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**Social entrepreneurship in Post-Soviet Countries
and Europe: Exploring Divergent Definitions and
Approaches**

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To my grandmother, Gulzhazira, and to my sister, Aziza, and to all social entrepreneurs who are trying to make this world better

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Abstract

Social entrepreneurship displays significant variation across diverse geographic and cultural landscapes due to differing socio-economic, cultural, and historical factors. This thesis investigates the variations in the definitions and practices of social entrepreneurship between Kazakhstan and Denmark. Applying the Gioia Method, this study conducts semi-structured interviews with ten social entrepreneurs—five from Kazakhstan and five from Denmark—to explore how regional differences influence the understanding and implementation of social entrepreneurship. By identifying the challenges and opportunities unique to each context, this thesis seeks to provide insights that could inform policy and practice, enhancing the support systems for social entrepreneurs.

1.Introduction

1.1 Research background

Can the pursuit of profit coexist with the drive to create social good, or is social entrepreneurship merely another form of charity? This fundamental question lies at the heart of the field of social entrepreneurship, which combines the purpose of providing social value with the rigour and innovation of entrepreneurial principles. While some argue that it should preserve a solely altruistic orientation, others claim that the integration of profit can enhance its social impact. Social entrepreneurship is marked by projects that strive to address social concerns using innovative, sustainable, and market-driven methods. However, the manifestation and interpretation of social entrepreneurship may vary greatly based on regional socioeconomic, cultural, and historical factors.

Historically, entrepreneurship is one of the oldest human activities. From the adventurous merchants of ancient Greece who crossed seas in search of trade opportunities to the structural changes of the 1970s and 1980s that spurred new ventures, entrepreneurship has always been about identifying and exploiting opportunities for economic gain (Karayiannis, 2003). These activities have significantly contributed to economic development and societal progress.

In recent decades, a new type of entrepreneurial activity has emerged: social entrepreneurship. The topic has expanded rapidly, gaining attention from academics, the media, and policymakers. Renowned personalities such as Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus have emphasized the power of social entrepreneurship to alter lives and create social change, in the same way that corporate entrepreneurs such as Steve Jobs have done with their innovation (Martin & Osberg, 2007).

However, as the popularity of social entrepreneurship grew, so did the argument about its definition and scope. Some say that social entrepreneurship should have a completely altruistic focus, putting social impact ahead of earnings. Others argue that including profit can increase social impact, resulting in a sustainable model for social change. This inclusion has resulted in a diverse and sometimes confusing landscape in which numerous socially beneficial activities are referred to as social entrepreneurship. The problem is to develop a clear and rigorous definition that distinguishes authentic social entrepreneurship from other social service activities (Martin & Osberg, 2007).

Although the concept of social entrepreneurship has been around since the 1950s, there is no commonly acknowledged definition among researchers. Saebi et al. (2019) highlight the term's complexities and the ongoing controversy over its exact meaning. Choi and Majumdar (2014) describe it as an “essentially contested concept,” emphasising the challenge of achieving a single, definite understanding (p.364). This absence of a precise definition makes it difficult to capture the different contextual elements that influence social entrepreneurship across areas (Foss & Saebi, 2017).

Social entrepreneurship is often shaped by contextual factors, leading to diverse interpretations and practices (Peredo&McLean, 2006). Contexts, defined as situational opportunities and constraints affecting organisational behaviour and relationships are crucial for generating novel explanations of entrepreneurial actions (Johns, 2006). These contexts encompass geographical environments, industry characteristics, social networks, and institutional frameworks (Welter, 2011). The role of diverse contexts in shaping social entrepreneurship is significant, as meanings, interpretations, and expectations around these contexts impact how social entrepreneurship is enacted and sustained over time (Siebold, Günzel-Jensen, & Müller, 2019).

The importance of context is underscored by the observation that social enterprises and social innovations are also deeply embedded within their specific situational and environmental contexts (Shaw & De Bruin, 2013). This has been illustrated by various forms of social enterprises across different regions that reflect their unique socio-economic and cultural landscapes. For instance, the hybrid nature of social enterprises, which blend business and charity, faces challenges in establishing legitimacy and acquiring resources due to their divergence from traditional organisational forms (Battilana & Lee, 2014). Moreover, the legitimacy of social enterprises can vary significantly across national and social boundaries, influenced by local norms and legal regimes.

1.2 Research question

In a world facing complex and interrelated challenges, understanding how social entrepreneurship operates across different contexts is crucial, yet the ramification in the current state of art does not allow a clear understanding of definition. To fill this gap, I identify the following prominent research question:

What factors influence the divergence of social entrepreneurship forms across different national contexts?

To answer this question, the research uses the Gioia method by conducting semi-structured interviews with social entrepreneurs from European and Post-Soviet regions. This strategy helps to identify patterns and themes that illustrate how diverse circumstances influence social entrepreneurship activities. By developing an integrated framework, the study combines these observations to provide a thorough understanding of the dynamics at play.

2. Literature Review

The definition of social entrepreneurship varies greatly depending on cultural, economic, and other contextual factors. This diversity has resulted in a proliferation of definitions, highlighting the absence of a unifying paradigm in the field (Bacq & Janssen, 2011).

According to Martin and Osberg (2007), it is critical to first understand the concept of entrepreneurship, before stepping into discussions about “social entrepreneurship”. They believe that simply adding the word “social” to the term does not adequately describe it.

2.1 Understanding Entrepreneurship

Understanding the term “entrepreneur” involves delving into its etymological roots, which reveal the fundamental qualities of entrepreneurial activity. The word originally comes from the Old French word *entreprendre*, which means “to undertake” (Cunningham&Lischeron,1991). Similarly, from German language the word *Unternehmer* means “undertaker” or “one who undertakes”. Moreover, taking into consideration that the Entrepreneur is the one who breaks market equilibrium (Schumpeter, 1934), this process is inherently risky. Finally, we might define entrepreneurship as the willingness to take risks.

These etymological insights are significant for understanding the broader implications of entrepreneurship as more than just a business venture; it is a fundamental economic force propelled by individuals willing to shoulder considerable risk for the potential of substantial reward (Drucker, 1986). The combination of these concepts from French and German roots not only broadens our knowledge of entrepreneurship, but also highlights the worldwide and historical importance of entrepreneurial action as a driver of societal and economic progress.

2.2 The Role of Social Mission in Social Entrepreneurship

Moving on to social entrepreneurship, Dees says, “For social entrepreneurs, the social mission is explicit and central...Mission-related impact becomes the central criterion, not wealth creation. Wealth is just a means to an end for social entrepreneurs” (Dees, 1998, p.3). This approach prioritises the significance of societal benefits over financial objectives, designating social entrepreneurs as individuals who are committed to advancing society.

Further, Bygrave and Minniti (2000) observed that while all types of entrepreneurship meet social purposes, social entrepreneurship places a special focus on generating social value rather than private economic gains. Extending this idea Barbera-Tomas et al. (2019) add to this perspective by pointing out that social entrepreneurs rarely expect rapid financial rewards from their initiatives, instead focusing on impacts on society. Following this, investigation of the altruistic dimensions of social entrepreneurship, Tan, Williams, and Tan (2005) developed a taxonomy that categorises social enterprises according to their primary missions and depends on varying degrees of societal engagement. This system distinguishes social entrepreneurship from traditional one by stressing that its societal benefit is its foundation.

However, this sole concentration on social impact can be seen as idealistic in contemporary dynamic realms. Gawell (2013) describes social entrepreneurship as the integration of social involvement with entrepreneurial activities, encompassing both mission-focused goals and business strategies. This setting lays the groundwork for investigating the evolution and regional adaptations of social entrepreneurship, with a focus on both social impact and traditional entrepreneurial actions. Schramm (2010) argues that the economic value and social benefits produced by social enterprises are frequently intertwined at the venture's core, making it difficult to distinguish between the two. The complex interplay between generating economic and social value is highlighted by this combination of goals, a feature that is indicative of contemporary social entrepreneurship. Hockerts (2010) takes a balanced

approach, saying that social enterprises must respond strategically to market forces to prosper and grow, while also incorporating appropriate social values and economic viability. This strategy facilitates the formation of hybrid organisations that combine social and economic goals, resulting in significant and long-lasting social change. Regarding the strategic response of social enterprises to market forces, Saebi et al. (2019) claim that “the array of possible social missions (e.g., educating the illiterate, securing access to clean water, including minority groups in the workforce) and the diversity of profit-generating mechanisms that the social entrepreneur can implement reflect the heterogeneity of Social Entrepreneurship” (p. 75). This observation underscores the adaptable nature of social entrepreneurship, emphasising its capability to conform to various societal and economic conditions with a focus on needs. Social enterprise, therefore, remains responsible toward attaining economic sustainability, but also plays a pivotal role in moving out significant social change that further results in advanced hybrid social ventures balancing social and economic goals effectively.

2.3 Hybrid Ventures

The term “Hybrid” in hybrid social ventures is also wide, as it differentiates the “social venture” from traditional charity perspectives. Opportunities for entrepreneurship necessitate navigating conflicting principles, which entrepreneurs must reconcile or hybridize to ensure their ventures thrive (DiMaggio, 1982). Additionally, the concept of hybridity may originate from the context where entrepreneurial activities are situated (Zahra et al., 2014). Commercial organisations tend to focus on value capture for shareholders within the constraints of societal value, while the social sector organisations ensure that value creation remains for the beneficiaries, but with due considerations for resource mobilisation. The social venture hybrids have the complexity to hold both the value capture and creation competently. It takes a real balancing act with systematic approaches, rather than giving all the attention to one stakeholder group (Santos, 2012). Effective governance in social entrepreneurship is essential for striving

the balance between social impact and financial sustainability. According to Roundy and Bonnal (2017), striking this balance is difficult, but necessary for the long-term viability of social companies. The governance structures must be strong enough to supervise the complex interplay between social and commercial activity, ensuring that neither undermines the other. This necessity for strong governance sets the stage for understanding the dynamics within hybrid organisations, a significant paradigm in the field of social entrepreneurship. There are two primary forms of hybrid organisation introduced by Battilana et al. (2012): differentiated hybrids (DH) and integrated hybrids (IH), each presenting unique strategies and challenges. Ebrahim, Battilana, and Mair (2014) further consider these dynamics and dig into the emerging challenges and risks linked with hybrid organisations needing, on one hand, to balance their profit-making activities with the social goals they purport to promote. For example, they highlight that integrated hybrids achieve their mission by treating beneficiaries as customers, whereas differentiated hybrids treat customers and beneficiaries as separate groups. Governance in DH, therefore, has to strongly manage the parallel streams. The commercial success of the enterprise cannot be at the expense of the social mission, which provides sufficient resources to realise the intended social outcomes. On the other, the development of an IH system requires a sort of governance approach to ensure that business practice is always adjusting to the social-impact goals in a manner that both sides support each other, do not draw away from each other negatively (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014). But where DH does afford transparent financial and performance assessments of separate streams, it may have trouble maintaining a coherent link between the commercial gains and the social mission. That could leave room for an increase in mission drift due to the dominance of the commercial side without adequate checks and balances. On the other side, IH would provoke more aligned organisational practices and potentially a higher level of staff engagement since every part of the business will directly be contributing to the social mission. However, it is difficult to

measure the impact and balance of resources of the model since the goals may complicate the integration of financial and operational decisions (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014). Yet, scrutinising the dynamics of hybrid organisations, as explored by Ebrahim, Battilana, and Mair (2014), social entrepreneurship shows critical dependence on its socioeconomic and political environment. Compared to non-profits, which rely mostly on donations and grants, social entrepreneurs use commercial strategies to achieve sustainable social impact. Roundy and Bonnal (2017) claim that social entrepreneurship is not just an alternative, but an important progression in the approach to social welfare, where market functions are used to effectively drive social transformation.

2.3.1 Social and Economic Hybrids

It is this broad view of hybrid governance and balancing social and economic aims that clearly shows the possibility of social entrepreneurship taking a quite different trajectory within various contexts. The economic hybrids are organisations between financial and social objectives, operating in an intermediate space between traditional profit-making organisations and non-profits. The hybrids are developed to create revenue while addressing social issues. The concept of economic hybrids recognizes that financial sustainability and social impacts are not mutually exclusive and, in a real sense, work to strengthen one another. Most economic hybrids rely on innovative business models so that when they hit their financial targets, the latter, in turn, support their social missions. The dual mechanism involved will thus assure the long-term sustainability of the enterprise and the maximisation of social impacts. This is how economic hybrids are critical in confronting and dealing with demanding, multi-dimensional social challenges: leveraging market-based strategies to achieve social outcomes.

