

BUILDING UP:
A CASE STUDY ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TORONTO

by

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ABSTRACT

Building Up: A Case Study on Social Entrepreneurship in Toronto

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This holistic case study showcases Building Up as an exemplar of a successful social enterprise in the city of Toronto. Data was collected through the interviewing of the founder, an employee, and a program participant in addition to an observational visit. Many perspectives surrounding the evolution, current conduct of the organization, and its overall impact were gained. The findings shine light on important aspects of social entrepreneurship that is absent within the literature. The discussion of the findings draws from critical and decolonial frameworks which deepened the conversation of what it means to be a successful social enterprise in Toronto. This paper concluded with contemplations, contradictions and suggestions on how best to move forward.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Successful Social Enterprise, Social Entrepreneurs, Alternative Systems, Connection, Social Change

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My research is dedicated to all of those who feel like our systems and supports don't serve them.

To those who long for connection.

For those who dream of a new way to create social change.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Social innovation and entrepreneurship have been foundational outlets for social action in the past and present. Social innovation is defined as “any novel and useful solution to a social need or problem, that is better than existing approaches (that is, more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just) and for which the value created (benefits) accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals” (Phills et al., 2008 as cited in Bhatt & Altinay, 2013, p.1774). Social entrepreneurship is the implementation of such innovation into a mission driven business model, whether that be through a for-profit or non-profit organization (Ebrashi, 2011; Hossein, 2017). Historically, the economy has provided communities with the opportunity to fight economic and social oppression despite its very own capitalist exploitative nature (Hossein, 2017). When utilized by a community with an ethical and social justice purpose, the economy has the capacity to empower by providing capital, employment, services and products that accurately serve and represent marginalized communities, all while ensuring the well-being of the environment (Bornstein, 2004; Chikadzi & Warri, 2018; Hossein, 2017; Lajovic, 2012). The nature of the creative vision transforms the economy into an ethical pursuit (Bornstein, 2004).

The growth of social entrepreneurship has continued in association with the capitalist market’s increasing failure to allocate social, economic and environmental equity and equality (Chikadzi & Warri, 2018; Cruz, Alves & Delbridge, 2017; de Bruin 2016; VanSandt, Sud & Marmé, 2009). This form of social action has expanded in Toronto, Canada due to the city’s growing disparities at alarming rates. Innovative solutions, that are possible within a social entrepreneurial approach, are needed now more than ever. According to the City of Toronto’s (2019) Toronto at a Glance webpage, the city has a population of 2,956,024 people as of July 2018. Meanwhile, the city’s 2018 estimated homeless population was 8,715 and within this

number; 38% were Indigenous, 11% identified as LGBTQIP2SAA, 13% veterans, 10% seniors and 10% youth (City of Toronto, 2019). These statistics unfortunately do not include the rates at which women, Black, Latino, people with disabilities, and many other populations who are more likely to become homeless. The statistics do however highlight the correlation between economic struggle and social location.

The widening of the socioeconomic gap is due to the increase of precarious, short term and low-wage jobs alongside the inflation of living expenses such as housing and food. For instance, United Way Greater Toronto (2019) states that the 2015 average income for young folks (25-34) is \$500 less than it was in 1980 (p. 99). United Way Greater Toronto (2019) states that about 1 in 4 young adults were classified within the poorest quintile, while in 1980 it was 1 in 6 (p. 7). The impacts of unaffordable living within the city of Toronto is even more detrimental for vulnerable populations. For instance, in 2015 immigrants who resided in Canada for less than 20 years earned \$40,200 on average (United Way Greater Toronto, 2019, p. 9). Meanwhile, in 1980 Toronto-based immigrants who have been in Canada for 10-19 years earned \$43,100 (United Way Greater Toronto, 2019, p. 9). The percentage of racialized people within the bottom quintile has increased from 19.1% in 1980 to 25.4% in 2015 (United Way Greater Toronto, 2019, p. 10). Evidently, the United Way Greater Toronto (2019) emphasizes that for every dollar a white person earns in Toronto, a racialized individual currently earns 52.1 cents (p. 10). These numbers clearly reflect the decrease in income, increase in living expenses and the harsh realities of this combination, specifically for vulnerable populations.

The government, for-profit and non-profit sectors, alongside the people of Toronto are making efforts to resist and rectify the growing inequalities within our city. According to the City of Toronto (2019), the Federal government has announced an upcoming Anti-Racism

Strategy to be launched in 2019, while the provincial government has already implemented an Anti-Racism Directorate. Both strategies work towards increasing equality under public policies, programs and services (City of Toronto, 2019). Additionally, there have been an increasing number of for-profit corporations that are partnering with and providing financial support for non-profit organizations (Bhatt & Altinay, 2013). Lastly, Torontonians have participated in large scale international and local social movements such as; Housing First initiatives, Me Too, Idle No More, Pride, Black Lives Matter, Disability Justice Network, No One is Illegal, Park People, and so many more. These social movements and organizations continue to raise awareness, provide a voice, and make positive change for those who face social and economic barriers.

To extend these efforts, I believe there is a need for social entrepreneurship to bridge the gap between Western, capitalist, neoliberal systems and social justice. Not only is it an outlet to develop an alternative just and sustainable organization, but it can also raise the ethical standards on how competing businesses operate (Lajovic, 2012). It is a solution we can contribute to our communities in the hopes of destabilizing the dominant systems, institutions, beliefs and behaviours (Cavalcante, Riberas & Rosa, 2016; Hossein, 2017; Roy & Karna, 2015; Westley, Olsson, Folke, Homer-dixon, Vredenburg, Loorbach & Van, 2011). I believe exploring the field of social innovation and entrepreneurship should be a requirement within critical social work as it is the vehicle of developing, improving and replacing the current social welfare systems and services (Chikadzi & Warria, 2018).

To showcase how a Toronto-based social enterprise has evolved to become a major contributor in filling a socioeconomic gap in our society, I have completed a case study on the local social enterprise called Building Up. This non-profit social enterprise fills a socioeconomic gap in Toronto by meeting the needs of the community, housing providers, and construction

unions through addressing environmental efficiency and affordable housing issues while meeting the demands for employee shortages and employment (Building Up, 2017; Soberano, 2019).

Building Up acts as a link by hiring their program participants, training and preparing them with a holistic approach, and finally connecting them to secure and impactful employment (Soberano, 2019). Overall, they have created a cyclical system within the local community that benefits all parties on social, economic, and environmental levels.

Within this case study I have highlighted how Building Up has directly impacted Torontonians who experience social and economic challenges. I hope for this study to begin mending the disconnection that exists between critical social work and social entrepreneurship. The absence of consideration and discussion of this phenomenon within classrooms reflect the scarcity of social entrepreneurial research that is conducted with critical and decolonial theoretical frameworks. The exclusion of social entrepreneurial practices from critical social work education results in the disregard of a crucial component of social justice work that can engage creatively with socially and economically marginalized communities to find solutions to struggles they experience. Overall, the purpose of my research is to present an example of a successful social enterprise. I hope for my research to provide readers, some of whom are hopefully current or future social entrepreneurs with examples of the do's and don'ts when building a social enterprise. I will contribute such insight by completing a critical analysis, based within critical and decolonial theoretical framework and guided by current literature, interviews and observations of Building Up.

The reason I pursued my path within the field of social work was because of the connection we have as people. The ways in which I have witnessed and felt the acts of empathy, support, recognition, validation, and essentially being with someone through pain and discomfort

with an open mind and heart can change someone's experience with struggle instantaneously. I lost this human level of connection in the systems that teach and practice social work. An urge to fill this void has driven my aspirations to build my own social enterprise despite the work ethic and lifestyle I have been taught in the past. I say this because I was raised by a single mother who relied on a survival mindset rather than one of self-fulfillment. I am in a privileged stage of my life because of my family's hard work and support where survival is no longer my goal. I have the privilege to dream for something different that will bring positive change within myself and the community. I aim to utilize this privilege and create a social enterprise that will instill our youth with not only skills to barely survive in a society that is against them but to create alternative opportunities for our youth to dream and thrive. If you identify with my ambitions, I hope this case study can help make our dreams a reality.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewed literature consists of five prevalent themes: 1) the History of Social Entrepreneurship; 2) Sustainability; 3) Creativity and Innovation; 4) Power Relations and 5) Empowerment and Social Benefit. The following literature originated from an array of different epistemological paradigms, associated methodologies and disciplines. The themes intertwine and overlap throughout my review.

History of Social Entrepreneurship

Despite social entrepreneurship's rich history, most of the literature has promoted a false narrative presenting it as a new development (Dey & Steyaert, 2010). For instance, Ebrashi (2011) stated that the concept of social entrepreneurship began in 1970 but more accurately, this date aligns with the introduction of the terms, "Social Entrepreneur" and "Social Entrepreneurship" into academic management literature but not the inception of the concept or practice (Nigam, 2016). Social entrepreneurship as a concept and practice is as old as the corruption of capitalism.

Originally, capitalism's purpose was to produce institutions that met the needs of society while earning capital and prioritizing the well-being of the local community (Grossman & Adams, 1993; Kelley, 2003; Nace, 2003 as cited by VanSandt, et al., 2009). This value-based objective ceased to exist when businesses began to expand and showcase their capacity to earn large-scale profits through exploitative practices (VanSandt et al., 2009). During this transitional time in the 18th and 19th centuries, the concept and practice of social entrepreneurship developed when self-help (or self-reliance) and charitable based associations emerged with the goal to support vulnerable communities in withdrawing from establishments that harmed and controlled society (Hosseini, 2017; Lajovic, 2012). Interestingly, social support systems followed the

economic systems' pursuit of colonialism by participating in the maintenance of white settler society through determining who are the deserving and undeserving (Johnstone, 2018). Even when corruption and greed became mainstream, social entrepreneurs courageously implemented the original value-based objective into their enterprises.

There are many social entrepreneurs to be recognized and honored for their work. Florence Nightingale founded the first nursing home and established the current Western nursing practices we utilize today (Nigam, 2016), Ralph Nader implemented protection for consumers, Asa Philip Randolph lead the first predominantly African-American labor union, and Bill Drayton established Ashoka which supports leading social entrepreneurs around the world (Bornstein, 2004). To specifically replace the misunderstanding of social entrepreneurial conception and behaviour, Hossein (2017), a woman of colour, created a counter narrative that shares the story of a pioneer of the social entrepreneurial movement, Marcus Garvey, who originated from colonial Jamaica in the early 1900's (McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2017). According to Hossein (2017), Garvey built a new system and economy that served the black community in replacement of the dominant systems that did not.

Hossein's (2017) article is derived from the discipline of social and economic studies and follows a critical paradigm. Rubin and Babbie (2013) explain that the purpose of a critical paradigm is to uncover myths and empower the people. In addition, its associated epistemology explains that knowledge exists in layers and many of these layers often go unseen or unknown (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). The selected paradigm and epistemology allowed Hossein (2017) to reveal layers of knowledge many of us may not have known to exist and share the narrative of the Jamaican social entrepreneur pioneer, Marcus Garvey. She brought historical awareness and

recognition within social entrepreneurial literature to showcase “the concept’s historical and ethnocentric anchorage” (Dey & Steyaert, 2010).

