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5 **Prone to ‘care’? Relating motivations to social and economic performance**  
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8 **among women social entrepreneurs in Europe**  
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11 **A.L. Humbert & M.A. Roomi**  
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13  
14 **Abstract**  
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16 **Purpose**  
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18 Little attention has been given specifically to the experience of women social entrepreneurs  
19 despite the assumption they are prone to ‘care’, and even less to their motivations or their self-  
20 perception of success. This article provides an insight into the relationship between motivations  
21 and social and economic performance among women social entrepreneurs in 10 EU countries.  
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30 **Design/methodology/approach**  
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32 This article classifies the motivations of women social entrepreneurs, drawing on the results of a  
33 survey conducted (n=380) by the European Women’s Lobby. The article then examines how  
34 these motivations relate to self-perceptions of social and economic performance.  
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41 **Findings**  
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43 In addition to being driven by self-interest and prosocial motivations, women social  
44 entrepreneurs also seek to develop alternative business models. Where a social mission is central,  
45 women are likely to feel successful in meeting their social aim; however, there is a strong  
46 negative relationship between self-interested motivations and revenue.  
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55 **Research limitations/implications**  
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3 This analysis relies on perceptual and self-reported data; therefore, more objective measures  
4 should be considered for further research, possibly combined with a longitudinal design. Another  
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6 limitation of this paper lies in the non-random sampling strategy employed to identify a hard-to-  
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8 reach population such as women social entrepreneurs.  
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### 11 12 13 14 **Practical implications**

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16 The findings provide a better understanding of the motivations of women social entrepreneurs.  
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18 This may be useful in assisting funding or support organizations, as well as social investors,  
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20 evaluate where to best invest resources. In addition, a more nuanced understanding of  
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22 motivations among women social entrepreneurs can inform policies aimed at supporting women  
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24 social entrepreneurs, without necessarily being bound by the expectation to maximise economic  
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26 and/or social outcomes.  
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### 31 32 33 **Originality/value**

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35 This article demonstrates the centrality of the social mission for women social entrepreneurs. The  
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37 results also identify ‘seeking an alternative business model’ as a key motivation among women  
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39 social entrepreneurs, thereby breaking existing conceptualisations of entrepreneurial motivations  
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41 on a binary spectrum as either ‘self-interested’ or ‘prosocial’. The article also shows that having  
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43 other than prosocial motivations for becoming a social entrepreneur does not necessarily lead to  
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45 higher economic revenue.  
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51 **Keywords:** Gender, Women, Social Entrepreneurs, Motivations, Performance  
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## Introduction

Over the past decade, there has been an increased recognition of the potential of social entrepreneurship to remedy social and community issues (Mair and Marti, 2006; Nicholls and Cho, 2006) and address the ‘grand challenges’ faced by the world (Shepherd, 2015). Yet, little attention has been given specifically to the experience of women within social entrepreneurship. This is despite the traditional association between concern for social and community issues with women, based on the assumption that they are more ‘caring’ than men and the evidence that suggests that gender inequalities are less pronounced among social entrepreneurship than mainstream entrepreneurship (Lyon and Humbert, 2012; Teasdale et al., 2011),

The process of social entrepreneurship ought to be regarded as inextricably linked to social, cultural, economic and political contexts that are themselves riddled with unequal gender power relations. The literature notes the emphasis given to social entrepreneurship as a means to sustain social missions, and gives it greater prominence in the context of neo-liberalism (Sepulveda, 2015) and how capitalism might be reconsidered (Shaw and de Bruin, 2013) in Europe and the rest of the world. For example, a study conducted in Uganda by Hayhurst (2014) shows how gender-development programmes for girls put an emphasis on the commercialisation of their activities to fund and sustain themselves, while another study in Berlin shows how young women designers engage with social entrepreneurship as a result of urban governance policies that seek to create jobs – in the creative industry, particularly for women – and promote local industries through entrepreneurial means (McRobbie, 2013). Tensions exist between the traditional portrayal of entrepreneurs as individualistic, hard, strong, etc. – much in line with the neo-liberal agenda (McRobbie, 2013) – and the potential for entrepreneurship to strive not for economic but