Social hybrids are the type of organisations which primarily focus on the creation of social value, but with some inclusion of traditional business practices to help them be more

effective and financially sustainable. In their operations, social hybrids can make some profit-making activities in the interest of social mission driving. This approach enables them to become self-supporting in terms of finances without solely depending on donations and grants. Social hybrids are committed to social objectives in community development, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. With these givens, social hybrids combine the strengths of both nonprofit and for-profit sectors to innovate and adapt more readily to changing social needs, ensuring broader and more sustainable societal effects (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015).

Both types aim to achieve financial and social goals, but differ in their primary focus. Social hybrids prioritise social missions, with income generation being a secondary goal primarily for sustaining operations. Conversely, economic hybrids focus on profit generation while still engaging in social activities, often being classified as socially responsible businesses. This distinction underscores the varying emphasis on social versus economic objectives within hybrid organisations (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015).

2.4 From Soviet Legacy to Market-Driven Social Enterprises: Kazakhstan's Transformation

Transitioning into Kazakhstan—a country that was following its path after the Soviet Union—has been a very illustrative and bright example of such diversity. Since independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has shifted from a centrally planned economy to one paying attention to the dynamics of the market, while trying at the same time to harmonise with social objectives. This transition hence presents the certain challenges and prospects of Kazakhstan for hybrid businesses. Local economic policies, cultural legacy, historical background, and worldwide trends that have high influence over the way these institutions balance their two purposes are given close consideration through the filter of contextual analysis. Thus, quite an important question arises of how this background will set the specific context for social entrepreneurship

in Kazakhstan and how different it will be from other contexts as a result of complex interrelations between historical heritage and modern economic development?

2.4.1 Soviet Legacy: Shaping Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship

To better understand the context of Kazakhstan, let's go back to the Soviet Union. There was limited discussions and research about social entrepreneurship in the context of the Soviet Union. It is simply because there is a myth that "entrepreneurship" did not exist in Soviet times. Consequently, this means that discussions about "Social entrepreneurship" could not exist either. However, this myth was caused by the narrow and rigid definitions upon which Western scholars based their understandings at that time. Rehn and Taalas (2004) had a critical review that the activity of entrepreneurship in the Soviet Union had generally been ignored or misinterpreted by Western scholars because of a biased understanding in the meaning of entrepreneurship. They argue that mundane forms of entrepreneurship, such as "blat"—using personal networks for obtaining goods and services—were common and necessary under Soviet economic conditions, and thus question the very idea that the USSR was entrepreneurship-free (Rehn & Taalas, 2004). The practice of blat exemplifies how individuals navigated the constraints of the Soviet system through entrepreneurial means, leveraging social connections to meet needs in an environment devoid of free markets.

In the Kovalev's (2019) study regarding social entrepreneurship activities in Soviet Russia during the 1920s can be found as examples of social entrepreneurship, but in its different form due to different context. In that regard, Kovalev also discusses the Assistance Committees for the War Disabled in Siberia, among others, as a fact that there have been some features of social entrepreneurship, such as mobilisation of resources and getting organised for relief activities, despite the operations being constrained under the Soviet regime (Kovalev, 2019). This historical perspective challenges the notion that social entrepreneurship is

incompatible with non-market economies and underscores its adaptability to various socio-political environments.

Furthermore, the unstable transition from a communist history to a capitalist society in Russia, with its extensive bureaucratic systems and rigid regulations, mirrors some of the challenges faced by Kazakhstan. The emergence of informal entrepreneurship in Russia, such as the re-enactment festivals creating social capital, illustrates how entrepreneurial activities can thrive even in constrained environments (Gordin & Dedova, 2015). This parallel highlights the potential for similar informal entrepreneurial activities to develop in Kazakhstan.

Additionally, the everyday economic life of the Soviet citizen involved realising hidden potentials within the system, often “by hook or by crook” (Ledeneva, 1998). Byzantine planning and lack of transparency led to absurdities like factories producing spare parts for non-existent machinery, or a shoe factory increasing efficiency by making only left-foot shoes to meet quotas (Berliner, 1957). These anecdotes highlight how the Soviet system, despite its rigid structure, forced citizens to become micro-entrepreneurs in their daily lives (Rehn & Taalas, 2004).

Moreover, Williams and Nadin (2012) investigated informal entrepreneurship in Russia and determined that social and commercial entrepreneurship are not mutually exclusive but rather exist on a continuum. The ecosystem encompasses actors with purely for-profit motivations as well as those with strong social motivations, with transitions between these logics occurring at various times. This insight is relevant for understanding the entrepreneurial landscape in Kazakhstan, where similar dynamics is present due to the influence of the centrally planned economy during the 74 years of the Soviet Union.

2.4.2 Social Entrepreneurship in the New Era of Independent Kazakhstan

Taking Independent Kazakhstan, there is a new generation of entrepreneurs, who have not seen the Soviet regime in the live format, despite the echoes of command economy. Kazakhstan launched one of the most important transitions towards increased entrepreneurship in 1997 through legislative reforms pushed by President Nazarbayev, who consolidated state support and regional business stimulation programs (Lee & Tai, 2010). This fact stimulated many to set up in the new, market-based Kazakhstan and leave behind the far Soviet-inherited economic frameworks. For example, most entrepreneurs, about 85%, of Kazakhs reached out to the foreign markets in 2006. Such elements bring out a strong international orientation on the part of Kazakh entrepreneurs (Lee & Tai, 2010). The aspirations of financial independence and social recognition drive these entrepreneurs. They navigate a business landscape enriched with new opportunities at the same time challenged by bureaucratic complexities and an inconsistency in legislative environments that shape the business operations and scalability (Lee & Tai, 2010).

If we consider independent Kazakhstan specifically, the term social entrepreneurship, according to Bepalyy et al. (2021), “the growth of social problems in society leads to the development of social entrepreneurship” (p. 6). The research showed that in Kazakhstan, the development of social entrepreneurship is determined by a large number of interdependent factors and is a kind of a “pill” from societal problems. These include social goals set by the government and non-governmental organisations, changes in the pattern of employment as advised by instability of the economies, changes in the structure of society and so on. With time, the legal climate is changing to make it suitable for the rise of the enterprises driven by both socio-economic pressure and demographic shifts in the name of social enterprises in Kazakhstan. This adaptability forms a larger trend in post-Soviet countries where they are changing from state-driven economies to market-oriented societies, putting value on social

innovation and entrepreneurship. So, it would be wrong to underestimate the influence of the Soviet regime, which lasted for 55 years under Soviet Rule.

After the Soviet Union had collapsed, radical social and economic changes were faced in countries that were part of the USSR. It resulted in such differentiation in the development of many fields and both traditional and social entrepreneurship were not an exception. There is a similarity of this process to the transformation in Nordic countries, but from different historical settings that can give comparative useful insights.

Understanding the impact of national contexts is critical. Social enterprises in different nations may establish distinct models to meet local requirements, driven by their respective cultural, economic, and political environments. For example, social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark reflects their respective historical and socioeconomic contexts.

Kazakhstan's shift from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy poses particular difficulties and potential for social entrepreneurs. Local economic policies, cultural legacies, and historical contexts influence how social enterprises achieve their social and economic objectives. Similarly, Denmark's welfare state and emphasis on community-based business practices have an impact on the growth of social entrepreneurship, emphasizing the need of supportive policies and cultural norms in promoting social innovation.

2.5 Denmark's Journey from Cooperatives to Contemporary Social Enterprises

The book *Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises: Nordic Perspectives*, edited by Linda Lundgaard Andersen, Malin Gawell, and Roger Spear (2016), makes a compelling contribution toward the subject of the great socio-economic transformation within the Nordic countries. These countries have changed from societies with restricted social and political freedom to modern states with high living standards and massive public welfare services. It is in comparison with the democratisation and economic liberalisation processes that, in fact, took

place in the post-Soviet states, but had different unique Nordic emphasis on sustainable social policies and the community-based business practice.

According to Sanders (2022), Denmark is a prime example of how entrepreneurship can address major global issues such as sustainability, inequality, and resilience. Sanders underlines that Denmark's approach to entrepreneurship is profoundly anchored in its institutional setting, which encourages innovation and social responsibility. Danish institutions, which include strong social safety nets, high levels of trust, and cooperative structures, provide an ideal environment for socially and economically beneficial entrepreneurial activities.

2.5.1 Historical Roots and Socio-Economic Transformation

The welfare state of Denmark particularly has been very instrumental in shaping the landscape for social entrepreneurship and social enterprises. It was the state that provided not only monetary and infrastructure support, but also educational support, knowledge sharing, and even the research support facilitated by the state. In this regard, this support system has been nurtured to encourage individual and collective entrepreneurial ventures within the non-profit sector (Mazzucato, 2013; Andersen, Gawell, & Spear, 2016).

Social entrepreneurship in Denmark goes back to the 19th century. Especially in the countryside, economically and culturally important farmer and worker cooperatives were formed. These cooperatives played an important role in general socio-economic development and are also part of the results of forming the modern welfare state in Denmark, oriented by movements like Grundtvigianism. They are early examples of social capital mobilised and collective action to meet the challenges in social and economic life (Hulgård & Bisballe, 2004).

In fact, the idea of social entrepreneurship elaborated in the 1980s and 1990s by Nordic representatives is representative of the development of small business in local communities. Their primary focus was on community development, though they have come to cover wider-reaching social, cultural, and ecologically orientated goals. This development aligns with the

social economy perspective, emphasizing the interplay between economic and societal goals (Johannisson & Nilsson, 1989; Gawell, 2014a; Andersen, Gawell, & Spear, 2016). This shares significant overlaps with broader social entrepreneurship initiatives observed in the post-Soviet reforms.

Renewal of the welfare state of Denmark since the 1980s—labelled by political and administrative reforms that include market-oriented welfare services and strengthened focus on user influence—is subtle in approach toward merging social values with entrepreneurial practices. This has made a major contribution to shaping the framework within which the operation of social entrepreneurship is set, in turn driving an economically more inclusive and innovative landscape (Andersen, 2014; Andersen et al., 2016).

In the early 2000s, a new period began in Denmark, marking the institutionalisation process of social enterprises. During this period, social enterprises went through a significant transformation, growing from small initiatives to established and institutionalised organizations. The social economy, social entrepreneurship, and social enterprises have garnered considerable interest from a wide range of stakeholders. Third-sector organizations had to navigate the delicate balance between their traditional advocacy roles and the delivery of welfare services within a market-oriented environment. Incorporating strategies to promote social enterprise, Danish public policies and welfare renewal strategies have embraced the emergence of a national strategy for social enterprise (Andersen, Hulgård, & Jakobsen, 2021).

2.5.2 Modern Approaches and Educational Impact

A modern approach to the theme of social entrepreneurship in Denmark uncovered a view of how to implement social values in the educational system. As highlighted in Jensen's article (2014), the use of the holistic person perspective puts growing emphasis on the impact of entrepreneurship education. This avenue underlines an assessment of how the students apply entrepreneurial concept applications in a series of contexts within courses and the life context,

thus widening the definition of impact of entrepreneurship education from the traditional business creation to a more generic outlook of impacts in the social, cultural, and ecological goals (Jensen, 2014). Building upon the broadened impact of entrepreneurship education in Denmark, the concept of “social enterprise” is evolving to meet the needs of the modern labour market. This shift emphasises not only educational outcomes, but also direct societal engagement, particularly in terms of incorporating unemployed individuals into the workforce. In this light, Denmark's approach to social ventures, although in its nascent stages, marks a significant shift towards integrating social values directly into economic practices.

Nowadays, in Denmark, the term “social enterprise” more or less refers to active labour market policies aimed at making small and medium enterprises more socially responsible, specifically in terms of integrating unemployed people into the labour market. This use of the term “social enterprise” is only just beginning to figure in the debate on social cohesion and reflects an emerging sector of the social economy in Denmark. To compare, in other European countries, the social economy and social enterprises have become part of public policy agendas since the mid-1990s, and Denmark is probably just at early stage of the development of policy and the interest in this area, since probably this fact is an indication of the country undergoing the first steps in the full recognition and institutionalisation of social enterprises as part of its economic and social make-up (Hulgård & Bisballe, 2004). As Denmark explores its position within the social economy, similar trends are observable in varying degrees across different regions, including Kazakhstan. This comparative perspective reveals diverse practices and definitions of social entrepreneurship that are shaped by regional specificities.

As Denmark explores its position within the social economy, Sanders (2022) suggests that this evolving landscape highlights the need for continued support and reform to foster a thriving entrepreneurial society. This includes understanding the historical roots of institutions

that channel resources towards entrepreneurs, scanning the entrepreneurial ecosystem for strengths and weaknesses, and tailoring interventions to fit the local context.

