**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)**

# Co-Producing Social Enterprise Strategy: a Critical Examination of the Policy Co-Production Process

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# Co-producing social enterprise strategy: A critical examination of the policy co-production process

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## Abstract

Cross-sector collaboration has increasingly been positioned as normatively beneficial when seeking to address complex policy challenges. Narratives with a skewed focus on the benefits associated with policy collaboration seem to thus be increasingly imbuing policy rhetoric with a sense of urgency around implementing 'innovative' and 'radical' cooperation on a global scale. As this trend around calls for collaborative approaches to management and governance accelerates, research examining perspectives on these collaborative processes in the context of policy design and delivery must keep pace.

Situated at the intersection of public management and policy studies, this thesis recognizes collaborative trends in policymaking and develops the concept of 'policy co-production' in effort to better align academic research with practitioner discourse. Conceptualizing co-production as both a public management practice that facilitates democratic engagement and a policy tool which ostensibly leads to more responsive policies and effective outcomes, the case of 'co-producing' Scotland's ten-year social enterprise strategy serves as the basis for this research.

The research presented in this thesis therefore follows a narrative arc that begins with historically informed archival research studying the emergence and development of the social enterprise policy ecosystem in Scotland. It follows the Scottish process, focusing on identifying discursive strategies which reveal particular, and potentially contestable, constructions of truth surrounding the process. The empirical work presented then concludes with exploratory research examining the mobilization and mutation of the discourses and practices associated with Scotland's social enterprise policy in the Australian context. Building on pioneering work studying the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem, this thesis is arguably the most complete account of Scottish social enterprise policy development to-date.

This thesis further contributes to theoretical understandings of co-production and policy collaboration in the context of sustained practical engagement by critically analyzing how policy co-production manifests over time. This contribution extends to demonstrating how the practical phases associated with designing, delivering, and sustaining policy might require nuanced collaboration approaches. By empirically testing theory around collaborative governance in an interdisciplinary manner, this research reveals the outsized role the capacity cross-sector actors have for joint action plays in influencing perceptions around the efficacy of policy co-production. Therefore, this research also adds practical policy value through its ability to strengthen future policy co-production arrangements.

## Acknowledgements

I firmly believe that so much in life is about what we can accomplish and how far we can go by working together. It has been my experience that embarking on a PhD journey is no exception. The joy has indeed been in the journey, but it has been a collective one, buoyed by the unrelenting support of the family, friends, colleagues, and mentors who have lifted me up and encouraged me every step of the way.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

*In an uncertain and challenging time, one thing is clear. We can shape a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable future, but the only way to do so is together.*

—Børge Brende, World Economic Forum President

## 1.1 Research aims and objectives

Cross-sector collaboration has increasingly been positioned as normatively beneficial when seeking to address complex policy challenges. Narratives with a skewed focus on the benefits associated with policy collaboration seem to thus be increasingly imbuing policy rhetoric with a sense of urgency around implementing 'innovative' and 'radical' cooperation on a global scale. While this trend around calls for collaborative approaches to management and governance accelerates, research that critically examines how these collaborative processes are experienced in practical and evolving contexts must keep pace.

As someone who has straddled the world of academic and practitioner conferences throughout my PhD journey, I know there is no dearth of academic research on 'collaboration' and other collaborative processes like 'co-production,' 'co-creation,' and 'co-design.' In fact, research around these topics has become arguably so muddled, and perhaps too definitionally bound, that it is now difficult to discern where a clear and productive research agenda in this realm might emerge. Throughout this thesis I will argue that understanding various perspectives on collaboration, including specific discourse around co-production and co-design, can help uncover underlying assumptions and motivations surrounding these processes. This underlying discourse thus provides the basis for enhanced theoretical understanding of collaboration around public policy and services. It also offers a new position enabling enhanced consideration of how collaborative discourses 'land' on a practical level and are operationalized and experienced by those involved. My experience at

practice-based conferences, engaging with entities like World Economic Forum and Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF) where notions of 'radical collaboration' and 'co-production' proliferate discussion and calls to action, has only strengthened my desire to improve understanding of what happens when various actors do come together to act on these calls.

In this respect, one of my principal aims with this thesis is to develop the concept of 'policy co-production.' In doing so, I enhance theoretical understanding of how collaborative strategy development and service delivery is intertwined in practice and evolves over time. Yet, my ambitions with this research are not limited to improved understanding. There is a practical and maybe even emancipatory aim as well. Through this work, I seek to highlight key practical considerations for policymakers and public managers who stand to benefit from increased knowledge on the fluidity and challenges associated with policy co-production as it evolves. My ambition is that the considerations highlighted throughout the thesis can be used to improve the sustained engagement and impact around future policy co-production arrangements.

Therefore, at its core, this thesis is motivated by a desire to improve the efficacy of policy engagement. This desire has driven my activism, work, and now research since I was 11 years old and speaking at a local planning commission meeting advocating for the addition of a crosswalk and improved public safety studies to strengthen walkability and street safety within my city. I hope this thesis becomes part of the critically important ongoing work to ensure public strategies, policies, and services become increasingly responsive to the needs of the communities, organizations, and individuals they are designed to support. In the most direct sense, this research demonstrates the role ongoing public sector commitment to collaboration with individuals and organizations in the broader social enterprise community can play in developing and delivering social enterprise policy

that is perceived to be more responsive and strategic than what other policymaking approaches might yield.

## 1.2 Empirical context and questions

I approach this research with a background in social enterprise and a pragmatic desire to study policy co-production in a context that is at least ostensibly emblematic of innovative policy design and delivery. I was specifically drawn to examples where individuals and organizations worked to promote narratives of cross-sector ecosystem building and policy development and delivery that was and/or is perceived to be collaborative. The Scottish context therefore provides fertile ground for this type of investigation since the Scottish Government has developed a reputation for collaborative and consultative policy development and implementation (Cairney et al., 2016). Further, Scotland has developed a reputation for being somewhat of a 'world leading' nation in their support for social enterprise via the 'ecosystem' which has been, again, at least ostensibly, collaboratively designed around the social enterprise sector (Roy et al., 2014, 2015). In 2016, Scotland published a ten-year national social enterprise strategy (Scottish Government, 2016c), which was perhaps the first national social enterprise strategy to be 'co-produced' in the manner it was. This strategy was used by the Scottish Government and the Scottish social enterprise sector to further pedal the narrative that Scotland was home to a 'world leading' social enterprise ecosystem that was supported by a collaborative social enterprise strategy designed by and for the sector. Yet, these claims that Scotland is an exemplar nation for social enterprise and that the Scottish Government consistently utilizes policy co-production to strategically support social enterprise, have not been critically studied.

The ‘world-leading’ and ‘exemplary’ discourses surrounding Scotland’s leadership in the social enterprise arena is nevertheless pervasive and persistent. At the most recent Scottish Social Enterprise Policy & Practice Conference, held on 26 October 2023, Richard Lochhead MSP, Minister for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade gave a keynote address in which he claimed, “Scotland is the world-leading social enterprise nation.” He went on to describe how it is common, particularly at global social enterprise events like those held by SEWF, to hear “other nations talk about the ecosystem of support we have here [in Scotland].” This discourse is not isolated to those positioned within the public sector. At the end of the conference, Polly Chapman, CEO and co-founder of Impact Hub Inverness, a social enterprise that also provides support services to the social enterprise sector, particularly in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, mirrored language used in the keynote. She said that “Scotland is *THE* leading social enterprise nation in the world” and told a story about experiences she had at SEWF’s 2023 conference where she was approached by people in New Zealand and Ireland “who want to replicate what we have in Scotland because it is very much *THE* gold standard.”

As individuals within the Scottish Government and Scotland’s social enterprise sector have worked to promote this ‘world-leading’ narrative, ongoing research into the development of Scotland’s social enterprise ecosystem and the policy developments and discourses underpinning it has been limited. Roy and colleagues (2015) have published on the historic and institutional evolution of the Scottish social enterprise sector, but contemporary research on the impacts of the 2016 strategy is largely absent from the literature. It is this strategy which arguably solidified Scotland’s self-promoted reputation as having the ‘most supportive environment in the world’ for social enterprise and while the Roy et al. (2015) paper picks up on this positioning, it was published before further action

around that claim could be critically examined. This thesis continues that work, critically analyzing the claim about Scotland's 'supportive' and 'noteworthy' approach to social enterprise. By analyzing the process of developing, delivering, and sustaining Scotland's social enterprise strategy critically and in-depth, this research reveals where this overwhelmingly positive narrative about Scotland's support for social enterprise may not match the perceptions of practitioners experiencing the practical rather than rhetorical manifestations of policy co-production process. At the same time, it also helps reveal where Scotland may indeed have a more credible basis for these claims about innovative and collaborative support for social enterprise in Scotland.

While Scotland is a discrete case, the limited amount of critical research surrounding its present-day social enterprise ecosystem puts those engaged in social enterprise ecosystem development globally at a disadvantage. Governments are increasingly dedicating more resources to experimentation with, and investment in, 'social enterprises' (Galera and Borzaga, 2009) and being encouraged to promote and implement strategies at all levels of government in support of social enterprise and the broader social and solidarity economy (United Nations, 2023). Recent research has indicated that at least local governments may benefit from collaborating with social enterprises (Choi and Park, 2021). At the national level, other research has highlighted some of the challenges with expecting social enterprise delivery partners and intermediary organizations to act as proxies for social enterprise service users when developing policies and services (Mazzei et al., 2019).

With limited research on the efficacy of cross-sector social enterprise policy co-production, governments are still being encouraged to promote 'the participation of social and solidarity economy actors in the policymaking process' surrounding nascent social enterprise strategy development (United Nations, 2023: 3). As Scotland has been able to

promote its approach to policy co-production as strategic support for social enterprise, other governments have looked to Scotland for inspiration around their own approaches to social enterprise ecosystem support and development (see, for example, Province of Nova Scotia, 2017; Victoria State Government, 2017). It is important to nuance this reputation which Scotland has established so that other governments seeking to support social enterprise strategically and collaboratively are aware of the complex dynamics underpinning policy co-production processes that these overwhelmingly positive narratives around Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem might obscure. This thesis therefore presents robust research which fills this knowledge gap around how Scotland's social enterprise policy approaches have continued to develop. It critically analyzes narratives around the historical evolution of Scotland's social enterprise policy, alongside the development of the Scottish social enterprise *movement* into an integrated *ecosystem*. Then, it explores the extent to which collaboration is sustained across sectors operating within this ecosystem. The work will represent what could be characterized as the most complete account of Scottish social enterprise policy history to-date, guided by a focus on policy development and impacts surrounding the 2016 strategy.

The Scottish Government positions the 2016 strategy as 'A ten-year, national social enterprise strategy, which sets out our shared ambitions for social enterprise in Scotland, jointly developed with the sector' (Scottish Government, 2016b). In the early days of this research, I was interested in understanding a) what those 'shared ambitions' were and b) what 'joint development' really meant to those involved in the process, and perhaps even those on the fringes of it. As my understanding of the context in Scotland progressed and I began to design my empirical study, I operationalized those two broad questions into four

discrete ones. These research questions have facilitated an in-depth and interdisciplinary study the of Scottish case. They are:

1. How did various political conditions, public programs, and policies preceding 2016 shape the environment in which Scotland's social enterprise strategy was developed?
2. How did actors within what was once a broad third sector with different historical roots come together and coalesce around a set of shared principles and aims that ostensibly emerged through the 2016 social enterprise strategy?
3. What can be learned about collaborative governance practices and policy co-production by critically analyzing the design, delivery, and process of sustaining Scotland's social enterprise strategy?
4. In what ways has the narrative of collaborative social enterprise policy development in Scotland been mobilized in different contexts as other governments and social enterprise sectors attempt to embark on their own policy co-production journeys?

The implications of these research questions extend beyond Scotland. The questions enable the development of theory around 'policy co-production' itself, an uncovering of key perspectives around policy co-production processes, and the necessary, although perhaps contested, elements associated with 'effectively' creating an environment to facilitate and sustain policy co-production over time.

## 1.3 Contributions

Offering a more complete history of Scottish social enterprise policy is one of the primary contributions of this research as I present an in-depth examination of how and why social enterprise policy has developed in the Scottish context. To add credibility and nuance to my presentation of this historical narrative, I triangulate many data sources. These include

archival material from two archives across multiple collections, previously conducted oral histories, my own semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of more current reports and materials like news articles or policies related to social enterprise in Scotland. A desire to instill originality into my research design also informs the development of an extensive corpus drawing on multiple data sources for analysis.

In this respect, a second contribution of this thesis is related to its interdisciplinary focus. I am predominantly informed by history, public management, and policy studies research and use these perspectives throughout this work. By leaning into historical perspectives and using concepts like critical junctures in ecosystem building, I can draw out articulations and re-articulations of both policy ideas and public management practices (with a specific focus on collaborative governance as a framework for developing my work on 'policy co-production') over time. In doing this research, I benefited from an extensive data collection period where I could explore historical representations and nuances around present-day discourse since I was not time-bound by a discrete empirical context.

This PhD therefore adds to literature on the sustainability of co-production and collaborative policymaking in important ways. First, it highlights what elements of collaborative governance processes appear to have the most significant influence on participants' perceptions around collaboration and co-production over time. Second, it discusses how definitional boundaries for collaborative policymaking terms blur as these processes are sustained in practice. This adds a level of credibility to an important principle underpinning my research: this thesis is not about determining whether the cases I present are emblematic of 'co-production' or 'collaboration' as defined in the literature. I argue that the phrase 'policy co-production' best captures the processes I researched; however, my orientation as a researcher necessitates that I focus on conceptions of these practices as

various claims to truth, which might shift or be contested depending on the perspectives of others involved in the process. I am most interested in revealing everything going on within and around these processes, and the underlying motivations and assumptions driving them, and use my interdisciplinary approach to enhance to this perspective. Finally, by examining the interrelationships between historical evolution and present-day discourse, I can reveal aspects surrounding policy co-production processes that research which is more discrete and time-bound struggles to uncover.

## 1.4 Thesis structure

In the next chapter, I focus on outlining the relevant literature that serves as the basis for this study. First, I concentrate on literature focusing on participatory and deliberative democracy to ground my explanation of interpretive turns in public management theories, especially the broad shifts associated with New Public Governance (NPG) in the early- to mid-2000s. It is within this context that notions of 'co-production' emerge, so I canvass the literature around 'co-production,' 'co-creation,' and other associated 'co-' terms before establishing how I conceptualize 'policy co-production.' I then explain how interest in 'social enterprise' was also gathering steam amid the context of shifting public management traditions. Chapter 2 ends by providing an overview of the history of social enterprise in Scotland as it relates to changing governance approaches and social enterprise support.

In Chapter 3, I connect the theory and conceptual frameworks which inform this research with my research design and methodology used for this study. I begin with an outline of the research's philosophical underpinnings and explain how those inform my use of the discourse-historical approach (DHA) and critical discourse analysis more broadly. I then describe how I develop a conceptual framework that knits together frameworks

emerging from policy studies or public management research and clarify how theory on collaborative governance, public value creation, and advocacy coalitions can be operationalized as analytical tools to make sense of data presented throughout this thesis. This involves some limited canvassing of the literatures surrounding each of these topics to ground the research more effectively. Next, the chapter outlines the project's qualitative research design divided into three phases that occurred mostly synchronously. The methods of data collection associated with each phase are presented before I explain my iterative approach to data analysis informed by DHA and the conceptual frameworks which emerged through my abductive analysis process. The chapter concludes with a discussion on research ethics and consideration of the choices made which influenced my overall research strategy.

Chapters 4 – 6 present empirical findings linked to Scotland and the case of producing its ten-year social enterprise strategy. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 follow closer to the presentation of oral and narrative history where there is a mix of descriptive findings and analysis interspersed among the presentation of those findings. This is the convention with historical writing and allows me to make connections to key literature and explicate different perspectives around how the social enterprise sector was evolving in Scotland. It also permits further analysis around *why* its evolution might have been perceived and positioned in various ways. In Chapter 4, I specifically focus on political conditions, public programs, and policies that were key contributors to an environment that has been described as primed for innovative cross-sector collaborative policy development. In contrast to Chapter 4, which focuses on the historical evolution of the public sector in Scotland, Chapter 5 focuses on the Scottish social enterprise sector. In it, I explain how discursive tools were leveraged within what was once a broad third sector with different historical roots to help a social enterprise ecosystem emerge and articulate shared principles and aims for their sector. I describe how

this happened through a staged processes preceding national strategy development in 2016. Chapter 6 is then written to be more descriptive in nature, lacking some of the integrated analytical commentary found in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. It presents findings around the phased development process associated with the design, delivery, and practice of sustaining *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016 – 2026*. The findings focus on perspectives related to collaboration dynamics and value creation, which are organized within the context of these phases.

In Chapter 7, I offer more analysis and summary of the findings presented across Chapters 4 – 6, to comprehensively outline the manifestation of policy co-production in Scotland. The consolidation of these findings is focused less on the historical evolution of Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem and more on the process of designing, delivering, and sustaining the 2016 strategy alongside its associated policies and programs. Indeed, this is where there is a gap in the literature and where understanding of lessons learned through this research can contribute to public management scholarship more broadly. Then in Chapter 8, aligned with my overall approach to abduction, I extend my research based on the Scottish context to Australia where discourse surrounding the 'Scottish approach' to developing and delivering a national strategy for social enterprise has been mobilized to stimulate action around an Australian national strategy. I present findings using organizational frameworks employed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, which facilitates a more detailed comparison to at least some of the Scottish findings at the end of Chapter 8.

In my final discussion and conclusion chapter, I offer a more robust discussion of the findings from this research. This discussion involves contextualizing this research within existing public management and policy studies literature, revealing how the thesis contributes to both fields. I then explain the relevance of these contributions for policy and

practice reflect on what further research might contribute to this area. This reflection is also enhanced by personal reflections on this research process, how my research design has enabled me to answer my initial research questions, and where limitations might inspire additional investigation.

### 1.4.1 Reading the thesis

Throughout this thesis I bring together many different sources of data, predominantly from interviews I conducted and documents I analyzed. In all the empirical chapters, material from written documents and policies are interspersed with quotes from interviews. To distinguish these two data sources, I use double quotation marks for anything where I am quoting directly from an interview (or to represent a public speech, for example) and single quotations for material I am referencing from written documents including journal articles, reports, and policies. Aligned with formatting guidelines, quotes, either written or spoken, that exceed three lines of text are indented and single spaced. I make it clear in the introduction to these quotes where the material comes from and only use additional quotation marks in the indented lines of text if a) it is a quote from an interview participant, and they were referencing conversational speech in their interview or, b) if it is a quote from written material where additional quoted material appeared in the text.

This thesis is also written in American English; however, I do not alter spellings when quoting written text and when quoting interviews, I have chosen to record quotes with respect for how people speaking to me in interviews would have written the speech themselves (i.e., following spelling and grammar conventions associated with British English, and specifically -ise spellings, and in Australia noting that 'program' is more popular than 'programme,' for example). Further, any names of specific programs or policies remain

unchanged to most accurately reflect how they are written, spoken about, and recognized in my study contexts. Where any one of these names might risk revealing the identity of a participant, but its inclusion is not central to overall understanding, it is omitted altogether.

# Chapter 2: Evolving trends in public management

## 2.1 Introduction

As my introduction to this thesis explained, at its core, this PhD is about policy engagement. It is motivated by concepts surrounding civic engagement, citizen participation, and changing relationships between the state and civil society. This research draws on the belief that 'democratic policymaking can be enhanced through detailed study of … the development and embedding of the rules and norms that enable and constrain actor's agency, whether this is a result of purposive action of evolving of patterns of behavior' (Skelcher and Torfing, 2010: 72). Building upon research using institutional logics, which might be a more common approach to revealing those 'rules and norms,' the discourse and narratives of people involved in these policymaking processes sit at the center of the research. As Putnam (2000) argues, 'if we think of politics as democratic deliberation, to leave people out is to miss the whole point of the exercise' (40). We need to thus understand how people and the organizations they represent are integrated into these processes surrounding democratic deliberation. My PhD centers the perspectives of people involved in these, at least ostensibly, collaborative, deliberative, and democratic policymaking processes. The research is designed to improve understanding of the history informing these processes, the dynamics governing them, and their impacts locally and as they are mobilized.

To establish the foundations for this research, I first begin by discussing literature related to citizen participation, specifically focusing on debates between participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. I highlight how these democratic ideals facilitated an environment where new approaches to and theories around public governance were

being considered and discuss the emergence and central importance of the theory of New Public Governance (NPG). It is within this context that notions of collaboration and co-production really begin to proliferate policy discourse and academic study. I therefore continue to discuss how co-production relates to different theories of management and governance before setting out to define the key debates in the field around 'co-production,' 'co-creation,' 'co-design,' and other related 'co-' terms. I then consider the normative values underpinning these practices and discuss them in the context of value creation within ecosystems—both 'social enterprise ecosystems' and 'public service ecosystems' before explaining the definitions of 'policy co-production' which are central to this thesis. Since this research is focused on policy co-production within social enterprise and third sector policy subsystems, I introduce the concept of social enterprise, outline key debates in the field, and then provide an overview of social enterprise and public management history in the Scottish context specifically. Finally, this chapter concludes by highlighting key literature in the critical policy studies field with a focus on policy mobilization and mutation as it relates to the operationalization of social enterprise policies in different contexts.

## 2.2 The foundations of 'policy co-production'

'Policy co-production,' at least terminologically although not necessarily conceptually, has not been extensively studied. Although there is some apparent interest in studying co-production from the perspective of public policies and public goods more broadly (Bance et al., 2022), 'co-production' instead is typically used in the context of public services. Other concepts like 'collaborative governance' might be more commonly used in the academic literature to describe broad cross-sector policy collaboration. Before discussing the literature around co-production and collaborative governance as key theoretical strands informing my

conceptualization of policy co-production, I first outline important precursors to these topics. Beginning with a discussion of literature on citizen participation and deliberative democracy, I then provide an overview of interpretive turns in public management and governance practices before transitioning into a more extensive discussion of co-production literature.

### 2.2.1 Citizen participation and deliberative democracy

Participatory and deliberative democracy are two concepts which are often conflated in the literature, but which have important distinctions (Elstub, 2018). At the core of this argument is the notion that participatory democracy need 'not value deliberation' and a deliberative democracy can be conceived as one 'that does not require mass citizen participation in deliberation' (Elstub, 2018: 188). Some research has suggested that political participation and democratic deliberation might undermine each other (Mutz, 2006). It has also been suggested that citizens often avoid engaging people with whom they disagree as a means to avoid the conflict deliberation can generate (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002) especially if the disagreements are familiar and recurring (MacKuen et al., 2010). Although, Neblo and colleagues (2010) have also suggested that deliberation can facilitate other forms of political participation and that the two may not be fundamentally opposed.

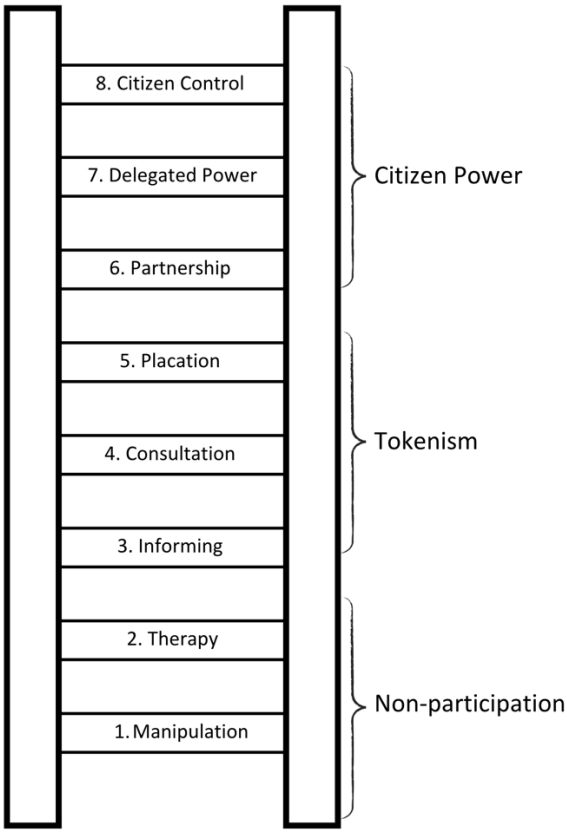
This had led to calls for more research into the potential of 'participatory deliberative democracy' (Cohen, 2009; Elstub, 2018; Vitale, 2006), which might capture ideals of mass participation while distilling collective decision making. Participatory and deliberative democracy are underpinned by their desire to push for 'the expansion of space in which will formation constitutes itself' (Vitale, 2006: 759), but participatory democrats are not always necessarily concerned with collective 'will formation' and argue that citizen participation

must be the principal, or primary, political practice (Vitale, 2006). Analyzing a local government context, Kübler and colleagues (2020) were critical of participatory governance finding that it was used to strengthen governability in contexts where there are strong and fragmented political interests. They therefore call for research that takes 'a more nuanced look at the motivations for the introduction of participatory mechanisms' (Kübler et al., 2020: 423). The key tenets of participatory democracy and governance thus require 'the establishment of political, social, and economic rights to enhance the opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making' (Elstub, 2018: 193). Yet, since 'participation' can be operationalized in a nefarious manner, it is argued that the legitimacy of these participation processes should be 'grounded in the correct use of the procedure, which is discursive and deliberative and, therefore, democratic' (Vitale, 2006: 745). It is therefore possible to conclude that under certain circumstances and within particular environments, it is possible to engage in wide and participatory political processes which are also deliberative in nature.

Arnstein's (1969) work on participation continues to offer something for scholars and practitioners alike who are searching for answers around establishing deliberative and participatory procedures. In fact, documents within the Social Enterprise Collection (Scotland) indicate that Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' was an important tool and discussion point within the Scottish third sector, often used in workshops on engaging communities (Voluntary Action Loachaber, 2001). Indeed, her seminal work has remained central in the evolution of these strands of literature surrounding deliberative democracy, public participation, and community engagement. Writing amid a context where political discourse around participation seemed to be insufficiently matched by meaningful action to integrate citizen voice into policy and decision making, her article 'A Ladder of Citizen

Participation' depicted different 'rungs' on the ladder of participation. These moved from nonparticipation to degrees of tokenism to degrees of citizen power (see Figure 2.1 on the following page).

