
Portrait of the Social Entrepreneur: Statistical Evidence from a US Panel

Author(s): Gregg G. Van Ryzin, Seth Grossman, Laurie DiPadova-Stocks and Erik Bergrud

Source: *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June 2009), pp. 129-140

Published by: Springer

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27928157>

Accessed: 31-10-2017 18:51 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Springer is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*

Portrait of the Social Entrepreneur: Statistical Evidence from a US Panel

Gregg G. Van Ryzin · Seth Grossman ·
Laurie DiPadova-Stocks · Erik Bergrud

Published online: 10 March 2009

© International Society for Third-Sector Research and The John's Hopkins University 2009

Abstract Social entrepreneurship is an increasingly important concept in the study of voluntary and nonprofit organizations. In spite of the growing recognition of this concept, little is known about what individual characteristics might describe or explain who in society is likely to be (or become) a social entrepreneur. This preliminary study empirically addresses this question using data from a United States online panel. Our results suggest that social entrepreneurs are likely to be female, non-white, younger, and college-educated individuals with some business experience and who live in big cities. Social entrepreneurs also tend to have more social capital, as measured by their activity in clubs and organizations other than work, and they are more likely to be happy, interested in politics, extroverted, giving (to charity), and liberal ideologically. Although exploratory, these findings help describe the social entrepreneur and suggest ways in which this important actor in civil society can be better identified, understood, and perhaps cultivated.

Résumé L'esprit d'entreprise social est un concept de plus en plus important dans l'étude du bénévolat et des Organisations à but non lucratif. Malgré la reconnaissance de plus en plus importante de ce concept, peu de ces caractéristiques individuelles sont en mesure de décrire ou d'expliquer qui dans la société peut être (ou devenir) un entrepreneur social. Cette étude préliminaire traite empiriquement de cette question en utilisant des données de la commission en ligne des États-Unis. Nos résultats suggèrent que les entrepreneurs sociaux seront probablement des femmes de couleur, plus jeunes et ayant reçu une formation universitaire, avec un

G. G. Van Ryzin (✉) · S. Grossman
School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers University,
360 Dr. MLK Blvd., Hill Hall, Newark, NJ 07102, USA
e-mail: vanryzin@rutgers.edu

L. DiPadova-Stocks · E. Bergrud
Hauptmann School for Public Affairs, Park University,
Kansas City, MO, USA

peu d'expérience dans les affaires et issues de grandes villes. Des entrepreneurs sociaux ont aussi tendance à avoir davantage de capital social, en tenant compte de leur activité dans les clubs et les organisations autres que le travail, et en seront probablement heureuses, car elles sont intéressées par la politique, battantes, charitables et ont une idéologie libérale. Bien qu'exploratoires, ces conclusions aident à décrire la nature d'un entrepreneur social et suggèrent des voies dans lesquelles les acteurs de la société civile peuvent être mieux identifiés, compris et peut-être même cultivés.

Zusammenfassung Sozialunternehmertum ist ein an Bedeutung zunehmendes Konzept bei der Untersuchung von ehrenamtlichen und Nonprofit-Organisationen. Trotz wachsender Anerkennung dieses Konzepts ist wenig darüber bekannt, welche individuellen Charakteristiken beschreiben oder erklären könnten, wer in der Gesellschaft wahrscheinlich ein Sozialunternehmer ist (oder wird). Diese vorläufige Studie befasst sich empirisch mit dieser Frage unter Nutzung von Daten eines US-amerikanischen Online-Panels. Unser Resultat deutet darauf hin, dass Sozialunternehmer wahrscheinlich weiblich, nicht-weiß und jünger sind, eine höhere Ausbildung und einige Geschäftserfahrung haben und in Großstädten leben. Sozialunternehmer tendieren auch dazu, mehr Sozialkapital, gemessen an deren Aktivitäten in Klubs und Organisationen neben der Arbeit, zu haben und sie sind eher glücklich, interessiert in Politik und extrovertiert, sie spenden (zu Wohltätigkeitsorganisationen) und sind ideologisch liberal. Obwohl sondierend, helfen diese Ergebnisse, den Sozialunternehmer zu beschreiben und Wege vorzuschlagen, wie dieser bedeutende Akteur der Zivilgesellschaft besser identifiziert, verstanden und möglicherweise kultiviert werden kann.

