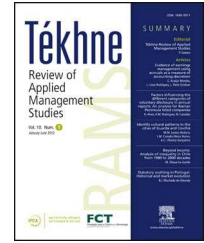


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## ARTICLE

# Motivations for social entrepreneurship – Evidences from Portugal



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## KEYWORDS

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**Abstract** The main purpose of this article is to explore the factors that motivate people to create, develop and maintain a social entrepreneurship project and also to explore the difficulties and expectations social entrepreneurs face. The research is based on an exploratory study that includes the collection and analysis of qualitative data, involving 13 interviews to social entrepreneurs from Portugal.

The study provides information about the motivations that take individuals to initiate and maintain a social project, standing out the altruism, the passion, the influence of role models, past volunteering experiences and the willing to create and innovate. The mobilization of financial and human resources, as well as the business bureaucracy, are the most frequent difficulties in the process of social venture creation but the will to fight, the persistence and passion the interviewers have, that is, their motivation, seems to be the motto for continuing to battle for their goals.

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## 1. Introduction

Although social entrepreneurship receives decreasing attention from academics, it is a phenomenon that needs to be further explored since it is undeniable the important contribution that social entrepreneurs are having at a social,

cultural and environmental level, creating innovative ways to respond to certain economic and social needs (Shaw & Carter, 2007). We need to continue to explore the many motivations that underlie this complex phenomenon since the studies in the area of motivation are lacking (Miller, Grimes, McMullen, & Vogus, 2012). Furthermore, entrepreneurship is a dynamic process and motivations may change over time (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000), so research seeking to understand these potential changes is lacking (Hessels, Gelderen, & Thurik, 2008; Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). Studying human motivation is of paramount

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importance if we are to understand, for example, how to motivate people to be more entrepreneurial (Shane et al., 2003). The objective of this research is to explore the motivations that lead individuals to create, develop and maintain a project of social entrepreneurship i.e., exploring what people want to achieve with the project and explore the processes/motivational dynamics to build it, i.e., the initial expectations, the supports they seek to obtain, the obstacles faced and what happened differently from expected.

## 2. Entrepreneurial motivation

Since there is little research into the motivations for social entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurs are a subtype of entrepreneurs who differ in their mission and in how starting their business, it was necessary to consider the existing literature on motivations for commercial or conventional entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010). Motivation, which is used to explain the effort and persistence through a given action (Latham & Pinder, 2005), plays an important role in the creation of new organizations (Segal, Borgia, & Schoenfeld, 2005), since it influences the decision's taking, including the one referring a new business creation (Shane et al., 2003). Motivation influences entrepreneurial behavior in three complementary ways: influences on the choice of the individual, i.e., the direction of the action; influences the intensity of the action, based on the importance or value that the action has for the entrepreneur and influences the persistence of action, based on the clearness of the path to achieve this value (Locke, 2000). The motivations in general, and also in the entrepreneurship domain have been investigated in the light of different theories, commonly referred to content and process theories. Content theories seek to understand the "why" of certain behavior, i.e., what moves individuals, and seek to identify the specific factors that motivate people to a particular choice (Beardwell, Holden, & Claydon, 2004). Allow therefore to understand what leads individuals to create their own business. Process theories focus on understanding the "how", i.e., the intensity of dedication and persistence that the person is willing to put in the activities (Segal et al., 2005), and provide a description and analysis of how the behavior is initiated, sustained and stopped (Borkowski, 2009). They also seek to understand the difficulties and expectations that influence the entrepreneurial process.

All these theories, synthesized in Table 1, provide an analytical framework that allows us to understand the process of setting up a business (Hechavarria, Renko, & Matthews, 2012).

All these theories provide an analytical framework that allows us to understand the process of setting up a business (Hechavarria et al., 2012). These models are implicitly or explicitly based on the basic design that the intentions of an individual to become an entrepreneur are provided for the answer to two questions: (1) entrepreneurship is desirable for me? (i.e., leads me to achieve the results and goals that I desire?) and (2) entrepreneurship is feasible for me? (i.e., do I have what it takes to succeed as an entrepreneur?) (Segal et al., 2005).