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3 for social goals, putting people over profit (Tedmanson et al., 2015). The language employed  
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5 sometimes reflects this masculine bias, such as when an ideal trait for social entrepreneurs is  
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7 described as “thinking like a businessman [sic]” (Ghalwash et al., 2017, p. 270). This subtext of  
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9 entrepreneurship becomes even more problematic when it is associated with traits associated  
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11 with masculinity (Ahl, 2006) that women are deemed to lack (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Marlow  
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13 and McAdam, 2013), despite social entrepreneurship itself being seen as more congenial to  
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15 women (Humbert, 2012), as evidenced by their greater representation at all levels (Lyon and  
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17 Humbert, 2012; Teasdale et al., 2011).  
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24 These observations raise a number of questions that hitherto have not been addressed by the  
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26 literature. If women’s involvement in social entrepreneurship is seen as a means of addressing a  
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28 range of social missions and issues, then what are the motivations of the women social  
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30 entrepreneurs for doing so? And how do different types of motivations relate to both perceived  
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32 economic and social performance, i.e. one’s ability to address the ‘grand challenges’ the world is  
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34 facing (Shepherd, 2015)? With few exceptions (Ghalwash et al., 2017), little work has been  
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36 conducted on understanding the motivations of social entrepreneurs.  
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42 Furthermore, motivations have been identified as key to understanding the performance of social  
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44 enterprises (Ghalwash et al., 2017; Zahra et al., 2009), yet with little empirical analysis to back  
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46 this up. Finally, to our knowledge, no work has been conducted specifically on the motivations  
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48 of women social entrepreneurs. This article thus contributes to scholarship on the experiences of  
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50 women social entrepreneurs by classifying their motivations and examining how these relate to  
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52 perceived performance outcomes, both economic and social, among women-led social  
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3 enterprises. It responds to calls to better understand the motivations of social entrepreneurs in  
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5 order to foster their effectiveness (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016), and in particular to understand the  
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7 role of prosocial motivations in relation to other types of motivations (Shepherd, 2015). It also  
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9 responds to calls to enrich understanding of social entrepreneurship by examining different  
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11 contexts (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011; Di Domenico et al., 2010; Welter, 2011; Zahra, 2007),  
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13 particularly the largely neglected perspective of women (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Calas et al.,  
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15 2009). Finally, it responds to calls for more empirical, rather than conceptual, research in the  
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17 field of social entrepreneurship (Dacin et al., 2010) on a scale sufficient to provide evidence that  
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19 is more than simply anecdotal (Mair and Marti, 2006).  
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26 This article draws on a survey of 380 women social entrepreneurs in 10 EU countries (Bulgaria,  
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28 France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden and the UK) developed as  
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30 part of a wider mixed-methods project coordinated by the European Women’s Lobby in 2014–  
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32 15. Its main contribution is two-fold: first, a deeper understanding of the motivations of women  
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34 social entrepreneurs, a group that has so far been largely overlooked in the literature; second, a  
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36 more nuanced understanding of how these motivations relate to the performance, measured  
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38 economically as well as socially, of social enterprises from the point of view of the women  
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40 behind them.  
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### 48 **Women social entrepreneurs, motivations and economic/social outcomes**

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50 Before proceeding, we would like to set out how we conceptualise social entrepreneurship, social  
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52 enterprises and social entrepreneurs, given the lack of consensus in the field on actual definitions  
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54 (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010). The definitions adopted need to fulfil a dual aim: they should  
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3 draw sufficiently from existing definitions, while at the same time capturing the inherent  
4 diversity of social entrepreneurial activities around the world. The definitions chosen for this  
5 article derive from those of the Social Business Initiative (European Commission, 2011). Thus, a  
6 *woman-led social enterprise* is defined as an organisation that meets the following criteria: (1)  
7 decision-making and leadership by a woman; (2) presence of a social mission; (3) a portion of  
8 revenue comes from the market; and (4) a portion of profit or surplus is reinvested in the  
9 organisation. *Women social entrepreneurs* are women who self-identify as social entrepreneurs,  
10 including women who lead social enterprises as defined above, as well as women who are  
11 involved in the leadership of social enterprises that do not necessarily meet of all of the above  
12 criteria. *Women's social entrepreneurship* is understood as entrepreneurial activities with a social  
13 focus, led and undertaken by women. Finally, *social impact* is defined as the net effect of an  
14 activity on a community and the wellbeing of its constituent individuals and families (WEStart,  
15 2015: 8). Although these definitions are informed by EU policy along with the goals of this  
16 project, they largely overlap with some of the more often-used definitions in the academic  
17 literature (see, for example: Mair and Marti, 2006; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Zahra et al., 2009).