While each country presents unique advantages and faces distinct challenges, the core ambition of social entrepreneurship—to address social needs through business strategies—is a common thread.

3. Methodology

The research question of this study hints at theory building rather than testing, making an inquiry-based approach more suitable than a deductive approach. Using an inductive research method is the most effective approach to address this question as it enables the examination of definitions and contextual factors in social entrepreneurship without any preconceived notions. Considering the focus of this study on social entrepreneurship definitions and contextual factors, it was crucial to conduct interviews with social entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds. This included individuals from a post-Soviet country and a Western country, in order to gain insights into the factors that influence social entrepreneurship in these distinct ecosystems.

Given the exploratory nature of this research, I adopted the Gioia method (Gioia et al., 2013) to analyse the qualitative data gathered during the semi-structured interviews. The Gioia method aligned well with the inductive approach as it emphasized the importance of capturing the informants' own terms and concepts, which allowed for the discovery of new insights and patterns directly from the data. A key assumption of the Gioia method is that the organizational world is socially constructed, and it recognizes the informants as “knowledgeable agents” who understand and can articulate their thoughts, intentions, and actions. This approach foregrounded the informants' interpretations and emphasized the importance of their voices in the early stages of data gathering and analysis. By treating the participants as knowledgeable agents, the Gioia method allowed for a rich, nuanced understanding of the studied phenomena,

ensuring that the resulting theory was deeply grounded in the participants' own experiences and insights (Gioia et al., 2013). This method was particularly suitable for theory building as it provided a structured process for developing theoretical constructs from qualitative data.

Initially, the focus was on identifying common patterns across both contexts to develop a unified understanding of social entrepreneurship. However, as the research progressed, it became evident that a more nuanced approach was necessary to better capture the divergent elements in each context. Then, the research protocol including interview questions was adapted and shaped according to that. Consequently, separate Gioia data structures were created for Kazakhstan and Denmark to elucidate the unique factors shaping social entrepreneurship in each country.

3.1 Research Setting

3.1.1 From Soviet Legacy to Market Economy: Kazakhstan's Transition

Kazakhstan, the largest country in Central Asia, has a history that significantly influences its current socio-economic landscape. During the Soviet era, particularly under the policies of Perestroika (restructuring) and the Era of Stagnation, Kazakhstan's economy was heavily centralised and industrially focused, with little room for entrepreneurial activity. The Era of Stagnation, roughly spanning from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, was a period marked by economic slowdown and a lack of substantial economic reforms in the Soviet Union. The mechanisms of rigid centralised planning grew inefficient over time, which led to general shortages, low productivity, and technological backwardness. For Kazakhstan, this period became a time of a clearly established path dependence on state planning and management, which brutally blocked the innovative and entrepreneurial rushes. There was a little more room for the individual initiative since the state decided where almost all economic operations were directed from the centre in Moscow. Perestroika was an economic reform launched in the mid-1980s by Mikhail Gorbachev, to reorganise the Soviet economy by incorporating market-

economic elements and reducing state control. In the case of Kazakhstan, perestroika marked the start of the transition towards the liberalisation of the economy. Although the reforms were limited and met with resistance, they laid the groundwork for the economic transformations that would follow the collapse of the Soviet Union (Kalyuzhnova,2020).

After gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan started a policy of radical political, economic, and social reforms. It also means the transition of the country from a centrally planned economy to an open-market economy over the last decade, which represents the transition and at the same time the radical reformation. Privatisation of state-owned enterprises, economic liberalisation, and development of the legal base to promote private entrepreneurial initiatives became the main tracks for this process (Pomfret,2020).

Kazakhstan's economy is characterised by its vast natural resources, particularly oil and gas, which have played critical roles in fuelling economic growth. The country has one of the world's largest oil reserves, and the energy sector has attracted significant foreign investment. This abundance of natural resources has led to Kazakhstan's rapid GDP growth, making it one of Central Asia's most advanced economies (Satubaldina, 2021). Despite its economic growth, Kazakhstan nevertheless confronts significant socioeconomic issues. Income inequality remains high, with significant differences between urban and rural areas. The fruits of economic expansion have not been properly dispersed, resulting in continuing poverty and unemployment, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, the legacy of the Soviet command economy has created a heavy bureaucratic and often inefficient governance system that complicates business operations (Kalyuzhnova,2020).

3.1.2 Cultural Influences and Social Dynamics in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's cultural landscape is a unique blend of Turkic nomadic roots and Soviet influence. Traditional Kazakh culture values community, family, and common well-being. This

collectivist culture is reflected in the strong social networks and informal support systems that exist across the country (Kudaibergenova, 2017).

However, the Soviet era had a profound impact on Kazakh society. The Soviet regime's centralised control and collectivist policies encouraged reliance on state support and a bureaucratic approach to issue solving. This has influenced how social concerns are treated, with a focus on state solutions rather than grassroots initiatives (Dave, 2007).

3.1.3 Legal Framework and Current State of SE in Kazakhstan

Social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan is a relatively new but quickly expanding sector that aims to address these socioeconomic concerns. According to current legislation adopted on June 24, 2021, under Law No. 52-VII, social entrepreneurship is defined as entrepreneurial activity that seeks to solve social problems for the benefit of individuals and society. This legal framework supports and recognizes social companies, highlighting their role in generating social innovation and tackling crucial societal concerns (Zakon.kz, 2023).

As of April 1, 2023, there were 129 registered social companies in Kazakhstan, classified according to their contributions to employing disadvantaged populations, providing goods and services for these groups, and allocating a major percentage of their income to social causes (Zakon.kz, 2023).

These social enterprises fall into four categories:

1. 52 firms (40.3%) support employment for disadvantaged groups, including individuals with impairments, parents raising disabled children, and elderly.
2. Enterprises supporting the creation of goods, services, or work by those in the first group (2, or 1.6%).
3. There are 27 firms (20.9%) that produce goods, services, or work for individuals in the first category.

4. 48 firms, or 37.2%, allocate at least 50% of their income to children's recreation and health activities, environmental conservation, and social causes.

The legislative framework for social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan was significantly strengthened with the adoption of Law No. 52-VII on June 24, 2021. This law made changes and modifications to many legislative acts governing entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and mandated social health insurance. The fundamental purpose of this act is to foster a positive environment for social entrepreneurs by giving legal recognition, money, and other forms of institutional assistance (Zakon.kz, 2023).

3.1.4 Denmark's Evolution: From Poverty to a Robust Social Economy

Denmark, currently recognized for its high standard of life and powerful welfare state, was formerly a poor agrarian community. In the early nineteenth century, Denmark experienced significant economic issues and widespread poverty. The mid-19th century saw important agricultural changes and the growth of the cooperative movement, which marked a watershed moment. These innovations shifted Denmark's economy from rural to more diverse, encouraging community-based activities and equitable resource allocation (Hulgård & Chodorkoff 2019).

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Denmark had developed a more structured market economy. Following World War II, there was tremendous development, including comprehensive social welfare policies and significant investments in education and infrastructure. These efforts resulted in a favourable climate for economic stability and prosperity. During this century, Denmark established a strong market economy and became a leader in social innovation and entrepreneurship (Hulgård & Chodorkoff, 2019).

Today, Denmark is a country with a high level of economic freedom, innovation, and a robust social safety net. The established market economy, which is distinguished by strong institutional backing and collaborative networks, provides an ideal environment for social

entrepreneurship to flourish. Denmark's stable and inclusive economic structure fosters social entrepreneurship and serves as a global paradigm (Hulgård & Chodorkoff 2019).

3.1.5 Cultural Influence and Social Dynamics in Denmark

Denmark's cultural roots are deeply intertwined with its Viking heritage. The Viking Age, spanning from the late 8th to early 11th century, left an indelible mark on Danish identity, emphasising values such as bravery, exploration, and resilience. The Vikings were known for their maritime prowess, establishing trade routes and settlements across Europe and beyond. This period of exploration and conquest not only shaped Denmark's early societal, but also instilled a strong sense of adventure and adaptability in the Danish people (Jensen, 2013).

However, over the past few decades, there has been a noticeable shift from collectivism to individualism in Danish society. This transition has been influenced by broader socio-political changes, including educational reforms that promote personal autonomy and self-expression (Telhaug et al., 2004). These reforms have progressively fostered an environment where individual rights and personal responsibility are highly valued. The educational system, in particular, has played a crucial role in this shift by encouraging students to develop their own opinions and pursue personal goals.

3.1.6 Legal Framework and Institutional Support for SE in Denmark

The legal framework for social entrepreneurship in Denmark began to take shape in 2013, when the government established the Social Economy Committee. This resulted in the passage of the "Act on Registered Social Enterprises" in 2014, which granted social entrepreneurs' governmental registration, visibility, and certain financial rewards. Several laws and initiatives promote the social economy, including those pertaining to sheltered employment and employment-supportive measures. This framework creates a supportive environment for social entrepreneurs, enabling them to successfully solve societal concerns (European Commission, 2023).

Associations, foundations, and limited liability firms are among the several types of organisations considered to be part of the Danish social economy. Social enterprises can gain formal registration by becoming “Registered Social Enterprises,” which gives them increased visibility and some fiscal and financial benefits. Since there is no official unified database on the social economy in Denmark, information on the number of social companies can be inferred using the Social Enterprise Registration. In 2017, it was expected that 411 certified Danish social companies employed around 4,932 people (European Commission, 2023).

The earliest social companies in Denmark emerged in the late 1800s, with the formation of worker and farmer cooperatives. This movement coincided with the growth of the non-profit sector, including charitable and religious groups. The social economy gained influence throughout the twentieth century as it asserted itself as a provider of public services. Since the late 1960s, a new sort of social entrepreneurship has evolved, centred on local and bottom-up activities, particularly in education, leisure, and childcare. Since the 1990s and 2000s, the social economy has grown in popularity, with public bodies becoming increasingly involved in defining, recognizing, and developing the sector (European Commission, 2023).

In Denmark, policymaking for the social economy is administered by a number of ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Business and Growth, the Ministry of Employment, the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment, and the Danish Business Agency. This multifaceted approach ensures full support for social economy development (European Commission, 2023).

3.2 Data Collection

The decision to use semi-structured interviews was driven by the need to ask questions and capture the process and flow of social entrepreneurship. This format allowed for timely reactions and follow-up questions, ensuring a deeper exploration of the topics discussed. To explore what factors affect the divergence of definitions and approaches of social

entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 social entrepreneurs 5 of whom were males and the other 5 females. In the case of the country distribution, five were from Kazakhstan and five from Denmark. The age of interviewees varied from 23 to 47 years.

This age diversity guaranteed the variety of views from people of different life stages and levels of entrepreneurial experience, including insights into experiences during both the Soviet era and post-independence periods in Kazakhstan.

The interviews were conducted between February 2024 and April 2024. Initially, the prospective respondents were selected from both the professional network and social entrepreneurship organisations. Gradually, as the study progressed, the snowball effect was employed, through which each participant was asked to suggest another social entrepreneur who could share the insights for the research. This also allowed me to do purposeful sampling (Pratt, 2009).

All the participants were founders of social ventures operating in the fields of education and labour integration. Among the participants, four were on their first venture, three on their second venture, and three on their third venture (see Table 1). This diverse set of social entrepreneurial experiences gave an in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities that social entrepreneurs confront in various regions.

Interviewees	Country	Age	Gender	Education	Entrepreneurship experience (number of ventures)	Entrepreneurship experience (year/s)
1	Kazakhstan	26	female	Bachelors	1	1
2	Kazakhstan	47	female	Bachelors	1	7

3	Kazakhstan	23	female	Bachelors	1	2
4	Kazakhstan	33	male	Masters	2	9
5	Kazakhstan	38	male	Masters	3	11
6	Denmark	28	male	Bachelors	3	5
7	Denmark	37	male	Masters	1	7
8	Denmark	37	female	Masters	2	7
9	Denmark	33	female	Bachelors	3	10
10	Denmark	33	male	Bachelors	2	8

Table 1. Interviewee Characteristics

Semi-structured interviews lasted from 45-90 minutes. These semi-structured interviews were used as primary data (e.g., Annosi et al., 2023). Guided by the research question, the initial part of the data analysis began with open coding of interviews for “in vivo” on defining entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship within their countries, motivations for starting their ventures, challenges faced, and the socio-cultural factors influencing their work (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Secondly, I looked for connections both within and between the original codes, which helped me to come up with second-order themes. Specific attention was given to understanding the legal and regulatory frameworks, funding mechanisms, and cultural contexts shaping social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark. In addition, I iteratively went and returned between data and literature for theoretical sensitivity to give meaning to the data (Glasser, 1978). This approach provided flexibility in crafting an integrated framework model for the research. The Gioia method’s adaptability to changes in interview protocols based on informant responses ensures that the research remains relevant and grounded in the actual experiences of social entrepreneurs (Gioia et al., 2013).

