



# Semantics and power

A concept analysis of social entrepreneurship

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## Abstract

Social entrepreneurship has emerged both as an active area of practice and research the last three decades. The concept appears both in politics, research and within different private institutions. However, there is no clear agreement on how to define the concept. This has resulted in various approaches to the concept. In this thesis I will shed light on the way the concept of social entrepreneurship is presented by different actors within different systems, political system, economic system, and science system. I have tried to map the semantic field surrounding the concept, using Koselleck's (1985) conceptual history approach. I'm using key terms from Koselleck's framework, and I will subsequently offer a discussion of the implicit power that may hide in the semantic field. The analysis indicates no clear definition of the concept but introduce a web of concepts appearing in the semantic field, which highlight the main characteristics of social entrepreneurship. This web of concepts contained mostly of supporting concepts, and most concepts were found within all systems. There were observed some variation in the presentation of the concept depending on which system the actors were embedded in. However, it generally seems like the different systems infiltrate each other, and that even though the concept may have somewhat different presentation, one can see these terms and concepts in its semantic field is being used interchangeably throughout the different systems. This can testify to cooperation between these systems where they can derive legitimacy, capital, and credibility from each other.

## Foreword

As a former caseworker in child welfare, I have met a lot of young people whom I tried to help out of criminal networks. Most of the youth I interacted with stated that a job would be the best course of action. However, I experienced a lack of job opportunities for these youth. This lack of opportunities made me curious of what other options or solutions that exist out there, for including these youth into workfare.

I was lucky to be able to take part in a big science project called YouCount. And it is through them I got introduced to the concept of social entrepreneurship, which inspired me to write this thesis. Thank you so much to all YouCount researchers who have let me in and openly shared their knowledge about the topic. I admire your work and dedication in trying to improve conditions for young people today. Especially, thank you to YouCount researchers Aina Landsverk Hagen and Frederick Reiersen for all help and support throughout the work.

Above all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Ivan Harsløf. Your wise and constructive input has been of invaluable help in the work on this thesis. I have appreciated our discussions around the topic, and I am impressed by your commitment and thoroughness.

Then I would like to thank my dear Henrik. Your patience and support have made it possible for me to complete this study. Also, thanks to friends and family who have supported me in this project.

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## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

“Concepts come with specific historical and social baggage. They are defined by their meanings and uses and become powerful in battle with other concepts. Since concepts are constitutive of political positions, the use of certain concepts rather than others will in and of itself be political. Study of concepts takes us directly into the place where politics is made, namely in language”

(Jordheim and Neiman, 2011, p.2)

### **Theme**

The above text extract suggests that there is an interaction between language, politics, and the social development. That the concepts we use should not only be understood as an indicator of social development, but that it may also play an active role in it. Such an understanding is a central perspective for this master's thesis. The main theme for this thesis is the presentation of the concept social entrepreneurship in a Norwegian context. I will conduct a concept analysis building on historian Kosellek's (1958) conceptual history approach. The basic idea in conceptual history analysis is to give researchers new perspectives on social and political phenomena that are usually understood as a matter of course (Boréus & Bergström, 2018). As this thesis will analyze different definitions and presentations of social entrepreneurship, I nevertheless see it as necessary to present a general and broad description as a basis for further reading. Social entrepreneurship can therefore be described as finding new solutions to social problems and applying methods from business life to achieve these (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016; Ferd, 2022; Government, 2019).

Consecutive Norwegian governments, including the former government (2019) have wanted to promote social entrepreneurs and the voluntary sector in the welfare system, hoping to get more people into work and activity, and to increase the diversity of suppliers. Social entrepreneurship has become an increasingly popular term and phenomenon (Choi & Majumdar, 2014; Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016; Ferd, 2022; Minister of Labor and Social affairs 2018). It means that it is a field of organizations that is growing and gradually attracting more attention from new groups, increased financial investment and human resources. As a field, social entrepreneurship in Norway is characterized by a great diversity of businesses, and thus also by several different understandings of what the field represents. There is a variation

in the field regarding choice of organizational form and varying emphasis on the social versus the economic dimensions (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016).

According to Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) is social entrepreneurship less developed in Norway than in many other European countries. However, the rise of companies who want to invest in social causes and who offer various forms of support to social entrepreneurs gives an indication of the rise of the field (Ingstad & Loga, 2016; Loga, 2018). Since there is no official organizational structure for social entrepreneurs in Norway, there is also no official numbers on the amount or value creation. However, figures from two recently carried out studies, point in the direction of 300-400 actors in Norway calling themselves social entrepreneurs (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016; Kobro et al., 2017; Minister of Labor and Social affairs, 2018).

### **Background**

The choice for this thesis topic is inspired by my involvement as a MA student in the research project YouCount- Empowering youth and co-creating social innovations and policymaking through youth-focused citizen social science. YouCount is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program. In the YouCount project proposal (2020) the researchers argue that there is a pressing need to develop more knowledge and innovation to create more inclusive and youth-friendly societies in Europe. The Norwegian case is especially focusing on how youth are socially included through social entrepreneurship and employability.

My curiosity about social entrepreneurship has sprung out of participating in the project. By being included in a big research program, it has given me great insight into how science can be co-created and especially the form of knowledge production that this project represents. It has also given me access to relevant research material which has been attributing to my text material for the analysis of this thesis. Simultaneously, my project presents perspectives which I believe can be an asset for the research project, especially for the Norwegian case. Primarily this thesis may give insight into the concept of social entrepreneurship and how it is presented and used by different actors in Norway, but it can also give an overall perspective on the use of concepts and the implicit power it can generate.

## Research question

As social entrepreneurship seems to be both on the political agenda, and a central topic in the YouCount research project, I wanted to dig deeper into what the concept is about, and, more importantly, investigate the implicit semantic field in which the concept is embedded. The semantic field means terms or concepts that appear together with the concept we want to study. This space is according to Koselleck, where meaning is created (Koselleck, 1958; Heggen & Engebretsen, 2012). Koselleck is especially interested in exploring how conceptual changes correlated with the discontinuity of political, social, and economic structures (Berenskoetter, 2017). Michailakis and Schirmer (2019) argue that the system of politics detects and approaches problems in a different way than the system of science or the economic system does. I therefore wanted to analyze the concept in different contexts, using written material authored by actors within different societal systems; economic-, political- and scientific.

This categorization is inspired by the system theory (Michailakis and Schirmer 2019). The point of systems theory is that different system are somewhat closed systems, and everything they see from the outside is drawn into this logic (Michailakis & Schirmer, 2019). Michailakis and Schirmer (2019) argue that within a system, there are several organizations. The organizations within the political system can be the state, the government, authorities, parties, etc. The scientific system can be represented by universities or private research institutes but also academic publishers and journals. The economic system can be represented by private and social enterprises, businesses, non- profit organizations and investment companies. Non- profit organizations are included in the economic system because they can make profits, and are in that way part of the economy, but any profits are reinvested for social or organizational benefit. It is an important notion that I have mainly used this system theory as an inspiration for dividing different actors into groups, and to get a general understanding of the different character each system represent. Hence, I will not elaborate on the system theory any further in this thesis.

My research question is;

*In what way is the concept of social entrepreneurship presented by actors within different systems?*



The analysis is limited to the Norwegian context. My aim is not to clarify and conclude on what social entrepreneurship is. Rather my aim has been to study the interaction between the language (semantic field) presented by different systems. Based on the analysis of the above question, I will subsequently offer a discussion of the implicit power that may hide in the semantic field. Heggen and Engebretsen (2012) describes that terms and concepts have a distinctive impact on our understanding of society, and in that way help to create frameworks for legitimate actions, which gives the use of terms considerable power. This is not usually power that comes out clearly, but the power lies implicitly and need to be analyzed to appear. (Christoffersen, 2010; Heggen & Engebretsen, 2012).

### **Structure of this thesis**

In chapter 2, *Theory and method*, I will first introduce arguments for why a concept analysis of social entrepreneurship is relevant. Furthermore, I will present the conceptual historical perspectives I have used as a basis for the analyses, represented mainly by Reinhart Koselleck. I then explain the different analytical approaches from his work, that I will use throughout my analysis. I have emphasized explaining the theoretical elements that are particularly relevant to my specific analysis. I will also elaborate on different theories I found relevant for my later analysis. I will then introduce my analysis and explain how I will conduct it, I will discuss and introduce the selection of the text material. Chapter 2 is ending with a description of my research approach and reflections over criteria for determining the quality of my analysis. Chapter 3, *Introduction to the concept*, presents the origin of the concept, what role social entrepreneurship plays in Norway today, and definitions presented by different actors within the different systems. Chapter 3 is meant as an historical and informative introduction, to better understand what the concept is about. In chapter 4, *Analysis of the semantic field*, I conduct a diachronic analysis, using Koselleck's framework and terms. I will discuss and highlight my findings throughout by showing examples from the different text material, and through two different figures I have developed. I will end this thesis with chapter 5, *Conclusion*, where I will summarize my analysis up against the research question.

## **Chapter 2- Theory and method**

To answer my research question, I will conduct a concept analysis. A concept analysis is often associated with the research design of philosophical inquiry, and the purpose of philosophical inquiry is to perform research using intellectual analysis to clarify meaning (Botes, 2002). My main text material came out of specific searches in different data bases, which I will further elaborate later in this thesis. I have decided to put- *Theory and Method* - together as one chapter because I experienced that the methodical conceptual analysis theory and other political and scientific theories are overlapping. All theories presented will work as a guideline to what I am going to look for in the text material for the later analysis.

### **Why is it relevant to conduct a concept analysis of social entrepreneurship?**

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as an active area of practice and research within the last decades. However, despite its growing popularity, scholars and practitioners are far from reaching an agreement as to what social entrepreneurship actually entails (Choi & Majumdar, 2014). This has resulted in several different definitions and approaches to the concept (Choi & Majumdar, 2014). Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) argue that

*“As a newly emerging field, social entrepreneurs and social enterprises are an organizational landscape that is difficult to define, because it emerges in different contexts in countries with different economic conditions and welfare models. They are organizations located between sectors, and which may be linked to different sectors in different countries, for example depending on the extent of the welfare state”*  
(Eimhjellen and Loga, 2016, p. 18)

The diversity of organizations calling themselves social enterprises makes it difficult to give a clear definition of this type of organization. Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) argue that some associate the concept with non-profit organizations that use commercial methods. Others understand the concept to mean starting up a new non-profit-driven, not-for-profit business. While others link the term to company managers and owners who include social responsibility and philanthropy in their business operations. Social entrepreneurship as a field can therefore be difficult to understand. Sara Prosser (2022), who was employed in Oslo commune to explore the potential of social enterprise and innovation state that there is a

need for clarity concerning definitions and awareness around social entrepreneurship in Norway.