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40 Much work has been undertaken on exploring entrepreneurial motivations, arguably because  
41 they are considered a crucial link between entrepreneurial ideation and exploiting an opportunity  
42 (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). In mainstream entrepreneurship, typical motivations include  
43 autonomy, personal satisfaction, financial gain, personal and professional development, or even  
44 status (Renko, 2012). An influential approach has been to classify motivational factors as either  
45 'pull' or 'push' factors (Buttner and Moore, 1997; Humbert and Drew, 2010; Orhan and Scott,  
46 2001): a distinction is made between what entices (pulls) individuals toward entrepreneurship,  
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3 and what drives (pushes) them away from their current unsatisfactory situation. Nonetheless, this  
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5 area of research has been cast aside over the past decade, despite continued calls for greater  
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7 understanding to be developed (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011), particularly within different  
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9 forms of entrepreneurship.  
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14 Indeed, work that examines motivational factors among ‘other’ types of entrepreneurs, such as  
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16 social entrepreneurs, is relatively recent and underdeveloped, to the extent that it is described as  
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18 ‘extremely limited and anecdotal’ by (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016, p. 548). Our own systematic  
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20 literature review (Tranfield et al., 2003), to identify articles on this topic via ESBSO Business  
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22 Source Complete databases, yielded only 22 articles, some of which were not relevant and  
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24 subsequently dismissed. None provided a breakdown by sex nor approached the topic from a  
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26 gender perspective. The paucity of research likely reflects the fact that social entrepreneurship is  
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28 a relatively new field; to date, much of the work has focused on describing the phenomenon in  
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30 opposition to other organisational forms of entrepreneurship (Miller et al., 2012).  
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38 Motivations for mainstream entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs are relatively similar (Shaw  
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40 and Carter, 2007). Financial compensation and economic returns have been identified as  
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42 motivational factors in entrepreneurship literature since its earliest days (see Knight, 1921;  
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44 Schumpeter, 1934), yet emphasising these has been shown to underplay the roles of other  
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46 motivations (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011; Miller et al., 2012). Social entrepreneurs reroute  
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48 potential economic returns principally, if not totally, towards generating social value (Dacin et  
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50 al., 2010; Peredo and McLean, 2006; Zahra et al., 2009) – the so-called prosocial motivation  
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52 theorised by Grant (2007) and Grant & Berry (2011). Constructing social value, in the sense  
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3 employed by Kirzner (1973), means that social entrepreneurs can incorporate higher levels of  
4 innovation and address previously unmet social needs. This is typically done at the macro rather  
5 than the local level, with a focus on social systems that are overlooked by institutional actors  
6 such as governments, NGOs and businesses. Scale, therefore, tends to be central – organisations  
7 should ‘match the scale and scope of the social needs they seek to address’ (Zahra et al., 2009:  
8 525) – alongside significant affective commitment to the issue (Baron et al., 2012; Grant, 2007)  
9 and a sense of personal identification (Lewis, 2016). However, not all social entrepreneurs  
10 conform to the image of the ‘grand visionary’; some, finding themselves in the right place at the  
11 right time and possessed of the right set of skills, opt to tackle issues at a more local level (Zahra  
12 et al., 2009). Social entrepreneurs tend to be close to the communities or issues that they  
13 assist/address (Zahra et al., 2008), indicating that proximity facilitates opportunity recognition.  
14 Where this is the case, motivations such as empathy and compassion play an important role  
15 (Dees, 1998; Grimes, McMullen, Vogus and Miller, 2013; Miller et al., 2012), and are seen as  
16 rooted in personal experiences which have created awareness of particular social needs (Yitshaki  
17 and Kropp, 2016). Individuals are rarely motivated by a single goal, however, and the  
18 coexistence of different goals – for example, prosocial and financial – has been noted (Boluk and  
19 Mottiar, 2014; Williams and Nadin, 2011; Zahra et al., 2009).  
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44 To our knowledge, little is known in the context of women social entrepreneurs. Previous  
45 research on motivations in the context of gender and entrepreneurship has sought to better  
46 understand the lower participation rates of women (Brush, 1992, 2008; Verheul et al., 2012) and  
47 has shown that there are more similarities than differences between women and men (Humbert  
48 and Drew, 2010). In Western countries as well as in developing countries such as Pakistan, the  
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3 main motivations include personal freedom, security and satisfaction (Shabbir and Di Gregorio,  
4 1996). Early research on gender and entrepreneurship sought to develop typologies of  
5 motivations (see, for example: Goffee and Scase, 1985; Carter and Cannon, 1992). Where  
6 differences have been found to exist, they tend to reflect the gendered societal contexts in which  
7 entrepreneurs live as well as women's positions in social and family structures (Ahl and Marlow,  
8 2012; Aramand, 2012; Brush et al., 2009; Kirkwood, 2012; Langowitz and Minniti, 2007;  
9 Patrick et al., 2016). For example, women are more likely to seek flexibility and autonomy in  
10 becoming entrepreneurs. This is often in response to family demands constraining paid  
11 employment, leaving entrepreneurship as an alternative means to derive an income. In a  
12 comparison of the motivations of women and men entrepreneurs in Ireland, motivations were  
13 found to be similar, with the exception that women were more likely to be seeking a better work-  
14 life balance, and men a greater income (Humbert and Drew, 2010). Understanding motivations is  
15 important because of the role they can play in determining the extent to which different  
16 objectives – social or economic – are met (Cardon et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2012; Welpé et al.,  
17 2012; Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016). Yet, little work has examined how motivations relate to future  
18 performance (Jennings et al., 2009), particularly in the context of social entrepreneurship  
19 (Renko, 2012) and specifically among women social entrepreneurs.