Data from both Kazakhstan and Denmark were used to create separate data structures according to the Gioia method, enabling in-depth country-context analysis. This structured approach ensured that the data analysis was both systematic and flexible, allowing for the

emergence of new insights and theories grounded in the lived experiences of the social entrepreneurs interviewed (Gioia et al., 2013).

The choice to focus on Kazakhstan and Denmark was made to highlight the ecosystem contrast between a post-Soviet country and a Western country, offering a rich comparative perspective on the varying definitions and approaches to social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, this gave me flexibility to craft my integrated framework model in my research.

The study aimed to comprehensively comprehend the factors that influence the definitions and practices of social entrepreneurship in post-Soviet and Western contexts by employing this methodological approach. The objective of this method was to emphasize the particular characteristics that are exclusive to these different environments and analyse their impact on social entrepreneurship, thereby making a valuable contribution to the advancement of theory in this field.

3.3 Consent and Anonymity

To ensure ethical considerations were met, consent was obtained from all participants for the use of their quotations and background information on an anonymous basis. This approach allowed for candid discussions while protecting the identities and sensitive information of the interviewees. The interviews were conducted online using platforms, such as Zoom and Google Meet. All interviews were transcribed verbatim.

3.4 Data Analysis

Following formulation of the research question, analysis began with open coding of the interview transcripts in order to extract first-order concepts. Open coding facilitated constant comparison of incidents relevant to each category, and memo writing facilitated the process of linking data to codes. Additionally, connections within and between the initial codes were

searched in the generation of second-order themes; these were of a more abstract nature, but maintained an anchor in the participants' actual experiences.

Data from both Kazakhstan and Denmark were used to create separate data structures according to the Gioia method. This enabled in-depth country-context analysis.

Figure 1. Data Structure for Kazakhstan

<i>First-order code</i>	Second-order concept	Theoretical aggregate dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prioritising profit, yet opting for greater impact</i> • <i>Social entrepreneurship is not a charity</i> 	Economic Hybrids	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inefficiencies waste time and leave needs unmet</i> • <i>The most vulnerable become entrepreneurs to survive when basic needs go unaddressed</i> 	Entrepreneurial Resilience	Strategic Agility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The system pushed Soviet entrepreneurs exploit legal loopholes and the black market</i> • <i>Absence of freedom in education stifles creativity, but paradoxically sharpens loophole finding</i> 	Cultural Stagnation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Top connections in collectivism fast-track funding</i> • <i>Oral promise is enough over written proof</i> • <i>A venture's life cycle hinges on informal connections</i> 	Trust in Informal Networking	Cultural and Network Imprints in Entrepreneurship

- *Private investors over government grants* **Alternative Funding**
 - *Bureaucracy challenges*
 - *Beyond domestic support*
 - *Fear of fraud* **Venture Lifecycle VS Legal Instability**
 - *Emerging legal acts*
 - *Paternalism of the system*
- Risk Management in Unstable Environments**

Table 2. Representative quotes from Social Entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan

Quotes	First-order code	Second-order concept	Theoretical aggregate dimension
<i>“They can make, like, 30% profit, for example, or they can decide to only make, like, 20%, willingly decreasing the profitability but increasing the impact.”</i>	Prioritising profit, yet opting for greater impact	Economic Hybrids	
<i>“Social entrepreneurship focuses on profit first to make social impact greater; it is not a charity.”</i>	Social entrepreneurship is not a charity		Strategic Agility
<i>“Noticing all these inefficiencies [...] You start feeling like your time and energy is getting wasted...basic needs are not covered”</i>	Inefficiencies waste time and leave needs unmet	Entrepreneurial Resilience	
<i>“Even people with disabilities are creating their ventures, because if they don’t protect themselves, no one will... basic needs are not covered.”</i>	The most vulnerable become entrepreneurs to survive when basic needs go unaddressed		
<i>“In Soviet times, because of communism, entrepreneurs learned how to overcome rules ‘legally’ and with limited resources through black market.”</i>	The system pushed Soviet entrepreneurs to exploit legal loopholes and the black market	Cultural Stagnation	
<i>“There has been a very strict almost totalitarian system since school times, where you are like tamed, the whole system is trained in such a way from Soviet times. So,</i>	Absence of freedom in education stifles creativity, but paradoxically		Cultural and Network Imprints in Entrepreneurship

starting from education, we need to change the system to have more creative and free minds.”

sharpens loophole finding

“One of the reasons why it is easier to get funding from private investors is networking and collectivistic culture. Faster track to ask for help, if you have some acquaintance.”

Top connections in collectivism fast-track funding

Trust in Informal Networking

“People go and learn about entrepreneurship culture from each other’s stories [...] No one is looking for a written proof.”

Oral Promises is enough over written proof

“Let’s say you go to an NGO, and the NGO promised you to funding, but in case of our country, an NGO is also dependent on some governmental company, and then governmental agency might not ‘hold’ the promise, it means you cannot survive too.”

A venture’s life cycle hinges on informal connections

“We don’t participate in governmental funding, only in very small grants, usually we get money from private investors”

Private Investors over government grants

Alternative Funding

“Before the government starts supporting you, you have to go through hell”

Bureaucracy challenges

“No, we don’t get governmental funding, we lost hope”

Beyond domestic support

“People are afraid most of the time to open enterprises, too much fraud, and you understand that no one will protect you in case of fraud. So, there is a lot of fear. Legal system cannot protect anyone really well”

Fear of fraud

Venture Lifecycle VS Legal Instability

Risk Management in Unstable Environments

“The law on social entrepreneurship is very new. I think it was signed in 2021”

Emerging Legal Acts

“We have a very strong hierarchy...so much stuff depends on the government [...] They may not be very good at responding immediately and professionally, and they don’t want to share wealth with the people”

Paternalism of the system

Figure 2. Data Structure for Denmark

<i>First-order code</i>	Second-order concept	Theoretical aggregate dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Society over shareholders</i> • <i>Shift the world's direction</i> 	Social Hybrids	Social Value Creation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Open entrepreneurial path</i> • <i>Academic freedom</i> 	Inclusive Opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Profit stigma</i> • <i>Seeking impact, not own profit</i> 	Altruistic Motivation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Organizing into small groups</i> • <i>Autonomy in startup culture</i> 	Individualism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resisting investors influence</i> • <i>Government as a facilitator</i> • <i>Public funding access</i> 	Governance synergy	Robust Institutional Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Secure environment</i> • <i>Proactive support</i> • <i>Established legal acts</i> 	Systemic stability	

Table 3. Representative quotes from Social Entrepreneurs in Denmark

Quotes	First-order Code	Second-order concept	Theoretical aggregate dimension
<i>"I guess social entrepreneurship would be entrepreneurship for actually creating something that makes people's lives better and not just the lives of the shareholders."</i>	Society over shareholders	Social Hybrids	

<i>"It wasn't really the way that I wanted the world to move, and I felt like okay now is a moment."</i>	Shift the world's direction		
<i>"You don't need to be the smartest, best ever, gifted person to go that path; like, that path is open."</i>	Open entrepreneurial path	Inclusive Opportunities	Social Value Creation
<i>"We start maybe at the more realistic start point because we understand the game. Because it is more likely that students heard something about social entrepreneurship at schools"</i>	Academic freedom		
<i>"It has a bad reputation if you say, like, 'Oh, I'm doing a social venture, but it's for profit.' Because then people will immediately say, 'Oh, you're greedy.'"</i>	Profit Stigma	Altruistic Motivation	
<i>"I had a will to change and do something meaningful, not for my own profit"</i>	Seeking impact, not own profit		Post-Materialism in Social Entrepreneurship
<i>"What I advise the youth is to at least organise themselves in smaller groups, and I always tell them that if they don't have passion for the cause of social entrepreneurship, then don't do it"</i>	Organising into small groups	Individualism	
<i>"In the startup culture, autonomy isn't just a benefit, it's a necessity."</i>	Autonomy in startup culture		
<i>"We didn't approach any investors because we basically just give something away for free, and most investors don't really like that, because it's not smart in a business sense."</i>	Resisting Investors Influence	Governance Synergy	
<i>"You do get a lot of support from the government in the sense that it's free to open a company. Anyone can open a company at any point, and they do not have to pay anything for it [...] Denmark has a very complex tax system and that's, even though it doesn't seem like it, it is to allow for a lot of exceptions and for a lot of flexibility."</i>	Government as a facilitator		Robust Institutional Framework
<i>"Mostly public funding from the European Commission or the Nordic Council of Ministries... So, we applied now for example on the 5th of March, we get the response in the end of summer, August-</i>	Public Funding access		

September, and then after that we can start implementing, if we get the funds.”

“You don’t search for stability in Denmark, it is pretty everywhere, so, when you start a venture, you do it with a passion”

Secure environment Systemic stability

“So, you have to work with other organizations in other countries. So, the quality of our courses is very high because we develop it together with universities, with other training centres, with NGOs around Europe.”

Proactive Support

“No matter which part of the country you’re in, you’re probably able to go to a business centre within your municipality and get some advice about how to start a business”

Established Legal Acts

4. Findings

Following this methodology, the section delves into divergent practices and conceptualizations of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark. Results from my interview data are structured in each table by three aggregate dimensions that stand out most strongly in the analysis. These dimensions have been developed within the parameters revealed by the application of Gioia Methodology. For Kazakhstan, those aggregate dimensions are strategic agility, cultural and network imprints in entrepreneurship, and risk management in unstable environments. For Denmark, those theoretical dimensions are social value creation, post-materialism in social entrepreneurship and robust institutional framework. I further assimilate the six theoretical dimensions to three overarching themes to develop an integrated framework for understanding and compare distinct factors that shape social entrepreneurship in two different ecosystems, Kazakhstan and Denmark, respectively (see Figure 3).

4.1 Factors influencing social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan

4.1.1 Strategic agility

Central to survival and growth of social ventures in Kazakhstan is the concept of strategic agility, which helps social entrepreneurs to adapt and navigate in crisis. Two second-order themes emerged from collected data: Economic hybrids and entrepreneurial resilience. Economics hybrids (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015) refer to how entrepreneurs are able to balance their profit-making activities against the pursuit of their social missions. Social entrepreneurs must balance strategic impact with profitability in Kazakhstan, reflecting a nuanced interpretation of Dees' (1998) vision of using wealth as a means to an end. The first order code "Prioritising profit, yet opting for greater impact" shows a critical adaptation within the local context where, contrary to Dees' (1998) ideal of prioritizing social mission, the surrounding context requires most of the time for economic viability to ensure that such social impact efforts would be sustainable and scalable. The need for a balanced approach was mentioned by social entrepreneur, Interviewee 1:

'They can make like 30% profit, for example, or they can decide to only make, like, 20%, willingly decreasing the profitability, but increasing the impact.' [I1]

Such a strategy highlights tactical flexibility that ensures the survival of the venture, yet it is still able to fulfil an impactful social mission. Another first-order theme covers that social entrepreneurship focuses on profit first, to make social impact greater, as it is not a charity. This view of an entrepreneur, Interviewee 2, tends to consider profitability as priority not for their own sake, but for ensuring the possibility of pursuing their social missions.

The second-order code is entrepreneurial resilience, the process through which an entrepreneur will act on an immediate problem and the systemic kind that characterises a

shifting economic environment in Kazakhstan. The first order code “Inefficiencies waste time and leave needs unmet” is evidenced by one of the entrepreneurs, Interviewee 5: “Noticing all these inefficiencies... You start feeling like your time and energy is getting wasted. Basic needs are not covered,” explaining some of the frustrations and motivations that drive their social entrepreneurial effort. Following that, several interviewees in particular highlighted the topic of uncovered needs and elaborated from another perspective of a relatively more vulnerable cluster of population. There was an entrepreneur who highlighted that, Interviewee 1:

‘Even people with disabilities are creating their ventures, because if they don’t protect themselves, no one will... basic needs are not covered.’ [I1]

This quote leads to the second first-order theme of that the most vulnerable become entrepreneurs to survive when basic needs go unaddressed. Having probed deeper into the strategic agility, where entrepreneurs navigate challenges and opportunities that Kazakhstan's socio-economic conditions present, what stands out has to be the way in which these strategic agilities seem to be inspired by underlying cultural and historical factors. This takes us to another aggregate dimension, which contributes significantly to shaping the local definition of social entrepreneurship: Cultural and network imprints in entrepreneurship.