In the system of research, different research traditions and definitions are also linked to the phenomenon, which in turn has its background in the fact that the phenomenon has emerged in different contexts in different countries (Eimhjellen and Loga, 2016). As a field of research, different definitions are also attached to the phenomenon from different professional fields. Economists have their input, civil society researchers have theirs, and researchers with a focus on the public sector often have other emphases (Kobro et al., 2017). Choi and Majumdar (2014) have made an analysis with the aim to shed light on the ongoing contestation of social entrepreneurship, and to offer a novel conceptual understanding of the concept that can facilitate the development of systematic and structured future research. They conclude that there is no official scientific agreement regarding the proper use of the concept, and that a universal definition that would be accepted among contestant parties is hardly possible.

Kobro et al. (2017) uses the term "the hybrid state" about Norway. They describe that the emerging field of social innovation and social entrepreneurship in various forms will fit well under such a term because it is difficult to place social entrepreneurship in sectors, industries and in clear knowledge segments (Kobro et al., 2017, p. 13).

This hybrid distinction correspond with what is argued to be a shift in knowledge production, going from "Mode 1" to "Mode 2" (Gibbons et al. 1994, referred to in Carayannis, 2020). Mode 1 designates a way of producing knowledge that emphasizes a traditional understanding and refers to university basic research, with little interest in knowledge application, and being organized in context of academic disciplines. Here, the established peers of the academic disciplines define and decide on quality- acceptance and rejection of work. Mode 2 already expresses a greater interest in knowledge application and is characterized by the following principles: knowledge produced in the context of application, transdisciplinarity, heterogeneity and organizational diversity, social accountability, and reflexivity, and finally "quality control" (Gibbons et al. 1994 referred to in Carayannis, 2020). Usually, teams are brought together for short periods and work on specific problems in the

society for knowledge production (applied research). In mode 2, the research must appeal to politicians, the society, and the economic system, making the lines between systems blurrier. Universities have had to adapt, to the need to seek alternative ties sources of funding from businesses, industry, civil society, and non-national state actors. Michailakis and Schirmer (2019) also argue that different systems now depend on each other, and that every system operates in the context of each other. The transition from mode 1 to mode 2 can therefore be a contributing factor for concepts having different and somewhat unclear meanings.

The methods of research have also changed in recent years. This can be exemplified through looking closer at the YouCount project design where the aim is to investigate whether youth citizen science is an effective way for finding new knowledge on drivers for social inclusion of youth in Europe. According to The European Commission et al. (2022) an increasing number of citizen science projects and initiatives are being implemented across Europe. The usages of co-researchers and the fact that research is to become more widespread means that these previously clear divisions are more indistinct. Citizen Social Science is defined as involving equal collaboration between citizen groups (co-researchers) that are sharing a social concern and academic researchers. Citizen science is currently launched by the European Commission (EC) as an open science priority. It's important to note that even though these divisions are more indistinct now, this rapidly emerging mode of research and innovation can also show potential in terms of achieving greater societal impact and increasing trust in science.

### **Choice of analytical perspective**

The study of concepts has long occupied a prominent place among historians and philosophers (Berenskoetter, 2017). As mentioned earlier, the basic idea in conceptual history is to give researchers new perspectives on social and political phenomena that are usually interpreted as a matter of course (Boréus & Bergström, 2018). As the name demonstrate, Berenskoetter (2017) argue that the historical approach highlights the temporal context to provide a better understanding of a concept's place in and evolution throughout history. However, the motivation is not only historical curiosity and to enlighten how concepts were used in the past. It also generates a better understanding of how concepts "push us to think along certain lines, thus enabling us to conceive of how to act on alternative and less constraining definitions of our situations" (Berenskoetter, 2017, p. 162).

Boréus and Bergström (2018) describe that there are two main directions within conceptual history. One developed by the German historian Reinhart Koselleck and the other by the British historian Quentin Skinner. Both Koselleck and Skinner approach history through language, with the main emphasis on central social and political concepts. They represent both a text-analytical and a historical approach and have a theoretical and analytical apparatus that is suitable for capturing conceptual changes and seeing these in a larger societal and political context. A concept analysis can provide important insight into the concepts semantic changes, i.e., changes in meaning, and at the same time highlight more implicit premises for social and political societal development. Concept history puts the concepts in focus, as the relationship between language and reality is understood as a relationship of mutual influence (Koselleck 2002; Skinner 2002 referred to in Christoffersen 2010).

#### [Reinhart Koselleck's theory](#)

In 1972, Reinhart Koselleck started work on the imposing *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. This lexicon, more than any other work on similar analysis, served to establish *Begriffsgeschichte* or conceptual history, as an academic discipline, indeed as a central discipline in historical studies. The collection contains 120 basic political and social terms and their history and was intended to be a study of the conceptualization of the shift between a pre-modern and modern world (Jordheim, 2001). Koselleck argued that the collection was an “investigation of the dissolution of the old world and the emergence of the modern world in Germany by tracking the history of how this transformation was grasped and articulated in the basic concepts used in German social and political language” (Richter & Richter, 2006, p. 346) It's further explained that Koselleck was not only interested in identifying "modern" meanings, but it also required demonstrating how “concepts came to carry overlapping old and new meanings or to have acquired altogether new meanings” (Richter & Richter, 2006, p. 347)

Koselleck is often placed within a hermeneutic tradition. According to Olsen (2014) he is inspired by Hans-Georg Gadamer's thoughts that language absorbs experiences, and at the same time expects such experiences by placing them in linguistic contexts that exist prior to

the experiences itself. This means that language determines how we understand the world and that linguistic changes always also involve changes in how we understand our historical reality. What this indicate is the idea that history is a result of conceptualization of the past by the people who tell it (Jordheim, 2004; Christoffersen, 2010).

Koselleck argues that “a concept bundles up the variety of historical experience together with collection of theoretical and practical references into a relation that is given and can be experienced only through concepts” (Koselleck, 1985, p. 86). He further states that “while concepts have political and social capacities, their semantic function and performance is not uniquely a result of the social and political circumstances to which they relate”. (Koselleck, 1985, p. 86). He does not believe that studying concepts can give us full access to reality as it is or history as it was. Rather, his starting point is that through a thorough analysis of the semantic content of concepts, we can gain new and greater insight into history through the experiences, systems of thought and theoretical frameworks that are at play in the concepts themselves (Koselleck & White, 2002).

Berenskoetter (2017) explains that concepts tend to be attached to words, although not necessarily always to the same word. As such, a concept is more than a word. Whereas the meaning of a word points to one thing, a concept catches and bundles multiple elements, aspects and experiences and relates them to each other. To than make sense of this configuration, Koselleck describes that we need to analyze how the concept relates to other terms or concepts that appear together with it. He calls this space where meaning is created as the semantic field (Koselleck, 1958; Heggen & Engebretsen, 2012). This semantic field will create a web of concepts (*Begriffsnetz*), and in this web, three kinds of links are prevalent:

- *Supporting concepts*, meaning they are integral to the meaning of our concept (sovereignty for the state)
- *Cognate concepts*, with similar meanings, meaning they correspond with each other, also called family resemblance (football and basketball; both ballgames)
- *Contrasting concepts*, that are opposite in meaning, sometimes even taking the form of counter-concepts (as in reactionary -revolutionary), which relate to and inform each other through a dialectic

(Berenskoetter, 2016, p.158).

These links of terms and concepts form a conceptual web, and they do not need to be grounded in logic, but can be unusual, sentimental, normative, and random in character (Berenskoetter, 2017). This web of concepts can also form what is called a cluster concept (Gaut, 2000). Cluster concept can also be conglomerate of certain concepts, which represent the defining properties of the cluster concept, and which can occur in varying degrees and various combinations in different instantiations of the concept (Gaut, 2000).

To further understand why a concept is interpreted in a particular way, there is a need to pay attention to context. It is here important to be looking at environment, and the relationship between the concept and the context (Berenskoetter, 2016). This is a key element in this thesis, because my main aim is to compare and investigate the concept in different context, in this case different systems.

Another important aspect of Koselleck's theory is the idea that concepts contain temporal levels, meaning that there are always different degrees of movement about past, present and the future in a concept. According to Berenskoetter (2016) the temporal dimension is about studying the historicity of a concept, and how it evolves over time. Heggen and Engebretsen (2012) argue that concepts not only contain traces of what has been, but also premises for what is to come. Terms contains both a "space of experience" and a "horizon of expectations", to use Koselleck's own expression. Language is thus understood not only as a mediator of experience and meaning, but also as productive (Jordheim, 2001). This can put Koselleck's conceptual history to a constructivist perspective (Christoffersen, 2010).

Koselleck also distinguishes between a synchronic and a diachronic approach to analysis. A synchronic analysis is based on data collected at the same time- period, while a diachronic approach use data collected from different time-periods. The diachronic approach is effective to see the historical development of concepts. The synchronic approach is favorable when it comes to reconstruct "concepts in action", which investigates the complexity of how a concept performs and changes in a temporally and spatially limited setting (Berenskoetter, 2017). Heggen & Engebretsen (2012) explains that synchronic analysis focuses on the term's

semantic, social, and political context at a given time. I will conduct a synchronic analysis in this thesis since I'm using text material from the same time-period.

#### Understanding of concepts

According to Risjord (2014) scientific concepts are different from everyday concepts because they are deliberately refined. Notions like "gene" or "atom" were developed to explain observed phenomena, but in the social sciences we have concepts like "innovation" and "culture." All by itself, these concepts do not explain anything, just as a single word it does not mean anything (Risjord, 2014). Words must be combined into sentences, and it is the sentences that are true or false, believable, or unbelievable, well or poorly justified.

Koselleck distinguishes between concepts and terms. A concept is always a term, but a term is not always a concept. The central point in the distinction is that a concept must always remain ambiguous. While a term's meaning can be made clear considering its referential function in a specific context, concepts cannot be definitively defined (Koselleck 1985; Jordheim 2001).

The concept of social entrepreneurship is perhaps not what Koselleck would call a *Grundbegriff*, with a major impact on our understanding of social and political phenomena - such as democracy, the state or freedom. However, I still find the use of conceptual history analytical tools to analyze the concept of social entrepreneurship appropriate, because it covers my needs in mapping the semantic field and answering my research question, which I will elaborate on further.