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45 Higher levels of prosocial motivations are generally seen as related to better entrepreneurial  
46 outcomes (De Dreu et al., 2011; De Dreu and Nauta, 2009; Grant and Sumanth, 2009). Since  
47 social entrepreneurs combine both economic and social-value creation (Zahra et al., 2009), these  
48 two aspects need to be considered separately, as success in one does not automatically lead to  
49 success in the other. While it stands to reason that high levels of prosocial motivations are  
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3 associated with greater success in meeting social objectives, this is not necessarily so when it  
4 comes to economic outcomes. For example, there is greater failure among non-profit  
5 organisations that seek to adopt a social enterprise model in order to remedy funding uncertainty,  
6 and likewise where stakeholder and internal management capabilities are not competent or  
7 aligned to the economic model of profit generation (Kirkman, 2012). In addition, social goals  
8 often require increased complexity and more innovative responses, meaning not only that more  
9 resources may be necessary, but also that social entrepreneurs are likely to face greater  
10 uncertainty and risk (Koellinger, 2008; Samuelsson and Davidsson, 2009). This is confirmed  
11 empirically in Renko's (2012) study showing that social motivations are negatively related to  
12 firm-creation among nascent entrepreneurs.  
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28 On the basis of previous research undertaken mostly within mainstream entrepreneurship, this  
29 paper seeks to produce a valid measure of motivations among women social entrepreneurs in 10  
30 EU countries. Empirically, the dichotomy theorised between 'self-interest' and 'prosocial'  
31 motivations will be explored – and challenged. The article will then explore how different types  
32 of motivation relate to economic and social outcomes. The methodology employed for these  
33 purposes is outlined next.  
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## 45 **Methodology**

