noted that while difficult, it was an important point of emancipation in many ways:

I realized that I knew where I was going and they may have wanted to go all kinds of different places but they weren't going where I wanted to go. So that process kind of unwinding partnerships and so forth I think was important put a lot of distance between me and others going forward over the years.

Another pivotal moment for Sascha was becoming an Ashoka Fellow in 2011. This recognition provided him with a sense of identity around his work and connected him to a group of people who he felt were like him and with whom he felt comfortable: other social entrepreneurs.

I suddenly became part of something that I had no idea existed. And that was really meaningful... in many ways the Ashoka Fellowship gave a lot of identity and replaced a lot of those kind of partnerships or support systems I was trying to build around me that didn't really work for me.

Personal influences. Sascha mentioned his father as a strong influence in his life. Even though his father had a very tough upbringing in the transition from Nazi Germany to a post-war country replete with family tragedies, Sascha admired how his father, out of all of this, became a genuinely loving, caring, and responsible person. Sascha also spoke about how important it was to him that his parents never provided too much guidance on how he “should be”; they allowed him to stretch his horizons. Sascha mentioned not having any relationships that he would have considered a mentorship throughout his college years, given these relationships were more transactional. However, during his time as a social entrepreneur over the last five years, he has felt a strong support system around him from investors who always have advice to give.

Suzanne McKechnie

“I was never going to be of the same ethnicity or race, but I could be of the community.”

Social innovation journey. Suzanne was born in England, to a British father and a Jewish-American mother. Suzanne mentioned how childhood experiences played a critical role in her development of empathy and an understanding of the power of diversity in any setting. Growing up in New York City, Suzanne often accompanied her mother to her teaching job in Harlem, working with low-income young people with a similar profile to that of the youth with whom Suzanne would eventually work as a social innovator. This experience would later inform Suzanne’s ability to step into a community and become part of it regardless of how different their lives were to hers. She was bullied when she was young, and she thinks this provided her with an understanding of how vulnerable young people can be: “I think I developed this affinity and interest in serving the underdog who might not always have a voice because I felt very vulnerable.”

Having been rebellious growing up, Suzanne often did things a bit differently, even applying to a college her family did not think she would get in. She made it to Brown University where, during a summer internship job at a law firm doing pro-bono work, she found the inspiration to apply to Stanford Law School. This was during the big tech boom of the '90s, particularly in the West. While she attended Stanford, Suzanne worked at East Palo Alto Community Law Project, where she noticed an absence of the entrepreneurial spirit she had found in the Stanford community. Suzanne made an important decision early in her social innovation career to move to East Palo Alto, the community from which most of her clients were coming from. While she had grown in relative privilege, it was this experience that helped Suzanne fully understand the experience of living in a community that was dealing with many economic challenges. She had heard frequently from people in the community that she would not understand something because she was not from there: "I was never going to be of the same ethnicity or race but I could be of the community."

Suzanne recalls having an entrepreneurial spirit from a very early age, so she readily notices the equity challenges that people in the community had when trying to launch their own businesses. During this time, a conversation with four kids from the neighborhood sparked Suzanne's idea to create BUILD, an organization focused on providing opportunities for young entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. The insight she gained from their conversation was that some youth in the community lacked interest in continuing to pursue their education since they didn't see it as relevant to their need for economic stability. Suzanne made a deal with these youth to stay in school and put their all in it in return for her help providing them the tools and training needed to start their

own business; this was the start of BUILD, the organization for which she was recognized as an Ashoka Fellow.

Similar to other study participants who have been founders and leaders of other organizations for many years, Suzanne is in the process of transitioning out and exploring a new chapter in her life. She has faced challenges in this process, as the shift out of a leadership position has meant sometimes painful downsizing experiences and leadership challenges. Like other fellows, she is excited and ready to explore a new chapter.

Personal influences. Suzanne's parents were some of the biggest influences in her life. They divorced when she was young; as they married other people, she grew up with the influence of two sets of parents. Her father's work ethic, drive, and ambition shaped her approach to many things, while her mother encouraged her to give back and serve others; Suzanne noted, "I think that juxtaposition was probably helpful but it was very challenging as a young person." Growing up with very different parental role models, she learned to be a chameleon in different settings. Her grandmother was pivotal in helping her navigate the challenges that came from her parent's divorce, providing a haven and a supportive presence for Suzanne to find her path. Throughout the years, her husband has been there, as well, someone she can rely on to talk about her work since he understands the field because he is also an entrepreneur. Suzanne also mentioned the Young Presidents Organization as a network that has influenced her life. This organization connected her to other CEOs to be her accountability partners as she grew into her position and developed as a leader.

Tanya Tull

"I was angry and I said 'Why doesn't somebody do something.' And then, I said I would."

Social innovation journey.

Tanya self-describes as a serial entrepreneur, having started many non-profits and organizations over a lifetime of working with people experiencing poverty and homelessness. Many moments in her life informed her decision to take on this path; growing up poor in a very artistic family and then experiencing poverty in her early adult life, she felt always called to do this work. A pivotal experience for her was traveling to Israel to live in a kibbutz, where she would meet her first husband, who was from Israel. Upon their return, they had a baby, and due to her husband's inability to get a job in the U.S., they faced great difficulties. Tanya recalled turning to welfare as a way to survive and relying on the kindness of others: "Somebody took us grocery shopping and put stuff in the basket for us. So, I will never forget that." After three months on welfare, Tanya's social worker suggested she apply to the Department of Public Social Services to be trained as a social worker, which led to working in South Central L.A. with single mothers on welfare a year or two after the Watts Riots. She was then transferred to the Skid Row area of Los Angeles, where she was assigned to work with mentally ill people being released from state mental institutions. Although Tanya eventually quit working for L.A. County in frustration at her inability to truly help, the insights she gained in this job motivated her to pursue other avenues to try to solve the problem at a systemic level. After quitting work as a social worker, she attended UCLA for a teaching credential. At the same time, she divorced her first husband. A few years later, Tanya would go on to marry her second husband and have two additional children. During those years at home with her young daughters, she saw starvation in Africa and genocide in Cambodia on the news each night. "I was angry, and I said, 'Why doesn't somebody do something!'" One

morning, she read an article in the *Los Angeles Times* telling the story of the hundreds of kids living in Skid Row hotels. Tanya was familiar with the situation from both her lived experience and her work experience. “This time, the suffering was close to home. I realized that I could actually do something to help!” she said to herself. She went down to Skid Row to offer some volunteer assistance but had already in mind what would become her first nonprofit, Para Los Niños, a childcare center for families living in the Skid Row hotels. Five years into her nonprofit work, her husband died; this was one of the most challenging situations for Tanya’s journey as she felt isolated and disoriented. At that time, not many people her age were widowed so she had to process it by herself. She had worked full-time while her husband was ill, which is something she would later regret: “I wish that I had a personal life during the time that I was developing Para Los Niños, because it was the end of our family life.” After her husband died, Tanya went back to work within six weeks, because, as she said, “I was the leader...but I went to work as a widow under stress... I had to make decisions. The work was by then too important not to do.”

A theme throughout Tanya’s social innovation journey is how much she was self-taught. She was a pioneer in this kind of work and had to figure out many things along the way. There were no guides or training that she could take, she recalled:

When I started Para Los Niños. I would spend the whole day on the phone trying to learn, you know, what is a nonprofit? I didn't know how they worked. In fact, I worked for a year without getting paid, and we were broke at the time. But I didn't know you got paid. There were no courses on nonprofit management that I knew of at the time.

She spent a long time teaching herself the ins and outs of running an organization and making transformative change happen. Later in life, she went back to UCLA and earned a teaching credential. She regained her love of writing, which would be an essential skill for her nonprofit career as she had to write grant proposals to foundations for funding. Tanya soon found that through her writing she could lead people through a process of understanding something new; “So this is how I began to integrate the right and the left side of the brain and find something I never would have thought of that was perfect for me in terms of a career.”

Personal influences. Tanya was influenced by growing up in a free-spirited artistic family in the 1950s: “If you'd asked me when I was 20 what I was going to be when I grew up I was trying to figure out how to be an artist, so I married one.” She came from a Reformed Jewish activism background; her religious teachings in childhood and up to young adulthood was the Jewish activist part of reformed Judaism. An essential supporter in her social change career was California democratic leader Elizabeth Snyder, who played a critical role in helping her get a substantial grant through Governor Jerry Brown.

Tomás Alvarez III

“I want to be motivated by love.”

Social innovation journey. The first critical moment in Tomás’s life was the passing of his mother when he was one-and-a-half years old. This turn of events changed his path in many ways, and his mother’s presence continues to be a source of inspiration and insight: “She was that person in people's lives that helped them see their potential and step into that potential.” Tomás was raised by his father, his grandmother, and other relatives with whom he lived. His father wanted him to attend a good school, so he took

the bus every day for an hour each way to attend school in a more affluent neighborhood. He recalled this experience as a painful yet critical for him; “it was really the first time I consciously experienced racism and for three years it was absolutely horrible experience being teased at school and every day being discriminated against and that level of both individual, systemic structural racism.” He remembered witnessing and experiencing internalized oppression with the fellow Latino students with whom he shared a bus ride every day. All of this stayed with him, and it would inform some of his later experiences. He attended high school in a more diverse environment, in his neighborhood, where he found a real sense of belonging and community.

He first attended college at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo but dropped out in the third year. The university’s many issues around lack of diversity and institutional racism were challenging; however, it motivated him to get involved in student organizing, as he wanted to push back against what he and his community had experienced. He became heavily involved in social justice issues, and started researching and learning from the history of civil rights movements; this period in his life would show him the different ways that people organized against injustice and fight against injustice. Tomás’s approach to social change shifted when he heard the quote by Cesar Chavez, “Is what you do for the love of your people or for the hatred of your enemy?” This quote helped him realize so much of his drive was rooted in anger towards the system, anger towards an experience, anger towards people: “I didn’t like who I was becoming. So, coming across that quote that story really enlightened me to see that I want to be motivated by love.”

Later, Tomás attended San Francisco State University, which was a better fit for him, but he struggled to find his place in it. Around this time, he had the most pivotal experience in his journey into social change, working as a behavioral health coach with a kid who had severe struggles with previous coaches. It was a tough experience for Tomás, but he ended up working with the kid for two years. During this time, they both went on a therapeutic backpacking trip with a group, where Tomás met his future mentor and inspiration, Clifton, who inspired him to go back to college, change his major to social work, and get his master's degree at Smith College School for Social Work. While completing his master's studies, he piloted what would eventually become Beats Rhymes and Life, the organization he ran for ten years and for which he was recognized as an Ashoka Fellow. His organization ended up combining his passion for youth and mental health along with one of the biggest influences in his life, hip-hop. Tomás felt hip-hop shaped not only his world view but so much of who he is. Hip-hop also influenced Tomás to explore and find his sense of agency and define his approach to his work:

I love hip hop because hip hop was started by young people. Young adults of color in the South Bronx and in the early 1970s in response to social conditions systems of oppression. It was literally them saying moving from being a victim to being their own savior, right? And so hip hop has taught me how to not only to transmute but also a positive identity, how to take your story that has all of these painful parts to it and actually turn that into something beautiful. That's what I try to do is create the conditions for people to connect with that inside of them and then work together to create something beautiful that can inspire other people.

Tomás is one of the research participants who has recently transitioned out of his organization. In 2016 he stepped down from his leadership position; this was a critical moment in his journey as a social innovator because for five years he cycled through burnout. “The organization was strong enough for me to not be there steering the ship but also, like, I needed to take care of myself and prioritize myself care, my personal well-being.”

Personal influences. Tomás’s grandmother, dad, and sister were significant influences in his life for different reasons. His grandmother and sister were the mother figures in his life, and his dad modeled what commitment to family can look like. Even though his dad was working very hard to provide for both kids, he continued to be very engaged in Tomás’s life in all aspects. He also played a role in Tomás learning about leadership and finding his agency, as he always encouraged him to take on leadership roles in everything he did, particularly sports. “I didn't know at the time he was teaching us to be comfortable with leadership and to have the expectation of ourselves to be a leader and have that self-confidence.”

Two interesting and unique sources of influence for Tomás were the TV shows *MacGyver* and *The A-Team*. The title character MacGyver was an inspiration and role model, as he always helping others and using creativity and solving problems to help others. *The A-Team* inspired Tomás to fight for social justice while working as a team to find creative solutions: “They were kind of these renegades that you could consider them like criminals, right? in the eyes of whoever was chasing them. But they had good hearts and they were doing good in the world.”

Trabian Shorters

“I decided to update the narratives about us.”

“I want to do my part, I want to play my role, in the historic evolution of my people.”

Social innovation journey. The most common theme across Trabian’s timeline and interview was his ongoing focus on updating the narrative, changing the story, that his life circumstances had provided. Trabian was born to a single teenaged mom in the late sixties; “I was African-American and poor so a whole bunch of stereotypes bundled up in one.” He was raised by his grandparents, who played a critical role in providing many of the values he lives by. A major influence on Trabian was growing up in a lower income neighborhood that was heavily impacted during the Regan’s administration declared “war on drugs.” These circumstances had a very negative impact on his neighborhood, as increased crime and gang activity became a new normal while he was growing up. When he was ten years old, Trabian was tested to have a genius-level IQ, which changed many things in his life; one of them was attending high school at a boarding school. He felt he was living in a world of contradictions, describing, “I’m in America which is supposed to be the land of opportunity. But our neighborhood was just getting wrecked over and over again, people losing their jobs, factories gone away, hardworking families couldn’t figure out how to feed their kids.” Trabian recalled a specific instance that inspired him to want to change the narrative about him and his community; he watched someone on TV speak about Martin Luther King reminiscing of how the African American community had come together before whereas now the speaker believed the community was being torn apart by gangs and drug dealers. This interview and statement triggered something in Trabian, and he remembers thinking,

This old head that I don't even know is blaming me for what's going on in my neighborhood as if kids are the ones who decide what happens in a community. And I think from that I got so pissed about it. My neighborhood was very dangerous. I was scared all the time. To hear people from the outside world blaming us for the conditions that we have to live with and vilifying us. I was like, you know, screw you guys. I decided right then and there if you're not from the hood you're not gonna understand it. So. It's up to us. To dig ourselves out of this stuff.

Correcting and updating the narrative continued to be a focus of his college years as well, where he was a student organizer and activist, running the black student newspaper and participating in campaigns and protests like an eight-day sit-in takeover of the administration building with a list of demands. These experiences profoundly influenced Trabian's approach to making a difference: "We saw what was possible when we got tired of being cynical about everything." Throughout the rest of his life, Trabian made choices that may have seemed unusual to others, like turning down a full ride scholarship for a master's fellowship at Indiana University or leaving a stable job with Public Allies. However, every choice he made was aligned with what he already knew he wanted to do, "to lead the next generation of civil rights leaders." His focus on changing the story told about his community continued as he developed his professional career. His social change journey took many iterations from being a journalist to working in the non-profit world, then founding a successful tech company, leading eventually into the social entrepreneurship space. "People say I was leaving about, but the common denominator in all these things was I was studying how you built community." The inspiration for BMe,

the organization for which he was recognized as an Ashoka fellow in 2015, came from his grandfather, who always showed a commitment to his community. Trabian said his grandfather had lived the typical experience of black men who faced absurd obstacles and systemic racism, theft of resources, and constant denigration, yet he also got to witness the protecting love that his community put into giving an opportunity to children they've never met, other people's children.

Personal influences. Trabian's most significant influence on his work was his grandfather, who was a minister. Trabian described him as a role model who did good without condemning others, someone living exemplifying true Christian love and values. Another influence on Trabian's social change journey was reading books about people who had changed society's narrative. He explained,

I read about King and Malcolm and Fannie Lou Hamer and Philip Randolph and H Rap Brown and Stephen Biko. Oftentimes when it was time for me to make a career decision, I would do was I ask myself: if this were written in the history book. What would our main character do at this moment?

This insight supported Trabian's constant exploration of which narrative he was fulfilling with his life choices and inspired him to continue working hard to become that person.

Conclusion on Personal Profiles

The importance of the described narratives for each participant in this chapter stems from the fact that an individual's growth and awareness cannot take place in a vacuum, as described in Chapter 2. Ego development theorists refer to the "holding environment" as a factor that influences the way an individual makes meaning of

themselves and their current worldview (McCauley et al., 2006; Cook-Greuter, 2013). Each social innovator had a number of experiences and personal influences that led them to become who they are and to do the work they do. This portion of the study showed the nuanced complexities of each of their journeys. It is this complexity, both in their journeys and the way they make meaning of their life, that developmental stage instruments are able to shed light on. The instrument I used for this research to gain such insight was the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP). The next chapter presents the MAP scores and discusses the findings of the participant's identified developmental stage.

CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) Results

As detailed in Chapter 3, there were two parts to the methods used in this study. The first part included the participants completing the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP), which is a sentence completion instrument. Cook-Greuter developed the assessment and designed it to identify the developmental stage of adults within what she calls the Leadership Maturity Framework (LMF). The second part employed qualitative interviews, which included the timeline activity used for the profiles in the previous chapter. The use of the ego development assessment instrument sheds light on the developmental levels of social innovators recognized by the same fellowship program, an aspect that has never been addressed by other research studies in this way. Previous research focused only on participants assessed at later developmental stages as it was the case for Barret Brown's 2012 dissertation focusing on leaders within the

sustainability field. In this section, I present the results of the MAP assessment and the ways in which the results help to answer Research Question 2: *What are the developmental levels of the social innovators participating in the study; do social innovators cluster around a particular developmental stage?*

The participants received instructions via email to complete the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) before their scheduled 90-minute interview. The details on the instrument were discussed in Chapter 3. To avoid any bias during the qualitative data analysis, I did not access the MAP results for any of the participants until after I analyzed the two qualitative portions of the study. The data analysis and results discussed in the rest of this study used the total protocol rating (TPR), which is an overall developmental stage from which one tends to operate. The term *center of gravity* is used throughout the rest of the study to refer to the TPR score. While all participants received the assessment ahead of time, two of the nineteen participants declined to complete this portion of the study but were keen on doing the interview. Thus, the results presented in Table 4 reflect data gathered from 17 of the 19 participants: nine women and eight men.

Table 4

MAP Results

Name	Stage										Σ	TWS	Ogive	TPR	Gravitational Center	Developmental Tier
	2	2/3	3	3/4	4	4/5	5	5/6	6							
Gary Johnson	0	1	12	15	8	0	0	0	0	24	210	3/4	3/4	Skill Centric	Conventional	
Jill Violet	0	0	8	18	10	0	0	0	0	36	218	3/4	3/4	Skill Centric		
Katherine Hall-Trujillo	0	0	5	18	11	2	0	0	0	36	226	3/4	3/4	Skill Centric		
David Castro	0	1	3	17	13	2	0	0	0	36	228	4	3/4+	Skill Centric		
Suzanne McKechnie	0	2	3	13	18	0	0	0	0	36	227	4	4	Self-Determining		
Lynn Price	0	0	7	13	13	3	0	0	0	36	228	4	4	Self-Determining		
Jeff Dykstra	0	0	6	15	11	4	0	0	0	36	229	4	4-	Self-Determining		
Lennon Flowers	0	0	6	11	13	6	0	0	0	36	235	4	4	Self-Determining		
Ben Powell	0	0	2	12	21	1	0	0	0	36	237	4	4	Self-Determining		
Sascha Haselmayer	0	0	5	13	11	6	1	0	0	36	237	4	4	Self-Determining		
Ana Williams	0	0	2	13	18	2	1	0	0	36	239	4	4	Self-Determining		
Tomas Alvarez	0	0	3	8	19	6	0	0	0	36	244	4	4	Self-Determining		
Patrick Struebi	0	0	0	6	22	8	0	0	0	36	254	4	4+	Self-Determining		
Christa Gannon	0	0	0	8	15	13	0	0	0	36	257	4/5	4/5	Self-Questioning	Post Conventional	
Daniel Kish	0	0	1	5	14	16	0	0	0	36	261	4/5	4/5	Self-Questioning		
Aleta Margolis	0	0	0	3	12	15	6	0	0	36	276	5	5-	Self-Actualizing		
Tanya Tull	0	0	0	1	10	19	6	0	0	36	282	5	5-	Self-Actualizing		
Imran Kahn	No MAP Assessment															N/A
Trabian Shorters	No MAP Assessment															

The MAP results show that 76% of the participants in this study operate within what ego development theorists refer to as the Conventional tier which, as discussed in Chapter 2, is the tier characterized by a more linear way of seeing life and reasoning, a viable way of functioning in today's society. This distribution is in alignment with the stage distributions provided by other ego development theories, such as Cook-Greuter (2000 and 2004), stating that 75-80% of adults in the US population inhabit the stages within the Conventional tier. The distribution at the Post-Conventional tier in this sample (24%) is higher than what research shows in the U.S. population, which is believed to be at 12%. The Post-Conventional tier, as previously discussed, is characterized by having access to a system's view of life and a more integrative approach to making meaning.

The results of the MAP assessments indicate participants clustered around four developmental stages, two stages in each tier (see Figure 3). There were 13 participants within the Conventional tier; 23.5% of them were assessed at the *Skill-Centric Developmental Stage* (two men and two women) and 53% of them at the *Self-Determining Developmental Stage* (six men and three women). The *Skill-Centric Stage* is characterized by individuals making sense by focusing on efficiency, expertise and procedures, whereas the *Self-Determining Stage* individuals are characterized by being goal driven, focused on problem solving and effectiveness while relying heavily on scientific methods to make meaning. Further individual stage characteristics are explored in the next sections. Regarding the stages in the Post-Conventional tier, four of the participants in the study (23.5%), three women and one man, were evaluated at this developmental tier. Two of them placed at the *Self-Questioning* stage, which is the first in this tier and it is characterized by individuals beginning to question underlying assumptions about themselves, their perspective in life and who they are in relation to others. Two participants were assessed with their *center of gravity* at the *Self-Actualizing* stage, which is characterized by individuals able to see their own development as a journey, with a greater capacity to discern and integrate multiple perspectives. An easy reference to which participants clustered per developmental stage can be found in Table 5. Appendix A provides a short description of the ego development stages measured by the MAP as described by Cook-Greuter and her global social enterprise, the Vertical Development Academy.

Figure 3. The distribution of MAP scores in study sample, by stage.

Table 5

Participants List per Developmental Stage

Conventional Tier		Post-Conventional Tier	
Skill Centric	Self-Determining	Self-Questioning	Self-Actualizing
David Castro	Ana Williams	Christa Gannon	Aleta Margolis
Gary Johnson	Ben Powell	Daniel Kish	Tanya Tull
Jill Violet	David Castro		
Katherine Hall-Trujillo	Jeff Dykstra		
	Lennon Flowers		
	Lynn Price		
	Patrick Struebi		
	Sascha Haselmayer		
	Suzanne McKechnie		
	Tomas Alvarez		

A closer look at the MAP results by gender in Figure 4 shows that eight of the nine men who completed the MAP are in the Conventional tier and only one man was evaluated at the Post-Conventional tier at the *Self-Questioning* stage, whereas six of the nine women scored at the Conventional tier and three of them were at the Post-

Conventional tier. Women were the only participants assessed at the most complex meaning-making stage in the study's sample, the *Self-Actualizing* stage. Whether these results indicate anything specific regarding gender differences in ego development is difficult to say, given there are few studies focused on addressing this topic. As noted in Chapter 3, most studies focused on other aspects related to ego development and gender such as gender roles and developmental stages (Bursik, 1995), nurturing aspects of women nurses and ego development (White, 1985), adaptation to divorce in adult women and ego development (Bursik, 1991), and (in some longitudinal studies) developmental growth in adolescents and families (Cohn, 1991, Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). However, as will be discussed in the final chapter of this dissertation, more research on the relationship between gender and developmental stages is needed.

Figure 4. Participant score distribution by gender within the various developmental stages.

The age range of this sample was quite wide, from 33 to 75 years old. Consistent with developmental theory, there does not seem to be a particular distinction between the age of the participants and their developmental stage. Research shows that age does not play a role in ego development beyond adolescence and early adulthood (Truluck & Courtenay, 2002; Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). The tendency may be to think that the older a person is, the later the stage they may operate from; however, the MAP results do not show any particular age group prevailing in a specific developmental stage, and there were older and younger people on both ends of the developmental spectrum.