4.1.2 Cultural and Network Imprints in Entrepreneurship

Kazakhstan's entrepreneurial landscape is uniquely shaped by its historical context—a blend of Turkic nomadic heritage and Soviet influence. These have driven dissimilar entrepreneurial practices characterized by theoretical dimension-cultural and network imprints that affect social entrepreneurship. A dynamic tension in the manner business is conducted in Kazakhstan has been created through the interaction between ancient nomadic traditions and decades of Soviet domination. This has resulted in a generational divide in which classic Soviet

corporate techniques remain while contemporary, market-driven approaches have been adopted, resulting in second-order code-cultural stagnation.

Evidence of this is seen in one of entrepreneurs who experienced Soviet times, mentioned Interviewee 5:

'In Soviet times, because of communism, entrepreneurs learned how to overcome rules 'legally' and with limited resources through the black market.' [15]

The quotation shows that Soviet times tactics have a continuing influence on contemporary entrepreneurial approaches. It is a clear demonstration of first-order code: The system pushed Soviet entrepreneurs to exploit legal loopholes and the black market. Another first-order is the absence of freedom in education stifles creativity. The supporting quote for it is said by Interviewee 2: “There has been a very strict almost totalitarian system since school times, where you are like tamed, the whole system is trained in such a way from Soviet times. So, starting from education we need to change the system to have more creative and free minds.” This system was intended to generate a homogenous class of workers and citizens, one that valued conformity over innovation, without questioning things.

Apart from Soviet influence, the historical nomadic heritage of Kazakhstan has had a great impact on the business culture and has laid a lot of emphasis on strong community ties and informal networking. Another second-order code is - trust in informal networking and three first-order codes were identified. The initial first-order code highlights how collectivism enhances the fundraising efforts for social ventures.

The social entrepreneur, Interviewee 2, remarked that:

'One of the reasons why it is easier to get funding from private investors is networking and collectivistic culture. Faster track to ask for help, if you have some acquaintance.' [I2]

In terms of resource mobilisation, these are often seen as an advantage, but at the same time a barrier to a more formalized and modern way of doing business. Social entrepreneurship is a field where resource units in the form of financial resources and organizational support may be scarce. The capacity to leverage top connections within a close-knit community network may often be a factor in determining securing the needed financial resources to launch and sustain social initiatives. In the context of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan, the first-order code “Oral Promises Are Enough Over Written Proof” highlights very well an extremely significant cultural practice. Sufficed by verbal commitments, it goes far beyond the traditional reliance on formal, written agreement that characterizes most other business environments. As Interviewee 5 stated:

'People go and learn about entrepreneurship culture from each other's stories. No one is looking for a written proof.' [I5]

This observation brings attention to the fact that the strength of one's word is often considered, within the local entrepreneurial community, as binding as a signed contract. The analysis of collected data also demonstrates how the venture life cycle depends upon informal linkages, which I have coded as first-order code. Therefore, social entrepreneurs are crucially dependent on informal networks for accessing critical resources, information, and support that

is generally not possible through formal channels. This is especially important in cases where formal institutions are unreliable. One of the indicative quotes is said by Interviewee 5:

'Let's say you go to an NGO, and the NGO promised you funding. But in the case of our country, the NGO is also dependent on some governmental company, and then the governmental agency might not 'hold' the promise, it means you cannot survive.' [I5]

This quote illustrates the fact that the promises might not get held within this old system and the unfortunate consequences of it. These all first and second order codes reveal the power of the theoretical dimension-cultural and network imprints in entrepreneurship: how absolutely critical it is that social entrepreneurs trust these informal mechanisms and use them as strategy to navigate the uncertainties in resource acquisition. Such trust also brings risks, as these informal assurances cannot be clearly translated into concrete support. It is a very fine balance of dependence and risk that entrepreneurs need to negotiate.

4.1.3. Risk Management in Unstable Environments

Navigating the uncertain economic and legal environment in Kazakhstan necessitates risk management, which is the third theoretical dimension. Under this theoretical dimension, there are two second-order codes, one of them is-alternative funding, reflecting on the challenges of securing government financial support. Social entrepreneurs often express a preference for private funding, as Interviewee 3 mentioned:

'We don't participate in governmental funding, only in very small grants, usually we get money from private investors.' [I3]

Such a preference alludes to the requirement of sufficient and reliable capital for growth within an uncertain environment. Going through the routine of obtaining government financial support, apart from reliability issues may entail the paperwork and approval process that mostly takes relatively long, not serving to benefit businesses from financial support. Consequently, the second first-order code identified is-bureaucracy challenges. One of the entrepreneurs summed up this long-drawn, difficult process for government support and public funding, Interviewee 5 mentioned: “Before the government starts supporting you, you have to go through hell.” The quote lays out the frustration and exhaustion of the social entrepreneurs in the desire to get public funding, often leaving them looking elsewhere for financial support.

Another first-order code is beyond domestic support. Prolonged bureaucratic challenges and inefficiencies in acquiring home country government support have instigated many social entrepreneurs to seek support avenues beyond their home country. They have increasingly become disillusioned with their own institutions, and many of these entrepreneurs are now visiting the embassies of other countries to consider international partnerships and possible sources of financing. As Interviewee 3 said:

‘No, we don't get governmental funding. We lost hope... We got funding from the Japanese embassy.’ [I3]

It is not just money that is changed in source, but strategy toward new sources in order to ensure sustainability and growth in an unreliable ecosystem. Another second-order code is-venture lifecycle versus legal instability. This second-order code highlights the profound impact of legal challenges on business operations, affecting every stage from start-up to maturity. These challenges necessitate constant vigilance and adaptation by entrepreneurs, who must navigate a landscape where legal unpredictability is the norm.

The first-order code of the threat of fraud, reveals a weak legal framework. This pervasive issue significantly influences business strategies, promoting a culture of caution and defensive business practices. For instance, one entrepreneur vividly describes the environment, Interviewee 1:

‘People are afraid most of the time to open enterprises, too much fraud, and you understand that no one will protect you in case of fraud. So, there is a lot of fear. The legal system cannot protect anyone really well.’ [I1]

This quote not only emphasizes the fear that permeates the entrepreneurial community, but also the need for robust legal reforms to provide a secure foundation for business operations. Second first-order code is emerging legal acts. As laws evolve, the need for businesses to adapt becomes another critical concern. The introduction of new legislation, such as the law on social entrepreneurship, introduces both challenges and opportunities. Businesses must quickly adjust to these changes to stay compliant and take advantage of new legal benefits. Reflecting on the impact of these changes, a social entrepreneur, Interviewee 4 notes: “The law on social entrepreneurship is very new. I think it was signed in 2021.” This statement underscores the importance of agility in business strategies to navigate in a new and unstable legal landscape.

Compounding these challenges is the systemic paternalism within the governmental structure, which is the third first-order code. This condition often stifles innovation and limits entrepreneurial freedom. This is a paternalistic approach that ends up with the government not genuinely seeking to know the people it purports to save, their real needs, and how effective its interventions are, despite its good intentions to save the economy and citizens. This oversight is also applicable to social entrepreneurship, in that all ties leading back to the

government indicate a dependency of the venture life cycle on government policies and procedures. As Interviewee 4 said:

'We have a very strong hierarchy, so much stuff depends on the government...They may not be very good at responding immediately and professionally. And they don't want to share wealth with the people.' [I4]

This critique speaks of wider implications of having a prohibitive and controlling government on business growth and vitality, which actually shows a misalignment between government actions and the real needs of entrepreneurs.

Together, these elements of legal instability create a complex environment for ventures operating in Kazakhstan. Social entrepreneurs must constantly adapt to new threats, legislative changes, and systemic barriers, which shape their strategic decisions and impact their operational capabilities. This dynamic interplay defines the venture lifecycle in this unstable legal context, illustrating the ongoing struggle and the resilience required to succeed.

To conclude, the factors that determine and influence the definition of the social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan according to the data collected for this research are described in three aggregate dimensions: Strategic agility; Cultural and Network Imprints in Entrepreneurship; and Risk Management in Unstable Environments, which addresses how social entrepreneurs adapt their business strategies in response to uncertainties, local culture, and social networks; as well as the aforementioned finance and regulatory challenges.

The next step of my study includes the application of the Gioia method within a Danish setting. Through comparative analysis, it reveals more insights into how different environments affect entrepreneurship dynamics. The approach will help in underlining the uniqueness of the Danish social entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The following three theoretical dimensions for Denmark were identified as following: Social Value Creation, Post-Materialism in Social Entrepreneurship, and Robust Institutional Framework.

4.2 Factors influencing social entrepreneurship in Denmark

4.2.1 Social Value Creation

Social value creation is an approach in which businesses develop and implement initiatives that result in significant social, environmental, and economic change beyond traditional commercial goals. This is significantly relevant in social entrepreneurship: ventures are not created to bring commercial profitability, but rather to be change agents towards enormous social change. Two second-order codes identified under this theoretical dimension were Social Hybrids and Inclusive opportunity.

Social Hybrids (Rahim&Mohtar,2015) represent an important aspect of Denmark's social entrepreneurship landscape, where ventures are structured to serve dual objectives — advancing social missions while also maintaining financial viability. However, these ventures predominantly incline towards their social missions, following more closely to their social imperatives than to mere profit generation.

Society over shareholders is the first-order code that highlights the underlying motive within Danish social ventures, putting societal impacts ahead of shareholder returns. It underscores a broader, more integrated approach to value creation, where societal benefits are paramount. One social entrepreneur, Interviewee 7 expressed:

'I guess social entrepreneurship would be entrepreneurship for actually creating something that makes people's lives better and not just the lives of the shareholders.' [I7]

This statement reflects the essence of social hybrids, illustrating their commitment to creating substantial and meaningful changes in the community that go beyond financial gains. Such ventures are vital in setting standards for how businesses can operate sustainably and ethically, emphasizing the importance of social value over traditional economic metrics.

Another first-order code is-shift the world's direction. The social entrepreneur discussed his dissatisfaction with the political climate, specifically referencing the year Trump was elected. He was inspired to influence the direction of societal norms after recognizing a misalignment with these dominant ideals. He chose to make an impact by supporting refugees in entering the Danish labour market. The quote of interviewee 10 captures his sentiment: "It wasn't really the way that I wanted the world to move, and I felt like, okay, now is a moment." This desire to redirect societal trends underscores the social mission as the fundamental driver behind the creation of his social venture.

The second-order code of Inclusive Opportunity includes two first-order codes: the openness of the social entrepreneurial path and academic freedom. One entrepreneur stressed that the social entrepreneurial path is open to anyone, stating that she discovered this throughout her bachelor's studies, when guest lecturers and role models motivated her. She, Interviewee 9, stated this in a quote:

'You don't need to be the smartest, best ever gifted person to go that path, like, that path is open.' [19]

This openness invites a wide spectrum of people to explore social entrepreneurship, which fosters innovation and inclusivity. Another first-order code is-academic freedom, highlighted by the quote of Interviewee 6: "We start maybe at the more realistic start point because we understand the game. Because it is more likely that students heard something about social entrepreneurship at schools." This illustrates that the young generation in Denmark

benefit from the freedom to choose their paths and have access to educational resources that provide a foundational understanding of social entrepreneurship.

4.2.2 Post-Materialism in Social Entrepreneurship

The theoretical dimension of post-materialism in social entrepreneurship covers two second-order codes such as “altruistic motivation” and “individualism”. In the Danish context, post-materialism reflects a cultural shift where values such as environmental sustainability, social equity, and personal realization often take precedence over mere economic gain. This cultural backdrop both fosters a supportive environment for social entrepreneurship and pressures ventures to prioritize societal impact, sometimes leading to challenges like profit stigma.

Under altruistic motivation, one of the first-order codes is-profit stigma. Social entrepreneurs are usually stigmatized when commercial benefit accrues to their social ventures. One social entrepreneur pointed this out, Interviewee 7:

‘It has a bad reputation if you say, like, ‘Oh, I’m doing a social venture, but it’s for profit.’ Because then people will immediately say, ‘Oh, you’re greedy.’ [I7]

This reflects Dees' (1998) argument that for the social entrepreneur, creation of wealth is seen as only a means to an end. This societal expectation that social goals should remain untainted by financial interests is rooted in a deeply ingrained value of altruism, likely reinforced by Denmark's strong social welfare state. Another first-order code is the entrepreneurs' pursuit of social impact over personal profit. An entrepreneur emphasized this motivation, interviewee 6 stating: “I had a will to change and do something meaningful not for my own profit.” This entrepreneur quitted his successful commercial enterprise to social venture by offering educational services, driven by the desire to make a significant societal impact. Extending this idea, Barbera-Tomas et al. (2019) note that social entrepreneurs

typically do not anticipate quick financial returns from their ventures, but instead focus on creating positive societal impacts. This reinforces the altruistic motivations that drive many social entrepreneurs, emphasizing their commitment to societal welfare over personal financial gain.