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47 This article draws on quantitative data collected by the European Women's Lobby (EWL) in  
48 2014–15 as part of a wider mixed-methods study of women's social entrepreneurship across 10  
49 EU Member States. These countries were chosen to obtain a diverse geographical representation  
50 and size, as well as a mixture of social enterprise ecosystems. The EWL designed its survey in  
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3 collaboration with the project's advisory group – comprising social entrepreneurs, academics and  
4 policy-makers – and other relevant stakeholders and experts, of which the first author was a  
5 member. National-language versions were produced for all countries, with the exception of  
6 Germany,<sup>1</sup> in order to capture responses from non-English speakers.  
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14 The number of social enterprises in the EU – although evidently many are women-led, for  
15 instance in the UK (Teasdale et al., 2011) – is hard to compile accurately. Consequently, the  
16 sampling frame in this study was constructed using snowball sampling techniques. National  
17 researchers were tasked to develop a list of up to 100 women-led social enterprises in their  
18 respective country on the basis of their network of personal and professional contacts.  
19 Information about these contacts was recorded, including electronic addresses to which the  
20 survey was subsequently forwarded. In addition, the survey was disseminated via the European  
21 Women's Lobby's social media channels (over 20,000 followers on Facebook and 6,000 on  
22 Twitter) and through the list of member organisations and their European networks of gender and  
23 enterprise stakeholders. To encourage participation, respondents were given the chance to  
24 participate in a raffle to win a trip to the project conference in Brussels held on 11 September  
25 2015. In total, 380 women across the 10 member states of the project responded to the survey,  
26 although there were stark differences between the numbers of responses by country – many more  
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51 <sup>1</sup> The questionnaire was administered in each country by individual contractors and not translated in Germany for  
52 operational reasons. This could therefore potential bias the results for this country. However, only 33 women social  
53 entrepreneurs were based in Germany, representing less than 10% of the sample and therefore unlikely to be of  
54 concern at aggregate level.  
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3 from the UK than from Lithuania or Bulgaria,<sup>2</sup> for example. Whether this relates to the  
4 proportions of women's social entrepreneurship activity in these countries, sampling issues, or  
5 both, remains unknown. In this study, given the wide differences in responses at the national  
6 level, the data are analysed at the aggregate level. For descriptive statistics at EU level, the  
7 results are weighted according to the actual population size in each of the 10 countries  
8 considered.  
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19 Two main measures are used in this analysis. In total, 15 items were included in the survey to  
20 capture potential motivational factors using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 'not a  
21 motivating factor' to 'a very strong motivating factor'. These items were derived from both an  
22 extensive literature review on motivations among (women) entrepreneurs and during  
23 consultation meetings with the project advisory group, which included academics, policy-  
24 makers, civil society representatives and women social entrepreneurs. Besides motivations, this  
25 paper also draws on two measures of perceived performance that were part of the survey, each  
26 consisting of a single item: first, respondents' perceptions of success in meeting social impact  
27 goals according to a four-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all successful' to 'extremely  
28 successful'; second, economic performance as measured by the revenue (in euros) reported by  
29 women social entrepreneurs. The relationships between types of motivations and  
30 social/economic performance are assessed through the use of ordinal logistic regression, where  
31 variables are excluded in case of missing data, leaving a valid sample size of 315 responses.  
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53 <sup>2</sup> Bulgaria: n = 12, France: n = 56, Germany: n = 33, Hungary: n = 17, Ireland: n = 14, Italy: n = 35, Lithuania: n =  
54 9, Spain: n = 21, Sweden: n = 29, UK: n = 151, no response: n = 3.  
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3 **Motivations and measures of performance**  
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5 The incidence of different motivational factors is presented in Table 1, together with numerical  
6 summaries that show the distribution of the data. There is a striking polarisation in motivational  
7 factors: on the one hand, women social entrepreneurs strongly agreed with motivations aligned  
8 with social impact, innovation, an unmet need in the community, or seeking to create either a  
9 more ethical or a more sustainable model of doing business; whereas on the other hand, the  
10 majority of them reported that unemployment, underemployment or the need to contribute a  
11 secondary income were not motivating factors. Using the pull/push framework, where a pull  
12 factor entices an individual into becoming an entrepreneur and a push factor constrains them to  
13 do so (Humbert and Drew, 2010; Orhan and Scott, 2001), the results suggest that among women  
14 social entrepreneurs, pull factors largely predominate. This is largely in line with other (non-  
15 gender-specific) studies, such as the work of Yitshaki and Kropp (2016) in Israel.  
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42 When it comes to perceptions of success in meeting social impact goals, responses were divided,  
43 with nearly half of respondents (48%, n = 342) feeling somewhat successful and a further 43%  
44 feeling very successful. The numbers at the extremes of the scale for this item were therefore  
45 marginal. Reported revenue ranged from less than €10,000 to €500,000 or more. For many  
46 women-led social enterprises, revenue was towards the lower end, with 33% generating less than  
47 €10,000 and a further 25% between €10,000 and €49,999 per year (n=321). Nonetheless, a non-  
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3 negligible minority (8%) of women-led social enterprises in the study reported revenue  
4 exceeding €500,000.  
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10 Besides describing the motivations for the respondents to become social entrepreneurs, this paper  
11 seeks to better understand the structure of these motivational factors and develop a valid  
12 instrument of measure that allows for further analysis. The core aim is to better understand  
13 whether a latent structure exists, to which end factor analysis is employed.  
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19 Not all of the available items (only 8 out of 15) are retained in the solution provided here, since  
20 the criteria are to ensure good measures of fit in the overall model and adequate reliability within  
21 the items grouped under each factor.  
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28 Exploratory factor analysis is implemented through SPSS, using principal components analysis  
29 (PCA) as an extraction method. This produces a factor solution that, following the Kaiser  
30 criterion, is above the cut-off value of 1 with an eigenvalue of 1.129, and which explains 71% of  
31 the total variance. All communalities are also above the threshold of 0.5. The solution provides  
32 an acceptable fit, with a KMO value 0.694 putting it above the suggested threshold of 0.6  
33 (Kaiser, 1974) and a highly statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) Bartlett's test of sphericity  
34 (Bartlett, 1954). In order to facilitate the interpretation of the loadings, the axes are rotated using  
35 the Varimax method, thereby maintaining orthogonality (and independence) between the factors  
36 identified. The validity of each factor has been checked by computing Cronbach alpha, with each  
37 meeting the recommended reliability level of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2006). These results are presented  
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Insert Table 2 about here  
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Two of the factors (1 and 3) are aligned with the theoretical division between motivations among social entrepreneurs as either ‘self-interested’ or ‘prosocial’ (Grant, 2007; Grant and Berry, 2011; Renko, 2012; Zahra et al., 2009). However, the analysis also demonstrates that another key factor can be considered: seeking to adopt a social enterprise model as an alternative business model.

The relationship between motivations and economic and social performance was examined through ordinal logistic regression using a logit link function (Table 3). Responding to calls to better take into account the potential effects of contextual factors (Welter, 2011; Zahra, 2007), the models include a categorical measure for countries to control for the heterogeneity of national contexts.