Resumen El espíritu emprendedor social es un concepto cada vez más importante en el estudio de las organizaciones voluntarias sin ánimo de lucro. Pese al reconocimiento cada vez mayor que recibe este concepto, se sabe poco sobre las características individuales que describen o explican qué personas de la sociedad tienen posibilidad de ser (o de convertirse) en emprendedores sociales. Este estudio preliminar aborda empíricamente esta cuestión utilizando datos del panel en línea de los Estados Unidos. Nuestros resultados sugieren que los emprendedores sociales suelen ser mujeres no blancas, jóvenes y con estudios universitarios, con alguna experiencia empresarial y residentes en las grandes ciudades. Los emprendedores sociales también tienden a tener más capital social, según se desprende de sus actividades en clubes y organizaciones no relacionadas con el trabajo y suelen ser felices, interesados en la política, extrovertidos, generosos (con la caridad) y de ideología liberal. Aunque estos resultados no son más que un primer tanteo, ayudan a describir el espíritu emprendedor social y sugieren formas de identificar mejor, entender y quizás cultivar a estos importantes actores de la sociedad civil.

Keywords Entrepreneurship · Social enterprise · Social capital · Personality · United States

Background

The concept of social entrepreneurship has been increasingly applied to the study of the voluntary and nonprofit sectors (Alvord et al. 2002; Badelt 1997; Dees et al. 2002; Kerlin 2006; Kourilsky and Walstad 2003; Mort et al. 2003). Borstein (2004) describes social entrepreneurs simply as “people who solve social problems.” According to the Ashoka Organization (2007): “Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society’s most pressing social problems. They are ambitious and persistent, tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide-scale change.” Dees (2001), in an essay devoted to defining the concept of social entrepreneurship, explains the concept this way:

Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector by: adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value); recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission; engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning; acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand; and exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.

Although these various attempts at conceptualization of the concept have been put forth, research devoted to operationalizing and empirically measuring social entrepreneurship has only recently appeared. Perhaps the best known and most established measure comes from the London Business School—the Social Entrepreneurship Monitor—a special report of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) UK project (Harding 2006). This study used population survey data to estimate the percentage of social entrepreneurs in UK society. The researchers based their operationalization of social entrepreneurship on three questions; revised versions of items used to track business entrepreneurship in other GEM surveys. This is the measure of social entrepreneurship we employ in this study and will describe more fully later on.

The GEM report found that about three percent of the working-age, UK population could be classified as social entrepreneurs. In addition, social entrepreneurs in the UK were more likely to be women, young, and well educated. It is interesting to note that while women are more likely to be *social* entrepreneurs, other surveys of the GEM find that men are more likely than women to be *business* entrepreneurs (Harding 2006).

Our study provides an initial statistical portrait of the social entrepreneur in a US voluntary online panel, using this established GEM measure. We examine a wide range of correlates or predictors of who is likely to self-identify as a social entrepreneur. These predictors include basic background variables (such as sex, age, race, and health) as well as both human capital factors (education and business experience) and social capital (club involvement and social trust). Personality traits as potential predictors are also considered, as the literature tends to portray entrepreneurs as having unique personality characteristics (Borstein 2004; Johnson 2002; Leadbeater 1997; Thompson et al. 2000). Finally, we include a wide range of social and political attitudes, including trust of public institutions, political ideology,

interest in politics, giving to charity, and happiness. These attitudes represent potential dispositions that enable, or provide motivations for, social entrepreneurship.