## 3. Social entrepreneurship

Certo and Miller (2008) define social entrepreneurship (SE) as a process that involves the recognition, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities that result in social value which involves the provision of basic needs such as food delivery, health services and education. SE is an activity with community goals, which hopefully is profitable and the profit is used to reinvest in the organization itself (Steinerowski, Jack, & Farmer, 2008). It is more likely to occur in contexts where there are socio-economic, environmental and cultural issues (Dacin et al., 2010) and promotes a lasting, attractive and sustainable solution for social problems (Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010). Social entrepreneurs are people who identify a failure in society and transform it into a business opportunity; they recruit and motivate others to their cause and build networks with essential people at the same time. Also, they face the obstacles and challenges and introduce their own systems to manage their social business (Thompson, 2002).

## 4. Entrepreneurship versus social entrepreneurship

The key difference is that in commercial entrepreneurship, the main focus is on the economic return, while in social entrepreneurship is in social return, which means that conventional entrepreneurs look essentially for economic profit (Kirzner, 1973), meaning that their performance is attached to financial return (Austin, Stevenson, & Weiskillern, 2006). On the other hand, social entrepreneurs search, generally, to accomplish social goals based on the economic sustainability (Dorado, 2006). Leadbeater (1997) defends that many of the traits and behaviors of social entrepreneurs are the mirror of commercial entrepreneurs, including their determination, ambition, charisma, leadership, ability to communicate their vision and inspire others and maximizing the use of resources; the key difference is that in business entrepreneurship, the main focus is the economic return while in SE is the social return. However, the creation of economic wealth is important for the social entrepreneur, so that he can ensure the sustainability of the organization and for it to become self-sustaining. Profit and wealth creation can be part of the model, but they are only means and not end in themselves (Dees, 1998). Therefore, social entrepreneurs create or apply viable economic models to achieve social or environmental purposes (Whitman, 2011).

## 5. Research questions

We cannot see conventional and social entrepreneurship in such a dichotomist way, thinking that their distinction is the financial or social point. Reasons for social entrepreneur may also include less altruist motives such as personal realization (Hall, Miller, & Millar, 2012; Mair & Martí, 2006). Other authors contradict this idea and, even though their study is not focused on social entrepreneurship motivations, they add that social entrepreneurs are motivated by a strong desire to change society, a status quo discomfort,

**Table 1** Motivation theories.

|   | <i>Content theories</i>   |
|---|---|
| McClelland's Theory   | A high need for self-realization is a common trait of entrepreneurs (Segal et al., 2005).   |
| Push/pull theory (or economic/autonomy need or necessity/opportunity) | The "push theory" argues that individuals are "pushed" to entrepreneurship by external forces (for example divorce/being overtaken by another colleague in a promotion/job dissatisfaction), the pull factors are those that "attract" a person to start a business (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010), i.e., people are drawn to entrepreneurship by looking for independence, self-realization or recognition of an opportunity (Marques, Ferreira, Ferreira, & Lages, 2012).<br>In this push and pull logic, the motivations to entrepreneurship go around four principal units: desire for independency; monetary motivations; family related issues; work related issues (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010).<br>Desire for independency and autonomy is, generally, the most significant factor for a person to become an entrepreneur, classified as a pull factor. Monetary motivations are also classified as a pull factor; people are not always motivated by money to start a business but it is a factor to consider (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010).<br>Work related motivations are generally considered push factors and may manifest in two different ways: dissatisfaction or instability with work, which can motivate a person to abandon her job and become an entrepreneur; or else, the desire to obtain bigger flexibility or progression in the career, dissatisfaction with the current career or difficulty in finding a job, all can be considered motivation factors to enter the entrepreneur world (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). Family related factors, usually classified as push, refer to the difficult combination between employment and domestic work, family obligations or the desire for family balance (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). |
| Extrinsic/intrinsic motivations                                       | Extrinsic motivations (associated with push motivations) – related to an external reward that follows certain behavior; intrinsic (associated to pull motivations) – refer to the personal interest in entrepreneurial task (Carsrud & Brannback, 2011).  |
|   | <i>Process theories</i>   |
| Vroom's Expectations Theory   | An individual will adopt, among several behaviors, one that will take him to reach the previous expectations.   |
| Locke's Goal Definition Theory  | What people do is largely influenced by their goals and by the perceived trust in being able to perform those actions.  |
| Bandura's Self-efficacy Theory  | Self-efficacy is a person's belief in its abilities, and is a key antecedent of intentions for entrepreneurship (Carsrud & Brannback, 2011).  |
| Value-expectancy model (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002)                      | The expectations that the individual has about success, his/her belief about the capacity to succeed and his/her motivations to be an entrepreneur defines his/her behavior.  |

altruistic feelings and the need to be socially responsible (Mair & Noboa, 2005). Steinerowski et al. (2008) also suggest the "passion" motivation, i.e., wanting to make a difference in peoples' lives, as a motivation factor for social entrepreneurship. Miller et al. (2012) defend that some emotions such as compassion may be related with the motivation for social entrepreneurship.