***Figure 2.1: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation***




There are limitations to this typology, particularly around its focus on power. For example:

> The ladder juxtaposes powerless citizens with the powerful in order to highlight the fundamental divisions between them. In actuality, neither the have-nots nor the powerholders are homogeneous blocs. Each group encompasses a host of divergent points of view, significant cleavages, competing vested interests, and splintered subgroups (Arnstein, 1969: 217).

The ladder also suggests that more participation is better (i.e., striving for full citizen control at the top of the ladder), but it offers little in the way of how citizens can participate in various activities at other levels. Tritter and McCallum (2006) argue that focusing only on power in a traditional sense of role and authority perhaps inadvertently undermines the

value and 'power' associated with knowledge and expertise. Further, they argue that for some individuals and groups participation may be an ends, not just a means to an ends, regarding sharing that knowledge and expertise and that for various activities, and within certain contexts, engagement on multiple rungs of the ladder could generate individual and/or collective value (Tritter and McCallum, 2006). In other words, degrees of involvement and empowerment may be context specific and subjective, but are still nevertheless worthy of thoughtful consideration in the context of public service reform agendas (Skelcher, 1993). This notion of both participation and deliberation and how it contributes to value generation, strengthens democracy, and empowers citizens, continues to remain relevant in the context of public service reform research.

### 2.2.2 Evolving public management and governance traditions

Between 1945 and 1976 there was a breakdown of the post-war consensus regarding economic thought and specifically employment policies, which ultimately led to the rise of a new way of approaching management and governance. What became known as New Public Management (NPM), was an approach that attempted to normalize private sector thinking and organizational best practice within public sector entities as a way of holding them accountable to the public (Hood, 1995; Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011a). NPM was criticized for bringing a heavy 'entrepreneurial' way of thinking and administration culture to public management that ultimately eroded the influence of individuals seeking to uphold collaborative management practices driven by social need (Hebson et al., 2003). In the United Kingdom, the privatization of utility companies during the shift to NPM was a practical example of this new form of public management. NPM also resulted in many 'doctrines' of public service that emphasized target-driven approaches, professional

judgment, and managerial control, in an ideological shift toward conservative thinking that undermined collaborative governance practices (Chandler, 2007). Over time NPM slowly started to fall out of political favor perhaps at least partially inspired by localized resistance to these management philosophies.

For example, in the UK 'While the ideological stance of the central government shifted to the right in the early 1980s under Thatcher,' locally 'a new brand of radical politics came to prominence in some local authorities controlled by the left' (Kendall and Knapp, 1996: 153). These Labour-led local authorities allied themselves with the voluntary sector and community groups to collectively pursue their own political agendas. In chronicling the history of local governments in Great Britain since 1800, Chandler (2007) also found that while NPM was becoming a defining practice at the national level, many local politicians with socialist sympathies were developing local economic development units based on collaboration and collective ownership to challenge the direction of central government policy.[1]

In the academic context, some of the early work offering challenges and alternatives to NPM came from Denhardt and Denhardt (2000). Their 'New Public Service' (NPS) suggested that the aims of public servants should be to serve the needs of citizens rather than direct those citizens and their needs (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). Yet, despite its critique of NPM, NPS never seemed to gain the traction it needed to position itself as a dominant framework (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2015). Later critiques did gather that necessary momentum, criticizing NPM for its lack of inclusion, which was positioned as lack of effectiveness. They also called into question its theoretical position as an entirely new

[1] These trends can be viewed as precursors to the articulation of 'social enterprise' in political discourse. See Murray's (2018) work on the history of community business and a more robust discussion of this in Section 2.3 and 2.4.

form of public management, rather suggesting it was more emblematic of a transitory phase moving away from old styles of public management (Osborne, 2006). Osborne (2006) thus developed a more distinctly 'new' theory of public administration called New Public Governance (NPG). NPG was presented as an alternative, and more contemporary, discourse on management theory to NPM. The argument was that under NPM, the role of service users held insignificant value, while social enterprises and other third sector providers became contracting 'partners' who had to compete for contracts to deliver services. This ultimately reduced opportunities for collaborative decision-making (Hebson et al., 2003), and, as Osborne (2006) argued, made NPM a theory that was too focused on intra-government affairs to have significant utility in an increasingly pluralist and collaborative world.

In this pluralist context, NPG emphasized collaborative policymaking and opportunities for collective decision making. Osborne (2006) focused on the transition of public management in the UK in developing NPG, articulating an observed shift from then accepted models of NPM, to a model that focused on maximizing the participation of citizens, networks, and third sector organizations in public service delivery. It is from within this context of evolving theories of public management that concepts like policy co-production and the co-production of public services are positioned. Within the NPG context, it was argued that collaboration between state leaders, individual stakeholders, and public authorities can improve public policy outcomes (Vaillancourt, 2009) democratizing relationships with the third sector by allowing citizens to engage as co-producers and to serve as active stakeholders in service delivery (Mazzei et al., 2019; McMullin, 2020).

### 2.2.3 'Co-production' and theories on public management

Co-production, particularly in the context of NPG, is conceived of as a tool for greater citizen participation, that if not egalitarian, is at least further fostering democratic ideals (Bovaird, 2007; Pestoff et al., 2012). Yet, approaches to adopting versions of public management and administration theories vary by country. These management styles are influenced by geographic and socio-cultural traditions impacting beliefs about how to guarantee service quality, and therefore they have implications for how specific approaches like co-production manifest in practice (Pestoff, 2018). For example, while NPM did reflect sweeping global trends, Hood (1995) noted how it was embraced and adopted differently in various OECD countries. For example, McMullin (2015) analyzed differences in discourses around co-production between England and France, ultimately concluding that while co-production is used in both contexts, the different political cultures result in different framing of co-production. In the English context, government rhetoric and discourse around community impacts the way third sector actors frequently adopt co-production strategies, occasionally to the point of co-option. Considering the ways some models of public management seem to contradict co-production, many studies have concluded that NPG is the most compatible form of public management to facilitate co-production between government and third sector professionals and citizens (Pestoff et al., 2012). Yet the notion NPG and co-production are inextricably linked and that co-production is fundamentally incompatible with other management models like NPM was eventually challenged by McMullin (2020), particularly because of its manifestations in the UK.

This points to a potential level of disagreement around how approaches to public management have been used to characterize governance in a particular nation. For example, while the UK has been considered the frontrunner in NPM and Canada as a country that has

long embraced a policymaking process most closely aligned with NPG (McMullin, 2020), Osborne's (2006) arguments about NPG center around changing UK governance approaches. Devolution also plays a role in both the Canadian and UK contexts and can complicate understanding of the context in which co-production may be unfolding. In Canada, a country where many governing responsibilities are devolved to the provinces, there are also varying degrees of adoption of NPG ideals; however, places like Quebec serve as strong examples of a committed NPG approach to co-construction and co-production between government, community organizations, businesses, citizens, and other actors (Evans and Sapeha, 2015; McMullin et al., 2021).

In 1998, the UK Parliament passed the Scotland Act 1998, establishing the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and transferring many legislative powers and responsibilities to the newly formed Scottish Executive (UK Parliament, 1998). Post this devolution of power, there was a different relationship between government and the third sector in terms of public administration in Scotland. In many ways, devolution further distinguished Scotland from the United Kingdom. Scotland had a unique approach to mutualization and the third sector, having built upon public management models that reflected accumulated experience of key actors in the wide Scottish policy networks that defined Scotland even before devolution (Midwinter and McGarvey, 2001). In essence, devolution paved the way for Scotland to shift management practices away from NPM that had defined England up through the turn of the century to practices underpinned by co-production and cooperation that are inherent in NPG.

In this respect, it follows that NPG literature is often linked to work on co-production and it has been suggested that this form of management is most compatible with effective co-production practices (Pestoff et al., 2012). The state and policy environment do impact

and shape co-production practices and what might be able to be achieved through these approaches in varied ways (McMullin, 2022; Pestoff, 2009). That said, it seems to matter less whether 'co-production' can occur based on a country's public management traditions, and more what the results of 'co-production' are and what the process resembles. Importantly, discourses underpinning co-production and assumptions about whether the process may be best designed to achieve ambitions around participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, or both, are also relevant. This is because discourse is likely to manifest differently across different contexts where there is an embrace of 'co-production.'

**2.2.4 Defining co-production, co-creation, and co-construction**

'Co-production' emerged as a concept in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the public administration and political science literature in the United States, but interest declined until early 2000s scholarship, particularly in Europe, reinvigorated the field (Brudney, 2021). Since this re-emergence, many governments have aspired to use co-production as a tool for greater citizen participation in the design, delivery, and governance of public services (Bovaird, 2007; Pestoff, 2009). While early definitions of co-production, including Ostrom's (1996: 1073) seminal definition of co-production as the process by which, 'Citizens can play an active role in producing public goods and services of consequence to them,' focus on tangible public services, more recent work has sought to expand and nuance the definition by bringing into focus the production of public value (Osborne, 2018, 2020) and outcomes (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2021). Focusing on value has some connection to earlier definitions like Alford's (2009: 23) that centers on the actions of government agencies to initiate a process that 'either intentionally or unintentionally creates private and/or public value,' albeit value derived from of outputs or services.

Despite this dominant focus on *services* in the co-production literature, not all scholars constrain their definitions of co-production to delivery of a tangible service. This is especially true of more recent work (see Bovaird and Loeffler, 2021). For example, emphasizing outcomes, McCulloch (2021: 412) still centers co-production within the scope of public services, but more broadly defining it, 'as the mix of activities that public service agents and citizens contribute to in the progression of public service outcomes.' While McCulloch does not specifically define what is precisely included in that 'mix of activities,' other scholars (e.g., Brandsen and Honingh, 2018; Loeffler, 2021; Nabatchi et al., 2017) have attempted to provide more clarity around what co-production is, by highlighting what it is not: it is neither public consultation, nor citizen participation, but goes beyond these forms of engagement.

Additionally, it has become more common to see scholars connecting their definitions of co-production with a discussion of value 'co-creation' (Eriksson, 2019; Strokosch and Osborne, 2021) even while other researchers have attempted to de-couple the 'co-production' and 'co-creation' terms, outlining clear distinctions between them (Brandsen and Honingh, 2018). Eriksson's (2019) and Strokosch and Osborne's (2021) definitions of co-production both involve the voluntary contributions of citizens or representatives to the process and note that value co-creation is not inherent in the process of co-production, but that it can be enabled by the public service organizations who typically initiate these processes.

Co-creation in the context of this body of work refers to *value* co-creation, which is conceptually different from the way co-creation is often connected to co-design literature that positions it as a way to innovate in service delivery (e.g., Sanders and Stappers, 2008). Rather, this conception of co-creation is connected to literature around co-production and

emerges from service management theory. In this context, reframing of public services as, indeed, *services,* rather than *products* that can be handed down to communities who will be passive recipients of anything cascaded their way, allows service organizations to innovate (Osborne, Radnor, et al., 2012). Reframing service delivery and integrating citizens into the process has been shown, at least in the private sector, to facilitate the discovery of latent community needs rather than simply reacting to those which have already been expressed (von Hippel, 2006).

Osborne, Radnor, and Nasi (2012) argue that integrating co-production into public service delivery as a key characteristic of the process requires a fundamental reframing of both the role of public management in achieving outcomes for citizens and the process of service delivery itself. In this context, a service gains value from users as they are involved (through co-production) in the process of developing and delivering it. As articulated by Osborne et al. (2016) value here might invovle, 'satisfaction with the service, the imapct of the service expereince upon … well-being and the extent to which it meets [an individual or group's] social, health or economic needs' (643). This manifestation of value co-creation is not limitted to the individual or group level: public value can be co-created if public services meet 'societal objectives or contribute to social cohesion or well-being' (Osborne et al., 2016: 643).

When not connected directly to public or indvidiual value, and therefore seen as an outcome of co-production, co-creation is positioned as a pre-cursor to co-production. As outlined by Brandsen and Honingh (2018):

> Co-production is generally associated with services citizens receive during the implementation phase of the production cycle, whereas co-creation concerns services at a strategic level. In other words, when citizens are involved in the general planning of a service—perhaps even initiating it—then this is co-creation, whereas if they shape the service during later phases of the cycle it is co-production (13).

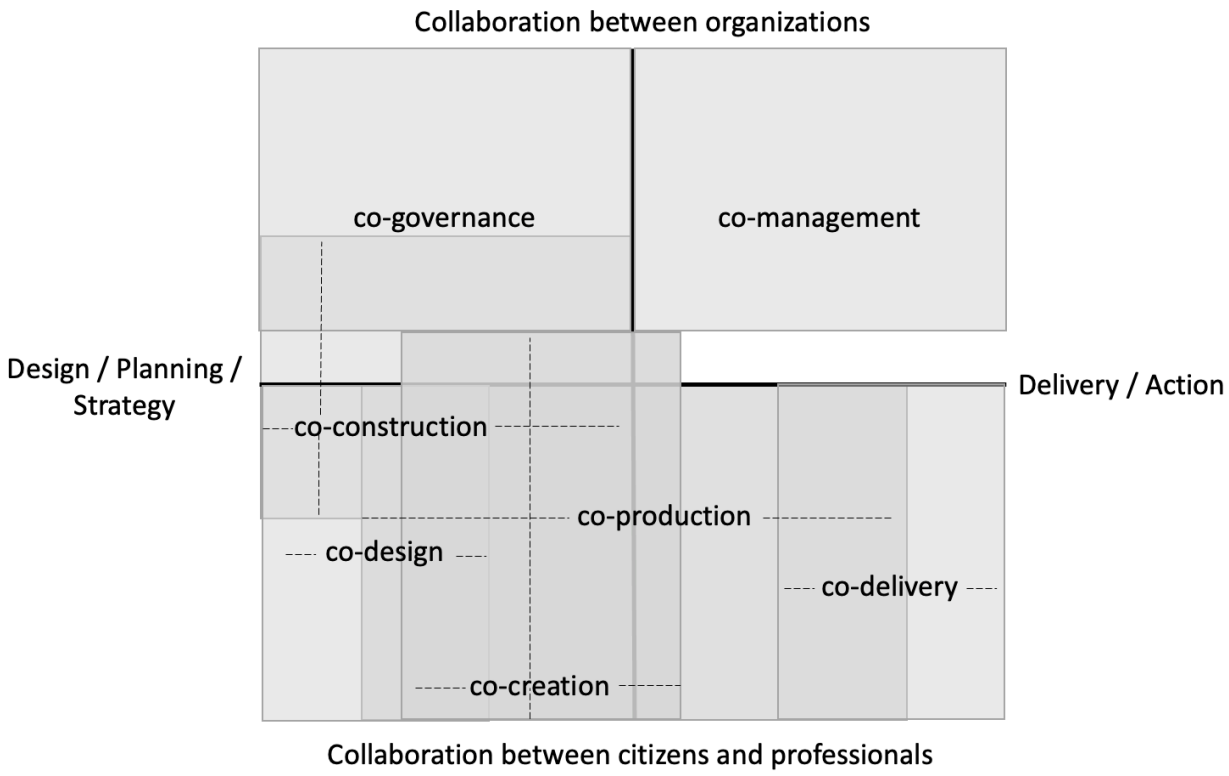
This distinction around co-production and co-creation is supported by Bovaird and Loeffler (2022) and Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia (2017) who have identified the 'Four Co's' of the policy cycle process as co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery, and co-assessment (or co-evaluation). Co-creation would fall under earlier phases of co-commissioning and co-design, and co-production the latter, involving co-delivery and/or co-assessment. Similarly, Vaillancourt (2009) defines 'co-construction' as citizen involvement in the design of public policy, while 'co-production refers to participation by stakeholders from civil society and the market in the implementation of public policy' (Vaillancourt 2009: 277). In this sense, using different stages of a service production cycle, or perhaps even policy cycle (Howlett et al., 2009), creates a continuum of different types of involvement of citizens / service users that can describe *when* co-production occurs.

*Who* is involved in a collaborative process also creates a central definitional debate in this literature. These debates recognize that third sector organizations (TSOs) have increasingly gotten involved in public service provision (McMullin, 2022; Pestoff, 2012) and evidence that third sector service providers are typically predisposed to more effectively embrace principles of collaboration, making TSOs interesting case studies in co-production (Pestoff et al., 2012). McMullin (2019, 2020) has specifically concentrated her research on filling what was once a significant gap around third sector engagement with co-production of public services, although there is still very little research around third sector involvement in the co-production of policy (viz. Vaillancourt, 2009). More recently, other scholars have contributed to research on nonprofit and public sector service collaborations but through the lens of collaborative governance (see Calò et al., 2023, 2023). To recognize the role TSOs are playing in public service provision, other 'co-' terms have been coined. Co-governance

relates to the participation of TSOs in strategic planning processes around public services, while co-management refers to delivery arrangements in which TSOs deliver public services with or for the state (Pestoff 2012; McMullin 2022). Co-creation, although typically positioned on the 'when' spectrum, can also potentially cross the co-management boundary as it sometimes describes the involvement of TSOs and citizens in strategic public policy and service decisions.

Figure 2.2 attempts to capture these two dominant 'who' and 'when' debates in the literature around collaborative processes. The 'when' boundary is traditionally situated on the design to delivery spectrum and positioned as a static binary where it is either one or the other, but this has expanded more recently to include assessment and/or assessment after delivery or commissioning before design. When considering 'who' is involved in the process, one stakeholder would traditionally have more power than the other (i.e., the professionals in the diagram). Although, the term 'professionals' can apply to third or public

***Figure 2.2: Definitional boundaries around common 'co-' terms***



sector actors engaging directly with citizens or the public sector actors engaging with TSOs. Ultimately, 'professionals' would theoretically be the actors in the arrangement who have more power that can potentially be disrupted or challenged through collaborative processes.

### 2.2.5 Co-producing public policy

While citizens and professionals are consistently the two main actors involved in the process of co-production as classically conceptualized by Ostrom and Ostrom (1971), the role citizens can and should play in design and creation of public policy and public services could possibly vary by public administration tradition. Even in areas where NPG is embraced and policy co-production is pedaled as an effective policy tool, there are often still claims of a disjuncture between the goals of policy co-production and its execution (Connolly et al., 2020; Martin, 2011; Mazzei et al., 2019). Scotland is an example of a nation where this disconnect is increasingly being studied from perspectives of collaborative governance and co-production. Calò et al. (2023), for example, reveal the importance of sustaining collaborative governance practices over time to ensure positive service-based outcomes among TSOs are realized. Considering policy beyond the service delivery level, the third sector in Scotland is heterogeneous with a multitude of different support organizations resulting in intermediary organizations often being engaged for policy development consultations. Mazzei and colleagues (2019) argue that engaging these organizations to represent service users, all of which have different relationships with individual users, potentially leaves the intended beneficiaries of significant third sector policies out of the conversation, and even risks alienating them in the process. Other research has also demonstrated the ways in which the concerns of third sector organizations have been overlooked and even co-opted during their ostensible participation in a health service co-production process (Martin, 2011).

Even though the process of co-production may not always reach its aspirational aims, there are still considered to be merits to the practice (Bovaird, 2007). Co-production can be a means through which stakeholders with varying and diverse interests actually create, and have a considerable stake in, the policies that affect them. As was already mentioned, Vaillancourt (2009) describes this process of 'defining' or 'creating' public policy as co-construction, whereas co-production of public policy enables the participation of both civil society stakeholders and market forces in the *implementation* of public services. Essentially, co-production is the application of co-constructing policy. This is different from simple consultations that do more to signal inclusion than to make stakeholders feel genuinely included and empowered. Co-production can equally be a process that falls short of this ideal and ends up leaving individuals in a state where they feel more disenfranchised by promises left unfulfilled (Boyle and Harris, 2009). There are often costs associated with collaborations between third sector organizations like nonprofits and the government which can jeopardize TSOs and their autonomy (Calò, Numerato, et al., 2023).

While this research suggests more inquiry into the motivations and mechanisms surrounding co-production and who gets to participate should continue to avoid, for example, perceptions of disenfranchising processes, it also provides a rationale for relying on definitions of co-production that are perhaps more aligned with practical co-production rhetoric. For example, Eriksson's (2019: 298) definition of co-production: 'The joint and voluntary involvement of group representatives in evaluating, designing, and delivering public services that enable value co-creation for other group members.' This focus on the potential for the role of representatives and not just the direct involvement and action of citizens might have more relevance for the way these processes unfold in practice. This definition is not only broader than most in its inclusion of actors involved in co-production

processes, but it also addresses a broad range of activities commonly associated with co-production and positions it in a way that aligns with common government discourse around co-production as 'representative co-production.' I choose to draw on both Eriksson's (2019) and Vaillancourt's (2009) definitions of co-production because of their applicability to the cases present throughout this research (i.e., their connection to policy and embrace of 'representatives' that might be TSOs). As Loeffler (2021: 29) states, 'any academic definition of co-production has to be 'fit for purpose' for the analysis to be conducted' and it is therefore 'entirely legitimate that different authors should choose to use different definitions of co-production.'

## 2.3 Evolving public management trends and the 'emergence' of social enterprise

In the context of TSOs collaborating with both public sector actors and citizens to achieve improved public service and public policy outcomes, social enterprises have a particular relevance. Social enterprises, mission-led organizations that trade with the explicit aim of benefiting the greater community, started gathering a lot of academic attention around the turn of the century, becoming increasingly studied and explored by academics and policymakers globally (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001; Nyssens, 2006). Praised for the way these organizations' principal aim is to produce environmental or social impact (Barraket et al., 2010; Kerlin, 2009), many governments have begun to dedicate more resources to experimentation with and investment in social enterprise ecosystem development, touting them as a mechanism for sustainable public service provision (Galera and Borzaga, 2009).

Often historically, although not exclusively, Commonwealth countries, like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are referenced as countries leading the charge to support social enterprise. Among these leaders, the United Kingdom is considered an exemplar: the UK is

home to the world's largest social enterprise membership body and sub-state nations with dedicated strategies for supporting social enterprise growth through policies promoting social procurement, social finance, and business support, among others. In Scotland specifically, both the social enterprise sector and the Scottish Government worked together to collectively promote Scotland as a world leader in fostering a successful environment for a flourishing social enterprise ecosystem (Roy et al., 2014, 2015).

### 2.3.1 The politics associated with defining the boundaries of social enterprise

Similar to how increasing interest in 'co-production' only seemed to muddle rather than clarify the concept, growing interest in 'social enterprise' did very little to clarify definitions around the topic or lead to a consensus on what qualifies as belonging to a 'social enterprise ecosystem.' Most scholars coalesce around the idea that there are different historical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors that lead to and shape different conceptions of social enterprise (Defourny and Nyssens, 2017; Galera and Borzaga, 2009; J. A. Kerlin, 2010; Teasdale, 2011). In turn, social enterprises operate in different institutional and legal environments all around the world (Kerlin, 2010, 2013) because of the diverse ways in which social enterprise ecosystems naturally grow and develop (Navarrete Moreno and Agapitova, 2017).

In practice, these different legal, regulatory, and policy environments often lead to different concepts of what social enterprises should deliver and how to finance social enterprise organizations. For example, European social enterprises tend to combine income from trade with public subsidies, donations, and volunteer time. By contrast, social enterprises in the United States tend to be more oriented toward the market and strive to develop their own earned income strategies from trade as a way of decreasing reliance on

public subsidies and philanthropy (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010; Kerlin, 2006, 2013). While service and product-oriented social enterprises exist across both contexts, the United States tends to have a greater emphasis on markets and the US concept of social enterprise, which is often conflated with social entrepreneurship, is rooted in developing business ideas and products that help achieve social or environmental benefit (Kerlin and Gagnaire, 2009). In Europe, the cooperative and work integration social enterprise (WISE) tradition is strong and there is a greater focus on community solidarity rather than product innovation and profit for social benefit (Leś and Kolin, 2009; Nyssens, 2009). Australian social enterprises fall somewhere between these traditions, influenced by both Europe and the US (Barraket et al., 2017).

Additionally, in the context of the UK, which blends both, often conflicting, US and European traditions, there is a significant focus on social enterprises that operate within public service markets (Powell and Osborne, 2015). Various UK governments have focused policy on supporting the growth of these social enterprises even though the evidence on their effectiveness, proclivity to thrive, and sustainability is mixed (Teasdale et al., 2013). These geographic and cultural differences might be inevitable on a global scale, but even in the United Kingdom, and Scotland more specifically, notions of social enterprise are highly contested and rooted in local traditions (Gordon, 2015; Mason, 2011; Mazzei, 2017; Teasdale, 2011).

Understanding the ways in which Scotland's local traditions influenced, and continue to influence, the social enterprise sector's development is essential to this study. Back when Scotland first developed its *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011* (Scottish Government, 2008b) and when the discourses around 'social enterprise' were increasingly gaining traction in Scotland (Pia, 2022), social enterprise, particularly its traditions and

emergence (i.e., cultural and historical contexts), was still an understudied field globally (Boddice, 2009). Since then, more studies have emerged that help categorize social enterprise through various lenses.

Early seminal work that was focused more on the cooperative tradition of social enterprise, positioned social enterprise as a concept at the crossroads between the public, voluntary, and private sectors (Nyssens, 2006). Another way of framing this crossroads is by considering social enterprises as hybrid organizations (Doherty et al., 2014) or organizations existing at the intersection of the state, the market, and civil society (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011b). Instead of framing social enterprises as organizations that embody some civil society and third sector characteristics, other scholars position social enterprise as completely embedded within the third sector, since they claim the third-sector is rooted in hybridity itself (Donnelly-Cox, 2015). This conception views the third sector as continuously evolving, ultimately leading to a blurring of non-profit and cooperative trading practices (Defourny, 2001). Some scholars challenge the view of social enterprise as existing only within the third sector by pointing to organizations that embody practices associated with multiple economic sectors (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011b) and noting that organizations within the third sector cross public-private, profit-non-profit, and formal-informal boundaries, developing hybridized characteristics in the process (Brandsen et al., 2005).