Data and Method

The data for our analysis come from an online survey conducted in January 2007 of participants in the CivicPanel project (formerly eTownPanel project), an Internet access panel of approximately 8,056 participants (at the time of the study). Internet access panels are increasingly being used for online research in social, health, and marketing research (Sudman and Wansink 2002). The CivicPanel project is a university-affiliated, foundation-funded panel created to provide a general population of US volunteers to participate in online surveys about public and civic affairs sponsored by nonprofit organizations and academic researchers. Although volunteers are recruited from various online notices and email lists and are not a random sample of the population, validity studies using the panel suggest that weighted results from the panel approximate traditional telephone polls based on probability sampling of the US population (Van Ryzin 2008).

Invitations were sent via email to the entire panel, and a total of 1,327 completed the online questionnaire, for a panel response rate of 16.5%. Given the voluntary, self-selected nature of the panel, it is important to examine the representativeness of the respondents compared to known characteristics of the American population. Table 1 compares 2000 US Census figures with both the weighted and unweighted demographic profile of respondents. Compared to the US Census, the unweighted study sample contains substantially more women, and fewer African-Americans, Hispanics, and adults 65 years of age and older. The weighted results reflect simple post-stratification weighting by US Census region, gender, race, and age (see Van Ryzin 2008 for more details on the weighting procedure). As weighting brings the sample more in line with the basic demographic profile of the US population, all analytical results are based on the weighted data (with the sum of the weights set to equal the original sample size for purposes of statistical significance testing). Of course, weighting does not eliminate other sources of bias that may be present in a voluntary sample unrelated to these basic demographic variables. While not statistically projectable, the sample nevertheless remains useful for purposes of examining the potential correlates of social entrepreneurship in a large group of respondents recruited from a broad cross-section of the United States.

Dependent Variable

To measure social entrepreneurship, our dependent variable, we replicated questions from the Social Entrepreneurship Monitor, which as mentioned is a project of the London School of Business that is modeled on the more established methodology of their GEM. The GEM regularly tracks entrepreneurship in the business sector (Harding 2006). Following the GEM methodology, social entrepreneurship is measured as answering “yes” to at least *one* of the following three questions:

Table 1 Comparison of weighted and unweighted profile of respondents

	US census	Weighted survey data	Unweighted survey data
Northeast	19.0	20.6	28.0
South	35.6	35.0	30.3
Midwest	22.9	21.1	24.8
West	21.9	23.3	16.9
White, non-Hispanic	69.1	69.9	85.4
Black or African American	12.3	11.0	6.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	12.5	11.8	4.2
Hispanic or Latino	3.7	4.7	2.5
Other	2.4	2.6	1.9
Female	51.0	51.2	73.2
Male	49.0	48.8	26.8
18–24 years	13.4	13.8	5.4
25–44 years	40.7	41.4	48.0
45–64 years	29.6	29.1	41.9
65 years and over	16.7	15.6	4.7
Less than \$25,000	28.7	17.4	15.9
\$25,000–\$49,999	29.3	33.5	33.0
\$50,000–\$74,9999	19.5	24.5	25.7
\$75,000 or more	22.5	24.6	25.4

Note: Census figures from American FactFinder, 2000 Census Quick Tables, available at www.census.gov. Weighted results reflect post-stratification adjustments for region, race, age, and gender. Unweighted $n = 1,327$

Are you alone, or with others, currently trying to start any kind of social, voluntary, or community service, activity or initiative? This might include providing subsidized or free training, advice or support to individuals or organizations; profit making activity, but where profits are used for socially oriented purposes; or self-help groups for community action. (Yes/No)

Are you alone, or with others, currently trying to start any kind of social, voluntary or community service, activity or initiative *as part of your job*? This might include providing subsidized or free training, advice or support to individuals or organizations; profit making activity, but where profits are used for socially oriented purposes; or self-help groups for community action. (Yes/No)

Are you alone, or with others, currently *managing* any such social, voluntary, or community service, activity or initiative? This might include providing subsidized or free training, advice, or support to individuals or organizations;

profit making activity, but where profits are used for socially oriented purposes; or self-help groups for community action. (Yes/No)

In our survey, 22% of the respondents were classified as social entrepreneurs using this measure, a surprisingly high percentage (see Table 2). The London Business School survey, as mentioned earlier, found that only 3.2% of UK adults could be classified as social entrepreneurs (Harding 2006, p. 3). It is important to note, however, that our sample is not a probability sample of the US adult population, and thus is not directly comparable to the UK results. Moreover, our voluntary sample likely includes a disproportionate number of socially conscious and civically active adults, as the CivicPanel project appeals to those interested in community issues and public affairs. Moreover, it is very likely that respondents were further self-selected by an interest in the announced topic of the survey.