In order to be able to understand and explore the motivations of social entrepreneurs to create, develop and maintain a social enterprise, we seek to answer three research questions:

- What motivates individuals to engage in a social context enterprise?

- Do the motivations for social entrepreneurship differ from the motivations for traditional business entrepreneurship?
- How does the process of project development, in particular, the obstacles and expectations, modify the motivated behavior?

## 6. Methodology

This investigation is based on a study with an exploratory nature. Qualitative approaches are particularly useful in areas that are not theoretically evolved (Edmondson & McManus, 2007), which reveals as particularly important in the entrepreneurship motivations study (Amit & Muller,

1995; Shaw & Carter, 2007). Qualitative data are useful to generate, elaborate and even test theories, since they inspire others investigators to seek for opportunities to expand their thought and investigation (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). On addition, the qualitative research methods give a decisive importance to the comprehension of the participants actions in their life expectations basis, "allow to indicate why the individual behaves in a certain way and responds to the various stimulus (...) and offer an open, flexible and experimental approach" (Milliken, 2001, p. 75).

In this study, the direct contact with the social entrepreneurs was privileged through personal interviews. In second place, "qualitative investigation in descriptive" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994, p. 48), i.e., collected data are words, phrases, thoughts and representations of the interviewed people instead of numeric data, and each interview is treated individually. The third characteristic is related to the fact that "qualitative investigators are more interested for the process than by the results or products" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994, p. 49). In this investigation remains the interest to comprehend the motivational process sub-jacent to the entrepreneurship existence the conception that this extends since the remote moment of the intention going through its own creation and evolution. The authors refer a fourth characteristic, "qualitative investigator tend to analyze their data in an inductive way" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994, p. 50). Considering the previously referred lack of empirical studies about motivations in social entrepreneurship, it was not assumed in the beginning of the investigation that the great questions of this study were known, making the whole process of investigation around the seek for discovery and comprehension related to the theme, based on what the interviewed social entrepreneurs could show. At last, the authors refer that "meaning is extremely important in the qualitative approach" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994, p. 50). It was a concern in this study to listen, know and problematize what motivates social entrepreneurs to start their projects and explore the process of social entrepreneurship there are involved.

As a research technique, personal semi structured interviews were used, prevailing interest in understanding the underlying motivational process of entrepreneurship. This happens because, to understand motivation, the way as they see their own social entrepreneurship, the difficulties and obstacles felt, the influence of determined factors in the creation of their own project, it is necessary to examine how social entrepreneurs think, remember and talk about their experience in the creation of their project. Qualitative interviews are the ones that allow a person to tell his/her own story, using his/her own language (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). Based on the literature revision, a series of analyze dimension to explore where established, which allowed to elaborate an interview script. In Table 2 are indicated the analyzed technical dimensions and the questions from the interview guide.

We intend to analyze the motivated behavior of the social entrepreneur from the remote moment of the intention to create a social project itself, through the actual creation and development of the same.

## 7. Participants and procedures

The Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Portugal recognizes and validates a set of social entrepreneurship projects in Portugal, totaling 38 projects.

All participants were identified as social entrepreneurs, and they are recognized by the Portuguese Social Entrepreneurship Institute as having high potential projects fulfilling four requirements:

1. Neglected social/environmental projects' resolution (social/environmental mission).
2. Potential for a positive transformation in society at a social/environmental level (social/environmental impact).
3. Challenging the traditional vision and using innovator business models (innovation).
4. Potential to grow up and/or replicate in other geographic places (scalability/replicability) (Instituto de Empreendedorismo Social, 2013).

Social entrepreneurs from these projects were contacted for an interview. Initially they were contacted via email with a written summary, the presentation and the objectives our research. The set of interviews conducted reflects a natural selection of social entrepreneurs derived from their availability and interest in joining our research. Some requested interviews were denied or constrained by the lack of time on their agendas. It was possible to conduct 13 interviews, with a maximum duration of 1 h 30 min in the workplace or in the home of the respondents and held between the months of May and June 2013. The respondent's distribution by gender is relatively similar, since the sample is constituted by 7 women and 6 men. The social entrepreneurs' age is between 20 and 29 years old and 40 and 54 years old, which a larger amount of people between the ages of 40 and 54. The academic degree level is high, since only one of the elements has not been on higher education, two of them have a master's degree and other two have a PhD. In Table 3 we can see a brief description of all social entrepreneurship projects associated with the participants interviewed.