To further this accomplishment, Hossein (2017) combined capitalism, racial justice, anti-black racism and Garveyism to create her conceptual framework while also utilizing a case study approach consisting of focus groups, individual interviews and analysis of Garvey text. It is important to note a total of 375 men and women within Jamaica, Guyana, Grenada, Trinidad, and Canada were interviewed (Hossein, 2017). The framework and data collection approach ensured as many voices and perspectives. This holistic approach permitted the narrative of Garvey’s work to be inclusive, multi-dimensional, diverse, and strong.

Hossein (2017) contributed a beautiful body of research that highlights and legitimizes the bold value-based foundations of social entrepreneurship. Although, I do not believe the selected paradigm and conceptual framework provided the critical lens needed to invoke a deeper discussion as to why knowledge of Garveyism was erased in the first place. Nor does it persist for the need of Garvey’s theory to be implemented within social entrepreneurial research and practice. Research is one of the ways in which colonialism is “regulated and realized” through the prioritization of various sources of knowledge and information (Smith, 2001 as cited in Brown & Strega, 2005, p. 204). Thus far the research surrounding social entrepreneurship has reinforced the colonial practice of ‘discovering’ a practice that is ‘new’ instead of paying tribute and integrating its racial history. Therefore, I believe social entrepreneurial literature needs to expand from Hossein’s (2017) work to answer those critical questions and continue to promote an accurate historical representation of social entrepreneurs’ evolution.

Sustainability

Social enterprises are often created due to lack of institutional infrastructure or support for the cause the entrepreneur seeks to address, therefore, the organization must sustain itself (Bhatt & Altinay, 2013; Chikadzi & Warria, 2018; Ebrashi, 2013; Hossein, 2017; Jaffe & Gertler, 2008; Roy & Karna, 2015). The consensus on how to achieve sustainability involves maintaining a competitive edge (low prices and good quality product), radical change in behaviour and ideologies, a positive reputation (from having founding roots in other established organisations and branching off), social capital, ethical management that is cost and quality effective, and a progressive and bold approach to business (Bhatt & Altinay, 2013; Ebrashi, 2013; Hossein, 2017; Jaffe & Gertler, 2008; Nigam, 2016; Prieto & Simone, 2013; Roy & Karna, 2015, VanSandt et al., 2009).

Sometimes it is very difficult for social enterprises to gain support if the entrepreneur is not in a high place of power, although, utilizing a hybrid business model of sustainability and social benefit often permits power and legitimacy (Cruz, Alves & Delbridge, 2017; Gandy, 2016; Lashitew, Bals & Rob, 2018; Nigam, 2016; VanSandt et al., 2009). This collaborative model of social and economic outcomes complements one another and allows the organization's goals to be practical and sustainable (Lashitew, Bals & Rob, 2018; Nigam, 2016; Prieto & Simone, 2013). The literature refers to versions of capitalism that incorporate the hybrid model resulting in the revival of its original purpose; to provide "goods and services for all" (VanSandt, et al 2010, p. 399). Lenssen and Wassenhove (2012) refer to this form of capitalism as "long-term capitalism" while Nigam (2016) describes it to be a "compassionate capitalism" and Gates (2008) uses the term "creative capitalism" (as cited in VanSandt et al., 2009). Regardless of the terminology, Koehn (2008) states that a form of capitalism that applies a hybrid model would

increase its “emphasis on transparency and socially beneficial careers” (as cited in VanSandt et al., 2009, p. 420).

From the departments of business and management, Lashitew, Bals and Rob (2018) and Roy and Karna (2015) both discussed sustainability in association to social enterprises in depth. These studies were conducted within a post-positivism epistemological paradigm. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that this epistemological paradigm perceives that “reality can only be approximated, but it is constructed through research and statistics” which generates knowledge that is only derived and validated by researchers (p. 35). Following post-positivism, these articles’ main objective is to develop a generalizable model or theory for social entrepreneurship (Lashitew, Bals & Rob, 2018; Roy & Karna, 2015). To align with their objective, the articles incorporated social entrepreneurship and resource-based advantage as their conceptual framework (Roy & Karna, 2015). The articles also explored competitive advantages created by social entrepreneurial practice in emerging markets (Roy & Karna, 2015); lack of motivation for change, need for new capabilities, goal and identity conflict, and legitimacy (Lashitew, Bals & Rob, 2018).

I believe disadvantages to a post-positivist epistemological paradigm and the selected conceptual framework regrettably privileges dominant sources of knowledge instead of personal experiences. For instance, Roy and Karna (2015) completed a case study only incorporating secondary sources of information such as the social enterprise’s websites and articles. Roy and Karna (2015) utilized information that may contain the organization’s biases and in result, they excluded valuable insight on how the studied organizations developed, operated and impacted the community. It is dangerous to create a generalizable model, especially without conclusive sources of data.

Creativity and Innovation

Creativity and innovation are the strongest characteristics and behaviours successful social entrepreneurs possess or practice (Gandy, 2016; Tiwari, Bhat & Tikoria, 2017). Innovation allows entrepreneurs to creatively determine how they will be a competitive business with a social cause as their driving force (Bhatt & Altinay, 2013; Chikadzi & Warria, 2018; Cruz, Alves & Delbridge, 2017; de Bruin, 2016; Dey & Steyaert, 2010; Nigam, 2016; Roy & Karna, 2015). More specifically, Dey and Steyaert (2016) explain creativity and innovation are tools that help one to “breach the normalizing effects of power” (p. 630). Innovation and resistance of dominant forms of power should be approached holistically, enabling the organization’s social justice values to be implemented on the business, supplier, employee, consumer, community and environmental levels to create long term social benefit (Bhatt & Altinay, 2013; Cavalcante, Riberas & Rosa, 2016; Cruz, Alves & Delbridge, 2017; de Bruin 2016; Hossein, 2017; Nigam, 2016; Roy & Karna, 2015).

Innovation and creativity in association to social entrepreneurship was the focus within the articles written by Calvalcante, Riberas and Rosa (2016) and Tiwari, Bhat and Tikoria (2017) from a post-positivism epistemological paradigm. Calvalcante, Riberas and Rosa (2016) wrote from a social work perspective and Tiwari, Bhat and Tikoria (2017) wrote from the department of management, yet both research groups aimed to describe the behaviour of social entrepreneurs through a generalizable model or theory. Cavalcante, Riberas and Rosa (2016) followed a conceptual framework consisting of; innovation, creativity, education and social action. Meanwhile, Tiwari, Bhat and Tikoria (2017) utilize the theory of planned behaviour. I do not believe the selected frameworks provided data or analysis thorough enough to highlight the full

potential and impact of social enterprises because they lacked a critical perspective of social entrepreneurs' behaviours' social, economic and political complexities and implications.

Aligning with the paradigm, the authors followed a scientific/experimental methodology. For instance, Cavalcante, Riberas and Rosa (2016) use Appreciative Inquiry to measure multiple experiments, such as various learning activities, to promote the need for their educational program and integrate social innovation or social action preparing students to be future innovative professionals. In addition, Tiwari, Bhat and Tikoria (2017) used systematized random sampling and a questionnaire that measured “emotional intelligence, creativity, and moral obligation, attitude towards becoming a social entrepreneur, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (...) (resulting in a) model (...) explaining the social entrepreneurship intention” (p.1). It is important to note that their ‘random sampling’ occurred within Universities confirming their participants have come from a certain level of privilege (Tiwari, Bhat & Tikoria, 2017). These scientific forms of data collection save time and resources allowing researchers to have a larger sample size. Although, the ‘efficiency’ that is associated with post-positivism is not worth the harmful generalizable models produced without critical perspectives, ultimately, misrepresenting all entrepreneurial behaviours.

Power Relations

Hervieux and Voltan (2018) highlight the power mainstream social enterprise discourse generates through social entrepreneurship's capacity to ‘discover’ and solve social and economic issues. This is possible because most social entrepreneurs are people who hold a certain amount of power and privilege. Such power can often promote a hero phenomenon within the social enterprise movement (Hervieux & Voltan, 2018). These power dynamics and subjective norms consequently affect the social entrepreneurial intentions and outcomes (Tiwari, Bhat & Tikoria,

2017). Hervieux and Voltan (2018) explained that we need to question how this impacts how the entrepreneur frames and attempts to address systemic issues, and how the power of social enterprise discourse affects internal policies and the sustainability of social organizations. This relates to capitalism as we can ask; do these organizations genuinely have an impact on a macro level and address capitalism (Hervieux & Voltan, 2018)?

Hervieux and Voltan (2018), from the department of business ethics, aimed to describe social behaviour within the development and operations of social enterprises. Hervieux and Voltan (2018) completed a discourse analysis with a theoretical framework consisting of social movement theory and social problems theory. The sources of data were selected social enterprises' websites and information about the founders publicly available in media and business-oriented publications (Hervieux & Voltan, 2018). The selected sources resulted in Hervieux and Voltan's (2018) insubstantial findings that do not represent all actors of the studied social enterprises. The findings only reflect the founders' dominant perspectives and motives while ignoring the diverse experiences of employees, service users and community members. This study's limitation is, again, a lack of critical perspective when researching social entrepreneurial behaviour. I believe the researchers should challenge their research by questioning how and why their concluded social entrepreneurial behaviour exists, in addition to how it may differ within alternative contexts. For instance, Dey and Steyaert (2016) view power, based within ethics, as a source of freedom allowing social entrepreneurs to critically and creatively resist powerful governmental discourse that encourages them to participate in capitalist entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurial power relations need to be researched holistically to understand its relations in various scenarios.

Empowerment and Social Benefit

A social mission is what differs economic and social entrepreneurs (Lajovic, 2012; Nigma, 2016; Prieto & Simone, 2013). The empowerment and social benefit that social enterprises generate can be experienced within a variety of realms. For instance, one can use economic empowering mechanisms within social enterprises and such mechanisms include giving opportunities for “job stability (zero layoff policy), low-interest microcredits (2% monthly rates), social benefits (interest-free loans, infrastructure in the community, free timber), and promoting entrepreneurial activity (preference for local suppliers, access to credit, training on managerial skills)” (Maguirre, Ruelas & Torre, 2016, p.21). Economic inclusion and empowerment enable the marginalized to participate in a productive economy (Young, 2006; Bornstein, 2007; as cited in Chikadzi & Warri, 2018). Particularly, non-profit social enterprises have the capacity to create a more accessible economy through the equitable collection and redistribution of assets which enhances the quality of goods and services while decreasing prices (Chikadzi & Warri, 2018).

The social cause should be a clear focus that creates sustainable changes in the lives of people and this change should be based on a local community level (Bhatt & Altinay, 2013; Cavalcante, Riberas & Rosa, 2016; Dey & Steyaert, 2010; Ebrashi, 2013; Hossein, 2017; Nigam, 2016; Roy & Karna, 2015). In contrast, De Bruin (2016) suggests there is a need for social enterprises to surpass the local level and create opportunities to make global level changes, specifically, for the environment. De Bruin (2016) advocates for large scale social entrepreneurship to effectively address complex systemic issues. To achieve this, SEs can collaborate with policy actors and private or public stakeholders to strengthen the nation-wide and/or regional structures of governance (Lenssen, & Wassenhove, 2012). Such collaboration

can also increase the acceptable level of ethical business standards and social responsibility (Lajovic, 2012). Overall, social entrepreneurial action on local, national, or global levels has the potential to better the standard of life (Nigam, 2016).