Beyond the split approaches to explain third sector and social enterprise hybridization, there are a few scholars who are more critical of this view of social enterprise as a blending of sectors and business models altogether. Instead of viewing social enterprises as 'crossroads organizations,' 'hybrid organizations,' or 'organizations with blurred lines,' scholars contributing to this strand of the social enterprise literature conceptualize social enterprise as an encroachment of private sector practices and ideals

into the third sector (Dart, 2004; Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004). This literature tends to position social enterprise as something that is 'done to' practitioners, founders, or organizations who have been swept up in a trend to commercialize under the guise of social enterprise discourse. Dey and Teasdale (2013) challenge the notion that practitioners running organizations ultimately get 'governed' by (viz. Carmel and Harlock, 2008) or swept up in more market-oriented social enterprise discourse. Their research examining the ways social enterprise practitioners engage with the term and concept of social enterprise challenged perspectives on the concept as an unavoidable and overbearing force that permeates all aspects of organizational autonomy and culture. It added to seminal scholarship demonstrating the utility of discourse analysis for enhancing understanding of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship rhetoric and practice that first called into question the proliferation of more market-based social enterprise discourse in the everyday localized practices of social entrepreneurs (viz. Parkinson and Howorth, 2008). Thus, the body of evidence suggesting that social enterprise leaders 'retain a certain degree of agency and are able to resist the social enterprise discourse by displacing, appropriating, or negotiating their own meanings and identity within the political context in which they work' started to grow (Dey and Teasdale, 2016: 489).

Ridley-Duff and Bull (2011a) consider this politicization of social enterprise discourse and as such propose a view of social enterprise that acknowledges not precisely what social enterprise is but how social enterprise came to be. They do so by specifically analyzing the political philosophies led to its emergence. Using the emergence of NPM in the 1980s, they explain how social enterprise can be thought of as a product of tension between attempts at utilizing private sector management rhetoric to reform the public sector and the radical

responses by local politicians and community enterprise leaders with more socialist, collectivist agendas (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011a).

### 2.3.2 Social enterprise and public management discourse

There are thus ultimately two central arguments related to social enterprise's positioning in the context of NPM traditions. First, as emblematic of the encroachment of private sector practice in the third sector (see Dart, 2004; Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004). Second and alternatively, there is the perspective that it is instead a source of resistance to these traditions (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011a). Regardless of the perspective held, the conceptual boundaries for social enterprise are fuzzy, reflecting various discourses that often oscillate between perspectives. These blurred boundaries result in discourse around social enterprise that is both complementary and contradictory. The discourses that emerge around social enterprise in Scotland are related to the competing ideas about what enterprises are, what social enterprises should do, how social enterprises should be financed, and what political, social, and economic conditions should lead to these types of organizations developing. The Scottish discourse has roots in both US and European traditions, which also aligns with the ways in which the UK (Powell and Osborne, 2015) and Australia (Barraket et al., 2017) have adopted elements of both conceptions of social enterprise.

Over time, social enterprise began to position itself, at least in Scotland, as a key partner able to contribute to more inclusive, community-oriented policy. Yet for this community-dominant discourse around social enterprise in Scotland to take off, it needed to land within a receptive policy environment. While general understanding of the policy environment exists insofar as moves to embrace collaboration and NPG thinking has been studied, more needs to be known about the specific drivers and barriers facilitating this

environment in Scotland where collaborative management practices and social enterprise could thrive. This thesis enhances understanding of this 'supportive environment' for social enterprise which facilitated policy co-production.

## 2.4 History of 'social enterprise' in Scotland

The history of 'social enterprise' in Scotland began to develop at the turn of the century with devolution and the emergence of NPM, followed by Osborne's (2006) characterization of NPG as its successor. Yet, social enterprise in Scotland did not emerge out of nowhere and there is a long history that helps explain its rise to policy prominence which this thesis further explores. In this next section, I highlight where scholars have already contributed to greater understanding of the 'emergence' of social enterprise in Scotland, particularly from traditions of cooperatives, community businesses, and community enterprises in the Scottish context. It is on this foundation that I continue my research, looking not just at the history of social enterprise, but also its ecosystem and specifically approaches to designing and delivering policy and public services surrounding the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem.

### 2.4.1 Arising from traditions of 'community business'

The NPM policy environment contextualizes the rise of 'social enterprise' terminology across the whole of the UK, where it gathered interest before the turn of the century. In Scotland, there was another layer to this policy context. The Scottish policy environment had historically been supportive of co-operatives and in the late 1970s there was a cooperative revival supported by legislation coming out of Westminster (UK Parliament, 1976, 1978). In addition to many community co-ops in Scotland that benefited from increased political support, particularly in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, there was also an increase in

support for community business and community enterprise models. Because of the existing political support for these business models in the Scottish context, the social enterprise terminology arguably emerged later amid political pressures for a 'new' alternative model that could garner more support.

Before discourse around 'social enterprise' began to gain traction around the turn of the century, the community business movement dominated public policy discourse in Scotland. Scotland's community business movement emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a tool to counter Thatcher's vision for enterprising culture with a vision for collectivism and a commitment to local community development and partnership with local authorities. The community business movement operated in opposition to the concept of 'enterprise' as Thatcher promoted it, in favor of a focus on localized and sustainable community development. Nevertheless, as community enterprise and co-operative leaders tried to institutionalize and mainstream their work in the 1980s, they found themselves in an increasingly hostile policy environment under Thatcher (Murray, 2018).

Many in the UK who embraced localized socialism and collective mentalities rejected the introduction of business practices into voluntary and charity organizations resulting from NPM thinking (Chandler, 2007; Kendall and Knapp, 1996). They believed it reduced a tradition of social enterprise based on commercial activity where ownership and control rights largely rest with productive labor (i.e., the cooperative tradition) (Ellerman, 1984, 1988) to social enterprise that was simply a business with social purpose without greater aims of promoting economic inclusion and protecting participatory democracy (Dart, 2004; Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004). Despite this localized support for collective community initiatives, or perhaps because of this deep entrenchment with local authorities putting voluntary and community groups at risk of local government whims, evolving tensions and

hostilities between the community and public sector forced community leaders to make pragmatic choices about the positioning of their movement to ensure its survival. These choices planted the seeds for current discourse around social enterprise in Scotland today.

When local authorities were reorganized into unitary local authorities in 1996, many community businesses lost their way (Reid and Hood, 1996). Following this local restructuring, devolution in 1998 further altered governance models in Scotland and changed many elements of the Scottish policy landscape (Midwinter and McGarvey, 2001). Within this socio-political context in the late 1990s, the community business movement began to lose favor in Scotland (Hayton, 2000). As a result, much of the existing community business landscape began shifting and new organizations emerged. Strathclyde Community Business eventually became Community Enterprise in Scotland. The Development Trust Association was established, and many place-based community businesses started describing themselves as development trusts, finding that model more suitable for their preferred way of working.

### 2.4.2 'Social enterprise' gathering interest and attention

During this overlapping era of the community business and social enterprise movements in the early 2000s, conversations with social economy actors across Europe began to inform the way many in Scotland were thinking about 'social enterprise' as rooted in community solidarity and empowerment (Burt, 1988; Leś and Kolin, 2009; Nyssens, 2009). Empowerment was always emblematic of the community business movement (Burt, 1988), reflected by the community business movement's initiative in creating these links with the social economy. These links would be continued on in the social enterprise era and be a salient part of the evolving and competing visions for the future of Scotland and its

community business, community enterprise, and social enterprise movements against the backdrop of structural changes facing Scotland in the early 2000s.

Post devolution, as policymakers and others within the sector started to adopt 'social enterprise' language more exclusively, organizations were pushed to pivot and adopt the new language, and in some ways new practice, around social enterprise. This push altered the names, and in some cases direction, of these organizations from their 1980s and 1990s to their present-day states; however, their strong lobbying apparatus and advocacy efforts preserved elements of the community business movement while ensuring that the Scottish Government took social enterprise seriously (Murray, 2018). For example, Community Business Scotland, established in 1981, provided a focus for promotional work and lobbying on behalf of community business that was ultimately very successful in securing the support of key officials and politicians with the ability to influence budgets and political priorities (Burt, 1988).

### 2.4.3 Emerging tensions around social enterprise

With support from this lobbying apparatus, in the early 2000s, the social economy sector and social enterprises began being promoted to address unemployment and modernize public services (Brady, 2003), but there was still disagreement about the term 'social enterprise' and the role government should play in these organizations (Birch and Whittam, 2008). Particularly in the context of 'community development' in Scotland there were two predominant views of the role of social enterprise. The 'radical' view, which positions social enterprise in an alternative way of engaging locally and running the economy, necessitates the promotion of cooperative economic relations, a view toward sustainability, and inclusive governance among local institutions to be realized (Zografos, 2007). This radical view, is

more aligned with John Pearce, a champion of community business in Scotland who began adopting the language of social enterprise later on in his career (Pearce and Kay, 2003); however, as Kay et al. (2016) argue, a perceived need to reform the public sector's delivery of service for citizens drove the development of social enterprise activity in the United Kingdom. This argument aligns with the 'reformist' view of social enterprise as an extension of pre-existing systems designed to deliver public services no longer receiving funding and attention (Zografos, 2007). These views underpin many of the debates and tensions around place (principally rural and urban) and profit and the state that marked the transition from the heyday of community business in Scotland to the current focus on social enterprise.

This transition was far from definitive and many social enterprise intermediary organizations that play a key role in the sector today, like Community Enterprise in Scotland and Community Enterprise were once organizations that supported the community business movement. The Voluntary Code of Practice for Social Enterprise in Scotland is another element of Scotland's social enterprise infrastructure and policy today, that arguably reflect this legacy of the community business movement (Murray, 2018). Although this legacy still remains, there are concerns among some in the sector that the once strong tradition of community business and enterprise that co-existed among other philosophical traditions underpinning social enterprise in Scotland is being crowded out by other, perhaps more market-driven, rather than community-driven, voices (Pybus, 2022). Some have described this as leading to a 'fracturing' within Scotland's social enterprise sector, but these divides are not new. Rather, they are the products of ongoing tension that can be traced back to the 1990s. Perhaps this goes back specifically to when Senscot was formed in 1999 to become an advocate for social enterprise business models (Pia, 2022) as alternatives to community businesses which were falling out of political favor (Hayton, 2000).

### 2.4.4 Social enterprise policy traction

Social enterprise began to get some attention through differentiated strategies developed under the Liberal-Labour coalition government in 2006, but as will be discussed further in subsequent chapters, many consider the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011* (Scottish Government, 2008b) as a key turning point for social enterprise in terms of formalized policy recognition. This is perhaps because that plan was published and executed under the Scottish National Party (SNP) and this government that has led the agenda for social enterprise ever since. Under their leadership, the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem has gradually become renowned internationally while the specific policy developments and discourses that underpin the social enterprise movement in Scotland have not been extensively studied.

Without strong documentation of the underlying policymaking and implementation processes as they relate to the social enterprise sector, Scotland has still been able to advance a narrative about their acclaimed and distinct social enterprise support ecosystem (Roy et al., 2015). In 2016, with the development of Scotland's ten-year social enterprise strategy (Scottish Government, 2016d), perhaps the first national social enterprise strategy to be co-produced in this manner, Scotland further promoted the narrative that Scotland was home to the world leading social enterprise sector. The research conducted for this thesis thus presents an important opportunity to critically examine a question around the extent to which Scotland's self-promoted narrative of collaborative policy development broadly, and in a social enterprise context specifically, is justified.

### 2.4.5 Co-producing social enterprise policy in Scotland

Adopting policies produced through a process of true, or at least ostensible co-production, is often made possible by the creation of a 'multi-interpretable' storyline that contains something for everyone to interpret in their own philosophy (Kemp and Rotmans, 2009). The attempt to reconcile every, or almost every, stakeholder interest, perhaps to be inclusive and representative, could have the unintended consequence of satisfying very few people and making them feel overtly excluded or disregarded. When a policy reaches its implementation phase and must have some form of standardized application, these feelings of exclusion and lack of satisfaction are of particular concern (Howlett et al., 2017). Particularly in this implementation context, there is a seemingly perpetual paradox between policy discourse and practice that many scholars cite generally (e.g., Goodchild and Cole, 2001; Moret-Hartman et al., 2008) and specifically in the case of social enterprise policy (Mazzei and Roy, 2017). This tension is something that policymakers must continually juggle when engaging in policy co-production and something that this research will explore further both from the perspectives of the social enterprise sector and citizens and from the perspectives of policymakers.

Scotland has been able to promote a narrative about their policymaking process as one with co-creation and co-production at its core that has been referenced as the 'Scottish approach' (Cairney et al., 2016). The 2008 action plan was an indication of this approach and a trend toward more citizen engagement in policy co-creation that has evolved into the Scottish Government's reputation for 'pursuing a consultative and cooperative style when it makes and implements policy in devolved areas' (Cairney et al., 2016: 333). At the same time, the extent to which Scotland really has historically embraced a 'strategic approach' to attain outcomes of collective value through their social policy is debatable with new

research suggesting that genuine trends in this direction are more recent (Sinclair, 2022). Regardless of when and how the Scottish Government started strategically embracing citizen involvement, the fact that at least by many accounts it does when implementing policy, is what leads more recent Scottish Government policy to be classed as 'co-produced' rather than simply 'co-created' when considering more traditional academic definitions of these concepts.

While 'strategic' by virtue of its title, Scotland's ten-year social enterprise strategy is better analyzed through a 'co-production' rather than 'co-creation' lens, because the strategy itself is accompanied by a series of three-year action plans, which promise to 'describe in more detail the evolving commitments, initiatives and programmes *that will deliver* on the long-term priorities set out' in the strategy (Scottish Government, 2016c: 6; my emphasis). These action plans were intended to be developed with the same actors involved in the drafting and production of the 2016 strategy; these citizen groups are also primarily the same ones who are responsible for the delivery of initiatives and programs outlined in the strategy and subsequent action plans. Importantly, at least initially, those involved in the early stages of strategy co-production included many individuals and citizen groups, rather than only organizations. This involvement and broad engagement distinguish this process from more traditional government-civil society partnerships, which is an important differentiator for 'co-production' (Loeffler, 2021; Nabatchi et al., 2017).

Ultimately, those involved in the process that began in 2014 with the visioning for the 2016 strategy would be considered 'co-producers' because of their continual involvement in program and service delivery outlined in the strategy and action plans and funded by the Scottish Government to support the social enterprise sector. Even though this process as positioned and as externally described better aligns with definitions of co-

production, it still requires critical examination. I argue that more research is needed to understand how this might have evolved over time, at what periods perceptions of its reality might be better described as another process (e.g., co-creation or even partnership), or what kind of co-production (i.e., individual and collective) it might be an example of when considering other research evaluating these approaches (viz. Bovaird et al., 2015, 2016).

## 2.5 Mobilization of policy processes and policy ideas

This is important because as Scotland's proclaimed policy travels elsewhere and as Scotland continues to pedal the narrative that they consistently and continually engage in co-production, more needs to be known about how this process evolves and travels. Indeed, what is known about the history of social enterprise in Scotland already suggests that as social enterprise sector leaders in Scotland began developing action plans and 'co-produced' strategies, they were all influenced by their own unique backgrounds in government, community business, cooperatives, or other enterprises. Despite the fact that the sector was able to come together and produce a policy now renowned as the co-produced ten-year strategy (Scottish Government, 2016c), competing definitions of social enterprise, as well as competing conceptions about the role of government in the sector, still undergird the policy document and the discourse that surrounds it.

While academic studies evidencing Scotland's current social enterprise policy influence globally remain sparse, organizations like Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF), headquartered in Scotland, are extensively engaged in global policy consultation work and can help advance social enterprise scholarship through the practitioner network (see methods in Barraket et al., 2010). Through SEWF policy forums, policymakers, and social enterprise advocates from around the world are coming together and often looking to

Scotland as an example for their respective social enterprise sectors as they build momentum and begin co-producing national and regional social enterprise strategies of their own social enterprise strategies (e.g., Government of Ireland, 2019; Victoria State Government, 2017). This occurs despite the absence of critical examination of Scotland's claims about its social enterprise support ecosystem, and more importantly, its 'co-production' process in the design and delivery of social policy.

Thus, to assume that *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026*, 'co-produced' with social enterprise, leaders, practitioners, and the third sector more broadly, was the product of broad consensus ignores the contestation, factions, and disputes that are inherent in policy development and the role of policy brokers in various policy subsystems (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier and Weible, 2019). Particularly in the case of Scotland's social enterprise policy where individuals worked together to develop a strategy that is based on different, and arguably competing philosophies about 'social enterprise,' it is unsurprising that there is uncertainty among social enterprise practitioners in Scotland whether the national policy truly endorses and advances their work (Mazzei and Roy, 2017). Nevertheless, Scotland was able to position itself as holding the key to an exportable social enterprise policymaking process of co-production. To ensure knowledge around policy co-production is appropriately nuanced to support future efforts to co-produce policy within and beyond Scotland, thesis seeks to fill the gap in research surrounding what that process truly entails not just rhetorically, but also practically.

There is a tendency for top-down policies produced at the hands of politicians to be the ones widely adopted globally through a replicative transfer across borders and policy contexts (Peck and Theodore, 2015), but there is also increasing focus on policy 'mobility' and 'mutation'. These newer and more interdisciplinary conceptions of traditional policy

transfer and translation, consider policymaking as a dynamic process that moves between different points of emulation and unique localized innovation (Peck and Theodore, 2010). This project will apply these ideas about policy transfer and mobility to understand how Scotland's policy and process, and even how the discourses within the policy itself, have been adopted and utilized elsewhere. This will help reveal not only how discourse around social enterprise itself travels and transfers, but also how discourse and practice around the governance of the social enterprise sector and the policy systems underpinning it also travel and transfer across geographic and sociopolitical contexts.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Through the literature review presented in this chapter I have explained how both co-production and social enterprise gathered both political and academic interest in the context of 'interpretive turns' in public governance theories. Underpinned by participatory and deliberative democratic discourses, both 'co-production' and 'social enterprise' are contested concepts that are positioned in multiple ways throughout the literature relevant to the public management and social enterprise fields. Understanding this contestation is important in the case of Scotland's social enterprise policy history because it has led to the ongoing negotiation around both social enterprise policy content and approaches. It is predominantly these approaches to developing, delivering, and sustaining social enterprise policy and associated public services which were studied throughout my research for this thesis, but the content of the policies had relevance as well, especially in terms of what it revealed about the process of deliberative negotiation. Building on existing work studying the history of social enterprise, and social enterprise ecosystems in Scotland, which I explained toward the conclusion of this chapter, this thesis will help fill gaps in research

around ‘policy co-production’ and critically analyze claims about approaches to collaborative governance arrangements.

In the next chapter I turn my attention to the methods and approaches I use to conduct this research to generate greater understanding of policy co-production processes that furthers existing scholarship in the public management, social policy, and social enterprise fields. I explain my epistemological and ontological perspectives and how these lead to a particular research design and strategy along with my embrace of the discourse-historical approach (DHA) to uncover the underlying assumptions and motivations around collaborative policy development. Using DHA requires the integration of other, often interdisciplinary, theories and frameworks to make sense of how discursive strategies are operationalized. I therefore also use this chapter to engage with further literature around collaborative governance, value creation in public service ecosystems, and policy advocacy coalitions and explain their conceptual and analytical relevance as frameworks in the context of my approach to this research.

# Chapter 3: Framing an interdisciplinary study through the discourse-historical approach (DHA)

## 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the current state of the research around social enterprise, with a focus on social enterprise policy and changing public management philosophies that have influenced the development and delivery of social enterprise policy in Scotland and globally. Noting the assumed normative benefits of collaborative policy design and delivery in the social enterprise and social economy policy context, it provided a justification for the research conducted for this thesis. In essence, as public management trends shift to embrace collaborative governance arrangements focused on policy co-production and cooperation, more needs to be known about what facilitates these processes, how they evolve over time, and how narratives from one context are mobilized elsewhere.

This chapter will now outline the research process designed to begin filling our gaps in knowledge around the sustainability and mobilization of policy co-production. I use this chapter to explain how Critical Theory underpins this research process and how it informs my methodological approach. First, I revisit the aims and objectives of this study before providing more detail around the research philosophy and approach that necessarily flows from them. I then describe the theory underpinning this research before introducing the conceptual framework I derived to contextualize my data and inform analysis. Following this I describe my research design along with my methods of data collection and analysis and then finally the ethical considerations informing this research.

### 3.1.1 Research aims and objectives

At its core, this project is about improving understanding of cross-sector policy collaboration.

Rather than focus on one discrete and time-bound example, I wanted to explore this area of knowledge through the lens of an ongoing process. In choosing the Scottish case, my aim was to gather knowledge that would help advance and develop existing theory around policy co-production and collaborative governance, particularly as the work to sustain these processes unfolds. There were two broad objectives surrounding my research on the Scottish case. First, through this research I would be able to provide a more complete historical account of social enterprise policy development in Scotland than anything that, to my knowledge, exists currently. Second, I would also help advance scholarship and theory around collaborative management practices as they relate to social enterprise policy development processes in different national contexts, with potential implications for other policy contexts internationally as well. Building off these aims and objectives, I developed four discrete research questions:

1. How did various political conditions, public programs, and policies preceding 2016 shape the environment in which Scotland's social enterprise strategy was developed?
2. How did actors within what was once a broad third sector with different historical roots come together and coalesce around a set of shared principles and aims that ostensibly emerged through the 2016 social enterprise strategy?
3. What can be learned about collaborative governance practices and policy co-production by critically analyzing the design, delivery, and process of sustaining Scotland's social enterprise strategy?
4. In what ways has the narrative of collaborative social enterprise policy development in Scotland been mobilized in different contexts as other governments and social enterprise sectors attempt to embark on their own policy co-production journeys?

The theoretical underpinnings informing my conceptualization of these research questions

along with a more extensive outline of my overall research approach and methods follow.

## 3.2 Philosophical foundations

Research philosophies help articulate underlying beliefs and assumptions held by researchers, which inform how knowledge is developed throughout a research process (Saunders et al., 2015). Ontology, or *what is*, focuses on what constitutes reality (Crotty, 1998). Epistemology, or the study of knowledge—its forms, nature, and how we can derive knowledge about what exists (Johnson and Duberley, 2000)—flows from ontological assumptions about what exists. In other words, clarity around what is out there within the world to know needs to be articulated from the outset before anyone sets out to discover what and how we can learn about that reality (Grix, 2018; Saunders et al., 2015). Broadly, when considering ontological positions, a researcher can take an objectivist or a constructionist stance (Bryman, 2016). Positioned in opposition to one another, objectivism is a position that 'social phenomena and the categories that we use in everyday discourse have an existence that is independent or separate from actors' whereas constructionism 'asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors' who are constructing them (Bryman, 2016: 29).

There is a dominant dichotomy among positivist and interpretivist epistemological orientations as well; however, critical realism has been identified as a third way that finds middle ground between the more dominant stances (Bryman, 2016; Wainwright and Forbes, 2000). While it is generally widely accepted that most social science researchers would not subscribe to positivist epistemological orientation (Hammersley, 1993), positivism and interpretivism are still treated as the two dominant approaches to 'ways of knowing' (Bryman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2015; Scotland, 2012). A positivist position advocates for the

application of scientific method to study social reality, arguing that only that which can be objectively observed is a valid form of knowledge (Bryman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2015). Interpretivism, on the other hand, argues that traditional methods used in the natural sciences fall short of generating reliable knowledge in the social sciences; there are differences between people and objects and research in this arena must capture the subjective meaning of social action to appropriately reflect the interaction between social phenomena and consciousness of those phenomena (Bryman, 2016; Scotland, 2012). As a researcher my ontological assumptions are grounded in constructionism, and I take an interpretivist stance toward knowledge development.

### 3.2.1 Constructionism and interpretivism

Clarity around ontology is particularly important for concept formation research 'because it involves specifying what is inherent and important in the empirical phenomenon represented by a concept' (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012: 206). In the context of this research, this means that when considering concepts like collaborative governance or co-production, I believe that conceptually this phenomenon of increased citizen and organizational participation in policy design and service delivery is 'not only produced through social interaction but [is] in a constant state of revision' (Bryman, 2016: 29). Thus, what constitutes reality and what can be known around these processes exists among the social interactions informing these practices. As individuals construct meaning through their engagement with the world, their interpretations are based on various historical and social perspectives from which meaning emerges (Crotty, 1998). These varied perspectives on what constitutes reality can lead to a high-level of 'fuzziness' or ambiguity among conceptual problems (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012) when there is not necessarily one clearly defined answer, but rather a

multitude of perspectives which hold elements of 'truth.'

Given these underlying ontological beliefs, I also align myself with interpretivists who attempt to understand and make sense of subjective meaning rather than trying to test an explicit hypothesis or develop direct explanations for phenomena. In this respect, one of my ambitions with this research is to better appreciate and characterize the social realities of my research participants. This interpretivist orientation allows me to clearly address my research questions focused on the negotiation of perspectives related to historical beliefs, political values, and institutional practices and norms. As I do this, I will work through multiple iterations of interpretation to not only 'simply reveal how members of a social group interpret the world around them' but also 'to place the interpretations that have been elicited into a social scientific frame' that is then 'further interpreted in terms of the concepts, theories, and literature of a discipline' (Bryman, 2016: 28).

There are of course potential limitations to the constructionist ontology and interpretivist epistemological positions. Critics of constructionism argue that in choosing not to prioritize any 'constructed' view of reality over another and seeking to understand the world in the ways people perceive it, there is a danger of encouraging cultism and dogmatism (Ratner, 2005, 2006). Yet, I argue that when it comes to participatory processes, designed often to empower an actor who traditionally holds less power than others involved, how individuals interact with and understand those processes is more significant to understanding their evolution and efficacy than anything which may be able to be claimed about the 'objective' realities of the social processes themselves.

Indeed, I am not arguing that these interpretations I present throughout this thesis are necessarily reflective of reality since I am seeking to understand subjective meanings generated through social interaction. I also acknowledge that the data and conclusions

presented throughout this thesis are informed by my 'specific version of social reality, rather than one that can be regarded as definitive' (Bryman, 2016: 29). This thesis is an important first step to advance empirical study and understanding of the varied individual perceptions, interactions, and experiences around this form of policy collaboration over time. Advancing this work is important because to my knowledge, little work has yet been done on the concept of *policy* co-production nor is there an extensive body of work empirically testing frameworks of collaborative governance over time. My philosophical worldview as a researcher not only appropriately fits with the aims and objectives of this research project, but it also naturally informs the theories I gravitate toward to help understand and contextualize my research. I now turn my attention toward my methodology, or my approach to acquiring knowledge, which flows from these ontological and epistemological foundations (Grix, 2018).

