

UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI
FACULTY OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
MAIN EXAMINATION
SEPTEMBER 2021

TITLE OF PAPER : **QUALITATIVE BUSINESS ANALYSIS**
DEGREE : **MBA**
COURSE CODE : **BUS 612**
TIME ALLOWED : **THREE (3) HOURS**
INSTRUCTIONS : **1. THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF SECTIONS (A) AND (B)**
2. THE CASE STUDY ON SECTION (A) IS COMPULSORY. TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE: 40 MARKS
3. ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS FROM SECTION (B): TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE: 60 MARKS

NOTE: **MARKS WILL BE AWARDED FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH AND FOR ORDERLY PRESENTATION OF WORK**

DO NOT OPEN THIS PAPER UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR HAS GRANTED PERMISSION

SECTION A

Study the synopsis of the following research article and respond to the questions below.

Opportunity formation in social entrepreneurship

Introduction

In 2002, 13 families moved to a bare corn field outside a small village in Eastern Jutland in Denmark. They moved into small trailers where they would be living as they built their own homes from scratch. Most of them came from ordinary one-family homes with a standard two-income household. The project Friland offered them the possibility of starting a new life, where they would build their own house from cheap, recycled or unprocessed materials such as straw bales, old bricks or timber. This would allow them to build a home very cheaply and without taking out a mortgage. The 13 families moving into trailers marked the culmination of a process that started ten years earlier in Western Jutland where the former organic farmer and folk-school warden Steen Møller started building his own sustainable house, later to be known as "the Sønder Felding House". This house was Steen's response to having experienced the pressure of mortgages both as a farmer and folk-school warden; a pressure that ultimately led to a nervous breakdown. To escape these problems he built his own house from cheap or free local unprocessed materials thereby making him debt-free.

The field of social entrepreneurship is full of anecdotal accounts that rightfully celebrate the efforts of social entrepreneurs such as Steen. Indeed, there is broad agreement that social entrepreneurs such as Steen create social value and make invaluable contributions to community development and provide solutions to social and environmental problems. The concept of opportunity has been deployed to understand social entrepreneurial processes by a great number of social entrepreneurship scholars (Austin et al., 2006; Borch et al., 2008; Dorado, 2006; Haugh, 2005; Hockerts, 2006; Mair and Marti, 2006; Monllor and Attaran, 2008; Roberts and Woods, 2005; Shaw and Carter, 2007; Thompson et al., 2000). However, these texts provide only a cursory reflection on the concept of opportunity, and our understanding of their role in social entrepreneurship processes is limited. Scholars disagree about what an opportunity is (McMullen et al., 2007), whether they are discovered or created (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Berglund, 2007; Gartner et al., 2003; Short et al., 2010), and the role they play in entrepreneurial processes (Sarasvathy, 2001). The purpose of this paper is therefore to examine the following questions concerning opportunities and the entrepreneurial process:

- . What is a social entrepreneurial opportunity?
- . What is the role of opportunities in the social entrepreneurship process?

The questions are examined through a case study of Friland. The deep insight into a singular empirical phenomenon provides a rich insight into the role of the opportunity in the entrepreneurial process.

The social entrepreneurship process and the concept of opportunity

Most if not all studies have explicitly or implicitly used the so-called discovery view of opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000), which is not surprising given that this view is dominant in the field of (business) entrepreneurship (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Short et al., 2010). Exceptions include Monllor and Attaran (2008), who suggest a creativity model and Roberts and Woods (2005), who argue that social entrepreneurship opportunities are constructed rather than discovered. The discovery view of opportunities has its roots in Austrian Economics and most significantly the work of Kirzner (1973, 1985, 1997). Kirzner

proposes a disequilibrium theory of the market, claiming that opportunities arise from imperfect knowledge and suboptimal decision making by market actors. This results in a difference between the traded price and real value of resources, which can be discovered and exploited by alert entrepreneurs. Kirzner's view of opportunities has been adopted by the so-called nexus perspective of entrepreneurship (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Venkataraman, 1997). Here, entrepreneurship is conceptualised as the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000), and opportunities defined as "situations in which new goods, services, raw materials, markets and organizing methods can be introduced through the formation of new means, ends, or means-ends relationships" (Eckhardt and Shane, 2003, p. 336).

Critics argue that the discovery view of opportunities generates empirically inadequate accounts of entrepreneurial processes (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Berglund, 2007; Berglund et al., 2007; Gaddefors, 2005; Garud and Karnøe, 2003; Sanz-Velasco, 2006; Sanz-Velasco and Magnusson, 2004). Instead, the critics propose that opportunities are created in the entrepreneurial process as a result of dynamic social efforts (Fletcher, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2004) and do not necessarily precede resource mobilisation. In fact, resources may define the opportunity, giving the opportunity a somewhat different role in the entrepreneurial process.