In the moment before creating the project, most people worked for other people. Now, their professional situation is different because most people work for themselves, since five from these seven elements are exclusively dedicated to the project. As to the fact that they earn income, the results are divided, since five people do and five people do not, and three of the social entrepreneurs earn income with their own project because this is inserted in their functions. After analyzing the demographic data, for the purpose of the investigation, the collected data from the interviews were analyzed using the content analysis technique. To construct knowledge, as suggested by the authors Quivy & Campenhoudt (2008), the used terms of the respondents are analyzed, along with the usage frequency and their disposition mode, speech's construction and its development.

This content analysis technique followed three phases: pre-analysis, the exploration of material and treatment of the results obtained and their respective interpretation, having emerged new theoretical categories (Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

**Table 2** Analyzed technical dimensions and the script's questions.

| Dimension analysis   | Script's questions   |
|--|--|
| <i>Entrance in the entrepreneurship activity and path</i>  | Q1. When did your entrepreneurship activity began and what initiatives have you been, or not, involved.  |
| <i>Motivations in the social entrepreneurship creation</i>   |  |
| Motivational push/pull factors   | Q3. What project have you created? (goals, mission, developed work, paid people, involved voluntaries, how is the project financed, financial evolution, clients,...).   |
| Willing to be your own boss  | Q4. Which were your main motivations in the creation of this project?  |
| Propensity to take risks   | Q17. What do you think about being your own boss?  |
| <i>Change in motivation through the time</i>   | Q18. Do you feel that there is a strong associated risk to this project? What other situations in your life do you feel like you have taken a risk? Do you like to take risks?   |
| <i>Differences in motivations in the creation of an business entrepreneurship (if that's the case)</i> | Q5. The motivations that you had to create the project are still the same or they changed?   |
|  | Q8. Do you think there are differences between a social or conventional entrepreneur? Which ones?  |
|  | Q9. Have you ever been involved in the creation of a conventional entrepreneurship project? If so, which were your motivations to create it? Are they different than the ones you had to create this project?                        |
|  | Q10. (if your answer in question 9 was no) Why did you create a social initiative instead of a conventional one?   |
| <i>Acknowledge</i>   | Q12. Do you feel that the fact that you have your own project gives you some sort of acknowledgment that you didn't have before? Was this also a motivation to create the project? Is today a motivational factor?                   |
| <i>Personal accomplishment</i>   | Q16. Do you feel accomplished? Was your personal or professional accomplishment dependent of the project's creation?   |
| <i>Expectations and self-efficacy</i>  |  |
| Comprehending in which way a person's expectations have influenced the project's prosecution           | Q6. Did you always expect to have your own business? Was it planned?   |
| Motivation choices   | Q7. Which were your initial expectations within the project's creation? Were they accomplished?  |
| Choice (value: fulfillment, utility)   | Q2. How did the will to become an entrepreneur appear?   |
| Role models influence  | Q14. Had you ever volunteered in this area before creating your project? And now? Did it influence the project on any way?   |
|  | Q13. Do you possess any other people close to you or in your family that have created their own projects? (or other entrepreneurs). Do you feel that influences your will to proceed with your own project on any way?               |
| Perceive how the auto efficiency perception influences the creation of a new business                  | Q19. Which were the main obstacles you faced in the beginning of the project's creation? How about today? How did you overcome those obstacles?  |
| Explore the way that obstacles influence the will to continue with the project (persistent)            | Q20. Were you ready to overcome those difficulties? If not, and if you knew they would exist, would you still move forward with the project?   |
|  | Q21. Do you think those obstacles are strong enough to enable the motivations for a potential social entrepreneur?   |
| <i>Success in the social entrepreneur's perspective</i>  | Q15. Do you think you are successful? Why?   |
|  | Q22. Which do you think the skills and capacities for a social entrepreneur should be to obtain success? Do you feel like you always had them or was it something that you acquired throughout the time? (How did you acquire them?) |
| <i>Representation of yourself as a social entrepreneur</i>   | Q11. Do you feel like you are a creative person? And innovator? Why?   |
|  | Q23. What would you recommend to other social entrepreneurs?   |
|  | Q24. What changed in you? What were the effects and meanings of being a social entrepreneur?   |
|  | Q26. Which do you consider to be the positive and negative aspects of being a social entrepreneur?   |
| <i>Reasons to give up the project</i>  | Q25. Reasons that could lead you to abandon the project.   |