Lajovic (2012) lists “trust, solidarity, dedication, fairness, honesty, openness, responsibility, democracy” as the basic social economic values needed to produce social change within the environment, economy, and social issues (para, 11.3). Gandy (2016) claims that the inclusion of spirituality in social entrepreneurship can strengthen the social economic values, in addition, to society’s caring and empathetic world views and behaviours. For any social change to continue and grow, there is a need to empower students and share social entrepreneurial knowledge and values (Lenssen, & Wassenhove, 2012).

Due to the mass of literature discussing empowerment and social benefit, I selected Maguirre, Ruelas and Torre’s (2016) article for my analysis. Maguirre, Ruelas and Torre’s (2016) are from the EGADE Business School and followed an interpretive paradigm. This article aims to determine what innovatively empowers women within social enterprises and how this participates in the local development of the Mexican Zapotec Indigenous community through social entrepreneurship theory (Maguirre, Ruelas & Torre, 2016). Neuman (2006) explains the interpretive approach examines how people experience things within social and physical spaces. Further, this paradigm aims to understand social behaviour and believes knowledge is found within the meanings people give to their interactions (Neuman, 2006). This production of knowledge allowed Maguirre, Ruelas and Torre (2016) to contribute a gendered lens to the literature surrounding social entrepreneurship. In addition, Maguirre, Ruelas and Torre (2016) has highlighted the need for social innovation to engage in the empowerment of women to support them in succeeding within Indigenous communities. Although, the lack of an Indigenous

epistemology with a decolonial theoretical framework ignores the implications of colonialism and capitalism, and how social enterprises participate in these oppressive systems of Indigenous communities (David & Watson-Gegeo, 2001).

Maguirre, Ruelas & Torre (2016) follows a case study methodology conducting 70 in-depth semi-structured interviews and observations. Maguirre, Ruelas and Torre (2016) interviewed workers, suppliers and clients of their selected social enterprise Ixtlán Group, in addition to community members and government officials. Maguirre, Ruelas & Torre (2016) fails to determine how many of these interviewees were in fact Indigenous. In addition, there were 8 more men interviewed than women. Two of the researchers are Hispanic women, although I am unsure whether they identify as Indigenous. I believe the sampling within this research added to the lack of a critical perspective of the empowerment of Indigenous women within social entrepreneurship.

Gaps and My Research

The gaps within the literature are due to its fragmentation and lack of development of applicable theoretical understandings of the practice of social entrepreneurship (Roy & Karna, 2015). The gaps include the unacknowledged historical foundations of social entrepreneurship, lack of critical reflection and analysis, in addition to studies being nonrepresentative of researchers, participants and community (Hoessein, 2017; Roy & Karna, 2015; Tiwari, Bhat & Tikoria, 2017). I hope to address the reviewed literature's epistemological gaps by answering the question: In what way(s) does Building Up serve as an exemplar of social entrepreneurship in Toronto? Similarly, to Ebrashi (2013), and Bhatt and Altinay (2013) I will follow a case study approach, specifically a holistic case study, to represent as many perspectives as I can within the given time-frame. I will privilege all sources of knowledge equally from a critical paradigm to

allow my findings to be an equal and realistic representation. I will continue the path Hossein (2017) has beautifully laid through her work by critically applying the history of social entrepreneurship to my research with the foundational purpose and values of social entrepreneurship.

The literature I have researched has presented me with an excellent foundational understanding of social entrepreneurship. The knowledge that has been produced from historical, business and social justice perspectives have given an immense amount of information that I am now able to incorporate into my analysis. These perspectives will support my ability to critically analyze whether these grounded values, characteristics and behaviours, that have been determined necessary when creating a social enterprise, have been implemented within Building Up. Overall, I hope this analysis will provide me with the necessary insight that will enable me to determine ways in which social entrepreneurship can further participate in critical research and practice. I will be utilizing critical and decolonial theoretical frameworks in my research to enhance my analysis.

CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based within critical and decolonial theories to provide the theoretical foundation needed in order to discuss the complex relationships of social entrepreneurship, capitalism, marginalization, and social impact.

Critical Theory

Critical theory was developed by the Frankfurt school theoreticians, Mark Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas throughout the early and mid-1900's (Bronner, 2017). Since its beginnings, critical theory has illustrated the failures of liberal capitalism and highlights its construction of “psychological, racial, and political foundations of totalitarianism” (Bronner, 2017, p.19). The objective of applying critical theory to this study is “to identify and challenge assumptions, to recognize the influence of culture, history and social position and to imagine and explore extraordinary alternatives, disrupt routines and established orders” (Curtis, 2008; as cited in Herrema, 2017, p. 35).

Resistance of alienation and reification

More specifically, critical theory attempts to address two main conceptual issues: alienation and reification (Bronner, 2017). Alienation can be identified as the psychological effects that occur when individuals are impacted by exploitation and division of labour (Bronner, 2017). Reification occurs when people are treated as dispensable objects through the eraser of history, culture, identity and denial of rationality (Bronner, 2017; Walton 2018). These forms of oppressions occur due to capitalism's power and ability to strip people of their humanity (Bronner, 2017). To abolish alienation, one needs to eliminate reification (Bronner, 2017). To eliminate reification, the capitalist and colonial ideologies, discourses and behaviours need to be

removed from economic practice. Social entrepreneurship can be an alternative form of economic practice engaging with the elimination and resistance of alienation, reification and in turn, the oppressive nature of capitalism through its ability to create new organizations that are socially, economically and environmentally just and sustainable (Lajovic, 2012). The creation of social justice based alternate organizations will simultaneously disrupt the current corrupt capitalist economic practice by setting a new ethical standard amongst business practices whilst producing/spreading progressive beliefs, behaviours and systems (Cavalcante, Riberas & Rosa, 2016; Hossein, 2017; Lajovic, 2012 Roy & Karna, 2015; Westley, et al., 2011). Critical theory's comprehension and recognition of these phenomena's implications guided my formation of interview questions and critical analysis, allowing me to determine how Building Up is affected by, resisting and/or participating within capitalism's pursuit of alienation and reification.

Consciousness transformation

Alienation and reification have increasingly become understood as psychological and philosophical problems within critical theory that require psychological and philosophical solutions (Bronner, 2017). To initiate these solutions, critical theory promotes the value of thought and believes it should adapt to the current issues and possibilities towards social justice (Bronner, 2017). This adaptation of thought can be achieved through questioning assumptions, traditional thought and absolute truths, having a critical outlook and understanding of how society operates, in addition to having a concern for a morally and socially just future (Bronner, 2017). Within social entrepreneurship, truth or knowledge resides in capitalist economic systems, rational-linear thought, and individualistic ideology that is embedded within power dynamics and thrives off the exploitation of marginalized communities (Curtis, 2008; Dey, 2006; Dey & Steyaert, 2010; as cited in Herrema, 2017). Social entrepreneurship and innovation engage with

psychological and philosophical resistance by instilling people with creativity and critical perspective on society, in addition to producing an alternative to the capitalist marketplace that does not employ alienation and reification. Through social entrepreneurship's prioritization of plurality of perspectives and adaptive thought processes, it can oppose authoritarian trends and allow the "world (to) be thought anew" (Bronner, 2017, p. 46). Critical theory's forms of consciousness transformation will advance my study's capacity to determine and critically analyze what Building Up's consciousness has been and currently is, how Building Up may resist or participate within the dominant capitalist ideologies, and lastly, how the dominant consciousness influences their work.

Empowerment and social change

Critical theory has always contained a humanistic spirit and a transformative purpose (Bronner, 2017). According to Fay (1987), critical theory addresses inequalities experienced by people and seeks to empower individuals through transformative interventions and solutions (as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018). It achieves this through experimental and interdisciplinary forms of action while emphasizing the importance of empathy when resisting an egotistic society (Bronner, 2017). I will incorporate this aspect of critical theory when analyzing if and how a modern Toronto-based social enterprise, such as Building Up, can genuinely empower 'the people' and produces sustainable social benefit.

Decolonial Theory

To begin, I believe it is crucial to discuss the discrepancies between decolonization and decolonial (or decoloniality) theory. The concept of decolonization is as old as colonization, although, it has become a project in the 20th Century due to the un-ignorable violent and oppressive encounters under the domination of colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Tuck and

Wayne Yang (2012) describe its processes as the return of stolen land and the recognition that land, and its relations, were always differently understood and enacted. Decolonization also involves the unsettling of everyone to return to this original understanding of land and life (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012). Decolonial theory is not derived from a single school of thought and theory but it is a way of thinking that is encompassed by complex tensions, although, the commonality between all perspectives is that coloniality is the root problem that needs to be uprooted (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). Decoloniality is an alternative to decolonization that addresses the experiences of colonialism rather than colonialism itself, such as the experiences of alienation and reification (Walton, 2018). As a result, decolonial theory can be viewed as a ‘vehicle’ or ‘ally’ of the grand project of decolonization (Walton, 2018).

Decoloniality of knowledge, power and being

According to Maldonado-Torres (2011), decoloniality is a type of critical theory that aims to deconstruct the relations of power and the control of knowledge. Such phenomena have socially constructed long-term patterns of value being assigned to race, gender, sexuality and nationality. These newer forms of socially constructed sources of power and control foster everyday experiences of oppression (Walton, 2018). The coloniality of knowledge is derived from colonialism’s prioritization of Western knowledge as the universal truth, which was a result of the original opposition between Eurocentric and Western societies ways of thinking (Walton, 2018). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), decoloniality addresses this by legitimizing the knowledge outside of the West (as cited in Walton, 2018). Maldonado-Torres (2007) continues to explain that the coloniality of power has resulted in a global hierarchy, with the Global North dominating power and imposing oppression through knowledge, authority and control of markets. Unequal power relations have impacted “the general understanding of being” (Walton,

2018, p.34). The coloniality of being is a reference to how colonialism impacts everyday experiences (Walton, 2018). Decolonial theory's framework of colonial manifestations will direct and improve this study's ability to deconstruct and address how social entrepreneurship may cooperate with, benefit from, experience and oppose the different forms of colonial oppression.

Double perspectives

According to Jackson et al. (2015), double perspectives is decolonization's concept that promotes the utilization of the positive aspects of the Indigenous and Western societies resulting in a cooperative, respectful, collaborative and sustainable society. This approach includes the collaboration of what our cultures, knowledge, technology and experiences have to offer to create, not new, but something different (Jackson et al., 2015). The value-based foundations of social entrepreneurship can easily be lost within our Canadian neoliberal society. Through the utilization of Jackson's et al. (2015) 'double perspectives' and resistance of Walton's (2018) 'coloniality of knowledge', I hope to prioritize multiple perspectives and sources of knowledge while engaging with Indigenous and Western assets. When completing this case study of a current day social enterprise, I hope to provide guidance on how best to implement a critical social enterprise and create something 'different' within a modern neoliberal society (Jackson et al., 2015).

Capitalism

Capitalism's very foundation is based on egoistic values and ideologies (Bronner, 2017). For instance, capitalism assigns human value based on an individual's capital productivity and ability to maximize profits (Bronner, 2017). It has allowed the wage gap to widen through its prioritization of the rich, leaving the working classes poorer and the rich, richer (Bronner, 2017).

People have become objects or machines within the global assembly line of capitalism, maintaining and sustaining its goals (Bronner, 2017). In turn, the value of spirituality, individuality, creativity and solidarity have been lost (Bronner, 2017). Social enterprises' incorporation of a social mission gives it the ability to instill the economy with these lost values. In contrast, it is imperative that I base my research within decolonial theory and let it to direct my research as social entrepreneurship can participate and thrive in the exploitative capitalist economy with little performative resistance.