Methods

The case study method is well suited for constructing theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). The method generates a rich account of a social entrepreneurship process unfolded in a unique and complex setting (Yin, 2009). Choosing a single-case study means employing an inductive approach to testing or generating theory, where the insights of the study are often generated directly from the data (Flick, 2006). The insights are therefore firmly grounded in a deep understanding of a singular empirical phenomenon. As a consequence, findings do not invite statistical generalisation (Flick, 2006), but embody potential for significant learning (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Stake, 2000) and may be extrapolated to other settings by way of analogous or theoretical generalisation. (Neergaard, 2007).

Friland can be categorised as a social entrepreneurship venture according to most definitions. The Friland venture does not incorporate a profit-making motive; on the contrary it explicitly seeks to create social value in the form of alternative forms of living that incorporates environmentally and economically sustainable practices. Furthermore, Friland offers two other distinct advantages: first, the project is a complex entrepreneurial phenomenon incorporating elements of social dynamics, personal development, rural development, environmental and economic sustainability political processes and media involvement. It thus incorporates a number of elements that we would expect to find across most social entrepreneurship ventures. Therefore, Friland can be seen as a critical (Patton, 1990) or revelatory case (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Stake, 2000). Second, the availability of data and access to people was opportune. As Danmarks Radio (DR), the national broadcasting agency in Denmark, was involved from the beginning, the project has been documented in a series of television programmes and newspaper articles that have been included in this study. Furthermore, the people in and around Friland have been very helpful in giving interviews and telling their stories.

Specific data collection started in 2007 as part of a research project on entrepreneurial processes. First, newspaper articles were read to get some background knowledge before contacting Friland. After initial contact with Steen Møller and Tove (head of the cooperative board of Friland), permission was obtained to collect data at Friland and to contact residents

in Friland for interviews. The two informants also suggested some specific people outside Friland who should be interviewed. The interviews with people in and around Friland were conducted from October 2007 to June 2008. Owing to the different perspectives of interviewees and the use of television programmes, newspaper articles and documents as data sources, triangulation of the data was possible.

The interviews were carried out using an unstructured narrative approach, where the interviewer would ask an initial generative question (Flick, 2006) and supplement with elaborating questions, whenever there were events, descriptions or interpretations in the narrative that the interviewer felt needed further examination. The interviews, lasting between one and two hours, were all carried out in Danish, the native language of both the interviewer and all the interviewees. The interviews were transcribed and coded using a narrative approach (Pentland, 1999). The coding focused on elaborating the sequence structure of the narratives as well as the context and content of the events (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Pentland, 1999). By combining the personal narratives (Riessman, 1993), it was possible to ferret out the underlying "same story" of the personal narratives (Pentland, 1999). The story presents a combination of the personal narratives and additional data sources into a generic description of the sets of events and their relationships. This description was written up and is presented in the section below. The personal narratives given in the interviews cannot be taken as complete and objective recollections of the actual events played out in the becoming of Friland, but the triangulation between different interviews, written documents, newspaper articles and television programmes enhances the credibility of the story presented below.

Results Analysis

Forms of the opportunity

When Steen started building his house in Sønder Felding, there was nothing that suggested that he would eventually find himself building a sustainable village in Rønne while being broadcasted to hundreds of thousands of viewers in Denmark. He was simply trying to solve his own problem of financial dependence. But in the course of the next ten years the opportunity for building Friland was formed from the platform provided by his house, experiences and life story. From the sequence of events and the content as well as context of these events it is evident that the opportunity takes a number of different forms throughout the process. At first Steen makes a living from his house, experiences and life story. In the collaboration with Anton this is transformed into an opportunity for making interesting and informative television. Steen's idea of financial and environmental sustainability becomes "Frizoner" in the collaboration with LØS (The national Association of eco-communities). After the break with LØS Steen works with Anton to develop "Friland". The Friland project appeals to the interests of both DR and Rønne Municipality by posing as the "global village of the future". Finally, Friland is given a concrete form as residents start building their houses and community. Underway, the opportunity is transformed from individual problem solving; to a source of income; to a community-level embodiment of the idea of financial and environmental sustainability.

Actors

Just as the sequence structure revealed the different forms of the opportunity; it also reveals that the critical events entail the involvement of new actors into the project.

Following Steen's building of the Sønder Felding House, the next critical event occurs as Steen is approached by Anton. The involvement of LØS, DR, Rønne Municipality and the

residents at Friland all mark significant events in the becoming of Friland. A further exploration of the critical events as involving a transformation and involvement of actors indicates that these two elements are linked. The involvement of an actor or set of actors entails a transformation of the opportunity to fit the interests of the actor(s) involved (Piihl, 2005). Examining the overall process it is clear that the contributions of the involved actors are crucial to the realisation of Friland (Callon, 1986; Latour, 1987). The actions of Anton in producing the television programmes broadcast Steen and his ideas to a general public making him a well-known character. The publicity that such a project will generate through the media broadcasts was very attractive for a municipality such as Rønde. Overall the continuous mobilisation of actors provides the impetus in the process (Akrich et al., 2002).