**Table 3** Description of the projects.













| Projects name   | First year of the project                    | Description of the projects   |
|---|--|---|
| <br><b>ENCONTRAR+SE</b>                                      | 2006   | Encontrar+se (Find+yourself) develops a broad spectrum of activities around the serious mental illness. Develops research, training, awareness and assistance in order to make ecosystem the most knowledgeable and friendly to individuals with serious mental illness.  |
| <br><b>PROGRAMA ACONCHEGO</b>                                | Scholl year 2003/2004                        | Aconchego (Warmth) is a program that promotes the coexistence/living between seniors and university students by sharing residence. Elderly, from Porto, share their residence with university students. The project generates an intergenerational sharing.   |
| <br><b>APPC</b><br>associação do porto de paralisia cerebral | Founded in 1974; project implemented in 2000 | APPC is a partnership of people with cerebral palsy or related neurological diseases that intends to make them effective agents of change. Instituted in its operating model that the directions of the institution must consist of three parts, including parents, coaches and the people with cerebral palsy as a way to change the paradigm of themselves and society. |
| <br><b>ColorAdd</b>  | 2010   | ColorAdd is a color code that allows colorblind identifies any type of color. This code is being implemented progressively in more areas, already including color pencils, underground lines, paint books, clothes and even in hospitals.   |
| <br><b>Espaço T</b><br>18 anos 12 94                        | 1994   | Espaço T (T Space) involves the individual in formal and non-formal artistic activities, stimulating their expressive abilities and developing the investment in you. Develops long run connections with their students using art as a vehicle of communication and development.  |
| <br><b>Fisiotrimtrim</b>                                   | 2011   | Fisiotrimtrim teams provide specialized babysitting services related to the care of children and youth with special needs. They direct their activity to stimulate the maintenance and development of capacities of children, also constituting themselves as a key support to parents and caretakers.  |
| NPISA   | 2005   | NPISA (Núcleo do Porto de Intervenção com os Sem-abrigo – Intervention with homeless in Oporto) is a network of organizations that develop activities for the homeless. They develop a joint work, providing care and expertise among organizations, promoting discussion and construction of a common performance management model                                       |
| <br><b>projetoRIOS</b>                                     | 2005   | Projeto Rios (River project) main axis is find sponsors for a section of a river. The groups, in their regular visits to the river banks, collect a set of data and make some improvements. Later, these data is sent to the Rivers team in order to be integrated in its databases.  |
| <br><b>terra dos sonhos</b>                                | 2007   | Terra dos Sonhos (Dreamland) develop every effort in order to achieve the dreams of children, young and seniors in situation of need or serious health condition. Thus, develop the belief of individuals and families in their dreams, creating a more conducive environment for the well-being and quality of personal and family life.                                 |
| <br><b>VO.U</b><br>VOLUNTARIADO UNIVERSITÁRIO              | 2006   | VO.U Acompanhar focuses on people that repeat hospital treatments and whose causes are linked to non-compliance with doctor's orders. In articulation with local nonprofit organizations, hospitals and medicine students, develop a volunteer program that includes home visits to these people.   |

Table 3 (Continued)

| Projects name  | First year of the project | Description of the projects   |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Start Up Pirates<br>      | 2012                      | Startup Pirates is a one-week program that enables aspiring entrepreneurs to get inside the startup world and learn how to develop a business idea. With a very hands-on approach and the support of a large community of experienced entrepreneurs, they combine workshops and mentoring with a clear focus on accelerating the development of entrepreneurs.  |
| Vitamimos<br>             | 2007                      | Vitamimos is an innovative project whose main objective is related to the intervention in preventing child and adolescent obesity by promoting healthy lifestyles. Vitamimos has a physical space installed at Quinta da Alagoa in Carcavelos where they run a center for food education  |
| Percurso das Memórias<br> | 2012                      | Percurso das Memórias (Route of Memories) is a project related to community tourism in the historic center of Porto. Its aims are related to the preservation and dissemination of socio-cultural identity of this territory, making known the traditions, memories and stories of this place. The materialization of this project is done through the design of paths with a set of activities presented by the community. |