Still, this markedly higher incidence of social entrepreneurship in our survey is intriguing and deserves more attention, for example in a future national probability sample survey. While not projectable to the US population, the 22% classified as social entrepreneurs in our survey does have the advantage of providing a better distribution (more variation) for testing the correlates of social entrepreneurship.

Independent Variables

Our analysis includes a wide variety of independent variables as potential correlates or predictors of social entrepreneurship. Table 2 lists the variable names, definitions, and descriptive statistics. First, we include a set of background factors, in particular age, gender, race (white vs. non-white), foreign born (vs. US born), and health. We also include a set of socioeconomic or human capital variables, in particular college graduate, hours of work in a typical week, income, and whether or not the respondent ever owned or managed their own business (again see Table 2). To examine and control for geographic factors, we include the type of community the respondent lives in (big city, suburb, or small town/rural area) and region of the United States.

We include two commonly used indicators of social capital (Putnam 2000). First, the General Social Survey's "trust" question—"Would you say most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" Second, we include the frequency with which respondents attend meetings of clubs or organizations, other than work. We also include a diverse set of attitudes that may, potentially, correlate with social entrepreneurship. These include: whether respondents think things in the country are headed in the right direction, or are off on the wrong track (a common tracking question in US political opinion polls); whether respondents finds life exciting, pretty routine, or dull (the General Social Survey's happiness measure); political ideology (from very liberal to very conservative); interest in politics (from not at all interested to very interested); trust of national government (from hardly ever to just about always); trust of local government (hardly ever to just about always); charitable giving (dollar amount given to charities in the last 12 months); and television watching as a primary form of entertainment (disagree strongly to agree strongly).

Finally, we include concise measures of the so-called Big Five personality domains, which are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional

Table 2 Variable definitions and descriptive statistics

Name	Definition	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	Mean	SD
SE	Social entrepreneur = 1, other = 0	1,327	0.00	1.00	0.22	0.41
AGE	Age in years	1,322	18.00	80.00	44.20	16.25
FEMALE	Female = 1, male = 0	1,318	0.00	1.00	0.51	0.50
WHITE	White, non-Hispanic = 1, other = 0	1,320	0.00	1.00	0.70	0.46
FOREIGN	Foreign born = 1, other = 0	1,321	0.00	1.00	0.70	0.46
HEALTH	Self-rated health, with 1 = poor to 5 = excellent	1,315	1.00	5.00	3.41	1.02
COLLEGE	1 = college graduate, 0 = other	1,315	0.00	1.00	0.39	0.49
HRSWORK	Hours usually worked in a week	1,318	0.00	50.00	22.84	19.16
INCOME	Yearly income in thousands	1,322	8.00	175.00	57.66	37.26
OWNBUS	1 = own(ed) or manage(d) a business, 0 = other	1,313	0.00	1.00	0.35	0.48
BIGCITY	1 = lives in a big city, 0 = other	1,321	0.00	1.00	0.29	0.45
SMALLTOWN	1 = lives in a small town or rural area, 0 = other	1,321	0.00	1.00	0.38	0.49
NORTH	1 = lives in the North, 0 = other	1,269	0.00	1.00	0.21	0.40
MIDWEST	1 = lives in the Midwest, 0 = other	1,269	0.00	1.00	0.21	0.41
WEST	1 = lives in the West, 0 = other	1,269	0.00	1.00	0.23	0.42
TRUST	1 = most people can be trusted, 0 = can't be too careful	1,326	0.00	1.00	0.39	0.49
CLUBS	Attends club or org. meetings, 1 = never to 7 = more than once a week	1,298	1.00	7.00	2.39	1.69
WRONGTRK	1 = things in this country off on wrong track, 0 = going in right track	1,320	0.00	1.00	0.68	0.47
LIFEXCIT	1 = life is exciting, 0 = life is pretty routine or dull	1,326	0.00	1.00	0.35	0.48
IDEOLOGY	Political ideology, with 1 = very liberal to 5 = very conservative	1,325	1.00	5.00	2.96	0.98
INTEREST	Interest in politics, with 1 = not at all interested to 4 = very interested	1,325	1.00	4.00	3.07	0.86
NATRUST	Trust national government, with 1 = hardly ever to 4 = just about always	1,318	1.00	4.00	1.98	0.75
LOCTRUST	Trust local government, with 1 = hardly ever to 4 = just about always	1,325	1.00	4.00	2.18	0.73
GIVING	Contributions to charity in last 12 months (in thousands)	1,324	0.00	6.00	0.60	1.25
TV	TV is primary form of entertainment (with 1 = disagree strongly to 7 = agree strongly)	1,324	1.00	7.00	4.48	1.84
EXTRAVER	Extraverted (1–7 scale)	1,312	1.00	7.00	4.01	1.35
AGREEABL	Agreeableness (1–7 scale)	1,304	1.00	7.00	5.26	1.15
CONSCIEN	Conscientiousness (1–7 scale)	1,310	1.00	7.00	5.54	1.18
EMOTSTAB	Emotional stability (1–7 scale)	1,302	1.00	7.00	4.82	1.34
OPENNESS	Openness to experiences (1–7 scale)	1,307	1.00	7.00	5.17	1.18
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)		1,140				