The second-order code-individualism may appear more associated with commercial entrepreneurship, yet it also intersects with social entrepreneurship in meaningful ways. As Kedmenec and Strasek (2017) have pointed out, high individualism does not directly link with higher or lower levels of social entrepreneurial activities. However, it influences the motivations and methods which social entrepreneurs apply. Personal initiative and responsibility play a significant position in societies that are more individualistic, such as Denmark.

One entrepreneur, interviewee 9, underlined the importance of small group dynamics, stating: “What I advise the youth is to at least organize themselves in smaller groups, and I always tell them that if they don't have passion for the cause of social entrepreneurship, then don't do it.” This statement emphasizes the first-order code of breaking down into smaller groups, which exhibits individualistic characteristics like personal responsibility and leadership within a collaborative framework.

Another first-order code shows the value of autonomy in the startup culture. According to Interviewee 8:

‘In the startup culture, autonomy isn't just a benefit; it's a necessity.’ [I8]

This view underlines the importance of decision-making freedom and autonomous action in social ventures for efficiency and innovation. Individualism, as described by Canestrino et al. (2020), provides autonomy to social entrepreneurs to hold onto their unique

vision and approach without becoming too dependent on others for making decisions in comparison to collectivistic cultures.

While at first glance, altruistic motivation and individualism might appear contradictory, they together foster a post-materialist approach in social entrepreneurship. This combination of self-reliance with a strong social mission motivates social entrepreneurs to build companies that are both impactful and financially sustainable.

4.2.3 Robust Institutional Framework

The final theoretical aggregate dimension is the robust institutional framework, which is made up of two second-order codes: Governance synergy and systemic stability. This approach emphasizes the critical role of coherent and stable institutional settings in promoting social entrepreneurship. It proposes that strategic interactions among different institutional players might improve policy efficacy and support for social entrepreneurship. The framework emphasises the importance of both dynamic inter-sectoral collaboration and foundational stability in ensuring that social entrepreneurs work in a supportive and predictable environment. This strong institutional support is critical to the long-term viability and scalability of social entrepreneurship.

Governance synergy is a second-order code that reveals the effective collaboration and alignment between government bodies and non-governmental organisations to promote and support social enterprises. This synergy is exemplified through three key first-order codes. The first is resisting investor influence. As highlighted by Interviewee 10:

‘We didn't approach any investors because we basically just give something away for free, and most investors don't really like that because it's not smart in a business sense.’ [I10]

This approach reflects a strategic choice to avoid potential mission drift influenced by the need to generate investor returns, highlighting a preference for governance structures, public funding that support the core social mission goals. Another first-order code is the government as a facilitator. Interviewee 8 noted: “You do get a lot of support from the government in the sense that it’s free to open a company. Anyone can open a company at any point and they do not have to pay anything for it... Denmark has a very complex tax system and that’s, even though it doesn’t seem like it, it is to allow for a lot of exceptions and for a lot of flexibility.” This support simplifies the startup process significantly. However, as businesses develop, the high taxation can become a limiting factor, leading some to relocate their operations abroad to benefit from lower taxes. This was the case for two out of the five interviewees surveyed. Another social entrepreneurs, Interviewee 8 and Interviewee 9, highlighted that even though entrepreneurs get good support from the government, especially at the beginning, if the venture wants significantly to grow, it is better to move to another country, as taxes become hefty.

Lastly, public funding access, detailed by Interviewee 6, shows the strategic use of governmental and intergovernmental financial resources to bolster social ventures: “Mostly public funding from the European Commission or the Nordic Council of Ministries... So, we applied now, for example, on the 5th of March; we get the response by the end of summer, August-September, and then after that, we can start implementing if we get the funds.” This demonstrates the reliance on structured public funding which supports long-term sustainability and growth of social enterprises. In addition, the social entrepreneurs were not complaining about bureaucracy procedure, stating that the calls for application for public funding are pretty clear and do not take plenty of time.

Systemic stability is another critical second-order code within the robust institutional framework. It shows the secure environment, as Interviewee 6 explained:

'You don't search for stability in Denmark, it is pretty everywhere, so when you start a venture, you do it with a passion.' [I6]

This pervasive stability across the country fosters a supportive climate for social entrepreneurship. Social Entrepreneurs highlighted that they left stable employment to pursue their ventures, boosted by Denmark's low unemployment rate and a strong social safety net. This environment not only reduces the risk associated with starting new ventures, but also empowers them to follow their passion.

Proactive support is another first-order code, with Interviewee 9 stating:

'So, you have to work with other organisations in other countries. So, the quality of our courses is very high because we develop it together with universities, with other training centres, with NGOs around Europe.' [I9]

This collaborative network provides substantial support, aiding ventures that often extend their impact to international development. Two social entrepreneurs, Interviewee 9 and Interviewee 10, particularly highlighted the agenda in some universities about extending the impact to developing or undeveloped countries.

The final first-order code is established legal acts, as mentioned by Interviewee 10, "No matter which part of the country you're in, you're probably able to go to a business centre within your municipality and get some advice about how to start a business." This points to a consistent legal framework that aids business creation across various locales, from major cities like Copenhagen to relatively smaller cities like Aalborg. It is a proactive support system for consistent and fair opportunities for social enterprise development based on the regions in

which these enterprises operate. The decentralized support system, in terms of expert advice and resources, readily available through advisory centres at municipal levels.

4.3. Integrated framework for Social Entrepreneurship comparison in Different Contexts

So far, the findings helped me to identify three main factors shaping social entrepreneurship for each context, thus six in total. Based on Corley and Gioia (2011), I thus incorporate the dimensions and themes with further findings from my interview data for social entrepreneurship in two different contexts (see Figure 3). The framework describes the two sides of the same coin, that is social entrepreneurship, and points out the differentiating factors between two countries. To do so, I further analysed my findings, and looked at similarities and differences on factors shaping their definition of social entrepreneurship. This revealed common dimensions with different elements composing in different ecosystems, and I found three matching pairs from the findings.

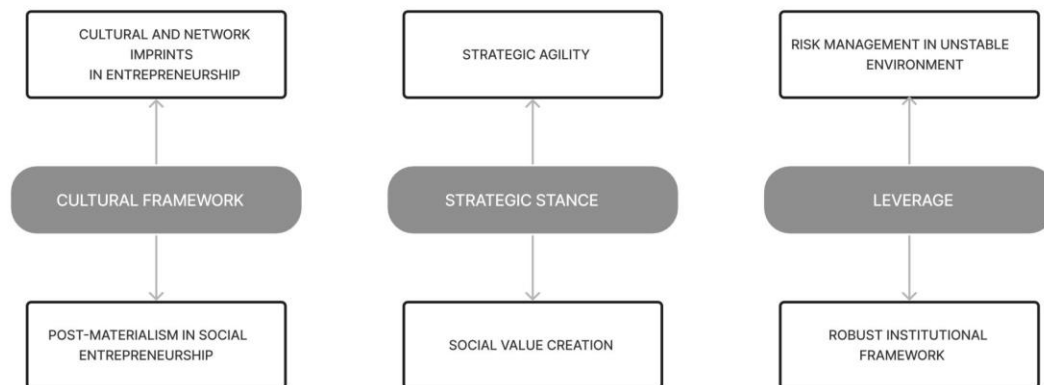


Figure 3. Integrated Framework for Contextual Divergence in Social Entrepreneurship Definitions

This enables me to do comparative study in sufficiently different contexts. I have selected Kazakhstan for the current research because of the limited existing works on the post-

Soviet region and its unique position of transitioning from the Soviet era to independence. Additionally, Kazakhstan is one of the developed economies in Central Asia, which enabled me to consider it as a representative of the region. In contrast, Denmark is a developed, market-oriented economy with firm institutional frameworks and social welfare. As such, it is considered a model for the development of social entrepreneurship in Europe. These contrasting contexts provide a grasp of how various factors influence social entrepreneurial ecosystems in diverse socioeconomic environments. By comparing these various contexts, the paper is looking for specific insights and general conclusions that might be drawn for social entrepreneurship.

The integrated framework for social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark reveals the significant roles of cultural context, strategic stances, and the leveraging of local conditions in shaping social entrepreneurship practices. This framework is divided into two parts: the upper part representing Kazakhstan and the lower part representing Denmark. Each part highlights the unique aggregate dimensions that influence social entrepreneurship within these countries.

4.3.1 Cultural Framework

Kazakhstan and Denmark both have distinct cultural frameworks that shape their approaches to social entrepreneurship. This divergence is seen when looking at the cultural framework, which is divided into two parallel aggregate dimensions: cultural and network imprints in entrepreneurship for Kazakhstan, and post-materialism in social entrepreneurship for Denmark.

Kazakhstan strongly relies on cultural and network imprinting, which have a significant impact on how social entrepreneurs obtain finance and sustain their operations. The strength of informal networks facilitates procedures and access to resources, allowing entrepreneurs to navigate and thrive in a developing market economy. This network reliance gives them a

strategic advantage in finding funds and ensuring the long-term viability of their ventures. This cultural tendency originated in the Soviet era, when entrepreneurs had to discover ways to operate inside limited systems, frequently using informal techniques such as the black market. Today, as Kazakhstan develops its market economy, social entrepreneurs use collectivist ideas to overcome residual problems from the previous system, acquire essential investment, and sustain their companies.

Notably, the results indicate a change in the way these cultural imprints are regarded and applied across generations. Entrepreneurs raised in the Soviet system highlight the importance of collectivism, claiming that having a strong network greatly facilitates a variety of procedures. These senior entrepreneurs emphasise the importance of community and informal relationships in their business methods. The younger generation of entrepreneurs, born or raised in independent Kazakhstan, understands and also utilises the value of networks and collectivism. However, they aim to widen their approach by including more formal methods, such as asking for funds from international organisations and foreign embassies, in order to establish a more globalised and diverse business ecosystem.

Kazakhstan's social entrepreneurial approaches pursue both path extension and path renewal (Brekke, 2015). Path renewal is revealed in adaptation to new market demands and integration of modern business, which shows the dynamic of restructuring entrepreneurial landscape.

In Denmark, post-materialism significantly influences social entrepreneurship. Danish social entrepreneurs focus on creating social value, prioritising quality of life, personal fulfilment, and social equity over material wealth. This value system promotes innovation for social impact and sustainability, aligning with Denmark's broader societal values of well-being and environmental sustainability. The stable European market provides the necessary infrastructure for social entrepreneurs to concentrate on altruistic goals rather than profit. This

economic stability allows for innovation in addressing social issues, though it can sometimes create a stigma around profit-making. Balancing financial sustainability with social missions can be challenging due to this perception.

Denmark presents both types of path creation and path extension. Path creation can be seen as new social enterprises are created to leverage innovative ways of coping with social problems, which are supported by an institutional framework. Path extension is reflected in continuous reinforcement of cooperative and social enterprise traditions for social entrepreneurship (Brekke, 2015).

Individualism is also important in Danish culture, giving entrepreneurs the freedom to make independent decisions and pursue innovative ventures. This autonomy helps social entrepreneurs drive meaningful change within a supportive market framework. This is a cultural characteristic that allows entrepreneurs to work out independently, where they are highly effective at mobilising their unique visions of the desired social change and are not that heavily dependent on collective networks (Canestrino et al., 2020).

While networks can be beneficial, Danish social entrepreneurs often succeed without relying heavily on collectivism. The stable market and strong institutional support enable independent success, highlighting the flexibility and inclusiveness of the Danish entrepreneurial ecosystem. In other words, the entrepreneurial ecosystem is open to accommodate diverse logics, and supportive for the path-creation.

4.3.2 Strategic Stance

The strategic stance of social entrepreneurs is critical as it shows their ability to fit their mission with practical actions, ensuring sustainable social impact. The strategic stance gives the social entrepreneurs the right way to resource mobilisation, challenge confrontation, and creation of lasting value within their community. This is quite relevant for social ventures in achieving social and economic objectives within a dynamic environment. The strategic

approaches social entrepreneurs take in Kazakhstan and Denmark are reflected in the particular economic environments of these countries. These are best understood while looking at theoretical dimensions, which are strategic agility in Kazakhstan and social value creation in Denmark. Different though they are, at their root, each seeks to accomplish social goals.

In Kazakhstan, the critical element in being essential to a social entrepreneur is strategic agility. Flexibility becomes essential in maintaining good responsiveness to the environment to remain effective and attain social impact. Strong network connections and reasonable risk management practices support such agility. Informal networks in enabling support systems are flexible and, hence, able to mobilise resources quickly and offer help during uncertain times. In addition, risk management practices enable entrepreneurs to pre-anticipate and diminish potential disruptions, hence ensuring a stable base for their businesses.