This approach is defined as a “series of communications’ analysis techniques seeking to obtain, for systematic and objective procedures, a description of the messages contain, indicators (which may or not be quantitative) that allow to infer knowledge related to the production/reception conditions (inferred variables) of those messages” (Bardin, 1997, p. 42)

## 8. Results

### 8.1. Expectations, obstacles, difficulties

Regarding the expectation of having their own business, the answers are divided, with half of social entrepreneurs saying they did not have this expectation. The other half says that they have always had the desire and expectation of having their own business. Nine of the respondents state that the expectations they had for the creation of the project have been overcome, especially regarding to the growth that all projects had and had not been planned. The difficulties that emerged did not allow confirming that expectations had been fulfilled soon, but that is a positive process under construction. Obstacles faced at the beginning of the creation of the project (in%) were: the mobilization of human and financial resources (35.7%), bureaucracy (21.4%), the fact that it is something innovative (14.2%), communication management and time (7%), the process of decision making (7%) and lack of credibility or inexperience in the area (7%). In the interviews, we realized that all of the respondents developed strategies to overcome the difficulties mentioned: the search for alternative sources of funding (40%), building a good network of contacts (20%), face the problems in a positive way (20%) and grab on models of existing projects (20%), adapting them to give credibility to their own projects. For the preparation to face those obstacles, half of the respondents reported having been

prepared while the other half did not. Even for those not prepared, the obstacles are not understood as determinants for a breakthrough design. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents stated that obstacles do not influence the motivation of a potential social entrepreneur today. Most current obstacles that social entrepreneurs face is related to the growth of the project, i.e., associated with the fact that having more people demands a better management of the same and more time available. Also, the question of financial resources is very important to refer, with a clear association with the financial and economic crisis facing the country, which affects the financing of projects.

### 8.2. Learning and success

Nine of the respondents considered themselves creative and innovative for the fact that they try to be different, by seeking new solutions for their project and get funding. The positive aspects of being a social entrepreneur are closely associated to the social impact they create. The negative ones are related to the difficulties encountered during the process and time management, as they refer lack of time to work on projects or tight timings to achieve them. About 46% of respondents said they feel successful, mainly because they were doing something they like. There is an association with the career they have had and the project they built. However, it is interesting to note that when asked about this issue, two elements refer to their perception of being successful as what they consider the success of your own business. For other social entrepreneurs, about 38%, the notion of being successful has not been reached yet since they consider that they still need to do more to feel successful, although most consider that their route is to be positive and that is a means to achieve this success.

### 8.3. Reasons to quit the project

Five types of reasons were found. The ones that stand out the most are: personal reasons (illness or family reasons), creating new projects, financial reasons, migration, and the ending of the project itself. Except for the creation of new projects, which demonstrates a positive desire to continue to create and innovate, other reasons show that only strong motives, such as a health problem or family or financial reasons, make the social entrepreneur quit.

### 8.4. Motivations

#### 8.4.1. Motivations in the creation of the social venture

Altruism was the most mentioned reason, by 92% of the respondents, as being the will to work for the welfare of society and the concern to make others happy. The passion or personal interest in the entrepreneurial task is a kind of intrinsic motivation and it was mentioned by 61% of respondents. The influence of role models seems to influence their involvement, since more than half of respondents (58%) reported having been influenced by other entrepreneurs, from family, friends or peer group. Volunteering, associated with values that a person has and the feeling of usefulness, was also one of the reasons most often mentioned by 53% of respondents. Previous experience either in the project area or in others helped the respondents thinking on the area and the project that could be developed later. The will for the individual to create new projects or to innovate is not such a referred motivation (23% of those referred), although 70% of respondents consider themselves innovators and creators. Recognizing an opportunity was another motivation that emerged during the interviews, mentioned by 23% of respondents. Opportunities have arisen in the life of these elements that made them grab them, motivated by an internal desire to do something meaningful in their life.