## 3.3 Research approach

Throughout this project I have become increasingly interested in how language is used to promote and/or subvert dominant political messaging and push through particular policy ideas. At the same time, this project also concerns the ways discourse is used to position various forms of political and policy engagement and make arguments about the evolution of these processes and their impact on cross-sector and inter-organizational relationships over time. I define discourse as a social practice that is shaped by, and works to shape, reality, systems, and processes through underlying assumptions and motivations embedded within it (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Discourse analysis helps reveal how socially constructed ideas and objects contribute to lived realities within organizations and institutions; therefore, it lends itself to enhancing understanding of socially produced inter-

organizational phenomena (Phillips et al., 2004). The approach to discourse analysis I adopt for this research, known as the 'discourse-historical approach' (DHA) (Wodak et al., 1990), is aligned with the process of abduction. I therefore provide some background on abductive approaches, situating them between more traditional approaches to deduction and induction, before outlining how DHA guides my overall research strategy.

### 3.3.1 Abductive approaches

Originally introduced by Peirce in 1932, abduction relates to the idea that individual researcher perception is interpretive and that inferences can be generated in an iterative way by drawing on both experience and observation (Peirce, 1974). Very tangibly, Dey and Teasdale (2013) describe this process of abductive inference as the 'sequential interpretation of empirical data against the backdrop of conceptual knowledge' (255). This iterative approach to analyzing data that moves back and forth, often in a non-linear manner, between the empirical data collected, relevant literature, and any emerging theory is known as 'systematic combining' (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). As Doubois and Gadde (2002) show, this approach grounded in abductive logic where framework development, data collection, and case analysis are all occurring concurrently to add power to case study research, especially when there is a desire to use the case to advance theory.

The abductive approach fits within the aims of this project as it can help nuance existing theory (see Sætre and Van de Ven, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015) around collaborative policy development over time. As a researcher I also held a level of preexisting familiarity with the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem; this type of knowledge can deepen analysis (Kovács and Spens, 2005) and generate richer case study findings that strengthen existing theory (Conaty, 2021) because abduction is ultimately an iterative and relational process of

analysis occurring between the researcher, their study subject, and relevant theory (Thomas, 2010). Since I was approaching this research with practical knowledge of social enterprise ecosystems, and theoretical awareness of public management reforms, it was necessary to acknowledge the broad theoretical ideas to guiding the project while still maintaining a commitment to ongoing examination of my data so that new and emergent themes could surface throughout the research process (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). I ultimately approached my research without a prescriptive plan for its various stages, neither moving linearly from theory identification to data collection (i.e., the deductive approach) nor from data collection to theory development (i.e., the inductive approach), but iteratively, all the while acknowledging the role my prior background would play as I began to make sense of the data (Conaty, 2021). Yet before I embarked on this non-linear abductive process, I decided to align my approach to abduction with the 'discourse-historical approach' (DHA) (Wodak et al., 1990) to further ground and provide structure to my research.

### 3.3.2 The discourse-historical approach (DHA)

DHA, first developed by Wodak and colleagues in 1990, is an approach that considers discourse analysis beyond simple language analysis and instead as an interdisciplinary project that should move between theory and ethnographic fieldwork or other forms of empirical research. DHA seeks to discover inconsistencies, dilemmas, or paradoxes in discourse, and draw on contextual knowledge and social theories to interpret discursive events (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017). DHA has typically been used in studies analyzing related topics like racism, anti-Semitism, anti-immigration, and religious intolerance (Polat, 2018; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; von Stuckrad, 2013; Wodak, 2011). There is also disciplinary innovation around DHA. Scholarship suggests it could be a useful approach to address many

different research questions in the field of critical policy studies (Howarth, 2010) and that DHA can help reveal salient strategies present in 'discourses associated with politics, public administration, institutions and business' (Rheindorf, 2022: 55). Yet using DHA is still novel in both the fields of public management and social enterprise research. To contribute methodologically to both fields, this research will use DHA to understand discourse around social enterprise policy and ecosystem development and improve the ways in which policymakers and practitioners can learn from these findings.

Since this project is focused on the policy impacts of discourse within the context of the social enterprise ecosystem in Scotland, a form of discourse analysis is best suited to answer the research questions. Using DHA as an overall approach guiding this research is appropriate within the wider critical discourse studies field because of its unique focus on the historical formations of discourse and its interest in identity construction (Wodak, 2015). Yet, I also acknowledge the role of narratives in the work of historical identity construction (Forchtner, 2021; Wodak, 2009) as actors in Scotland use storied networks to position themselves within broader narratives around the history of social enterprise and social enterprise policy development. Further, I believe it is important to use a critical research approach generally since critical approaches are associated with attempts to democratize organizations, potentially leading to change (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011a). DHA's focus on critique that leads to change emphasizes deliberative democracy as a political model positioned to enable this level of emancipation where there is a 'free public sphere and a strong civil society, in which all concerned with the specific social problem in question can participate' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 34). Thus, DHA is an approach which offers the potential to extend existing applications of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand

the evolution of social enterprise discourse (see Mason, 2011 and Teasdale, 2011) within the political sphere.

## 3.4 Theoretical framing: Critical Theory and Habermas

DHA is grounded in the socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001) and understanding of the relevant theoretical frameworks underpinning it is an important antecedent in applying the approach. DHA as a project draws specifically on the Critical Theory of Habermas within the broader context of the Frankfurt School (Forchtner, 2011; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001) and attempts to uncover how 'power relations are reproduced at the level of language use and discourse' while advocating for deliberative democracy (Forchtner, 2021: 324). In this section I provide a brief explanation of how Critical Theory informs this research followed by more detailed explanation Habermas's theory of communicative action insofar as it relates to DHA and the research presented throughout this thesis.

### 3.4.1 Critical Theory

Research rooted in critical theory is often oriented toward practice because critical theories in their broadest sense have emancipatory aims. In this respect, critical theory has been conceived of a theoretical lens that then 'becomes an advocacy perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change' particularly in the context of marginalized groups and questions around their marginalization or empowerment (Creswell, 2009: 70). Critical Theory when capitalized, builds off the work of Marx and specifically references the critical social theories being developed by a string of German philosophers from the Frankfurt School, including Habermas, who 'sought to expose the roots of social domination in modern life, thus

opening the way for the eventual realization of freedom through reason' (Denhardt, 1981: 630). In general terms, critical theory has expanded, as some argue, far too broadly, for work investigating power asymmetries, incomplete and distorted communication, and exploitation (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2011). In the context of this research, I consider critical theories more narrowly, as associated with the Critical Theory perspectives coming out of the Frankfurt School where interdisciplinarity and reflection would help 'not just to determine what was wrong with contemporary society at present, but, by identifying progressive aspects and tendencies within it, to help transform society for the better' (Finlayson, 2005: 4). There is an understanding within Critical Theory that what appears 'to be' mirrors a particular historical relationship and should always be questioned rather than accepted as 'truth' (How, 2017).

Despite these applied, transformational aims of research rooted in critical theory, scholars have argued that critical theory has not provided enough practical knowledge to address management challenges (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Similarly, Zanetti (1997) argues that at least early applications of critical theory in public administration research overemphasized discourse and theory at the expense of applied research that could practically impact administrative practices.[2] Considering this critique, I was motivated to design this research such that it would have practical applications for public managers and practitioners particularly insofar as they can leverage their roles to abolish social oppression

[2] Examples of this kind of scholarship include those that sought to apply critical theory to enhance greater understanding of public organizations (Denhardt, 1981), theoretical proposals for greater practical application of critical theory to influence action in the public sector (Denhardt and Denhardt, 1979), and theoretical discussion on the roles of public administrators in disrupting traditional power dynamics in policymaking (Box, 1995). More recently within public management, critical theory has been used in empirical contexts to critique and compare different theories around administrative reforms (Dunn and Miller, 2007). It has also been used at a more micro-level, for example when looking at the complexities of varied manifestations of the discourse surrounding NPM and the impacts of those NPM expressions on feelings of recognition for those who are traditionally marginalized (Dahl, 2009).

and promote equity through engagement.

I draw on Habermas as one of the key contemporary scholars elaborating on the critical perspectives put forward by Frankfurt School theorists (Denhardt, 1981) because his social theories can be understood in the context of his desire to abolish social oppression. At the same time, he also acknowledges 'that the most his social theory can directly achieve is to help us to understand the causes of social oppression' and thus has been criticized for not being 'critical' enough (Finlayson, 2005: 59). Interestingly, Habermas diverged from the work of his Frankfurt School colleagues 'in that his deep concern for individual freedom was always wedded to an interest in the fate of democratic institutions and in the prospects for a renewal of democratic politics' (Finlayson, 2005: 14). Habermas (1996) conceives of the democratic process as one that 'filters arguments and gives legitimacy-producing reasons a privileged chance to come into play' (340) and that the procedures associated with these processes 'are meant to institutionalize the forms of communication necessary for a rational willformation' (484). From his perspective, democracy can be reformulated with the proper 'interplay of a public sphere based in civil society with the opinion- and will-formation institutionalized in parliamentary bodies' (Habermas, 1996: 371). When considering democratic engagement and deliberation, and how these concepts relate to discourse, the contributions Habermas made are rooted in his theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984, 1987).

### 3.4.2 Habermas and the theory of communicative action

The theory of communicative action focuses on how argumentation, or discourse, is used to make claims to truth and justify these truth claims as valid in the face of criticism. Habermas argues that both semantic and pragmatic analysis is necessary to determine the extent to

which these claims can be intersubjectively justified (Habermas, 1984). For Habermas, this process of justification and communication is the basis for all social action:

> Language competence carries with it an explanatory and justificatory imperative. Action is the product of speaking, hearing, acting and interlocutive subjects whose subjectivity is expressed through their social action. Social action, in turn, is explicable only through language (Clegg, 1989: 93).

Thus, DHA is about understanding the relationship between units of language and the meanings attributed to that language (i.e., semantics) while also considering the broader context of that language use (i.e., pragmatics).

I thus approached this research with the theoretical perspective that language is inherently social and intertwined with various interactions and social processes that are rooted in power and influenced by various ideologies. Habermas argued that the ideal environments for communicative action would not only challenge power imbalances (Habermas, 1984), but ultimately eliminate the role of power as it creates structural disadvantage and ultimately constrains the ability to arrive at a place of collective understanding (Habermas, 1970, 1987). In other words, although power *may* be facilitative and *may* serve collective goals, its presence can lead to somewhat hollow outcomes if one's participation in the in the process is neither built on trust nor free and unconstrainted. As Clegg (1989: 135) notes, 'To be invariably told, rarely asked, infrequently consulted, and be expected not to participate in the formation of collective goals is hardly a secure basis for obtaining commitment to these goals.' Indeed, for many organizational actors, particularly in the context of policy development, discursive participation in the formation of collective policy aims and objectives, especially where there are attempts to disrupt power, is not often standard.

### 3.4.3 Applying the theory

Using DHA, and focusing on interpreted subjective meanings, including how those interpretations in turn influence action and future discourse around the process of policy development and delivery that is at least positioned as being collective and collaborative is crucial to this research. Therefore, DHA and Critical Theory informed my overarching research approach, but I remained open to other theories and frameworks which could offer additional insight into my research questions. As I collected data, I specifically sought out practical frameworks and theories which could help structure my analysis. Through this iterative and open approach to collecting and analyzing data and revisiting existing theory and scholarship I developed a more robust conceptual framework that combined theories from public management and critical policy studies.

## 3.5 Conceptual framing: Uniting public management and policy studies

DHA is an interdisciplinary approach which argues that we can enhance the knowledge and understanding we gain about complicated, power-laden phenomena by drawing on frameworks and theories from a variety of interrelated disciplines. The research questions guiding this project focus on understanding collaborative cross-sector collaboration for policy design and service delivery where public management and policy studies literatures offer helpful frameworks for analysis and conceptualization.[3] Sowa and Lu's (2017) work highlights the connections between policy studies and public management, noting that

[3] History as a discipline is also critical to this thesis. The historical underpinnings of the management and policy processes and how they manifest in a contemporary context are viewed as inextricable. I benefited from guidance from historians and archivists throughout my research who encouraged the history of management practices in Scotland and the historical development of social enterprise in Scotland to serve as the starting point for this research. As I worked through my abductive process to determine which theories would best help frame emerging data, I was drawn more toward the fields of policy studies and public management for what they offered to help explain collaborative policy development and delivery. This does not negate the critical role historical inquiry played in the early phases of this research.

scholars in both fields ‘are all considering the question of how to accomplish public policy goals and what constitutes and leads to effective governance when we consider the policy process’ (75). I also believe that knowledge of governance and policy processes will be strengthened by taking a dual approach to studying these phenomena (Sowa and Lu, 2017) and thus draw on frameworks from both fields to conceptually and analytically frame the work presented throughout this thesis. From the public management literature I use Emerson et al.'s (2012) integrative framework for collaborative governance and Osborne et al.'s (2022) integrative framework for value creation in a public service ecosystem. From the policy studies perspective, I rely on Sabatier's (1988) Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) which can help position policy analysis, learning, and change over long trajectories spanning more than a decade.

Beyond these specific frameworks, I am also drawing on policy studies scholarship that explores how policies, and specifically the tools which govern them, are influenced by the goals and content of policy as well as the institutional settings in which it is created (Howlett, 2009; Howlett and Cashore, 2009). Further, I am looking to public management research to understand not just how policies are developed and whether they work, but also how that work is experienced by actors involved in the policy process that hopefully generates public value (Moore, 1995; O’Flynn, 2007). This connection to value generation, particularly value-in-production that organizational actors obtain, at least ostensibly, at the meso-level through their engagement in policy production relates to Osborne et al.'s (2022) integrative framework for value creation in a public service ecosystem. The ACF also helps enhance understanding of the experiences of actors involved in the policy process: it directly relates to the concept of a ’policy subsystem’ which reflects the interplay and connections between actors, institutions, and ideas in policymaking (Howlett et al., 2009). In bringing

these perspectives together, my research sheds light on broader theoretical questions of how collaborative networks or coalitions can produce the best outcomes that might create wider public value and how these groups might evolve over time, in turn impacting outcomes related to both management and policy objectives.

### 3.5.1 Collaborative governance

Through this research I aim to understand how key actors make claims about the process of designing, delivering, and sustaining social enterprise policy in Scotland and how their conceptions of 'co-production' contribute to their arguments. Existing frameworks for analyzing 'co-production' processes are insufficient for understanding the case of 'co-producing' Scotland's social enterprise strategy. This is because usage of the term 'co-production' in Scotland, particularly in this context, is not aligned with mainstream academic definitions of co-production that emphasize collaborative *service*, rather than *policy*, design and delivery. Instead, using existing frameworks designed to highlight the nuances within 'collaborative governance' arrangements is helpful. Collaborative governance is broadly defined as:

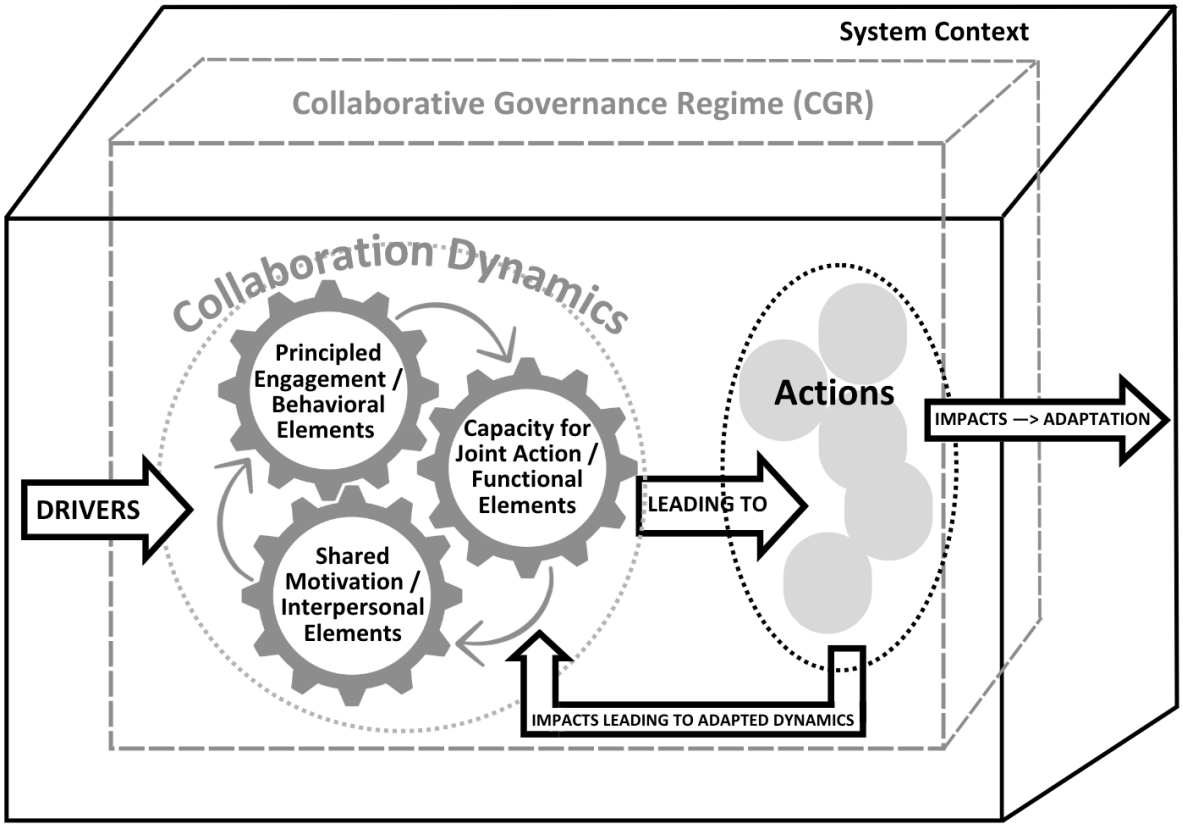
> the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished (Emerson et al., 2012: 2).

This definition aligns with Scottish social enterprise policy discourse where 'co-production' is the term used to describe the collaborative process between public and third sector organizations (and at times citizens directly) particularly as it relates to the work of strengthening and supporting social enterprise in Scotland.

Collaborative governance dynamics lead to a particular set of actions taken by actors operating within a collaborative governance regime (CGR). In the case of this research, those

actors could be public sector officials, elected representatives supporting social enterprises, intermediary social enterprise support organizations, and social enterprises themselves, among others involved in developing and supporting the social enterprise ecosystem. A CGR is the 'particular mode of, or system for, public decision making in which cross-boundary collaboration represents the prevailing pattern of behavior and activity (Emerson et al., 2012: 6). Figure 3.1 situates the CGR within a broader system context and highlights how various drivers underpin the collaborative dynamics which contribute to and influence the actions taken by various actors operating within a CGR. These drivers might include contextual factors like an election that shifts political context, or historical relationships among organizations influencing how actors collaborating in the CGR interact with one another.

***Figure 3.1: Framework of a collaborative governance regime highlighting the critical role of collaborative dynamics (adapted from Emerson et al., 2012)***



From a framework perspective, the CGR involves a cyclical process of interaction among various dimensions of collaborative dynamics. This interaction leads to various actions, which, within the parameters of the Emerson et al. (2012) framework, have two dominant forms of impact. First, the impacts of those actions, for example how actions taken to develop a government support program are perceived by social enterprise advocates, can have more internal effects, leading to the adaptation of the collaborative dynamics influencing the CGR (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015a, 2015b). Second, actions (e.g., hosting policy roundtables) can also lead to more external outputs (e.g., the publication of a synthetized strategy) that also have impacts on a policy system and can lead to adaptations or changes in a broader system beyond a more discrete CGR. There are four key factors that distinguish CGRs from other collaborative arrangements: they have a broad public service and/or public policy focus, they are broader than interest-aligned coalitions as they represent many different organizations and/or jurisdictions/ sectors, they enable repeated interactions among actors opposed to isolated or short-term collaborations, and therefore they involve the intentional development or rules and norms that govern the CGR over time (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015b).

It is important to understand these governing dynamics to better understand how and why various outputs (e.g., for this research the 2016 strategy and subsequent action plans) were generated, manifesting in varied outcomes. Per Emerson and colleagues' (2012) integrative framework for collaborative governance, there are three key collaborative governance dynamics: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. Principled engagement relates to the behavioral elements of discovery, definition, deliberation, and determination. Shared motivation covers the interpersonal elements of commitment, trust, understanding, and legitimacy. Finally, capacity for joint action covers

the functional elements of procedural and institutional arrangements, leadership, resources, and knowledge. Throughout the thesis, and in Chapter 6 in particular, I will focus heavily on these collaboration dynamics and the roles they played during the various phases of designing, delivering, and sustaining *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026*. Doing so helps nuance any existing understanding of this collaborative social enterprise policy evolution in Scotland and increases opportunities to reveal concrete insights into the dynamics of future processes in the Scottish system context, or indeed other contexts, that could lead to improved actions and better impacts. While I argue that understanding collaboration dynamics is the key to this framework for collaborative governance, the system context in which these arrangements are situated is also important.

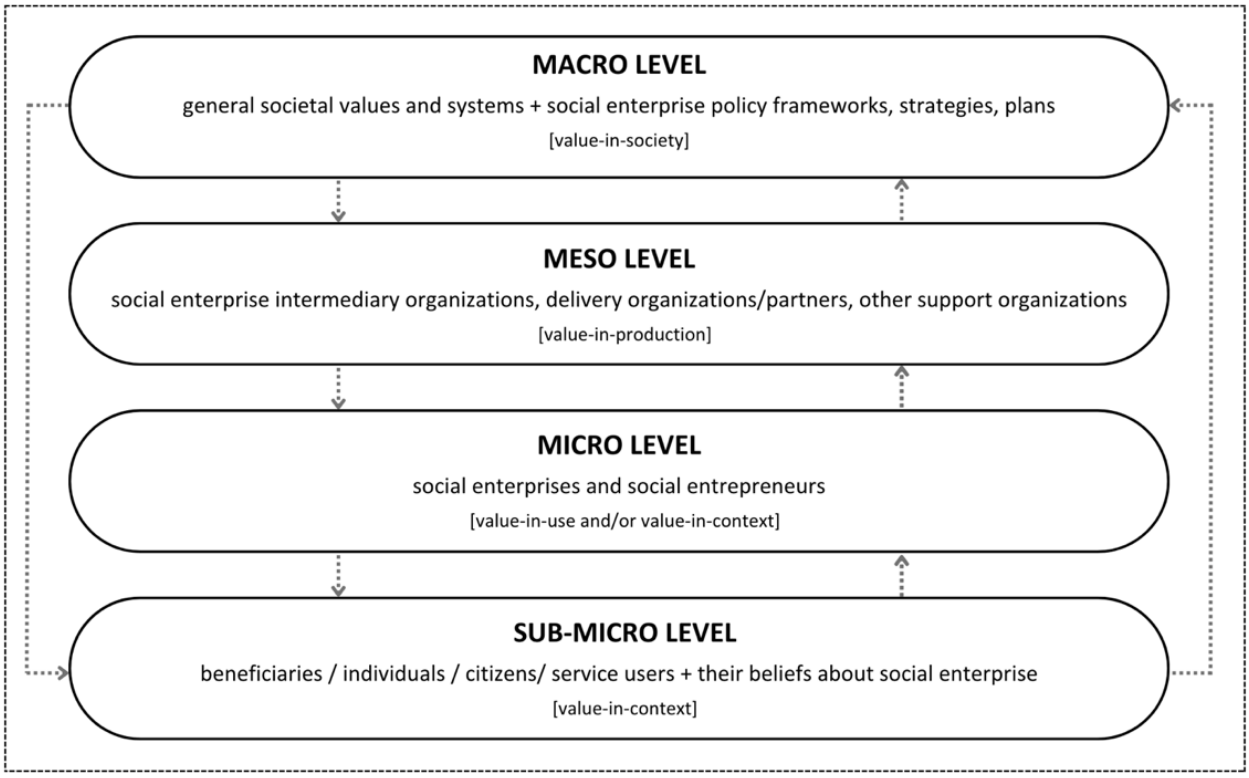
### 3.5.2 An ecosystems perspective

An ecosystem perspective provides a useful lens for contextualizing the system in which CGRs may emerge. The ecosystem metaphor highlights the interdependence between institutions, organizations and individual actors, as well as non-linear processes mediating the impacts of action (for example, de Bruin et al.'s (2022) work in the context of social entrepenuerial ecosystems). Building on work to further conceptualize 'service ecosystems' (see Vargo et al., 2017; Vargo and Lusch, 2014, 2016). Osborne and colleagues (2022) present a multi-level framework (i.e., the public service ecosystem) for exploring dimensions of public value and value creation within service ecosystems. These dimensions of value include both the economic value derived from value-in-exchange and the additional value from value-in-use as someone uses a service—both types of value articulated by Vargo and colleagues (2017) to capture how value should be understood 'within a constellation of actions and actors' (118). Value-in-production, emanates from involvement in service design

or improvement and is generated at the production stage, and value-in-context, which is derived at the use stage of a public service from the ways a service interaction impacts on broader individual needs, and a final dimension, value-in-society, which may be generated in production and or at use, further extend conceptualizations of value worthy of further study (Osborne et al., 2022).

Building off Osborne and colleagues' (2022) work demonstrating how value can be conceptualized on multiple levels within a public service ecosystem (see Figure 3.2 for how this translates in the context of a social enterprise ecosystem), I primarily focus on the meso-level of the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem throughout this thesis. The theoretical underpinnings for value creation at this level align with literature on collaborative governance so there is a high-level of alignment between the two public management frameworks I am predominantly using to help understand the data from this research.

***Figure 3.2: Value creation in a social enterprise ecosystem (adapted from Osborne et al., 2022)***



Discourse is often very linked to the context in which it was created, and there are thus important implications in terms of power and politics in how we use language (Hardy, Palmer, and Phillips 2000; Clark 2022). These implications exist on societal (macro), organizational (meso), and individual (micro and or sub-micro) levels, although in the context of this research, I focus most on the theoretical and practical implications at the organizational level.

Further, analysis at the meso-level is appropriate since my interviews predominantly center around organizational perspectives related to cross-sector collaboration for policy development and delivery. In this respect, examining the collaboration dynamics through a framework for collaborative governance helps highlight where and for whom value might have been created for various organizations[4] throughout Scotland's process of designing and delivering a strategy for social enterprise. Particularly in the Scottish context, it is important to understand the delicate balance of organizational interests, or, put more crudely, the winners and losers of collaborative social enterprise policy processes and how these interests impact perceptions of value creation and/or destruction. In this regard, policy studies scholarship and frameworks also offer insight into the management of competing interests and values during the policy process.