The MAP as an instrument is a useful tool to understand the frame of reference that individuals use to make meaning (Helson & Roberts, 1994). The MAP results do not tell us necessarily how an individual will behave, but rather provides insight on the complexities behind how they organize and make meaning of their experiences. Thus, it is of great importance to observe the distribution of the stages present for each participant. As noted in Chapter 2, Cook-Greuter (2013) emphasizes the importance of the shape of the stage distribution in the MAP results. Research indicates a person may be more flexible when the MAP scores reflect a wider range of responses across stages, which would suggest that people can access various developmental stages as frames of reference to make meaning, and presumably can respond differently depending on the situation. Whereas the narrower the range, i.e. an individual's stage distribution within only one or two stages, the more set in their ways this person can be (Vertical Development Academy, 2018). Figure 5 is an example of how the range of responses differs from one person to the other. The figure displays the range of stage distribution for four participants, one on each identified stage in the MAP results: *Skill-Centric* (Jill),

Self-Determining (Sascha), *Self-Questioning* (Christa), and *Self-Actualizing* (Tanya). As the figure shows, Sascha's stage distribution is greater than the other participants, which would indicate, according to Cook-Greuter, further access to different frames of reference on any particular situation, whereas Jill and Tanya's stage distributions are narrower and very accentuated, indicating possible lack of flexibility or openness to change as they may be set in their ways.

Figure 5. Examples of MAP stage ranges for four participants.

The next section explores these MAP results in relation to the qualitative portion of the study, taking into consideration the responses given to the timeline activity as well as the open-ended interviews. The findings are split into each of the four developmental stage clusters identified through the MAP results.

MAP and Open-Ended Interview Key Findings

The use of the MAP instrument provided relevant data to identify the developmental stages within the Leadership Maturity framework (LMF) from which this study's participants operate. As noted in the previous section, there were four main

developmental stages in which the participants clustered: *Skill-Centric*, *Self-Determining*, *Self-Questioning* and *Self-Actualizing*. This section presents data pertinent to each of these clusters and explores the qualitative data gathered in relation to the characteristics of each stage. For each cluster, I provide examples of participant responses that seem to demonstrate alignment with aspects of the LMF's description of a particular stage, thus providing insight on how the identified developmental stages may or may not reflect a participant's description about how they make meaning of their work and themselves. This section answers Research Question 3: *What is the relationship between the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) instrument description of study participants' current developmental stages and their own description of how they approach their work as social innovators?* Each of the sections provide an overview of the developmental stage characteristics and share findings related to how these characteristics align, or not, with the participant's open-ended interview responses. For clarity, each of the four developmental stages includes a short description and important characteristics of that particular stage. The discussion also includes a brief section exploring the relationship between leadership characteristics for each stage and the participant responses.

Conventional Tier Stages

The MAP results indicated participants clustered around two of the three stages within the Conventional tier. The *Skill-Centric* and *Self-Determining* stages represent, as described previously, the societal expectations for most adults, particularly in professional settings. While the differences between stages may seem subtle at times,

they represent different ways of making meaning. The results of each stages identified are explored next.

Stage 3/4: Skill-Centric overview. Individuals with the *Skill-Centric* stage as the main stage from which they operate differentiate themselves from the previous stage (*Group-Centric*) in one crucial way: They have access to a third person perspective, which allows them to see themselves as objects in the distance and appreciate themselves and others as unique individuals. *Skill-Centric* individuals are called “experts” in Torbert’s Ego Development measuring instrument, which is a succinct way of describing how highly skilled and knowledgeable these individuals are, particularly in their chosen field of work. They are perfectionists, reactive to feedback, competitive, and highly critical of others, among many other characteristics (Vertical Development Academy, 2018).

Findings related to the Skill-Centric Stage. The *Skill-Centric* stage had four participants, two women and two men: Jill Vialet, Katherine Hall-Trujillo, Gary Johnson, and David Castro. I did not expect to have any *Skill-Centric* participants in the study, given the ongoing narrative surrounding social innovators having exceptional traits that may be more commonly associated with later developmental stages, such as being a visionary. Once I compared the data side by side with the characteristics listed by Cook-Greuter, I found some responses, though not many, that matched the *Skill-Centric* characteristics. These are explored next.

The one characteristic of *Skill-Centric* individuals that seemed to match the open-ended responses of these participants was how they receive and deal with constructive criticism or feedback. One of the characteristics of *Skill-Centric* stage individuals,

according to the MAP assessment, is their sensitivity to feedback and a tendency to defensiveness, where criticism is taken personally. From the perspective of a *Skill-Centric* individual, their expertise in what they do is something to be proud of. While their perfectionist tendencies have been useful for them to become the expert in their chosen field, this perfectionism also makes them prone to feel hurt by criticism and they can be quick at redirecting their criticism towards their team. For instance, Kathryn said, “Probably my first impulse is to say defend myself. I'm trying to get better.” Another example highlights this connection, as when Jill stated:

I think on some level I'm a little thin skinned and defensive sometimes and I take it personally, like people keep saying “oh you're going to run for office “and I could never run for political office because I think I would experience the sort of constant unkind criticism is just debilitating.

While participants spoke about being defensive when receiving feedback, they also displayed an understanding of the importance of feedback as well as an openness and desire to work on it, they also knew they have to work on it constantly. For example, David said,

I'm aware though that there is a certain kind of approach which it causes me to be defensive. It's mostly around personal and family stuff. But that can really matter. And that can affect everything so. You know, it's actually something that I've been working on a lot of the last few years to learn how to make sure that I'm not too defensive and that I can't receive constructive feedback.

Similarly, Kathryn expressed it has been a process to get to where she is now in receiving feedback:

It doesn't bother me nearly as much as it may have (in the past). I'm not so much attached to the outcome of what I think. I finally understand that I know that what you think isn't necessarily truth because it popped up in your head, and at the point that I realized that was true for me it was so humbling.

For Gary, feedback provides important and valuable insight even when it is not pleasant to receive it. He said, "I wish I had more. I mean, I find it extremely helpful... it's really painful to hear sometimes... But I think it's really important and it makes you better." Beyond receiving feedback, no other stage characteristics seemed to align prominently with participant responses in this stage. This is explored next.

The participants who clustered around the *Skill-Centric* stage of development seemed to have the least alignment with responses during the interviews. Their responses displayed a way of thinking and meaning-making that seemed less focused on their expertise and skills, which is what this stage focuses on. However, these participants displayed a more complex understanding of their role at work than what the stage characteristics describe. For example, the way they seem to make meaning of their work – by focusing on the development of others more so than their own craft – seems broader than that of an expert. Jill's response is an example of this thinking:

Over the course of time I've also become as motivated by the experience that humans who work at Playworks have and the grown-ups especially the young adults who are having that transformative experience of making a difference that that really has come to really inspire me and keep me going.

Furthermore, Jill seemed to have access to broader lenses to make meaning while holding multiple perspectives and a desire to develop others. For example, she spoke on

the importance of providing space for her employees to find meaning in what they do when she stated, "I very consciously remind people, and I ask that we as a workplace prioritize making meaning, mastery, and community accessible to everybody." It is worth noting Jill has been involved in her organization for over 20 years, thus her role in her organization has evolved over the years.

Similarly, Kathryn seemed to be making meaning from a more integrative framework in which she is thinking less about herself at the center of the story, as some *Skill-Centric* individuals would do, and changed her focus to be about the way people and communities are interconnected. Kathryn shared how her worldview and way of operating has evolved over the years as her work expanded into other countries like Zambia in Africa, when she stated:

I've grown from that, that one place where I was the center of my world, and so much of that is also the Ashoka experience of helping me become a more of a global citizen, you know than just the community. And so, my community is a part of the Globe.

Perhaps less eloquently, but more directly to the point of not seeing themselves as the most important asset to their organizations, Gary told me:

At the end of the day my job is to drag myself out of business. And it can't be about us. It can't be about me. It's not about the glory of our work or our organization or any of that I honestly just don't... excuse my language I don't really give a shit about that.

Individuals assessed at the *Skill-Centric* stage are highly knowledgeable in their area of interest; they tend to feel they are special and see their way of thinking as the only

valid way of seeing things. Once again, the participants' responses in this stage, contrary to stage characteristics, reflected a work approach more focused on letting others take on leadership roles, which is not something a *Skill-Centric* individual would state as clearly as Jill does in the following answer:

At some point if you really want to create scalable change that it's the opposite of being a control freak, it's all about unleashing... especially if your goal is real social change, right? then it's not at all about you doing it. In fact, you doing it becomes a liability. It's really about changing the system and giving it away. And being comfortable with it happening, however it happens as interpreted by others.

Something worth noting is that David's open-ended interview responses seemed to reflect his meaning-making process may be closer to the *Self-Determining* stage (Stage 4) than the *Skill-Centric* stage. It was noticeable how many of his answers were more aligned with the goal-driven approach, which is a characteristic of *Self-Determining* individuals. For example, he stated, "I think one of my practices is to step back and really examine long term deepest goals. If you make a decision I want to always make the decision in the light of what am I trying to accomplish." In fact, his MAP results reflected a Total Protocol Score (TPR) as 3/4+, meaning the distribution of his answers were split in between stages 3/4 and 4, and he may be transitioning his way of understanding himself and the world to see it more like a *Self-Determining* individual would. However, when David was asked during his interview about his personal approach to work, decision making, and (particularly) leadership, he tended to respond with what seemed more like advice than lived experience. For example, David explained in detail the tools and strategies he teaches through his organization; however, there were hardly any "I"

statements in these answers, which I interpreted as a gap between the knowledge and language he has mastered versus the lived experience of said knowledge. Here is an example of these types of response:

You have to have an uncommon sense. Uncommon Sense means seeing the complexity in the world seeing the way that things are related. Seeing the connection points seeing the set of dominos if I hit this domino and it would cause a chain reaction. And where does the chain reaction go. Anticipating the unintended consequences of some behavior that you will do. You have to be smart about the interconnectivity of everything.

This is an important finding because Cook-Greuter (2013) states that even when one may have access to another developmental stage lingo – as may be the case of David using language more aligned with the *Self-Determining* stage – there is a possibility that the individual has not fully integrated this way of operating into their everyday experiences.

I asked Dr. Cook-Greuter why these participants would have a MAP score at the Skill/Centric stage when the open-ended interview responses seem to indicate a later stage of development. She stated the following in an email exchange:

Sometimes it is an outcome of the instruction: some don't read them or ignore them (Individualist), others rush through [as it could have been the case for Gary] because of external pressures or because that is how they deal with matters of uncertainty or dislike. Personality tests can definitely make some people cautious and either try to come out higher than they are or to underperform because they don't want to reveal what is going on inside if they are Diplomats [*Group-*

Centric] or Experts [*Self-Determining*]. If they are a bit later 4+ they can self-disclose by choice. The later the stage, the less the need to self-protect and to accept oneself as a flawed human being aware of his or her defenses. (Cook-Greuter, personal communication, March 11, 2019)

A constant in Kathryn's life was having to prove herself to others that beyond her race and gender she was indeed an expert. This could explain why she her MAP score assessed her at *Skill-Centric*. As discussed in her social innovation journey, Kathryn mentioned having to often use her academic titles and reference her work experience to be taken seriously in some circles. There is a possibility she answered the MAP assessment in this state of mind of proving herself as an expert, which is ultimately what a *Skill-Centric* individual is focused on. The leadership characteristics attributed to *Skill-Centric* individuals are explored next.

Skill-Centric leadership characteristics. As described, the *Skill-Centric* stage participants in this study displayed greater self-awareness than what is commonly attributed to individuals in this stage. Their leadership practice insight was also not consistent with Cook-Greuter's Leadership Maturity Framework (LMF), which as noted before, is the framework within which all developmental stages assessed by the MAP are described. The *Skill-Centric* stage characterize leaders at this stage as "likely to be unaware of their personal preferences, and over-involved with specifics, unable to prioritize among competing efforts or to grasp the bigger picture." (Vertical Development Academy Report, 2018). Examples of how the *Skill-Centric* stage participants in this study seemed more self-aware of their own growth are Kathryn and Jill. They both shared how aspects of their leadership evolved over time. Kathryn told me, "Leading now is

more like leading myself and maybe encouraging other people to figure out how to lead themselves to get to where they wanted to be.” Jill shared she is very conscious of the importance of weighing any unintentional consequences or biases that may play out in her leadership practice. She stated being more aware that being a leader for her is also knowing that sometimes her good intentions may at times have a negative impact as well.

Jill mentioned her role has transformed over the years and her focus and skills have as well. “I’m sort of better at inspiring other humans and bringing on and building teams and when to the best of my ability creating sort of leaderful organizations where all sorts of humans actually lead and drive the effort.” It is hard to tell whether this shift in leadership is solely a manifestation of their developmental stage or if it is related to the fact that both Jill and Kathryn are in roles that do not manage any more the day to day operations of their organizations.

Commonly, *Skill-Centric* individuals tend to struggle delegating and trusting others to do a job that they feel only they can do well. Once again, the responses by all participants in the cluster displayed inconsistency with the stage characteristics, they all alluded to a disposition and understanding on the importance of leading by letting go of control. Jill’s unleashing approach has already been described, below are three statements by Kathryn, Gary, and David that exemplify the way they let go of control and display the mentioned inconsistency:

Everyone is going to do things differently like your children. And so. I’m feeling more confident that they will figure it out. That I don’t have to figure it out for them. I’m kind of at the stage where I’m getting out the way and letting people lead their own lives and do their own things and I really don’t have to control it.

So that's what's happened; the thing about leadership is really not about leading other people it's probably come down to leading my own self. You know and giving and helping people to understand that in themselves. (Kathryn)

When you see leaders that are really burned out or really bogged down it's usually because they haven't given enough creative power to the people around them.

They have to decide everything and overlook everything... I've talked to people who say "I have 40 people reporting to me" and I'm like why? why would you have 40 people reporting to you? you don't trust people? Create a team of people that you trust and then you don't have that, so many people report[ing] to you because you can just know that they're doing the right thing. (David)

Letting people go in and do what they need to do. I'm not a not micromanaging people. Giving people sort of the trust and the freedom to thrive. (Gary)

The ability to let go of control is a bit more developed in the *Self-Determining* developmental stage- the stage discussed next. As noted before, *Self-Determining* is the largest cluster of participants who were assessed in one stage.

Stage 4: Self-Determining stage overview. According to ego development theory, this stage is characterized by individuals that are focused on meeting goals, developing effective plans to reach outcomes, and ultimately running the day to day operations in various professional settings. Cook-Greuter states that our educational systems aim to create fully functional adults that are independent and have a mental capacity to navigate the world as it is currently organized. *Self-Determining* individuals see themselves as agents to make things happen. They rely on the scientific method to solve problems and deliver intended results. These individuals tend to be more receptive

to feedback and begin to see the value of multiple perspectives, and they are highly critical as they seek to improve and grow (Vertical Development Academy, 2018, p. 7).

Findings related to the Self-Determining stage. This stage had nine participants, four women and five men: Ana Williams, Susanne McKechnie, Lynn Price, Lennon Flowers, Ben Powell, Sascha Haselmayer, Jeff Dykstra, Tomás Alvarez III, and Patrick Struebi. It is no surprise that the MAP results indicated the majority of the participants operate from the *Self-Determining* stage given that this is end-goal stage in many Western cultures. Cook-Greuter (2013) suggests that the characteristics displayed by this stage are most valued in today's society; she asserts, "Along with expertise, an independent, entrepreneurial, and self-reliant mindset is the financially most rewarded stage in the US and much of the West" (p.40). There were a number of areas in which the participants' responses aligned with the *Self-Determining* stage description, specifically their desire to make an impact in the lives of others, approaching work with goals in mind, having a strong capacity for reflection, as well as a growing awareness of the importance of feedback and an ongoing focus on making the most effective use of their time. The sections below explore how each of these stage characteristics were reflected in these participant's open-ended interview response.

Desire to make an impact. A key characteristic of people in this stage is a desire to contribute to humanity's well-being and prosperity. It makes sense that this is the one stage with most of the participants, given that this is also an essential characteristic shared across all social innovators, not only the participants of this study. The open-ended responses align with Cook-Greuter characterization of *Self-Determining* individuals as "committed to work towards the betterment of humanity according to what

they consider an ideal future. Whether they believe in democracy, communism, socialism or whatever form of government ideology, they are convinced their particular approach is best for all.” (Cook-Greuter, 2013, p. 42) Ben’s statement below is an example of how their responses displayed a desire to make a positive impact in their communities:

My general purpose is I think we need, there needs to be more agency for human beings in the world. And if you had more agency more opportunity for people to carve out their little piece of the world and have some ownership over their lives the world be much better.

Approach to work. An essential aspect of the *Self-Determining* stage is that individuals have a higher capacity to seek and want to learn about other people’s perspectives. They display a willingness to listen and recognize that there can be multiple perspectives on an issue. For example, Jeff spoke about his own evolution into thinking in less binary ways, stating, “I’ve become less black and white much more comfortable with shades of gray than I probably once was.” Similarly, Suzanne described her approach to making a decision as a way of “being able to understand different perspectives, being able to think like a chessboard: if I do this, three moves later here’s where we’re going to be.”

However, even when *Self-Determining* participants may be more open to varied perspectives, they still have a propensity for believing their approach is the right one, which is another characteristic of this stage. Ana explained, “Most of the time I’m pretty clear on what I want to do.” Likewise, Suzanne suggested, “I kind of solicit some input but I really feel like I do believe too many cooks spoil the broth.”

Directly related to their approach to work is one of the most essential characteristics of this stage: the capacity *Self-Determining* individuals develop to see that the way a problem is framed *is* the problem. While this was not something that all participants displayed in their open-ended interviews, this finding became apparent in the ways some described approaching their work, engaging in community and aiming to identify the root causes of a problem. Tomás's explanation of how his frame of reference changed is perhaps the best example of this finding:

That was a pivotal point in my time where I saw that it's kind of like seeing the limitations of being driven by like anger and hatred and rage and seeing that there's a way more productive way to go about this. And that's through love, it's through compassion or empathy, it's through taking off... I used to say take the shit colored glasses and putting on like glasses of optimism and strength, asset-based lens. To for me that was a huge shift in my evolution in my, world view is really shifting from a deficit-based lens to an asset-based lens. A sense of rage and anger too, a sense of admiration and appreciation. And that was that it allowed me to do the work that I proceeded to do for like the next 10, 15 years and the work that ultimately I do now.

A focus on framing or reframing a problem is consistent with stage characteristics and was consistently expressed as important for these individuals. Ultimately, knowing how to frame a problem is a critical skill for social innovators, and particularly for the study participants, given they were all founders of their organizations. *Self-Determining* individuals are intentional at planning their actions, concerned about priorities and

consequence, and capable of revision and an iterative assessment on as well as reorienting towards new goals.

Goal driven. According to Cook-Greuter (2013), people in the *Self-Determining* stage use the scientific method as a foundational approach to make decisions. This is another area in which the data gathered from the interviews supports their MAP results. Sascha's statement below is an example of this:

I employ more like a research approach and experimenting to test the answers before concluding something. Certainly decision making has become much more evidence-based and experimentation. ... by and large I think the idea that you test something before you commit to it.

However, using the scientific method and research was not a critical approach for all participants in this stage, many of them attended first to their gut feeling in combination with data and research. Ana is an example of this approach:

First, I check my gut instinct when I'm approaching something I don't know enough about or a challenge or a decision is just to inform myself. I feel like it's deeply important to be making informed decisions.

Whether they rely solely on the scientific method, their gut feeling, or a combination of both, what was clear from these participants' responses is that they have an ongoing reflective practice which helps them make meaning of their work, which is consistent with this stage of development as it is discussed next.

Reflection practice. Ego Development Theory states that individuals operating from the *Self-Determining* stage have access to an expanded third-person perspective that allows them to look backward and forwards to learn from past experiences while

envisioning whom they want to become (Cook-Greuter, 2013). Reflection becomes an essential aspect for people in this stage as they think about their future and their personal growth. Cook-Greuter states that *Self-Determining* individuals understand they can grow in mind and heart and have access to an emboldened sense of agency. Participants assessed in this stage spoke significantly of the importance of reflection in a couple of ways. Sascha for example, spoke on the importance of quiet, reflective time to think and process information, and about being selective on the issues with which he engages his mind. Similarly, Lennon and Suzanne mentioned how critical it is for them to spend time doing rigorous thinking on issues that matter to them.

Given that reflection is an important aspect of their growth and development, when asked how they like to process work and personal experiences, almost every participant referred to the role their significant other plays in their life as a sounding board for making sense of their experiences. For some, their partner was also involved in the entrepreneurship field (i.e., Christa, Sascha, and Jill); for others it was the support, encouragement, and words of insight from their partner that has helped them through the darkest times as a social innovator. Those that did not speak about a significant other (Lennon, Imran, Lynn) talked about having a close circle of two or three friends to consistently rely upon to help them reflect and help them make meaning of the challenging times they had over the years. As I will discuss in Chapter 6, having a reflective practice as a way of making meaning was one theme that emerged across the board for most study participants, regardless of their developmental stage indicated by the MAP scores.

Dealing with feedback. In regards to feedback and criticism, *Self-Determining* individuals tend to be more open to receiving constructive feedback and are interested in learning from it. “Feedback can now be listened to without necessarily agreeing with it or feeling one’s whole identity has been diminished. Whether the critic is right, misinformed, or misjudged me, their response is useful information both about myself and about the critic” (Cook-Greuter, 2013, p.43). The majority of the participants reported receiving it well and being interested and open to receiving constructive feedback. The defensiveness that was most salient in the *Skill-Centric* stage is more diffused in the *Self-Determining* stage, as exemplified by the statements below:

I encourage people. To tell me what they really think you... Because I'm always trying to improve. And I am in a position to be, I'm in a very strong position and people don't generally tell me what they think you know. But I really try to encourage people to give me feedback. (Patrick)

I always again like to meet people where they are so when they give that criticism I'm saying or I'm asking, where does it come from? How did you arrive at that question or that comment or that feedback? And then realize that I am gonna take that, I am gonna think about how I present myself, how we presented ourselves. Do I have all the facts, right? Or, we may just say OK let's agree to disagree. (Lynn)

I'd like feedback and constructive criticism and it's been really helpful for me because I am not perfect by any means because managing people in a dispersed team in a resource constrained environment with tons of uncertainty is really hard. (Ben)

I take it pretty well I feel like because I'm pretty because I believe that I'm ever evolving and I have a lot to learn and because I've had a lot of failure I feel like I appreciate feedback, I appreciate constructive feedback. We created a process here where people could ask questions without my knowing who the questions come from or, you know, doing 360 reviews and those pieces I think have been really helpful. (Suzanne)

It is perhaps no surprise that there seems to be so much alignment between the *Self-Determining* stage characteristics and the participants responses as this particular part of the sample represents or models, according to ego development theory, what is expected of a fully functional adult within a professional setting in a Western society. That said, within the findings I identified a couple areas in which there was not complete alignment between the stage characteristics and the participant responses.

Systems thinking language. There is one particular aspect of these participant's responses that seemed more aligned with Post-Conventional stages than with the *Self-Determining* Stage. The use of systems thinking language is often associated with Stage 4/5, *Self-Questioning*, and Stage 5, *Self-Actualizing*. Many *Self-Determining* participants seemed to have access to language related to more complex ways of thinking and processing. Cook-Greuter (2013) explains this finding a phenomenon she calls a case of "aboutism," she describes it as follows:

Because of their access to formal operational thinking, Achievers [*Self-Determining*] can create complex theories as well as learn all about complex topics. However, this is done from an external point of view: They can learn to

know everything there is to know about a theory without transfer of the conceptions to their interior life. (p. 43)

The use of language that seems to pertain to a Post-Conventional tier while a participant is still operating from a conventional stage generates a number of possible reasons. Perhaps these *Self-Determining* participants were scored at an earlier stage than what they actually inhabit; perhaps the language of systems thinking means something different in ego development theory than in the social innovation field; or perhaps the MAP assessment and stage descriptions need to be updated to reflect the changes in the way language use continues to evolve.

Relationship with time. The MAP characterizes *Self-Determining* individuals as future oriented, often concerned with making the most efficient use of their time and the most effective way of accomplishing what they set to do. Cook-Greuter states *Self-Determining* individuals often have a sense of urgency and “are preoccupied with getting things done with responsibility, conscientiousness and expediency” (2013, p. 46). Some individuals scored at this stage described their relationship with time as something to be managed and a critical resource to get things done. David and Lynn described best what some of the participants expressed:

That's to me excruciating. It is wanting to spend all that time in creating and brainstorming and visioning, alongside the reality of that time; it's worth something. (Lynn)

I'm always struggling to have enough. You know enough, I wish the day had more hours. Time has forced me to focus and to cut out everything that has

nothing to do with what I want to achieve in life. So, it has forced me to say no.