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Insert Table 3 about here  
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Model 1 identifies a strong positive relationship between high levels of prosocial motivations and success in meeting social impact goals. The odds ratio ( $e^{1.204} = 3.33$ ) shows that each additional point increment (on the four-point scale by which prosocial motivations are measured)

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2 is associated with being more than three times as likely to report three times the odds of reporting  
3 a higher level of social impact success. This result is highly statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).  
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5 However, among those seeking an alternative business model, there is a negative relationship  
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7 (odds ratio:  $e^{-.408} = 0.66$ ) with success in meeting their social impact goal which is also highly  
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9 statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). In addition, the relationship between motivations linked to  
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11 self-interest and social-impact success is marginally statistically significant (odds ratio:  $e^{0.315} =$   
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Model 2 shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between either prosocial motivations or seeking an alternative business model and annual revenue level. However, it shows a strong negative relationship between self-interest and annual revenue level, with each additional point increment on that motivational four-point scale associated with a reduction by more than half (odds ratio  $e^{-.743} = 0.48$ ) in the odds of being situated in the next higher revenue band. The assumption of parallel lines holds.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

This paper seeks to better understand the structure of motivational factors – in particular, whether a latent and more theoretical structure exists. Factor analysis is used to this end, by constructing and validating a measure of motivations for women social entrepreneurs. This yields a three-factor solution: ‘self-interest’, ‘alternative business model’ and ‘prosocial’. Factor scores are then used to assess how these different types of motivations relate to perceived success of the social mission as well as economic performance through reported revenue.