### 3.5.3 Advocacy coalitions

The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) has been applied broadly across many different countries, contexts, and policy subfields in ways that allow for cross-study comparison

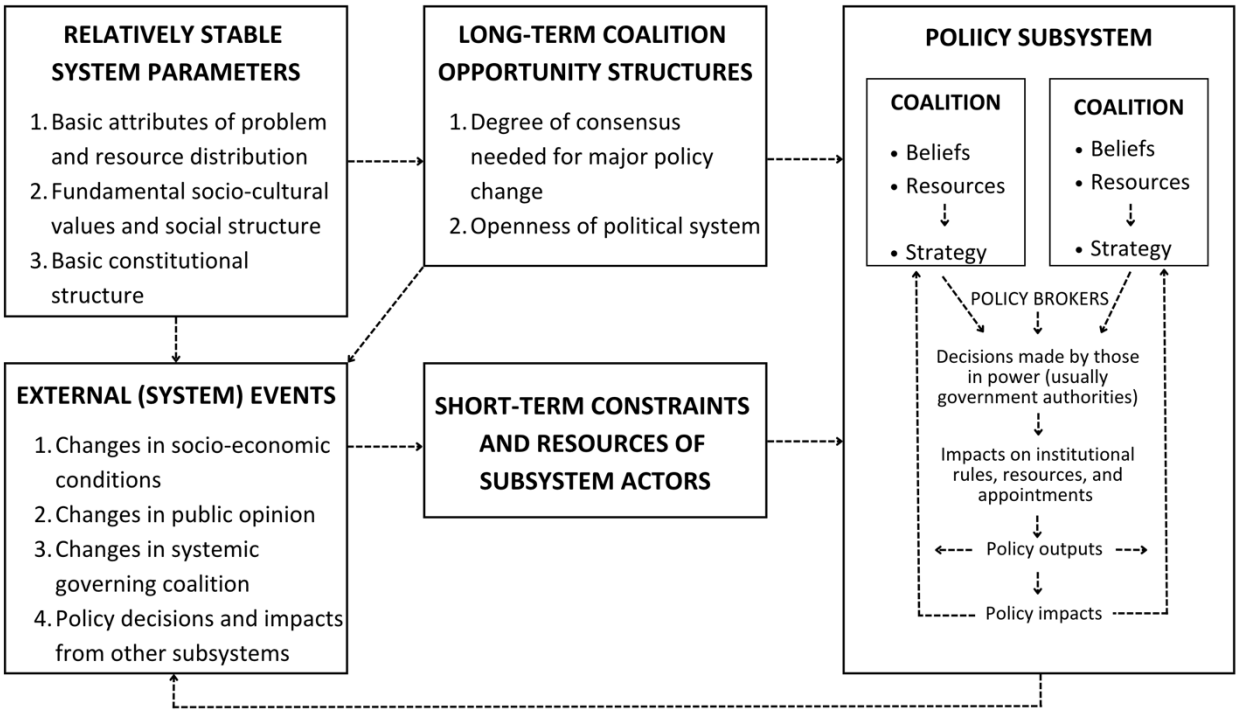
[4] In the context of the adaption of this framework of value creation from an ecosystem perspective to a framework for social enterprise ecosystems specifically, it is more accurate to position individual social enterprises at the micro-level. Therefore, there is limited discussion of the micro-level as well, where I discuss the impacts of collaborative policy design and delivery for social enterprises and not just delivery and intermediary organization which may in some cases, although not always, also identify as social enterprises themselves, albeit operating within the ecosystem to achieve different aims.

facilitated by common approaches, while respecting specificity and nuance in particularly contexts (Pierce et al., 2017). The ACF is less concerned with identifying patterns within policy adoption, and rather more interested in observing longitudinal change where advocacy coalitions are identified 'by measuring belief systems, identifying policy subsystems, and identifying the mechanisms that promote policy change' (Schlager, 2019: 298). Also related to the ecosystems perspective that informs this research, there are three foundational elements of the ACF:

> (1) a macro-level assumption that most policymaking occurs among specialists within a policy subsystem but that their behavior is affected by factors in the broader political and socioeconomic system; (2) a micro-level "model of the individual" that is drawn heavily from social psychology; and (3) a meso-level conviction that the best way to deal with the multiplicity of actors in a subsystem is to aggregate them into "advocacy coalitions" (Sabatier and Weible, 2019: 191–192).

As demonstrated in Figure 3.3, collective action occurs within a policy subsystem focused on a particular policy issue (e.g., social enterprise) and within a broader policymaking process. The broader process contributes to the opportunities and constraints coalitions face.

***Figure 3.3: The Advocacy Coalition Framework (adapted from Sabatier and Weible (2019) based on the ACF of 2005)***



‘All those in an advocacy coalition participate in the policy process in order to use the government machinery to pursue their (self-serving) goals’ (Howlett et al., 2009: 83), and this leads to complex dynamics and relationships among coalitions that have different goals. Examining the power dynamics, capacities, and relationships among the actors involved with contested processes of policy design and delivery is a key component of critical policy studies (Spicker, 2005) and this research more specifically. Within the context of contested policy issues developing over time, public managers can use various policy tools and tactics to help reach consensus among coalition groups with conflicting perspectives. Policy co-production or co-creation, that occurs in discursive spaces, is one such example.

These discursive spaces provide a forum for various actors, often involved in competing coalitions, to share their perspectives (Hardy and Maguire, 2010). Hardy and Maguire (2010) identified domination, interpretation, and translation as three key strategies by which ‘narratives told in the discursive spaces generated by field-configuring events can lead to institutional change’ (1382). It is possible to conceptualize engagement around the Scottish social enterprise strategy as a series of field-configuring events and critical junctures where through the process of co-production, discursive spaces were created that allowed for the negotiation of various policy ideas among coalitions.

Through this thesis, I thus situate co-production not just as a public management practice that can enhance public service provision, but also as policy tool that can help negotiate tensions and achieve governance goals (Howlett et al., 2017). The first conceptualization of co-production as a public management practice acknowledges how it can be used to collaboratively design and deliver policies, which in practice also involves the integration of service delivery. The second positioning as a ‘policy tool’ recognizes how co-production can be mobilized across borders to achieve broader management objectives

around inclusion and effectiveness and engage those from different 'coalitions' who subscribe to various policy discourses around social enterprise. In this second context, I focus on policy mobilization and mutation (Peck and Theodore, 2010) where policy processes, particularly in the form of collaborative governance arrangements (Emerson et al., 2012) change based on the context (both spatially and temporally).

### 3.5.4 Uniting the central frameworks

In keeping with my abductive research approach, I did not begin my research with a predetermined plan for siloed stages of data collection and the identification and development of theory and frameworks. Instead, I began my data collection with a clear outline of my research questions[5] and remained open to relevant theory and frameworks that might emerge and prove fruitful. The introduction of the framework for collaborative governance, for value creation in a public service ecosystem, and the advocacy coalition framework were all introduced at various points during the research as their utility as analytical frameworks were discovered. Due to the multiple methods used for collecting qualitative data and varied research questions, there is not one overarching analytical framework. Instead, I am conceptually framing this research as a study that integrates policy studies and public management literature. In drawing upon multiple frameworks and integrating elements of each into my analysis, I aim to improve understanding of the negotiation that takes place during the process of collaborative policy development and service delivery over time. I am also interested in how these collaborative processes generate (or not) value for those involved across different contexts and believe this

[5] Although notably my fourth and final question was also developed and strengthened through my process of analysis; I had expected there would be an important international component to the mobilization and mutation of ideas around the 'Scottish approach' to social enterprise policy development.

integrated conceptual approach facilitates my ability to reveal new insights in this regard.

## 3.6 Research design and strategy

Based on my ontological and epistemological positions, my inclination toward an abductive approach guided by DHA, and the incorporation of multiple frameworks from policy studies and public management scholarship to analyze my data, I was drawn to employ a qualitative research strategy. I aimed to better understand and compare language use, uncover perspectives and motivations for collaboration, reveal overt and hidden discourses running through collaborative processes. Quantitative tools would have been insufficient in this regard, but so too would one method of qualitative data collection. Therefore, this study evolved into a qualitative project divided into three, largely synchronous phases.

First, I focused on developing a more complete understanding of the evolution of social enterprise discourse in the Scottish context. The focus was not just on understanding how the concept of social enterprise emerged from previous movements in Scotland, but also how the concept grew in popularity, developing a reputation for being a movement or a sector in and of itself. Second, I was interested in studying social enterprise and the discourse around Scottish social enterprise policy in a more contemporary context. This current context centers around *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016—2026*. Third and finally, I recognized that the discourse of internationalization was particularly salient in the contemporary Scottish context and sought to explore how the Scottish example had been mobilized and perhaps mutated in other contexts. Each phase involved different methods of data collection and helped facilitate improved understanding around questions of 'how' and 'why' policy collaboration has developed in the Scottish context and was then mobilized elsewhere. In seeking to uncover discursive themes and patterns among different actors'

narratives, I was ultimately interested in developing a more complete historically grounded understanding of social enterprise policy—both its content and approaches—in Scotland. A case study strategy lends itself to this line of inquiry.

Creswell (2009) defines case studies as 'a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals' where the cases are time and activity bound (30). Simons (2009) also highlights the importance of drawing on multiple perspectives to highlight 'the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context' and how a case study research strategy is 'inclusive of different methods' (21). Yin (2014) further highlights the utility of a case study approach in real life contexts when the researcher has very little control over how contemporary events impacting upon the case will unfold. While my aim was to historically contextualize more contemporary policy developments in Scotland and not necessarily study them as they were unfolding in 'real time,' it became clear that current events would impact upon the discourse of those I was interviewing and therefore the case study approach would be useful in the 'live' context in which I was collecting data. As a researcher positioned within the 'live' social enterprise context in Scotland, I had a level of 'preunderstanding,' or insights, knowledge, and experiences that a researcher brings to a particular project, which could have either served as a help or hindrance in executing this research project (Gummesson and Van Maanen, 2000). There was both the chance for this background to increase the subjectivity of the research that case studies are often criticized for (Patton and Appelbaum, 2003), or enhance the types of questions I asked and directions I pursued.

For example, because of my Scottish and global experience, when I first conceptualized this research, I had an inclination that an in-depth case study research

strategy focused on the Scottish context would have broader global implications and might necessitate a level of international comparison. Aligned with my abductive approach, I initially began my research focused solely on the Scottish context. As I continued to conduct interviews, analyze Scottish social enterprise policy documents, and engage in my own global social enterprise policy advisory work, the need to conduct additional research in a context beyond Scotland as part of more completely chronicling Scottish social enterprise policy history became apparent. I chose the case of nascent national social enterprise policy development in Australia as a comparative case to begin extending this research. The aim of this comparison was to better understand both the challenges and successes various social enterprise sectors have encountered while attempting to collaboratively develop and deliver social enterprise strategies. A comparative case study is well-suited to revealing this type of in-depth insight, particularly in the context of policy and practice (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2016). Before I embarked on this exploratory research beginning to build a case around social enterprise policy development in Australia, I began by studying the Scottish context from a historical perspective.

### 3.6.1 Understanding historical context through archival research

DHA makes the case for not only looking at discourses as isolated events and principles, but rather as those that are embedded in a background of social and political fields that necessitate the integration of knowledge about historical sources (Wodak, 2001). This is based on 'the role of language as a power resource that is related to ideology and socio-cultural change' that is ultimately inseparable from social reality (Bryman, 2016: 540). As such, the project began with a preliminary analysis of archive material to establish a historical account of social enterprise policy development in Scotland and identify some

emerging discourses around social enterprise. Glasgow Caledonian University holds the Social Enterprise Collection (Scotland) (SEC(S)), which is arguably the most complete collection of materials related to Scotland's history with social enterprise. Given the extensive nature of this collection, I concentrated my preliminary research on reviewing materials held within SEC(S). I reviewed materials with an aim of better understanding the tradition of community business and revealing the evolving discourses around this business model particularly in the early 2000s during its overlap with nascent interest in 'social enterprise' in Scotland. I specifically attempted to choose documents and listen to oral histories that could reveal tensions in the sector during this overlapping era by focusing on items like legal structures, organizational mergers, and evolution. For a complete list of documents reviewed initially, see Appendix A.

Shortly before archival work could begin, COVID-19 lockdowns began across the UK preventing access to the SEC(S) archive material that had not been digitized. In January 2021, the University Archivist was able to access campus and slowly begin digitizing materials I wanted to review within the collection. From January 2021 through May 2021, I received 52 documents including newspaper clippings, research papers, conference proceedings, and annual reports. I uploaded all these documents to NVivo and went through a preliminary round of thematic coding to better understand the material (Braun and Clarke, 2006). At this stage, I was less focused on critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand how actors were using language to make claims about the realities of social enterprise and relate those claims to social structures (see, Mason, 2011). Instead, I used my knowledge of contested issues within social enterprise to identify key thematic codes (see Appendix B for a

list) that I would later use to better concentrate on documents that would be coded using a method compatible with DHA[6] as outlined in Section 3.7 discussing my overall data analysis.

After I had established a base of understanding for the general material present in the SEC(S) archive, I used that to inform the next phase of my research. During this second phase, I was focused on more contemporary manifestations of social enterprise discourse in Scotland and understanding the processes surrounding Scotland's ten-year strategy. My methods of data collection during this phase focused on qualitative interviews rather than document analysis of archive material, but as I progressed with my interviews participants often mentioned documents which they felt were relevant to Scottish social enterprise policy history. Where I could find these documents online, I would download them and then upload them to NVivo to later code. Where I could not, I made a note of them in hopes that in future in-person visits to the GCU Archive Centre I might find copies of materials in folders from the archive that had not been completely cataloged. In February and March 2023, I returned to the Archive Centre five times to review over 25 different documents in the collection that were not part of the digitized collection of documents scanned throughout the COVID-19 lockdowns. Unlike the thematic analysis I used to analyze the initial set of archive material I received in 2021, I analyzed these materials looking for discursive strategies present in the text.

[6] This preliminary thematic coding was pragmatic based on the realities of conducting archival research remotely, which extended the process of data collection and analysis. Not only was producing high-quality digital scans a time-consuming process, but lack of physical access eliminated my ability as a researcher to pull entire folders of material and quickly filter documents that were of relevance. While the University Archivist had general knowledge of my research and a list of all the documents I thought *could* be pertinent, they were scanning anything I asked for knowing that once I received the scan I might quickly determine it had little relevance to my research questions. Therefore, it did not make sense to approach each of these digitalized archive documents in the same way I would eventually code all data that would form my full corpus.

During a similar period (i.e., January—April 2023), I also reviewed additional archive material (e.g., draft policies and email correspondence) from the first and second Scottish Cabinet stored in the virtual ScotlandsPeople Scottish Cabinet Records archive. I coded 11 documents from this archive after reviewing over 30 and making determinations about which contained information that was most relevant to my research questions. Like the SEC(S) materials that I consulted in response to my interviews, I had also determined it was important to understand the political arguments both politicians and practitioners were making about social enterprise during the early days of the Scottish Executive when 'social enterprise' first started emerging within Scottish policy documents.

I began coding the ScotlandsPeople documents using the same preliminary thematic codes which I applied to the SEC(S) records (listed in Appendix B) to ensure consistency across the document analysis regardless of the archive source. Then drawing on Teasdale's (2011) work categorizing social enterprise discourse in the UK, I focused on an additional level of theory-based coding where I coded based on previously identified social enterprise discourses to discover alignment and divergence. In this respect, building the historical foundations for this research happened iteratively with the other phases of data collection, particularly in response to what I learned from my interviews with participants in Scotland.

### 3.6.2 The contemporary context: Social enterprise in Scotland

The second phase of this research was designed to understand the impacts of Scotland's social enterprise strategy and its phased implementation process on the Scottish social enterprise sector today. In other words, beyond understanding the discourses that led to the development of the strategy in 2016 and its historical foundations, this phase of the research was concerned with policy development and implementation. I aimed to

interrogate the way the policy and policy resources informed the discourse of key stakeholders and practitioners, or the 'winners' and 'losers' of this policymaking process. Data for the second phase of this research was collected over a one-and-a-half-year period from June 2021 to January 2023 using a qualitative research design based on semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

***Qualitative semi-structured interviews***

The interviews were broadly focused on three topics: the evolution of the strategy, or how it came to be; the process of developing the strategy itself in 2016; the impact the strategy had, and continues to have, on the sector in terms of service delivery through action plans and other means. I used a general topic guide (see Appendix C) to provide some structure to these interviews while still maintaining a level of fluidity since it is 'crucial that the questioning [in semi-structured interviews] allows interviewers to glean research participants' perspectives on their social world and that there is flexibility in the conduct of the interviews' (Bryman, 2016: 469). No participants were privy to this complete topic guide ahead of the interviews, but some who either requested more information, or needed more information to get official Scottish Government approval for the interview were provided with some sample questions before agreeing to the interview. Instead of a topic guide, all participants were provided with an 'interview guide sheet' (presented in Appendix D) that had general research objectives and questions as well as a simplified timeline with some key social enterprise policy events in Scotland I identified through preliminary archival and scoping research. I developed this guide sheet to serve as a visual tool during the interview for those who might appreciate it, especially since using visual methods as part of qualitative

data collection has been cited as having benefits for enabling communication and facilitating relationships between interviewers and participants (Glegg, 2019).

My interviews were conducted during a period of relative uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure my participants felt relaxed, safe, and free of all avoidable technological worries, most of the interviews were conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams or Zoom, based on participant preference. Where local COVID-19 restrictions allowed, participants were given the choice of how they would like to interview, and some were conducted in person. I thought it was important to let my participants choose their mode of interview (i.e., in person or virtual) and their choice of video conferencing platform, where they elected to meet virtually, to facilitate the most comfortable and stress-free environment. My intention was for those interviewing with me to experience feelings of increased control and ease to facilitate their candor when reflecting on their experiences (Tremblay et al., 2021). In total, only three interviews were conducted in person, including one follow-up interview where the initial interview was conducted via Zoom.

***Selection and sampling***

The outreach process involved initially contacting ten different stakeholders within the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem, with whom I had an existing level of rapport given my previous work in social enterprise in Scotland. These ten individuals were selected as the initial cohort of people to approach for interviews due to three key factors: our existing relationship with one another via previous work, their familiarity with my research and an expressed desire to support the study, and their positions within the sector. Their position and historical knowledge of social enterprise in Scotland was an especially critical factor as I was determined to gather relevant insights and perspectives from especially 'data rich'

participants. Thus, individuals who participated in this study were sampled purposively (Mason, 2002). The different roles these participants played within the sector (i.e., did they represent delivery organizations, intermediary/ membership organizations, were they leading social enterprises, or working in the public sector) were important to consider and balance. So too was the level of involvement those interviewed had with the development and implementation of *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016—2026*.

After the initial outreach to my first ten participants, I continued my purposive outreach, but combined it with a 'snowball sampling' technique which is often used in conjunction with more general purposive sampling whereby initially selected 'participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research' and then those participants will suggest more people to participate (Bryman, 2016: 415). This snowball sampling technique was ultimately useful in revealing emergent knowledge around political and social relationships and connections and how those may have contributed to power dynamics (Noy, 2008) in the Scottish social enterprise sector. Although this dual strategy proved useful, there was still a level of selection bias both with purposive and snowball sampling strategies (Parker et al., 2019).

Combining my personal knowledge of the sector with suggestions from participants was an attempt at reducing strong bias in any direction. This combined sampling strategy also allowed me to focus my outreach while I worked toward a level of data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018). In total, I contacted an additional 16 potential participants, 14 of which responded to my requests for interviews. One of those 14, one had to drop out, so I ended up interviewing 13 more individuals. During this period, I also conducted a follow up interview with one of my initial participants. In total, I conducted 24 interviews with 23 people. Table 3.1 highlights the balance of sector affiliation and temporal involvement across

study participants. There were eight participants from third sector intermediaries, seven from the public sector, six from third sector delivery partners, and two social enterprise leaders.[7]

***Table 3.1: List of participants in relation to their direct involvement with the social enterprise strategy in 2016***

| TIMING OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT | PARTICIPANTS | TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS |
|---|---|---|
| In the lead-up (early policy documents like the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008−2011*) | PSA 1, 3, 6<br>TSDP 1, 2, 3<br>TSI 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 | 11 |
| During development (strategy & first action plan) | PSA 1, 2, 4<br>SEL 2<br>TSDP 1, 2, 3<br>TSI 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 | 12 |
| After publication (second action plan) | PSA 5, 7<br>SEL 1<br>TSDP 1, 2, 3, 5<br>TSI 1, 2, 4, 8 | 11 |
| No direct involvement | TSDP 4, 6<br>TSI 5, 6 | 4 |

**Participant Abbreviations:** Public Sector Actor: PSA / Social Enterprise Leader: SEL / Third Sector Delivery Partner: TSDP / Third Sector Intermediary: TSI

***Document analysis***

Insights revealed throughout my semi-structured interviews helped guide the supplementary document analysis I conducted. Document analysis, a systematic process for reviewing and evaluating printed and electronic documents, is often used in conjunction

[7] Those who were running their own social enterprises were the least likely to agree to be interviewed and after continued follow-up, few connections were made. At the time of the interviews, social enterprises were especially resource constrained, stepping up to fill immediate community needs as part of the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and sacrificing time that could otherwise be spent on service delivery was not a priority. Further, as was revealed throughout my interviews, and as evidenced in the literature (see, for example, Mazzei et al., 2019 and Mazzei and Roy, 2017), practitioners directly running social enterprises are less likely to feel as though their views are considered in policy or that policies impact their daily work. Given this perception, they may also have felt as though they had less to contribute to research on Scotland's social enterprise policy history and development.

with other methods to enhance reliability of data (Bowen, 2009). This validation strategy of combining different data sources is known as data triangulation whereby 'data [is] drawn from different sources and at different times in different places or from different people' (Flick, 2004: 178). The documents I analyzed provided a contemporary reference point where memories of those I interviewed might have instead highlighted subjective priorities through their personal connections to the topic or their present-day preoccupations with social enterprise in Scotland.

When choosing documents to review and analyze for discursive strategies, I focused on grey literature, policy documents, and reports, published by third sector organizations and the Scottish Government between 2000 and 2022, as well as news articles and blog posts on the social enterprise sector. Any documents quoted throughout the thesis are listed in my references, but far more were consulted throughout the research process. One of the key documents that I reviewed after multiple interview participants emphasized its importance was Scotland's strategy for internationalizing social enterprise (Scottish Government, 2016a). In the context of the internationalization discourse surrounding social enterprise in Scotland, and aligned with an abductive process where patterns, narratives, and themes revealed through data collection and analysis can result in further data collection and theory testing (Sætre and Van de Ven, 2021), I conceived of the third phase of this research.

### 3.6.3 Exploratory global research: The Australian case

To further understand the implications of *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016—2026*, the third phase of this study moved beyond Scotland to examine the mobilization of Scottish practices and references to Scottish policies in other social enterprise polices, strategies, and

processes globally. In Australia, the social enterprise sector has been working to produce a national social enterprise strategy by drawing heavily on the Scottish experience and relying on insights from actors who were involved in the Scottish process, many of whom were also interviewed for this research. Of course, the Scottish case is not directly comparable to the Australian case because the 'co-production' processes are evolving under different timelines. Nevertheless, the mobilization and mutation of discourse around Scotland's social enterprise policy and self-promoted collaborative process is part of the Scottish social enterprise policy narrative. Beginning to examine the ongoing process in Australia helps to position the Scottish narrative more completely. It also helps untangle how public management lessons gleaned from comprehensive analysis of Scotland's approach to collaborative social enterprise policy development and delivery might be relevant in other contexts, adding to the impact of this research both theoretically and practically.

To capture Australia's social enterprise sector's live co-production process and consider the Australian process alongside the Scottish process, digital ethnographic methods, in particular virtual meeting observations and analysis of mass email communication from sector organizations, were used in conjunction with more traditional semi-structured qualitative interviews. I approached this digital ethnography broadly, conceiving of it as 'ethnography mediated by digital technologies' that might include 'online participant observation, blogs/wikis with contributions by respondents, and online focus groups' (Murthy, 2011: 159). To begin my research in Australia, I was predominantly focused on using the online space to observe those in the sector during public meetings, while also tracking their posts and emails with updates about their national social enterprise strategy developments. This helped me to identify where there may have been connections to Scotland, to understand their process and approach to collaborative strategy development,

and to capture emerging discourses around social enterprise that would inform my future interviews. Critical discourse analysis of interview transcripts combined with ethnography is particularly useful for revealing connections between multiple layers of policy activity and understanding how policy evolves through creation, interpretation, and appropriation (Johnson, 2011). This makes a blended approach that relies on discourse analysis and ethnography suitable to discover the implications of policy co-production on social enterprise ecosystems both during the creation stage and after policy implementation.

As a researcher also working for an international organization hosting a conference in Australia in 2022, I had access to sector leaders that facilitated my purposeful sampling of particularly data-rich participants for interviews (Bryman, 2016). Due to time constraints with the thesis, I conducted interviews with five key individuals who held (or still currently hold) leadership roles within the Australian social enterprise sector especially as they pertained to the national strategy project. These individuals had varied roles in both intermediaries and delivery/ social enterprise support organizations, often transcending both through board roles in addition to their primary leadership position. My interviews were conducted virtually either on Zoom or Microsoft Teams from December 2022 to January 2023. Similar to my approach to data collection in Scotland, I also reviewed additional documents, policy reports, blog posts, news articles, and more as they were mentioned by participants in interviews or surfaced throughout my digital ethnography. These are all cited where quoted or referenced indirectly. Those used were analyzed in accordance with my overarching approach to data analysis, which I explain next.

## 3.7 Data analysis

### 3.7.1 Discourse analysis

Throughout this project, discourse and the aims of discourse analysis was conceived of:

> as an interrelated set of texts and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being… In other words, social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning. As discourse analysts, then, our task it to explore the relationship between discourse and reality (Phillips and Hardy, 2002: 3).

Importantly, 'texts' is also a broad concept encompassing many different forms of language use including spoken word (e.g., my semi-structured interviews) or written documents and archive material incorporated into my document analysis. Returning to my social constructionism perspective, it is a stance that:

> frequently displays a concern with the language that is employed to present categories in particular ways. It suggests that the social world and its categories are not external to us, but are built up and constituted in and through interaction. This tendency can be seen particularly in discourse analysis (Bryman, 2016: 30).