#### 8.4.2. Variation of the motivation over time

Respondents have three different types of perception regarding the changes in motivation throughout the entrepreneurship process: (i) the motivations remain, (ii) the motivations are higher with the growth and success of the project, and (iii) the motivations are different. Over half of the respondents consider that their motivation has increased with the success of the venture and experience: on the one hand, the fact that there is still much work to be done on the project and on the other hand, the fact of seeing positive results, mobilizes the person forward. When the perception of the social entrepreneur is the success of the project, the willingness to do more is also increased i.e., the motivation is higher. Three respondents have the perception that their motivations are the same ones today than those at the start of project creation. It was noticeable in their speech some hesitation and some angst toward certain situations such as political issues that create some problems in their timings to accomplish their goals. Finally there is the perception that the motivations are different and somehow minor, even though there is a clear intention to remain in the project.

**Table 4** Motivations of social entrepreneurs in the creation of the project.

| Motivations of social entrepreneurs in the creation of the project |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| Pull factors   | Push factors            |
| Altruism   | Factors related to work |
| Passion  |                         |
| Innovate and create  |                         |
| Opportunity  |                         |
| Role models influences   |                         |
| Volunteering   |                         |

#### 8.4.3. Difference between the motivation to create a commercial enterprise and a social venture

About this issue only responded the ones that reported having been involved previously in commercial entrepreneurship initiatives (five elements). The perception of one of the elements is that the motivations are the same, namely the willingness to innovate and create, either in the creation of this venture, either in projects that he has already been involved. The remaining elements have the perception that the motivations are different, since the commercial entrepreneurship projects were behind a need for creating self-employment and a need to raise capital, motivations that were not involved in the creation of the social venture.

## 9. Discussion

### 9.1. Motivation for the individuals to create a social venture

The motivations for creating a social enterprise found in this study fall mostly into pull factors. These factors attract individuals to start a business (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010) and are more prevalent than push factors (Segal et al., 2005) which is relevant since the entrepreneurs motivated by pull factors are more likely to succeed (Amit & Muller, 1995). We can see the pull order motivations of respondents in the creation of social enterprise in Table 4.

Altruism is the most quoted factor for all entrepreneurs and even though the sustainability of the projects is a concern for all social entrepreneurs, obtaining profits for personal gain is not a goal for any of the elements. Passion has also enormous relevance in the words of social entrepreneurs, and there is a will to do things differently, believing that this innovation can bring benefits to the projects. Recognizing an opportunity is another pull factor that emerged, and social entrepreneurs who mentioned it are able to grab a challenge and develop an idea, which also demonstrates that these individuals are able to face challenges and create new projects when they had no such need. The motivations included in the push factors are very insignificant. Although, this shows that the push and pull factors are not mutually exclusive. Associated with the theory of value-expectancy, we find the influence of role models, i.e., the fact that these social entrepreneurs have someone in the family or peer group involved in some kind of social entrepreneurial initiative, served as a model which is a fac-



**Table 5** Comparison between the motivations for commercial entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.

| Motivation                             | Commercial Entrepreneurship | Social Entrepreneurship |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Innovate/create                        | x                           | x                       |
| Independency                           | x                           | –                       |
| Recognition                            | x                           | –                       |
| Role models                            | x                           | x                       |
| Financial success                      | x                           | –                       |
| Achievement                            | x                           | –                       |
| Passion                                | x                           | x                       |
| Work related factors (dissatisfaction) | x                           | x                       |
| Volunteering                           | –                           | x                       |
| Opportunity recognition                | x                           | x                       |
| Altruism                               | –                           | x                       |

tor that influences their motivation for joining the social entrepreneurship. This can also be affirmed in the volunteering practice, where value transmission and the experience the respondents had in those actions influenced the motivation to create their project. Even though some motivations may look like they have more relevance than others, there is no order of importance. However, this could be better explored in a quantitative order study. When it comes to other type of motivations that have been thought as having some kind of influence in the motivations to create a social entrepreneurship project, it does not apply in this study. The will to be their own boss is not relevant for most entrepreneurs, even though it might bring many advantages in the present, but it was not a motivation to create the project. Although risk propensity is a characteristic pointed at conventional entrepreneurs, this does not happen with social entrepreneurs, since this was not a motivational factor to create their project, and even though they are aware of the risks of the project. As a matter of fact, most of them do not like to take risks and try to control them; still, knowing or not knowing the risks they were about to take, they show resilience and motivation to face them.

## 9.2. Comparison between the motivation for social and commercial entrepreneurship

The answer to this question involves two perspectives that complement each other. On the one hand, the perception of the respondents previously involved in commercial entrepreneurship initiatives, claiming that there are differences in the motivations that led them to create these projects and social ventures. The first had mainly push motivations, associated with the need for job creation or for personal recognition and the creation of social enterprises associated with motivations cited. Moreover, on their own opinions there are differences on the issue of obtaining profit (commercial) by opposite to the creation of social value. On the other hand, the comparison of this results with the literature review, can confirm the existence of differences in entrepreneurial motivations and also some points in common (see Table 5).