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3 The results demonstrate the significance of the social mission within the social entrepreneurial  
4 venture. Women who lead social enterprises where a social mission is central are more likely to  
5 feel successful in meeting their social aims. This is fully in line with previous research findings  
6 showing that strong prosocial motivation is positively linked to higher social-impact success (De  
7 Dreu et al., 2011; De Dreu and Nauta, 2009; Grant and Sumanth, 2009). However, the results  
8 show that higher levels of prosocial motivations among women social entrepreneurs are not  
9 associated with greater economic revenue.  
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21 What is clear from the results is that there is a strong negative relationship between self-interest  
22 motivations among women social entrepreneurs and annual revenue level, suggesting that having  
23 other than prosocial motivations for becoming a social entrepreneur is not predictive of greater  
24 revenue. This might be due to women social entrepreneurs being less ‘grand visionaries’ than  
25 pragmatic agents seeking to create a form of enterprise that responds to their individual needs,  
26 and likely reflects the fact that many of these ‘lifestyle’ social enterprises remain small in scale  
27 (Carter and Cannon, 1992). While such social enterprises have a legitimate place among the  
28 heterogeneity of forms and scales that social enterprises can take, this finding demonstrates the  
29 importance of understanding motivations in order to better distinguish between different types of  
30 women-led social enterprises.  
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47 Finally, the results identify that seeking an alternative business model acts as a motivation  
48 among women social entrepreneurs. This breaks existing conceptualisations of entrepreneurial  
49 motivations on a binary spectrum as either ‘self-interested’ or ‘prosocial’. This can be seen as  
50 evidence of the importance of institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988) among women  
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3 social entrepreneurs. Mair and Marti (2006, p. 40) describe institutional entrepreneurs as ‘actors  
4 who have an interest in modifying institutional structures or in creating new ones’. The findings  
5 show that being motivated by seeking an alternative business model is negatively related to  
6 perceived success in meeting social goals. It is possible to theorise that this is related to the trend  
7 among a variety of organisations and individuals to follow the social enterprise model of  
8 ‘commercialisation with a purpose’ (Tedmanon et al., 2015), only to find that the model fails to  
9 align with individuals, stakeholders, the organisational culture or the social need being addressed  
10 (Kirkman, 2012). If that is the case, then creating a better fit between the aim of an alternative  
11 business model and the intended social outcome needs to be tackled by other actors, such as  
12 support organisations.  
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28 Social enterprises are perceived as organisations that can fill a gap created by either market or  
29 government failures (Santos, 2012) which leave an ‘institutional void’ for social entrepreneurs  
30 (McMullen and Bergman, 2017). In filling this gap, social entrepreneurs will aim at maximising  
31 the reach of their social venture so that they can address the specific social need. In this view, the  
32 binary opposition between self-interested and prosocial types of motivations tends to be reified,  
33 but it fails to consider that ‘maximisation’ is not always at the fore of social entrepreneurs’  
34 motivations. Instead, the ‘maximisation’ assumption seems to be derived from expectations of  
35 what mainstream enterprises ought to be about. For example, Agafonow (2014, 2015) argues that  
36 it is precisely the hybrid institutional logic of social enterprises that makes it difficult for them to  
37 choose whether to maximise profit – and risk allowing the social mission to drift – or focus  
38 solely on the social aim. Social entrepreneurs are thus characterised as having to choose between  
39 maximising either their profits or their social mission, but not both (Sullivan Mort et al., 2003).  
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5 However, we argue here that social entrepreneurship might not be solely about motivations that  
6 seek to maximise economic and/or social returns, either separately or simultaneously. In fact, our  
7 results show that beyond the binary of self-interest vs. prosocial, there is space for alternative  
8 motivations behind social entrepreneurship. We therefore call for researchers not to  
9 automatically assume that individuals ought to maximise either social or economic returns. This  
10 is borne out by previous influential research suggesting that different forms of social enterprises  
11 co-exist – for example, Zahra et al.’s (2009) typology of ‘social bricoleur’, ‘social  
12 constructionist’ and ‘social engineer’ entrepreneurs, which are differentiated not by the  
13 prevalence of either self-interest or prosocial motivations, but by the scale at which social  
14 entrepreneurs operate.  
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31 This article therefore contributes to calls for research that seeks to understand not only social  
32 entrepreneurial motivations, but also how these might relate to outcomes (Carsrud and  
33 Brännback, 2011). While our data is limited in so far as it does not allow us to capture social or  
34 economic effectiveness, it shows that motivations are related to subjective perceptions of social  
35 and economic success. The results show a more nuanced account of entrepreneurial orientation  
36 when we expand our frame of understanding for motivations. An ‘entrepreneurial’ orientation  
37 need not be defined by characteristics such as competitiveness, aggression or risk-taking  
38 (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996), all of which reflect a rather masculine subtext (Ahl, 2006). In fact,  
39 the specific case of women social entrepreneurs is pertinent in that they are disproportionately  
40 affected by a double set of expectations. First, as women, they operate within cultural and  
41 societal structures that create gender-role expectations of them as entrepreneurs (Gupta et al.,  
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3 2009; Thébaud, 2010). Because women are expected to ‘care’, they are more likely to be  
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5 expected to perform entrepreneurship differently (Brush et al., 2009). Evidence suggests that it is  
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7 likely that these dynamics can be transposed to the context of social entrepreneurship (Humbert,  
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9 2012; Teasdale et al., 2011). Second, social entrepreneurs are likewise expected to ‘care’ more;  
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11 empathy and compassion are seen as fuelling their ventures (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2015).  
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13 However, expectations that women social entrepreneurs ‘care’ should not stand in the way of a  
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15 more nuanced understanding of their motivations and their venture outcomes.  
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22 The findings have practical implications for social entrepreneurship. First, they can assist  
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24 funding or support organisations, as well as social investors, in evaluating where to best invest  
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26 resources, particularly among women social entrepreneurs for which little empirical evidence  
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28 exists regarding their motivations. Second, a more nuanced understanding of motivations among  
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30 women social entrepreneurs can support policy development aimed at supporting women social  
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32 entrepreneurs, without necessarily being bound by the expectation to maximise economic and/or  
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34 social outcomes.  
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41 As the data used in this analysis measure perceptions, a further research step entails assessing  
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43 this relationship further through the use of more developed and/or sophisticated measures, at the  
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45 point of either data collection or analysis. As this analysis relies on perceptual and self-reported  
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47 data, more independent measures should be considered for inclusion. A more longitudinal design  
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49 would also be of benefit, since social outcomes take time to materialise and may not be easily  
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51 measurable (Grant, 2007). Another limitation of this paper lies in the non-random sampling  
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53 strategy employed to identify a hard-to-reach population such as women social entrepreneurs.  
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3 The dissemination of the survey via social media platforms could have introduced some issues in  
4 relation to self-selection bias.  
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10 This article has provided an exploratory account of the main types of motivations present among  
11 women social entrepreneurs in 10 EU countries. It has shown that women-led social enterprises  
12 are most likely to be socially effective where prosocial motivations dominate. Social enterprises  
13 – whether they grow or remain small – have their value in the extent to which they can meet their  
14 social aims. It is therefore of critical importance to better understand motivations among nascent  
15 women social entrepreneurs, so that targeted support measures can be used most appropriately.  
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**Table 1 Motivations among women social entrepreneurs in 10 EU countries 2014-15**

	<i>Not a motivating factor</i>	<i>Somewhat of a motivating factor</i>	<i>A strong motivating factor</i>	<i>A very strong motivating factor</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Seeking to make a specific social impact</i>	3%	4%	26%	68%	343
<i>Innovative idea for new product, process, market or service</i>	5%	7%	22%	65%	341
<i>Responding to an unmet need in the community</i>	1%	4%	30%	65%	341
<i>Seeking to create a more ethical model of doing business</i>	9%	11%	26%	54%	340
<i>Seeking to create a more sustainable model of doing business</i>	10%	11%	25%	54%	333
<i>Personal connection to a particular issue or group</i>	8%	10%	33%	49%	343
<i>Seeking to try something new and learn new skills</i>	5%	16%	37%	41%	342
<i>Greater decision-making and leadership power in my job/career</i>	14%	24%	31%	31%	340
<i>Seeking better work-life balance</i>	26%	28%	23%	24%	342
<i>Seeking more financial independence in my job/career</i>	31%	29%	24%	17%	341
<i>Seeking to make profit</i>	31%	32%	20%	16%	336
<i>Seeking to support myself and/or my family as a primary earner</i>	47%	24%	21%	9%	343
<i>Unemployment or underemployment</i>	65%	18%	9%	8%	340
<i>Funding opportunity was available</i>	48%	28%	16%	8%	340
<i>Seeking to contribute a secondary income to my household</i>	64%	19%	12%	5%	342