Learning to say no more was difficult for me. (Patrick)

Many participants in this stage described a relationship with time aligned with Cook-Greuter's depiction of Self-Determining individuals. However, a third of the *Self-Determining* participants seemed to have a different relationship to time. For example, Jeff spoke of not being driven by time but rather being "shaped by it day to day." Sascha spoke of having a more relaxed attitude towards time; he did not mind things taking longer if that is what a specific project needed. His response displays a bit more of complexity in how he understands the concept of time in relation to work. He stated,

I think one of the things that took me longest to realize is that trying to solve the problem we're solving has a different timeline from a 20-year-old starting Facebook and this is something everyone is struggling with. I think entrepreneurship and kind of whole startup world as well as once you start dealing with technology. People just expect rates of change and adoption that are very fast. And we haven't really translated this into what this means when you're solving a problem rather than building a business. I've also kind of come to realize that I'm somewhat relaxed about time so I'm not. I am no longer willing to... Throw people in front of the bus for the for the sake of time.

Similarly, Tomás described how his experience with time has shifted as he transitioned out of his leadership role in his organization:

There is a tradeoff of building that organization and what it cost me personally, fiscally, spiritually...it's time for me to prioritize myself... I also need to value my time because it teaches other people how to value my time... I'm very

selective with the projects that I take on are? very intentional. [I'm intentional] with the time.

However, Tomás's shift came out of necessity as he was feeling very burned out after working for so many years as the founder and leader of his organization. His experience with burnout is further explored within the leadership characteristics of the *Self-Determining* Stage.

Self-Determining leadership characteristics. When describing leadership characteristics of the *Self-Determining* stage, Cook-Greuter emphasizes that the extreme focus and drive to accomplish goals is the greatest *Self-Determining* strength and weakness. While being goal driven, as described in the previous section, can lead to many accomplishments, individuals in this stage tend to blame and be hard on themselves when trying to achieve their goals. According to Cook-Greuter (2103) the goal driven attitude that individuals in this stage display often leads to experiencing imbalance between personal and work life, and in some cases burnout. Some participants displayed an ongoing struggle with balance, as was the case for Ana, who mentioned balance as an area in which she wants to improve. She shared “work or personal balance would be good. Having a lot more balance and figuring out how to balance all these things a bit better. It's actually a big theme for me.” Similarly, Suzanne stated, “I think leaving more time to just be, versus do, is really important. I haven't done that for two decades.” While imbalance and burnout were not exclusive to the participants in the *Self-Determining* stage, it was noticeable that burnout was part of many participants' journey as a result of trying to accomplish their social change goals. For example, Tomás shared having gone through burnout as explained in this response:

January 1, 2016 I officially transitioned out of my non-profit and that was a critical point for me because I had spent the last five years cycling through burn out and really got to a point to where I felt like I needed to, the organization was strong enough for me to not be there steering the ship but also like I needed to take care of myself and prioritize myself, my personal well-being. So, I took a sabbatical for two years after that and did a lot of self-reflection and explored other interests and passions and here I am two years later healthier than I've ever been; happier than I've ever been.

Tomás expressed, as well, that the learning that came from that experience continues to be a focus for his personal growth:

I love what I do so much I can easily work 10, 12, 14 hours a day doing it and not feel tired. But just because I can, doesn't mean I should. And so, for me it's like what are those barometers in my life? My health used to be one of them. I often get sick. I had pneumonia like once a year for like three years when I was in my old nonprofit role. My physical body was a barometer for me I think in terms of practices it's to be present like trying to be present challenging myself to be present.

According to the *Self-Determining* description people in this stage "have high performance standards and may be their own worst critics when they do not measure up to these standards" (Vertical Development Academy Report, 2018, p, 8). While this was not a theme that applied to all *Self-Determining* participants, Lennon's response exemplifies this tendency to be hard on themselves:

I hold an incredibly intense set of standards for myself. And, I think the harder thing as a leader is to, the much harder practice for me, is to see that it is unfair to ask of the people on my team the same. Where I have failed as a leader is that people perpetually think that they are not enough. And I'm still a work in progress for me.

The most prominent theme related to the *Self-Determining* stage and leadership was that five of the nine participants in this cluster shared that an aspect of their leadership approach is developing others in their organizations. This characteristic is mainly attributed to the *Self-Questioning* stage individuals, which is the first stage in the Post-Conventional tier. It is an interesting finding to have many of the participants display a characteristic more present in a later stage than their MAP assessment score because it signals a higher level of complexity in their thinking and behavior. Participants in this cluster seem to be very aware and intentional in their desire to help others in their organization grow. A number of them mentioned noticing many people are attracted to the work they do because of who they are, the vision for change that they provide:

One of the things I'm most proud of is I think people who come and work for us all without exception learn tremendously it's a tremendous learning environment for them. (Ben)

I think there was a shift that then shifted to kind of like this idea of helping people step into their own greatness as opposed to trying to get people to work towards accomplishing a prescribed goal. (Tomás)

The thing that motivates people is their own sense of fulfillment and meaning and purpose and being seen and witnessed. And so, I strive to do that as a leader. It's

pretty important that I figure out who you are and what it is that brings you energy so that I can make sure that you have more of that in your days and not less. So, I think that is one kind of hallmark that I at least strive for organizationally and I will say that that is vastly harder as things grow. (Lennon)

The way I view good leadership is that you develop trusted relationships with the people that you work with ... this idea that it's not about you... our informal motto is "it is not about us" because it's about us helping to create leadership among other people. We're gonna be the right voices to speak to the people that that we want to engage. (Ana)

This is what has attracted people all the time to me, I mean people come into my life because of this because this is who I am. I really want and want to give people opportunities to develop. I mean I don't have a reason to teach here but I'm teaching because I know I can I can spark that flame. (Patrick)

Patrick's statement also brings up a small leadership theme that came up for a couple of the men in the *Self-Determining* stage: They alluded to how they have worked on owning the fact that many people have chosen to work with them because of who they are as individuals and/or leaders. For example, Sascha stated,

I no longer am kind of embarrassed about that people come to work for City Mart because they want to work with me. They want to be acknowledged by me. They find that most fulfilling. They have a lot of respect and trust for my judgment.

Tomás stated a similar thought, but like Patrick, his response is also connected to his hope for developing others: "This is what has attracted people all the time to me, I mean people come into my life because of this, because this is who I am. I really want to

give people opportunities to develop.” The desire to develop others is a characteristic more prominent in the Post-Conventional tier. This discrepancy between the MAP assessment and the open-ended interviews brings about a variety of possible reasons for it. Perhaps people were scored in the MAP at an earlier stage than the one they operate from, or perhaps the desire to develop others is somehow related to the social innovator’s ethos of wanting to make an impact. There is also a possibility this discrepancy may indicate some participants are developing into the postconventional way of making meaning.

The Postconventional Stages

The Post-Conventional tier encompasses four developmental stages, the *Self-Questioning* stage, the *Self-Actualizing* stage, the *Self-Aware* stage, and the *Unitive* Stage. These stages comprise a much smaller percentage of the U.S. population, less than 20% (Vertical, Development Academy, 2018). The sample in this study had four participants evaluated at the *Self-Questioning* and two at the *Self-Actualizing* stage. The following sections explore how the responses in the open-ended interview of these participant clusters align - or not - with each stage description.

Stage 4/5: Self-Questioning overview. This stage represents the individual’s transition from operating within society’s conventional ways into exploring new ways of making meaning and functioning in the world. An individual in the *Self-Questioning* stage begins to question the beliefs and assumptions he or she have lived by and examines how these came to exist. These individuals have an “increased understanding of complexity, systemic connections and unintended consequences of actions” (Vertical Development Academy, 2018, p. 9). They do not conform any more to what others may

see as the only reality; they begin to see and hold multiple perspectives informed by context. As a result, Self-Questioning individuals become, as described by Cook-Greuter (2013), the ultimate relativist.

Findings related to the Self-Questioning stage. Only two participants, Christa Gannon and Daniel Kisch, were evaluated at this stage. I found a number of their responses aligned with the stage's characteristics, their answers reflected critical aspects of how *Self-Questioning* individuals make meaning of life. Among these characteristics, the ability to see and value other people's point of view, a more nuanced relationship to time and making meaning with a holistic approach. In contrast, only their approach to work seem to be less in alignment with the stage characteristics. All these findings between the stage characteristics and the participants' responses are explored below.

Relativism and context. *Self-Questioning* individuals are described by Cook-Greuter as consumed relativists, interested in considering multiple perspectives and honoring all ideas equally. They place much more emphasis on context than on finding an ultimate truth. In this stage, individuals see the world through a lens of context, be it geographical, historical, or cultural. Their orientation shifts from the external to the internal experience. For example, during her interview, Christa spoke about the importance of listening and taking into consideration different perspectives, while trying to make meaning of past experiences:

I think the fact that I wasn't looking for just one place to help me make sense of it but that I was getting input from a variety of places that quite honestly had sometimes diametrically opposed opinions and experiences. I think it really helped me.

Daniel's response coincides with the *Self-Questioning* stage characteristics of being open to exploring different ways of doing things and open to the process and journey of learning along the way. The insight and perspective he gained throughout the process has informed the way in which he will tackle a present challenge. He stated,

I never assume I have the perfect solution or the right answer or that it has to be this way. I mean our whole approach changes over time. Yeah because we learn new things we incorporate new things. It may be feedback from people. It may be new evidence that challenges old evidence.

Similarly, Christa provides an example of valuing all perspectives and caring to include them in her work. Her approach reflects a desire to have these different voices and perspectives represented in what they do as an organization.

I remember one year when we realized that the chief probation officer police, kind of the head of a police department the public defender the district attorney and the juvenile court judge were all personal donors to the organization. I was like damn, I'm so proud of that. I'm so proud of that from all aspects of the system no matter where they sit they see the value of what we're doing. That's how I lead. That's. It's hard to lead that way right now.

According to Cook-Greuter (2013), this stage can be liberating, as an individual identifies his or her own uniqueness while experiencing the many choices and complexities available. Daniel's statement below is an example of how his meaning making has expanded to explore how to integrate the multiple perspectives available to him now:

To me the universe is kind of a puzzle and it is patterns. I guess one gift I like to think I have is finding the patterning chaos, finding the organization and chaos.

And I think maybe that comes from being blind and traveling.

Cook-Greuter suggests the *Self-Questioning* stage can also be confusing for individuals because they understand that context can impact how other people experience the same events or occurrences and thus the number of available meanings and perspectives can feel overwhelming. Christa's statement below reflects this confusion and is an example of *Self-Questioning* individuals as ultimate relativists:

I also will say I think that's one of my greatest challenges as a leader that I sometimes struggle with is and maybe this is a condition of my upbringing, but I think I didn't want to be what? I really have worked really hard to not be so black and white in my thinking and to be much more nuanced and in the gray. I think now with all these different inputs I sometimes have a really hard time taking a strong stance because like I can really see your perspective, and I can really see your perspective, and I can really see your perspective and "Can't we just all love each other and get along."

Individuals in the *Self-Questioning* stage are more comfortable with the complexities they perceive in the problems that they are trying to tackle, they are eager to find a fresh perspective and to explore possibilities. This stage also brings a self-awareness of how futile it can be to frame things one way when there are other perspectives out there and other ways of approaching things.

A holistic approach. While people in the previous stage, *Self-Determining*, typically use the scientific method as a preferred way of making meaning of their world,

Self-Questioning individuals, like Christa and Daniel, have access to what Cook-Greuter (2013) calls a more “organismic, somatic and holistic mode of understanding” (p.60).

People in this stage find that relevant information and insight can emerge from sources that are commonly not considered aspects of the scientific approach, such as “body sensations, intuition, dreams, reflection, and meditation” (p.56). There is a realization of the interconnectedness of their body, mind, feelings, and thoughts, and how they affect each other. Instead of relying solely on their analytical or intellectual way of processing life, *Self-Determining* individuals pay more attention to their inner wisdom, which in the case of Christa, she calls it her “body knowledge.” She states, “I’m a real big believer in listening to my inner wisdom listening to my gut listening to my instincts listening to my intuition.”

As discussed previously, individuals at later stages of development have access to previous stages’ ways of processing, which is part of the holistic approach characteristic of this stage. For example, Christa spoke of being a linear thinker and focusing on the pros and cons of a situation, which would indicate she is still operating as a *Self-Determining* in this particular aspect of her life. She stated, “I’m very linear in my thinking, I mean as you see my picture [referring to her timeline activity, which is a chronological bullet point list of events in her life] I’m very linear. I think that I quickly take an issue and I try to break it down I am very process oriented.” However, while referring to being linear, Christa also clarifies that she is process oriented (a characteristic of the *Self-Questioning* stage) versus goal oriented which would be a characteristic of *Self-Determining* individuals. This ability to combine linear thinking with her inner-wisdom and body knowledge is what places her in her current Post-Conventional stage.

Similarly, Daniel's statement exemplifies how a *Self-Questioning* individual approaches the analysis of an issue from a holistic approach:

I don't know that I would characterize myself as a risk taker except to say that I am happy to explore the unknown. But I am pretty analytical about how I go about it really in my analysis I try to concentrate on the concrete. I don't tend to concentrate on things that haven't happened yet. I try to, I try to focus on what we have available to us now what are our resources if we need more resources what are our resources to get more resources but what do we have to work with, now.

Daniel's example, also alludes to another essential characteristic of *Self-Questioning* individuals; they display a time orientation towards "the now."

Relationship to Time. Cook-Greuter (2013) states that *Self-Questioning* individuals shift from the *Self-Questioning*'s main focus of "doing and achieving" to "feeling and being." Their language and approach to life reveal an inclination to "infuse experience in the present with importance" (p. 61). *Self-Questioning* individuals have a fascination with the "now" and an ongoing focus on personal growth and learning. Both participants in this stage provided answers that exemplify this characteristic:

I think that's a lot of my perspective of the world as the universe unfolds as it should and all the horrible things that happen can teach us, we can grow and learn from it and have something to offer. (Christa)

I tend to be a kind of a Buddhistic thinker I guess I try hard to concentrate on present, "if only" is about the past and "what if" is about the future. And, where are we now? So, I mean I definitely am a future thinker to be sure. When I'm looking at outcomes I am in essence looking at a future prospect. And I feel we

can learn from history. So, in that sense I look at the past but again I try to be as concrete about it as I can so I try to anchor that in. Where are we now? If we want to go somewhere where we should really understand quite well where we are now and it be nice if we had a good understanding of where we came from and how we got here. But to me the *where we are now* is sort of the central point of all that.

(Daniel)

Christa spoke of the ongoing struggle to remain in the present moment as she feels growing up she was conditioned to “borrow trouble from the future” and plan accordingly. However, she also shared she has continued to do work in her relationship with time:

There's a mantra that I say a lot that I've been working on “I'm calm and centered and there's plenty of time for everything,” to really try to shift my perspective on my relationship with time that there is enough time as opposed to constantly saying “Oh my gosh I don't have time!” Or “Oh I'm so busy!”... Like my life is full, as opposed to, “life is busy, there isn't enough time,” there will be time for everything that I need.

Participants in this stage displayed many consistencies between their responses and the stage descriptions. However, their relationship with the concept of time was not aligned 100%. While both participants in this stage displayed a focus on process, they also provided responses in their open-ended interview that could indicate operating from the *Self-Determining* stage. The following two statements are examples of how both Christa and Daniel seem to be still focused on effectiveness in order to achieve what their organization is set out to do more so than the process:

There's also processing for me in terms of looking at it more practically and academically. The practicality part is how does this really help us with our approach? How Does it help us to develop our business? ...How does this improve that product? And then academically, how does that help us to understand the product? So how can I articulate the product better. (Daniel)

I tend to look quite heavily on impact and outcomes. What's going to happen? and who is it going to happen to? ... who is involved in this impact? So, I guess in a way I guess they tend to think kind of an outcome first... and then I look at how can that be brought about in the most efficient in a manner that's most mutually beneficial? (Christa)

Christa's response reflects she is still focused on the most effective way to reach her outcome, which matches the *Self-Determining* way of operating. These examples do not mean their default stage should be *Self-Determining*, but rather it displays how individuals at any stage rely on previous stages to make meaning of some situations in life. There is a possibility that the examples given have more to do with the fact that both Daniel and Christa need to operate from the *Self-Determining* perspective because of their leadership role within the organization.

Despite the aforementioned paradoxes in their relationship with time, participants in this stage reflected a key characteristic of the *Self-Determining* stage, an ability to be introspective and draw out learning from their experiences. Cook-Greuter (2013) describes this as a process in which they "turn inward in search of their unique gifts or answers to their own burning questions" (p.57). They both spoke of using several processing strategies to make sense of their experiences, from writing and journaling to

meditating. Daniel has developed an ability to silence the voices internal and external in order for him to stay in the present:

I have cultivated a calm place a happy place. And I carry it around with me. I mean there are several things but what I think probably the most important thing was this, I keep a silent place in my head and a part of my awareness a part of my attention is always there like, it's like the quiet, the quiet room. I can always hear the quiet room. I can always feel.

This statement by Daniel is an example of how internalized the world of a *Self-Questioning* individual can be and their ability to become the observer, access to what Cook-Greuter calls the “fourth person” perspective:

It's not that I have stage fright it's not that I fear the stage. It's just that I find people quite agitating and I find exposing myself in that way quite agitating. So, I think I have to have this sort of ...it's kind of like I'm speaking from a quiet place into another place. So, like I'm in the quiet place but I recognize that I'm projecting myself into this other place where everyone else is and that's kind of how I think about it.

The broader perspective of *Self-Questioning* individuals impacts different aspects of their leadership practice. In the case of Christa and Daniel, their developmental level was reflected in two main leadership characteristics of the stage. These are discussed next.

Self-Questioning leadership characteristics. *Self-Questioning* individuals tend to value others' insights and views so much that it can have negative repercussions for their leadership practice. “In order to not harm anyone, they may rely on consensus decisions

and endless explorations of possibilities. Decision paralysis is an aspect of this need to give every voice its due"(Vertical Development Academy Report, 2018, p. 11). Christa's response is consistent with this characteristic: "I'm a big on input so I'm a leader that takes a lot of input which also sometimes is a criticism that it takes me too long because I care too much about trying to make everybody happy." As hard as it may be for them to deal with the constant relativistic experience, *Self-Questioning* individuals can also access a broader vision that is more inclusive of other perspectives than in previous stages. They tend to stop focusing on short-term goals and become "increasingly aware of systems thinking" (Vertical Development Academy Report, 2018, p.11). Both participants in this stage displayed this notion, as shown in the statements below:

I think I got to this place where I'm like I just want to find out where the common ground is like where we can meet in the middle and move forward together. And so, I think that very much has a part of my leadership style which I think at times be challenging for some.... I'm so proud of that from all aspects of the system no matter where they sit they see the value of what we're doing. That's how I lead. That's. It's hard to lead that way right now. (Christa)

I tend to be a big picture thinker. Maybe too much. I am much better at envisioning than I am at the operational nitty gritty of making it all happen. And I know that about myself. So, I try to engage people who are better about making things happen than I am. But I don't meet too many people who seem to see the picture that I see in the way that I see it. (Daniel)

Daniel's response in a way alludes to one of the challenges people in Post-Conventional tiers experience. Individuals in later stages become aware that their way of

making meaning and seeing life differs from people in different developmental stages. Given *Self-Questioning* is the first of the stages in the Post-Conventional tier, it is no surprise to see Daniel's response align with the next developmental stage, *Self-Actualizing*, where the way of making meaning becomes more complex and integrated.

Stage 5: Self-Actualizing overview. According to Cook-Greuter (2103), the *Self-Actualizing* Stage represents another major shift in a person's frame of reference. *Self-Actualizing* individuals have access to more complex and systemic thinking compared to previous stages. They are able to integrate their focus on both process and outcomes, as well as become more tolerant of those that inhabit earlier stages.

Findings related to the Self-Actualizing stage. There were two participants evaluated at the *Self-Actualizing* stage, Aleta Margolis and Tanya Tull. Both participants evaluated at the *Self-Actualizing* stage had a total weighted score that placed them as Stage 5-, which means they are an example of what Cook-Greuter (2013) calls the trailing edge in a participant's MAP score. Most MAP scores show a distribution of responses across three stages, the one with the highest score is considered the *center of gravity*, their main stage, and the earlier stage is referred to as the trailing edge, the stage on which an individual defaults to make meaning, particularly in stressful situations. (Cook-Greuter, 2013). The growth edge, as described earlier, indicates the stage to which this individual is transitioning. Therefore, the MAP scores for these participants show that they are not fully operating from the *Self-Actualizing* stage but perhaps in transition from the *Self-Questioning* stage into a new way of making meaning. This may explain why there didn't seem to be as many open-ended interview responses that aligned with some of the characteristics of the *Self-Actualizing* stage. The areas in which their

interview data was consistent were: a focus on development of self and others, vision and strategy, access and integration of multiple perspectives, and decision making. These are described in this section.

Focus on development. The main concern for *Self-Actualizing* individuals is to integrate the many aspects of themselves, they strive to develop themselves and others through a constant effort to continue learning and growing. This is one of the characteristics that seemed consistent with the open-ended interview responses of both participants in this stage. Tanya stated, “Every day I learn what to do. Every single day. I learned what to do tomorrow.” Similarly, this short statement is an example of Aleta's desire to help other people evolve and grow, in this case through the book she is writing on best practices for improving the education system: “But I'm curious about how I can change mindsets and practice of people I'll never meet? Who read my book and hopefully will do things differently? I'm curious about that and I'm excited to try and figure that out.”

According to Cook-Greuter (2013), every developmental stage manifests in both healthy and unhealthy ways. *Self-Actualizing* individuals are no exception. While some can come across as balanced, insightful, and tolerant, others may present the shadow side of the stage through impatience and frustration at the shortcomings or lack of growth of those they are trying to help. Some of this frustration came across in Tanya's responses in relation to how she has seen so many cycles of different approaches to end homelessness. She has been working on this topic for decades and she mentioned despair at what she perceived as little regard for the research and lessons learned from the past within the field.

Another example of how this developmental stage can have a shadow side is that *Self-Actualizing* individuals are often preoccupied with larger issues regarding their vision to impact the world through their work. For many, focusing on what may seem small - like an interview about their personal journey into social innovation - makes it hard to hold a conversation. This was my experience with Tanya, with whom I spent double the time I spent with all other participants; however in that time I was not able to get through all my questions because she seemed more interested in talking about other things, particularly her work and her legacy. Cook-Greuter (2013) states that this is one of the main preoccupations for *Self-Actualizing* individuals; “legacy issues become even more important for people in this stage, they want to know How does my life and my contribution matter beyond my life time and my immediate realm of influence?” (p.47). This was the case for Tanya, who often referred to the work she has done over the years and expressed preoccupation with what she was leaving behind,

This is just launching into the nonprofit world. I founded four more nonprofits after that too within three months of each other in the 80s that were the two top innovations in the field of homelessness across the board for any population. I had been written out of history. I find that really, you know, unless you really search in Wikipedia, but I find that terribly insulting. That's what I found in this world. Because nobody knows unless they are there with you, it is blood sweat and tears and sacrifice.

Whether it is a matter of her age (75 years old) or her developmental stage, Tanya's relationship with time is, according to her, about living in the moment. However, her responses seemed to combine a deep concern to accomplish what she set out to do

while leaving a legacy. “Everything I do is done in light of (my work) ... because I don't. I don't like to waste my time. I don't have a lot of time. I thought about this a long time ago.” The *Self-Actualizing* concern for legacy is fueled by what Cook-Greuter (2013) describes as an essential motivation for them, fulfilling their purpose in life; “this shift from feeling in one's full power to feeling no longer needed is especially common when (*Self-Determining* individuals) approach retirement... the question of one's worth in one's older, less engaged years looms large” (p. 71). The experience Tanya is going through may be of particular relevance to many of the study participants who mentioned transitioning out of their organizations.