#### *Contested- or cluster concept*

Essentially contested concepts is a theory proposed by Walter Bryce Gallie in 1955. He was a social and political theorist and uses an example of "art" as a contested concept. The statement "this picture is a work of art" is liable to be contested, since there is no agreement on what constitutes a "work of art" (Gallie, 1955, p. 167). In other words, there is no agreement regarding the proper use of the concept of "art". Gallie (1955) suggests a method to clarify the definitional and conceptual problem of contested concepts. This clarification does not suggest any best meaning, but explains, in the case of a special group of concepts,

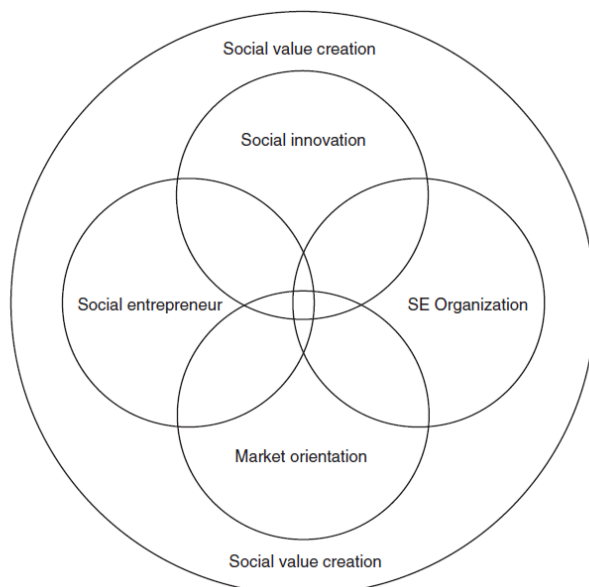


the reasons and the root causes for the conceptual problem and implicates that arguments about these concepts' proper meanings can never really be settled (Gallie, 1955, p. 152).

Choi and Majumdar (2014) have analyzed the concept of social entrepreneurship globally through the criteria of contested concepts and concludes that “an universal definition of social entrepreneurship that would be accepted among contestant parties is hardly possible” (Choi & Majumdar, 2014, p. 63). Responding to this recognition, the article proposes the conceptualization of social entrepreneurship as a cluster concept, which can serve as a conceptual tool to help advancing social entrepreneurship as a coherent field of research despite its contested nature.

They identified five sub- concepts making social entrepreneurship a cluster concept. The five sub- concepts identified where: (1) Social value creation, (2) the social entrepreneur, (3) The SE organization, (4) market orientation, and (5) social innovation. (Choi & Majumdar, 2014, p. 73).

*Figure 1: Social entrepreneurship as a cluster concept by Choi & Majumdar (2014)*



They further emphasize that conceptualizing social entrepreneurship as a cluster implies that it is a representation of the combined quality of these different sub-concepts.

### Political rhetoric and power

To the extent that this study will find variation in the semantic field and different definitions, this may give the concept political and economic power. Jordheim and Neumann (2011) have described how concepts can be political, and that a study of concepts "takes us directly into the place where politics is made, namely in language" (Jordheim & Neumann, 2011, p. 153). Heggen and Engebretsen (2014) also argue that a concept analysis can study how terms are used as rhetorical weapons in political battles. As described earlier, Koselleck argue that concepts have no definitive determined meaning. This semantic flexibility opens the possibility for different use, and rhetorical battles over how to conceptualize a term. Jordheim and Neumann (2011) argue that hierarchy in world politics must be discussed by means of specific concepts, because concepts come with specific historical and social baggage. They are further defined by their meanings and use and become powerful in battle with other concepts. This semantic flexibility can also be an important tool, according to Holder and Layard (2010). In a discussion about European legislative and policy terms, Holder and Layard (2010) argue that concepts with an uncertain character can be used strategically, exactly because they are easy to sign up to and therefore provide opportunities for diverse interpretations. This flexibility can be helpful for politicians or scientists to make room to navigate in practice.

As described earlier, Heggen and Engebretsen (2012) argue that terms and concepts have a distinctive impact on our understanding of society and in that way help to create frameworks for legitimate actions, which give the use of terms considerable power. They argue that by putting new concepts into play, power practices can be changed. This is not usually power that comes out clearly, but the power lies implicitly and prepares the ground for everyone to authorize a new political room for action. This form of implicit power can be just as effective as the more visible power, but it must be analyzed to appear (Christoffersen, 2010; Heggen & Engebretsen, 2012).

Jessop (2012) argues that there is created "hegemonic economic imaginaries", a coherent set of ideas and expectations that simplify, and thereby frame, a complex social reality from a particular perspective (Jessop, 2012, p. 58). This means kinds of mental figures for how the economy works, which dominate in our discussions about society's development. He

believes that capitalism has both 'semiotic and material dynamics'. The semiotic dynamics help to create these figures of thought, which in turn give us new value systems and rankings of what works and not, what is good and bad, new visions and so on. The semiotic dynamics can also give concepts positive and negatively loaded associations.

Jessop (2012) further argue that political system can achieve credibility by applying seemingly scientific concepts. At the same time, science and private actors can achieve research grants, relevance, and funding, by making use of terms that are of interest in the political system. Concepts can in this way be powerful and can therefore also be used strategically in politician battles. The shift to mode 2 knowledge production may contribute and change the power inherent in a concept. This is so because researchers must adapt to what politicians at the time wants, because that generate funding. The economic system may also adapt and be influenced of what is "in the wind" at the time.

As mentioned earlier, Koselleck argues that history is created through conceptualizations. The actors and who creates this history can vary from, politicians, professional historians, researchers, and ordinary citizens. According to this theory history can be created different in different systems. Jessop (2012) recognizes that different actors can have different understandings of the terms and concepts and put different meaning to terms and concepts. He points out that popular terms such as innovation is a "transdiscursive term", that is, terms with significant rhetorical functions that flourish at the interface between science, public discourse, and politics. The problem with such terms may be that they hide important differences between them, and that the different systems put different meanings to the term.

### **Introduction to my analysis**

As I have studied the concept of social entrepreneurship, I have used an analytical tool to particularly capture both the term's semantic meaning and function. I'm using Koselleck's analytical approach, doing a synchronous analysis of the semantic field. I have looked for supporting concepts, cognate concepts, contrasting concepts and the concept's temporality. Koselleck is especially interested in exploring how conceptual changes correlated with the discontinuity of political, social, and economic structures (Berenskoetter, 2017). My analyzes

are therefore based on ten different web sites or reports, authored by actors within different systems; economic, political and science. I have also analyzed how the concept can generate different meanings depended on who describe them, and in this way potentially have political influence and power. I wanted to see if I could find interesting nuances depending on the context. I have also looked for differences or similarities in how actors within the three systems describe and present the concept. Do they emphasize different things?

I have structured the presentations of my findings under several themes that emerged from the analysis. My findings are clarified by showing examples through text extract and quotations.

### **Searches and selection of data**

I have done different searches to find litterateur relevant for the research question in mainly five databases: Academic search ultimate, Oria database, database of *SESAM- Senter for sosialt entreprenørskap og samskapende sosial innovasjon*, Google Scholar and Google. Search streams I used was both in English and Norwegian. I have also been in contact with some researchers and founders on the field of social entrepreneurship in cooperation with the YouCount project. The aim for contacting these people was to get tips for relevant litterateur.

The selection of the specific text material used in the analysis is based on my searches, popularity, and relevance. It's also based on who has the most hits and comes up first when typing "social entrepreneurship" in search engines as Google. As google engines will vary depending on who does the searches, I am aware that my searches might be unique and customized for me. I'm also aware that private companies can pay google to appear first (on top) when there is made searches around their topic. Nevertheless, I found this to be relevant and useful when selecting text material, because this can influence the overall understanding of the concept.

## Text material

Below I will present my text material represented by different actors divided into systems.

### Economic system

#### Ferd Social Entrepreneurs

Ferd is an investment company. Their own description says that they through a combination of capital, expertise and networks strengthen companies' opportunities for success. They also collaborate with the public sector to create tools and framework conditions for interaction and cooperation with social entrepreneurs.

I use their website under the heading, *what is social entrepreneurship*, as text material, and they are referred to as Ferd (2022).

Ferd (2022), *Hva er sosialt entreprenørskap?* Ferd.no, Retrieved 06.05.22 from:

<https://ferd.no/sosiale-entreprenorer/sosialt-entreprenorskap/>

#### Innenforskning.no

Website with information about social entrepreneurship. The platform has digital meeting places, and according to the author of the webpage Odd-Eirik Eriksen, the aim of the webpage is to motivate people to start up and spreads good vibes. I am using their webpage under the heading, *hva er sosialt entreprenørskap* (what is social entrepreneurship), as text material, and it is referred to as Eriksen (2020).

Eriksen, O. (2020, 20.juni) *Hva er sosialt entreprenørskap?* Innenforskning.no, Retrieved from:<https://innenforskning.no/sosialt-entreprenorskap/hva-er-sosialt-entreprenorskap>

#### Tøyen Unlimited

Tøyen Unlimited is an independent organization. They describe their aim to support enthusiasts with innovative ideas that can solve social challenges at Tøyen through social entrepreneurship and local roots. Tøyen Unlimited is a stakeholder and subcontractor in YouCount. They also describe themselves as a neighborhood incubator and are based at Tøyen in the city part of "Gamle Oslo" - which is YouCount's case area.

I am using their whole webpage as text material, referred to as Tøyen Unlimited (2022).

Tøyen Unlimited (2022), tøyenunlimited.no, retrieved 20.09.22 from <https://www.toyenunlimited.no/>

### Political system

I have based my analysis upon three different text material representing the political system. My thesis writing has coincided with a shift from a conservative to social democratic government. This has resulted in diverse material which might reflect different political views. One webpage presents policy deliberations on social entrepreneurship prepared under the right-wing government in 2019, and the other material is a report from 2018, but fronted by the center-left- wing government in 2022. The main difference here is that the government in 2021 have their own article on what social entrepreneurship is, and why they think it is an important investment area. While the current center-left- wing government shows directly to a report called *Cooperation on social entrepreneurship*. I decided to include these in the analysis because I wanted to see if the semantic field and especially the political rhetoric could change in the various text depending on which government presenting the concept. However, I'm only scratching the surface in comparing these two. For further research it will be interesting to investigate several documents to analyze these nuances deeper.

### Government 2019

This text material is from government.no downloaded under the right-wing government. The headline was *Sosialt entreprenørskap* (social entrepreneurship). This article was developed by the minister of labor and social affairs in 2019. This material is referred to as Government (2019).