The selected theoretical frameworks provide me as a researcher with the necessary lens when analyzing a social enterprise. Critical theory's ability to question the dominant capitalist entrepreneurial practice and decolonial theory's capacity to address the specific implications these systems have on the people, will allow me to produce a comprehensive case study of a Toronto based social enterprise.

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology is how the intention of a research project comes to life. The various qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis uniquely contributes to a meaningful and positive impact. To fully capture an example of a Toronto-based social enterprise and its continuous effects on the community, I have chosen to complete a case study on Building Up.

Approach of Inquiry

I will pursue a holistic case study on Building Up to showcase its evolution as a social enterprise and continuous impacts on the people in Toronto who experience social and economic struggles/barriers. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that case study research is a qualitative approach where the researcher explores a real-life system bounded within space and time, through a thorough collection of data, utilizing a variety of sources. Specifically, I believe a holistic approach will give me the opportunity to not only focus on the case itself (the organization) but also its relations and impacts to its workers, service users and community (Padgett, 2017). Overall, the case study's prioritization of multiple perspectives and sources of data will create a representative analysis of social entrepreneurship in Toronto while also maintaining an appropriate workload in relation to the time and resources provided (Padgett, 2017).

Case study's use of multiple perspectives and sources of data will enable this study to produce a deep, meaningful and holistic analysis of the Building Up (Kohlbacher, 2006; Padgett 2017). Despite the case study's strength, according to YIN it is unable to produce a statistical generalization (YIN, 2003 as cited in Kohlbacher, 2006). For instance, this study will not produce a measurement of the Building Up's effectiveness or success. Regardless of this

limitation, I believe holistic case study's production of analytical generalization is much more valuable within the discipline of critical social work (YIN, 2003 as cited in Kohlbacher, 2006).

Sources of Data, Recruitment of the Organization and Participants

The various sources of valuable information that were gathered from Building Up's founder's, employees' and service users' knowledge and experiences through interviews, in addition to my personal observations. I decided to study Building Up because it met the criteria of being a social enterprise that is based within Toronto. The recruitment of the organization began with an email to Building Up's founder and executive director. This email outlined the purpose of my research, what is required of the organization and the need for the Founder's participation in an interview (see Appendix C). Once I was given permission to complete a case study on Building Up (see Appendix F), I requested Building Up to send my recruitment flyer through a mass email to all staff and service users (see Appendix B). In addition, Pagett (2017) highlights the importance of going where the possible participants are, therefore, I brought flyers during my observational visit providing possible participants with a better sense of who I am as the researcher and future social entrepreneur.

The recruitment flyers included the purpose of my research, expectations of participants, compensation, and researcher contact information (See Appendices B). The use of flyers is an efficient form of recruitment and thankfully, I did not have to screen the candidates saving time and resources because all service users and employees were eligible (Padgett, 2017). Therefore, participants were selected on a first come first served basis. The selected participants were sent an electronic copy of the consent form and provided a detailed explanation of this study (See Appendix A). In addition, I ensured that I made it clear that participation is completely

voluntary, and they were able to withdraw from the project at any time, answer any questions they may have and determine the location of the interview.

Data Collection

I used two methods of data collection – observational visit and interviews. The observations followed a representative approach to reflect an average, yet active, day in the office (Padgett, 2017). To achieve this, I arranged one visit that lasted approximately one hour during a time when the organization had an orientation for their employment program scheduled. Padgett (2017) emphasizes the importance for observations to take note of the all the sensory aspects of the “physical space, actors, behaviours, interactions, relationships and affect or emotions” (Lofland & Snow, 2005; as cited in Padgett, 2017, p. 103). I believe my observations will provide a brief view of what Building Up’s environment is like, its daily functions, level of accessibility and how Building Up directly affects the community. The goal was not to form generalization from the observational visit but discover any additional information that will aid in my analysis. For example, I am now able to answer questions surrounding the culture, energy, accessibility, population Building Up attracts, etc.

Field notes were recorded in real time to ensure information was accurate (Pagett, 2017). I have created an observational log that outlines the areas I would focus my attention to; the environment, actors, behaviours/interactions and effects (see Appendix E). In the field notes, I did not only record my observations within each category but also described what they may mean (Padgett, 2017). When doing so, I maintained a non-judgemental yet focused perspective to ensure I capture the action that is related to my research’s goal and themes (Padgett, 2017). Observations provide researchers with meaningful and practical data that no other source can produce. Due to the nature of the observational visit at an orientation for the program, I was

able to sit in the back of the large room to observe the presenters and the audience, avoiding the risk of me interrupting a moment, having a lack of privacy, not making my presence obvious hopefully allowing people act naturally and authentically (Padgett, 2017).

The first interview took place directly after the orientation with Marc Soberano, the founder of Building Up to allow me to gain a holistic understanding of it as a social enterprise. On different occasions, I interviewed the staff member and program participant. This order of data collection I followed allowed me to be more knowledgeable about Building Up and find new aspects of the organization I wished to address before attempting to learn about the impacts this social enterprise has on the community. All interviews were audio-recorded and directed by my interview guide (See Appendix D). After the interviews were completed, I wrote any afterthoughts or feelings I may have to ensure the entire essence of the interview was captured (Padgett, 2017). As a researcher it was difficult to gauge how truthful or open a participant was going to be during the interview sessions (Padgett, 2017). For instance, interviewees may have wanted to please their boss and represent their place of work in a positive way. I believe I overcame this barrier by ensuring confidentiality. In addition, my respectful and genuine approach created space for authenticity. With authentic interviews, I believe I was provided with in-depth information on the development of and the experiences within the Building Up.

Analysis

The analysis of data collected began with the gathering of the field notes from the observational visit and transcription of the interviews. During transcription of the interviews, I inserted any important emotions from my post-interview notes that added meaning to the dialogue. A challenge was trying not to edit what was said into shorter and concise sentences. To avoid distortion of the data, all wording was left as it was originally said which resulted in the

use of larger quotations in the analysis to provide full insight into what the individual had to share. In addition, it was crucial for me to ensure all identifiable information was censored and pseudonyms were implemented.

Both sources of data were analyzed with a universal coding method. I initiated writing associated memos or queries in the margins of both the transcripts and field notes to produce descriptions and interpretations (Padgett, 2017). During this process, I began with a descriptive point of view emphasizing the historical and current context of the Building Up. I then presented other information such as staff and service users' perspectives on and experiences within Building Up thematically (Neuman, 1997; as cited in Kohlbacher, 2006). I utilized my theoretical frameworks to interpret findings and form conclusions to benefit the literature surrounding social entrepreneurship (Kohlbacher, 2006).

Limitations and Ethical Concerns

Areas of concern within my study are mostly surrounding the interview portion. To begin, it could have been triggering for an individual to share their experience within the Building Up if the experience was a negative one. This concern may have been mitigated by telling the participants that the hope is for the organization to use their valuable stories in order to improve their workspace or services. There were no obvious moments of distress that I needed to comfort but I did provide encouragement and confidence for what the interviewees have accomplished during their time at Building Up.

In addition, confidentiality was an ethical issue to consider, especially when the study was being conducted in a place of work. My interview with the founder will not be confidential since the information they provide is identifiable and their interview would not threaten their employment although mistreatment or risk of job loss of employees and services of program

participants may occur if their confidentiality was breached. I reassured participants about this risk by sharing that all identifying sources such as consent form, contact list and audio recording of the interview will be stored in a locked cabinet. Participants who felt like any of the listed risks would impact them opted for me to use a pseudonym on their behalf and exclude any other identifying information from my report. In order to respect confidentiality of all staff and participants of Building Up, all identifying information mentioned within the interviews regarding people who were not interviewed has been removed. In addition, interviews occurred in locations that ensured visual and audio privacy. I believe the sending of flyers to every employee and service user through a mass email mitigated suspicion and observations of who seems interested. To further avoid any possible breaches of confidentiality, the flyers advised possible participants to use their personal emails when contacting the researcher. Once my MRP is complete and approved, I will erase/destroy all electronic and physical documentation including consent forms.

Overall, a holistic case study approach will pursue my research goal of showcasing Building Up as a social entrepreneurial example while also permitting me to analyze its ongoing impacts on the Toronto community. Additionally, my cautionary procedures surrounding recruitment and confidentiality will ensure the protection of the study's participants.

CHAPTER 5. MAJOR FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The experiences that were shared through the three interviews brought to light the complexities of social entrepreneurship alongside the everlasting impact that it can have on everyone involved. My observations from the orientation have only enhanced my understanding of the meaningful work Building Up accomplishes. The three participants held very different perspectives by participating in the social enterprise in a variety of ways. Joshua was a past program participant at Building Up. He is a Jamaican man who was recently let go from his previous place of employment and on social assistance which led him to apply to the program. Kevin, an employee of Building Up, grew up in a high-profile neighbourhood and had a “horrible” high school experience which gave him the drive to uplift people who had similar experiences. Lastly, Marc Soberano is the CEO and founder of Building Up – a business major who was interested in the social aspect of the economy and found a way to bridge the gap.

Similar to the literature, the themes derived from the findings overlap each other creating a messy and holistic view of Building Up and social entrepreneurship.

The experiences derived from the interviewees and my observations presented common values, goals, and skills that the social enterprise required itself which began as a *spark that spread like wildfire* amongst the community. Building Up is a *neutral system* that acts as a *means of connection* by setting the entire person up for success without leaving aspects of the individual behind and bridging the gap between social and economic spheres- paving the way with more room to grow. Although, there is a *risk of pursuing connection in a disconnected society*.

A spark that spreads like wildfire

The spark, an idea or urge, is different for everyone but it is required for any social enterprise to be successful as it is the driving force of the organization. Bornstein (2004) states, “at some moment in their lives, social entrepreneurs get it into their heads that it is up to them to solve a particular problem. Usually something has been brewing inside for a long time” (p.240). This spark is often ignited by one of two things; an event that leads to the recognition of an opportunity to address a need within society, or one’s personal experience or struggle that motivates them to address the same issue (Bornstein, 2004; Pecoraro, 2019). Regardless of its origin, “the deep prompt and personal needs are like a spark that becomes an ever-living wellspring of action that sustains the effort to overcome uncertainty, ambiguity, and obstacles” (Pecoraro, 2019, p.76).

During my interview with Marc, he casually discussed how he came across the opportunity to found the social enterprise,

Building Up is based off some work that was happening in other places. There is an organization in Winnipeg called Build. Uh, and we are based off Build. Yea, uh, the thing that kind of intrigued (...), me as someone that was like in a similar position to you, being interested in learning. What are some interesting things **happening** and what’s kind of striking a chord with me. What I thought was pretty cool with what they (Build) were doing was that they were identifying all this work needs to be done within Manitoba housing. (...) So, what they did was create Build with the intention of taking on energy efficiency upgrades within Manitoba housing to reduce utility costs within the province, while also using that as a vehicle to train and employ these people in the buildings to get the work. And what was really cool with the way that they did it, uhm, they identified that it’s not just about getting people work. There’s a lot of **reasons** why these individuals aren’t working already but it’s not because they don’t want to work but they have different barriers going on in their life. So, they didn’t just start a company and hire them all but created a training program that prepares people, like getting their health and safety and hooked up with drivers’ licence, with case workers, with IDs and you know-math and just like a lot of workshops on parenting and cultural healing. A very holistic approach to like supporting a person and the job is one part of it. That really intrigued me and I became close with the guy that ran it. I worked with him and lived with him for a month and just followed him around. (...) We remained good friends and the intention was to learn it and bring it here because it’s all the same thing. We have so much

affordable housing, we have towers filled with people who need work, our buildings are falling apart like crazy, and we kind of just connected the dots.