Vision and strategy. Similar to adults in the *Self-Determining* and *Self-Questioning* stages, *Self-Actualizing* individuals are motivated and driven to making an impact on the world. However, this stage is differentiated from the others in that there is prevalent sense of purpose and a vision to fulfill (Cook-Greuter, 2013). While this is something that could apply to most of humanity regardless of their developmental stage, *Self-Actualizing* individuals have a more realistic perspective of what it entails to change the systemic patterns they see in the world. For example, Aleta expressed being very intentional by always having in mind the impact she intends to create through her work: “I try to overlay that that vision on top of the to do list.” Aleta and Tanya spoke at length about becoming and being strategic in their approach to work. Aleta's strategy takes into consideration the amount of energy needed in relation to how much control she has over an issue and her chances of winning a battle:

When I'm at my most effective I'm able to make some choices and focus on them rather than trying to do everything. Being able to be strategic with my energy is a

strategy I use. So, it's choosing battles that need to be fought the battles that I can win or I can bring in partners and we can win together.

A key component of executing their vision is the *Self-Actualizing* individual's capacity to consider and integrate multiple perspectives in their process.

Multiple perspectives. The *Self-Actualizing* stage reflects an expansion of the fourth person perspective characteristic of the *Self-Questioning* stage. What this means for individuals in this stage is that they have access to their life experience within the context of multiple perspectives and across time. Cook-Greuter (2013) states individuals in this stage are able to hold a historical perspective and “can comprehend multiple interconnected systems of relationships and processes both internally and externally as these are experienced as connected” (p.62). Aleta provided a number of examples in which she was able to observe, understand, and learn from the perspective of others, whether this happened through her daughters showing her different approaches to life (e.g., introverted vs extroverted) or fully comprehending the reasons and motivation of the teachers with which she has worked over the years:

I realized when I worked with a group of teachers in the summer of '96 who probably if I had seen them in practice I would not have been impressed with what they were doing. What I realized was they were doing the best they could with the tools they had.

Aleta's statement below exemplifies the ability a *Self-Actualizing* individual has to access other people's perspectives while being able to break down what they see at the systemic level to those who may not see the vision they have in mind.

I've had colleagues more than occasionally get really flustered saying like 'we changed we were gonna do this and now we changed it and I'm upset and how did that happen?' So I've learned to just be really proactive and state things that maybe to me were obvious. But of course, you can't assume [they] are obvious to everyone. Like here's our plan here's our 10 steps. I am absolutely certain many of these are going to change as we encounter the realities in front of us. And we won't let go of our goal.

Directly connected to how *Self-Actualizing* individuals integrate multiple perspectives is their decision making approach, which is more assertive than in previous stages.

Decision making and feedback. The way *Self-Actualizing* people make decisions displays an important movement in their developmental growth; while *Self-Questioning* individuals are relativists at the core, *Self-Actualizing* individuals have greater capacity to make meaning "independent of conventional ideas" (Cook-Greuter, 2013, p. 63). An aspect of this capacity to make meaning independently is how they deal with feedback. Both participants in this cluster shared insight consistent with this stage's characteristic. While at the time of the interview Tanya was not in a current job setting in which she is receiving much feedback from anyone because she is not running the day to day operations of any particular organization, she still shared how over the years her response to feedback changed: "I began to look at it if I needed to do my work as water and oil. My back was water, criticism was oil because I had to. It got to the point that I'm really good at doing that." For Aleta, it seemed to be an area in which she is very self-aware of

how it impacts her and how with time, she has developed the ability to not let other perspectives change her ultimate reaction:

I value it. It has made me much stronger. I gave you the example like feedback from my staff about you know, definitely made me better at what I do. But I'm still working on how deeply to allow it to permeate. And when to just be like OK I got it. And you make an interesting point but I'm going to choose not to act on it for whatever reason.

Though Aleta still finds it challenging to not get defensive when receiving feedback, she is transitioning from a relativist perspective to develop the capacity to make meaning and decisions for herself:

I would call myself indecisive. But I don't really think that's true anymore. But again, naturally I'm so curious about everyone's perspective that I could never make a decision, I could allow myself to get stuck in the way of like 'you know, that's a really good point, maybe...' you know, because every time you choose one thing you're choosing not to do other things. And I'm so deeply aware of that. Like I'm sad for the thing I didn't choose to do. Having said that I have gotten much more decisive. The way I make decisions when I'm at my best is just I stop for a second and I said, what is it that I'm trying to accomplish? What Is the goal I'm trying to accomplish? What is the question I'm trying to answer?

Both participants in this stage shared how crucial it is for them that their decision-making process be well informed. Thus, they place great importance on doing research and listening to other sources before they decide.

I found no participant responses that indicated inconsistencies with the MAP description of this stage. However, this lack of insight could be the consequence of the inability to transcribe much of the data I had from one of the participants due to technical issues with the recording of the interview.

Self-Actualizing leadership characteristics. According to the stage description, *Self-Actualizing* individuals are supposed to have transcended the "go it alone" attitude that characterizes the previous stage. Aleta displayed some alignment as she shared how she works and deals with input and multiple perspectives,

I think that the one thing I didn't learn until a while with Inspired Teaching that I wish I'd known earlier is on the one hand, building consensus getting buy-in is critically important. On the other hand, I was so against anything that felt like hierarchy. That I wasted a lot of time and created frustration because my colleagues told me. I would say well, there are 20 of us and only 19 of us agree so we're going to sit here for another three hours. I have since learned that that's sometimes what you need to do as a leader is say I've weighed all the data and I've made a decision and you may not like it but we're doing it. It took me a while to learn that.

Aleta's response is a good example of the shift in behavior between the decision paralysis that Christa (*Self-Questioning* participant) expressed and what Aleta (*Self-Actualizing*) shared.

Another leadership characteristic of *Self-Actualizing* individuals is their noticeable shift of focus from short-term to long-term outcomes; they are no longer interested in short-term victories. People in this stage become "concerned with what is happening at

all levels of an organization and point out potential long-term consequences (intended and unintended) both for the organizations as well as for the wellbeing of its members and of the wider world” (Vertical Development Academy, 2018, p.13). Once again, Aleta’s response exemplifies this approach:

I've also learned that you had to think long term. right? So, in the short term you might not like the policy on X Y Z but I know in the long term it's for the health of the organizations for the health of the mission, etc. I think I always knew how to adjust in midstream. You know, you make a choice you move forward and then as you go you recalibrate.

This section concludes the exploration of how the relationship between the MAP results per stage cluster and the open-ended interviews compare. The findings reflected how each developmental stage cluster displayed some consistencies and inconsistencies with the qualitative data. The next step in the process was to take a look at the entire qualitative data set to identify any possible themes. I discuss these themes in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS FINDINGS

This chapter begins by describing the themes that emerged from across all 19 of the *Formative Influences Timelines*. The second part of this chapter explores the themes that emerged from across all 19 of the open-ended interview responses. The two participants who did not complete the MAP assessment were included in this portion of the study.

Factors Shaping a Social Innovation Journey

The purpose of the *Formative Influences Timeline* was to gain insight on how participants became involved in the social innovation field. The individual findings were presented in Chapter 4 through the individual profiles narrating each participant's journey into social innovation. Next, I conducted the cross-case analysis of all 19 timelines to identify factors that influenced the entire sample's journey as social innovators. The findings that I present in this chapter were themes existent in at least 50% of the participants. While there was not one main theme across all participants indicating a specific reason for them to enter social innovation work, I identified four main themes regarding factors that shaped their journey into social innovation and the way they make meaning of it. The four themes are (a) the holding environment (100% of participants), (b) the impact of socioeconomic status (58% of participants), (c) overcoming hardships growing up (74% of participants), and (d) experiences living abroad (63% of participants). Each theme below includes exemplary quotations that support the finding described and how it impacted the participants' social innovation journey. The themes presented in this section help to answer the first part of Research Question 1: *What factors, if any, challenged or supported their journey as social innovators?*

The Holding Environment.

Perhaps the most important element bringing together all identified themes is how much the context in which each participant grew up influenced their engagement in social innovation. Given this study is using Constructive Developmental Theory (CDT) as a foundation, it is important to note CDT uses the term *holding environment* to allude to what others would call context. CDT defines *holding environment* as the "totality of the

surrounding and embedding social and interpersonal world of love, family, work, and play.” (McCauley et al., 2006). *Holding environment*-related findings are manifest all throughout each individual profile presented in Chapter 4; it showed up in the kind of family structure they had, their parents’ background and values, the community in which they were raised, and their socioeconomic status growing up. To shed some light on why this finding is meaningful, we need to look at the way constructive developmental theory (CDT) – of which ego developmental theory is a subset – describes developmental growth.

CDT poses that developmental growth involves an individual’s gradual increasing awareness on his or her way of making meaning. What was once subjective becomes objective as they are able to name and see how their way of seeing life may have been limited, and as a result they expand their way of understanding and operating in the world. Thus, their meaning-making process becomes more complex with each developmental shift. These shifts are driven by challenges bringing to light the limitations an individual was not able to see before (McCauley et al., 2006). These challenges do not happen in a vacuum; this is where the holding environment comes into play. The holding environment influences the developmental process of an individual by challenging or supporting their current meaning-making framework. Therefore, it is no surprise to see how critical each participant’s holding environment was to their journey into social innovation.

The Impact of Socioeconomic Status.

It seems as though socioeconomic status is one aspect within the holding environment that was critical in the participant’s social innovation journey. The

participant's status demarcated the kind of access, resources and opportunities they had. For the purposes of this study a high socio-economic status will equate to privilege. Growing up in privilege was one of the key factors influencing the lives of 58% of the sample (11 white participants, five men and six women), who all mentioned having grown up in relative privilege.

It is not a new finding that Social Entrepreneurs, and particularly those recognized by fellowships like Ashoka, come from what would be considered privileged backgrounds. In fact, Michael Zakaras, director of partnerships for Ashoka United States and a member of the Ashoka Fellows selection team, published an article in 2016 in the Stanford Social innovation Review in which he shared the results of a study exploring the lack of diversity across many of the social entrepreneurship fellowships, Ashoka included (Zakaras, 2016). In the article, he shared that over 60% of the Ashoka fellows at the time came from the same four cities: Boston, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., and that “they are also disproportionately white, male, and highly educated” (Zakaras, 2016, p.59). What makes this finding interesting in relation to participants' life timelines is the exploration of how privilege influenced their journeys into social change.

As it can be expected, for these 11 participants, privilege offered opportunities for better education, as well as access to social circles and opportunities that other people did not have. For example, many of them attended Ivy League schools, which would later become important to their organizations, given that they had the social networks and academic backing to find funding in critical years of growth for their organizations. The opportunities and exposure they had brought them insight as well to the needs of others and an understanding of social injustice. For Ben, Gary, Patrick, and Jeff, their

experiences abroad allowed them to see what social injustice looks like in other countries. This experience combined with their background in business led all four of them to identify gaps in the local systems where their skills could be put to use for good. For others, like Jill, Aleta, and Suzanne, privilege played a role in allowing them to be able to take risks, find agency, and overcome some of the challenges, that they face (especially as women) when creating a social enterprise. Suzanne stated, “I think the challenge is that you have to have enough privilege to be able to do this work right and particularly in the startup phase.”

A commonality mentioned by these 11 participants was their awareness of how their social innovation journey had been positively and drastically impacted by their privilege. Gary felt very cognizant of the fact that he is a tall white guy who comes from privilege. He clarified that it was not so much that he identified with that as he knew that that's how other people see him. This awareness led him to feel a profound sense of obligation to do something positive, to create some type of a positive impact with the privilege he was born into. Jeff used a sports metaphor that illustrates his self-awareness on this topic: “I was born on third base. I didn't hit a triple. I know a lot of people who were born on third base thinking they hit a triple.” Jeff would later in life make the intentional choice to move his wife and kids to live and work in Africa in order to take his kids out of the privileged bubble in which they were being raised. Similarly, Ben and Patrick were intentional in leaving their ivory towers and privileged communities in Massachusetts and Switzerland, respectively, to learn more about themselves and the world. It was during these travels that both of them realized how privilege and power had influenced their life experience; for example, Patrick's “epiphany” moment came when

he realized he was “making the rich richer and the poor poorer.” This realization led him to shift his professional career into the social change field.

For some fellows, the experience of growing up in privilege came as well with a sense of discomfort. This was the case for Sascha, who had the chance to run in very affluent social circles in his native country of Germany. He stated,

I felt uncomfortable not so much because I couldn't or wouldn't do it. I just felt that was deeply wrong... seeing how doors are closed for some, and open for others, that's I think something that broadly speaking bugged me. So, the environment was you know was fine. It was just deeply frustrating. I didn't find my place in it at all.

Suzanne and Christa had a similar experience dealing with discomfort in relation to privilege. While attending Stanford University for law school, they engaged and worked with communities who lacked access to many of the things schooling at Stanford would afford them. To this point, Christa said,

When I would go to early meetings I would never say where I went to law school. I would always say that I went to law school in the Bay Area. I consciously never had like a license plate that said anything about where I was an alumna. So, it's kind of a part of my identity that I tried to hide.

Some participants spoke about an expanded awareness of how their privilege intersects with their race and their gender. For example, for Jeff the experiences of dialogue and learning as an Aspen Fellow, a common fellowship experience for other Ashoka Fellows, within the last three or four years were a reckoning of how privilege has shown up for him in other forms beyond money: “I think I've walked much more gingerly

since then just realizing I don't have, I don't have any idea what it's like to not be a white male with resources and education.” Jill pointed to the painful but important recent realization for her that, even when she always believed her success as a social entrepreneur was connected to all her hard work, privilege played a big role in her success.

It's just it's hard to ignore, although I know a lot of people are working hard to do it, to ignore the extent to which my success is so clearly predicated on the privilege that I was born to and the access to everything from a network which has enabled me to fundraise and credentials that you know fill a narrative that are easier to invest in... There's no way that I would have been this successful had I not had the privilege that I was afforded.

The experience and impact of their socio-economic status and privilege manifested very differently for the participants who stated they grew up in middle and lower socioeconomic backgrounds. For those who mentioned living in privilege, their travels abroad and exposure to other places were the key experiences that informed a greater understanding of empathy, complexity, and poverty. On the other hand, for participants who mentioned having grown up without economic privilege, it was the experience of economic anxiety – and in some cases poverty – that activated them to explore ways in which they could make a difference for the lives of others who were in a similar position to how they grew up. Both groups gained empathy as well as a broader understanding of how a system works, but the roads that led them there were very different.

An interesting juxtaposition related to economic privilege was how many of the participants think about money and how little the objective to make money has played in their ability to do this work. As exemplified in the following statements of David, Patrick, and Lennon, the reason for them to engage in this work goes beyond the financial reward they could ever get:

Like it would have been very easy for me to make much more money than I made. So that's not what motivates me. Why do I care about those things?

Because when you look in the mirror you have to say what is this life about? And I had to answer that question for myself and I had to give myself an answer that I can respect. (David)

It is a part where you can play you can be part of something bigger. It's not that you just come in to take a position and then you make money. It's something that it gives you a sense of purpose. (Patrick)

I place greater weight in the currency of a meaning and purpose than I do in money. (Lennon)

However, the majority of the participants also stated how challenging it was to start an organization from nothing; finding funds to operate was often a priority throughout their careers, on top of leading and managing many other aspects of their organizations. For some, their decision to follow the social innovation path had an impact on their personal finances and economic futures. Many mentioned having gone without pay for the first few years of their organization's life; others mentioned leaving profitable careers in law (David, Susanne, Lynn, and Christa) or in the mining industry (Patrick), for a job that paid less. Some fellows also realized the impact their early life as social

innovators had on their current economic status. For example, when Lynn started her organization, she could absorb many of the expenses because she had made good money during her career in cable television. However, over time money became a challenging factor:

I was in a position to jump in. 24/7 blood sweat and tears, live it, sleep it, dream it, nightmare whatever it takes. And all of a sudden you wake up one day and you go "oh this is great, I've now spent a lot of the money that I made in the corporate world and developing this nonprofit. And like maybe I should be taking care of my own family and making a living.

Financial resources also had an impact on the social innovation career. Tomás, who transitioned out of his leadership role two years ago, spent some time reflecting on his entire tenure running an organization. He realized that prioritizing his well-being, his mental health, and his family's well-being is vital now that his organization is stable. The statement below provides more insight into his experience:

I've spent a decade of like 30 to 40 like building this organization but also like self-sacrificing in all these different ways and burning out and like defaulting on my student loan and like now having to clean up this financial mess that I made because those are top earning income years that like I was not making market value, right? And so well under market value. So, there is a tradeoff of building that organization and what it cost me personally, fiscally, spiritually and then thinking about my 40s as being like this is this next 10 years is gonna be setting me up for the rest of my life and how I live my 50s 60s and 70s. Physically, relationally because at that point I wasn't married yet. I was in a relationship for

seven years with now my wife. So, I started to really think about like okay it's time for me to prioritize myself. When I think about it, time is very big for me because, right now I'm 41 and I see my 40s as not only trying to catch up but get ahead financially because I know that when I retire I'm not gonna be able to rely on having worked someplace for 30 years and having a pension or I can't rely on Social Security because it probably won't exist when I get older. And I need to be in a position to care for my parents or my wife's parents, if they need that and they likely will need that.

Socioeconomic status and resources are elements also connected to the next theme found across most participants in the study, the experience of hardship.

Overcoming Hardships Growing Up

A theme for 74% of the sample (14 of the 19 participants) was the experience of challenging times while growing up. While the challenges they faced have different levels of complexity, this is a theme worth exploring given it provides insight into how hardship shaped their journey as social innovators. This theme is consistent with Ego Development theory given that, as noted in the literature review of this study, hardship, challenges, and (in some instances) pain in an individual's journey can be a catalyst of change from one developmental stage to the next (Lewis & Jacobs, 1992; Weathersby, 1993; McCauley et al., 2006; Cook-Greuter, 2013). However, as previously noted, experiencing hardship is not enough; rather, the experience needs to be accompanied by deep reflection and self-awareness in order to lead to developmental growth (Weathersby, 1993; Helsing et al., 2008).

The dynamics of privilege. The experience of hardship was noticeably distinct between the participants who grew up in privilege versus those who did not. Thus, I explore below how hardship shaped the lives of participants by looking into the common threads for each of these groups. It is worth noting that five of the six fellows who described growing up in these conditions were people of color and only one of them, Tanya, identified as white.

Some of the participants grew up in communities and families facing a tremendous amount of socio-economic challenges and experiencing economic distress. For these participants, their adversity was often connected to poverty related issues, such as dealing with institutional racism, growing up in single-parent households, as well as experiencing domestic violence, and housing and food insecurity. Education, as is the case for many in these situations, proved to be the way out for David, Trabian, and Tomás, who were able to attend school in communities with a higher socio-economic profile; however as discussed in their individual narratives, this proved to bring its own set of challenges. Tomás and Trabian recalled experiencing discrimination and institutional racism. They struggled with fitting in and finding their place when they attended schools with a majority white and privileged student population. David recalled the amount of hard work he had to put in, in order to succeed in these environments given the pressure to make it out of a community that was suffering from the effects of racism:

It was just super hard work. I mean just being focused on academic success and being focused on... I knew. I always knew academic success was the ticket out and so I focused on academic success and I could see like I could see what was happening to my peer group of people who weren't like I mean I would literally...

I could see they were on the corner killing each other... and I was like: that's not going to be me.

Kathryn recalled the amount of work it took for her to be able to stay in school at UCLA while being a single mother and dealing with housing insecurity. The participants in this group dealt with the added pressure to do better and pursue financially stable careers. Once these fellows completed college and entered their professional lives, it was a difficult decision to engage in social change because in some instances it would mean going against what their parents expected of them as they chose to leave a secure financial future for an uncertain one that promised more fulfillment. This was the case of Imran who spoke about how challenging it was for him to tell his father he would pursue a career in education versus a more profitable career as it was expected of him, he stated, "I made a step that sort of challenged my father and his dreams for us having a wealthy life and became an educator."

For the participants growing up relative privilege, their experiences with hardship were very different from those described above; nevertheless, hardship was present. They recalled situations at home like divorce, alcoholism, death in the family, dyslexia, bullying at school, not fitting in, and feeling like the underdog. Many participants believed these experiences provided a greater depth of understanding on the issues other people deal with, as well as an opportunity to recognize their own privilege. For example, Jeff spoke of learning to use a different lens to see the difficult times he lived through, a lens that allowed him to see there's purpose, a reason for which things happen. Jeff and Jill commented on how their family situation, divorce and addiction respectively, helped them realize their privilege and a sense of life beyond what they knew. Jill stated,

“alcoholism was a dynamic in the family that I was aware of. So, I grew up simultaneously with privilege but also a sense of insight and empathy into how things could be broken.”

Across the board for all participants, the experience of hardship also involved two other important outcomes: a clear understanding of how vulnerable people across communities can be, and the realization that other people were there to provide support and help during the most difficult times. Christa and Suzanne shared the experience of being bullied in school and how it led them to greater empathy and a commitment to help care for the underdog, the vulnerable. Jeff, Tanya, and Kathryn, among many other participants, spoke about how their darkest times also brought the gift of receiving kindness and support from other people within and beyond their immediate network; from buying groceries for them and providing shelter, to being role models they could aspire to be.

A common thread across all participants was that they viewed these tough experiences as part of a story in which they played a role. They believed adversity helped build character. They were able to see a version of this story in which they could use agency to change the narrative and make a new story. Through constant reflection, awareness and hard work, many of them took control of their stories and narratives, though in different way for those with privilege versus those without it. The participants of color needed to place themselves in the middle of the story as protagonists to break the stereotypes and patterns of poverty that surrounded their communities. For those growing up in privilege, they found a way to realize they were not at the center of the story and worked on identifying the role they could play in the story of others. All of them

displayed an ability to process these experiences and turn them into lifelong lessons, inspiration, and motivation to do many of the things they accomplished over the years.

Tomás referred to this process as “transmutation,”³ explaining,

I became fascinated with this idea of transmutation and how I could take my lifelong experiences and incidences and in turn gain insight from them, reflect on, and even get to a point to where I can be thankful for all of it because it all contributed to who I am.

Perhaps the most noticeable timeline theme where privilege played a role is the travel experiences that those with more comfortable socio-economic status had. These experiences heavily influenced the way they see the world and how they came to make sense of their work.

Experiences Living Abroad.

Travel stood out as one of the most shared factors shaping the participants’ journey into social change. 63% of the sample (12 participants) lived or spent a significant amount of time outside their country of origin. This is consistent with Cook-Greuter’s (2013) assertion that developmental growth takes place when exposed to realities different than one’s own, “for many the recognition that one’s own view of life is not the only possible one happens when traveling abroad and encountering other peoples and languages” (p. 54). Of course, this was not the case for all participants, but it is worth noting that for those that spoke about it, the majority of their experiences were longer than a summer or a semester abroad; some participants spent years living abroad. As to the reason for their travel, most of them had in common a desire for getting out of their

³ “the action of changing or the state of being changed into another form” (Oxford English Dictionary)

environment and a longing to see what else was out there, as exemplified by Ana and Patrick in these statements:

I had this hunger to see different places and to see different things and I think I ended up getting the education that I desired, you know, kind of very instinctively knew that I needed to get out. (Ana)

I decided I want to go away and reconsider what to do with my life. And this is when I said I need to go to a country I've never been to, a neutral place. (Patrick)

While their experiences influenced them in numerous ways, there are three particular areas in which these participants saw travel as a transformative experience: exposure to new realities, a greater understanding of others, and a shift in their way of seeing their world.

A key insight for participants who had experiences abroad was the opportunity to see realities outside the bubble in which they were raised. This was particularly true for participants who grew up in privilege, like Ben, Gary, Patrick, and Jeff. Their travels showed them the social injustices and poverty in which different communities live. For example, for Ben, traveling was very formative because through his experience in Mexico he learned to think in a different language and identify his privilege while living in a situation completely foreign to where he had grown up:

Like many people, or at least for people who have a lot of privilege, you leave these elite institutions and then you get out into the real world and you realize that the real world is kind of collapsing and falling apart and nothing is as good as you would hope it would be unless you kind of stay in certain industries where you can stay in that bubble.

Ana's experience abroad helped her other realities but, in her case, she became aware of how the rest of the world sees the United States. She learned about the role the U.S. had played during Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile, which led her to question the narrative of American exceptionalism with which she had grown up:

It's like we've done a lot of bad things around the world and it really was like a kind of a critical thinking prism that I had not gotten from college and or my high school and so it was for me that was really a game changer. There was like a period of just real soul searching around that.