Continuous movement to the market economy in Kazakhstan has resulted in the phenomenon of economic hybrids. This is a practically founded strategy to maintain social impact in the constantly and fast-changing financial landscape. Hybrid organizations blend profit-making activities with a social mission; they ensure financial stability while working for the common good. This dual focus is needed in Kazakhstan, where economic stability is still raising its wings, and entrepreneurs have to be agile-the same way they have to survive and succeed. Therefore, being agile as a dynamic capability in such an environment has a significant role for entrepreneurial resilience (Hedner et al., 2011). Entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan often rely on their networks for support, enhancing their resilience through these connections (Hedner et al., 2011). The adaptability and fluidity in resource utilization, which is a form of strategic agility, are crucial for overcoming market uncertainty. This is reinforced by the concept of social bricolage, in which entrepreneurs use accessible and local resources to solve current needs and innovate in response to obstacles (Crupi et al., 2021).

In Denmark, the strategic stance of social entrepreneurs is predominantly focused on social value creation. Denmark is one of the leading countries with strong supporting institutional frameworks in social entrepreneurship, which has a support mechanism by policy, funds, and collaborative networks (European commission, 2023). Danish social entrepreneurs engage in social bricolage, creatively using available resources to address social issues, and employ causation strategies, meticulously planning their activities to achieve specific goals within a stable and supportive environment. These supports thus give the Danish social entrepreneurs a niche in standing up for long-term social goals and innovative solutions through a stable base of their ventures. The Danish government and other institutions ensure general access to grants, subsidies, and resources that help the expansion of social enterprises. The institutions combine the common goal of creating an environment through which social ventures are guaranteed to succeed. It has policies that are aimed at encouraging social innovation and entrepreneurship and so go a step further in ensuring that social enterprises are fitted with everything they need and pledge to have a promising social impact. According to research, social value creation in Denmark is a process that occurs in response to social impact opportunities. This process requires numerous players to engage in innovation and collaborative interactions within specific contexts (Lorenzo-Afable, Lips-Wiersma, & Singh, 2023). Danish social entrepreneurs can focus on altruistic goals rather than profit due to the stable European market, which provides the necessary infrastructure for their operations.

4.3.3 Leveraging Contexts

The differences in the approaches to social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark lie in how they leverage opportunities in local conditions too. Based on my model, Kazakh social entrepreneurs employ risk management in an uncertain environment; while Danish social entrepreneurs engage in a robust institutional framework.

The unstable economic and regulatory environment of Kazakhstan demands strong measures of risk management. Social entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan will thus need to develop and rely on such practices for the perception and preclusion of upcoming disturbances, building resilience through adaptive strategies, and utilising informal support systems.

For the social entrepreneur in Kazakhstan, the level of economic volatility is ever-high, while regulatory unpredictability remains common. As such, they adopt risk management strategies that allow them to navigate these challenges effectively. Some of these strategies involve comprehensive financial planning and the use of strong informal networks to gather timely information and support. The resilience developed through these adaptive strategies ensures that the entrepreneur can be stabilised in progress and continue innovation despite the increasingly unstable environment. Cultural and network imprints play an important role in this scenario. The historical reliance on informal networks serves as a strategic buffer against economic shocks, allowing for swift mobilisation of resources and support. This informal support system is critical in situations when formal institutions may be absent or untrustworthy. By exploiting these networks, Kazakh social entrepreneurs may better manage risks and sustain their initiatives, ensuring that they stay operational and impactful even during times of economic uncertainty.

In Denmark, using a robust institutional framework promotes social entrepreneurship by creating a stable and predictable environment suitable to innovation and long-term planning. This institutional framework has a clear legal system in terms of legislation, when the laws are well defined, clear regulations in the practice area, and public policies that support instead of threaten the social entrepreneur. Danish social entrepreneurs benefit from a legal and regulatory environment that reduces ambiguity and establishes clear norms for business operations. This involves consistent enforcement of regulations, transparent business creation procedures, and predictable tax policies. These qualities help to create a stable business environment in which

social entrepreneurs may focus on their goals without having to navigate an unpredictable regulatory landscape.

Furthermore, Denmark's solid institutional architecture promotes collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental groups, and the commercial sector. This collaboration makes it easier to have access to resources and networks that help social enterprises expand and sustain themselves. The Danish institutional framework enables social entrepreneurs to capitalize on these conditions to generate long-term social impact and drive innovation by offering a dependable infrastructure and support system.

5. Discussion

5.1 Variance in Social Entrepreneurship Definitions

This study highlights the variance in social entrepreneurship definitions across two different socioeconomic and cultural contexts. The results support existing works that contend historical and socioeconomic contexts influence how social entrepreneurship is defined within the entrepreneurship ecosystems (EE). Moreover, I contribute to the diverse definitions across two entrepreneurial ecosystems with different historical and cultural backgrounds as building blocks. In Kazakhstan, the volatile economic climate forces social entrepreneurs to take a pragmatic approach, prioritising both profit and social objectives equally or occasionally prioritising profit more to have greater social impact. In contrast, in Denmark, the stability offered by strong institutional support allows projects to focus more on social outcomes, while profit interests may still limit some social entrepreneurs.

5.2 Contextual Influences on Defining Social Entrepreneurship

The analysis identifies six factors—three for each country—contributing to the divergence in definitions and approaches to social entrepreneurship. In Kazakhstan, these factors are strategic agility, reliance on cultural and informal network imprints, and risk

management in unstable environments. In Denmark, they include social value creation, post-materialism in social entrepreneurship, and a robust institutional framework.

To overcome legal and economic volatility, Kazakhstan's social entrepreneurs adopt risk management measures. This research undermines the idealistic vision of social entrepreneurship by emphasizing the importance of strategic adaptation in an uncertain environment. According to Bepalyy et al. (2021), the increase in social problems in Kazakhstan has resulted in the development of social entrepreneurship as a tool for addressing these concerns. My findings support Bepalyy et al.'s (2021) conclusion that social entrepreneurship functions as a response to societal concerns. However, my research expands on their ideas by demonstrating how systemic restrictions, fear of fraud, and paternalism within the Kazakhstani system limit the amount and quality of social initiatives. Social entrepreneurs are hesitant to start businesses because they do not believe the system will protect them if something goes wrong. As a result, although Bepalyy et al. (2021) focus on the rise of social entrepreneurship as a response to societal concerns, my findings highlight the crucial importance of risk management strategies in overcoming these systemic challenges. This makes risk management in unstable contexts an especially important theoretical framework for comprehending social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan.

The concept of strategic agility is especially essential in Kazakhstan, where social entrepreneurs must strike a balance between profit and social purposes. This finding adds to existing theories by indicating that in less stable economic situations, chasing profit benefits an enterprise's sustainability and social impact rather than destroying its social orientation. This finding contradicts with Dees (1998), who claims that social entrepreneurs emphasize social objectives over income development. In Kazakhstan, however, owing to the emerging economy, the concentration solely on social impact may result in the closure of social activities, demonstrating that strategic adaptability is critical for survival and influence in economically

challenged circumstances. This observation also conflicts with Barbera-Tomas et al. (2019), who state that social entrepreneurs often do not expect immediate financial gains, but instead focus on societal benefits. However, Kazakh entrepreneurs underline that social entrepreneurship is not a charity and that focusing on profit can improve social effect. This lends support to Hockerts' (2010) balanced perspective, which contends that social companies must strategically respond to market dynamics while combining acceptable social values and economic sustainability. Moreover, the social ventures are economic hybrids (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015). In that way, the entrepreneurial ventures can sustain their functioning and pursue their aspirations which is to deliver social impact. Although resilience takes a significant part of the story for entrepreneurs, the lack of ecosystem incentives for social entrepreneurship pushes the agents to adopt a balanced perspective. Therefore, the strategic agility strategy works as a mechanism to keep their venture running.

In Denmark, social entrepreneurship ventures emphasise creating societal impacts rather than shareholder returns. This resonates with the concept of “Social Hybrids” proposed by Rahim and Mohtar (2005), where the focus is majorly on creating societal impact. Danish social entrepreneurs value making life better for the people over generating profits for the shareholders, which emphasizes societal impact with innovative business models. This is in agreement with Dees' (1998) concept that social entrepreneurs explicitly and central to the social mission are the wealth creation and society expects social ventures not to maximize profit. Social entrepreneurship in Denmark strongly embodies post-materialist values: the views on environmental sustainability, social equity, and personal fulfilment are more important than economic gain. It provides an ideal nurturing environment, yet brings other cultural challenges to the perception of profit in society. This stigmatised social entrepreneurs and puts them in a tight spot with a need to ensure social returns while guaranteeing financial viability. This profit stigma can lead to societal accusations of greed, restricting entrepreneurs

and hindering their ability to ensure economic viability. The socio-cultural effect restricts the entrepreneur and initiates their inability to champion the course of economic viability. This resonates with the finding by Tan, Williams, and Tan (2005) on the effect of societal responses on social enterprises and further supports the altruistic dimension of social entrepreneurship.

Denmark's institutional framework is supportive of social entrepreneurship, creating a conducive climate for launching social ventures. The government provides support, making it free and simple to start a business, fostering a thriving social entrepreneurship ecosystem. The public funding mechanisms are well-structured and accessible. This highlights the necessity of institutional support in supporting social entrepreneurship, in line with Andersen, Gawell, and Spear (2016).

Despite these benefits, significant challenges arise when businesses reach a certain size. The high tax burden in Denmark can hinder entrepreneurs from expanding operations, pushing some to contemplate relocating to nations with lower taxes. Social entrepreneurs are expressing this concern, and out of the five social entrepreneurs interviewed, two of them had to consider this option. This conclusion implies that, while Denmark's institutional framework is strong, legislative changes are required to encourage long-term stay in the country.

5.3 Shifting Paradigms in Different Contexts: Bricolage, Effectuation, and Causation in Social Entrepreneurship

The landscape of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan can be discussed from the principles of effectuation and social bricolage. The rapidly changing socioeconomic environment and the legacy of the Soviet era have shaped the way social entrepreneurs operate. Effectuation is particularly relevant in Kazakhstan due to the high level of uncertainty and the need for flexibility. According to effectuation theory, entrepreneurs start with their available resources and select prospective outcomes depending on those resources and growing opportunities (Sarasvathy, 2001). This strategy is based on an entrepreneur's identity, which

includes who they are, what they know, and who they know (Sarasvathy, 2008). These accessible means or resources, and their strategic application, act as catalysts for producing business ideas or establishing entrepreneurial ambitions (Chandler et al., 2011; Sarasvathy, 2001). Kazakh social entrepreneurs exemplify effectuation by leveraging their informal networks to secure funding and support. As noted in the research, informal networks play a crucial role in navigating the complexities of the market economy. This reliance on networks is consistent with the ideas of effectuation, in which entrepreneurs use their immediate environment and relationships to adjust to changing situations and reduce risks (Crupi et al., 2022). Kazakh social entrepreneurs often find themselves navigating an uncertain and evolving market landscape. This reliance on networks aligns with the principles of effectuation, where entrepreneurs make use of their immediate environment and relationships to adapt to changing circumstances and mitigate risks (Crupi et al., 2022). For instance, one of the social entrepreneurs, Interviewee 1, founded a café employing people solely with disabilities. She utilized the space she had and her desire to help people with disabilities, as she also had a brother who was deaf, demonstrating how effectuation works in bird-in-hand practice.

Simultaneously, social bricolage is also a dominant approach in Kazakhstan. Bricolage involves creating new solutions from available resources, particularly in resource-constrained environments (Baker & Nelson, 2005). For instance, one notable example is a social entrepreneur, Interviewee 5, who established a private school with a focus on entrepreneurship in the countryside. Utilising local resources and infrastructure, the school offers education at a cost of at least 10 times cheaper than other private schools. This approach made quality education accessible to rural students, showcasing resourcefulness and improvisation. Furthermore, the entrepreneur demonstrated flexibility by forming a partnership with Oxford School for an exchange program, thereby enhancing the school's offerings without substantial new investment. This innovative use of existing resources and networks highlights the essence

of social bricolage—solving social issues through creative and resourceful means. Such examples of social bricolage are important for overcoming the limitations imposed by the uncertain economic and regulatory environment in Kazakhstan. By creatively combining available resources, social entrepreneurs can generate significant social value and address pressing societal needs, despite the constraints they face.

Social entrepreneurs in Denmark engage more in social bricolage with some elements of causation. Social bricolage in Denmark can be characterized by the innovative use of resources to address social issues, reflecting a deep commitment to social value creation (Servantie & Rispoli, 2018). This approach aligns with the post-materialist values prevalent in Danish society, where the emphasis is on improving quality of life and promoting social equity. The creation of inclusive opportunities and social value is significant for social entrepreneurs from Denmark and they often leverage the robust institutional support available to them. This support includes favourable policies, funding opportunities, and collaborative networks that facilitate the growth and sustainability of social enterprises.