I studied business but was more interested in the social aspects of it. You know, if business and capitalism can create these sorts of challenges then how can we use those same tools as a way to, you know, resist it. So that was kind of the interest and there was a bunch of things that kind of lead to it all happening. But I started working at a place called Ashoka, which finds- they have offices in different countries and it's all about social entrepreneurship, uhm, and the Canadian office is responsible for finding individuals across Canada that are solving some sort of social issue in a new and innovative way (...) So I was there screening applicants which is when I found out about people in Winnipeg and when going through the process of finding out whether we were going to support them, I was like oh this is pretty good (...) My goal wasn't to start something at all but I just wanted to get involved in something interesting. I kind of had done some things recently that were starting things related to my values and I did enjoy that, so I was kind of like open to it. So just in talking about where this guy wanted to go, he mentioned he wanted to see it replicated in other cities. So, we hit it off, had a good connection and it kinda just took off from there.

Marc's informal demeanor while explaining the beginnings of Building Up made it seem like he naturally kept finding himself in scenarios where one decision would either lead him one step closer to developing Building Up or one step further. Bornstein (2004) explains how social entrepreneurs make all their decisions following that deep prompt or interest. It is evident that Marc's decisions were based on his intrigue of the connection between the social and business realms which lead him to completely embed himself in the pursuit of his spark by completing an education in business, working at Ashoka, and then ending up in someone's home whom he had just met (Pecararo, 2019)! Marc took the leap to follow his passion and to my surprise, the amount of support and connection between Marc and his mentor at Build aligns with the common pattern of shared struggles, shared direction, and the need for solidarity within social entrepreneurship (Hossein, 2017).

Building Up's driving force is not upheld by only its founder, but it requires a team of champions to make a social enterprise successful. Bornstein (2004) describes champions to be "obsessive people who have the skill, motivation, energy, and bullheadedness to do whatever is

necessary to move them forward: to persuade, inspire, seduce, cajole, enlighten, touch hearts, alleviate fears, shift perceptions, articulate meanings and artfully maneuver them through systems” (p. 92). Joshua mentioned some of the champions at Building Up and described how the staff has set him up with confidence and skill he needed. He presented the idea that they have a natural social tendency and how that greatly impacted their work. In the following excerpt Joshua is describing two employees that stood out to him,

[Y]ou can talk to them about anything! If you’re in front of them and you have a problem, they will see right through you and I swear they can talk to each other without talking. Haha! You know? Their social skills are like, like it’s not a coincidence. It’s a trend. They (Building Up) hire people I think that have their individual strengths surrounded around some type of social or helping aspect. And if that person doesn’t have the answer, they will forward you to the person who does.

Joshua continued to explain that some of the staff members even have their own social enterprises outside of Building Up. It is clear all actors have embedded themselves into their passions enabling them to have such an impact on the program participants. The champions that make up the Building Up team are not separate from the spark that originated the social enterprise. Similarly, how the social entrepreneur is pulled by an idea, urge, inner prompt or desire; all actors within the organization must also have a similar drive that is sparked by something. For Kevin, it is the shared experience of struggle and an event that showed him how support and empathy can make a difference,

You know, I was born and raised in [high profile neighbourhood and] I had a horrible high school experience (...) And you know, if I had not met one teacher, he had big long dreads, he had a big chain, and he was a teacher! And he was a teacher unlike any other teacher I have met in my entire journey of public schooling. And, you know I remember when I first knocked on his door. I knocked on his door, and he was like “yesss family!”. And I was like, okkkk who is this guy?? I started talking to him regularly and he demonstrated positive masculinity, critical thinking, and all of these important concepts that I had never really thought of throughout high school. And so, Building Up gives to me, is that it plays the role of that teacher, of someone who can give [individuals] from these neighbourhoods a different chance.

Kevin's struggle and recognition of an opportunity to create change is what sparked him to be that person for others (Pecoraro, 2019). Kevin's ability to have empathy has enabled him to connect with the program participants and create a meaningful impact (Bornstein, 2004; Bronner, 2017; Chan, 2015). For instance, he mentioned a moment with a program participant where they began "talking about our shared lived experiences and how similar they are. And so, it turned into much more of a (session)", and he continued to explain that it developed into a real relationship where he could provide genuine and long-lasting support to the individual. It is the empathy and connection that draws people into seek support (Chan, 2015).

Regardless of where everyone's passion originated from, they all influence each other creating identities that serve the enterprise and it becomes a part of how they see themselves and how others see them (Pecoraro, 2019). This formation of identity evolves from a combination of one's personal world and the collective space (Holland, 1998; as cited in Pecoraro, 2019). The identities of the individuals develop the community of the social enterprise that continue to grow simultaneously (Pecoraro, 2019). Individuals who are not used to this sense of identity, purpose, support or empathy can experience a sense of culture shock. Joshua shares his experience of being overwhelmed by,

The community was extremely welcoming. One thing that I can be completely honest about is for someone who is not used to that, there was a period of time where I had an issue with that. I'd wonder if these guys were for real because they were so transparent about things and they offer so much help. You know, but that was just my personality but uh, extremely, extremely, extremely welcoming.

Although it may have taken Joshua time to adjust to Building Up's community, he felt supported and cared for. Kevin explains that this sense of mistrust or anxiety is common. He describes the program participants to be, "very ambitious. Very curious. Anxiety- when they are learning but brilliant when they foster those skills. Very excited about learning new things after they have

built their confidence”. Once this hesitation is overcome, the program participants are shown that they have their own skills, strengths, and passions and that Building Up is there to support them. Building Up ignites or nurtures the spark the program participants may have within them but have been contained by barriers. These barriers often do much more than make them unable to follow their pulls of passion but may have posed threat to their very existence based on social constructs. Building Up acts as a link, a source of connection, in a very disconnected society.

Alternative system as a means of connection

There is a major disconnect between the social and economic ideologies and practices. Within the business world individuals have been understood to be the engines of change meanwhile the focus within social change has been geared towards how ideas move people rather than how people can put ideas into action (Bornstein, 2004). Marc has connected these realms by following the idea that, “if business and capitalism can create these sorts of challenges then how can we use those same tools in a way to, you know, resist it”. Marc has taken this idea, put it into action to create an alternative that has bridged the gap between often divided and subdivided systems and institutions in our society which ultimately “engage(s) the world in its wholeness” (Bornstein, 2004, p. 236).

To attain this sense of wholeness, solidarity or connection, the community must be given the opportunity to no longer live a life that has been shaped and molded by systemic barriers. Systemic barriers are the tools and mechanisms that are maintaining our disconnection in our society, widening the socioeconomic gap. Marc explains how Building Up does exactly this by offering the community a different path or opportunity,

I think what we are doing is giving people an alternative to the lives they have been leading. You know, giving someone who has been in jail or has been involved in gangs, that's the way they have been trained to make a living. And it's like 'give me an alternative and maybe I'll take it'. Well we are giving people the alternative, you can go through this and be a lead to a job. Being able to provide a very legit path with resources and flexibility.

Building Up offers an alternative by providing holistic services to meaningfully impact individuals who are inhibited by barriers to survive and hopefully pursue greatness. Joshua describes Building Up's ability to act as an alternative by offering any form of assistance one may require,

Their focus was really to help you get to the next level and they would eliminate all excuses about barriers or boundaries (...) Building Up is extremely personal to me because where I was at they were perfectly coming in. Normally you would think that a program might just be uh, an employment centre! You know what I mean? You might tend to think of them as uh an employment centre type thing but they aren't at all like that. They have different managers or whatever you call them are responsible for different things, so I found that amazing how each person played their individual role. [One class taught us life skills, another] just like interpersonal type skills, [a math class], they had a whole people that came in to do taxes! So, in the centre itself didn't just have Building Up but there were other organizations. (...) They had uh, on certain days they had fruits and fresh produce for sale, bread give away! So they had a little day care. They had ESL class. So, everything that was there, Building Up had a link to. (...) Building Up means a lot to me. Even after the program, they reach out to you, there's other tax and credit clinics, there's money for when you're in the trades – loans and grants that they facilitate. You know? If you need their help.

Not only do Building Up's employees excel in their own roles that are already diverse and all encompassing but what stands out to me is their flexibility. This is quite the opposite to dominant bureaucratic systems who emphasize the importance of designated roles that only utilize repeated and rigid tasks (Mills, Simmons & Mills, 2005). Building Up's capacity and prioritization of extending their supportive abilities beyond their designated role creates a natural support that is much more effective and uplifting benefits (Chan, 2015). The diverse services Building Up offers along with their flexibility and fluidity between the divisions within their own

organization has created a very holistic approach that focuses on the entire individual sets them up for success in more than one way.

A holistic approach is what enables Building Up stand out from many other employment programs in Toronto. Kevin highlights the importance of the whole person, specifically the spirit of a program participant, when comparing different employment programming style,

I find the culture at Building Up is very very supportive. (...) They are just so warm. And so caring. I also compare that to other programs that I know that do not use that same model. They are very strict, almost a bootcamp model. Another program chooses to build soft skills through this bootcamp style. Expects you to be on time, or you'll be kicked out. Expects your cellphone to not go off, or you'll be kicked out. Whereas Building Up is very supportive. Now, you know, given both approaches may work, but I think there are layers of marginalization. A bootcamp style program may work for those who are less marginalized, or who have been through less traumatic experiences. They may have still have grown up in Regent Park or Rexdale. They still may have only one parent at home but may they had an uncle who, you know, put them on to something better at an early age. Or something, maybe they never went to jail. Or had some community linked to. Where as someone who also lived in that area, with a single parent, could have gone through the Criminal Justice System, may have uhm, never had a support or have known what it is like to be cared for. So if you put them into that same program that other students are going in and they expect them to all respond in similar ways in a bootcamp, I think that is a model that is counter intuitive. I don't think it is designed to really help build the spiritual strength of one of these learners or give them a real sense of community.

The barriers that are experienced and the ongoing level of stability one has going into such a program determines the amount of support they may require (Chan, 2015). Such a holistic approach enables all program participants to benefit in an equitable manner (Chan, 2015). For instance, during my observational visit I saw children sitting beside their caregivers during the orientation, children playing in the front yard, people walking in late - and not in any moment, not even when a baby started to cry, did anyone get called on. Again, this holistic support for all aspects of someone's life is necessary when bridging a socioeconomic gap to create connection.

One of the foundational functions of a social entrepreneur is to “serve as a kind of social alchemist: to create new social compounds; to gather together people’s ideas, experiences, skills and resources in configurations that society is not naturally aligned to produce” (Borstein, 2004, p. 237). During our interview, Marc explained even though he has accomplished this and developed Building Up to serve as a link between various systems in Toronto, he has done it in a way that makes the social enterprise a neutral alternative,

But there is a need for jobs, there is a need for people from these employers, there’s the people that need the jobs, there’s people that are looking for contractors, looking for business, people they can trust to come into their home and do these things, there’s you know, very honest approach to how we are trying to support people. It’s not something like you have to be left or right to understand or appreciate it. It’s very just like, it’s here, it’s a service that fills these needs. So either you can get involved or not but you’re not going to want to squash it. It’s not a bad thing from either ‘sides’. So, that’s been helpful because it’s kind of undeniable in my opinion and it’s not because of anything we’ve done. It’s just the concept in general. I’ve noticed this right from the beginning when we were having meetings because the general reaction was like, huh this will be hard but it could work, you know, and that was kind of enough.