In choosing discourse analysis, and specifically critical discourse analysis (CDA) guided by principles of DHA, to inform my overall approach to data analysis, I aimed to understand the categorization of various ideologies, or attitudes and beliefs or ways of understanding and approaching the world, and how these create identities, interact with power structures, and ultimately shape discourse. Specifically examining the texts and topics that emerge from the archive material, interviews, and other documents, and systematically categorizing these into different discourses (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017) formed the basis for my findings about the ways in which ideology manifests and power operates within the social enterprise ecosystem in Scotland and then more broadly.

### 3.7.2 Transcription

Throughout this project I have been interested in not just what was said, but also how it was said, and in what context. For this reason, it was important for me to transcribe interviews capturing as many data points as possible to contextualize the speech of my participants and strengthen my eventual analysis of the interviews. 'Complex behaviours and contexts of dialogical interaction' can be captured through transcription of 'the words spoken (the *verbal* component), to the way in which they are spoken (the *prosodic* component), and to whatever non-verbal vocal behaviour accompanies the words (the *paralinguistic* component)' (Kowal and O'Connell, 2014: 66). The decision a researcher makes about the components to include in a transcript is an inherently political decision that is heavily influenced by a researcher's orientation to the subject matter and their study participants (Bucholtz, 2000). How researchers approach these transcription decisions typically places them on a spectrum from 'naturalized' transcription (i.e., 'intelligent verbatim') where edits are made to align the transcript with grammatical norms, to 'denaturalized' transcription (i.e., 'full verbatim') where everything is left in including errors, repetition, and vocal tics (Bucholtz, 2000; McMullin, 2023c).

Not only was I committed to giving voice to my participants and respecting their choice of words and phrases, but also I knew I wanted to pay special attention to how statements were made: recognizing where an interviewee may have decided to correct or 'walk back' a statement and where they spent time pausing to perhaps choose their words carefully, as examples, would be an important part of my analysis. While McMullin (2023c) argues that typically intelligent verbatim transcription is appropriate for research in the third sector, my analytical approach necessitated more detailed transcription. Thus, I transcribed my interviews in a denaturalized, or full verbatim way, recording repeated words and verbal

fillers like “um” and “so.” Beyond the verbal component of the transcripts, I was also interested in capturing some of the prosodic and paralinguistic components. I did not go as far as providing the level of systematic detail sometimes found in transcripts associated with conversation analysis (Atkinson and Heritage, 1999), but I did note pauses, laughter, words that were given a particular emphasis, among other non-verbal vocal behaviors and particular speech patterns. Since not all my interviews benefited from a video recording I could also re-reference to note facial expressions and other non-verbal cues since some were conducted in person, I did not make note of these in the transcripts. To ensure this was consistent, I used audio files rather than video files to produce the transcripts. Further, while I did all my own transcribing, for the interviews I conducted over Microsoft Teams, I started with a base transcript that had been automatically generated through the platform. This was not something that was available with my Zoom license, nor was it possible for interviews I conducted in person, so I applied the same level of scrutiny to the transcripts whether I was working from a generated transcript or had to develop it entirely myself.

### 3.7.3 Data coding

Once I had my transcripts prepared, I began my first round of coding using the approach outlined by Reisigl and Wodak (2017) focused on discursive strategies. I coded every document I wanted to fully analyze after initial review and each transcript[8] for the five discursive strategies they highlight: nomination, or how people, objects, events, actions, and practices were referred to; predication, or the characteristics, features, and qualities that were attributed to those people, objects, etc.; argumentation, or what arguments are

[8] Some of these documents and interview transcripts were uploaded to NVivo where I coded them using nodes, sub-nodes, and a series of annotations. Other transcripts and documents (e.g., reports, blog posts, web pages, emails) were copied and pasted into Microsoft Word (interview transcripts were created in Word initially) and coded within the Word document itself using comments, replies to comments, and highlighting.

employed in effort to make various truth claims; perspectivization, or considering the perspective from which the nominations, attributions, and arguments are made; intensification and mitigation, or the ways in which statements are phrased to be overt or subvert. Since DHA is grounded in the belief that sociopolitical and historical context informs discourse and that 'discourse undergoes historical change relating to social change' (Reisigl, 2017: 52), this stage of analysis also accounted for the time when the interview was conducted and what was occurring within the social enterprise sector or broader political context that may have been influencing the discourse of participants. This was particularly important to account for because I was coding transcripts and conducting interviews simultaneously for more than a year and speaking with participants about a process that many were still actively involved with through their day-to-day work.

As I have previously highlighted through explanation of my phased and iterative approach to data collection, not all my data was collected before I began the process of analysis. This allowed me to move back and forth between the data and the literature, drawing out new insights as I continued with data collection, and creating opportunities for multi-level coding approaches (Saldaña, 2021). After I had transcribed and coded many interviews using the approach outlined by Reisigl and Wodak (2017) focused on discursive strategies, I returned to the public management and policy studies literature to include additional theory-based themes since DHA necessitates that the research 'moves recursively between theory and empirical data' drawing on contextual knowledge and social theories to interpret discursive events (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017: 94). DHA has also been suggested as a useful interdisciplinary way to address many questions in the field of critical policy studies (Howarth, 2010) meaning there was a level of complementarity between my approach to analysis and the literature I was integrating through subsequent rounds of coding.

During the initial coding for discursive strategies, I noted that I was coding for argumentation quite frequently. It has also been suggested that argumentation can be situated more thoroughly within the context of narratives while not losing the 'egalitarian and inclusive potential residing in intersubjective relationships' inherent in discourse analysis (Forchtner, 2021: 315). This development of DHA would allow the work of Habermas to extend beyond argumentation centered discourse, to narratives, or the stories that individuals employ to communicate information and frame concepts (Feldman et al., 2004). Indeed, discourse — a social practice that is shaped by, and working to shape, reality through underlying assumptions and motivations embedded within it (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) — often emerges through the narratives people tell. Forchtner (2021) notes that while the immediate project of DHA is to elucidate discourse, narratives have in many cases also played a role in that approach. With this in mind, I 'zoomed out' from my data in a second round of analysis where I focused on the narratives that were emerging through the interviews to better understand and contextualize the arguments interviewees were making about co-production/ collaboration and/or social enterprise.

While conducting interviews I kept a notebook where I would make notes of statements participants made that I wanted to return to later in the conversation or highlight something they said that might have aligned with discourse of another participant, for example. After most of these interviews, I also took the time to pen some summary points from the interview that in retrospect aligned more with high-level narrative themes that were particularly salient throughout the interview rather than discourse at a more granular level. While I did not code these notes themselves, they were useful to reference before returning to the data to capture general themes. At this stage, I also coded documents for broader narrative themes. By focusing on narratives alongside discourse, the

theoretical connections in the data became clearer. Narrative themes around collaboration, value creation, and coalition building emerged. It was thus through this process of analyzing narratives alongside discourse that I developed my ideas to draw on theory that would help with analytical framing around collaborative dynamics (Emerson et al., 2012; Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015a), value creation (Osborne et al., 2022), and advocacy coalitions (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier and Weible, 2019) as described earlier in this chapter. I specifically went back through interview transcripts to code for the three central elements that inform collaboration dynamics in Emerson and colleagues' (2012) integrative framework for collaborative governance to nuance my codes around 'collaboration.' I did not systematically re-code data around value creation or coalition building as I believed these instances had been sufficiently documented. Instead, I used theory from these frameworks to make sense of the data through my discussion of it later in this thesis.

## 3.8 Research ethics

Before turning to present my empirical data and results that I derived through this approach and analysis process, I now discuss research ethics in the context of this entire project since ethical issues can emerge at any stage throughout social research (Bryman, 2016). Rigorous research adheres to ethical standards at every stage, ensuring ethical practices underpin all key research decisions. In the context of this research, the key ethics considerations revolved around research participants, specifically their recruitment, the protection of their identities and their words (i.e., the data collected) through transcription and then through publication. Before data collection began this project received full ethical approval in accordance with procedures outlined by Glasgow Caledonian University's Glasgow School for Business and

Society Research Ethics Committee. A copy of my submitted ethics forms and approvals are provided in Appendix E.[9]

When I recruited participants to participate in this research, I was committed to being as transparent as possible about the aims of the research, my role as a doctoral researcher, and my ambitions for the project so they would know how I hoped to use and share the experiences and perspectives they shared with me. Everyone was provided with a general participant information sheet (included in Appendix F) and was informed of the general purpose of the research and topics that were likely to be covered in advance of their interviews. Along with the participant information sheet and the interview guide sheet, participants were also emailed an informed consent form (see Appendix G). Before I interviewed anyone, I ensured they emailed me their signed informed consent form, indicating that they understood the focus of my research, how I would work to protect their identities, and how I hoped to use their data. As part of this informed consent process, I was committed to ongoing and transparent dialogue with those participating. This was of paramount importance to me because the Scottish social enterprise sector, and to a certain extent the third sector more broadly, is notoriously small. I was conscious that despite my best efforts to protect the identities of my participants and carefully steward their words and experience, it might still be possible for others in the sector to read my eventual published work and make informed guesses about who said what. Since I had an existing level of rapport with most of my participants, I was able to have very open conversations about this

[9] This project received ethical approval twice because I updated my research design throughout the project. Initially I sought ethical approval just to collect data in Scotland, but throughout the project the connections to and opportunities for further data collection with participants in Australia became clear and I resubmitted my ethics form to extend my research.

reality with them. I felt honored that despite this reality, they were all eager to support and consented to participate in this research.

While there is little debate about the necessity of gaining informed consent from research participants, views have historically been mixed around whether this leads to better quality data (Crow et al., 2006). I argue that through taking the time to be very transparent about my project and issues that might be of concern to participants, while simultaneously providing multiple opportunities for them to ask questions about the research (i.e., over email in advance of the interview, at the beginning of our interviews, after the interview) those participating trusted the process and were willing to be more transparent and open with me as a result. Full and complete informed consent is thought of as sometimes being easier to describe than implement in practice because at times it may be impossible to know all the information a participant may need to or want to know (Bryman, 2016). Further, the extent to which deception or omission may be incorporated into research is also a contested topic (Bulmer, 2001). With this study, the only case where information about the aims and objectives of my research was deliberately withheld from participants was through the omission of language around collaboration, co-production, co-design, and other associated terms. I chose to consciously avoid this language in my questions during interviews and in the information I provided about the study ahead of time because I did not want participants to be influenced by my choice of terminology and inadvertently skew their discourse or reposition their narratives in response to my language.

Tangibly, there were a few key things I did to increase participants' comfort with engaging in this research by ensuring they were aware of issues of confidentiality and anonymity and how I would protect and manage their data through processing, storage, and dissemination. My participants were informed that I would be the only one with access to

their recordings and transcripts and that they would be stored on encrypted drives ensuring as much confidentiality as possible. Not even my supervisory team was given access in effort to protect anyone who might have been named during an interview, particularly if they still held a position within the Scottish Government or Scottish social enterprise sector. My team had a general awareness of the people I would interview for the research and even facilitated some introductions to participants, but I was careful not to explicitly confirm the names of everyone I interviewed. I was cautious about this with other participants as well: if they asked whether I spoke to someone, usually because that person came up in a story they were telling, I would neither confirm nor deny if I had. Even at the end of interviews when they might provide further suggestions for other participants as part of my snowball sampling strategy, I made those connections on my own where possible and only in one case asked a pervious interviewee to facilitate a new connection.

Everyone who participated was also told that while I intended to use quotes from their interviews to evidence what I was discovering, their name would not be attached, providing them with a level of anonymity. Unlike oral history, for example, where ethical standards encourage interviewees to have the opportunity to review a transcript before it becomes part of the public record (Oral Histroy Association, 2023), those participating in this study were not given the same opportunity because my transcripts are never going to be published.[10] I also felt strongly that evolving dynamics within the social enterprise sector

[10] While I explored the possibility of conducting some oral history interviews for this project, the more traditional semi-structured interview format was chosen since history formed a basis for this research but capturing historical accounts was not its primary objective. Ultimately, I was less interested in having participants shed light on a particular historical moment since many oral histories on the development and evolution of social enterprise in Scotland have already been recorded within the Dr. Gillian Murray papers held as part of the Social Enterprise Collection (Scotland). Rather, I wanted to build a more historically grounded account of policy development and use that to inform a contemporary understanding of policy collaboration and management practices. Thus, existing oral history and archival data helped formulate an important historical context in which participant experiences and perspectives that they shared through their semi-structured interviews could be situated (Galletta, 2013).

might lead people to want to position statements slightly differently than they had in their interview. I was determined to capture those slightly less 'filtered' perspectives as a means of exposing underlying assumptions and motivations informing their discourse. This was also part of my decision to transcribe full verbatim. Bucholtz (2000) notes how 'the responsible practice of transcription, then, requires the transcriber's cognizance of her of his own role in the creation of the text and the ideological implications of the resultant product' (1440). I recognize that in choosing to transcribe full verbatim I was not, for example, omitting ocassions when an interviwee mispoke and then corrected themselves, and therefore not providing them with the opportunity to have a transcript reflect more closely perhaps what was intended by the speaker (McMullin, 2023c). Yet, given the ongoing political tensions and 'live' nature of some of the topics covered in my interviews, I agreed with all participants that they would be able to review any publication where I would be using quoted material from their interview before it was officially published. Despite none of my quotes being attributable to individual interviewees since I use participant ID numbers rather than their names, or even pseudonyms, I still believed it was important to obtain this form of ongoing consent from the participants who have supported this research.

## 3.9 Conclusion

Just like the attention I devoted to ethical considerations throughout the various stages of my research, the project itself has been carefully considered and evaluated throughout every stage. The purpose of this chapter was to explain the methodological approach that I developed to address my research aims and objectives. I clearly outlined my ontological and epistemological stances as constructionism and interpretivism respectively. Further, I addressed that while I also had emancipatory ambitions with this research, an interpretive

perspective that seeks to understand, rather than a fully critical perspective that seeks to emancipate (Scotland, 2012), was most fitting for research where the primary aim was to increase understanding around collaborative policy development by empirically studying the evolution of those processes over time.

As Creswell (2009) notes, 'theoretical perspectives may be integrated with the philosophical assumptions that construct a picture of the issues being examined, the people to be studied, and the changes that are needed' (27). Thus, through my research, I integrate the theoretical perspectives emanating from Critical Theory, with a specific focus on the work of Habermas. While Critical Theory informs my approach to research through DHA, I also heavily rely on middle-range theories (Merton, 2007) related to collaborative governance, co-production, policy processes, and public service ecosystems to provide conceptual framing for my research. These frameworks have informed my approach to data analysis through an abductive process. Indeed, co-production, which sits at the core of this research, must be viewed through an integrated theoretical lens in order to be properly understood in the context of policy studies beyond its typical exploration in public administration and management literature (Howlett et al., 2017).

My research strategy, supported by this interdisciplinary conceptual framework, involves a mix of archival analysis, interviews, and textual analysis of the social enterprise policies, strategies, and action plans (both developed and developing) in Scotland. This multifaceted approach is justified by DHA's salient characteristic of using triangulation as a methodological principle (Wodak et al., 1990). Specifically, I use archival research, focusing on document analysis and integration of oral history, semi-structured interviews, document analysis of contemporary policies, grey literature, and other sources, alongside some virtual ethnographic meetings observations and listserv monitoring. By combining these methods

and knitting findings from the three phases of this study together in effort to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of policy formation, implementation, and interpretation, this approach will make a methodological, as well as topical, contribution to the literature. This thesis also serves as an example of how historical analysis can effectively nuance contemporary public policy and public management research. In the next two chapters of this thesis, I demonstrate how chronicling the history of social enterprise policy in Scotland, both from the perspective of the public sector and the broader third sector, can serve as a basis for understanding the ostensibly innovative public management approaches surrounding Scotland's ten-year social enterprise strategy.

# Chapter 4: Building the Scottish public sector and facilitating the development of a social enterprise ecosystem for Scotland

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the historical evolution of social enterprise policy in Scotland. It draws on the following sources: archive material from the Social Enterprise Collection (Scotland); draft policies and email correspondence from the first and second Scottish Cabinet stored in the ScotlandsPeople Scottish Cabinet Records archive; grey literature, policy documents, and reports, published by third sector organizations and the Scottish Government between 2000 and 2022 (focusing on content related to events through 2012); news articles and blog posts from the same time; and interviews with actors across the Scottish ecosystem who have held roles in either the public or third sector, and in some cases, both. In this chapter, I weave together all these data sources to begin developing what could be considered the most complete account of social enterprise policy in Scotland to date. The chapter particularly focuses on the historical antecedents to Scotland's ten-year social enterprise strategy answering the first question central to this thesis: What were the political conditions, public programs, and policies that preceded Scotland's 2016 social enterprise strategy and contributed to an environment for facilitating its collaborative development?

The historical account involves narratives of simultaneous public and third sector evolution, but it focuses predominantly on how the public sector evolved and how that evolution contributed to shifting relationships with the Scottish third sector. Throughout this historical narrative, I analyze key programs and policies to illustrate these shifting relationships. Despite relational shifts, I note how social enterprise has persistently been positioned within the wider context of Scottish public sector 'community' policy since Scotland gained the ability to develop policy in this arena. This chapter therefore begins with

devolution in 1999 and charts the trajectory of public sector evolution through 2012. Toward the end of the chapter, I highlight changes within the Third Sector Division of the Scottish Government in 2011 and immediately after. These changes, which led the division to become a key supporter of many programs designed to accelerate the development of Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem, were reflective of broader public sector trends in Scotland where citizens, communities, and civil society organizations were viewed as key policy partners. I highlight two key factors I identified through my research that ultimately contributed to a greater focus on social enterprise policy within the Scottish Government, but also facilitated an environment where the governance philosophy around those policies would involve cross-sector collaboration. It is in this respect that the Scottish Government's community policy discourse has influenced its approach to policy co-production and collaboration, giving particular relevance to this case study research on their social enterprise strategy. I will analyze all these developments further in Chapter 7 in the context of varied and evolving discourses and practices related to Scottish policy co-production.

## 4.2 The first five years: Early days of the Scottish Parliament

### 4.2.1 Devolution and the Scottish Executive

When the Scottish Parliament was established in 1999 with the first act of devolution, the Scottish Executive assumed control of many legislative powers that had previously been reserved to Westminster (UK Parliament, 1998). This gave Scotland the opportunity to reflect on its systems of governance and envision a future for Scotland that reflected its rooting in community and the third sector with a focus on localism (Midwinter and McGarvey, 2001). The Scottish Executive wanted to position itself differently from Westminster and in 1999, even though the UK Parliament was run by a Labour majority

during the first Tony Blair Administration (May 1997–June 2001), the country was still reacting to the impacts of the previous Conservative governments that had been in power since 1979. Conservative policies put local governments across the UK, and especially in Scotland, in a position where they continually felt under siege (PSA 3). As discussed previously in Chapter 2, the reorganization of local authorities into unitary local authorities in 1996 effectively eliminated the powerful and large regional authorities that were crucial in Scotland's community orientation and traditions of localism. While devolution presented an opportunity to 'return' some of that power to communities, the process placed a further dent in the power of the large regional authorities that had dominated the local government landscape in Scotland (PSA 6).

This did not necessarily mean it was inevitable for Scottish communities to lose their influence on the back of devolution. Rather, it meant that the regional authorities would no longer broker that community influence at national or international levels. As someone who was serving within the Scottish Executive at the time described, the elimination of the regions created an opportunity to rethink service delivery in Scotland. They said, "The Scottish Model at that time" was one where the "voluntary sector … did things that were then taken up by the public sector and delivered in the public sector," often in the form of prototyping a service so that Strathclyde Region, for example, could then take it up and deliver it on a statutory basis (PSA 6). Without the regional councils to take up these services and then deliver them, there were also opportunities to forge new public sector partnerships and rethink the public sector's relationship with civil society more broadly.

#### *4.2.2 Communities Scotland*

As part of rethinking the public sector's relationships with civil society, and importantly communities, a body known as Communities Scotland was established in 2001. It was an

arm's-length executive agency that "was envisaged as [a] regeneration agency, which would be able to deliver programs at local level to … address poverty, stimulate innovation, and link up the importance of housing and other forms of regeneration" (PSA 3). A couple years later in January 2003, the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 was passed by Scottish Parliament. The passage of the Bill for the Act is, at least in retrospect, an example of what could be considered a proliferation of discourse on 'community' in the early days of the Scottish Executive. The act itself focused on 'the way in which local authorities discharge their functions and … the local provision of certain public services' as well as giving 'local authorities power to do things which they consider will advance well-being' (Scottish Executive, 2003b). Through the passage of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and the establishment of Communities Scotland in 2001, the newly formed government in Scotland "prepared the ground for a new sort of collegiate form … of local governance called community planning … along with a new best value regime for local government" (PSA 3). As records from the 2nd Administration, the Labour/Liberal Democrat Scottish Executive (May 2003–May 2007) highlight, Scottish Ministers were focusing on 'how initiatives such as Efficient Government, Community Planning and Best Value should be seen as part of a coherent programme of improvement and modernization' within government under the umbrella of a public service reform agenda (McKay, 2005: 2). In essence, as part of a renewed focus on governance that was arguably inevitable with the establishment of a new government, the Scottish Executive was signaling that they would be a government focused on prioritizing local community engagement.

Community planning was a strong example of this new approach to making and implementing policy within Scotland that also reflected a renewed focus on communities. According to one public sector actor, there were two pillars of community planning: "to

engage people and businesses much more in the future and fortunes of their local areas" and to encourage public bodies to work much more collaboratively with a view toward improving the local areas in which they were embedded (PSA 3). I argue that principles and discourses underpinning the Community Business Movement of the 1980s, as they related to community regeneration and enabling communities to invest in and solve their local problems, re-emerged within community planning discourse. While community businesses were then largely being established as a reaction to deindustrialization in an attempt to regenerate communities blighted by poverty, the community planning approach focused on combatting local poverty that had been exacerbated by more recent austerity measures. The discourse around community planning, similar to discourse surrounding the Community Business Movement, also capitalized on the strength and resilience of 'community.'[11] The community planning discourse gained popularity, arguably in part because at the turn of the century Scotland was "continually suffering from … quite a disparity in incomes and still quite high levels of poverty" (PSA 3). It offered the promise of a better, locally rooted future against the backdrop of previous UK governments who had systematically stripped power away from communities in Scotland.

This continual, at least rhetorical, thread of policies and programs that is designed to support communities in Scotland weaves its way through to the present day. Presently, support for local communities is often linked to policy around social enterprise support. In

[11] Communities are often looked to in times of crisis and thus scholars have linked conceptualizations of community resilience to community development, with a specific focus on response to social and economic crises (Matarrita-Cascante and Trejos, 2013; Zautra et al., 2008). Yet there are different and often competing visions for and of 'community' (Shaw, 2008) that can sometimes contribute to the downfall of community-centric movements like the Community Business Movement (Hayton, 2000) as practitioners face philosophical and practical challenges in balancing these visions (Kenny, 2002). This does not prevent the 'ideological recycling' (Shaw, 2008) of the community discourse in policies and programs seeking to respond to crisis and address complicated societal problems like poverty.

this respect, it is not surprising that a few individuals who were working in the public sector in the early 2000s linked the community-focused work of the Scottish Executive to modern-day social enterprise policy. These civil servants mentioned in their interviews that it was through conversations happening at Communities Scotland and various policy teams working for Scottish Parliament focusing on both the economy and communities that some of the early thoughts on a social enterprise strategy were shaped (PSA 6, PSA 3). These conversations about the potential of a strategy to support social enterprise were arguably, in some ways, before their time. One of these ways becomes clear in the next chapter focusing to the evolution of the third sector where I outline how the lack of sufficient social enterprise infrastructure or even agreement around the concept of 'social enterprise' in the early 2000s made it difficult to warrant or facilitate any coherent social enterprise strategy development. So, instead of starting in the middle of a policy cycle where the development and publication of an explicit strategy often occurs, the Scottish Executive began supporting social enterprise in a more practical and tangible manner through various research programs and funding initiatives. These were linked to a broader 'community' agenda, rather than supporting the 'social enterprise' sector strategically and rhetorically with the publication of an overt social enterprise policy.

In the early to mid-2000s, most of the Scottish Executive's policies and programs related to social enterprise came out of the Social Economy Unit within Communities Scotland (SCVO, 2005). One of the early programs developed by the Social Economy Unit directly targeting social enterprise was the £18m Futurebuilders Scotland program that was launched in 2004 (Alcock, 2009). One person working in a delivery agency commented that Futurebuilders "was the first initiative that [they] recognised as being a pump primer for the social enterprise sector" (TSDP 1). Yet, this program of support looked very different from

what lots of the public sector support for the social enterprise sector has evolved into today. Over the past 15 years, there has been a move to encourage contractual arrangements between the public and social enterprise sectors. The public sector will put support services for the social enterprise sector out to tender and delivery organizations who often run as social enterprises themselves will bid for the funding to deliver the service on behalf of the public sector. These contractual arrangements also extend to social enterprises delivering public services directly in communities. The idea behind contracts was to reduce the social enterprise sector's dependency on grants, but grant funding was still available to the sector over this period.

Instead of fully embracing this push toward contracts, the Futurebuilders initiative straddled practices of civil society engagement rooted in the 1980s and 1990s (at least in Scotland), which were predominantly built on grants and public sector delivery. As one person working in the public sector at the time explained, Futurebuilders:

> was largely a grant program, it wasn't a mix of grant and loans, and you know a number of familiar projects, continuity projects, came [through it], and … perhaps in retrospect, you know, [those administering it could] have been a lot tougher … selecting … a more impactive approach (PSA 3).

This focus on grants may have been one of the key factors contributing to the way Communities Scotland was viewed at the time. From the perspective of the same civil servant, it was:

> seen as a bit of a money tree and there [were] many stakeholders that just saw this as a route to funding and money and grants. And there's nothing wrong with that in itself, some of the projects that were on the go were creating jobs and being really valuable to local communities … but some couldn't actually see beyond [Communities Scotland] just having another grant programme (PSA 3).

Nevertheless, the social enterprise sector benefited from this early influx of grant funding, which was used to establish many key aspects of the social enterprise ecosystem infrastructure in Scotland. For example, in April 2004, Senscot secured three years of funding

from the Scottish Executive specifically to develop and begin establishing the place-based Social Enterprise Networks (SENs) that Senscot became most known for throughout the sector (Pia, 2022: 7). At the time Senscot received this funding, it had already helped support the incubation of many of the social enterprise delivery organizations that make up a substantial portion of the sector's support infrastructure today including the Social Enterprise Academy and Firstport (Pia, 2022: 5). As these specialized social enterprise support and delivery organizations began to be established, Communities Scotland had to consider the most effective ways to engage them.