Gouvernement (2019, 5. december), *Sosialt entreprenørskap*, Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet. Retrieved: 06.10.21 from:

<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/arbeidsliv/arbeidsmarked-og-syssetsetting/innsikt/sosialt-entreprenorskaps/id2009201/>

### *Minister of Labor and Social affairs*

This text material is a report called *Samarbeid om sosialt entreprenørskap* (Cooperation on social entrepreneurship). It's originally published in 2018 by the Minister of Labor and Social affairs in cooperation with many ministries. A cross-ministerial working group was established to review and assess possible follow-up of a report from a Nordic working group that has mapped efforts for social entrepreneurship and social innovation in the Nordic countries.

I am using this document as text material, and it's referred to as the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018). This report did not include page numbers, so the quotations are referred to the page number I got after downloading the report.

Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet (2018) *Samarbeid om sosialt entreprenørskap*, retrieved 10.08.22 from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/samarbeid-om-sosialt-entreprenorskaf/id2585672/?ch=1>

### *The Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV)*

NAV consists of both municipal and state services. I'm using their webpage that describes what is needed to get grants for social entrepreneurship in Norway as text material. Referred to as NAV (2022).

NAV (2022, 1. oktober) *Tilskudd til sosiale entreprenører og sosialt entreprenørskap for 2022*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nav.no/no/nav-og-samfunn/samarbeid/tilskudd-gjennom-nav/nyheter/tilskudd-til-sosiale-entreprenorer-og-sosialt-entreprenorskaf-for-2016>

### Science system

#### *SESAM – Center for social entrepreneurship and co-creative social innovation*

I have used the database of SESAM in finding relevant research reports. Main text material is the report developed by Eimhjellen, I., & Loga, J. (2016) *Utvikling av sosialt entreprenørskap i Norge* (development of social entrepreneurship in Norway).

Eimhjellen, I., & Loga, J. (2016). Utvikling av sosialt entreprenørskap i Norge. In: NORCE Samfunnsforskning

Another report developed by SESAM which I'm using as text material is: Kobro, L.U. mfl. (2017): *Statlige rammevilkår på ramme alvor*. Sosialt entreprenørskap i norsk offentlig kontekst (State framework conditions taken seriously. Social entrepreneurship in the Norwegian public context).

Kobro, L. U., Røtnes, R., Eggen, F. W., & Skar, C. (2017). Statlige rammevilkår på ramme alvor. Sosialt entreprenørskap i norsk offentlig kontekst. In: Høgskolen i Sørøst-Norge Nr 14/2017. Porsgrunn: Høgskolen i Sørøst-Norge.

#### *YouCount*

I have used two different reports produced by actors within the YouCount project. The project proposal called *Project funding application to "EU Horizon 2020"*, referred to as YouCount Proposal (2020).

YouCount Proposal. (2020). *Project funding application to "EU Horizon 2020"*.  
Proposal number: 101005931. Delivered 23. April 2020.

I have used notes, presented as a literature review, from Sarah Prosser, who was employed in Oslo commune to explore the potential of social enterprise and innovation (VID, 2018). This note was developed as an order from the YouCount project and is an overview of important scientific and popular-science publications on social entrepreneurship and youth in Norway.

Prosser, Sarah (2022) Sosialt entreprenørskap og ungdom/unge voksne. Internal note YouCount, Arbeidsforskningsinstituttet, OsloMet - storbyuniversitetet



## **Research approach**

As earlier described was the main inspiration for this thesis the way researchers in YouCount wanted to investigate how social entrepreneurship could lead to social inclusion. I started doing wide searches about social entrepreneurship, and I found it hard to capture what social entrepreneurship really was about, and how to define it. I discovered different approaches by searching in different databases, and this is how I ended up doing a concept analysis. After selecting my text material, I started to read them thoroughly and look for repetitive terms and words that seemed central in the descriptions of the concept. I needed theoretical and analytical perspectives that pay special attention to language and concepts, and that also deals with the question of the interaction between concepts and political rhetoric and power. I found the approach by Koselleck as the most fitting to answer my research question as he also highlighted the importance of context, which suited with the idea that I wanted to compare systems. I am only using central elements from Koselleck's conceptual history approach. This means that I do not provide a thorough description of Koselleck's theoretical and analytical approaches to conceptual historical research. It's an important notion that this analysis is a qualitative analysis, where I analyze language, terms and concepts used by the different authors. Mapping of semantic fields can also be done with a quantitative approach, done by counting terms and concepts that appear together with the main concept. One of the reasons I didn't find this approach fitting to my research question was because of the range of words and size of my text material.

### [Mapping the semantic field, prioritization, and use of quotations](#)

I have studied the different text material in their entirety, but for a more detailed analysis I have selected certain parts of the text which I perceive to be particularly relevant for elucidating the concept of social entrepreneurship. In the prioritization of what to illuminate I have particularly studied the parts of the text where the concept is explained. I look for how it is defined and what other terms or concepts that appear in these definitions. This gives a picture of which other terms and concepts social entrepreneurship is particularly related to. I have also studied other terms which do not necessarily appear in the definitions of the concept, but which especially caught my attention, or are highlighted in several of the texts. This gives me a picture of the central concepts in its semantic field and points out which concepts I should focus on next to the main concept. I have also prioritized parts of the text

where the actors explain what makes social entrepreneurship advantageous, or attractive for the Norwegian welfare state. Such sections of text often clarify the main features of both the systems of understanding and the main political arguments for the use of social entrepreneurship. Mapping the semantic field in this thesis consists of looking for concepts or terms that frequently appear together with the concept of social entrepreneurship and which relationships exist between them. Examples of such relationships can be whether they are synonyms (supporting concepts), or whether they can be characterized as opposite- or counter terms. The composition of the concepts in the semantic field and the relationships between them gives me such nuanced information about how the concept is understood, what are its most important dimensions and what delimits it from other concepts.

The specific selection of quotations is based on how to best show why I ended up with my conclusions. I have also used quotations that illustrate the relationships that are created between the various concepts to illuminate how the conceptual relationships together form specific political frameworks of understanding and how the semantic field can create implicit power. An important notion is that my quotations from webpages are not accompanied with page numbers, as webpages are unpaginated. Yet the quotes are easily searchable on the webpages.

### **Criteria for determining the quality of my analysis**

A conceptual analysis is based on some theoretical premises that have consequences for the kind of research questions which are relevant to ask, and the type of answer that can be given. A consequence of this is that my analyzes do not aim to clarify and conclude on what social entrepreneurship is. Rather my aim has been to study the interaction between the language (semantic field) in the different context, presented by different systems. However, I do present several definitions and relevant theory regarding the concept throughout this thesis.

By studying the semantic field, I have become aware of more implicit tendencies, tendencies that might otherwise be easy to overlook. Such an analysis can therefore contribute to providing new perspectives on the interaction between the choice of language and terms, and the power that lies in language.

A common objection to qualitative research is that it does not live up to the reliability and validity requirements that are standards in quantitative research (Merrick 1999). Qualitative research in general involves an interpretive approach to a research object, and the researcher herself is an important tool in the research process. In qualitative research, one works analytically with material that has no clear key to interpretation. The goal is not primarily to find a truth, but to contribute to new and hopefully interesting perspectives on a phenomenon and to achieve a more nuanced understanding. Koselleck argues that concepts cannot be given definite meaning, they can only be interpreted and give us new and greater insight into history through the experiences, systems of thought and theoretical frameworks that are at play (Koselleck & White, 2002). Within the qualitative research tradition, there are therefore many who advocate that the terms' reliability and validity must be given a different content in the assessment of qualitative research than of quantitative studies (Merrick 1999).

My findings, that I will present below are connected to my perspectives and my interpretations of the material. Mapping a semantic field is a work of construction. Acknowledgment that the researcher is central in the construction of knowledge leads qualitative researchers to emphasize the reflexive aspects of the research process (Risjord, 2014; Merrick, 1999). Reflexivity is about the researcher reflecting on his/her preconceptions originating in the world they live in. Commitment to reflexivity suggests that "the research topic, design, and process, together with the personal experience of doing the research, are reflected on and critically evaluated throughout" (Merrick, 1999, p. 6).

I am aware that my mapping and prioritizing of concepts in the semantic field could have shed light on other interesting nuances than those I have studied. However, this does not mean that the mapping of the semantic fields and the interpretations I have made are governed by randomness or chance. I have tried to proceed in a methodically consistent manner and to give an account of the procedure I have used. I have also validated my interpretations and results through use of text extracts and quotations, so that the reader can decide for himself/herself whether my interpretations seem reasonable and well-founded or not. Nevertheless, the text extracts are based on selection, which necessarily means that I give priority weight to certain parts of the text at the expense of others. In this way, it can be objected that my analysis and my results are also the product of construction. I

cannot avoid this dilemma. However, I have explained how I have made these selections and why I have prioritized as I have. This is to ensure that the readers have an opportunity to assess these criteria and decide on the reasonableness of my analyzes and the conclusions I draw. I have also tried to include nuances and ambiguities in the texts and be critical to my own findings.

My values and interest will also influence my research. To navigate this, I have tried to consider my biases and interpret my understandings along the way. My own experience with activities under the notion of social entrepreneurship is from my former work as a caseworker in child welfare. I got familiar with various organizations and enterprises calling themselves social entrepreneurs. They mainly offered support or jobs to young people. I found it difficult to use or take advantage of these social entrepreneurs and what they offered, because the municipal framework made it difficult to incorporate new or different suppliers than what was already approved. I am therefore aware that this can influence my interpretations regarding how the political system approach social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, I have no experience of working in, or collaborating closely with someone who calls themselves social entrepreneurs, which I think can be a strength in the objectivity of this analysis.

Another notion is that I have been included in the YouCount research team, and I must therefore be aware of the independence of my research as I have gotten to know the other team members and could end up reporting and interpreting from their perspective (Kvale, 1996). Also, I must be aware that I could adopt an “insider” perspective, described in Hammersley & Atkinson(1996), menaing I don’t have to make biased analyses because of a too-close involvement.

#### [Implications of translating Norwegian material to English](#)

Another important issue is that most of my text material is originally in Norwegian. I have used various translation tools in the process. As a concept analysis is precisely about linguistics, language and the choice of terms and words in the semantic field, it is particularly important that my translation is as correct as possible. I have mainly used google translate, but important terms and concepts has been further reviewed. The selection of which terms I

use when in doubt, has been double-checked mainly with the Cambridge dictionary, but also other English-speaking friends and supervisor. An example of the difficulties I encountered in the translation is the use of the term “innovative”. It is described in my text material in Norwegian that something is; “nyskapende”, in addition the same actor have used the term “innovativ”. In English, "nyskapende" is directly translated into “innovative”, so when one actor uses both the term “nyskapende” and “innovativ” I have chosen to translate both to the term “innovative”. This can contribute to my interpretations not being as accurate as it could have been if all my text material was originally in English.