Similarly to what happens in business entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship's motivations for starting a business are close to the pull type. However, while in the commercial entrepreneurship these pull motivations are more closely associated with extrinsic and hedonic motivation (Santos, 2012), i.e., there is a greater concern with getting financial success, independence and recognition, in social entrepreneurship there is a type of intrinsic and eudemonic motivation, since the person does not create the project with the intention of obtaining external rewards but by the self-interest that he/she has in the entrepreneurial task and for an eminently unselfish concern with the welfare of others. "Social entrepreneurship is not about exerting pressure or raising awareness but rather about developing and validating a sustainable solution to problems that often have a local expression but global impact" (Santos, 2012, p. 348). Thus, the effort to engage in their tasks has goals less centered on themselves, and more on the others and the specific objectives of the project. The experiences they have had in the past, imbued these social entrepreneurs a set of values that made them opt for this choice and this type of work, rather than one focused endeavor to obtain profit for their own benefit or the creation of a work that would bring them any other type of external reward such as recognition or status, opposed to the satisfaction generated by what they do for society and themselves. This conclusion corroborates literature since unfavorable or favorable socioeconomic contexts have very different influences on the options pursued by their managers (Feliço, Gonçalves, & da Conceição Gonçalves, 2013).

## 9.3. Obstacles and expectations found along the process and impact on the entrepreneur's motivation

Numerous entrepreneurs are concerned about the potential for reduced or lost funding, especially during economic hard times, at the same time sustaining a social objective and managing a viable business can be complementary and reciprocally advantageous activities (Zhang & Swanson, 2013). So, issues of sustainability usually head the list of concerns, being that in our research the barriers identified are more restricted to the financial issue, closely related to the current socio-economic context, the issue of the mobilization of human resources and time management. It is important to notice that it is in how the difficulties have been overcome in the search for alternative and innovative solutions, that the fighting ability and the motivation to keep overcoming these obstacles, which is often growing, are transmitted. The motivation over time often seems to increase with the difficulties faced and they seem to have, somehow, an opposite effect. The explanation may be the fact that most social entrepreneurs have the perception that their project is being successful and that their expectations were exceeded. Elements that do not consider they to be successful, believe they can still be it if they remain focused on continued action. The personal and professional experience gained as well as the resilience, humility and empathy toward others and passion for work, are considered essential skills of a potential social entrepreneur. Finally, one realizes that the only reasons for withdrawal appear to be

compelling reasons, such as illness or some family problem, serious financial problems that prevented them from paying the bills or the intention to make new projects in this area.

## 10. Conclusion

Concluding, the motivations for social entrepreneurship are closely related, on the one hand, with the profile of the person, since they can have a personal interest in this work and a selfless mission in seeking the welfare of others. On the other hand, the motivations are also closely related to their previous experiences (for example, volunteering), and their learning and expectations. Their beliefs that it is possible to change the others they work with, i.e., social impact creation, the object for the creation of their projects, makes them even more motivated. Generating income is not a primary objective for the social entrepreneur, although there is a challenge in every project: to ensure their sustainability. The motivation seems to have a huge impact in achieving the goals of the entrepreneurs and the success of their initiatives. The study highlights the main obstacles in the creation and development of a social enterprise: the mobilization of human and financial resources and time management, the core skills needed for the social entrepreneur – persistence, leadership and empathy, as well as some recommendations to whom might want to start a project of this scope, including strengthening the resilience needed to succeed.

In terms of limitations, this research is qualitative since we collect data through interviews, and this method has some limitations as it can lead to ambiguous responses, at the same time the presence of the interviewer can inhibit the interviewee. The fact that was made to a limited number of interviews means that cannot be generalized. Furthermore, given the growing importance that social entrepreneurship has had, other topics could have been part of this research, like social impact that social business practices have had on society or perceptions that social entrepreneurs have about the success of their projects. Finally, our research focuses only on social entrepreneurs operating in Portugal and, given the context, the entrepreneurship levels of countries and their resources, can influence the propensity for entrepreneurship processes, it would be interesting that future research could make a comparison of different motivations in different countries and thus get a broader perspective on the subject.

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