## 4.3 The mid 2000s: Rethinking relationships with the Scottish third sector

### 4.3.1 The EQUAL Programme and Social Economy Scotland

While Communities Scotland's grants often supported ongoing community initiatives, their support and funding helped establish new support and delivery organizations as well.[12] This eventually led to broader partnership working between arm's length agencies like Communities Scotland and Highlands and Island Enterprise and the growing number of third sector organizations providing support and advocacy services on behalf of social enterprises, development trusts, charities, and other third sector organizations in Scotland. As this infrastructure grew organically and by design, Communities Scotland began supporting broader partnership and collaboration to strengthen the social economy in Scotland beyond. Specifically, they were one of the core partners who formed the Social Economy Scotland Development Partnership (DP) Steering Group with other stakeholders like Highlands and

[12] For example, the Senscot Story written by Aidan Pia in 2022 outlines how it was 'With support from Communities Scotland, [that] Senscot–working in partnership with the Association of Small Towns in Scotland (ASTIS) – establishe[d] the Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) in 2004. DTAS [would] act as the umbrella body for development trusts in Scotland, supporting local communities in taking greater control and ownership of local assets via the creation of robust local 'anchor organisations'' (6).

Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Scottish Enterprise, Social Firms Scotland, Social Investment Scotland, and the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition, among others (SCVO, 2005).

The Social Economy Scotland DP was formed as part of a European Union project called EQUAL aimed at finding 'new methods to combat inequality and discrimination' where one key theme of the project was 'Strengthening the Social Economy' (SCVO, 2005: 1). SCVO was the lead partner on this project, which as someone familiar with the project recalled:

> was a social economy project, but it was really, it turned into really being about social enterprise. So, I think that that was probably SCVO dipping its toe in the water in terms of social enterprise, although they didn't like the terminology social enterprise (TSI 2).[13]

The partners who formed Social Economy Scotland agreed to five key themes that would underpin their work: Partnership and Procurement, Access to Finance, Business Development, Quality and Impact, and Raising the Profile (SCVO, 2005: 6). Four thematic boards were developed to oversee actions related to the first four priority themes and they all agreed to collaborate on activities related to 'Raising the Profile' of the social economy (SCVO, 2005: 2, 8). This development of the partnership and articulation of the project's themes and goals was the first phase of the EQUAL project. The second phase involved project implementation to learn best practice across the themes and then to disseminate that information and mainstream the impacts through policy implementation and outputs. As outlined in one of the project's output documents, through the work of mainstreaming, the partners endeavored to:

> -Establish a framework to foster the development of an 'entrepreneurial and enterprise culture' within the sector.

[13] These objections from SCVO to the terminology around 'social enterprise' are discussed in more detail in the next chapter, see pages 123-124 & 147.

-Provide the capacity for future growth and sustainability leading to improvements in job quality in the sector.
-Significantly enhance the cohesion, visibility and credibility of the social economy at local, national and transnational levels (Robbie and Maxwell, 2006: 64).

Table 4.1 presents each theme, the aims of the partnership[14] within each theme, and the example of an output associated with the theme.[15]

***Table 4.1: EQUAL Programme – work of the Social Economy Scotland DP***

| THEME | PARTNERSHIP AIMS | OUTPUTS |
|---|---|---|
| Partnership and Procurement | 'mainstream public social partnership models and new approaches to procurement practice'[16] | The publication of 'Developing consortia: Forming a consortium for the delivery of public services' to guide social enterprises and other third sector organizations who want to enter the public service delivery market through the legal issues involved in setting up consortia (Philips and Harkness, 2008)<br><br>AND<br><br>'Tendering for Public Sector Contracts' a step-by-step guide for social enterprises and other third sector organizations to provide them with the knowledge needed to effectively tender for contracts (Fourth Sector Development, 2007) |
| Access to Finance[17] | 'to demonstrate new approaches to | The 'Investing in Impact: Developing Social Return on Investment' report[19] presents lessons and practical |

[14] These aims come from website archives from the Social Economy Scotland DP's website. The aims are written as they appeared on the website on either 10 May 2008 or 5 July 2008. I accessed these pages using the Wayback Machine Internet Archive, but since Wayback Machine does not capture every page on a site on the same day, I used the dates that were closest to EQUAL's end on 31 March 2008 (Social Economy Scotland, 2008).
[15] I was emailed documents from those involved in the EQUAL Programme. Those who shared the documents with me did not indicate whether any of the documents directly mapped to a particular EQUAL Programme theme: they simply said they were part of the commissioned reports associated with the partnership. Through my own analysis, I initially mapped the outputs to a particular theme and later reviewed an archived webpage from Social Economy Scotland (dated 10 May 2008) where outputs for each theme were listed to confirm my association of documents with a particular theme. While these documents were publicly published, and while the titles for most can be seen on Wayback Machine's webpage captures, the documents themselves were not captured in the archive. Thus, I have commented on the content of the four documents shared with me (the outputs associated with the Partnership and Procurement, Access to Finance, and Quality and Impact themes) but the content under Business Development and Raising the Profile is based on material found on the archived webpages only.
[16] From 5 July 2008 capture
[17] While this partnership was referenced as 'Access to Finance' in the original Partnership Agreement establishing the Social Economy Scotland DP from 2005, a website capture from 5 July 2008 indicated the name shifted to 'New approaches to finance' at some point throughout the project.
[19] Developing profiles and case studies of social economy organizations using the SROI approach was listed as one of the Quality and Impact outputs, but this report itself is associated with the 'New approaches to finance' theme on the old Social Economy Scotland website.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | financing social economy organisations'[18] | guidance on using and developing SROI analyses and a cautiously optimistic prediction that with continued development and refinement it has the potential to be a viable tool used to help understand the quality and impact of the social economy (Durie et al., 2008) |
| Business Development[20] | 'mainstream new approaches and models of business support for the social economy'[21] | In addition to reports and guides, the partnership groups under the Social Economy Scotland DP produced 'Learning Points' to capture discussions, questions, and working principles from various meetings and engagement sessions. 'Business Development for the Social Economy' was the title of one of the Learning Points produced by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration as part of the partnership.<br><br>Other listed documents included: 'A business planning guide to developing a social enterprise' and 'Acquiring business for good: Buying businesses and turning them into social firms – lessons for Scotland' |
| Quality and Impact | 'promote the application and uptake of tools to demonstrate the quality and impact of the social economy's role in service delivery'[22] | The development of 'Making the Case: Social Added Value Guide' that was designed to help social enterprises and voluntary organizations understand and identify tools to help them identify their 'added value' to help secure investment or prove their impact (Robbie and Maxwell, 2006) |
| Raising the Profile | 'raise the profile of the social economy through a collective promotional campaign and promote uptake of new promotional tools and methodologies at Scottish and GB levels'[23] | All the above reports (some included ministerial forwards) were circulated throughout government and used to cascade project learning to social enterprises and other social economy organizations.<br><br>The Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition (SSEC) also developed a series of policy briefs as part of the EQUAL Social Economy Scotland's Mainstreaming initiatives (SSEC, 2008a). |

[18] From 5 July 2008 capture
[20] While this partnership was referenced as 'Business Development' in the original partnership terms document from 2005, a website capture from 10 May 2008 indicated the name shifted to 'Business support' at some point throughout the project.
[21] From 10 May 2008 capture
[22] From 5 July 2008 capture
[23] From 10 May 2008 capture

As will be discussed further throughout this chapter and then again in Chapter 7, these priority themes, their associated aims, and even the content of some of the outputs remain relatively consistent for the sector over time. There is undeniably some slight tweaking, re-packaging, or alteration of dominant discourse, but this core consistency around ideas reflects a 'dynamic persistence' of policy across time (Nicholls and Teasdale, 2021). This consistency meant that when reflecting on the origins of the ten-year social enterprise strategy published in 2016, one intermediary partner believed that "there was an awful lot of work done … through that EQUAL European funded project that started [the social enterprise sector] on the journey for the social enterprise strategy development" (TSI 2). In reflecting back on EQUAL, this person even positioned the project within the context of co-production, focusing on relationships between public and third sector actors. From their perspective, since the Scottish Executive was match-funding the program, the Scottish Executive "then had a vested interest in what [the programme partners] were doing, what [those partners] were trying to achieve,'' and had ''very much kind of bought into the whole concept from the beginning'' (TSI 2). They went on to say, ''So … that was a form of co-production even back then'' where the government was effectively letting the sector take the lead, listening to what their priorities and ambitions were, and supporting them with time and money (TSI 2). [24]

In the mid-2000s (2005–2006 especially) programs like EQUAL were laying the groundwork for an eventual social enterprise strategy. Communities Scotland was supporting social enterprise at a programmatic level in government, but it was more

[24] In Chapter 9, I discuss how different stakeholders involved in my thesis research used (or not) the term co-production within the context of academic literature. In this case, invoking 'co-production' terminology is more emblematic of the discourse around governance in Scotland and an ambition for collaboration between government and third sector organizations, rather than the collaboration between citizens and public sector actors for the design and delivery of public services.

challenging for the movement to garner overt and symbolic political support in the form of concrete policy and strategy coming directly from the Scottish Executive. From the early-2000s, a coalition government between the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party (the Lib-Lab Coalition) controlled the Scottish Parliament. In particular, Labour ministers were very attached to what some people I interviewed for this research referenced as an older 'Scottish Model' of service. Under this model of delivery, they explained that the voluntary sector would receive a grant to do something and then if it was successful, it would be taken over by and run from within a local council (TSDP 1, PSA 3 & 6). According to someone working within the public sector during the mid-2000s, the majority government wanted to preserve this more traditional grant relationship with the voluntary sector. They were happy to support the social enterprise sector but did not think it was necessary to have differentiation within their approach to the broad voluntary sector (PSA 6). In other words, they rejected the notion of a strategy specific to social enterprise because they believed, at least initially, it was contrary to the way Labour Party policy approached the third sector and its relationship with government.[25]

Around 2004 the social enterprise business model was only getting traction at the fringes of the public sector, and, at least from the perspective of those campaigning for social enterprise, there was hesitancy among many politicians to elevate the social enterprise concept further (PSA 6). Despite this perceived hesitancy, pervasive conversations about public services reform in and around 2004 and 2005 were also contributing to an

[25] There is significant political nuance to the reasons why the Lib-Lab Coalition in Scotland may not have wanted to appear to be creating policy or strategy that went against the grain of more traditional Labour Party policy, including the way they supported and designed policy for the voluntary sector. The reality was that with a Labour government controlling Westminster, even though devolution had occurred, it made sense to people in the public sector that there was not significant policy divergence at this stage between Scotland and England (PSA 1). Indeed, there were high levels of alignment between the governing philosophies of the Scottish Executive and Westminster.

environment that would be more receptive to the ways in which social enterprises could contribute to these reform efforts. In this sense, the discourse around social enterprise started to evolve and speak to the time, and the priorities within government (PSA 1). Specifically, rethinking tendering and making it more responsive to needs within the third sector connected with other Scottish Executive policies at the time, 'which [sought] to move to a relationship with the wider public sector based on shared high level outcomes, combined with greater local flexibility about how to deliver these outcomes and radically streamlined bureaucracy' (McKay, 2005: 2). Further, Scottish Cabinet records from the 2nd Administration (May 2003–May 2007) provide early indications that Scottish ministers were beginning to recognize the diversity within the voluntary sector and potentially the need for different funding streams, even if they were unwilling to latch onto social enterprise terminology explicitly.

**4.3.2 A 'Vision for the Scottish Executive's Future Relationship with the Voluntary Sector'**

Within the 2nd Administration of the Scottish Executive, Malcolm Chisholm MSP served as Minister for Communities from 2004–2006. During a Voluntary Sector and Social Economy Parliamentary debate on 19 May 2005, Chisholm outlined his vision for 'a vibrant, strong, self-sufficient, sustainable and independent [voluntary] sector, that from its position of strength in communities [would] choose to engage with government on joint agendas and work with [government] to deliver joint priorities' (Chisholm, 2005: 1–2). During this same debate, where much of the focus was on the broad voluntary sector, Scottish ministers also agreed to produce a strategy for social enterprise in Scotland (Porch, 2006). A focus on both reforming the Scottish Executive's relationship with the voluntary sector and beginning to support social enterprise more explicitly as part of that reform thus proceeded in tandem.

After this debate, various departments across the Scottish Executive undertook research in the form of 'questionnaires and focus groups' with the aim of identifying what the voluntary sector was 'doing to help the Executive deliver its commitments and what more it could do' (Chisholm, 2005: 2). This research concluded that:

> the Executive's relationship with the sector has expanded since devolution from a relationship based around funding and delivery of policy objectives to a more sophisticated and mature relationship. There is growing interest in the sector's service delivery function and interest too in the potential that their frontline experience can bring to policy development (Chisholm, 2005: 2).

In response to these conclusions, Chisholm wrote to the Cabinet in November 2005 asking for their input and sign-off on 'A Vision for the Scottish Executive's Future Relationship with the Voluntary Sector' which would outline the ways the Executive would support the sector as a service delivery partner and agent of change. Additionally, this vision document would signal the Scottish Executive's recognition of the value of voluntary sector's contribution to community cohesion and its role in advocacy and policymaking (Chisholm, 2005: 2).

The then Minister for Education and Young People Peter Peacock MSP CBE responded to the request for comment and focused on the ways in which this proposed vision would push the sector away from the more traditional grant model discussed previously throughout this chapter:

> I support the increased focus on ensuring that investment of public funds delivers clear and agreed outcomes from funding streams which we should aim to rationalise and consolidate over time. However, it is important that we avoid creating expectations that additional resources will be available to help the sector to adjust to these changes and we should work with voluntary organisations to avoid any unintended consequences from delivering the vision (via email sent by Pescodd, 2005: 1).

He went on to note that, 'A proportional approach which recognises the diversity in the sector will also help us to drive forward this agenda' (Pescodd, 2005: 1), which alludes to tensions within the voluntary sector around business model and funding that were

beginning to emerge during this time. In addition to this potential challenge around funding, Malcolm Chisholm acknowledged that there could be challenges 'Promoting a closer relationship in service delivery without losing what makes the sector particularly valued as a partner' and developing a more strategic approach around the way the Scottish Executive engaged the sector in policy development (Chisholm, 2005: 3–4).

Arguably, the challenges Chisholm noted were more closely related to the emerging 'social enterprise' part of the voluntary sector; however, the vision did not seek to make distinctions that would divide groups like social enterprises within the broad voluntary sector. The vision for the voluntary sector was approved by the Cabinet on 2 December 2005 and announced days later at the Voluntary Issues Unit's Voluntary Sector Conference on 12 December (Dubery, 2005). Meanwhile, beginning in October 2005 and running through June 2006, the Social Economy Unit, along with key social enterprise agencies and Scottish Executive departments began to draft a social enterprise strategy aligned with the amendment Scottish Ministers had agreed to back in May 2005. This amendment recommended:

> ...the development of a differentiated strategy to meet the specific needs of the social enterprise sector of the social economy, and further recommend[ed] that such a strategy be developed in partnership with social enterprises and their networks beyond the voluntary sector, be aligned with the development of the Co-operative Development Agency and be aligned with the Department of Trade and Industry's strategy to support social enterprise across the rest of the United Kingdom (Porch, 2006: 1).

The Scottish Executive then developed a consultation paper titled 'A Social Enterprise Strategy for Scotland,' which was sent around to partners across Scotland including local authorities for comment (Porch, 2006). Strategic partners were asked to comment on substantive aspects of the strategy like key priority areas, but also on ongoing debates about where the social enterprise 'sector' was situated and whether 'different terminology [would]

help clarify the debate on differences between social enterprise, social economy and the voluntary sector - i.e. use of the term Third Sector?' (Porch, 2006: 2). Getting to this consultation stage, or even the stage where the Scottish ministers approved an amendment for a differentiated strategy, was not a seamless process for the social enterprise sector or for social enterprise advocates within the public sector.

**4.3.3 A strategy and action plan for social enterprise (2007)**

While the majority, Lib-Lab coalition government had prioritized focus on the voluntary sector, the Scottish Greens had taken up 'social enterprise' as a policy area during the early and mid-2000s. According for someone familiar with policy conversations during this period, the Scottish Green Party thought there was "something useful about having a broader civil society approach to the economy" (PSA 6). Particularly against the backdrop of changing perceptions about how public services could and should be delivered, the party thought that government should not just 'engage' with civil society when it came to campaigning or service delivery, but that enterprise could also be part of that engagement (PSA 6). The Scottish Greens therefore attempted to position social enterprise as a way for "the economy to become more social rather than the voluntary sector to become more enterprising" (PSA 6). Importantly, the majority government, led by many MSPs who still felt connected to this more traditional vision for the voluntary sector and its engagement with the public sector, were not particularly keen on the notion of social enterprise, nor, it seems from my interviews, were they interested in letting what was then a tiny a minority party push forward a policy agenda. Nevertheless, there was a lot of negotiation from roughly 2005–2007 where, as someone working within the public sector described, the coalition government eventually acquiesced:

> But we managed to do enough work with back bench Government MSPs, or Executive MSPs, to have them say, 'Well look, we can't really vote down a social enterprise strategy, can we? I've got three or four social enterprises in my constituency that really want a differentiated strategy for them, because the voluntary sector strategy just doesn't work for them. That's not what they're interested in, you know, they're not interested in getting three-year contracts to deliver social care, they're interested in getting access to tendering where they can compete with private sector companies.' So, we managed to move enough, enough of those back bench MSPs that we were able to get the differentiated strategy in (PSA 6).

The differentiated strategy, *Better business: A strategy and action plan for social enterprise in Scotland*, was published in March 2007 after a signoff from then First Minister Jack McConnell MSP on 20 March 2007 (Mowat, 2007). The publication followed a period of sector consultation at the end of 2006 and input from the Scottish Cabinet in early 2007. Published in partnership with Communities Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Scottish Enterprise, the 2007 Strategy was underpinned by a vision for:

> social enterprise as a dynamic, sustainable and credible way of doing business, delivering services and actively improving our communities. [The Scottish Executive wanted] to develop social enterprise as a realistic and attractive option for those who want to use their talents, energy and creativity to change communities for the better (Scottish Executive, 2007: vi).

To realize that vision, the strategy had four strategic aims: raising the profile and proving the value of social enterprise, opening up markets to social enterprise, increasing the range of finance available to develop social enterprise, and developing the trading capacity of social enterprises by providing better business support (Scottish Executive, 2007: 1-2). Two months after the 'Better business' differentiated strategy was published, the Scottish National Party (SNP) won the May 2007 elections and set up a minority government. When they came to power, the SNP was therefore inheriting this 'new' social enterprise policy focus from the previous administration.

## 4.4 The dawn of the SNP Government

Many people who are currently operating within the social enterprise sector in Scotland will point to the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008−2011* as one of the first key social enterprise policy documents in Scotland. For them, the 2008 action plan solidified the importance of social enterprise within Scottish policy, or at the very least demonstrated a tangible commitment that would suggest social enterprise was deserving of policy attention. Even though most current sector institutional memory seems to privilege the action plan in 2008, this chapter has thus far outlined both the implicit and explicit ways social enterprise was already on the policy agenda throughout the early and mid-2000s. Nevertheless, despite the national strategies and action plans, social enterprises were not necessarily being 'shouted about' at a national or international level at this stage. Many people interviewed throughout this project argued it was not then, and perhaps not ever, steering government thinking sufficiently. They discussed how the social enterprise sector, and its supporters, could have been more ambitious and strategic by ensuring social enterprise policy intersected with the work of other departments and agencies and that it was referenced in other strategies and actions plans in a meaningful way (PSA 2, 3, 6; TSI 1, 2, 4, 7; TSDP 5). At the same time, it is possible these perspectives reflect a natural tendency to perceive that in hindsight more could have always been done to strengthen impact.

These comments are retrospective in nature: among all the people I interviewed it would have been impossible to separate these reflections on opportunities that may have been missed in the past with their current sentiments around the state of social enterprise and the sector's relationship with government. Therefore, the comments might also arguably capture some dissatisfaction with the current reality for social enterprise in Scotland. They also show that different stakeholders are drawing on similar ideas to suggest

how the trajectory of social enterprise policy in Scotland could have been altered from those early days of its advancement. In essence, individuals who are invested in the success of social enterprise today wish more was previously done to integrate social enterprise across government policy; however, Scottish Cabinet records from early 2007 indicate there were attempts to do just that. These records show various cabinet secretaries actively trying to ensure various strategies or programs from within their portfolios were referenced in the 'Better business' strategy. Conversely, they also wanted to ensure that other draft strategies or reports due to be published by the Scottish Executive, such as those on public service reform, also referenced back to the 2007 social enterprise strategy and action plan (Anderson, 2007; Knox, 2007; McCabe, 2007). Ultimately though, as is commonplace when the party in power changes, much of the work under the Lib-Lab coalition government was destined to be repackaged, repositioned, or eliminated entirely when the SNP came to power.

While some ideas risk getting lost, buried, or not fully integrated when there is a change in government, these external system changes also facilitate opportunities for advocacy coalitions to capitalize on an openness to new ideas that have the potential to lead to policy change (Sabatier and Weible, 2019). It could be argued that under the Lib-Lab Coalition in 2007, the degree to which they wanted to be different and dramatically integrate social enterprise across policy areas was only rhetorical. It could also be argued that when the SNP came to power, they did not want to just disregard policy, but approach what existed and put their own stamp on it. This meant there was a unique opportunity for social enterprise to act during this time.

### 4.4.1 SNP shift of systems and policies

Wanting to make its mark on the structure of the public sector, the Scottish Executive was quickly rebranded by the new SNP administration to become the Scottish Government.[26] Then, impacting social enterprise and by extension the community and voluntary sector, came the SNP's decision to abolish Communities Scotland. On 31 October 2007, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, then Health and Wellbeing Secretary, announced the new Scottish Government's intention and 'said: "In reviewing [Communities Scotland's] functions we have looked at the most effective structures to respond to the policy challenges we have inherited, alongside our aim of simplifying the public sector."' Ultimately the new Scottish Government decided that by bringing Communities Scotland's '"main non-regulatory function into the core Scottish Government"' that they would better achieve those aims (Scottish Government, 2007).[27] Communities Scotland was officially closed in 2008 and the Third Sector Division within the Directorate for Public Services Reform was formed. Much of Communities Scotland's Social Economy Unit's work was moved into the newly formed Third Sector Division so that it was a core part of Scottish Government (Alcock, 2009: 10).

One of the Third Sector Division's first policy decisions involved determining how the 2007 social enterprise strategy and action plan would be continued under the new

[26] The name change from Executive to Government was a symbolic choice that for some people I interviewed indicated the SNP's earnestness in forming not just an 'executive' arm of the UK Government, but an independent 'government' that could stand alone on the international stage.

[27] Throughout the course of UK politics, parties across nations and ideological lines have often taken an approach toward public sector reform that opposes these arm's-length executive agencies known as quangos because of the perception they are undemocratic and unaccountable. Yet they also can been seen to limit political interference while bringing government closer to the public, and parties in power often rely heavily on them to govern (Dommett et al., 2014). What has become dubbed at the 'bonfire of the quangos' often resulted in many implementation challenges (Flinders and Skelcher, 2012). The SNP's move to eliminate many of the quangos also rapidly hit rocky shores, but not before Communities Scotland was disbanded and its work largely moved within the Scottish Government.

administration, if at all. The then Scottish Executive had committed to some broad actions aligned with the four key pillars of the strategy. Per the document:

> These initial actions will take place between April 2007 and March 2008. We will then publish an update to this strategy in light of decisions taken during the Strategic Spending Review 2007, which will set Scottish Executive budgets from 2008 to 2011. The second phase will be informed by our monitoring of the impact of this first phase of support for social enterprise (Scottish Executive, 2007: 3).

Some of the monitoring was already underway, ready to inform an update to the document in 2008. As someone working in the public sector during this transition period said, "we were right on the cusp of bringing something out, and it was almost on a silver server for John Swinney, and he doesn't look a gift horse in the mouth, and they took it up with great gusto" (PSA 3) and quickly launched the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008−2011* in 2008. The positioning of the new administration's *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008−2011* aligned with discourse from the Scottish Green Party, which had advocated to link social enterprise to the broader economic agenda during the previous administration. The new action plan was heralded as a way of recognizing 'the importance of the third sector in helping the Scottish Government achieve its purpose of creating a more successful country with opportunities for all to flourish, through achieving sustainable economic growth' (Third Sector Division, 2008).

Yet this transition was not entirely a natural progression of policy ideas. From the perspective of someone working within a third sector intermediary at the time, this period of transition was marked by uncertainty and a lack of communication from Scottish Government. This was particularly true when it came to moving from a strategy and action plan with 'social enterprise' in the title to something that appeared to be about the broader 'enterprising' parts of the third sector:

> the strategy was ready to launch and then there was a bit of a pause and then the next thing [that] was launched, it was the enterprising third sector [action plan] and we were all a bit like 'What? Where did that come from?' So I do think that happened from within government probably without much dialogue with the sector on that change in terminology (TSI 2).

This could have been interpreted as a reversion to policy back in 2005 that did not outwardly recognize social enterprise, but still provided some support for it via broader voluntary sector policy. Despite this uncertainty around the explicit status of 'social enterprise' and perhaps some confusion about the stakeholder relationships the Third Sector Division was attempting to balance at the time, there was nevertheless a recognition that the publication of these documents was pushing the social enterprise sector forward.

While it may have taken the sector some time to adjust to the new Scottish Government and better understand its intentions around social enterprise, someone working within a social enterprise delivery agency at the time identified this period of transition in 2007–2008 as one full of real momentum for the sector where lots of trust was being built with the Scottish Government. They mentioned a trip to California for a Social Enterprise Alliance Summit in 2007 where people from both the public sector and across the social enterprise sector, mostly in intermediaries or delivery organizations, traveled together and began to build trust:

> that was part of a relationship strengthening across the sector that helped government to see that the sector leaders here are well-intentioned and the enterprises are fabulous in many cases. It's a high-energy, rapidly growing sector that's good to be around. So, and from the sector's side to have had door closed in government for decades, for anybody who was about then, and suddenly a new willingness in government to collaborate and to support. And to have John Swinney as champion, with his high-profile finance role … who would turn up to events, he would say how important this is to government (TSDP 1).