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	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Deviation</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Seeking to make a specific social impact</i>	3.59	.691	-1.830	3.324	343
<i>Innovative idea for new product, process, market or service</i>	3.48	.844	-1.619	1.784	341
<i>Responding to an unmet need in the community</i>	3.58	.630	-1.542	2.516	341
<i>Seeking to create a more ethical model of doing business</i>	3.25	.966	-1.094	.074	340
<i>Seeking to create a more sustainable model of doing business</i>	3.23	.993	-1.071	-.048	333
<i>Personal connection to a particular issue or group</i>	3.24	.917	-1.084	.291	343
<i>Seeking to try something new and learn new skills</i>	3.15	.876	-.770	-.203	342
<i>Greater decision-making and leadership power in my job/career</i>	2.78	1.037	-.332	-1.074	340
<i>Seeking better work-life balance</i>	2.44	1.116	.104	-1.342	342
<i>Seeking more financial independence in my job/career</i>	2.26	1.071	.284	-1.185	341
<i>Seeking to make profit</i>	2.22	1.062	.386	-1.084	336
<i>Seeking to support myself and/or my family as a primary earner</i>	1.92	1.014	.682	-.814	343
<i>Unemployment or underemployment</i>	1.60	.951	1.440	.851	340
<i>Funding opportunity was available</i>	1.84	.971	.850	-.416	340
<i>Seeking to contribute a secondary income to my household</i>	1.58	.888	1.354	.723	342



**Table 2 Rotated Component Matrix**

	Factors			Communalities
	1	2	3	
<b>Factor 1: Self-interest (<math>\alpha = 0.79</math>)</b>				
<i>Seeking more financial independence in my job/career</i>	.859			.763
<i>Seeking to support myself and/or my family as a primary earner</i>	.760			.604
<i>Seeking to have greater decision-making and leadership power in my job/career</i>	.750			.601
<i>Seeking better work-life balance</i>	.699			.541
<b>Factor 2: Alternative business model (<math>\alpha = 0.88</math>)</b>				
<i>Seeking to create a more ethical model of doing business</i>		.927		.890
<i>Seeking to create a more sustainable model of doing business</i>		.914		.884
<b>Factor 3: Prosocial (<math>\alpha = 0.60</math>)</b>				
<i>Responding to an unmet need in the community</i>			.831	.699
<i>Seeking to make a specific social impact</i>			.819	.689

Values below |0.3| are omitted

**Table 3 Logistic models**

	<i>Model 1: Social impact</i>		<i>Model 2: Revenue</i>	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
<i>Perceived social impact success = 1&amp;2</i>	3.961**	1.060		
<i>Perceived social impact success = 3&amp;4</i>	<sup>a</sup>			
<i>Annual revenue level = &lt; €10,000</i>			-2.678**	.808
<i>Annual revenue level = €10,000-€49,999</i>			-1.495	.798
<i>Annual revenue level = €50,000-€99,999</i>			-.826	.796
<i>Annual revenue level = €100,000-€249,999</i>			.269	.800
<i>Factor 1 – self-interest</i>	.315*	.158	-.743**	.137
<i>Factor 2 – alternative model</i>	-.408**	.152	-.062	.119
<i>Factor 3 – prosocial</i>	1.204**	.266	-.028	.191
<i>Bulgaria</i>	1.048	.833	-1.532*	.731
<i>France</i>	-.037	.357	.837**	.319
<i>Germany</i>	.132	.431	.427	.380
<i>Hungary</i>	.100	.564	-.878	.538
<i>Ireland</i>	-.210	.581	.142	.521
<i>Italy</i>	-.828	.459	1.053**	.352
<i>Lithuania</i>	.530	.809	n.r	
<i>Spain</i>	.125	.506	-.450	.470
<i>Sweden</i>	22.682	.000	.164	.414
<i>United Kingdom</i>	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	0 <sup>a</sup>	.
<i>Cox and Snell</i>	.205		.177	
<i>Nagelkerke</i>	.273		.185	
<i>McFadden</i>	.166		.063	

<sup>a</sup>: reference category

n.r.: no responses

\*: p < 0.05; \*\*: p < 0.01