This emphasis on social value creation through bricolage is exemplified by an initiative where one of the Danish social entrepreneurs, Interviewee 7, created a network of volunteer IT specialists to offer free specialised training to immigrants. This venture exemplifies the “making do” process described by Di Domenico, Haugh, and Tracey (2010), where existing resources, specifically the skills of the IT specialists, were leveraged to meet an unmet community need of enhancing immigrants’ employability. This initiative not only creates social value by empowering immigrants but also aligns with the idea of stakeholder involvement, as it relies on the active participation of volunteers (Di Domenico, Haugh, & Tracey, 2010).

Additionally, elements of causation can be observed in the structured and planned approach that Danish social entrepreneurs often adopt. The stable and supportive institutional

framework allows for relatively more predictability and long-term planning, which are hallmarks of causation. For instance, one of the social entrepreneurs highlighted their structured approach to measuring social impact through SROI (Social Return on Investment) calculations: “The latest grant that we got, we have a five-year limited grant from a company or a foundation called the Lind Foundation, who also focus in Denmark a lot on social return on investment reports. They specifically look at those like SROI calculations, so together with them we kind of did an entirely new way of collecting data and collecting control groups to then measure a bit more in detail the exact impact that we’ve had.” This example reveals how Danish social entrepreneurs set clear goals and systematically work towards them, supported by the reliable infrastructure and resources available in the country. The involvement of stakeholders in building innovative solutions and networking with strategic potential stakeholders to capture new resources and support is also evident in the Danish context, reinforcing the blend of social bricolage and causation in their approach (Evers & O’Gorman, 2011). The dual application of effectuation and social bricolage in Kazakhstan highlights the adaptability and resilience of social entrepreneurs. They continuously navigate the challenges posed by an evolving market economy and an unpredictable regulatory landscape by being flexible and resourceful. This comparative analysis highlights how diverse contextual factors drive the unique entrepreneurial strategies and adaptive resilience of social entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan and Denmark.

5.4 Path Dependency in Social Enterprise Development

My model also contributes to the understanding of path dependency, as well as the concepts of social and economic hybrids. It demonstrates how historical practices and contemporary strategies intertwine to shape the landscape of social entrepreneurship in diverse contexts. By integrating these elements into our framework, I highlight how cultural

frameworks, strategic stances, and the exploitation of context collectively influence social entrepreneurial practices.

The approaches of Kazakhstan's social entrepreneurs manifest in the forms of both path extension and path renewal. This research contributes to the field of path dependency by demonstrating how historical practices of resource mobilization condition current entrepreneurial strategies. Path extension is visible in the dependence on Soviet-era methods, particularly the utilisation of informal networks for resource mobilization (Brekke, 2015). This reliance on cultural and network imprints provides a strategic advantage in navigating the complexities of a developing market economy.

The adaptation to modern business practices and new market demands reveals to us the path renewal in Kazakhstan. This dynamic restructuring reflects the entrepreneurial resilience necessary to navigate a transitioning economy. The findings further extend path dependency theory by revealing how younger business people mix traditional collectivist approaches with formal methods, such as searching for international funding and partnerships. Thus, this blend represents both continuity and change, highlighting how entrepreneurial strategies evolve to meet contemporary challenges.

In this context, economic hybrids are especially essential in Kazakhstan, where ventures combine profit-making activities with social objectives to ensure both financial stability and social effect (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015). This dual focus is required in an environment where economic stability is still evolving. Social entrepreneurs frequently use strategic agility, utilising their networks for assistance and implementing risk management strategies to anticipate and minimize disruptions. This agility is essential for meeting both social and economic goals in a dynamic economy.

In Denmark, social entrepreneurship involves both path creation and path extension. This research contributes to the knowledge of path development by highlighting how new

social ventures use innovative solutions to address social concerns, backed up by a robust institutional framework. Path creation entails the formation of ventures that introduce new methods and drive new path development, in line with the country's emphasis on social value creation (Brekke, 2015).

In Denmark, the path extension is seen through the consistent reinforcement of cooperative and social enterprise traditions. The presence of a stable and supportive institutional context fosters the development and long-term viability of social ventures, allowing them to adjust and enhance their current strategies. This extension is backed by policies and frameworks that promote social innovation, offering a reliable infrastructure for continuous entrepreneurial activities.

The integration of social hybrids in Denmark, where ventures focus on achieving social missions alongside financial sustainability, underscores the importance of leveraging institutional support to foster long-term social impact (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015). Danish social entrepreneurs place a high importance on creating social value, ensuring that their actions are in line with the wider societal ideals of well-being, sustainability, and equity. The strong institutional backing enables these enterprises to concentrate on achieving long-term social objectives, aided by grants, subsidies, and collaborative networks that promote innovation and the expansion of their influence.

5.5. Integrated Framework Summary

To summarise, the integrated framework shows how these factors collectively contribute to the divergence of definitions and approaches in social entrepreneurship between Kazakhstan and Denmark. In Kazakhstan, the blend of traditional and modern approaches within a developing economic context fosters economic hybrids, emphasising both survival and social impact. In Denmark, the emphasis on social value creation within a stable institutional framework supports path creation and extension, fostering innovative and

sustainable social ventures. These differences highlight how varying socio-economic environments shape unique entrepreneurial ecosystems and definitions of social entrepreneurship.

5.6 Methodological Contribution

Moreover, this study makes a significant methodological contribution by employing the Gioia method (Corley & Gioia, 2011) as a comparative tool to explore social entrepreneurship in two diverse regional contexts: Post-Soviet and European. The application of the Gioia method in this research demonstrates its effectiveness in capturing and categorizing the complex, nuanced data derived from in-depth qualitative research.

By utilising the Gioia method, I could develop an integrated framework that highlights the parallelism of context between the two countries, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences in social entrepreneurship across different cultural and socioeconomic landscapes. Through this methodological approach, the research not only enhances our understanding of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark, but also showcases the versatility and robustness of the Gioia method in comparative studies. This innovation in methodology offers a valuable template for future research aiming to explore similar phenomena in varied contexts, thereby broadening the scope and applicability of qualitative research methods within the field of social entrepreneurship.

6. Implications

The findings challenge and extend the theoretical paradigm by revealing the hybrid nature of social ventures, and hence social entrepreneurship. The value of this research lies in examining social entrepreneurship within the distinct contexts of post-Soviet and Western economies, highlighting how specific historical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors influence the forms and practices of social entrepreneurship. They demonstrate that integrating and

equally prioritising commercial incentives and social impact in social entrepreneurship is not antagonistic to its social mission, but rather crucial for its long-term viability, particularly in an uncertain environment such as Kazakhstan. In Denmark, however, institutional frameworks enable social entrepreneurs to prioritise social mission. Nonetheless, they confront the stigma of profit-making, which may discourage broader entrepreneurial activity. These findings challenge the universality of Western models of social entrepreneurship and emphasize the need for models that are contextually relevant and culturally sensitive.

For policymakers, these findings highlight the need for supportive measures that consider the unique economic and cultural contexts of social entrepreneurs. In Kazakhstan, there is a critical need for the government to facilitate rather than just rely on social entrepreneurs to solve social problems. In Denmark, addressing issues related to venture growth and taxation could prevent capital flight and encourage the scaling of successful social enterprises within the country.

6.1 Limitations

This study has potential limitations. A larger sample size would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the various experiences and challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in these countries. Future research may include a larger representation of social entrepreneurs to enhance the generalisability of the findings.

Moreover, the study was based solely on two countries. The inclusion of more countries from Europe and the post-Soviet region would provide broader comparison criteria and the possibility to see more subtle differences and similarities in social entrepreneurship practices throughout a different cultural and socio-economic setting.

Additionally, responses to the interviews could have been influenced by the timing. Interviews that take place over varied periods capture any changes and trends in the views and

practices of social entrepreneurship, particularly in those faced with turbulent times economically and politically.

These limitations suggest that the study can give valuable insight, yet there is a large extent of further research that has to be conducted under wider geographical scopes and diverse methodological approaches toward the full understanding of the complexes and dynamics of social entrepreneurship in different regions.

6.2 Directions for Future research

Future studies could consider how social entrepreneurship is carried out in other post-Soviet countries and how these compare to those more established models in Western Europe. This will help not only in identifying best practices, but also in understanding the unique challenges and opportunities of social entrepreneurs working in different socio-economic and political contexts. Comparative studies can also look at how different institutional settings, cultural factors, and economic conditions influence the emergence and survival of social enterprises.

Furthermore, future research could look beyond fields in education and labour integration to cover a broader range of social enterprises and an understanding of social entrepreneurship from various industries. This expanded approach would provide a more complete picture of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, highlighting sector-specific obstacles and potential.

A longitudinal study that explores the possibilities of how the existence of social enterprises develops over time, how social enterprises navigate through challenges, and how impact scales up various opportunities. The approach of longitudinal studies would help to understand the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of social entrepreneurship initiatives across regions and different contexts.

7. Conclusion

This study how contextual variables influence the perception and practice of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark. Based on semi-structured interviews with social entrepreneurs, six key characteristics affecting the phenomena in these two contexts were identified. The findings shed light on the socioeconomic, cultural, and historical aspects that shape the practice of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and Denmark.

The transition from a centralized to a market economy has had a substantial impact on the nature of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's social entrepreneurs are well-positioned for strategic agility in the face of economic instability. In the face of economic volatility, they rely on established ties and strong risk management to sustain their initiatives and social impacts. This is backed by cultural and network imprints left over from the Soviet era, which play important roles in resource mobilization and community participation. This hybrid economic backdrop, in which profit-making operations and social goals coexist, emphasizes the necessity for adaptability and realignment within Kazakh entrepreneurship.

Effectuation and social bricolage are very relevant in Kazakhstan. Because of the high level of uncertainty and the requirement for flexibility, effectuation, which entails beginning with available resources and selecting outcomes depending on those resources and emerging opportunities, is critical. Kazakh social entrepreneurs demonstrate effectuation by using their informal networks to seek funding and support. Simultaneously, social bricolage, which entails developing innovative solutions using available resources in resource-constrained contexts, is a dominant approach. These strategies demonstrate Kazakh social entrepreneurs' adaptation and resilience in navigating an evolving market economy and an unpredictable regulatory framework.

In contrast, the Danish institutional environment for social entrepreneurship is robust, with a strong emphasis on social value creation. Danish social entrepreneurs benefit from

policies, funding, and a stable socioeconomic environment that allows them to focus on long-term solutions. Denmark's stable and inclusive market environment continues to foster social entrepreneurship, with a focus on social well-being and environmental sustainability. Social entrepreneurs in Denmark can engage in social bricolage, which is defined as the innovative use of resources to address social concerns and reflects a strong dedication to creating social value. This approach is consistent with the post-materialist ideas prominent in Danish society. Additionally, characteristics of causation can be seen in the relatively structured and planned approach that Danish social entrepreneurs. The robust and supportive institutional framework provides for greater predictability and long-term planning, which supports their approach that combines social bricolage with causation.

My model also contributes to the understanding of path dependency, as well as the concepts of social and economic hybrids. It shows how historical practices and present methods interact to shape the landscape of social entrepreneurship in various contexts. By incorporating these factors into our framework, I demonstrate how cultural frameworks, strategic positions, and context exploitation all impact social entrepreneurship behaviours.

Kazakhstan's social entrepreneurs take two approaches: path extension and path renewal. This study advances the subject of path dependency by illustrating how past practices of resource mobilization influence modern entrepreneurial efforts. In Denmark, social entrepreneurship includes both path creation and path extension, emphasizing how new social ventures apply innovative solutions to address social challenges, which are supported by a strong institutional framework. The integration of social hybrids in Denmark demonstrates the need to harness institutional support to promote long-term social impacts.

To summarise, the integrated framework demonstrates how these elements contribute to Kazakhstan and Denmark's divergent concepts and approaches to social entrepreneurship. In Kazakhstan, the combination of traditional and modern practices in a dynamic economic

climate promotes economic hybrids that prioritize both survival and social impact. In Denmark, the emphasis on social value creation within a robust institutional framework encourages path invention and extension, resulting in innovative and sustainable social ventures. These distinctions highlight how different socioeconomic environments shape distinct entrepreneurial ecosystems and definitions of social entrepreneurship, demonstrating that social entrepreneurship in its non-profit Western sense cannot be applied uniformly across emerging economies and developing countries. Each country's historical backdrop has a significant impact on its social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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