In this entry, Marc showcases the vitality of the neutrality of a successful social enterprise and how social entrepreneurship can act as a middle ground for the left and right world perspectives and bring these contradicting perspectives together to collaborate for the best interest of the community. O’Toole (1996) states, people only resist change when their power, reputation, status, and satisfaction with who they are, what they believe, and value. The prominent reason why people resist change is the desire to have autonomy and not be forced against our will (O’Toole, 1996). Building Up offers change to all of those involved but does not force this change.

The voluntary nature of Building Up allows program participants to willfully make changes in their life to support their goals. During the orientation, the opening statement was tough but fair stating that you have to “hold up their side” and want to be here to be successful in

this program. The reaction was silent but a lot of head nods of understanding. Fully supporting individuals through holistic services but also giving them the autonomy to change their life produces the most responsive approach to social support in contrast to a controlling or demanding approach (Chan, 2015).

Not only is Building Up an alternative for the program participants but is an outlet for consumers to direct their financial participation in the economy with an intent. Marc explains,

I think it is really just like creating a vehicle to be more intentional with their money. Allowing people to not only just install a new floor or something but to allow them to support someone who needs employment in the process. Social enterprises give people really reasonable ways to be more impactful because we are all spending money every day and it's like you know, what's that going to?

Acting as a neutral alternative in a society that is imbued with opposing and fragmenting forces, Building Up creates connections and opportunities to overcome these man-made barriers.

Overall, it creates civic wealth- a positive societal change created by connecting multiple parties to reach a common ground that ultimately benefits all of society (Lumpkin & Bacq 2019).

Collectively breaking social, communal, and economic boundaries all involved are empowered to take control of their how they create change within Toronto as a whole.

The risk of pursuing connection in a disconnected society

When faced with problems, social entrepreneurs intuitively combine fragmented aspects of our society through creative integration of “functions that otherwise would remain disconnected” (Bornstein, 2004, p. 237). This is a challenging task going against the grain and with benefits comes risk. Marc explains that starting a business in general is very risky but developing a social enterprise that aims to employ the unemployed is especially challenging,

I mean yea, there are a lot of challenges and ones that just come across every business. Just like the stat that says a huge percentage, I forget what it is, goes out of business in its first year or two. So, it's hard regardless. You know we have access to grants which other businesses don't have, but at the same time we have our reasons for having that resource... There are a lot of challenges and ongoing ones when growing this in Toronto. I think the term 'barriers to employment' is a good term and is very descriptive to the situation. So if you're trying to start a business intentionally to hire people that no one else will hire. You know, there are reasons why they aren't being hired. Reasons as simple as brutal things like being overall racist and there are also times when people are living in a circumstance which makes it difficult for them to hold down a steady job. So, when you're intentionally filling your team with that and then once they've received the training, the goal is to have a 100% turnover rate and bring in new people. Those are difficult circumstances to operate a business, be competitive, try to build some credibility and sustain it. So, I mean, there was a lot of challenges at the beginning in terms of gaining credibility and being like ok we are about to spend lots of money on a project where we want to do a good thing but also, it's a lot of money. We need to make sure it's done well. So establishing credibility took a long time, I think we are there now... (to do that..) I think you just have to find champions that are willing to take a chance and when things go wrong, which they have gone wrong many times, as they do with any business, just being really good with customer service. You know, just being okay with losing money on a certain job in order to maintain the long term and have respect. Uhm, so there was that. Being honest.

The risk Building Up faces due to the significant resource voids a social enterprises face which are often similar to the barriers the service users encounter (Montgomery, 2012). Building Up's tendency to take the burden off the individuals to overcome systemic barriers to employment, they take on that responsibility themselves.

This is a very personal choice of whether one is able and willing to take initial and ongoing financial risks that hold a lot of responsibility. Bornstein (2004) explains that there is a threshold where the level of fulfillment gained by pursuing a meaningful path outweighs the financial or professional risk. This threshold varies from person to person due to a variety of things such as preference, what is meaningful to them, and their socioeconomic position. Marc admitted that privilege supported his ability to pursue Building Up,

In terms of starting something, I think people are paralyzed by this idea of 'oh well, I can't do it' but you probably can! I mean, you look around and there are so many stores,

and someone started all of these things. You just have to figure it out and be willing to take a risk. I was in a position where if this didn't work out, I'd be living at my parents place and I would have been fine, you know. So, I was fortunate to be able to try it that way but like, you know, it's not that big of a deal as it sounds. It is difficult but it's really engaging and it's something to do. If I had known what I was getting myself into, I might not have done it but I am also really happy that I have this interesting thing to do every day.

Marc's ability to take the risk of being a social entrepreneur knowing he had a safety net to fall back on is greatly beneficial. In addition, the opportunity he had to complete a formal education has also given him the skill to speak both languages of social and economic sectors creating collaboration and cooperative relationships that can support Building Up's success (Montgomery, 2012).

The amount of effort, energy and resources it requires to provide such an intensive, inclusive and holistic program can bring risk of burnout to the employee team. Kevin states, "I have noticed some staff starting to burn out. I believe having more support staff can help ease the workload and stress of helping such a diverse group will help the program". Alleviating job overload must be a priority of a social enterprise that is employment focused (Chan 2015). The same level of support that is given to the program participants should be available for Building Up staff.

Now, how do the program participants experience risk in Building Up? Firstly, due to the competitive aspect of the program, there's an initial risk of not even being able to receive the services Building Up has to offer. During the orientation it was announced that there were 300 applicants for 25 positions. The competitiveness of the program had some people on the edge of their seat, a couple of folks left, and you could feel an overall sense of eagerness. Although Building Up is successful as a social enterprise, it's inability to meet the demands of the

community due to resource restrictions leaves the majority facing unemployment and at risk for its associated experiences such as poverty, stigma, lack of education, hunger, and so much more.

In addition, tensions between Toronto's social and economic systems leaves program participants at high risk to encounter discrimination. Kevin shares a story of an individual who experienced a hostile racist act while working within a union that Building Up's participants work with,

Okay so, there is one student at a union working on a project. This is not Building Up but another program. But it is just a good example of something that has happened at one of the unions we work with. And this social enterprise is working with the same demographic but just a different program. So, he is at the union working on a project and he made a mistake. He is very scared that he will get judged on his mistake because he has a very short time to demonstrate his aptitude and so he picks up another project from the teacher's desk. And thought he could just continue working on this one because it wasn't fully done. So, he picks it up, starts working on it. The union worker comes in, going "Who the F stole my project?". And you know I am saying it in a much nicer tone. The worker was being very hostile. Everyone comes scared, including the person who picked it up from the desk. The union worker was constantly using vulgar language. "Everyone search each other, find out from the person beside you, who stole it??" You know, basically interrogating each other. No one came up with anything. And he was like, "everyone go back in the room", swearing the whole time. You know, I'm not swearing right now. So, the one student who did take a piece off the desk went up to him in private and went "Look I was so scared to tell you that I was the one that picked up the piece, but I just wanted to let you know I did it". He just reacted so hostile. He goes "you effing this and that" he **SAID** "You just fulfilled the stereotype". And he... took him back in the room with everyone else and just started going at it. Constantly putting him on blast. He uhm... you know ... he just made him feel so horrible. He later gets kicked out of the program. And so, some unions, this is an example that they are not culturally responsive. They don't always understand where these students are coming from or take the time to listen to them and contribute to the trauma to someone who is already coming from struggle.

Although this is not a story of a participant within Building Up's programming, it showcases the potential scenarios a participant could encounter. After overcoming so many limiting boundaries, it would be difficult to continue to work within the larger society that is discriminatory. Building Up accomplishes what it sets out to do, it meets a need and fills a gap whilst trying to promote

self-esteem, confidence and self-efficacy to allow for these individuals to be resilient in the face of struggle (Chan, 2015). This preparation does not relieve them of the risk that remains in Toronto's dominant society.

The findings derived from interviews with Marc, Kevin and Joshua, along with my observations, have presented pleasantly surprising themes. I am excited that this study has captured social entrepreneurship from this unique perspective. I will continue to discuss these themes further in relation to the historical and current context.

Chapter 6. Discussion and Implications

I will discuss the ways in which Building Up serves as an exemplar of social entrepreneurship in Toronto following the literature's prevalent themes including sustainability, creativity and innovation, power relations, and empowerment and social benefit. My discussion is written through a critical and decolonial lens. The use of critical theory supports my exploration of the alternative Building Up provides to our city while remaining analytical of any patterns that represent those of capitalism's exploitative and discriminatory nature. Decolonial theory strengthens my ability to determine the overall impact Building Up has on colonial manifestations experienced or inflicted by those involved. I hope my discussion can bring guidance on how we can move forward towards social change.

Discussion

Aligning with the literature, Building Up has been successful and impactful through the utilization of a variety of skills, tools, and resources. The innovative thought and action that it required to link the often-contradicting realms was the source of Building Up's existence. Not only does Building Up resist dominant forms of power by making a progressive and bold approach to business but it also attracts the attention of many at a competitive rate (Dey & Steyaert, 2016; Prieto & Simone, 2013; Roy & Karna, 2015, VanSandt et al., 2009). Building Up's creative efforts to meet demands for employees and employment, support affordable housing through cost effective and environmentally conscious solutions, and provide a value-based outlet for consumers to spend their money all while paying their program participants and providing multi-dimensional services makes them competitive and sustainable (Dey and Steyaert, 2016).

The sustainable business model also recreates a long-lasting social benefit through the utilization of economic and social mechanisms (Bhatt & Altinay, 2013; Cavalcante, Riberas & Rosa, 2016). Building Up empowers program participants by providing them with the transformative interventions and solutions needed to gain stable employment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The organization also creates sustainable impacts by eliminating alienation and reification through the exclusion of capitalist and colonial ideologies, discourses and behaviours within the social enterprise, setting a new standard amongst economic practice (Cavalcante, Riberas & Rosa, 2016; Lajovic, 2012). Building Up's inclusive community along with the opportunities they provide through their alternative nature allow program participants and the larger community to question traditional thought and adopt a critical outlook prioritizing the need for a morally and just future (Bronner, 2017). For instance, program participants are given the opportunity to question the discriminatory systems and overcome hesitations when they enter a supportive community, while actors in the community can question the traditional approach to finding construction related solutions in affordable housing. This supports marginalized individuals to participate in a productive economy that benefits all involved (Maguirre, Ruelas & Torre, 2016; Chikadzi & Warria, 2018).

The findings go far beyond the very practical and technical information derived from the literature. The literature has touched on how a social enterprise's social mission reintegrates morally driven values (Tiwari, Bhat & Tikoria, 2017), briefly mentioning the importance of spirituality (Gandy, 2016). The literature also mentions that capitalism has lost sight of a person's spirit, individuality, creativity, and solidarity (Bronner, 2017). What was absent in the literature that this study has exemplified, is the significance of an internal spark, spirit, wholeness, and connection within social entrepreneurship. It appears the literature has discussed

social entrepreneurship separate from the person or people. I believe the exclusion of this perspective is due to the lack of critical and decolonial theoretical frameworks as these are common concepts amongst critical and decolonial epistemologies. I also believe that the exclusion of historical foundations has created gaps within what it means to be a successful social enterprise. These perspectives are specifically important when discussing social entrepreneurship in Toronto's diverse neoliberal society that is growing in socioeconomic gaps, leading to further and further disconnection of our services, communities, and systems.