Note: Means and SD above are weighted as described in the text

stability, and openness to experiences (Gosling et al. 2003). Each of these domains is measured with two items, both on a 7-point agree–disagree scale, and the items are then added and averaged to form five indices of personality traits. (Again, see Table 2 for a list of all the analytical variables.)

Analysis and Results

Table 3 shows the results of our regression analysis, which estimates the association of the above-mentioned independent variables with the probability of being a social entrepreneur. We first enter background variables (Model 1), followed by socioeconomic variables (Model 2), geographic variables (Model 3), and then social capital (Model 4). Because of the large number of potential attitudinal and personality factors, these are entered stepwise, with the coefficients for the selected variables shown (Model 5). Although we also estimated these same models using logistic regression (not shown), we present the OLS results for ease of interpretation (all of the same variables were significant in the logistic regression models, and the same variables were selected in the stepwise procedure). Table 3 reports standardized coefficients, which are directly comparable in magnitude, to facilitate an assessment of the relative importance of each variable in predicting who is likely to self-identify as a social entrepreneur.

The results in Table 3 are fairly clear and consistent. Older people are less likely to be social entrepreneurs, while women and especially non-whites are more likely to be social entrepreneurs. Health also appears to be a social entrepreneurship enabler. College educated people are also more likely to be social entrepreneurs, as are those who work more hours and those who ever owned or managed a business. Big city residents are more likely to be social entrepreneurs as well.

Social capital, particularly the frequency of attending club or organization meetings, emerges as perhaps the single strongest statistical predictor of those likely to identify as social entrepreneurs. The magnitude of this effect needs to be interpreted with caution, however, as it may reflect in part the fact that social entrepreneurs attend more meetings because of their social entrepreneurial activity (that is, attending meetings may be in part a result, not a cause, of social entrepreneurship). Still, it remains plausible that social entrepreneurs are, indeed, individuals with many networks, attachments, and group memberships that existed prior to the initiation of their social enterprise.

In terms of attitudes and personality domains, the regression results (Table 3, Model 5) indicate that social entrepreneurs are happy people, interested in politics, giving to charities, extroverted, and more liberal in their political ideology. We discuss the interpretation of these as well as previously mentioned findings in the next section.