A number of participants had their critical travel experience in college and early formative years (Ben, Gary, Lennon, Jill, Aleta, Sascha, Lennon, and Tanya). Others had pivotal experiences later in their professional careers, as was the case for Jeff, Daniel, Ana, and Patrick. In many cases this experience was the critical factor in them shifting careers and paths. Patrick is perhaps the most powerful example of someone for whom travel led to a career shift. He had been working for a while for the same company and it was not until he traveled to Peru on a work assignment that he fully comprehended the impact his company had in creating and perpetuating poverty among the Peruvian miners. Not only did he become aware of other people's realities, but he also understood the role he played in this situation.

Interestingly, three of the fellows were connected to experiences in South Africa. Jill was there while apartheid was taking place, Aleta got to experience local plays and protests regarding apartheid while she lived in London, and Sascha ended up working for a period of time in South Africa right after apartheid ended. Their learning varies but they all mentioned it as something that would later inform their approach to what they do. For

Jill, living in South Africa during apartheid was a critical experience of feeling powerless while coming face to face with issues taking place both at home and abroad. Aleta's experience helped her see the power for positive change behind tools she had been trained on, in her case theater: "It was the first time I had really been immersed in theatre as a tool for social change and my own learning about the issues around apartheid and about whatever other critical issues were going on." Lastly, for Sascha it was disappointing to see how some NGOs were dealing with the local issues in ideological ways instead of being practical and his interest in learning more about urban conflict and how to bring about actual change deepened.

Traveling and living abroad helped many of the fellows gain a greater understanding of others and the complexities in the world as well as identify a possible way with which they could engage with a problem they cared about. For example, for Jeff, even though he had been traveling internationally for business for some years, his experience living abroad in Zambia helped him better understand the complexities of the problems that development and aid organizations were trying to solve in Africa. It was his daily exposure to the local issues that led him to identify an overlooked aspect in the lives of the community, the lack of access to business opportunities. In the case of Ben, Patrick, and Gary, their experiences in Mexico and Guatemala helped them see how their personal skills - in this case their business acumen - could be a tool to make a difference in the lives of others. For Lennon, travel experience brought about more questions about ways in which she could engage in social change. She got to experience two very different approaches to the work through her summer in Tanzania and Kenya: On one hand, she witnessed the paternalistic approach many American organizations take while

doing work abroad, and on the other, she learned and was present to the powerful experience of local women being their own agents of change.

Overall, the travel experiences noted by the participants indicate powerful and meaningful moments in which the fellows learned more about themselves, gained an understanding of their role in the system, and identified ways in which they would take part in making a difference at systemic levels. Millions of people travel and have similar experiences throughout their life, so why would travel play such a key role in the development of social innovators? It is worth noting that the experiences these individuals had were not average tourism travel. Three common characteristics can be noted from their travel experiences: exposure to social injustice, a reflective time set aside by the individual, and transference of learning into their lives upon returning home.

These themes and their consequences will be further explored in chapter 7, but first, in the next section I discuss the last set of themes that emerged from all qualitative data. The themes described provide some insight on how participants make meaning of their past experiences, their present selves, and their work.

Meaning-Making Themes for Social Innovators

The purpose of the open-ended interviews was to gain insight on how participants make meaning of themselves and their work, as expressed in their own words. Chapter 4 explored findings concerning each of the four developmental stages identified in the sample as revealed by their MAP scores. This section presents the themes that emerged from across all 19 participants' open-ended interview responses. I identified four main themes regarding factors that shaped their journey into social innovation and the way they make meaning of it. The three themes presented in this section help to answer

Research Question 4: *How do social innovators make meaning of themselves and their work?*

Reflective Practice

A theme present for 74% of the sample was the practice of reflection and the intentional processing their experiences. As discussed in Chapter 5, this theme was big commonality for the *Self-Determining* participants; however, it is worth exploring further because having a reflective practice showed up in interview responses across the entire participant sample regardless of their MAP scores. For example, Tomás spoke about the importance of taking time to reflect and process experiences as an essential practice at his organization. Given their work with youth and mental health, Tomás prioritized creating a culture in which everyone would have access to intentional reflective spaces to facilitate therapeutic processes. This practice included also the organization's staff; "we knew that if we can create that space for ourselves there's no way that we could possibly show up and be present for our young people in a way that they needed us to be present." Patrick, Jill, and Christa also spoke on how essential it was for them to find time to be introspective, find clarity, and grow.

Participants listed three main strategies for reflecting and making meaning of their experiences: writing, talking with others, and being active; each participant used one or more of these strategies. Daniel, Ana, Tanya, Lennon, Gary, and Suzanne talked about using writing (including journaling) as a go-to method of processing. The following are examples of their responses:

I was a writer long before I was in this space. I became a journalist because I started writing. I think the first thing my mom has that I wrote was when I was eight. She has a poem. (Ana)

I was a frequent journaler. I feel like journaling has always been helpful for me to kind of process the things down. (Suzanne)

It's just a lot of consumption of observations and information and writing it down and continually revisiting it and trying to find patterns as you do that. And at the end of the day with the recognition that it only works if it works for everybody involved in. You are creating sort of these mutually symbiotic ecosystems and that's critical to this process. (Gary)

Similarly, Daniel recalled how important writing was for him when he embarked in his first hiking experience by himself:

I journaled while I was doing it. I actually had I actually had a machine a little a little computer with me and every time I stopped for a break or meditation or a snack or to try and figure out where the hell I was, I would actually kind of document what I was thinking and what I was feeling and what was around me partly because I just I really wanted to remember the moment. And then afterward I kind of went over it and smooth it out a bit and kind of flesh it out with additional impressions and things that I recall and so forth. I often will write a lot about my experience.

For other participants, the ability to process out loud, speaking with people they trust, was their preferred method to make meaning of their experiences. For some, their significant others played this role, as it was the case for Tomás, Ana, Aleta, and Jeff.

Sascha and Lynn noted how important is for them to have a selected group of people with whom they can process. For Lynn it was especially important given she experienced so many people in her young life who were naysayers, who took away choices from her when she was in foster care. She explains,

My tribe is close and distant. I am a pretty private person so I'm very careful to choose who I was and share my life with her or my ideas with because I don't want naysayers in there... the strategy is really seeking... I don't want to say necessarily like-minded because you also need the ebb and flow of conversation, but related communities where your voice will be heard and people will listen.

Seeking insight from others helped them to reflect and gain insight on perspectives other than their own. For example, Christa explained how important it was for her to seek insight from other people as she processed; “the fact that I wasn't looking for just one place to help me make sense of it, I was getting input from a variety of places that, quite honestly, had sometimes diametrically opposed opinions I think really helped me.” She also noted that her strategies have changed over the years as she changed and grew.

A number of participants mentioned that doing exercise and being active (e.g., running, hiking or walking) was a key tool they had used to process very difficult moments and make sense of them. Jill and Christa’s responses provide insight on why this strategy:

I just remember being in my body and running in the ocean and this sense of remembering who I was and trying to make sense of this new understanding of

the world... Anyway, being physical and being outside and making sense of it all feels like something I do. (Jill)

I go and I stay at this place in Mt Shasta and go out for you know 13-14 mile hikes every day on the Pacific Crest Trail and we'll do that for five six days in a row and just not see any people not talk to any people not be on my cell phone just be with nature. And that's been a huge gift that keeps on giving. (Christa)

Most participants mentioned being very intentional about reflecting and processing by taking time to be by themselves. It is worth noting that 11 participants spoke about practicing meditation, if not regularly at least striving to learn and make it into a practice. Not all of them stated using meditation for processing; some use it as a helpful activity for their well-being.

A component of reflecting on present and past experiences is questioning the why, how, and what of any experience, so it is not surprising to see curiosity and inquiry as the second cross-case theme related to how participants make meaning.

Curiosity

Over a third of the participants (37%) expressed that being curious was an essential aspect of their identity, a helpful mindset to make meaning of their experiences and to make sense of the world around them. Curiosity is often cited as an important skill to engage in lifelong learning (Fulcher, 2008). What makes this finding interesting is that their responses showed participants go beyond calling themselves curious; rather, they use curiosity as mindset, an everyday practice to make meaning. It seems, for many, curiosity has become a practice to process different aspects of their life. Although the topic of curiosity showed up in participants across different stages, being curious is a

particular characteristic of those in the *Self-Determining* stage, which is also the largest stage cluster of participants in this study. *Self-Determining* individuals are interested in learning more about themselves and others, and their use of the scientific method is a preferred way of making meaning; “finding the causes and working out explanations for what one observes are paramount for the scientific, modern method of inquiry and knowledge acquisition” (Cook-Greuter, 2013, p. 44). Hence it is no surprise that so many of the participants described being curious as part of their identity.

Cook-Greuter (2013) suggests *Self-Determining* individuals are interested in getting to the root causes of problems, which will then in turn help them achieve their goals and desired outcomes. As mentioned, people in the *Self-Determining* stage are more open to feedback and are interested in improving and learning more about themselves. Thus, curiosity is also another manifestation of this developmental stage. Cook-Greuter (2013) states that people at this stage “are curious what makes themselves and others ‘tick’ in more than a passive ‘I wonder why?’-way. They will actively ask to find out what motivates others and explore causes of both their own and others’ behavior” (p. 43). However, curiosity was not a theme exclusive to the participants assessed as being at the *Self-Determining* stage. The topic came up as well for participants at other stages, such as Greg (*Skill-Centric*), Aleta (*Self-Actualizing*), and the participants who did not complete the MAP assessment. Such was the case of Imran, who recalled being good from an early age at critical thinking, aiming to get to the root cause of something and trying to understand how people feel about something. This skill became a great tool during his time as a teacher. Imran witnessed how many of his students faced many struggles on a daily basis, which was a challenging experience for him to fully comprehend. He

described asking questions as the best way he found to make meaning of the whole experience:

I think as I was dealing with those issues, the [classroom experiences] were so dramatic and so intense they were such a challenge to me that I processed it by just continuously asking myself why is this happening? What might other people be thinking about that? Where might they be getting that information from? What are all the reasons that I am seeing the world in one way and my students are seeing the world in another? And why is there a disconnect between how I'm trying to get messages and drive certain things in the classroom and asking them to do X Y and Z and why are they resisting? Or why are we having a challenge in the classroom? And for me is always why, why, why, why, why, and how are this in the world?

The following statements are examples of why participants considered curiosity an important and useful way to understand themselves, others and their work:

I feel like I have a mindset that is questioning it's questioning the status quo. It's saying: Can't we do it better. Do we really have to do it this way? Why did we get to be this way? And then think about well what are the root causes of the problem? How can we attack those root causes and how can we mobilize and we arrange resources and partnerships. (Ben)

I think it's just asking questions from every possible angle and listening and trying to learn. I mean I think that, sort of we're in the change business and the problem-solving business which means you're trying to find out what's working and what

isn't working and where you can play a value-added role in people becoming empowered to solve their own problems and change their lives. (Gary)

I spent a lot of time like pulling students aside and talking and just listening deeply to their stories and trying to piece together the world and in which they lived in the context in which they saw the world, and how that was different from mine so that when I approached them and tried to give them support or try to manage. (Imran)

The practice of inquiry and curiosity continues to impact the way they operate at work and how they learn to make meaning and adapt to ongoing changes. While some fellows have used inquiry and curiosity as ways to make meaning of their work, others have used it more introspectively to make meaning of themselves. For example, Lennon mentioned she had no idea she would end up doing what she is doing today as a social innovator, but asking questions led her to this path. She recalled earlier professional experiences that led her to ask different sets of questions and to interrogate her life differently. Lennon stated, “The learning laboratory and the questions that it asked provoked a different set of questions in me whereby I responded to my own life differently.”

Aleta was the only participant in the Post-Conventional tier that alluded to being curious as part of her identity. She believes her faith identity, growing up Jewish, very much informed her desire to always question everything, particularly when she encountered social injustice. She spoke of being curious as a daily practice to understand what is happening in her organization, and particularly people; “Whatever I’m doing I’m curious about everyone in the room. How do you learn? How does your brain work?” For

Aleta, curiosity is part of her identity as it has helped her inform who she is at her core. There did not seem to be much a stark difference between how participants in different stages practiced curiosity.

Bridging Different Worlds

Over a third of participants (37%) in the study spoke of developing the ability to navigate different worlds. While many of the participant men may be able to navigate different worlds based on their life experiences, it is important to note that this theme manifested only for women participants in the study. Seven of the nine women participants referred to it as an experience, whereas none of the men in the study mentioned anything like it. Given that there are very few studies exploring gender differences and developmental stages as mentioned in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5, I reached out directly to Cook-Greuter to ask for her insights on this particular theme, to which she responded:

Having done thousands of MAPs, what we have observed across cultures is that in the conventional stages being socialized into a particular mind- and value set is the rule and thus gender role differences are most evident. Once folks get into the postconventional, i.e. they can now take a perspective on their own social conditioning and imbibed ideas of what it means to be a good man or woman, the differences are much less pronounced. At the very late stages (5/6 and 6), we often can't tell whether the MAP is from a man or a woman or whoever unless they specifically reveal it (Cook-Greuter, personal communication, March 20, 2019).

The most recent study I found that focused on gender and developmental stages, as well other demographic factors, found no statistically significant relationship between gender and developmental stage (Truluck & Courtenay, 2002). Thus, there is an opportunity to further explore gender differences within particular populations.

For many participants, the experience of understanding and navigating two worlds came from the intersecting identities with which they grew up; these identities were always linked to being a woman in different contexts. For Lennon it was being a Southern woman living in between different economic worlds; for Christa it was being a female athlete in a sexist town; for Ana it was growing up in the South to a gun-owning family and being a journalist; for Suzanne it was growing up with two sets of parents with very different approaches to life; for Tanya it was being a short, white, Jewish woman in rooms where the majority of people were men; and for Kathryn it was being a biracial woman growing up in the L.A. projects and Arkansas.

The participants spoke about how useful it was to have lived experience with worlds that for some may seem far apart. This ability became particularly relevant for all of them as they embarked on their work in social innovation. First, they learned to notice the gap between those worlds, and then it became a tool to bridge the gap as part of the work in social change. Being able to bridge two worlds has had an impact in various aspects of their work. For example, Christa's experience informed her approach to leadership and provided her the skill of finding commonalities in radically different systems and navigating or operating in different contexts; she called it code-switching. She takes the opportunity to engage in a neutral way, particularly when trying to address a situation in which two systems are at odd with one another: "When you're trying to do

system change and fix the system, and you're trying to dismantle the system that's not working. Doing that in a way where you're not eviscerating people and you're part of the solution." Suzanne's experience attending Stanford Law School while working and eventually living for a period of time in East Palo Alto, a low-income community near the more affluent Stanford community of Palo Alto, gave her the opportunity to "walk in both worlds." She mentioned this experience helped her understand how to work with different constituents and it showed her the importance of developing a sense of belonging in the community.

Ana spoke about how hard it has been to navigate worlds seemingly as opposite as those concerning gun ownership and gun law reform. She stated,

The work that I do and being able to bridge those two worlds, you know, the sort of country, Southern gun owner, farming reality that, you know, I know through my family and then the kind of big city perspective that is often very different from that. So that's the kind of living between this is really critical to the work that I do.

Her ability to understand both perspectives led her to reframe her work to focus on the commonalities between those two worlds. She has been able to gain credibility and create change while providing opportunities for these different constituents to engage in the work. In describing her approach, she stated, "It's a product of life experience and kind of skill after having years of doing this; inside finding people I can kind of really move among those worlds... It is challenging."

Tanya felt her work has always been in the space between research and real life. She valued her experience at UCLA learning the theory behind many of the experiences

she witnessed while working on housing insecurity issues and mental health. She described having to be very intentional in how to bridge those two worlds: “I had to learn how to clearly speak in a language that people from diverse backgrounds who know nothing about what I’m talking about can start to connect and understand.”

For Kathryn, the only woman of color in the study, the experience was a bit different than for the rest. She described herself as being very bilingual and bicultural. She shared how her history and ancestors informed her perspective in life and continue to inform how she interacts with different worlds:

I have to deal with the fact that my ancestors were bred to make more slaves and I’m a bred person and it doesn’t go that far back. My grandfather was bi racial. And his father was a man that could have his way with my great grandmother because he could. And so. The way that I could deal with that is, well you know what? Sometimes I have to call on my white ancestors. Because when you are dead you don’t know any better ... You know they help me understand that part of how people think. It’s a different, I call it European thinking you know. So. Instead of totally rejecting that, I kind of, I can do that when I have to. And then the other part is my Indigenous cultural memory. You know and I could do that. I think accepting that and balancing that enables me to have a strategy for survival.

Social Innovators often operate in very different contexts and systems. The ability to make meaning from a place that not only understands both perspectives but works to bridge the gap between them is perhaps one of the most salient aspects of the participants in this study.

Vision Setting

The third cross-case theme reflected in the study is a characteristic often attributed to social innovators: being a visionary leader (Mulgan et al., 2007; Schöning, 2013). 47% of the sample (nine participants) spoke about vision setting in relation to how they practice leadership. Seven male participants were evaluated with their *center of gravity* in the Conventional tier, and two, one man and one woman, as operating from the Post-Conventional tier. Beyond using vision as a way to describe the way they lead, participant responses provided insight on how they use vision setting as a way of making meaning to create a shared vision for others to understand the direction and type of change their organizations aim to create. The following responses are examples of this:

I think the word "vision setting" is an important way I lead. I am constantly trying to throw the rock as far as I can. So that everyone can see where it could go and the direction we can go. And I work to lead in a way that I bring the other people. I take what everybody wants and what's truly at the heart of what my close people want for the organization and the vision and I throw the rock. You know as far as I can. (Imran)

My view of leadership is that of someone who basically can take a group of people together who for some reason have some shared interests or chosen to work together and help them to have a clear goal and vision and make sure that everybody's talents get used to the fullest to achieve that vision. (Aleta)

You have a vision and you try to find good people and you show them that you care and that you trust them. And you try to set a good example. And you work your ass off to try to get stuff done. (Gary)

In my work, it's about kind of like facilitating a process around attaining a shared vision, a shared purpose and getting people bought-in and excited in that process and willing to invest in that shared vision in a way that doesn't compromise what they're doing in their daily life. (Tomás)

As an element of processing, vision setting seemed like a tool for participants to explore viable ways of tackling some organizational and social justice issues. For example, Patrick, David, and Imran spoke about using it as a tool to process and fully understand their work by putting together the puzzle pieces that would take to accomplish that vision. The way participants spoke about working towards their vision for their organizations reflected aspects of their *center of gravity*, at least in the case of the *Self-Determining* participants like being goal driven and focused on outcomes. Even when the participant did not complete their MAP assessment, as it was the case of Imran, his responses are consistent with the way someone in the *Self-Determining* stage operates. He stated:

I'm constantly strategically dreaming and thinking about what the next five years or ten years could be and all the steps that it takes to get there and in my brain I'm like I'm always looking at where is the organization now or the movement now? where can the movement be in two years from now or three years from now? Where does it need to be in five or ten? Can the ten-year destination be turned into a five-year destination or a three-year destination?

Another characteristic shared by some participants in regards to how they connect leadership and vision is their desire to focus on the large, macro perspective aspects of their organization, not the day-to-day management of the process. This was the case for

David, Sascha, and Jeff. They all spoke of being big-picture thinkers and being better at envisioning rather than the operational nitty gritty of making it all happen. I shared before Daniel's struggle with finding people who can see the big picture the way he sees it. The following statements by Patrick and Ben are further examples of this:

I recognize it, my view is really macro, really visionary what it's like in the future. And I also realize when it goes down into like the business area my attention span goes down. The minute it's sort of day to day I just realize how my attention span goes down. And that is something I am, I'm just not so interested in. (Patrick)

My leadership style is really actually I am not a micromanager. I am about having a vision and attracting people who believe in that vision. I have a clear strategy. I am a very high-level thinker and you know I'm not a detail guy. I really look at this always in the highest context. And now people tell me you're always look at things about 50000 feet about sea level and they say you should also sometimes... you know and I mean I can do that. But my way of issues I look at it from that angle., what is macro? (Ben)

This finding is important because it reflects an essential aspect of the way these participants lead, by showing others what the future can look like, imagining new realities and finding new ways of seeing things. However, it is also worth noting that being a visionary is also among the list of positive traits that have informed and fueled the current narrative surrounding social innovators as extraordinary individuals (Papi-Thorton, 2016b; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). Thus, it is important to explore not only this theme but all cross-case themes in relation to what this all means for the future of social

innovation and whether this study supports, contributes to, or challenges the prevalent narrative.

Leadership Metaphors

In order to draw out deeper insight on how Social Innovators make meaning of their leadership practice, I added a question to interview that asked them to share a metaphor that would describe the way they lead. The findings to this question are included in Appendix H. The participant's answers were another way of accessing the vision they speak of in this theme. Each metaphor was converted into an illustration; these illustrations are included in Appendix I.

The metaphors provided display different approaches to practicing leadership, and while there is not one major theme around the way all participants describe their leadership practice, a couple of interesting things are worth noting. First, a number of metaphors referred to elements in nature: fire, river, paths, and animals. Among them, water was the choice visual for three participants (Christa, Kathryn, and Patrick); while the way they explained their metaphor varies, they all represent a way in which this element transforms what was there before. Secondly, two participants used the metaphor of a bridge, which was one of the themes discussed in this chapter. Lastly, one of the two participants in the *Self-Actualizing* stage used the imagery of a spiral, which is one of the ways in which adult development theories tends to be described visually. It is intriguing and somewhat not surprising that a participant at a later stage would have access to this metaphor when describing her way of practicing leadership. The final chapter of this study explores how the themes and findings discussed in Chapters 4-6 help provide greater insight into how social innovators make meaning.

CHAPTER 7

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter I bring together the findings from Chapters 4, 5, and 6 and explore ways in which these findings intersect with one another; for example, how the factors identified through the *Formative Influences Timeline* connect with the meaning-making themes. Thus, the following sections provide an overview of the findings for each research question and present propositions emerging from the findings of this study. Thereafter, I present a discussion on methodological approach, study limitations, and future research opportunities. The chapter concludes with a personal reflection on my positionality and learning through this research, as well as the implications of the study.

Research Question 1 Summary and Propositions

1. What factors, if any, challenged or supported their journey as social innovators? How do these factors relate to the way social innovators make meaning?

To answer this research question, participants were invited to create a *Formative Influences Timeline* that would denote the turning points that shaped their journey into social innovation. Chapter 4 presented an overview of each participant's responses, identifying and exploring the factors that formed, challenged and supported their journeys. Each narrative highlighted the participant's critical experiences and influences as told during their interview. Table 6 lists a summary of the various factors and personal influences named throughout the interviews.

Table 6

Summary of the Various Factors and Personal Influences Named Throughout the Interviews

Critical Moments	
Critical Moments\A-ha moment	Examples: horse accident, Mother's passing, living abroad, being evicted, experiencing homelessness, hiking alone.
Critical Moments\Interaction with Other	Teaching abroad and in the USA, working with youth, speakers at conferences.
Experiences	
Experience\School	Examples: attending boarding school, getting a scholarship, experiencing bullying, racism, and discrimination
Experience\Career shift	Realizing teaching is not their calling, attending business school, having kids, feeling angry about social injustice.
Experience\Work experience	Examples: seeing the impact their current job had on perpetuating poverty cycles, feeling disappointed on systemic injustice.
Experience\Hardship	Examples: economic anxiety, disease, bullying, sexism, parent's divorce, addiction in the family, domestic abuse.
Experience\Travel	Examples, studying abroad, working abroad, moving to live in a country they never visited before, volunteering abroad, creating a business abroad.
Experience\fellowship\	Examples; becoming a fellow in programs like Ashoka, Skoll and Aspen fellowships.
Personal Influences	
Personal Influences\family	Grandparent, Parents, Kids, Spouse Partner
Personal influences\Other	Teacher/Mentor, Network-friends, conference speaker, local youth and community.

As was expected, no participant's journey was the same as another's. However, important common insights emerged from their responses. To better understand this insight, I conducted a cross-case analysis that helped me identify four salient themes from the data. These four themes were: the holding environment, the impact of socioeconomic

status, overcoming hardship while growing up, and experiences living abroad. Each of these themes were explored in Chapter 6. The propositions below explore how these factors come together and how they intersect with the insight gained through the MAP results. I begin by discussing part one of Research Question 1: *What factors, if any, challenged or supported their journey as social innovators?*

Proposition RQ1a: Socioeconomic Status is a Critical Factor Shaping a Social Innovator's Journey

As described in Chapter 6, socioeconomic status had an impact on all three themes found in the timeline. There is scarce research on whether socioeconomic status is actually connected to the ego developmental stage a person inhabits (Snarey & Lydens, 1990). However, the findings in this study provide valuable insight on how socioeconomic status, as an element of the holding environment, shaped participants' journeys into becoming who they are. Their status defined so many aspects of their life, including access, resources and opportunities they had, such as travel, and in some cases even the kind of challenges and adversities they faced. The self-awareness participants displayed regarding their privilege, and lack thereof - is an example of how socioeconomic status continues to be an element influencing the way many participants make meaning and approach their work.