I believe a lot of Building Up's success and impact on the Toronto community is due to its support of the original intentions of social entrepreneurship of implementing an economic practice that is driven by a value-based objective (VanSandt et al., 2009) specifically, an alternative to exploitative capitalist systems, filling the gap between social and economic systems (McKenzie-Mohr, Lafrance, 2016). The social enterprise is acting as a participant in the reparation of the relationship between the social and economic sectors by setting an example as an alternative (McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2016). Ultimately, this enables Building Up to support vulnerable communities who are harmed by oppressions created and maintained by socially constructed sources of power and control (Lajovic, 2012; Maldonado-Torres, 2011; Walton, 2018).

Although Building Up is an extraordinary alternative that critical theory seeks out, I will disrupt social entrepreneurship's routine by discussing the gaps within the social enterprise using critical and decolonial theories (Herrema, 2017). When having this discussion, it is crucial to look at how Building Up can act as an alternative without anyone wanting to "squash it" (Marc). I was a bit surprised by Building Up's neutrality since economic potential of marginalized communities has often been a threat to dominant white Canadians (Carstairs, 1999). Building Up

seems to have it easy compared to the harassment Marcus Garvey received in pursuing a socially conscientious business by the police, capitalists, political and business elites (Hosseini, 2017). This could be viewed as progress in the Western social, economic and political spheres enabling social entrepreneurship to no longer be so dangerous. This could also be because of the power dynamics used for Building Up's advantage.

The privilege Marc held, as someone with an education and a parental safety net, supported and protected him during his risky pursuit of social entrepreneurship. Tiwari, Bhat and Tikoria (2017) stated that power dynamics and subjective norms affect the social entrepreneurial intentions and outcomes. Due to Marc's initial interest in social and economic spheres, his ability to speak both languages, and have access to opportunities to share a space for both sectors, Building Up was able, and maybe destined, to be neutral. Although Building Up is participating in the elimination of alienation and reification, it is also important to resist it (Lajovic, 2012). I believe this lack of resistance on a macro level is what is permitting Building Up to remain neutral. There is a need for social entrepreneurship to go beyond local level changes and infiltrate complex macro level issues (De Bruin, 2016; Hosseini, 2017).

Building Up's collaborative work with external systems, such as construction unions, still maintains the Canadian capitalist and bureaucratic system's power and ability to strip people of their humanity (Bronner, 2017). This is exactly what happened during the racist incident Kevin described. Although this scenario did not involve a Building Up program participant, Kevin explained that this was an extreme example of the union or construction environments but later describes how this tone can be common,

Okay, alright so, the environment really depends on the foreman who sets the tone and so if there is someone who is vulgar, which is often the case. Someone who is short tempered, which is often the case. Everyone around them becomes like that. It is extremely racist, extremely sexist, extremely.. uh... harsh. And, and, positive

personalities tend to convert into less positive personalities. Uhm, based on the environment. I have also been in a construction environment where the foreman is very friendly. So everyone is a bit more comfortable and you see that leadership trickling down. So yea, uhm, it's not surprising after working in a construction site why the unions may be the way they are. I get where it comes from.

Kevin continued to explain that he is hopeful for change within the unions to occur as the program participants continue to climb up the ladder of authority and infiltrate the system. Kevin believes that they will slowly integrate the inclusivity learned within the Building Up program to make changes within their new environments. Unfortunately, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to change the way a system operates once it is already established (Aryeh Gitterman, personal communication, 2018). It also leaves program participants with the burden of experiencing hostile encounters and everyday microaggressions. According to Fredrickson (1995) and Clarke (1974), change will not occur if marginalized people remain low paid workers to white businesses (as cited by Hossein, 2017). I believe Building Up breaks boundaries and sets people up for success, but success within a problematic system.

Historically, social entrepreneurship was initiated by the individuals who were directly impacted by the enterprise's targeted social issue. For instance, Marcus Garvey's "philosophy and practice was rooted in an experiential education" and was derived from his own lived experience growing up poor in colonial Jamaica (Hossein, 2017, p.152). Due to this personal socioeconomic experience, they are unable to rely on the support of the dominant systems, such as a union. Instead, they had to create their own. This may be the missing piece that is allowing the neutrality of Building Up, still putting the program participants at risk.

Overall, Building Up has met the standards set out by the literature to be a successful social enterprise. Through the incorporation of this study's findings and the historical foundations of social entrepreneurship we can reframe what it means to be a successful social

enterprise. I believe reframing it to also involve the goal of establishing connection and wholeness of the community while also addressing the entire person, including the spirit of the person. This should all be achieved with the “ethnocentric anchorage” of social entrepreneurship incorporated in the social enterprises’ strategies and approaches (Dey & Steyaert, 2010). Moving forward, I hope Building Up, social entrepreneurship, and social change is willing to take my discussion into consideration and continue to adapt and grow (Bronstein, 2004).

Moving Forward

This study has a lot to offer Building Up, social entrepreneurship, and social change. I am thrilled for Building Up’s success and the great impact it has had on all involved. Marc’s vision has turned the economy into an ethical pursuit, but the approach cannot turn the extended economic environment into an ethical one (Bornstein, 2004). It is clear that there is a major demand for what Building Up does but it is expected that strategies and business models adapt over time in response to problems and new opportunities to meet the evolved threshold of major impact (Bronstein, 2004).

To accomplish this, I believe we need to refocus on Jackson et al.’s (2015) double perspectives. Following this concept, Building Up already has implemented cooperative, respectful, collaborative and sustainable practices but I believe the collaboration of culture, knowledge, and experiences between the Western and Indigenous communities can be improved (Jackson et al., 2015; Walton, 2018). Connecting with Indigenous communities and not only including them but prioritizing them throughout the strategizing processes is crucial. In addition, finding ways in which Building Up can give them positions of opportunity and power to make an impact on the continuing challenges the social enterprise faces. Since socio-economic gaps in Toronto are rapidly widening, it is even more difficult for marginalized individuals to pursue

their own alternative systems therefore, similar to Marc, we need to use privilege in a form of ally ship. Building Up is already overwhelmed with demand and lack of resources making it crucial for the organization to share its knowledge and tools with others, which is something Marc explained they plan to do as he did with Build. Currently, social entrepreneurship must work with the systems we have in Toronto as of date but to pursue macro level changes, we must try our best to build alternatives on top of other alternatives specifically, the ones created by marginalized communities. I believe this approach of knowledge sharing will enable the strengths of Building Up to be spread within the city to further support the community and move closer towards 'wholeness'.

Throughout my research and my social work education, I have been given the opportunity to learn how to articulate my longing for connection and in what ways I was missing it in my social work career up until now. It put words to my preference and desire to become a social entrepreneur. Both have shown the disconnection within social work, the economy, education and other Canadian neoliberal systems. This disconnection, specifically between social and economic realms, is valid and justified. There has been and continues to be a lot of pain and suffering from exploitative practices. I understand critical social work's hesitation to collaborate with economic practices as it is continuously evolving with the hopes of overcoming the injustices and harm itself has done in the past and present.

Holding hands with exactly what we, as critical social workers or social justice advocates, are fighting against sounds absurd. It is absurd. Traditionally, I would call for critical social work to implement social entrepreneurship within its curriculum providing social workers with an excellent option of practice Building Up has showcased. To effectively include this outlet of social change, research must continue to form a general consensus of what social

entrepreneurship is, its impacts, and best form of practice based within critical and decolonial theoretical frameworks. This would prevent the infiltration of harmful ideologies and practices that remain within social work. The question I am left with is; what makes us think that social workers can utilize the economy better when both social work and capitalism were designed around determining who are the deserving and undeserving (Johnstone, 2018)?

We have learned that social entrepreneurship is a means of connection, but what is the use of connecting broken systems? Shouldn't we focus on connecting culture, knowledge, and experiences first and foremost, enabling us to create something different- an alternative (Jackson et al., 2015)? I am having the urge to leave social work behind and not even recommend social entrepreneurship to be integrated into its education. This frustration with social work is not only just mine, even a professor within my Master of Social Work has opened a discussion about their ongoing contemplation to scrap social work altogether due to its ongoing harmful implications (Anonymous, personal communication, 2018). The answer on how to move forward from this concluding question, is not straightforward one.

Angela Davis once said that there is not "a strict dividing line between reform and abolition" (Davis & Rodriguez, 2000, p. 216). Davis is referring to prison in this sentence, but I believe it is applicable to all neoliberal systems. Even though these systems are disconnected from each other, they all have the same underlying root issues- capitalist and colonial ideologies, discourses, and behaviours. Some systems present this in a better way than others, but they all have very similar struggles. Davis explained, to achieve an anti-oppressive approach one must ask the question; why are certain people more disposable than others (Davis & Rodriguez, 2000, p. 216)? I must admit, critical social work and social movements are changing the ways in which we think and be. Although this change, amongst the masses, is taking time. Timing is crucial,

whether people are ready for a certain idea to be put into action determines its success (Aryeh Gitterman, personal communication, 2018). An idea won't make its way into the dominant ideology because it is good. Especially, if it is an idea that poses threat to the powerful, an alternative to the dominant, or comes from someone who does not match the privileged person; the idea requires skillful marketing to produce change within people's perceptions and behaviours (Bornstein, 2004). Indigenous, and many non-Western, communities have always had these 'alternative' systems and ways of being. The dominant white Canadian population are not ready to let go of the resistance towards these changes yet. Remember, the biggest resistance to change is when people think it is forced upon them (O'Toole, 1996).

Therefore, my answer to my own hesitations and contemplations in relation to moving forward is that we need to continue to reform our current systems, specifically critical social work through the integration of social entrepreneurship, while we simultaneously use social entrepreneurship as a vehicle towards the abolition of colonial capitalist systems that have fragmented our society. As social entrepreneurs, we must continue to address this resistance by presenting alternative options. Once an alternative is considered neutral and "undeniable" (Marc), we know we can take another step towards connection.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This study is complex, scattered, and messy- similar to Toronto's society. We are disconnected as human beings, as communities, as infrastructures, and as systems. When working towards reconnection, there is a lot of room for error and harm to be done. Acting as a link in such fragmentation is risky but I believe it is riskier for people not to try. When Marc admitted that Building Up "is not perfect", I immediately realized that none of our actions towards social change ever will be. Once a change is made, a goal is met- or more importantly, once someone reaches a state of comfort, we must use this as a cue to reflect, determine, and act on how they can improve their anti-oppressive practices and perspectives. There will always be room for evolution, improvement and inclusion. This continued change is exactly what's going to get us closer to social justice.

Before I began this study, I believe I was looking for a list of do's and don'ts for social entrepreneurship in order to lead me in the right direction. Marc was correct when he explained that people overthink social entrepreneurship, deterring most of us away. I am glad that this study did not produce this list as rules are what got us into this mess in the first place (Bornstein, 2004). I now know with confidence that our guidance system is within us as social entrepreneurs. My urge, my spark, is to create something different. Different than social work – different than the systems we already have. I hope to create something one day that supports the entire person and entire community from as many angles as possible.

Our community is at risk, at risk of the implications of disconnection.

I hope my study has sparked something in you.

APPENDIX A: Consent Form



Consent Agreement

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent form so that you understand what your participation will involve. Before you consent to participate, please ask any questions to be sure you understand what your participation will involve.