## **Chapter 3- Introduction to the concept**

To get a greater understanding of the concept and a basis for further reading I will present an overview of the origin and history of the concept. In this chapter I will further present what role social entrepreneurship plays in Norway and how the different actors representing different systems define social entrepreneurship.

### **Origin of social entrepreneurship: Where does the concept come from?**

According to Eimhjellen & Loga (2016), social entrepreneurship is a popular concept and phenomenon, which is growing in large parts of the world, especially in the USA and southern European countries. While the idea of economic systems incorporating social good with social entrepreneurship is new, the basis for more inclusive societies can be seen throughout history. What the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship represents has occurred long before the specific term came to life. The drive to engage and create better social opportunities are very human traits. This can be exemplified by the fact that the world's most popular religions attempt to codify it into their belief systems. In Christianity, Jesus demonstrated acts of service, in Islam Muhammad encouraged waqf (charitable endowments), in Buddhism the Buddha taught compassion, and in Hinduism the giving "dana" (charity) is a part of one's dharma. Max Weber also argues that the role of (Protestant) religion in motivating people to take entrepreneurial activity, lead to the rise of capitalism in the West (Spear, 2010).

As a term, social entrepreneurship can be linked to several other terms that cut across the social and the economic realms such as social enterprise, social economy, solidarity economy and social innovation. The term "social enterprise" first appeared in Europe in 1990 as a new initiative. In 1991, the Italian Parliament passed a law creating a separate legal framework for so-called "social cooperatives". Parallel to this, the terms "social enterprises" and "social entrepreneurs" also appeared in the USA, in connection with innovation and entrepreneurial environments at various universities. In several European countries and in organizations such as the European Commission and the OECD, there has been developed several political action plans, legislation, and grant schemes as a contribution to facilitating the emergence of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises. This occurred especially after the financial crisis in 2007-2008 (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016). From 1996 the European Commission has

supported the establishment of a research network called EMES, which has the goal of gathering comparative knowledge and build up an international corpus of theoretical and empirical knowledge around SE concepts in different countries (EMES, 2022).

Social entrepreneurship and social enterprises therefore appeared in parallel in the USA and several European countries in the first half of the 1990s, although the field developed in different ways. In the southern European countries, the concept emerged as part of the new so-called solidarity economy and social economy, and of organizational forms that were common within the cooperative movement. That is, organizations at the intersection between the voluntary and private sector and which often combine ideal commitment and commercial methods. Hulgård and Andersen (2009) referred to in Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) believe that the terms reached Scandinavia partly via the European social economic tradition and particularly with inspiration from countries such as Belgium, France and Italy.

### **What role does social entrepreneurship play in Norway?**

Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) attempted to assess the field of social entrepreneurs in Norway. They sent out a questionnaire and received responses from 179 social entrepreneurs. Based on organizational form, they could place approximately half within the private sector and the other half within the voluntary sector (voluntary organizations, non-profit foundations, and cooperatives). As organizations, social entrepreneurs operate with several bottom lines, and are motivated by one or more social purposes, which are supposed to be greater than the desire to produce profit (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016). This is what mainly distinguishes them from traditional businesses. Nevertheless, they are organized and financed with commercial methods, but also generate their own income, which again distinguishes them from organizations in the voluntary sector. In this way, social entrepreneurs find themselves between the private, voluntary, and public sectors. They seek to combine the best from each sector, and to build relationships between the sectors (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016).

The report published by the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) state that there is a desire for more cooperation, to make better use of social entrepreneurs in the welfare state in Norway. Cooperation between public authorities and social entrepreneurs often takes place through public procurement. The report emphasizes the importance of both

employees in the public sector and social entrepreneurs having good knowledge of the possibilities inherent in the procurement regulations, and how innovative procurement can be carried out. There is an information booklet called; *Ways to cooperation* (Kobro, 2018) that has a separate chapter on how to set up a procurement process to open dialogue between purchasers, users, and suppliers. It also provides information about how social entrepreneurs can go about entering dialogue with the public sector and participating in competitions for public procurement.

Eimhjellen & Loga (2016) argue that the reason for fewer social enterprises in Scandinavia than rest of Europe is about the fact that the Nordic welfare state is comprehensive and covers most social needs. Prosser (2022) argue that the reason for few social enterprises in Norway, is due to lack of impact from financial crisis, and low degree of welfare provision by third sector. Also, that there is “Not enough political interest in the two discourses now: i) increasing the role of private actors in welfare provision or ii) social enterprise as an instrument for social innovation” (Prosser, 2022, p.10).

Norwegian actors also do not have the opportunity to set up a social enterprise as they have in many other European countries. The company setups we have available are thus not completely suitable for social entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, political initiatives have recently been launched in Norway with the desire to increase efforts particularly towards work inclusion (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016). This effort consists of stimulation of entrepreneurship and the development of new businesses, encouragement of innovation both in business and social work, and an increased focus on the need for efficiency and restructuring of the welfare state (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016). The rise of actors who want to invest in social causes and who offer various forms of support to social entrepreneurs also gives a hint of the rise of the field in Norway. The state, through NAV, also has its own grant schemes for social entrepreneurs, which can be interpreted as an incentive to increase actors to call themselves social entrepreneurs.

### **How is social entrepreneurship defined?**

According to the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) there is no official definition of social entrepreneurship that is used within all sectors and at all levels of administration in



Norway. Different characteristics are emphasized in different contexts. The report highlights five characteristics in the attempt to define social entrepreneurship.

- Social purpose or unmet welfare needs
- Innovative solutions to these challenges
- Driven by social results, but also by a business model that can make the business viable/sustainable
- Target group involvement
- Collaboration across disciplines and business models.

(Minister of Labor and Social affairs, 2018, p.4)

Professors Andersen and Hulgård at Roskilde University who represents the Nordic working group (2015), referred to in the document of the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) have made a definition. They argue that this definition is based on the last 20 years most important research in social entrepreneurship.

“We define social entrepreneurship as creating social value through innovation, with a high degree of participant orientation, often with the participation of civil society and often with economic significance. Innovation often takes place across the three sectors of government, market, and civil society, which is perhaps particularly true for the Nordic region” (Nordisk Ministerråd, 2015, p. 35).

The Government (2019) states that "Social entrepreneurship is about developing and adopting new solutions to social and societal problems". They also write that it is about developing new networks across disciplines and businesses, and collaboration in new ways. Furthermore, social entrepreneurs can, through their own experience-based knowledge and their own networks, have advantages over traditional public solutions.

According to Eimhjellen & Loga (2016) social entrepreneurship is about "finding new solutions to social problems and applying methods from business life to achieve these"(Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 13). Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) also emphasize the four first characteristics presented by the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) and call them central dimensions which is also in line with EMES understanding of the concept.

Actors in the field link the term social entrepreneurship to several things, but consistent themes were about “start-ups and small businesses that, through new solutions and innovation, contributed to helping or supporting various types of vulnerable groups, and through this also contributed to society more generally” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 61).

Kobro et al. (2017) defines five characteristics of social entrepreneurship that seems to be the same as highlighted by the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018). Kobro et al. (2017) describes that three of these characteristics came about in a survey of efforts for social innovation and entrepreneurship in the Nordics in 2014, and that they have supplemented the last two themselves.

YouCount argue that “Social entrepreneurship involves seizing opportunities for the market-changing innovations of a social purpose. Much like social innovation, social entrepreneurs operate towards social goals, making the social mission the key motivation and purpose” (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p.10).

Ferd (2022) presents in their heading that a social entrepreneur is one or more people who want to contribute to creating a new solution to a social problem. They further argue that social entrepreneurs often have services aimed at marginalized groups or excluded people. Eriksen (2020) state that social entrepreneurship is building a business (enterprise) where the main motivation is to solve a social problem. He further elaborates that social entrepreneurship is at the intersection between ordinary business, non-profit organizations, and public welfare.

## **Chapter 4- Analysis of the semantic field**

In this section, I will conduct the analysis of the semantic field. I will first highlight supporting and cognate concepts that I pay particular attention to. I will summarize this web of concepts in a figure, presenting social entrepreneurship as a cluster concept. I further analyze the concepts temporality, contrasting concepts and if the concept can entail power. I will throughout the analysis try to compare the different actors within different systems. I will also introduce a figure that summarize my findings divided into systems.

### **New and innovative**

One actor from each of the systems present that social entrepreneurship leads to “new solutions to social problems” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016; Ferd, 2022; Government, 2019). The term “new” seems to be used as a supporting concept for social entrepreneurship, as it is not only found in the definitions, but also throughout the material in different settings. Eriksen (2020) emphasizes the word "new" by saying that "to maintain the welfare state... we will need new solutions to both current and future challenges. It will require collaboration across traditional dividing lines, and a willingness to include new players with new ways of doing things"(Eriksen, 2020). Social entrepreneurs themselves described their working methods as “finding new solutions to new and old challenges” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 60).

The government (2019) links to NAV (2022), where one can apply for grants to start a social enterprise. One of the criteria for receiving a grant is that "the aim of the business is to solve social problems in a new way" (NAV, 2022). Furthermore, they describe that "innovation and innovative activities are prioritized over activities that are new in a geographical area or a municipality" (NAV, 2022). One can then question what it means that something is new, or how to set the criterion that this has not been tried before, or is found in another part of the country?

The notion of innovation can also be seen as a supporting concept as it can be found in the text material from all the different actors. The Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018), Kobro et al. (2017) and Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) describes that one of the characteristics of social entrepreneurship is "innovative solutions". Innovation is also one central dimension

in the report from Eimhjellen and Loga (2016), they state that “a social entrepreneur; *meaning the innovative business that are in an entrepreneurial phase*” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p.67). With this statement, it can seem like they take it for granted that the concept of innovation is linked to social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs themselves also describe their working methods as “Innovative methods for solving society's challenges that cannot be managed in the public sector ”(Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 60).

The concept of social innovation can also be interpreted to perform as a cognate concept to social entrepreneurship. The two concepts are often found in the same sentence in the YouCount documents, for example, “the YouCount project will particularly focus on the potential role of social innovation and social entrepreneurship” (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p.20). YouCount further stated that “by social innovation, we refer broadly to the new frameworks, methods, services, and products that can be used as positive actions to reduce/prevent social exclusion” (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p.20). The word new is also found here where they further argue that “we also include a broader understanding of social innovation as creating broader social changes at the institutional level, changes in narratives, knowledge, and practices providing a useful basis for creating solutions to global social and sustainability challenges” (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p.20). The concept of innovation according to Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) relates to initiatives that through untraditional solutions, approaches and collaborations across state, market, and civil society, bring about positive social change.