Proposition RQ1b: Travel and Hardship are Factors that Can Transform the Way One Makes Meaning

Experiences living abroad, as we discussed, opened the door for many of the participants to see the world differently, ultimately leading them to engage in social change. Perhaps the travel experience was critical for many participants to understand

themselves and see the world differently because for that period of time most elements of the participant's holding environment changed. Their experiences challenged them to question existing assumptions about their reality and as a result the participants shifted their perspective and way of making meaning about themselves, their home country or their work. This was especially evident in the journeys of Jill and Ana, who learned to challenge the notion of American Exceptionalism while being abroad, or for Ben, Gary, Jeff, and Patrick, who gained a whole new understanding of what their business skills and experience could be used for and in more complex ways than what they originally thought.

Similarly, when participants spoke about the many adversities they faced growing up, the second theme identified in this study, it was the *holding environment* or context in which they lived that brought about the experiences that shifted their perspective of the world as they knew it. While their experiences of hardship differed, as described in Chapter 6, and it was often influenced by their socioeconomic status, the adversities they overcame pushed them to question and explore their current ways of seeing themselves and their immediate community. In some cases, hardship became a vehicle for the shift in the way they understood themselves. As described in Chapters 2 and 6, this finding aligns with Ego Development theory, which emphasizes the impact hardship and challenges have as catalysts for a shift in developmental growth. It is worth noting that even when challenges are not overcome, the relationship of the individual to the challenge changes, and the way they make meaning of it shifts and transforms over time (Cook-Greuter, 2013). This shift helps explain why so many of the participants share past painful experiences as sources of learning and insight today.

The Intersection of Critical Timeline Factors and Meaning-Making Factors

It is important to note that I am not making the case that travel, hardship, and privilege (or lack thereof) are the only factors shaping the lives of a social innovator, much less that experience of all three would ultimately lead someone to become involved in social change. This research's findings suggest the themes discussed are a common experience for some social innovators, but beyond that, what is essential is to understand that these themes provide a more nuanced and thorough image of who social innovators are and how they came to be, beyond a set of traits defining them. A lingering question is, then, what about the many other people who have had a combination of the same factors shaping their life who did not become social innovators? I hope to provide some insight on this by discussing how the meaning-making themes identified, such as curiosity and reflection, intersect with life factors discussed, potentially influencing an individual to engage in social innovation. This section answers the second part of Research Question 1: *How do these factors relate to the way social innovators make meaning?*

Reflection and curiosity, among the four themes associated with the way participants make meaning, seem to be most prominently intersecting with the identified life timeline factors. Both of these are discussed at length in Chapter 6. The following propositions explore how they intersect with the experience of privilege, traveling and facing adversities or hardship.

Proposition RQ1c: Experience is Not Enough; A Reflective Practice is a Key Strategy to Make Meaning

As discussed in Chapter 6, the majority of participants spoke about having an ongoing practice of reflecting on their experiences, past and present. While the methods

they used to process these experiences differed, from journaling and writing to doing exercise or verbally processing with specific people, these participants used reflection as a tool to make meaning of their life. This may explain, at least partially, why some people could have had the exact same travel or hardship experience as some of the participants in the study, yet the outcomes for each person were different. For example, someone traveling to South Africa during apartheid times, as Jill did, or to Zambia in sub-Saharan Africa, as Jeff did, could have witnessed the same social injustices these two participants did. However, the participant's ability to reflect and examine their experiences allowed them to process and make meaning in rich and powerful ways for their future. The insight gained provided them with a new understanding of themselves and the world, which other people in a similar situation may not have had access to without an ongoing reflective practice in their life. It was this new understanding that eventually led participants to engage in social change.

Similarly, reflective practice was a key strategy for participants experiencing adversities in their life. For example, Daniel spoke at length of how important writing was for him to make meaning of his first hiking experience by himself. The insight he gained from reflecting on this experience led him to a greater understanding of his own abilities as a blind person and, more importantly, this new-found perspective helped him refine what he described as the "freedom approach" to his work in social innovation with blind youth. Lennon is another example of how using reflective practice to help process adversity can lead to engagement in social change. Lennon's work had been on the periphery of social innovation for a few years, but it was through verbally processing her mother's passing at a dinner with close friends that she found the model for her

organization The Dinner Party, a gathering of young adults who have experienced significant loss to connect, grieve, and process together. This organization became the social innovation for which she was recognized as an Ashoka Fellow.

Lastly, reflection also played a role in how participants made meaning of their socioeconomic status. This was particularly true for those who grew up in privilege who through reflection they became aware of the opportunities that privilege afforded them and they were able to broaden their understanding of the human experience, particularly when witnessing other people's misfortune. This new understanding would eventually lead them to engage in social change. Their continued awareness of how privilege influences their lives today is another example of how reflective practice is a key tool for meaning-making for these participants while engaging in social innovation. For the participants who did not have a high socioeconomic status, their reflective practice played a different role, as was the case for Trabian, Kathryn, and Imran. Through constant reflection, these participants were able to identify useful strategies to change the narrative of their lives and those of others.

Proposition RQ1d: Researchers Should Focus Less on Individual Traits and More on Meaning-Making Mindsets like Curiosity

The findings of this research reflected some of the traits often associated with social entrepreneurs, like risk taking, high inner locus of control, and comfort with ambiguity (Bornstein, 2007). These traits were often mentioned when the participants described themselves or their characteristics during the open-ended interview. For example, Ben mentioned his ability to take risks as valuable, Lennon referred to having an unusual capacity for working with ambiguity, and Aleta spoke about having a high

internal locus of control. However, the available literature on social entrepreneurs and social innovators' traits does not talk about curiosity. As noted, curiosity plays an integral role in the way many social innovators in the sample make meaning. A long list of traits like being driven, taking risks, or being comfortable with ambiguity can seem rather unattainable for many individuals. However, there is an opportunity to shift the narrative to emphasize the role that curiosity played in how participants gained personal insight that ultimately led them to become a social innovator. This way, any individual can develop and adopt curiosity as a mindset into their lives to figure out how they can uniquely engage in social change. Curiosity as a mindset and a reflective practice may not be sufficient for anyone to become or develop into a social innovator. However, while other research may have pointed out the value of research and curiosity separately, the findings of this research show how they played an important role in the developmental journeys of social innovators. Of course, nothing can be generalized, but it is something to consider for future exploration.

Research Question 2 Summary and Propositions

2. What are the developmental levels of the social innovators participating in the study; do social innovators cluster around a particular developmental stage?

The core of this question was answered in Chapter 5, where I described the sample's distribution into four clusters, with 76% of participants assessed to be at a stage within the Conventional tier and 24% in the PostConventional tier, which matched the distribution amongst the US population according to Cook-Greuter's research database. What is still left to explore are the implications of this distribution. Perhaps the most salient insight gained from these findings is that so many of the participants were scored at what would be the common developmental stages for any fully functional adult in a

professional setting. Despite the prevalent *social heropreneur* narrative around social innovators as individuals specially gifted with unique traits and skills, it seems that most of them seem to inhabit developmental stages within the same developmental tier as many other adults in the world. So, what makes them special? Why is there such emphasis on their uniqueness? I present two propositions to address these questions.

Proposition RQ2a: Social Innovators are Not Extraordinary; Their “Uniqueness” Stems from Displaying Traits Often Celebrated in Western Conventional Thinking

According to Cook-Greuter (2013) and other Ego Development theorists, the stages within the Conventional tier are the stages within which most adults have been socialized to function in today’s society. In other words, it is expected that most adults learn to operate within one of the frameworks in these four stages. The *Self-Determining* stage is the stage with the most complex meaning-making of the four, and the characteristics attributed to this stage tend to be what most adult would aspire to be: high achieving, goal driven, and determined individuals. As mentioned, Torbert’s developmental model calls individuals in this stage *achievers*, which is a fitting way to illustrate the exceptional narrative surrounding social innovators today. There is a possibility that social innovators tend to be “glorified” because they ultimately represent people who have “fulfilled” the *Self-Determining*/achiever model that Western society promotes. As described in Chapter 5, the *Self-Determining* stage had the most alignment between the stage description and the open-ended responses by participants. Many of the participants’ responses were consistent with one of the key characteristics of *Self-Determining* individuals: their desire to make an impact and contribute to the betterment of humanity. In a way, social innovators have become examples of what conventional

society aspires to be: not only fully functional, high achieving people, but also individuals dedicated to doing good for others and making an impact in the larger society. Therefore, it is perhaps not the many lists of exceptional traits that define them, but rather the perception that they have reached the *Self-Determining* stage, and developmentally they symbolize what achievement and success can look like. That said, it is important to further explore and consider how the participant's meaning making themes play a role in their lives.

Research Question 3 Summary and Propositions

3. What is the relationship between the Leadership Maturity Assessment for Professionals (MAP) instrument description of study participants' current developmental stages and their own description of how they approach their work as social innovators?

Chapter 5 detailed the extent to which the descriptions of the identified developmental stages in the MAP assessments aligned with the participants' open-ended interview responses. As noted, the *Skill-Centric* stage displayed the least amount of alignment. The only area in which the stage description matched the participant responses was in how participants receive and deal with feedback. However, the participants in this cluster displayed a perspective that was more aligned with later stages of development. The *Self-Determining* stage cluster had the most alignment with the stage description, including the desire to make an impact, their approach to work, being goal driven, how they deal with feedback, and having a reflective practice. The *Self-Questioning* and *Self-Actualizing* stages showed some consistency between responses and stage descriptions, but both had only two participants, thus the amount data available was somewhat limited. The following proposition stems from these findings.

Proposition RQ3a: Social Innovators Strive to Achieve Goals and Aspire to Develop Others

Given that the *Self-Determining* stage had the most amount of alignment between the stage description and the responses, it is possible to infer that social innovators not in this sample may operate from this frame of reference on a daily basis. Of course, the sample of this study is very small for any generalization; however, we are talking about a stage within the developmental tier that, according to theory, 76-80% of the population inhabits. It is also worth noting that even though many social innovators may rely on the *Self-Determining* way of making meaning, i.e. relying on the scientific method, and being goal driven, many of them also displayed a strong desire to help develop others in their organization and communities. This was evident in the many participant responses that expressed desire to help others grow as part of their leadership style. Therefore, there is a possibility that, beyond their developmental stage score, a characteristic of social innovators is that they operate and make meaning of their work through the lens of helping develop others.

Research Question 4 Summary and Propositions

4. How do social innovators make meaning of themselves and their work?

Research Question 4 was the overarching question to this whole study; thus, it provides an opportunity for integration of all the research questions. The propositions and model presented below integrate many of the findings from the other research questions.

Proposition RQ4a: Making Meaning for Others is a Key Behavior of Social Innovators

Bridging different worlds and *vision setting* are the remaining two meaning-making themes that emerged from the open-ended interviews that have not been

discussed in this chapter. Each of these themes have proven useful ways for participants to make meaning of themselves and their work, as detailed in Chapter 6. However, I propose that more than providing a way for participants to make meaning internally, social innovators use *bridging different worlds* and *vision setting* as a way to help others understand, see, and envision the social change they want to create. As leaders, social innovators lead organizations with people presumably at all different developmental stages, so, it is crucial that they help people get on the same page focusing on the organization's purpose and goals, and they do so by using meaning-making strategies like *bridging different worlds* and *vision setting*. While something like *vision setting* is already a key strategy discussed in Social Innovation literature and in leadership in general (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014), it is worth noting that the term is rarely described as a useful tool for an individual to help others make meaning of their work, which is why this finding in the study is important. Similarly, *bridging different worlds* seems like a key skill for social innovators to help others see, understand, and work towards a common goal, in this case positive social change. However, what stands out in the findings of this study is that the capacity to navigate different worlds is the result of intentional introspection and self-awareness, as displayed by the participants in this study.

Proposition RQ4b: A Model for Social Innovators Journey and Meaning Making

I propose the meaning-making mindsets and strategies discussed in this chapter (curiosity, reflective practice, bridging different worlds, and vision setting) are what set apart at least some social innovators from individuals at the same developmental stage not engaged in social innovation. They may not all be exceptional individuals, though they are indeed accomplished and successful people in the field; however, describing

them based on a list of traits without honoring the nuances and complexities with which each of their journeys shaped is reductive. It was through making meaning, learning more about themselves, and becoming aware of their ability to bridge different worlds that they realized what was possible to do with a social issue they care about. It was through curiosity and ongoing reflection that these participants seemed to gain the insight required to engage in work they defined as meaningful and purposeful. And lastly, it was through vision setting that they managed to motivate others to tackle social justice issues in a way that has created systemic change over time.

I created a model to provide a visual summary of how the different identified themes and findings in this study interconnect (see Figure 6). At the center of the model is the individual; in this case, the future social innovator. Surrounding the individual is the holding environment, the first theme identified in their *Formative Influences Timeline* activity. The next layer represents the experiences they had over time, among them the other three factors identified as themes: overcoming hardship, the impact of their socioeconomic status, and experiences living abroad. The next layer is how they processed these experiences and the various tools they use for making meaning then and now, among them the four themes identified in the open-ended responses to the interview: curiosity, reflective practice, bridging different worlds, and vision setting. The subsequent layer involves the meaning they ascribed to these experiences and the impact of these experiences on their lives. Finally, the outer layer reflects the action they took as a result of the meaning they ascribed to those experiences, which for these participants meant engaging in social change. It is worth noting that this is not a static process but rather cyclical, given that every time their holding environment changes, or every time a

critical experience takes place, the process repeats and presumably developmental change takes place over and over throughout time.

Figure 6. The Rivas Model of Meaning-Making for Social Innovators visually summarizes the interconnections between the identified themes and findings of the study.

Instrument limitations and methodological considerations. Like with any other study, the data collection methods and instruments used present research limitations. Many of these limitations, particularly those involving the MAP instrument, have been discussed throughout this paper. However, there a couple of points on each data collection method that I would like to highlight.

Formative Influences Timeline activity. This activity proved useful to draw out rich data concerning the participant's social innovation journey. However, it also proved to be difficult to implement in a standardized way. Given that 17 of the 19 interviews took place online, this activity was difficult to administer when I was not in the same room as the participant. Even though participants were asked to have pen and paper for the interview, many lacked materials, especially those who decided to do the interview while not at their office (e.g., walking or attending a conference). Secondly, the visual component of the timeline presented some challenges; some participants seemed intimidated by having to draw anything, while others felt restricted and simply wanted to use bullet points for their timeline. All of this was of course data, as I was able to observe how linear or spontaneous these participants' ways of thinking were. In addition, one participant (Daniel) was blind, which meant the activity had to be adapted; I sent instructions to him ahead of time, and he typed and sent his answers ahead of time. Daniel's timeline conversation was so rich in data and insight that I changed the way I implemented the timeline activity for the rest of the interviews. His was the third interview I conducted, so for subsequent participants, instructions and questions for the timeline were provided ahead of time and some of them typed responses ahead of time or had their drawn timeline ready by the time we started the interview, which gave us more time for in-depth conversation. The last challenge presented by the timeline was obtaining an electronic file of the document; some participants took a picture and sent it right away, while others only shared on the screen and I had to take a screenshot for my records. Given these challenges and limitations, I would make the following two changes in future research: 1) Send instructions and questions for the activity ahead of time and

ask they make their timeline before the interview, and 2) Limit the number of critical moments or experiences that shaped their journey into social innovation to maximum of five. These changes would help participants to go more in depth only on the critical experiences (versus giving a detailed, chronological recounting of their life, which happened in a couple instances). During the data analysis portion of this research, it was really only those 3-5 moments that had the richest data for the study.

Open-ended interview. As described in Chapter 3, the second part of the 90-minute session was an open-ended semi-structured interview exploring questions related to how participants make sense of the work they do as social innovators. The main limitation I found using this data collection method was related to time. Even though the interview only had nine questions, doing this in the time left after doing the *Formative Influences Timeline* proved to be quite difficult, especially given that many of these participants are used to speaking for long periods of time about themselves and their work. Asking participants to do a 90-minute interview was already a big request on my end; in fact, many other Ashoka fellows who expressed interest in the study declined to participate once they learned how much time it would require on their end. So, it seems as though in future research increasing the amount of time for the interview would not be a possibility given the busy lives typical of desired participants. I would perhaps reduce the number of questions to five and spend more quality time on each of them.

MAP instrument. Some of the limitations of Ego Development instruments, and particularly the MAP, were discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. One of the limitations I did not expect to have an impact on this study was language, as I had wrongly assumed every participant would have used English as a native language. However, I had two

participants, Sascha and Patrick, for whom English was their second or even third language.

Sample size and participant selection. This was an exploratory study of a particular population on a topic that has not been studied before. As such, a small sample of participants was expected. The study had a small sample size (N=19), and as such I do not claim it provides any highly generalizable findings. However, the individual case studies and cross-case themes identified provide rich insights on the lives and meaning-making frameworks of social innovators that have not been explored before. These insights generate other research opportunities, as noted in the propositions detailed earlier in this chapter.

Demographically, the sample could have been a bit more diverse, although it was relatively balanced in gender with nine women (48%) and ten men (52%). As the MAP instrument does not require people to disclose race or ethnic background, I had to rely on the participants' sharing of their life timelines to determine those that identified as people of color. There were only five self-identified people of color (25%): four men and one woman. The statistics regarding Ashoka Fellows, as of 2016, were similar to the gathered sample of this study; 65% of Ashoka fellows are men and only a bit over 15% of them identify as people of color (Zakaras, 2016). The opportunity for future research with more diverse samples - in terms of gender, race, and particularly socioeconomic background - would shed light on important aspects of social innovators' lives, as it is evident these factors influence the way they make meaning and ultimately engage in social change.

Member checking. Participants were provided a copy of the Individual Profile analysis presented in Chapter 4. They were asked if the description of their journey into social innovation was accurate in describing critical moments and personal influences. Any provided feedback was included in the present narratives. I selected not to share the analysis of their MAP results presented in Chapter 5 and 6 because I believe a more in-depth understanding of EDT would be necessary for them to be able to provide constructive feedback. Their MAP results were shared, along with a brief document explaining the characteristics of each stage and more information on Ego Development Theory. No participant has as of yet responded with a desire to follow up on their results.

Researcher bias and memo writing. As noted in Chapter 3, there were a number of reasons why researcher bias could take place, among them my personal understanding of the social innovation field based on the last seven years of working at an academic institution and my own developmental stage. I took a number of steps to minimize both personal bias and subjectivity, from recording voice memos to taking the MAP assessment myself. This section describes each of these steps.

A critical step to mitigate potential research bias was to take the MAP assessment myself. The results indicated my *center of gravity* to be at the *Self-Questioning* Stage (4/5) with a strong base in the *Self-Determining* Stage (4), meaning I am in between the two developmental tiers discussed in Chapter 2. This insight allowed me to first gain perspective on my own way of making meaning. For example, *Self-Questioning* individuals are characterized as being relativists and having a hard time taking a final stance when accessing multiple perspectives; I certainly can relate to this characteristic and have noticed it in my daily life. Hence, when conducting the data analysis, I noticed

how difficult it was for me to write the conclusion chapter and to make firm statements that could encompass all the things I had in mind. Secondly, before I took the MAP I was concerned about my capacity to grasp the complexities of participants who inhabited a later or higher stage than me. Given that the sample only had two participants at a later stage (*Self-Actualizing*), I felt more comfortable analyzing all data. That said, I know that I had the hardest time understanding and making meaning of the interview data for one *Self-Actualizing* individual; whether that is because of our developmental stage difference or a matter of personal compatibility is a matter for future personal reflection.

I selected not to make my own estimation of the participant's developmental stage a part of the study. I had two reasons for this choice in the research design; the first was purely financial, since the training to become a MAP scorer was beyond my available personal budget for this research. Secondly, and most importantly, I did not want my personal opinion or impression of the interviewee to influence my estimation of their developmental stage. Hence, recording voice memos, the second tool I used to minimize bias and subjectivity, became very useful. I recorded voice memos after every interview, as well as after transcribing and coding each interview. I noticed in my memos I tended to overestimate in my mind the developmental stage at which I thought a participant would score. I kept assuming their MAP results would indicate later developmental stages than what many actually scored at once I accessed the MAP results. For example, I was a bit disappointed and skeptical of the results for those in stage 3/4 *Skill-Centric* because my one-on-one interaction with these participants indicated something different, as they came across as incredibly put together and highly intelligent. The voice memos allowed me to explore further why I would have overestimated their scores: Was it a

matter of personal subjectivity, or was there an answer I could find in Ego Development Theory?

Cook-Greuter's (2013) insight helped me understand a possible reason for the overestimation noted in my voice memos. EDT proposes that having high intelligence and access to "complex cognitive thought" may mislead an individual to overestimate their own Ego Development. Thus, if EDT, and thus the MAP as an instrument, was only cognitively-oriented theory, then these participants would be assessed at higher stages because, according to Cook-Greuter (2013), the cognitive-oriented developmental theories tend to "privilege sheer intellectual prowess, memory, and the complexity of arguments over a more holistic, integrated view of personality" (p. 43). However, EDT claims to offer insight beyond the cognitive aspect on how an individual relates to this knowledge in other aspects of their persona, including self-awareness and personal growth, which is perhaps one of the reasons the MAP results reflected different scores than what I expected.

The practice of recording voice memos was essential for me to process out loud my own emotions, thoughts, and feelings about the people I interviewed, as well as the subject matter of the study. One of the things I noticed through these memos was when I expressed being overly impressed with some participants and caught myself falling for the "social innovators are exceptional people" narrative. They are indeed very successful and inspiring individuals; however, I needed to keep my own feelings about them in check so that my coding - and ultimately my analysis - would not be impacted by these emotions. I noticed my report with participants of color seemed to be very special for me, as I, as another person of color, am used to knowing and talking to more white social

innovators in the field. The following extract from the voice memo after interviewing Tomás is an example of how recording these memos proved useful for my own processing of the experience and to keep my biases in check:

I noticed throughout was that I felt more comfortable with him [Tomás] because he's young and he's Latino. It seemed to me that he understood not just the surface level of the issues that he's trying to confront but he's done a lot of personal work to really match the kind of work he's been doing. I was really impressed with a lot of what Tomas shared. I was inspired by it. I didn't have as many moments of judgment about his work. Whenever he showed some aspects of confidence and whatnot he didn't come across as arrogant or he didn't come across to me as self-promoting. I was just impressed with him.

After listening and transcribing all memos, I was able to remain aware of any potential bias as I wrote and while I coded data of participants' that I seemed to have liked more than the others. It helped me minimize subjectivity.

The practice of analytical memos proved useful to broaden my own understanding of the interview data. Through writing these memos I was able to identify how the participants were processing interview questions and noticed moments in which the participants had an "aha" moment. An example of this was the analytical memo I wrote after listening to and coding Jeff's interview: "At this point in the interview he realized he never put words like this together; he seemed to be in the moment, self-reflecting and learning about his own way of seeing the world and his purpose." Analytical memos also helped me notice when themes emerged from the data, as exemplified in this segment from my analytic memos: "There was also the theme of being in two worlds, whether it

was back at home with the different approaches to life by her parents or in school and work with the community that faced many economic challenges.” As I re-read all these memos, I noticed how much this study had an impact on my own personal growth and my understanding of the social innovation field and the people engaged in it.

Implications of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

This study represents an inquiry into the lives of social innovators in a way that has not been undertaken before by exploring the factors that shaped their journey as well as the way they make meaning of themselves and their work. The findings present various opportunities for future research, such as:

- Exploring in-depth how the holding environment, and particularly socioeconomic status, influenced the lives of individuals engaged in social change. A particular emphasis on people of color or social innovators who grew up in lower socio-economic status would provide a fuller picture of the field, given so much of the extant literature has used the white, male, and highly educated population as a baseline.
- Exploring how the use of language concerning systemic change differs or aligns across developmental stages within the field of social innovation.
- Exploring gender differences in developmental stages with social innovators as a unique population to identify whether gender may influence meaning making across developmental stages.
- Exploring the impact meaning-making strategies like being curious and having a reflective practice have on individuals interested in social innovation and social change.