Discussion and Implications

It is important to note first that our study has certain methodological limitations. The online panel is not a probability sample of the US population, as mentioned, and

Table 3 Regression analysis (linear probability models), standardized coefficients

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Background factors</i>					
AGE	-0.023	0.058*	-0.063**	-0.080***	-0.106***
FEMALE	0.014	0.065**	0.078***	0.065**	0.059***
WHITE	-0.204***	-0.181***	-0.166***	-0.133***	-0.126***
FOREIGN	0.036	0.030	0.013	0.026	0.028
HEALTH	0.141***	0.059**	0.051*	0.048*	0.005
<i>Socio-economic status</i>					
COLLEGE	-	0.174***	0.152***	0.083***	0.055***
HRSWORK	-	0.158***	0.154***	0.115***	0.104***
INCOME	-	0.025	0.024	0.012	0.001
OWNBUS	-	0.153***	0.173***	0.123***	0.108***
<i>Geography</i>					
BIGCITY	-	-	0.136***	0.131***	0.120***
SMALLTOWN	-	-	0.023	0.027	0.035
NORTH	-	-	0.043	0.020	0.010
MIDWEST	-	-	0.031	0.040	0.047
WEST	-	-	-0.072**	-0.056*	-0.049*
<i>Social capital</i>					
TRUST	-	-	-	0.013	-0.009
CLUBS	-	-	-	0.325***	0.275***
<i>Attitudes and personality factors (selected stepwise)</i>					
WRONGTRK	-	-	-	-	-
LIFEXCIT (1)	-	-	-	-	0.104***
IDEOLOGY (5)	-	-	-	-	-0.052**
INTEREST (2)	-	-	-	-	0.074***
NATTRUST	-	-	-	-	-
LOCTRUST	-	-	-	-	-
GIVING (4)	-	-	-	-	0.065**
TV	-	-	-	-	-
EXTRAVER (3)	-	-	-	-	0.068***
AGREEABL	-	-	-	-	-
CONSCIEN	-	-	-	-	-
EMOTSTAB	-	-	-	-	-
OPENNESS	-	-	-	-	-
R ²	0.077***	0.172***	0.196***	0.287***	0.316***

Note: All results shown are weighted. Listwise $n = 1,134$. Largest coefficient in bold in each model
 * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

thus the results are not statistically projectable. Indeed, the panel seems to contain a fairly high proportion of civically engaged people. Still, the results have been weighted to the basic demographic profile of the US national population and, given that our analysis remains focused primarily on relationships among variables (rather

than levels or point estimates); we might expect that the salient predictors of social entrepreneurship in our analysis would remain fairly generalizable. Future research will help clarify this contention.

Our dependent variable, the three-item GEM measure of social entrepreneurship, has the advantage of being an established operationalization of the concept—indeed, the only one we know of. But the GEM questions do contain some ambiguities, and it seems they may overstate the extent of social entrepreneurial activity in a US sample (perhaps because these questions identify many who simply work in an ordinary capacity in the voluntary or nonprofit sector). It would be helpful to further develop and test the GEM measure, perhaps in comparison to other possible ways of operationalizing the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship. It remains important for future empirical research in this area to develop a valid, systematic method of identifying who is, and who is not, a social entrepreneur.

The fact that women and especially non-whites are more likely to be social entrepreneurs (at least as measured by the GEM questions) is an interesting finding in the American context. Perhaps social entrepreneurs are motivated to some extent by their own life experiences or historical awareness of social injustice and inequality. It also may be that the voluntary sector and nonprofit organizations provide more leadership and innovation opportunities to women and minorities. This greater propensity of women and especially non-whites to be classified as social entrepreneurs certainly deserves further investigation.

Social capital is the single strongest predictor of a social entrepreneur in our analysis, suggesting that social entrepreneurs rely on their connections and networks in the community to carry out their mission. But as suggested earlier, social capital could also be a result of, rather than a cause of, social entrepreneurial activity. We would speculate that the causal arrow likely points in both directions to some extent—that social capital supports social entrepreneurship but also results from it.

Education and business experience correlate with social entrepreneurship as well, suggesting that *human capital* also remains an important factor or prerequisite for the creation of a social entrepreneur. It would be interesting in future research to gather more detail on the educational backgrounds and experiences of social entrepreneurs, especially since here is where public policy can possibly make a difference. For example, future research could ask respondents if they have had a service-learning course or experience in their high school or college years.