Based on these extracts, it can be derived that for a business to be called a social entrepreneur, it must offer something new, and the entrepreneurs must find innovative and untraditional ways of solving problems. If a social service is copied, but still meets the criteria of being at the intersection of public, private and voluntary activity, and works well as a solution to a social problem, it may seem that it cannot be called social entrepreneurship. Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) problematize this by saying that

“To the extent that the activities do not have scaling ambitions, and do not seek to find new ways to solve the social challenges, then it is rather ordinary social work that voluntary organizations have contributed to for a long time”. (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 70)

The economic system seems to have another understanding of what to entail to call something social entrepreneurship. Ferd (2022) state that “if a company is primarily concerned with solving the relevant societal problem, we call them social entrepreneurs”. Eriksen (2020) also don’t include the term new or innovative in their description of what to call social entrepreneurship, saying that “social entrepreneurship is building an enterprise where the main motivation is to solve a social problem”. This indicate that the concept may entail different criteria in different systems, and it correspond with Jessop (2012) distinction of “transdiscursive terms” flourishing in different direction in different systems.

### **Diversity and target-group involvement**

The term diversity also seems to appear as a supporting concept observed in the text material from all the systems. For example, the Government (2019) writes that "in order to get more people into work and activity, the government wants a diversity of suppliers and professional environments". In research reports, this is also described both in terms of the diversity of organizations that call themselves social entrepreneurs, and the desire for diversity of providers of services (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016). As it looks like the different organization forms, and providers of the services represents the diversity, it also seems like the target group represents this diversity.

The description of the target group is found in my text material from all three systems. Ferd (2022) describes that the “target group for becoming social entrepreneurs are often innovative people employed in the public sector, who work with vulnerable groups”. Ferd (2022) further describes that these new solutions are often created by people who themselves have experience with a social problem and lack the help they themselves wished they received. “These people are often in good dialogue with the target group, as they themselves are part of it” (Ferd, 2022). Tøyen Unlimited (2022) describe their target group as “often non-traditional and resourceful people, who are passionate about a cause they know through their own life experience”. They further present their social entrepreneurs as “unlimitere”.

The Government (2019) and NAV (2022) describe that the subsidy scheme aims to stimulate self-development among groups that have themselves experienced poverty, social or economic exclusion from society, and that the measures should hit the same target group.

In the research report by Eimhjellen & Loga (2016) it is described that approximately 60% of the founders of social entrepreneurship in question, were themselves connected to the target group they aimed at helping through the efforts of the enterprise. They further describe the target group as "various vulnerable and under-resourced groups of people"(Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 60). Furthermore, they described that it was about "creating unity, trust, respect and about including the target groups in society" (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p.60).

Kobro et al. (2017) and the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) define one of the main characteristics as "involvement of the target group for the social entrepreneurial work, the employees, and other key stakeholders" (Kobro et al., 2017, p. 20).

YouCount highlight that" an important part of YOUCOUNT is to explore the potential of including youths more actively in social innovation and entrepreneurship activities at the local level" (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p. 20). They further describe their target group by stressing that they want youths from multicultural backgrounds, because they can possess a transcultural competence that can be used as a major social and innovative resource. They also further want to explore how "young people with a migrant background can contribute to new policies, social innovation and youth-based social entrepreneurship in collaboration with stakeholders and researchers" (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p. 20).

Tøyen Unlimited (2022) also used the term "neighborhood incubator", described as a place where neighborhood enthusiasts can come to develop ideal social enterprises with local and potentially national impact. The focus is that the ideas have local anchoring. This kind of presentation shows an accessible approach to entrepreneurship. By giving their entrepreneurs specific names such as "unlimitere" can contribute to the feeling of belonging and inclusion and may be a way of giving power to the target group.

Based on these extracts it can be interpreted that the target group involvement is a central characteristic throughout all the systems, and it's interpreted to be a supporting concept.

#### Co- creation

Another concept that is found in the semantic field is co-creation. The term itself is seen especially in one research report published by SESAM. Based on this report co-creation seems to appear as a supporting concept. Ueland (2017) argues that co-creation is an important and not as much talked about dimension when it comes to social entrepreneurship. Ueland (2017) states that co-creation in the input phase of welfare services occurs when people who will be affected by the service have a real responsibility for planning and designing it. Co-creation in the output phase is about letting the target group into the actual production/delivery of the service. He describes further that many of the relatively small social entrepreneurial businesses that have sprung up in recent years are largely based on this. They are themselves people who feel an unmet need in the welfare system (Ueland, 2017). Ueland (2017) further argues that there is often little difference between the meaning behind the prepositions in this context; the service is provided for someone, by someone, which is often overlapping. Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) argue that citizenship is a dimension that seems especially important in the Norwegian landscape. First and foremost because inclusion seems to be central to most of the businesses' social purposes, but also because the businesses often represent user participation and create increased involvement and participation.

Although neither the political nor economic system in this analysis use the term co-creation, it seems that what they describe as the target group themselves creating innovative solutions is precisely co-creation, namely "target group involvement" (Ferd, 2022; Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Government, 2018; Kobro et al., 2017). Co-creation is also a fundamental concept in YouCount, but they use the concept in another context when they talk about co-creation in research, so called citizen science as described earlier.

#### **Inclusion- exclusion**

Inclusion is another term that can be interpreted as a supporting concept. All three systems use the term often. Eriksen (2020) describes that work inclusion is one of the main areas of

social entrepreneurship. Here can also the name of the homepage itself; “Innenforskap”, be seen as a synonym for the word inclusion. Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) argue “inclusion seems to be central to most of the businesses social purposes” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 7). They further argue that “this applies in particular to the inclusion of children and young people who experience alienation, immigrants and refugees and lonely elderly people in need of community and activation” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 75). Kobro et al. (2017) argue that inclusion in working life is a goal for several of the businesses. The aim of the YouCount project is to “develop new knowledge about positive drivers for social inclusion” (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p. 2). They also argue that the project will “particularly focus on the potential role of social innovation and social entrepreneurship as drivers for social inclusion”.

The Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) argue that innovation takes place through “new ways of solving tasks and through creating inclusion in interaction with the welfare state”. NAV (2022) do not use the term directly but use phrases such as “they want to get more people into work and activity”, which can be interpreted as a description of what work inclusion is. NAV (2022) describes that social entrepreneurship should stimulate the fight against poverty and social exclusion. And exclusion can also be seen as a counter term to inclusion. "It is...a goal that the scheme should stimulate self-organized people who have experienced poverty, social and economic exclusion to contribute to the development of social entrepreneurship with experience-based competence and knowledge." (NAV, 2022). In describing the target group, exclusion also becomes important, as they want "socially and economically disadvantaged people who either experience, or are at risk of experiencing, poverty and social exclusion"(NAV, 2022).

Exclusion can be interpreted as a counter-term, or something that wants to be combated through social entrepreneurship. Both the terms of inclusion and exclusion represents politically powerful terms that engages. YouCount uses both the term of inclusion and exclusion in their main description of the project as they want to “produce new knowledge of positive drivers for social inclusion of youth at risk of exclusion” (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p. 2). The use of the term inclusion instead of exclusion can be interpreted to be a conscious action in the presentation of the concept. The terms seem to encounter temporal differences, when inclusion is more positively loaded, and more futuristic by representing



something that is to happen. While exclusion can have a more negative associations, and seem more as something set, in the past, with an aim to move forward from.

### **Business or altruism**

Another notion I have noticed in the texts is characteristics of the specific vocabulary in the semantic field. One can distinguish different vocabularies that seems to be used, for example one business-oriented vocabulary, which can be found in all the different material across systems. Examples are description of profit, what makes social entrepreneurship different from traditional business activities, investors and how to finance a social enterprise. Descriptions of “double bottom lines” (Eriksen, 2020; Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016; Ferd, 2022), is a matter of developing social, economic, and environmental value. And the “duple bottom lines” seems therefore to appear as a supporting concept through all the system.

Kobro et al. (2017) define on of the main characteristics of social entrepreneurship to be that it is “driven by the social results, but also by a business model that can make the company viable and sustainable”, which is also in the characteristics of the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018). Social entrepreneurs that responded in the report by Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) saw the business model as an important dimension of social entrepreneurs. They emphasized combinations of “community involvement and social services with a sustainable business model, but where profits must be returned to the operation and not taken out as profit” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 60). Both these description of the business side of the concept shows multiple sides, both the economic entrepreneurial perspective, but also the social perspective with a seemingly altruistic undertone. The economic dimension can be seen as an important factor to emphasize the entrepreneurial aspect of the concept, separating it from social innovation. Where social entrepreneurs *create* social innovations.

The altruistic dimension spotted in the social perspective is prominent in the material from the economic systems. Eriksen (2020) state that; “the social results are the very motivation behind the business, and the financial results are a necessity to achieve the social results. Feel free to call it a professionalization of goodness” (Eriksen, 2020). He further state that; “The social entrepreneur is not driven by financial gain for their own part. The social entrepreneur is driven by a strong desire to make the world a better place. For all of us, and

perhaps especially for vulnerable groups” (Eriksen, 2020). This may look like an ideologization of social entrepreneurship where he assigns social entrepreneurs an altruistic quality. Ferd (2022) also have a similar example, stating that; “when a social entrepreneur experiences an offer that is better than the existing one, it is difficult for them to give up”. They also empathize that “where commercial players want to maximize profit, a social entrepreneur wants to get the most social change possible for every penny” (Ferd, 2022). This kind of vocabulary is not as prominent in the research material, nor in the material representing the political system.

On another hand, social entrepreneurs themselves highlighted “social entrepreneurs are often seen as extra committed people” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p.60). As one respondent puts it, social entrepreneurs are "people who have a burning commitment to a social problem, and who consciously tackle it and want to establish a new solution" (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 60). Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) also highlight that altruism is one of the motives for social entrepreneurs. Which suggests that social entrepreneurs themselves also see this altruism as an important part of their role and business. Based on this extract the altruistic dimension seems to appear as a supporting concept.

#### Social value, social mission, social purpose

Social entrepreneurs that responded in the report by Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) linked concepts such as social responsibility, social purpose, social value creation and the production of social goods to social entrepreneurship. These concepts can also be seen as supporting concepts. Several of these concept builds connections through the terminology of the economic field, and the field of social work. Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) further argue that the social aim is dominant in the organizations, and that “the social engagement encompasses welfare production, interest representation and also activism for certain social group” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 11). Kobro et al. (2017) also describe the aim of social entrepreneurship as social purpose.

The Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) also use the term of social value, stating that “social entrepreneurship is driven both by the social results, or put another way, by creating social values...”. Social value creation is described by Choi and Majumdar (2014) as “a highly

valued aspect of social entrepreneurship, which is certainly considered to be a prerequisite for social entrepreneurship” (Choi & Majumdar, 2014, p. 365). They further link social value to social mission, and social purpose which are terms used in YouCount; “Much like social innovation, social entrepreneurs operate towards social goals, making the social mission the key motivation and purpose” (YouCount Proposal, 2020, p.10). Social purpose is also a key factor in the definition in the text by the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018). The social aspect of the concept of social entrepreneurship is what seems to distinguish these businesses from other entrepreneurial activities, and it also deals with activities that differ from other non-profit activities in the voluntary sector. Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) agrees arguing that “the social dimension is what delimits both concepts from other business operations and from other innovation and entrepreneurship in the business world” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 68). This difference is primarily about what motivates the activity. “While the profit motive is central to ordinary entrepreneurship, the motive for social entrepreneurship is different: namely social responsibility, solidarity, and altruism” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 68).

My text material representing the economic system does not use these specific terms directly, but both Eriksen (2020) and Ferd (2022) uses the terms of social result and the main aim to be social change.

According to Choi and Majumdar (2014) the concept of social value creation is a value laden concept, that has altruistic objectives, and promote social purpose, which further implies values like freedom, equality, and tolerance (Murphy and Coombes, 2009, referred to in Choi and Majumdar, 2014). Choi and Majumdar (2014) argue that not only the creation of social value is an integral aspect of social entrepreneurship, but also that the concept of social value itself is a complex and ambiguous one and is therefore one of the factors contributing to the internally complex character of social entrepreneurship. This indicate the complexity of the semantic field surrounding social entrepreneurship when several of the surrounding concepts also are difficult to conceptualize.

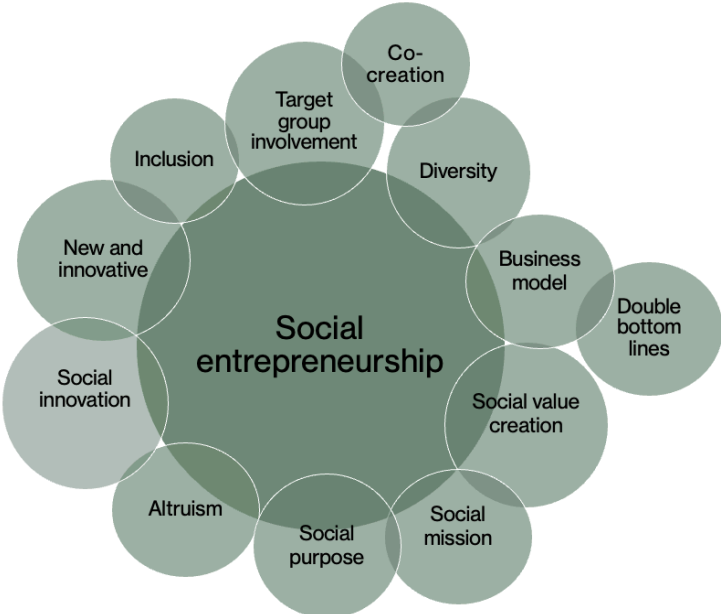
The very composition of “social” and “entrepreneurship” is something that seems to create the complexity of the concept. Nicholls and Cho (2008) referred to in Choi and Majumdar (2014) note that the “social” itself is a highly complex, ambiguous, and contested concept.

Kobro et al. (2017) discuss «the hybrid state”, as mentioned earlier and Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) argue that the concept has a hybrid nature, because social entrepreneurship draws meaning (and social values) from several sectors. It thus provides associations with both social development in the form of start-ups, business development, technological innovation, and taking responsibility for social problems based on a social mission and desire to make a difference. And these “double bottom lines” might contribute to the complexity of the concept, as Jessop (2012) recognizes that different actors can have different understandings of terms and concepts and put different meaning to terms and concepts.

**Social entrepreneurship as a cluster concept**

This figure contains the supporting and cognate concepts I have observed in the semantic field. It shows the web (Berenskoetter, 2017) of terms and concepts surround the main concept of social entrepreneurship. Based on Gaut’s (2000) description of cluster concept, can this web of identified defining properties initiate social entrepreneurship as a cluster concept.

*Figure 2: Web of concepts surrounding social entrepreneurship*



## **Social entrepreneurship vs traditional solutions**

The overall semantic field surrounding social entrepreneurship seems to be positively loaded. This is particularly noticed in the texts from the right-wing government (2019) and the actors under the economic system. There are several examples in the texts, where the public or traditional is associated with something negative, while the new and innovative social entrepreneurship is associated with something positive. The government (2019) writes that "social entrepreneurs can have advantages over traditional solutions". By using the word "advantage", it can be interpreted as saying that they place these new solutions higher than existing public solutions.

Ferd (2022) describes that social entrepreneurs can invent new solutions that "are often better than before", i.e., what already exists. Eriksen (2020) describes that there are many people in Norway who are struggling and have challenges at various levels, and we therefore need social entrepreneurship because the traditional measures have their limitations. Furthermore, he says that social entrepreneurship solves problems that the public sector should solve but does not have the capacity for. They also refer to a quote from the conservative Prime Minister at that time, Erna Solberg; "Social entrepreneurship, and not NAV, is the solution for building inclusion" (Eriksen, 2020). Furthermore, he also makes statements at the website such as "innovation does not come from the public sector".

Based on these examples, it can be interpreted that the government in 2019, and two of the organizations representing the economic system see social entrepreneurship as something better than what already exists in the public sector. To promote social entrepreneurship, it may appear that they are using traditional, public solutions as a contrasting concept to these new and innovative solutions that social entrepreneurship represents.

It is also interesting that these specific statements have been selected to promote social entrepreneurship, as it very clearly talks negatively about the public sector, here also specifically NAV. The term "traditional solutions" is also a carrier of an implicit meaning, as it seems to be used as a contrast to the "new" solutions found in social entrepreneurship. These type of statements can also be found in the report by Eimhjellen and Loga (2016), where social entrepreneurs themselves see their working methods as "innovative methods to solve society's challenges that cannot be managed in the public sector" (Eimhjellen & Loga,

2016, p. 60), another example is, “the respondents saw social entrepreneurship as improvements, changes and supplements to existing solutions to social challenges, where mainly the public sector, but also the non-profit sector, are not sufficient” (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016, p. 60).

What specifically differentiates the traditional solutions from the new solutions? It can be difficult to get hold of the content itself, as the texts especially show little of what makes new solutions better than traditional ones. On another hand, social entrepreneurship is also presented as a supplement to the public sector by various systems. Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) state that the aim is to combine the best from each sector, and that social entrepreneurs come in handy where the public sector is not sufficient. This is also expressed in the text from Eriksen (2020) when he says that “we have a fantastic welfare state, but we need social entrepreneurship” (Eriksen, 2020). Tøyen Unlimited (2022) also shows a more nuanced approach by stating that social entrepreneurs “sell products and services that fill gaps in the existing market”. This seems more nuanced because it does not come across as they see the existing market as something that is poor, and by saying existing market, it does not directly point at the welfare system or traditional solution. The text material from Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) neither correspond with this counter term theory, and I will elaborate on this later in the text.

### **Power and politics**

A type of vocabulary I particularly noticed is a forward-looking temporal vocabulary. As described earlier, Koselleck believes that one can always distinguish between the present and future in a concept, and the use of terms as "new and innovative" can be interpreted as forward-looking and futuristic terms. Meaning terms that foreshadow what Koselleck calls the “horizon of expectations”, meaning these concepts contain premises for what is to come. While "public, traditional" can be interpreted more as something that is stationary and old, that Koselleck calls “space of experience”, meaning traces of what has been.

An example of this forward-looking temporal vocabulary can be seen in Eriksen (2020) when he says: "To maintain the welfare state..., we will need new solutions to future challenges. It will require collaboration across traditional dividing lines, and a willingness to include new

actors with new ways of doing things" (Eriksen, 2020). Ferd (2022) argue that "public employees often have the experience that the workplace does not want to change, and therefore take their ideas out of the public sectors" (Ferd, 2022). This is an implicit example of the public sector being described as something set, as a maintainer of the "traditional", as a contradiction to the forward-looking temporal profile of the concept of social entrepreneurship. This temporality can arguably contain power because it seems like it has a clear goal of influence the reader with contrasting comparisons. Without directly calling the current welfare system bad, it is done using temporality and the choice of terms in the sematic field. This kind of implicit power is described by Heggen and Engebretsen (2012) to be just as effective as the more visible power.

As mentioned earlier, Koselleck describes that terms can be used as rhetorical weapons in political battles, and thus have power. Based on my text material, there is an interesting difference regarding how the different governments of 2021 and 2022 have chosen to present the concept. The example of the contrasting concepts does not appear in the same way in the text material fronted the Government in 2022 (Minister of Labor and Social affairs, 2018) as in the text by the Government (2019). The traditional/welfare state does not get a negative association or negatively loaded words, in the same way as it was perceived to be done by the Government (2019). In the text by the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018), it is described early on that innovation also happens in other sectors. "The public sector has, especially in recent years, been the subject of several major reforms, and experimental and development work takes place as part of ordinary business"(Minister of Labor and Social affairs, 2018, p.5). Examples of a positive descriptions of the welfare state is;

"Social entrepreneurship and social innovation driven forward by civil society actors has been an important driving force in the development of offers and measures within, child protection, kinder gardens, education, shelters, family protection and municipal health and care services. In several areas, the public sector has taken over responsibility for measures developed under the auspices of civil society actors".  
(Minister of Labor and Social affairs, 2018, p.4)

Furthermore, the report describes that in Norway, social entrepreneurship occurs in interaction with a public sector that is characterized by a large degree of universal social

arrangements and a wide range of services, and that social entrepreneurs can contribute to the public sector's innovation work at all levels.