- Exploring how bridging different worlds and vision setting impact the work of social innovators. This can be done at the organizational level by doing separate case studies.

For those entities interested in further developing future social innovators, such as universities and community initiatives, the findings from this study add insight by providing an example of a process that can be used to help an individual explore his or her journey into social change. Individuals interested in social change could engage in a process similar to this study. First, they could do a personal *Formative Influences Timeline* as a tool to explore and identify critical factors and influences in their life that have shaped who they are. Next, they could use the open-ended interview questions to document and examine ways in which they prefer to make meaning. Individuals could broaden their way of making meaning through adopting some of the ways in which social innovators in this study described, like adopting a reflective practice and intentionally working to develop a mindset of curiosity, or identifying how their identities connect with different worlds, to ultimately explore ways in which they could genuinely engage in social change.

By bringing to light the meaning-making framework social innovators in this study currently use, the propositions described in this chapter help expand the common narrative around social innovators. Perhaps the most significant contribution of the study is how it helps reframe the conversation about who social innovators are beyond the current exceptional “school of traits” that defines them, which could in turn help dismantle or challenge the idea of *heropreneurship*. A good start would be to realize that much of the existing *heropreneur* narrative stems from Western society’s notion of what

a fully functional and successful adult should be. I recommend pivoting from using the social innovator image only as an inspirational yet unattainable goal to focusing on the many layers of complexities that surround them. The opportunity lies in being able to learn from the way they have made meaning of their lives and focus on how each of us are making meaning of ourselves and our work.

REFERENCES

- Adams, G. R., & Fitch, S. A. (1982). Ego stage and identity status development: A cross-sequential analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social psychology*, 43(3), 574.
- Alden Rivers, B., Armellini, A., & Nie, M. (2015). Embedding social innovation and social impact across the disciplines: Identifying “changemaker” attributes. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, 5(3), 242-257
- Alvord, S. H., Brown, L. D., & Letts, C. W. (2004). Social entrepreneurship and societal transformation: An exploratory study. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 40(3), 260-282.
- Avelino, F., Wittmayer, J., Haxeltine, A., Kemp, R., O’Riordan, T., Weaver, P., ... & Rotmans, J. (2014). *Game changers and transformative social innovation: The case of the economic crisis and the new economy* (Working paper).
- Avolio, B. J., & Gibbons, T. C. (1988). Developing transformational leaders: A life span approach. J.A. Conger & R. N. Kanugo (Eds.), *Charismatic leadership: The elusive factor in organizational effectiveness* (pp. 267-308). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ashoka US (n.d.). About Ashoka US. Retrieved from <https://www.ashoka.org/en/country/united-states-0>
- Baldwin, J. M. (1890). *Handbook of psychology: Senses and intellect*. New York, NY: H. Holt.

- Banks, J. A. (2006). Researching race, culture, and difference: Epistemological challenges and possibilities. In J. L., Green, G., Camilli, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 773-793). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Benneworth, P., Amanatidou, E., Edwards Schachter, M., & Gulbrandsen, M. (2014). Social innovation futures: beyond policy panacea and conceptual ambiguity. *European Forum for Studies of Policies for Research and Innovation*.
- Benneworth, P., & Cunha, J. (2015). Universities' contributions to social innovation: reflections in theory & practice. *European journal of innovation management*, 18(4), 508-527.
- BEPA (Bureau of European Policy Advisors). (2010). Empowering people, driving change: Social innovation in the European Union. Brussels: European Commission.
- Bergman, N., Markusson, N., Connor, P., Middlemiss, L., & Ricci, M. (2010). Bottom-up, social innovation for addressing climate change. Sussex Energy Group Conference 25th-26th February.
- Blasi, A. (1993). The theory of ego development and the measure. *Psychological Inquiry*, 4(1), 17-19.
- Bornstein, D. (2007). *How to change the world: Social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas*. Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of leadership*. Sage Publications.
- Bursik, K. (1991). Adaptation to divorce and ego development in adult women. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60(2), 300.

- Bursik, K. (1995). Gender-related personality traits and ego development: Differential patterns for men and women. *Sex Roles*, 32(9-10), 601-615.
- Cajaiba-Santana, G. (2014). Social innovation: Moving the field forward. A conceptual framework. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 82, 42-51.
- Cohn, L. D. (1991). Sex differences in the course of personality development: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 109, 252-266. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.109.2.252
- Cohn, L. D., & Westenberg, P. M. (2004). Intelligence and maturity: Meta-analytic evidence for the incremental and discriminant validity of Loevinger's measure of ego development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86(5), 760.
- Collinson, D. (2011). Critical leadership studies. *The SAGE handbook of leadership*, 181-194.
- Cook-Greuter, S. R. (1994). Rare forms of self-understanding in mature adults. In M. E. Miller & S. R. Cook-Greuter (Eds.), *Transcendence and mature thought in adulthood: The further reaches of adult development* (pp. 119-146). Lanham, MD, England: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cook-Greuter, S. R. (2000). Mature ego development: A gateway to ego transcendence? *Journal of Adult Development*, 7(4), 227-240.
- Cook-Greuter, S. R. (2004). Making the case for a developmental perspective. *Industrial and commercial training*, 36(7), 275-281.
- Cook-Greuter, S. R. (2005). *Ego development: Nine levels of increasing embrace*. Unpublished manuscript.

- Cook-Greuter, S. R., & Soulen, J. (2007). The developmental perspective in integral counseling. *Counseling and Values*, 51(3), 180-192.
- Cook-Greuter, S. (2013). Nine levels of increasing embrace in ego development: A full-spectrum theory of vertical growth and meaning making.
- Crozier, M., & Friedberg, E. (1993). Die zwänge kollektiven handelns: Über macht und organisation. Frankfurt: Hain
- Cunha, J., Benneworth, P., & Oliveira, P. (2015). Social Entrepreneurship and social innovation: A conceptual distinction. In *Handbook of Research on Global Competitive Advantage through Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (pp. 616-639). IGI Global.
- Davies, A. (2014) Social Innovation Process and Social Entrepreneurship. In Howaldt, J., Butzin, A., Domanski, D., & Kaletka, C. (2014), *Theoretical approaches to social innovation – a critical literature review*. A deliverable of the project: ‘Social Innovation: Driving Force of Social Change’ (SI-DRIVE). Dortmund: Sozialforschungsstelle.
- Dees, J. G. (1998). The meaning of social entrepreneurship. Retrieved from <https://entrepreneurship.duke.edu/news-item/the-meaning-of-social-entrepreneurship/>
- Dey, P., & Steyaert, C. (2010). The politics of narrating social entrepreneurship. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 4(1), 85-108.

- Edwards-Schachter, M. E., Matti, C. E., & Alcántara, E. (2012). Fostering quality of life through social innovation: A living lab methodology study case. *Review of Policy Research*, 29(6), 672-692.
- Edwards-Schachter, M., & Wallace, M. L. (2015). Shaken, but not stirred: Six decades defining social innovation. *INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) Working Paper Series from INGENIO (CSIC-UPV)*, (201504).
- Eigel, K. M., & Kuhnert, K. W. (2005). Authentic development: Leadership development level and executive effectiveness. In W. Gardner, B. Avolio & F. Walumbwa (Eds.), *Authentic leadership theory and practice, volume 3: Origins, effects and development (monographs in leadership and management)* (pp. 357-385). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Fulcher, K. H. (2008). Curiosity: A Link to Assessing Lifelong Learning. *Assessment Update*, 20(2), 5-7.
- Gilmore, J. M., & Durkin, K. (2001). A critical review of the validity of ego development theory and its measurement. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 77(3), 541-567.
- Grimm, R., Fox, C., Baines, S., & Albertson, K. (2013). Social innovation, an answer to contemporary societal challenges? Locating the concept in theory and practice. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 26(4), 436-455.
- Habisch, A., & Adai, C. R. L. (2013). A social capital approach towards social innovation. In *Social Innovation* (pp. 65-74). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.\
- Hauser, S. T. (1993). Loevinger's Model and Leasure of Ego Development: A Critical Review, II. *Psychological Inquiry*, 4(1), 23-30.

- Heifetz, R. A., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Harvard Business Press.
- Heifetz, R. A., & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leading*. Harvard Business Press.
- Helsing, D., Howell, A., Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. (2008). Putting the "development" in professional development: Understanding and overturning educational leaders' immunities to change. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(3), 437-465.
- Helson, R., & Roberts, B. W. (1994). Ego development and personality change in adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66(5), 911.
- Hjorth, D., Bjerke, B., Steyaert, C., & Hjorth, D. (2006). Public entrepreneurship: Moving from social/consumer to public/citizen. In C. Steyaert & D. Hjorth (Eds.), *Entrepreneurship as social change: A third new movements in entrepreneurship book* (pp. 97-120). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Hoppe, C. F., & Loevinger, J. (1977). Ego development and conformity: A construct validity study of the Washington University Sentence Completion Test. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 41(5), 497-504.
- Horrigan, S. R. (2016). *Meaning-making in student conduct administration: A developmental perspective* (Order No. 10128123). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1799049223). Retrieved from <https://0-search.proquest.com.sally.sandiego.edu/docview/1799049223?accountid=14742>
- Howaldt, J., & Schwarz, M. (2010). Social Innovation: Concepts, research fields and international trends, Sozialforschungsstelle, Dortmund.

- Jackson, D. N. (1993). Personality development and nonlinear models. *Psychological Inquiry*, 4(1), 30-33.
- Jones, J. A., & Castillo, E. A. (2017). The fundraiser's journey: A developmentally informed, grounded theory analysis. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 22(4), e1584.
- Kärkkäinen, K., & Vincent-Lancrin, S. (2013). Sparking innovation in STEM education with technology and collaboration: A case study of the HP catalyst initiative. OECD Education Working Papers, (91), 0_1.
- Kegan, R. (1980). Making meaning: The constructive-developmental approach to persons and practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 58(5), 373-380.
- Kuhnert, K. W., & Lewis, P. (1987). Transactional and transformational leadership: A constructive/developmental analysis. *Academy of Management Review*, 12, 648-657.
- Kuhnert, K. W. (1994). Transforming leadership: Developing people through delegation. In B. Bass & B. Avolio (Eds.), *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership* (pp. 10-25). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Labouvie-Vief, G. (1993). Ego processes in adulthood: A comment on Jane Loevinger. *Psychological Inquiry*, 4(1), 34-37.
- Larsson, O. S., & Brandsen, T. (2016). The implicit normative assumptions of social innovation research: Embracing the dark side. In T. Brandsen, S. Cattacin, A. Evers, & A. Zimmer (Eds.), *Social innovations in the urban context* (pp. 293-302). Springer International Publishing.

- Lawrence, T., Phillips, N., & Tracey, P. (2012). From the guest editors: Educating social entrepreneurs and social innovators. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 11*(3), 319-323.
- Leadbeater, C. (2006). The Socially Entrepreneurial City. In A. Nicholls (Ed.), *Social entrepreneurship: New models of sustainable social change* (pp. 233-246). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, P., & Jacobs, T. O. (1992). Individual differences in strategic leadership capacity: A constructive/developmental view. In R. L. Phillips & J. G. Hunt (Eds.), *Strategic leadership: A multiorganizational-level perspective* (pp. 121-137). Westport, CT, US: Quorum Books/Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Liang, C. T., Peng, L. P., Yao, S. N., & Liang, C. (2015). Developing a social enterprise performance scale and examining the relationship between entrepreneurs' personality traits and their perceived enterprise performance. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11*(3), 89-116.
- Lilienfeld, S. O., Wood, J. M., & Garb, H. N. (2000). The scientific status of projective techniques. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 1*(2), 27-66.
- Livesay, V. T. (2013). Exploring the paradoxical role and experience of fallback in developmental theory (Order No. 3571361). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1433819874). Retrieved from <https://0-search.proquest.com.sally.sandiego.edu/docview/1433819874?accountid=14742>
- Loevinger, J. (1966). The meaning and measurement of ego development. *American Psychologist, 21*(3), 195.

- Loevinger, J. (1979). Construct validity of the sentence completion test of ego development. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 3(3), 281-311.
- Loevinger, J., & Knoll, E. (1983). Personality: Stages, traits, and the self. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 34(1), 195-222.
- Lucius, R. H., & Kuhnert, K. (1999). Adult developpement and transformational leader. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 6(1-2), 73-85.
- Maclean, M., Harvey, C. & Gordon, J. (2013). Social innovation, social entrepreneurship and the practice of contemporary entrepreneurial philanthropy. *International Small Business Journal*, 31(7), 747-763.
- MacQueen, K. M., McLellan-Lemal, E., Bartholow, K., & Milstein, B. (2008) Team-based codebook development: Structure, process, and agreement. In G. Guest & K. M. MacQueen (Eds.), *Handbook for team-based qualitative research* (pp. 119–35). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Mair, J., & Marti, I. (2006). Social entrepreneurship research: A source of explanation, prediction, and delight. *Journal of World Business*, 41(1), 36-44.
- Martin, R. L., & Osberg, S. (2007). Social entrepreneurship: The case for definition. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 5(2). Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/social_entrepreneurship_the_case_for_definition
- Mathur, A. (2011). Social entrepreneurs and the vision to build the society with ethical sustainability. *Information Management and Business Review*, 2(4): 154-161.

- McCallum, D. C., Jr. (2008). Exploring the implications of a hidden diversity in group relations conference learning: A developmental perspective (Order No. 3327080). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304625846). Retrieved from <https://0-search.proquest.com.sally.sandiego.edu/docview/304625846?accountid=14742>
- McCauley, C. D., Drath, W. H., Palus, C. J., O'Connor, P. M., & Baker, B. A. (2006). The use of constructive-developmental theory to advance the understanding of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(6), 634-653.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1980). Openness to experience and ego level in Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test: Dispositional contributions to developmental models of personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(6), 1179.
- McLeod, S. (2017) Lev Vygotsky. Retrieved from www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Merron, K., Fisher, D., & Torbert, W. R. (1987). Meaning making and management action. *Group & Organization Studies*, 12(3), 274-286.
- Meyskens, M., Robb-Post, C., Stamp, J. A., Carsrud, A. L., & Reynolds, P. D. (2010). Social ventures from a Resource-Based perspective: An exploratory study assessing global Ashoka fellows. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 34(4), 661-680.

- Miller, M. E., & Cook-Greuter, S. R. (Eds.). (1994). *Transcendence and mature thought in adulthood: The further reaches of adult development*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Miller, T. L., Wesley, C. L., & Williams, D. E. (2012). Educating the minds of caring hearts: Comparing the views of practitioners and educators on the importance of social entrepreneurship competencies. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 11(3), 349-370.
- Moshman, D. (2002). Developmental change in adulthood. In J. Demick & C. Andreoletti (Eds.), *Handbook of adult development* (pp. 43-61). Boston, MA: Springer US.
- Moulaert, F., Martinelli, F., Swyngedouw, E., & Gonzalez, S. (2005). Towards alternative model (s) of local innovation. *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 1969-1990.
- Mulgan, G., Tucker, S., Ali, R., & Sanders, B. (2007). Social innovation: what it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated.
- Mulgan, G., 2006. The process of social innovation. *Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization*, 1(2), 145-162.
- Mumford, M. D. (2002). Social innovation: ten cases from Benjamin Franklin. *Creativity Research Journal*, 14(2), 253-266.
- Murray, R., Caulier-Grice, J., & Mulgan, G. (2010). *The open book of social innovation*. London: National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Art: Young Foundation.
- NESTA (2008). *From Social Innovation: New approaches to transforming public services* (Policy Briefing). Available at https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/social_innovation.pdf

- Orr, S. S. (2016). Social entrepreneurs: Innovators and change makers tackling the world's toughest problems through connective leadership (Order No. 10142052). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1807949882). Retrieved from <https://0-earch.proquest.com.sally.sandiego.edu/docview/1807949882?accountid=14742>
- Papi-Thornton, D. (Feb. 23, 2016). Tackling heropreneurship: Why we need to move from “the social entrepreneur” to social impact. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/tackling_heropreneurship
- Papi-Thornton, D. (2016b). Tackling Heropreneurship. Retrieved from <http://tacklingheropreneurship.com/tackling-heropreneurship-report/>
- Patton, M. Q. (2005). Qualitative research. *Encyclopedia of statistics in behavioral science*. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1002/0470013192.bsa514>
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity—one's own. *Educational researcher*, 17(7), 17-21.
- Phills, J. A., Deiglmeier, K., & Miller, D. T. (2008). Rediscovering social innovation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 6(4), 34-43.
- Redmore, C. D. (1983). Ego development in the college years: Two longitudinal studies. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 12(4), 301-306.
- Rooke, D., & Torbert, W. R. (1998). Organizational transformation as a function of CEO's developmental stage. *Organization Development Journal*, 16(1), 11.
- Rossiter, M. (1999). Understanding adult development as narrative. *New Directions For Adult and Continuing Education*, 1999(84), 77-85.

- Rüede, D., & Lurtz, K. (2012). Mapping the various meanings of social innovation: Towards a differentiated understanding of an emerging concept. EBS Business School Research Paper No. 12-03. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2091039> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2091039>
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE.
- Sastre-Castillo, M. A., Peris-Ortiz, M., & Valle, D. D. (2015). What is different about the profile of the social entrepreneur?. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 25(4), 349-369.
- Schöning, M. (2013). Social entrepreneurs as main drivers of social innovation. In T. Osburg & R. Schmidpeter (Eds.), *Social innovation: Solutions for a sustainable future* (pp. 111-118). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Seelos, C., & Mair, J. (2012). Innovation is not the Holy Grail. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall*, 10(4), 44-49.
- Serrat, O. (2017) Sparking social innovations. In *Knowledge solutions: Tools, methods, and approaches to drive organizational performance* (pp. 691-699). Springer, Singapore.
- Shamir, B., Dayan-Horesh, H., & Adler, D. (2005). Leading by biography: Towards a life-story approach to the study of leadership. *Leadership*, 1(1), 13-29.
- Shamir, B., & Eilam-Shamir, G. (2018). "What's your story?" A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development. In I. Katz, G. Eilam-Shamir, R. Kark, & Y. Berson (Eds.), *Leadership Now: Reflections on the Legacy of Boas Shamir* (pp. 51-76). Emerald Publishing Limited.

- Sharra, R., & Nyssens, M. (2010). Social innovation: An interdisciplinary and critical review of the concept.
- Smith, I. H., & Woodworth, W. P. (2012). Developing Social Entrepreneurs and Social Innovators: A social identity and self-efficacy approach. *Academy Of Management Learning & Education*, 11(3), 390-407
- Snarey, J., & Lydens, L. (1990). Worker equality and adult development: The kibbutz as a developmental model. *Psychology and Aging*, 5(1), 86.
- Strang, S. E., & Kuhnert, K. W. (2009). Personality and leadership developmental levels as predictors of leader performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20(3), 421-433.
- Stringer, E. T. (2014) *Action research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Syed, M., & Seiffge-Krenke, I. (2013). Personality development from adolescence to emerging adulthood: Linking trajectories of ego development to the family context and identity formation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(2), 371.
- Torbert, W. R. (2004). *Action inquiry: The secret of timely and transforming leadership*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Tracey, P., Phillips, N., & Jarvis, O. (2011). Bridging institutional entrepreneurship and the creation of new organizational forms: A multilevel model. *Organization Science*, 22(1), 60-80.
- Transmutation (n.d.) *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/transmutation>

- Truluck, J. E., & Courtenay, B. C. (2002). Ego development and the influence of gender, age, and educational levels among older adults. *Educational Gerontology*, 28(4), 325-336.
- van der Have, R. P., & Rubalcaba, L. (2016). Social innovation research: An emerging area of innovation studies?. *Research Policy*, 45(9), 1923-1935.
- Van Maanen, J. (1979). Reclaiming qualitative methods for organizational research: A preface. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4), 520-526.
- Vasakarla, V. (2008). A study on social entrepreneurship and the characteristics of social entrepreneurs. *ICFAI Journal of Management Research*, 7(4), 32-40.
- Vertical Development Academy (2018, May 25). *Your MAP report: Juan Carlos Rivas*. Maturity Assessment for Professionals personalized report (MAP #10805/VeDA/2018/US).
- Weathersby, R. (1993). Sri Lanka managers' leadership conceptualizations as a function of ego development. *Development in the Workplace*, 67, 89.
- Westenburg, P. M., & Block, J. (1993). Ego development and individual differences in personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65(4), 792.
- Westley, F. *Keynote speech on 'The History of Social Innovation'* [PDF Document]. Retrieved from https://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/key_note_speech_frances_westley_on_the_history_of_social_innovation.pdf
- Wolcott, H. F. (1990). Making a study “more ethnographic”. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 19(1), 44-72.

- Wongphuka, K., Chai-Aroon, T., Phainoi, S., & Boon-Long, P. (2017). Social entrepreneur competencies of social activists involved with children and youths: a case study of Nan province, Thailand. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(2), 143-149.
- Zakaras, M. (2016). Let's redraw the map. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 14(4), 59.
Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/lets_redraw_the_map#

APPENDIX A

Stages of Leadership Maturity

The following descriptions of *Stages of Leadership Maturity* were created by Cook-Greuter and the Vertical Development Academy:

The Preconventional Stage (~5%)

Stage 2/3: Self-centric

Core Characteristics: Getting and Defending

Focus on own self-protection, personal needs, material things and immediate opportunities; may manipulate, deceive, and coerce others to manage them; distrust others as manipulating them; fragile self-control; hostile humor; stereotyping; external blame; view luck as central; see rules as loss of freedom; treat what one can get away with as “right;” punish according to “eye for an eye;” “I win, you lose mentality;” feedback heard as an attack.

The Conventional Stages (~75-80%)

Stage 3: *Group-Centric*

Core Characteristics: Conforming and Belonging

Observe protocol and socially expected behavior; conform to social norms, work to group standard; need approval and a sense of acceptance; avoid negative impression and conflict; think in simple terms and speak in generalities and clichés. Seek membership, external signs of status; feel shame if they violate rules; face-saving essential to feeling good; attend to welfare of own group; “us versus them” mentality; feedback heard as personal disapproval.

Stage 3/4: *Skill-Centric*

Core Characteristics: Comparing and Perfecting

Immersed in being competent in their own area of interest, regarding their way as the only valid way of thinking; decisions based on incontrovertible “facts”; consistent effort to improve techniques and efficiency; value high standards; strong beliefs and opinions; single-loop problem-solving; reactive, dogmatic, perfectionistic; can get stuck in detail; need to stand out and be counted (respected); conformist moral standards; critical of and competitive with others; cannot yet prioritize among competing demands; feedback heard as criticism.

Stage 4: *Self-Determining*

Core Characteristics: Analyzing and Achieving

In charge of self as agent, initiator rather than pawn of system; focus on delivery of results, effectiveness, goals, success; pursue results and effectiveness rather than efficiency only; longer-term goals; future-oriented; systematic (scientific) knowledge, seek proactive ways around problems, may be unorthodox; begin to appreciate complexity and multiple views, but keep them separate; belief in objectivity; can collaborate by “agreeing to disagree;” value mutuality and equality in

relationships; feel guilt when not meeting own standards or goals, self-critical; behavioral feedback accepted as useful for improvement.

The Postconventional Stages (~15-20%)

Stage 4/5: *Self-Questioning*

Core Characteristics: Relativizing and Contextualizing

See self in relationships to context; interaction within systems; concerned with difference between reality and appearance; increased understanding of complexity, systemic connections and unintended consequences of actions; aware of impact on others; begin to question their own assumptions (new focus on own inner life) and that of others; realize subjectivity of beliefs; talk of interpretations rather than truth; can play different roles in different contexts; may seek changes in many life and work situations; postconventional ability to adjust behavior to context; systematic and double-loop problem solving; begin to seek out and value feedback for its own sake.

Stage 5: *Self-Actualizing*

Core Characteristics: Integrating and Transforming

Recognize higher principles, social construction of reality, complexity and dynamic systems interactions; interested in the interplay of roles, theory, context, judgment, not just rules and customs; linking theory and principles with practice; problem finding and creative problem solving; both process and goal-oriented; aware of paradox and contradiction in system and self; deep appreciation of others, tolerance of difference; non-hostile humor; sensitivity to historical moment, larger social movements and unique market niches; create “positive-sum” games; aware of own power and sometimes tempted by it; seek feedback from others and the environment as vital for growth and making sense of world.