Building Up: A Case Study on Social Entrepreneurship in Toronto

INVESTIGATORS:

This research study is being conducted by Kristen MacCarthy, supervised by Dr. Purnima George, from the School of Social Work, at Ryerson university.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Kristen MacCarthy at kmaccarthy@ryerson.ca or Purnima George at p3george@ryerson.ca.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

This study is designed to explore a Toronto based social enterprise that can serve as an example for future social entrepreneurs. Its goal is to learn about the organization's evolvment, successes, challenges, and impact on its employees, services users and community.

The study will interview 3 participants. Participants will consist of staff and service users. This study is being completed by a graduate student as requirement for completion of their degree.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO:

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

One-on-One Interview

- In a one-on-one audio-recorded interview session with the researcher, you will be asked to share your experiences within the organization
- You will be asked about its evolution and operation
- You will be asked what your experience in relation to the organization
- You will be asked to reflect on the organization's impact on the community and yourself
- The estimated duration of the interview is one hour; however, the participant will be the decision maker on the duration based on how much they have to say or feel comfortable saying.
- The interview will occur at a private location that both the participant and researcher are comfortable with
- Participants can expect the interview to consist of broad questions that can be expanded upon through open discussion. Example questions are as follows:

What do you know about past or present operations within the social enterprise?

Tell me about your experience in relation to the organization?

How does or has it impacted you, the community, and social entrepreneurship in Toronto?

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

Potential benefits include the opportunity to debrief and reflect upon your experiences. The interview may provide an opportunity to use your voice and make an impact on the organization's practices while also maintaining confidentiality. In addition, these interviews along my observations during a scheduled visit, may provide the social enterprise an opportunity to reflect on the organization's strengths and possible room for growth. Overall, information gained and shared may allow future and current social entrepreneurs to learn do's and don'ts when building a social enterprise. However, I cannot guarantee that you will receive any other personal benefits from participating in this study.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO YOU AS A PARTICIPANT:

During the interview, you may experience triggering conversations if there has been a negative experience within the social enterprise. Please be assured that your participation is voluntary. You are welcome to take breaks, leave out certain details, decline to answer any question, and/or stop participation in this study at any time.

To mitigate any risk of breach of confidentiality, possibly resulting in unfair/unethical treatment within the organization, job loss, or declined of services, recruitment was done through a mass email and a flyer in a common area accessible to all. In addition, any contact between you and the researcher will be done over personal phone or personal email.

How confidentiality will be protected is further explained in the confidentiality and data storage sections below.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Participation in this research will remain confidential and measures will be taken to protect your identity, unless preferred otherwise. Pseudonyms (fake names) will be given to participants and any other identifying information will be censored. Contact with the researcher will be through participants private phone or email. In addition, interviews will be done in private locations away from the organization of focus.

All information you provide will only be viewed by the researcher and identifiable information will not be available to any other party. If needed, censored information will be shared with the supervisor of this study.

DATA STORAGE:

The interview will be audio recorded on a password-protected recording device and stored on a password-protected laptop in a hidden file. Once the transcription is finished, the transcript and audio recording will be sent to your personal email for review. You can edit your transcript and send it back over email within a 7-day period of initially receiving the original copy. The audio file will be stored on this computer until your edits and final approval of your transcript has been received. One approval is received, the audio file will be permanently deleted off the computer. Transcripts will be stored on this same password protected computer until the researcher's graduation. Signed consent forms and contact information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. These will be shredded once the researcher has graduated.

DATA DISSEMINATION:

The data will be transcribed and used for analysis at the researcher's private residence. This will be done on the same password protect computer that is being used a data storage. The transcripts

will be used to produce the researcher's final paper.

The final paper will be available on Ryerson's Digital Repository:

<https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/>

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION:

Incentive to participate in the study will include a \$15 Walmart, Shoppers Drug Mart, Tim Horton's or Starbucks gift card, whichever you prefer.

COSTS TO PARTICIPATION:

Reimbursement of TTC tokens or equivalent fare, to attend the one-to-one interview may be provided at the request of the research participant.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If any question makes you uncomfortable, you can skip that question. You may stop participating at any time and you will still be given the incentives and reimbursements described above. If you choose to stop participating, you may also choose to not have your data included in the study. If you would like to withdraw your data; please indicate this by August 1, 2019. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University or the investigator, Kristen MacCarthy, involved in the research.

This study is approved by Ryerson University Research Ethics Board (ID: 2019-028) and Building Up.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY:

If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact.

Kristen MacCarthy

Researcher, MSW Candidate

kmaccarthy@ryerson.ca

Purnima George

Supervisor

p3george@ryerson.ca

This study has been reviewed by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study please contact:

Research Ethics Board

c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation

Ryerson University

350 Victoria Street

Toronto, ON M5B 2K3

416-979-5042

rebchair@ryerson.ca

Building Up: A Case Study on Social Entrepreneurship in Toronto

CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to participate in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement. You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

I agree to be audio-recorded for the purposes of this study. I understand how these recordings will be stored and destroyed.

Signature of Participant

Date

How would you like to be identified within my research?

- ☐ My own name, therefore, my participation will not be confidential.
- ☐ A fake name allowing for my participation to remain confidential. Please write selected fake name here _____.

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Flyer Information



Building Up: A Case Study on Social Entrepreneurship in Toronto

Researcher: My name is Kristen MacCarthy and I am pursuing my Master of Social Work at Ryerson University. I am very interested in social entrepreneurship and innovation. I would love to learn more from any willing volunteers. I hope to share this information with fellow social entrepreneurs through my final research paper.

Looking for: Employees and services users who are willing to discuss their personal experience with Building Up and the organization's impacts on the community.

What: Approximately an hour-long one on one audio-recorded interview. Participation is completely voluntary.

Where: A private location that is accessible for both the participant and researcher.

Compensation: Each participant will receive a \$15 Walmart, Shoppers Drug Mart, Starbucks or Tim Horton's gift card based on their preference in addition to reimbursement for standard TTC fare (\$3.25) to and from the interview location.

If you are interested in this study or would like more information, please email kmacCarthy@ryerson.ca through your personal email to ensure confidentiality of possible participation.

This study has been approved by Building Up management and Ryerson University Research Ethics Board (ID: 2019-028). It is being conducted by a graduate student as a requirement for program completion. Research supervisor, Purnima George, can be reached at p3geroge@ryerson.ca

APPENDIX C: Recruitment Email Script

Dear Building Up Team,

My name is Kristen MacCarthy and I am pursuing my Master of Social Work at Ryerson University. This research study is being conducted as a requirement for program completion and will be supervised by Purnima George.

I am interested in completing a case study on your social enterprise to provide an example of successful social entrepreneurship in Toronto. I hope to provide readers of my research, some of whom are hopefully current or future entrepreneurs and myself, with a critical example of what to do and what not to do when building a social enterprise. In addition, I'd hope this would provide an opportunity for your organization to reflect on the impact it has on its employees, members and community.

If you are interested in my research, the founder will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview discussing the evolution of your organization and its continued impact on the community. To recruit two additional interviewee participants, preferably an employee and a service user, I would like to post my recruitment flyer in a common area, possibly have it sent in a mass email and hand out hard copies during my observational visit. I believe this direct recruitment will ensure the participants' confidentiality. As the Executive Director would be sharing valuable information no one else may be able to, I do not feel that I could keep their personal participation confidential, although, I am open to discussing further.

In appreciation of your time, all participants will receive full reimbursement of TTC fare (\$3.35 each way) to an offsite interview location if needed and a \$15 Walmart, Shoppers Drug Mart, Tim Horton's or Starbucks gift card. I hope my research will provide you the opportunity to reflect on your organizations impact on the community to highlight your strengths and address areas where growth can be achieved.

The final paper will be available on Ryerson's Digital Repository:

<https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/> and if you are interested I can mail you a hardcopy for your and the organization's possible use.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board (ID: 2019-028).

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there will be no repercussions should you decline this offer or choose to withdraw from the study. If needed, I am willing to making amendments to my research plan based on further discussion. If this sounds like an opportunity that suits your social enterprise and you would like to participate, please reply to this email.

Thank you,
Kristen MacCarthy

APPENDIX D: Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank participant for their time and effort.

Share with them how their participation truly helps me in my understanding of social entrepreneurship.

I hope that this research will benefit the social enterprise of choice, although, I cannot guarantee that it will

Ensure confidentiality. Sign consent form if needed.

Remind them that this study is voluntary, and they can decide to end their participation.

General Questions:

Can you tell me about the social enterprise?

Examples of probing questions for executive director:

How did this innovative idea come to life?

What were the challenges you faced when developing the social enterprise?

What helped you during its evolution?

Tell me about its current services and programs.

What are its current strengths and challenges?

What does (and has) your role as director require(d) of you?

Examples of probing questions for employee:

What is the work environment like?

What do you do?

In what areas do you believe the social enterprise thrive in?

What do you think the social enterprise struggles with?

Examples of probing questions for service user:

What does the social enterprise provide you?

What is the environment like?

What do you think the social enterprise's strengths and needs for improvement?

What does social entrepreneurship mean to you?

Examples of probing questions:

Have you always been interested in social entrepreneurship?

Do you believe it promotes social justice? Why or why not?

What makes social entrepreneurship stand out to you versus working for other current social services?

How does the social enterprise impact its community?

Examples of probing questions:

What is its community?

Do employees seem to enjoy working here? Why or why not?

Do service users seem to enjoy coming here? Why or why not?

What impact does it have on the social entrepreneurial community? What are some examples?

What impact does it have on oppressed communities in Toronto? What are some examples?

Does it reinforce any injustices, intentionally or unintentionally?

What is your experience here?

Examples of probing questions:

Do you think the social enterprise supports your goals?

How do you feel when you are here?

Do you feel like your voice is heard?

Is this a safe space?

Are all people welcomed?

Concluding Remarks

Thank you for sharing your time, input and experiences with me.

Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

I will share a copy of the transcript and audio recording of our conversation to you directly through your personal email. Feel free to call or email me if you have any questions while reviewing the transcript/audio recording. If you want to make any adjustments to the transcript, please do on the digital copy in a different colour. If you want to add any information you believe you may have forgotten, please do. You will have 7 days from when you receive the transcript to make any adjustments or comments. Once you have finished, please email me the revised copy.

I will be submitting my final research paper in the year 2020. You will have access to it through the Ryerson database if you so wish that I can provide you the link to. In addition, I can email you a copy.

Give them the gift card they wanted

Thanks again!

APPENDIX E: Observational Log

Environment	Actors	Interactions/Behaviours	Affects

APPENDIX E: Letter of Permission



116 Industry Street – Unit 208
Toronto, ON M6M 4L8
Tel: 647 993 5507
Website: www.buildingup.ca

Letter of Permission

I am writing to confirm our permission for you, Kristen MacCarthy, to:

1. Complete a case study on Building Up! for your MSW requirement
2. Post an interview recruitment flyer in common area(s) that is accessible to service users and employees
3. Have the recruitment flyer sent on her behalf through a mass email
4. Visit the organization and make observational notes. In addition, she may hand out more interview recruitment flyers if needed
5. Interview Marc Soberano, one service user and one employee (or two employees if Marc is unavailable).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ashley Mathew".

Ashley Mathew
Building Up

www.buildingup.ca
ashley@buildingup.ca

Address: 116 Industry Street, Toronto, On, M6M 4L8
Phone: 416-769-0830 ext. 2056 or 416-871-6959

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