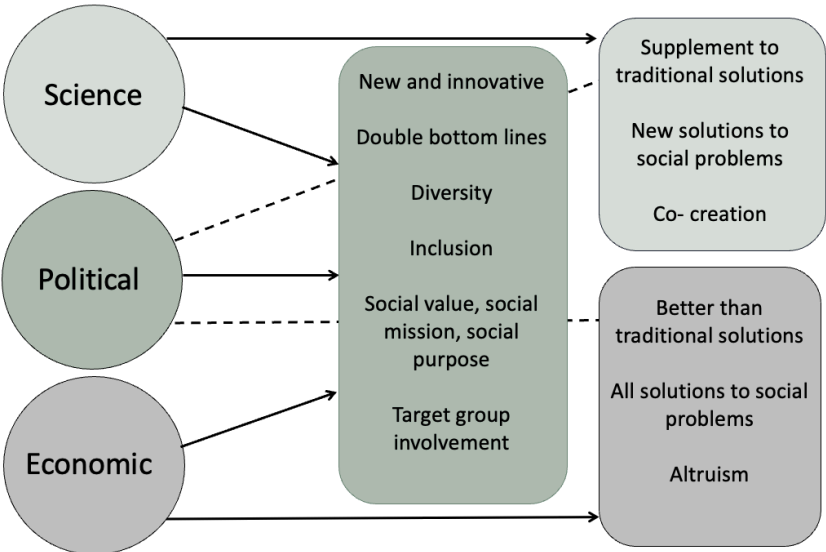
Based on the earlier interpretation that social entrepreneurship is used as a counter-term to the public traditional solutions by the Government (2019), it may look like the Government (2019) uses this contradiction as a form of political rhetoric. This corresponds with the notion that traditional right-wing politics (Government 2019) generally advocates free enterprise and private ownership, while the left-wing politics (Government 2022) generally advocates an active and strong state that manages many welfare services.

Eimhjellen & Loga (2016) also state that social entrepreneurship can be interpreted as a new development within political rhetoric, which deals with the fact that the boundaries between the public, private and voluntary sectors are moving towards becoming more diffuse. This corresponds with Carayannis (2020) description of the shift to mode 2, where he emphasizes that the shift to mode 2 has led to blurrier lines between systems.

**Semantic field categorized according to system**

This is an attempt to illustrate terms, concepts, and differences I have found in comparing the presentation by actors within the different systems. The systems are presented in the circles to the left, and the terms, concepts, and differences in the various boxes.

*Figure 3: Semantic field of social entrepreneurship divided into systems*





The terms, concepts and differences are divided into three categories. The first box contains terms and concept found within all three systems. The upper right box contains what was especially apparent in the science system, and the lower right box contains what was especially apparent within the economic system. A striped line runs from the political system to both boxes, representing the nuances in the presentation of the concept under different governments. It's an important notion that this figure is an attempt to give an overview of my interpretations of the selected text material. Meaning that this figure will not be representative for all actors within the different systems. However, it might give an indication of the characteristics of the different systems.

As seen in the figure, my analysis indicates that most concepts and terms in the semantic field are used throughout all the systems. Yet, the analysis identified some nuances in the semantic field regarding which system who represent the concepts. Actors within the science system stand out as more modest in the way they present social entrepreneurship. Rather than seeing it as *the* solution, it is presented as a supplement to existing public services within the welfare state. While actors within the economic system seems to but social entrepreneurship advantageous over existing services within the welfare state. The distinction of what I interpret as kindness and altruism is also seen especially in the economic systems. Where the economic system seems to give social entrepreneurs altruistic properties in the way they present what a social entrepreneur is and represent. These two distinctions can have a natural explanation knowing that these private initiatives are trying to sell a product or an idea, which is in the aim of the economic system. There is also a different interpretation of the concept in the way an actor from the science system (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016) argue that the activity must find new ways to solve social challenges to be called social entrepreneurship, while the economic systems (Eriksen, 2020, Ferd, 2022) state that if the company is primarily concerned with solving societal problems, it can be called social entrepreneurship. This kind of difference indicate the complexity of the concept and might be an example of the consequence of Norway having no clear organization structure for the field.

Another difference is that the science system introduces the term co-creation, which is not used by any of the actors writing from within the other systems. On another hand, it seems

like the way they describe co-creation correspond to what the other systems calls target-group involvement.

### **Popular concepts and strategic use of them**

Eimhjellen and Loga (2016) argues that in several European countries and in organizations such as the European Commission and the OECD, there has been developed several political action plans, legislation, and grant schemes as a contribution to facilitating the emergence of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises. Harsløf (2015) write in his chapter about “European Policy and Social Innovation”, that European commission has embraced the concept of social innovation with strong enthusiasm. The Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018) describes that the EU research program Horizon 2020 focus on innovative solutions to societal conditions and can provide opportunities that can be exploited by the field. The funding generated from EU, can be interpreted as an incentive to do more research on the field. These kind of grant schemes and fundings also gives all the systems a reason to use the term social entrepreneurship. This is an argumentation for what Jessop (2012) problematizes as political systems achieving credibility by applying seemingly scientific concepts. At the same time, science can achieve research grants and relevance, by making use of terms that are of interest in the political system. Popular concepts that can give grants and credibility can contribute to what Jessop (2012) defines as mental figures, that can give us ratings of what is good or bad, positive, and negative. In this way the concept of social entrepreneurship can be interpreted to powerful and can therefore also be used strategically in politician battles.

Another notion is that I have noticed several complex concepts in the semantic field, which can be an indication of what Holder and Layard (2010) argue to be an important tool. Holder and Layard (2010) argue that concepts with an uncertain character can be used strategically, exactly because they are easy to sign up to and therefore provide opportunities for diverse interpretations. This flexibility can be helpful for politicians or scientists to make room to navigate in practice.

## **Chapter 5- Conclusion**

I have through this thesis tried to show in what way the concept of social entrepreneurship is presented by actors within different systems, divided into the categories of economic, political, and science systems, within a Norwegian context.

The analysis indicates no clear definition of the concept but introduce a web of concepts appearing in the semantic field, which highlight the main characteristics of social entrepreneurship. I have throughout this thesis shown to different researchers arguing that there are different understandings of the concept (Choi & Majumdar, 2014; Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016; Kobro et al., 2017). Also, Jessop (2012) argues that different actors can have different understandings and put different meaning to terms and concepts. My analysis indicates that there are several concepts and terms in the semantic field that are used throughout all the systems. Hence, there were less marked differences between the systems than one could have expected. However, the analysis identified nuances in the semantic field regarding which system who present the concepts.

I found some variation depending on which government presenting the concept. The Government (2019) argue that social entrepreneurs can have advantages over traditional solutions, which might be explained by the right-side's political value standpoint. Jordheim and Neumann (2011) argue that the use of certain concepts rather than others will in and of itself be political. This variation might be an indication that the concept can be used rhetorically and can contain political power. The economic system was also more prominent in putting social entrepreneurship over existing services within the welfare state. While actors within the science system stand out as more modest in the way they present social entrepreneurship. Rather than seeing it as *the* solution, it is presented as a supplement to existing public services within the welfare state. The economic system was also more prominent in giving social entrepreneurs altruistic properties. These nuances might be explained by the context of which system they represent. While the economic and political systems have an aim of selling a message, the scientific systems aim is to share a message in a neutral way.

Despite these nuances, I will conclude by saying that I found most similarities. Especially I note how social entrepreneurship as a concept stand out rather vague and complicated across the board. It's an interesting discovery that even within the scientific system there is no clear definition. The point of system theory is that different system are somewhat closed systems, and everything they see from the outside is drawn into this logic (Michailakis & Schirmer, 2019). Based on the interpretation that the transition to mode 2 have made these lines between systems more blurred now(Gibbons et al. 1994 referred to in Carayannis, 2020) my analysis also indicate this tendency in the way that systems infiltrate each other, and that even though the concept may have somewhat different presentation, one can see these complex and unclear concepts being used interchangeably. It can testify to more cooperation between these systems where they also can derive legitimacy, capital, and credibility from each other. This interpretation also corresponds with what Prosser (2022) argue is one of the reasons for few social enterprises in Norway; that there is not enough political interest. It is also apparent in the text material from the Minister of Labor and Social affairs (2018), where they refer to both research reports presented in the science system (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016; Kobro et al., 2017). The different actors seem to use each other's terms and concepts, and it may seem like these different systems I investigate in some ways dependent on each other; they observe, react upon, and affect each other (Michailakis and Schirmer, 2019). The researchers can use terms that are defined by politicians, and vice versa. The distinction of co-creation only appearing in the science system might be an example of a scientific concept that is new, and still only a scientific concept, and it might appear in other systems in the future. The concept of social entrepreneurship can also appear to create a cluster with several other unclear concepts, where the different systems are again dependent on each other's legitimation. The very composition of social and entrepreneurship is also something that seems to create the complexity of the concept, because social entrepreneurship draws meaning and social values from several sectors.

As Koselleck argues that history is created through conceptualizations, and Jordheim and Neuman (2011) argues that concepts come with specific historical and social baggage. The actors and who creates this history can vary from, politicians, professional historians, researchers, and ordinary citizens. In this case it seems like the history (the concept) is created through all the systems that together create, shape, and develop the concept

further. Which correspond with what Michailakis and Schirmer (2019) points out, that systems do not operate in isolation from each other, “instead every system operates in the context of other systems in its environment” (Michailakis & Schirmer, 2019, p. 32).

Although social entrepreneurship cannot be said to be a central political concept, I believe that a conceptual analysis of social entrepreneurship will give new insight and some new perspectives on the power inherent in the concept, and that the presentation by the different systems have given insight to how we perceive and understands concepts. Also, that the concepts we use should not only be understood as an indicator of social development, but that it may also play an active role in it, since concepts can have political weight, they can have the power to mobilize and de-mobilize resources, set new agendas, and change our welfare state.

### **Implications of my findings and further research**

To limit my thesis, I have focused on the concept in a Norwegian context, and mainly used Norwegian research. This was because, as described earlier that social entrepreneurship is so wide in how it is used internationally, because it emerges in different contexts in countries with different economic conditions and welfare models (Eimhjellen & Loga, 2016). This thesis also investigates mainly three text materials from each of the systems, and by only using this number of materials it will limit my research. Meaning that my interpretations is based on this exact text material and cannot be representative for all actors within the different systems. However, as stated earlier it might give an indication of the characteristics of the different systems.

As mentioned earlier, this thesis is my own interpretation of the semantic field. The material used for analysis range between a few pages, to reports consistent of up to hundred pages. As my main aim was to capture the variation of the semantic field represented by different systems, this differentiation was necessary.

For further research of the concept, it would be interesting to compare and analyze the semantic field using several actors, and text material from different countries. It would also be interesting to analyze more documents produced by different governments in a Norwegian context over a longer time period. This could give an historical perspective and

might give a clearer answer to what I distinguish as differences because of right- wing or left- wing values.

Another important notion for further research is what Choi and Majumdar (2014) problematizes about acknowledging social entrepreneurship as a contested concept. If researchers neglect the complex nature of social entrepreneurship and continue using the concept without explicitly stating their specific understanding, it will remain difficult for researchers to build on each other's work and establish social entrepreneurship as a coherent field of research.

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