Stage 5/6+: Construct-aware and beyond

Core Characteristics: pointed attention to constructs, metacognition, and ego traps to final all-embracing and witnessing of what is

Focus on transforming self and others in real time; Highly conscious of complexity of meaning making, systemic interplay, and dynamic processes; seek personal and spiritual transformation and support others in their life quests; may create events that become mythical and reframe meaning of situations; work both with chaos and order; blend opposites; see light and dark, continually attend to interaction among thought, feeling, perception and action; appreciate ambiguity and polarities as well as influences from and effects on individuals, institutions, history and culture; treat time and events as symbolic, analogical, metaphorical (not merely linear, digital, literal); aware of continuous self-redefinition (story telling) and change as part of life process and human yearning for permanence and certainty. Sometimes overly attached to complexity. They may embrace what is in the moment in a way that liberates them from many defensive constraints and opens possibilities for wise choice and creative responses. Feedback is seen as a necessary aspect of being a living organism within systems of interacting systems.

(Vertical Development Academy, 2018, pp. 5-6)

APPENDIX B

Ashoka Fellowship Selection Criteria

Ashoka Fellowship Criteria

The Knockout Test: A New Idea. Ashoka cannot elect someone to the Fellowship unless he or she is possessed by a new idea—a new solution or approach to a social problem—that will change the pattern in a field, be it human rights, the environment, or any other. We evaluate the idea historically and against its contemporaries in the field, looking for innovation and real change potential.

Creativity: Successful social entrepreneurs must be creative both as goal-setting visionaries and as problem solvers capable of engineering their visions into reality. Creativity is not a quality that suddenly appears—it is almost always apparent from youth onward. Among the questions we might ask: Does this individual have a vision of how he or she can meet some human need better than it has been met before? Does the candidate have a history of creating other new visions?

Entrepreneurial Quality: Perhaps our most important criterion, entrepreneurial quality is the defining characteristic of first class entrepreneurs. It defines leaders who see opportunities for change and innovation and devote themselves entirely to making that change happen. These leaders often have little interest in anything beyond their mission, and they are willing to spend the next ten to fifteen years making a historical development take place. This total absorption is critical to transforming a new idea into reality, and it is for this reason that Ashoka insists that candidates commit themselves full-time to their ideas during the launch phase.

Social Impact of the Idea: This criterion focuses on the candidate's idea, not the candidate. Ashoka is only interested in ideas that it believes will change the field significantly and that will trigger nationwide impact or, for smaller countries, broader regional change. For example, Ashoka will not support the launch of a new school or clinic unless it is part of a broader strategy to reform the education or health system at the national level and beyond.

Ethical Fiber: Social entrepreneurs introducing major structural changes to society have to ask a lot of people to change how they do things. If the entrepreneur is not trusted, the likelihood of success is significantly reduced. Ashoka asks every participant in the selection process to evaluate candidates for these qualities rigorously. To do so often requires one to resort to instinct and gut feelings, not just rational analysis. The essential question is: "Do you trust this person absolutely?" If there is any doubt, a candidate will not pass.

<https://www.ashoka.org/en/program/ashoka-venture-and-fellowship> retrieved March 28, 2018.

APPENDIX C

Email to Fellowship Program

Dear _____ Fellows Director

My name is Juan Carlos Rivas (JC), I am currently one of the Change Leaders at University of San Diego (USD) as part of the Ashoka U Changemaker Campus network, as well as a Doctoral Student at the School of Leadership and Education Sciences. I am reaching out to see if you'd have some spare time during the Exchange to discuss research I am conducting for my dissertation. Below is a short description of the project, my hope is to recruit Ashoka fellows for this study. I am hoping you can provide some insight on the research project as well as explore viable ways in which I could reach out to the network and perhaps have this study be of service to your fellowship program as a whole.

The purpose of my study is to better understand how social innovators make meaning of themselves and of their work; and to identify factors that influenced their personal growth and development. The study will utilize human development framework and MAP instrument developed by Dr. Sussane Cook-Greuter to identify how social innovators/entrepreneurs, as founders or leaders in their initiatives, see and make sense of the world. The research will also explore, through qualitative interviews, factors that have influenced a social innovator's development and growth through a qualitative interview and relate these factors to the level of development of particular interviewees.

Please let me know if you'd be interested and available to chat and explore possibilities for your fellows in your program to take part in this study.

I look forward to hearing from you,

APPENDIX D

Email Invitation for Participants

Dear Ashoka Fellow,

I am a doctoral student at in the Department of Leadership Studies in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego (USD), based in California. USD is an Ashoka U Changemaker designated campus and my job as USD's Associate Director of the Changemaker Hub is to engage students in social innovation initiatives. I am reaching out to invite you to participate in my dissertation research on the lives of social innovators.

The purpose of the study is to better understand how social innovators make meaning of themselves and of their work; and to identify factors that influenced their personal growth and development. Should you decide to participate, the following would be asked from you:

- Take an assessment called MAP (Maturity Assessment for Professionals) which is a 36-stem sentence completion assessment. It takes 60 minutes, it is done electronically and whenever most convenient for you.
- Participate in a 90 minute in person or online session comprised of an open-ended interview as well as a short exercise where you will draw a timeline of your life as a social innovator. You will be audiotaped during the interview.

For your participation you will receive a report of the findings

I know you may find this opportunity useful to reflect on your own journey into social innovation. Your time and insight will also help us gain a deeper understanding about the life of social innovators as well as increase the overall knowledge in the social innovation field.

I know how busy you are and I appreciate you considering taking part in this study. Please reply to this email if you are interested and I will send you an email with next steps as well as a consent form for your review.

Sincerely,

Juan Carlos Rivas

APPENDIX E

Participant Consent Form

University of San Diego Institutional Review Board

Research Participant Consent Form

For the research study entitled:
Social Innovators and Stages of Development

I. Purpose of the research study

Juan Carlos Rivas Espinosa is a doctoral student in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study he is conducting. The purpose of this research study is: to better understand how social innovators make meaning of themselves and of their work; and to identify factors that influenced their personal growth and development.

II. What you will be asked to do

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to: complete a sentence completion assessment (60 minutes) and participate in a 90 minute in person or online session comprised of an open-ended interview as well as a short exercise where you will draw a timeline of your life as a social innovator. You will be audiotaped during the interview.

Your participation in this study will take a total of 2 hours and 30 minutes.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts

a) This study involves no more risk than the risks you encounter in daily life.

IV. Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers gain a deeper understanding on the life of social innovators as well as increase the overall knowledge in the social innovation field.

V. Confidentiality

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher's office for a minimum of five years. You will be given the option of having your identity kept confidential by using a pseudonym or, if you prefer, you can choose to use your name and be identified. Your real name will not be used unless you choose to be named in the findings of the study. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings.

VI. Compensation

a) You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

VII. Voluntary Nature of this Research

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this, and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will have no effect on any benefits you're entitled to, like your health care, or your employment or grades. **You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.**

VIII. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:

1) Juan Carlos Rivas Espinosa

Email: jcrivas@san Diego.edu

Phone: 619-316-9252

2) Cheryl Getz, EdD

Dissertation Chair

Email: cgetz@san Diego.edu

Phone: (619) 260-4289

I have read and understand this form, and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of Participant (**Printed**)

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX F

Participant Instructions to Complete the MAP Assessment

Cook-Greuter & Associates, LLC

R

36-Item MAP Research Form

Received:

Your Project JC Rivas Dissertation Project **Research ID**

Gender **Age** **Profession**

Education **Native language**

Instructions: Please save this form to your computer. The MAP contains 36 sentence beginnings of various kinds. Please just complete each sentence to the best of your understanding. There are no right or wrong answers. Give yourself no more than 60 minutes of private time to complete this form. Use the TAB-Key to move through the assessment. When you are done, return a copy of the assessment in WORD by email attachment to Juan Rivas Espinosa <jcrivas@sandiego.edu>

Please initial the field on the right to give Cook-Greuter & Associates permission to share the result of this assessment with the researcher at the University of San Diego

Initialed by **1 Raising a family****2 When I'm criticized****3 A true friend****4 A man's job****5 Being with other people****6 The thing I like about myself is****7 My mother and I****8 What gets me into trouble is****9 Education**

Cook-Greuter & Associates, LLC

R10 ***When people are helpless*** 11 ***Women are lucky because*** 12 ***A good boss*** 13 ***A girl has a right to*** 14 ***At my worst*** 15 ***When they talked about sex, I*** 16 ***I feel sorry*** 17 ***When they avoided me*** 18 ***Rules are*** 19 ***Crime and delinquency could be halted if*** 20 ***Men are lucky because*** 21 ***I just can't stand people who*** 22 ***At times s/he worried about***

"S/he" should be read as "she" by women, "he" by men

23 ***I am***

Cook-Greuter & Associates, LLC

R**24** *If I had more money***25** *My main problem is***26** *When I get mad***27** *People who step out of line at work***28** *A husband has a right to***29** *If my mother***30** *If I were in charge***31** *My father***32** *If I can't get what I want***33** *When I am nervous***34** *For a woman a career is***35** *My conscience bothers me if***36** *Sometimes s/he wished that* "S/he" should be read as "she" by women, "he" by men

Please send the completed WORD-form to Juan Rivas Espinosa <jcrivas@sandiego.edu>

APPENDIX G

Formative Influences Timeline Activity

Note, if the session takes place online through a video conference service, please have available flip chart paper, post it notes and some markers for this portion of the interview.

1. Please draw a line signifying your life timeline on a piece of paper, note that the timeline doesn't need to be linear, it can have ups, downs and cycles. You can also choose to do a bullet point list.
2. Note on the piece of paper with words, sentences or images the following:
 - ▶ **Critical moments** or experiences have been most important growth or turning points in your life?
 - ▶ **Personal influences** that played a role in who you are today
 - ▶ **Experiences** that activated you to do the work you do

Focus specifically on moments that informed, challenged or supported who you are as a social innovator and your orientation towards social change work.

Participants will be invited to share the timeline and any insights they may have from looking at their *Formative Influences Timeline*.

Possible probes

Tell me about the critical moments you identified:

- a) How did this experience change your thinking? How did it inform who you are today?
- b) How did the environment in which you grew up impact you becoming involved with social innovation?
- c) What strategies, if any, did you use to process these experiences? What was most helpful in processing this moment?
- d) How did these experiences shape your view of leadership and the world around you?

APPENDIX H

Participant Interview Protocol

Thank you for accepting to do this interview.

Before we begin, I figured I could share a bit of who I am and why am I doing this work.

- Originally from Mexico, worked in NP for a long time.
- Work at USD, focus on Social Innovation,
- Doing this PhD because I am interested in developing people and applying theory
- I am excited about this research because it will contribute to something we have not yet focused on beyond traits and skills

The session will take about 90 minutes. My hope is to learn as much as I can about the way you make meaning of yourself and the work you do. We will begin with an activity I call *Formative Influences Timeline*; this activity will ask you to look back into your life journey and share personal experiences. I know that when I did it before for myself it required a bit of vulnerability, so, some things may be uncomfortable. I hope to provide as safe and trusting space as possible for you to be comfortable sharing openly who you are. Please know that what you share is a great contribution ultimately to the field.

We will take some time to debrief the activity and then I will ask questions regarding your experience as a social innovator. There are no wrong or right answers, just opportunities to share insight on your personal experiences.

If at some point you feel fatigued or need a break, we can stop and rest at any time or may reschedule the session if you are too fatigued to continue.

Formative Influences Timeline

1. Please draw a line signifying your life timeline on a piece of paper, note that the timeline doesn't need to be linear, it can have ups, downs and cycles,
2. You can write on the paper or use post-it notes to note with words, sentences or images the following:

- Critical moments or experiences have been most important growth or turning points in your life?
- Personal influences that played a role in who you are today
- Experiences that activated you to do the work you do

Focus specifically on moments that informed, challenged or supported who you are as a social innovator and your orientation towards social change work.

- Once done, take a moment to add possible personal values that you learned or practiced at the time of these experiences. Can you circle them on the paper?

Tell me about your timeline... Tell me about the critical moments you identified

Participant Interview Protocol

Let's begin with a question on language you use to define yourself and the work you do. or the purposes of my research I am using the word social innovator, but what do you call yourself?

Possible probes

- a) How did the environment in which you grew up impact you becoming involved with social innovation?
- b) What strategies, if any, did you use to process these experiences? What was most helpful in processing this moment?
- c) How, if at all, did the environment in which you were helped you make sense of the experience?
- d) How did these experiences shape your view of leadership and the world around you?

Self

we talked about your background, but we have not talked about other aspects of your identity. For example, my being Mexican, being gay and growing up in a fair amount of privilege, are aspects of my identity that influenced who I am.

I. What aspects of your identity, if any, have influenced who you are as a social innovator?

Thank you for your sharing, I'd like to spend the rest of our time talking about your approach to work and leadership.

1. What role does time play in your life?
2. How do you deal with feedback or constructive criticism?
3. How do you go about making decisions?
4. How do you approach your work and why?
5. How has your approach to leading others changed over time, if at all?
6. What would be a metaphor that describes the way you lead? MY own example
7. How do you think about an issue?
8. Do you have any strategies to deal with stress? how do you manage your wellbeing?
9. What are some areas for growth or things you want to work on? What are some challenges you find to accomplish the work u want to do?

As I mentioned on the consent form, I want to give you the chance to I choose to be named or identified or I would rather use a pseudonym.

Named_____

Pseudonym_____

APPENDIX I

Code System

Critical Moments

- Critical Moments\A-ha moment
- Critical Moments\Interaction with Other

Experience

- Experience\School
- Experience\Career shift
- Experience\Work experience
- Experience\Hardship
- Experience\Travel
- Experience\fellowship

Personal Influences

- Personal Influences\family
 - Personal Influences\Grandparent
 - Personal Influences\Parents
 - Personal Influences\Kids
 - Personal Influences\Partner
- Personal influences\Other
 - Personal Influences\Teacher/Mentor
 - Personal Influences\Network-friends

Timeline influences

- Timeline influences\Environment influence from timeline
- Timeline influences\Timeline Influence on work
- Timeline influences\Timeline influence on leadership

Identities

- self-description
 - self-description\Gender
 - self-description\Race
 - self-description\Beliefs
 - Beliefs\faith
- Identities other\
 - Privilege

Relationship with Time

- Time\Challenge
- Time\Working on time
- Time\Timing

Dealing with Feedback

- Dealing w Feedback\Challenges
- Dealing w Feedback\welcoming and actionable
- Dealing w Feedback\Ongoing work on it

Thinking process

- Processing strategies
 - Processing strategies\Writing
 - Processing strategies\Meditation
 - Processing strategies\talking with people
 - Processing strategies\Outdoor activity
 - Processing strategies\Other processing strategies
- Decision Making
 - Decision Making\Exploration and Research
 - Decision Making\Gut instinct
 - Decision Making\Figure it out
- Thinking Process\other
 - Risk taking
 - Curiosity
 - Learning
 - Lens
 - Purpose and meaning
 - Agency
 - Change
 - System Change

Approach to work

- Approach to work\when I look when people give me a menu I always start by saying
- Approach to work\Listening
- Approach to work\Goal focused
- Approach to work\curiosity
- Empathy
- Story-Narrative
- Community
 - Community\Two Worlds
 - Community\Potential

Leadership

- Leadership\Leadership Style
- Leadership\Challenge
- Challenge\Fundraising
- Leadership\Vision
- Leadership\Shift in Leadership practice
- Leadership\Metaphor
- Leadership\Firing, leaving or org change

Wellbeing Strategies

- Wellbeing Strategies\Being Outdoors
- Wellbeing Strategies\Struggles on stress or wellbeing
- Wellbeing Strategies\Relationships
- Wellbeing Strategies\meditation
- Wellbeing Strategies\exercise

Other

- Growth
- Ego
- Legacy
- Success
- Money
- Belonging
- Bragging
- Fitting in
- Hardworking
- independence
- Power
- Values
- Perseverance
- Trust
- Failure

APPENDIX J

Data Analysis Flow

APPENDIX K

Memorandum of Agreement between Vertical Development Academy (VeDA) and
Researcher

Juan Rivas Espinosa <jcrivas@sandiego.edu>

RE: MAP Inquiry- Research Project- University of San Diego

1 message

Susanne Cook <cookgsu@comcast.net>
To: Juan Rivas Espinosa <jcrivas@sandiego.edu>

Thu, Mar 22, 2018 at 9:35 AM

Hi Juan:

Happy to hear that Terri Monroe is still bringing developmental theory into the leadership field at San Diego U.

Indeed I have been providing research advice and scoring services for many, many projects including dissertations using constructive developmental theory. The MAP is a solid instrument. Your project sounds quite similar to the dissertation of Barrett Brown. Perhaps you know about his inquiry (2010) and use of the MAP already.

We do have a research fee of \$150.00 per MAP. The administrator (you) gets a form made for the specific project. The results come in an aggregated log of all the MAPs in the project. The log lists the SES (age, gender, education, profession), the unique ID (anonymous). The result shows the distribution of stages within a MAP, the statistical score, the Total weighted score, and a final score based on both quantitative evidence and a qualitative reading of the sentences.

Unlike the full version, the research version **does not allow** for debriefing individuals about their result. It's purely for research. If desired one, of us at VeDA can offer a tutorial for the participants.

I'd be glad to talk to you on zoom if you have further questions.

Sincerely

Susanne

PS. And please give my regards to Terri.

Dr. Susanne Cook-Greuter

Wayland MA 01778

APPENDIX L

Leadership Metaphors as Described by Participants

Participants with MAP Assessments**Jill Violet**

I feel like I am the kid outside after school, or on the weekend, whatever, getting this game going. Like, getting like the best game that you can imagine of, like, kick the can, you know, it's sort of like Capture the Flag. And I mean I'm convincing people to come play and I'm making sure that people who don't necessarily feel included and kind of being reticent; and I'm helping people to switch sides to keep the teams more even, and ultimately the game has a life of its own, right? And all these other people are having their own experiences of playing the game; they are leading and running with the flag and doing all that stuff.

Kathryn Hall Trujillo

I'm more like a river. People could choose to drink or not drink as much or as little as they want. I am not chasing people, you know, like, "Come get, come and drink it" I like the idea of being the water being. I really identify with Yemaya, you know she is the mother of all mothers. She doesn't care where the babies come from. And if you go to the deepest part of Yemaya there is Orukun (another Santeria god imagery from Cuba and Nigeria) and Olukun is both male and female and has that total energy of the whole thing. Kind of, she is the Mama, you know, when the water is where life is made, me in the womb, and all of that stuff. Sometimes I see myself as being a bridge back and forth between communities and ways people think and around genders around class or whatever. There's this kind of, like, bridge for crossing.

Gary Johnson

Let's just say that you're, like, a pack of wolves or something like that; certainly, I'm kind of out in front. And then my objective, my role is to, bit by bit, move towards the back. The goal of the whole thing is that at the end of the day of whatever we're doing that I'm not only at the back of the pack, but I'm not even necessary within the pack. Or maybe I'm running alongside. So, when somebody needs help or support or there's a challenge or what have you, then I can jump in and help out. In the beginning there's sort of a dependency upon me and that's what I do well in the beginning but and then there's co-dependency and then there's independence but people know you're there in the wings to help out if need be.

Ana Williams

Bridges. I guess it's this sometimes-painstaking process of kind of laying the groundwork for these encounters between people from different worlds. And so, it's definitely like that in that there's people like trying to burn the bridge down; a lot of times you got to work extra hard to build the bridge but very much that's always been like in my mind the visual for all we're trying to do.

Jeff Dykstra

If I'm leading well, I'm still probably more of the explorer and kind of go ahead and look at what's next but then have responsibility to change out of my explorer outfit and come back and put the conductor outfit on and kind of make sure that everyone's singing in harmony.

Ben Powell

A metaphor of a ship and the ship is... it could be a starship. It could be the Starship Enterprise or it could be a boat and you're trying to get from one destination to the next and you're dealing with pirates and sand storms and you're trying to make sure that the boat can get to the next port before it sinks. Then once we were able to get into port, you hope you get into this amazing port where they have the best new rockets and you can get the best new upgraded weapons systems and then you're ready to go and you have this new ship. And then the port you get into, it's always so great when you finally land and the port never has quite enough tech that you really want it. So, the new ship it's patched up, it's better; you can get the new crew members; and you're stronger than you were before but you're still pretty small, right. My life metaphor it's kind of like you're going from port to port getting a bigger ship.

Lynn Price

The saying by Muhammad Ali, "Float like butterfly sting like a bee." You kind of just float around in you're kind of observing, and then you just swoop in and you sting, and you show people what's going to happen

Sascha Haselmayer

A marathon... Not that I've ever run a marathon.

Suzanne McKechnie

A critical friend, a dear friend, very nurturing, but the friend who will tell you, "You're full of shit; that's not going to happen." Someone who can be that real friend.

Tomás Alvarez III

I think that when I sense that there's a leadership void, I step into that void and I do it in a way that comes very natural to me. When I sense that no one is leading, like, I just start to lead but I try to lead in a way that is more with the interests of the group in mind at all times. Not just trying to lead in a way that is like "I know what's best; I know what we need to do; I know a place to call" I am very collaborative in the way that I lead.

Christa Gannon

What I love about a river is that at times it can very subtly carry people along. But then at times it is out and there's parts of the river that are at peace and at rest, letting other aspects of the river flow. So, kind of, I think getting out of the way to let other people lead but also then at times kind of being that rushing torrent that's super passionate and very determined and it's just going to find its way to the ultimate end. For me my whole goal is like my mission in life. I would just still it to one sentence as I just I want to be a beneficial presence. I want people to leave time with me feeling a little bit better or a little bit higher energy vibration than when they came. And for me that's a river.

Daniel Kish

I can think of a metaphor when it comes to social change and how I guess I catalyze or activate social change. And I think of it as a fire. I use this analogy often when you're building a fire: fire is the ultimate change agent. It's going to change things. Yes. More than just about anything else. It will change things. If you are building fire for change, you concentrate that fire on the material that wants to change, that's ready to change. It's poised to change. You build your fire around the wood that's ready to burn. And that's where you concentrate your fire. The heart of the fire, if you will, that it's the intensity of the fire. And then everything else will either follow or not. So, the wood that is less likely to burn will burn it will be cause from the fire, because it's in the way. So, I concentrate on the change that wants to happen. I don't tend to trouble myself very much with the change that really doesn't want to happen if I encountered dead wood or rough wood. If I encounter people who are dichard intractable. My attention goes to whatever is around them that is ready for change. I know we live in a world of 8 billion people; someone wants to change.

Aleta Margolis

It's a spiral or it's a tornado. So you just, like, you sort of grab hands and start spinning and it's fun. Lots of people jump in and it becomes the gravitational pull, right? Pulls more people in and then they get going. The idea is, whatever the opposite of dragging people through the mud. I do think some sort of like energetic spiral that, like, pulls things in and grows and grows and grows. I think just pulling people in toward a very compelling core that you'd like "Wow. I got to be part of this," whether because I'm having it enforced by gravity or because I think it's cool.

Tanya Tull

I always worked kind of alone; other people are better at running programs. I was just kind of on top, trying to keep everybody floating on a log in the rapid because everything changes every few years. And when you have that much responsibility, you've got to be working on top of that.

Participants with no MAP Assessment

Imran Kahn

That's interesting. I wonder if my mind thinks in visuals like that. I don't think it does. I think it thinks in words. The word "vision setting" is an important way I lead. I am constantly trying to throw the rock as far as I can. So that everyone can see where it could go and the direction we can go. And I work to lead in a way that I bring the other people. I take what everybody wants, and what's truly at the heart of what my close people want for the organization and the vision, and I throw the rock, you know, as far as I can, knowing what I think society needs beyond anybody's reasonable mind.

Trabian Shorters

You have someone on a path, and they're facing a path that shows hills and mountains and beautiful pastures, an idyllic sort of outcome in one direction and in the other direction is calamity, like behind them is calamity. I actually think those pathways are created by how you're looking at them. If this person were to turn around looked the other way, that's the world they would live in. If they turned to look this way, that's the world they live in. They don't exist. They're both real. But the story you tell yourself will tell you which path to go down.

Date: 8-14-2018

IRB #: IRB-2018-490

Title: Social Innovators and Developmental Stages

Creation Date: 6-29-2018

End Date: 7-26-2019

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Juan Rivas Espinosa

Review Board: USD IRB

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved
-----------------	---------	-------------	-----------	----------	-----------------

Key Study Contacts

Member	Juan Rivas Espinosa	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	jcrivas@SanDiego.edu
Member	Cheryl Getz	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	cgetz@SanDiego.edu