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## SOCIAL BRICOLEURS' LIFE STORIES: THE INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN MOTIVATIONAL ANTECEDENTS, OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION AND VISION (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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## ≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

**SOCIAL BRICOLEURS' LIFE STORIES: THE INTERRELATIONS  
BETWEEN MOTIVATIONAL ANTECEDENTS,  
OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION AND VISION**

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**Principal Topic**

Social entrepreneurs are important change agents addressing social needs not met by governmental policies and actions (Roper & Cheney, 2005). The expansive growth of social entrepreneurship creates the need for a better understanding of the characteristics and motivations of social entrepreneurs, including opportunity recognition and development processes. We focus on social bricoleurs who address small-scale local social needs, typically, for disadvantaged groups that have limited capacity to help themselves. We examine social bricoleurs in different contexts and cultures, focusing on motivations and the way in which they make association between their past (childhood), present and future actions.

**Method**

The study is based on interviews conducted with 43 social entrepreneurs from 9 countries. Life stories methodology was used to understand how social entrepreneurs connect between their past (childhood and motivation), present functioning and vision and future prospect. The life stories method is an inductive approach, reflective in nature, which examines motivations and gives meaning to actions and intentions. The basic assumption that underlies the life stories methodology is that people discover and reveal themselves to others, by the story they tell. These stories require people to integrate their stories in a coherent and plausible way (Mitchell 1997).

**Results and Implications**

Social bricoleurs are motivated by pull factors — e.g., long-term awareness of social injustice and life experiences or events that identified unmet social needs — and push factors, e.g., job dissatisfaction or external causes. Push and pull motivations are relatively stable over the cultural contexts examined in this study. Social entrepreneurs also referred to personal evolution of their self-identity in the process of being social entrepreneurs. When referring to the present or future, social entrepreneurs describe an expansion of their vision and actions evolving from small scale organizations to something bigger. The findings of this study contribute to theoretical development of social entrepreneurship by showing the common aspects of social bricoleurs in different cultural context. The findings indicate that the motivation of being social entrepreneurs is sometimes emotional and derived from life events. In addition, the findings also show that social entrepreneurs are motivated by social awareness that enable them to discover and exploit social opportunities.

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