Our results found that big city residents are more likely to be social entrepreneurs, perhaps because they are confronted more directly with urban social problems. It could also be that big cities provide better access to groups, networks, funding, and other support for social enterprises. Whatever the explanation, this finding is consistent with the findings of Korosec and Berman (2006) who also discovered higher levels of social entrepreneurship in larger cities.

Future surveys like ours should perhaps ask more about community characteristics and conditions that motivate social entrepreneurship, as well as ask about information, training or support people receive from local governments and foundations. A better understanding of what specific information or resources help people become social entrepreneurs would be useful for purpose of policy and planning.

Although Putnam (2000) and others have observed that older people in the US are more civically engaged and possess more social capital, it appears from our findings that social entrepreneurship may follow a different pattern. Whether because of their life stage or because they are looking for new forms of expressing civic engagement, younger people appear more—not less—likely to be social entrepreneurs. This generational effect deserves further investigation.

That social entrepreneurs in our study were found to be happier, extroverted, giving, and more interested in politics corresponds with much that has been assumed or observed anecdotally about social entrepreneurs (Ashoka Organization 2007, Borstein 2004; Johnson 2002). Thus, our study lends empirical support to some of the assumptions about the personality profile of the social entrepreneur. Certainly, it appears that social entrepreneurs do indeed draw upon their personality strengths.

Finally, regarding implications for future research, especially in other countries, it would be instructive to investigate the extent to which the characteristics that emerged as important correlates in our US panel also predict social entrepreneurship in other social and political contexts around the world.

References

- Alvord, S. H., Brown, D., & Letts, C. W. (2002). *Social entrepreneurship and social transformation: An exploratory study*. Working paper no. 15, The Hauser Centre for Nonprofit Organizations and The Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.
- Ashoka Organization. (2007). What is a social entrepreneur? http://www.ashoka.org/social_entrepreneur
- Badelt, C. (1997). Entrepreneurship theories of the non-profit sector. *Voluntas*, 8(2), 162–178.
- Borstein, D. (2004). *How to change the world: Social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dees, G. J. (2001). *The meaning of social entrepreneurship*. Durham, NC: Duke University. http://www.fuqua.duke.edu/centers/case/documents/dees_sedef.pdf
- Dees, J. G., Economy, P., & Emerson, J. (2002). *Enterprising nonprofits: A toolkit for social entrepreneurs*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Gosling, S. D., Rentfrow, P. J., & Swann, W. B. (2003). A very brief measure of the Big-Five personality domains. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37, 504–528.
- Harding, R. (2006). *Social entrepreneurship monitor, United Kingdom 2006*. Foundation for Entrepreneurial Management, London Business School. http://www.london.edu/assets/documents/PDF/Gem_Soc_Ent_web.pdf
- Johnson, S. (2002). Social entrepreneurship literature review. *New Academy Review*, 2(2), 42.
- Kerlin, J. A. (2006). Social enterprise in the United States and Europe: Understanding and learning from the differences. *Voluntas*, 17(3), 246–262.
- Korosec, R. L., & Berman, E. M. (2006). Municipal support for social entrepreneurship. *Public Administration Review*, 66(3), 448–462.
- Kourilsky, M. L., & Walstad, W. B. (2003). *Social entrepreneurship*. Dublin, Ireland: Senate Hall Academic Publishing.
- Leadbeater, C. (1997). *The rise of the social entrepreneur*. London: Demos.
- Mort, G. S., Weerawardena, J., & Carnegie, K. (2003). Social entrepreneurship: Towards conceptualization. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 8(1), 76–88.
- Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Sudman, S., & Wansink, B. (2002). *Consumer panels* (2nd ed.). Chicago: South-Western Educational Publisher.

-
- Thompson, J., Alvy, G., & Lees, A. (2000). Social entrepreneurship—A new look at the people and the potential. *Management Decision*, 38(5), 328–338.
- Van Ryzin, G. G. (2008). Validity of an online panel approach to citizen surveys. *Public Performance and Management Review*, 32(2), 236–262.