Opportunity and the entrepreneurial process

Having explored the basic dynamics of the entrepreneurial process, the question of opportunities and their role in the entrepreneurial process can be confronted.

Gartner et al. (2003) argue that opportunities signify the external circumstances of the entrepreneurial activity. What is important in terms of the external circumstances is that different formations of actors, their interests and resources, make, what eventually becomes Friland, emerge in different ways. An opportunity is therefore a situation in which actors and resources are mobilised to make objects, actors, ends and means emerge in a specific way. The formation including Steen, Anton and DR makes Friland emerge as the “global village of the future”, but a village without a location. The mobilisation of Rønde Municipality makes Friland emerge as a building project just outside Feldballe. Furthermore, the different forms of the opportunity mix ends and means over time. What may appear as an end in one form of the opportunity may appear as a means in another. The Sønder Felding House and the TV programmes, which are ends in themselves in the early stages of the process, are valuable means in later stages. For the purpose of analysing social entrepreneurship processes, opportunity must be seen as the linked series of situations in which elements are mobilised and combined to make the relevant objects, actors, means and ends take different forms. In order to understand the entrepreneurial process, it is therefore important not to simply take for granted that the final manifestation represents a realisation of an opportunity that was present at the beginning of the process. It is necessary to track the transformations that the opportunity undergoes in the process. This will give better insight into the complex dynamics and multiple actors that are involved in the process.

Discussion and implications for research

The findings of this paper and the model of mobilisation and transformation make a contribution to two central debates concerning the role of opportunities in entrepreneurial processes, both within the field of social entrepreneurship and in the broader entrepreneurship field. The first is the debate on the nature of opportunities, are they discovered or created? (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Berglund, 2007; Berglund et al., 2007). The second is the debate on the relation between opportunities and resource mobilisation (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Borch et al., 2008; Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990). As the concept of opportunity has been imported into the field of entrepreneurship, both the discovery (Dorado, 2006; Haugh, 2005; Hockerts, 2006) and creation view (Roberts and Woods, 2005) have been sounded. The findings of the case support the creation view of opportunities. The entrepreneurial process is not initiated by a response to an external deficiency or potential but by a response to Steen's subjective experiences of stress resulting from financial dependence. What Steen does is to combine ends and means to create value for himself. The challenge, in terms of creating social value, is not one of evaluating and diagnosing features of the external circumstances,

but of making Steen's solution to his problem of relevance to others. The opportunity is therefore not pre-existing, but has to be created (Fletcher, 2006).

Implications for practice

The shift in focus from seeing the social entrepreneur as one that discovers, evaluates and exploits, to one that actively mobilises in order to change external circumstances entails a shift in the mindset or logic of the entrepreneur. The notion suggests that the entrepreneur should let the goal or opportunity be determined by the available resources. For practicing social entrepreneurs, the notion of opportunity creation emphasises another set of skills and ways of thinking. The analytical skills of the discovery perspective must be replaced with skills and mindsets that aim at creativity (Monllorand Attaran, 2008), imagination, bricolage (Baker et al., 2003) and collaboration. This entails a more open approach to the goals and ambitions of the venture. Mobilisation requires a willingness to allow others to make their interests impact on the direction of the venture.

Adapted from:

*Korsgaard Steffen (2011) Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy. Vol. 5 No. 4, 2011 pp. 265-285 Emerald Group Publishing Limited
1750-6204 DOI 10.1108/17506201111177316*

Questions

(a) Analyse the features, conceptualizations and constructs of the study that identify it as a case study (20 marks)

(b) Comment on the manner in which the results were reported as a feature of a qualitative research study report. (10 marks)

(c) The ultimate purpose of research investigation is to postulate generalizations, concepts and/or theories about specific phenomena. Identify and describe the phenomena under study, and the resultant generalizations, concepts / theories that emanated from the research if any. (10 marks)

SECTION B

Question 1

Explain the qualitative research method in relation to epistemological and ontological considerations, highlighting its uniqueness and advantages. (20 marks)

Question 3

Combining qualitative and quantitative research methods in one study is becoming increasingly popular. Undertake a critique of the mixed research method and make a case for a leading method approach. (20 marks)

Question 4

Interviews under qualitative research are usually purposed to gather rich and extensive data in order to conduct in-depth analysis. Identify and discuss the structure and manner in which such interviews are conducted, in comparison to those designed for quantitative study. (20marks)

Question 2

Describe phenomenology and grounded theory qualitative research designs highlighting the differences between them. (20 marks)