Reports from this time also support this view that Scottish Government was leaning into meaningful and productive engagement with the sector. In March 2008, the Scottish Government invited the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition to be a 'Strategic Partner,'

‘enabling members to feed in their ideas and views direct to Government [and create] a genuine coalition of the willing’ to engage with policy and, at that time in particular, contribute to the pending action plan (SSEC, 2008: 4). This move was welcomed within the sector because as the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition’s 2007–2008 annual report notes:

> It is very clear we are working with a government that wants to encourage a positive and constructive role for the Third Sector in the implementation of the Government’s Economic Strategy. It states that the Sector will be ‘particularly important in pursuit of economic growth which promotes solidarity, cohesion and sustainability.’ (SSEC, 2008: 1).

During this time, individuals from the social enterprise sector were being asked to meet with the Third Sector Division and the civil servants leading it, mostly on an individual basis. One delivery partner noted that they thought of these meetings as some “of the [early] co-production meetings” because it “wasn’t untypical in an era where co-production wasn’t really a common concept, that you would, and government did, speak individually and meet individually, to stakeholders to form their ideas” (TSDP 1). Someone working on the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011* from within the public sector also indicated that even though the division may not have been consulting or informing on everything consistently, namely the name of the actual document, they did “remember a huge number of focus groups and meetings and [recalled that] the iterations of that action plan … run over 100” (PSA 3).

### 4.4.2 The *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011*

After all those meetings and drafts to negotiate the interests of varying sector stakeholders, the Scottish Government released the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011* in June 2008. It was positioned as a document that would ‘help to create the right conditions in which an enterprising third sector - including social enterprises - can thrive, enabling the

third sector to play a full role in the development, design and delivery of policy and services in Scotland' (Third Sector Division, 2008). The action plan had seven key objectives: opening markets to an enterprising third sector; investing more intelligently; promoting social entrepreneurship; investing in skills, learning, and leadership across the third sector; providing support for business growth; raising the profile of enterprise in the third sector; and, developing the evidence base (focused on demonstrating the value of the third sector and increasing collective knowledge about the Scottish third sector) (Scottish Government, 2008b).

In many ways, this action plan was built upon a stable and predictable trajectory for social enterprise policy that the Liberal Democrat and Labour government had begun to chart. This trajectory was simultaneously uncertain especially after the new SNP government came into power and had to figure out how they would establish themselves. In substance, the action plan was very similar to what was contained in the 2007 strategy and action plan for social enterprise and even the EQUAL project before that. The seven pillars in the 2008 action plan can be mapped to the four pillars of the 2007 strategy and action plan, which are even more closely aligned with the four themes from the EQUAL Programme. The 2008 plan was more specific and concrete in its seven pillars than the four of the 2007 action plan and strategy, arguably indicating the actions would be better suited to the needs of social enterprise and be able to strengthen and advance the sector more effectively. Perhaps paradoxically, the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011* was thus a document that signaled a more refined and targeted direction for social enterprise in its content, while in its name it regressed, returning to language more commonly associated with the broader voluntary sector and lack of differentiation that characterized the early 2000s. This shows that while the social enterprise movement was beginning to gain strength and momentum

and establish itself as a legitimate sector, there were still many competing discourses and interests surrounding the movement.

Some of this had to do with broader uncertainty within the Scottish third sector about its direction of travel and the role it wanted to play in Scotland's future. While this will be discussed in much more depth in the following chapter, the perceptions that civil servants had of the broad third sector certainly influenced the trajectory and content of policies designed to support the sector during the early days of social enterprise policy development. One civil servant described how within the third sector, there was greater familiarity with "the more charitable side of the sector" and how "SCVO … [as] the main, the overarching umbrella organisation [for the third sector was] involved in the conversations about how things should go forward" as interest in the sector grew (PSA 1). This individual noted how they were keen to be seen as embracing diversity but reluctant to single out social enterprise for particular focus and attention.

Another civil servant was aware of this tension within the sector but added a different dimension to it: it was both around how different actors believed the sector should be positioned and around what they believed its relationship with the Third Sector Division and Scottish Government more broadly should have been. First, they also discussed the sector's positioning in relation to SCVO and the organization's desire to keep private sector rhetoric from encroaching on the voluntary sector. This person mentioned that the government was being lobbied hard to get rid of the 'social enterprise' language especially from the title of any published strategies or action plans because:

> there was the term around the social economy and that was a broader term than voluntary sector. It was this sort of business end of the voluntary sector, those bodies that generate an income. Most probably felt that wasn't enough. So we wanted to emphasise that, you know, there's nothing wrong with, you know, business practices making a profit so long as that was plowed back into social ends. So maybe social

> enterprise jumping from social economy was too harsh and that too, uh 'business like', but the compromise would be 'enterprising third sector', which the SNP would be keen to keep SCVO as much on board as they could, so perhaps soften that somewhat. So, from recollection, it was a pragmatic decision I think more than anything else, but not one that was worth arguing about to be honest (PSA 3).

Second, regarding the sector's relationship with the Scottish Government, that civil servant said:

> some would have seen that action plan to be primarily just about a money tree, whereas we were determined that a lot of it was about softer support, you know, developing the principles around procurement, some of it was about marketing, some of it was about positioning, you know, exploring new markets, for example. It isn't all just about grant funding, so, to be fair, I think at the time we widened out the action plan to be more than just the giving of grants and the giving of money, which was the tradition frankly in the 80s, the 90s (PSA 3).

Nevertheless, linked to the 2008 action plan, many different funds were developed to support the social enterprise sector. These included a £30m Scottish Investment Fund that would provide both grants and loans for established enterprising third sector organizations from 2008 to 2011, and a Third Sector Enterprise Fund of £12m and a £1m Social Entrepreneurs Fund targeting organizations at different stages in their development which provided funding over much of that same three year period (Alcock, 2009: 10; Third Sector Division, 2008). The £30m Scottish Investment Fund was particularly supported by then Finance Secretary John Swinney MSP and the SNP government who praised its promise 'to help enterprising Third Sector organisations become more effective and efficient' (Scottish Government, 2008a). In a review of the 2008 action plan, these funds, in addition to the Third Sector Resilience Fund, were all named as having contributed by 'providing wider support for those organisations that we are investing in and by creating the environment in which an enterprising third sector can thrive' (Social Enterprise Scotland, 2010). Yet after this review happened, and the action plan ended in 2011, the sector was left with something akin to a high-level strategic policy vacuum: "after that strategy was launched, ehm, I think

there was one action plan, and then that kind of fizzled out, and then there was nothing. There was nothing for a couple of years" (TSI 2). The sector did internally continue to engage with the Scottish Government. Individuals from the Third Sector Division attended sector events to discuss the ongoing impact of the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011* during its three-year delivery period (Indigo, 2010); however, the momentum for future high-level strategic policy development withered. It was not that there was no longer any public sector support for social enterprise. Rather, the public sector was once again experiencing a restructure that meant its ways of engaging with the social enterprise sector were once again going to change.[28]

## 4.5 Public sector and public service reform

In May 2011, the SNP shifted from being a minority-led government to a majority government, providing them with an even larger mandate to take forward their agenda around inclusive economic growth and public service and welfare reform, among other things that impacted upon the third sector (Osborne, Bond, et al., 2012). From the perspective of one public sector official, this period was marked by "the burgeoning … or the development of the … practical delivery of … some aspects of the ecosystem" (PSA 1). As before, this meant that partnership between social enterprise delivery and intermediary organizations, as well as social enterprises themselves, and the Scottish Government was entering into a new phase of collective and collaborative delivery of programs and services. Ultimately, these programs and services were designed and being delivered to grow and

[28] The release of the Christie Commission's report on the future delivery of public services in 2011 was significant in some of this restructuring, and importantly, rethinking governance and therefore government's relationship with organizations like social enterprises. Christie was asking questions like: What should we be thinking about delivery of public services, different financing, and different ways of working? Bringing social enterprise into that conversation seemed natural for the Scottish Government at the time.

strengthen the social enterprise movement into something that would eventually become more recognizable as an 'ecosystem' rather than a movement operating at the fringes, clamoring to get attention from government.

The Just Enterprise program, launched in 2011, is a tangible example of a noticeable shift in how the Scottish Government approached social enterprise. It was a move from rhetoric that supported the growing social enterprise movement conceptually and some small grant programs like Futurebuilders to concrete action via resource allocation for initiatives and partnerships designed to develop a more robust ecosystem to support the social enterprise sector. In the case of Just Enterprise, the focus was on business development. This focus allowed for the "bringing into practice [through] the establishment of a number of the aspects of the ecosystem which had been talked about in the initial strategy and which had been picked up in the … *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan [2008–2011]* in 2008" (PSA 1). Yet this shift to collaborative partnership between the public and social enterprise sector in Scotland did not happen in a vacuum.

Across my interviews, it was clear from those working in either the public or third sector at the time that the SNP receiving its mandate as a majority government was important for social enterprise policy development for two key reasons. First, there was a new willingness in government to not only reform public service design and delivery, but also to rethink policymaking and the role communities, organizations, and individual citizens could play in designing and delivering policies and strategies that would impact them. This rethinking contributed to the collaborative launch of programs (i.e., with the Scottish Government and the social enterprise sector working together) that would begin to deliver on some of the ambitions articulated in the 2007 strategy for social enterprise (albeit under the previous government) and the 2008 action plan. Second, and aligned with new

approaches to policy design and delivery, leaders within the civil service responsible for the third sector saw value in extending the trajectory of policies and funding commitments. Traditionally these policies and commitments would last for a year or in certain cases, up to three; however, the public sector actors working on this policy area at the time were interested in exploring the potential of designing and delivering strategy and policy that had more longevity and therefore more relevance and utility within communities. I briefly elaborate on both shifts before turning to the next chapter where I focus on the historical development of the social enterprise sector in Scotland. In this chapter I also concentrate on the conditions and events occurring in parallel to public sector developments that also influenced Scotland's collaborative social enterprise policy design journey.

### 4.5.1 Rethinking collaboration in policymaking

Crucially at this time, concepts like inclusive growth, Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF), and even independence featured heavily on policymakers' agendas and influenced the ways civil servants approached crafting policies. If Scotland was going to shift its economy, change the way it conceived of performance, and create a new independent society, many believed that communities would have to sit at the center of that policymaking. The discourse around Scottish independence was also starting to play a key role where the underlying conversations related to the independence movement were centered around the kind of society in which people wanted to live (PSA 1 and 6). As one person working within Scottish Government at the time described, what was "sitting underneath" the constitutional debate about an independence referendum:

> was a huge sort of discourse [and/]or contemplation about what kind of society [was wanted]. I mean the … debate about the constitution and where [Scotland] might go in the future [opened up thinking] beyond one year or two years. … the third sector had a major role to play … what did the third sector think about its future, its place?

> … it wasn't a debate with them about … independence or not … it was about … reflecting [on] how [to] make things better and what role [social enterprise could] play (PSA 1).

Since the third sector had historically been positioned as a key part of a different vision for society, as this individual stated, they were also going to be part of conversations about different ways of delivering public services. Therefore, it was easy for these conversations about the third sector to be swept up in the discourse around independence.

It was arguably then inevitable that public sector actors would open conversation with the third sector and social enterprise sector. As people I interviewed shared, these conversations focused on what the sector thought about its future or its place, about how the sector could improve life for communities, and about what other future roles in society the sector might play (PSA 1, 3, and 6). Importantly though, conversations within the Scottish third sector slowly started to focus on social enterprise more specifically. While actors within the broad third sector were involved in the discourse generated by the independence debate around what kind of society Scotland should be, the third sector as a broad entity did not necessarily have the same motivations for developing a strategy as the social enterprise movement did. As articulated by someone working in the Scottish Government at the time:

> there wasn't an overarching drive, there wasn't an energy, particularly for a strategy [for the third sector] at that point … that didn't mean [there wasn't] strategic thinking, because there were lots of things that were going on that were about the strategic thinking, but it was a bit disparate in that sector (PSA 1).

The diversity of discourse within the social enterprise sector, while it was contested and required debate, was not quite as broad and disparate as ideas emanating from the Scottish third sector with its community, voluntary, and social enterprise components. This ultimately made it easier to explore the idea of a specific social enterprise strategy.

When one of the public sector actors who was involved in supporting the strategy was asked about the motivations for supporting these conversations with the sector, they articulated how there was a belief that social enterprise had much to offer and to contribute to Scottish society in terms of improving outcomes for communities. Specifically, they mentioned how it:

> became important to have the idea of social enterprise as a part of the programme for [the Scottish] Government as part of [government's economic thinking]. So, [social enterprise] featured when [the Scottish Government] talked about inclusive growth and [an inclusive economy] (PSA 1).

As discussed, Scottish Government thinking at the time was not just about concepts like 'inclusive growth' but also about the NPF and independence, and this individual believed social enterprise could help the Scottish Government deliver on those objectives. The pervasive discourse around these ideas began to create what was described as a tacit, not explicit, environment where, because of things like the NPF with a horizon greater than three years, the ethos within the public sector was starting to be driven by a notion of needing "to be thinking, you know beyond this immediate timeframe … [to] almost provide a license in policy thinking about going beyond three [years]" (PSA 1).

### 4.5.2 Extending the policymaking horizon

As this tacit environment was building within the public sector, a Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF) event also played a tangible role in helping operationalize how public and third sector actors could maximize the potential of this "license" to extend policy thinking. Back in 2013, a few actors from the Scottish social enterprise sector were together in Calgary for the Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF). They recall being struck by generational planning of First Nations communities they learned from at SEWF 2013 and started discussing amongst themselves what it might mean for the social enterprise sector in

Scotland to have an overarching vision or strategy. Actors who were involved in these conversations back in 2013 represented both social enterprise delivery organizations and the public sector. According to three of these different actors who were involved in this study, SEWF 2013 was one of the first occasions in which they recall a long-term social enterprise strategy being discussed. These discussions were exciting, because they revolved around not only the potential of a Scottish Government endorsement, but also around an endorsement for an amount of time exceeding the horizons of any comparable public sector documents. Working under this potential policy timeline meant that the initial government and public sector actors who supported and developed the strategy would not necessarily be the ones responsible for sustaining it. In reflecting on that pivotal experience at SEWF 2013, one of the delivery partners said the First Nations community:

> … had a planning horizon of 200 years. It was the first time we thought about as a sector, [we], and others were just chewing that over thinking, 'My goodness what it would be like to have a ten-year strategy that actually eclipsed parliaments, you know that spanned parliaments' (TSDP 2).

Even though ten years might seem paltry in comparison to the 200-year horizon that inspired it, those interviewed for this study made the argument that this longer-term thinking was still innovative and different in the context of standard operating procedures within the Scottish Government at the time. As one civil servant articulated, the Scottish Government:

> tended to work in both political cycles and economic cycles or fiscal cycles. So, when you have a spending review, which is largely [a] three-year thing, the maximum you tended to have was a three-year vision. And annual accounting actually meant that … what you could do … was constrained (PSA 1).

Therefore, in this context around political, economic, and fiscal cycles combined with annual accounting, government visioning was often constrained to a maximum of three years creating a context where a ten-year strategy was novel. From the perspective of both public

sector and social enterprise delivery partner participants who all shared their reflections on some of these early-days conversations where the strategy 'seed' was planted, a long-term strategy would ensure public sector recognition of the social enterprise sector's contribution to Scotland irrespective of changes in political climate. In doing so, it would signal a public sector commitment to the social enterprise sector's longevity and endorse how social enterprises were delivering positive impact within Scottish communities.

## 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has charted the evolution of the public sector and its partnerships, policies, and programs as they related to social enterprise policy from turn of the century in Scotland up to 2013. I have explained that the Scottish National Party (SNP) gets a lot of credit for their work promoting social enterprise across their time leading the Scottish Government, especially because it was under their leadership that one of the first critical social enterprise policy documents, the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011* was published. Yet, much like the way in which the current Scottish Government has followed the ten-year social enterprise strategy from 2016 with subsequent action plans, the 2008 action plan was preceded by Scotland's first strategy for social enterprise (Scottish Executive, 2007). This first 'Better business' strategy and action plan should be an achievement attributed to the many who were working often behind the scenes to advance an agenda around social enterprise when the Liberal-Democrats and Labour Party were running their coalition government.

The newly rebranded Scottish Government under the SNP was trying to create a new flavor of government in Scotland by reorganizing departments and services. This shift in government created a newer philosophy around governance (i.e., relationships between the public and thirds sectors became more collaborative with social enterprises being viewed as

key policy and service delivery partners). Yet, when it came to Scottish Government policy related to social enterprise, much of the content of these policies was more of a continuation of what existed before under the previous government rather than something completely new. This included, for example, a focus on tendering as it related to public service reform, which was part of the previous Scottish Executive initiatives. In this respect, all policy from the Scottish Parliament related to the broad voluntary and third sector, the social enterprise sector specifically, and public service reform more generally, were important antecedents on which Scotland's 2016 social enterprise strategy could be built.

The original research question for this chapter sought to uncover not only the important policies, but also the political conditions and public programs that preceded the 2016 strategy. Programmatically, the EQUAL Programme played an outsized role in the early days of the Scottish Executive, whereas the political context of an independence-focused majority government in 2011 contributed heavily to an environment ripe for facilitating dynamic collaboration around ambitious, long-term social enterprise policy. Importantly, this chapter has predominantly explored evolution within the social enterprise sector within the context of its relationship with the public sector. The next chapter therefore is far more inward looking, focusing specifically on the lead-up to and development of *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026* from the perspective of the social enterprise sector. It elaborates on some of the tensions within the third sector alluded to throughout this chapter and critically analyzes the evolving discourse around Scotland's social economy. In doing so, it offers and in-depth exploration of the process by which these competing discourses were negotiated in the lead up to the development of the social enterprise strategy.

# Chapter 5: Moving from model to ecosystem: Building a case for Scotland's social enterprise strategy

## 5.1 Introduction

As shown in the previous chapter, the history of social enterprise policies in Scotland can be traced back to the founding of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 when the then Scottish Executive was established. The Scottish Executive began working to address complex community challenges facing Scotland and involve communities in the response to those challenges, thus paving the way for a unique public sector relationship with civil society. On the other hand, the history of 'social enterprise' as a concept has much deeper historical roots. Going back to Scottish cooperatives in the 1780s and more recently the Community Business Movement of the 1980s, there are clear linkages to how social enterprise is positioned today. It is evident that the community, entrepreneurship, and self-help / resilience discourses currently associated with the social enterprise movement were equally pervasive in the Scottish context historically, albeit linked to different terminology (e.g., community business, cooperatives). This continuity of discourse that has been attached to different terms / concepts has similar parallels to the repackaging of Scottish Executive policies related to social enterprise by the newly elected SNP administration in 2007 and beyond.

While the content of Scottish policy related to social enterprise has remained relatively stable over time, political conditions have changed. This has provided social enterprise coalitions with the necessary socio-political context to develop new cross-sector programs to support the social enterprise sector and re-envision a cooperative role for social enterprise sector organizations within the context of public sector initiatives. Now that I have explored the political conditions, public programs, and policies that preceded the 2016

social enterprise strategy and contributed to an environment facilitating its collaborative development, in this chapter I present findings related to the second research question guiding this thesis. That is: How did actors within what was once a broad third sector with different historical roots come together and coalesce around a set of shared principles and aims that ostensibly emerged through the 2016 social enterprise strategy?

Throughout the chapter I explain how advocates for social enterprise in Scotland were able to elevate the social enterprise *business model* to a status as a *sector* deserving of a supportive 'ecosystem' contributing to its flourishing. Aligned with the period from the previous chapter, I begin by outlining the evolution of the Scottish third sector roughly from 1999–2012. I include a discussion of this evolution within the context of parallel social enterprise building work in England and then discuss how discourse associated with the social economy in Scotland evolved, diverging from conversations occurring in parallel in England. I then explain the three key factors / events / stages I have identified in this case as important antecedents to the publication of a national strategy for social enterprise. In this part of the chapter, the focus is on 2005 with the founding of the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition to 2016 when *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026* was published.

## 5.2 The evolution of the Scottish third sector

At the end of the 20th Century the Scottish third sector was broad but recognizable. Organizations and individuals within this sector had different histories and different priorities. For example, community co-operatives often operating in rural areas of the Highlands and Islands were focused on solving community problems and providing services in remote and isolated areas. Community businesses more commonly emerged within deprived urban communities as a response to rising unemployment (Community Business

Scotland, 1984). Both models were taking a community approach to solve social and economic needs locally, but priorities and key purposes differed. Other terms like social enterprise, social business, and community enterprise also emerged in Scotland in the 1990s as community-based approaches reacted to external pressures encouraging them to become more commercially viable (Hayton, 1997, 2000). As organizations were navigating these transitions and determining the most prudent ways to deal with shifts in dominant political discourse around community, there was more to be gained in working together to advance their collective cause. They may have used different terminology, but they still needed to gain base-level recognition for their income-generating, community-focused initiatives (e.g., by demonstrating their legitimacy as something viable and distinct from more traditional charities). Until this happened, there was arguably little point for actors within this broad Scottish third sector to shift their attention to which model or movement internally was more deserving of government policy or resources. From an advocacy coalition framework perspective, the values underpinning these various business models were coherent enough to keep a broad coalition together.

Gradually, external political shifts in Scotland, led 'social enterprise' to become a more favorable term for socially-focused, income-generating businesses, as concepts like 'community business' lost political support (Hayton, 2000). As the 'social enterprise' concept began to gain more traction within the Scottish third sector, gathering support from those who had once been key champions of community enterprises and the Community Business Movement, they also gained more traction with successive sympathetic governments. By the time the SNP was elected, what was once just a "social enterprise business model," began to be branded and recognized as a "social enterprise movement" (TSI 4) that was gaining momentum on Scottish policy agendas (Pia, 2022). Achieving status as a 'movement' or

sector within its own right against the backdrop of the broader third sector, key social enterprise supporters and advocates were able to begin engaging with the Scottish Government slightly differently than they had previously. There was no longer the pragmatic motivation to collaborate across groups whose discourse around these community-based, income generating business models and movements was rooted in different motivations for and assumptions about the practices. Instead, their advocacy became more about making a specific case for social enterprise's added value in society in a way that just a few years prior would have been unthinkable.

In 2005, leaders from within the sector came together to develop a coalition for social enterprise, known at the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition (SSEC) recognizing that "one of the key factors to getting government engaged is for the sector to make it easy to talk to it" (TSDP 1). Through the SSEC, they started to lobby for social enterprise in a collective and concerted manner. As John Oates, Manager of BRAG Enterprises Ltd when the SNP came into power and some of the relationships between government and the third sector began to shift, was quoted in an SSEC report saying: 'The Coalition has been particularly effective at campaigning at a national level to raise awareness of the "added" value of Social Enterprise, this macro approach will hopefully pay dividends to the sector for years to come' (SSEC, 2008: 3). To better understand how this shift in relationships between the public sector and third sector occurred in Scotland, I outline tangible organizational development and lobbying activity of Scottish organizations and connect it to dominant discourse around social enterprise. It could be argued, as some of my interview participants acknowledged, that the development of social enterprise in Scotland cannot be understood in isolation from the development of the social enterprise movement in England. Therefore, the next two subsections of this chapter (i.e., 5.2.1 and 5.2.2) focus on the practical and

discursive evolution of social enterprise in Scotland, but within the context of parallel developments in the English context.

### 5.2.1 Changing relationships between the public and third sectors: England and Scotland

***The Scottish movement***

At the turn of the century, the UK started to experience an accelerated shift in public policy in relation to the design, commissioning, and delivery of many public services. 'Social economy' organizations thus became important policy players who were often looked to as ideal nonstate actors who could help with the delivery of public services and other welfare provisions (Scottish Executive, 2003a). In particular, *A review of the Scottish Executive's Policies to promote the Social Economy* published in 2002 concluded 'that the social economy had the potential to make a major contribution to the Executive's objective of improving public services, and a significant contribution to make to improving Scotland's economic performance' but that in order 'to add value to public expenditure' and realize that 'potential the sector [needed] improved access to public service markets, the removal of discriminatory practice in public procurement and funding, a strengthening of the sector's asset base, and reform of the regulatory framework within which the sector operates' (Scottish Executive, 2002: 2).

This was an early indication that the public sector in Scotland would look to partner with and strengthen the third sector. Further, it also indicated that there was an intention to ensure the partnerships were strategic, perhaps shifting from "the old Scottish Model" of public service delivery (TSDP 1; PSA 3 and 6). This shift would see social economy organizations move from grant-dependent organizations who simply 'tested' the delivery of programs not yet within the purview of governmental initiatives to active public service delivery agents. As an example of this shift, Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS) used to

be a local authority dependent body that did some consultancy work within the social economy, but often for grant dependent organizations, helping them with funding applications and related activities (TSDP 1). Now CEIS is better recognized as an agency that specializes in social enterprise policy and delivery, that for many years held annual social enterprise policy conferences, and since 2012 has led the consortium for one of the Scottish Government's hallmark social enterprise ecosystem support programs, Just Enterprise.

This transition for CEIS began under new leadership in 2006. During 2006, new discourse around the potential contribution of social enterprise in terms of economic transformation was becoming more dominant as those with different perspectives on the movement rose to prominence. These leadership changes arguably accelerated the sector on a trajectory where it might have appeared to diverge from its rooting in 'community' discourse. Throughout this thesis, I will argue that this divergence was not predetermined but that contestation was inevitable. Senscot's founding story helps highlight the negotiated tensions which have been part of Scottish social enterprise now for a couple of decades.

Senscot, one of Scotland's leading social enterprise membership organizations up until its eventual closure in 2022,[29] was established in the early 2000s. During the early days of their organization's operations, the organization was focused on setting up local social enterprise hubs to expand social enterprise in Scotland. They were not necessarily concerned with situating social enterprise within the broader third sector. Senscot's leaders

[29] In 2020, Senscot and Social Firms Scotland merged after the two organizations and Social Enterprise Scotland (SES) were unable to reach an agreement surrounding the prospect of merging into a single intermediary organization for social enterprise in Scotland (i.e., membership body). This 'impasse' in negotiations (Pia, 2022: 18) arose from ostensibly incommensurable arguments inherent in social enterprise discourse that has rooting in community and economic / business orientations. The merger of Senscot and Social Firms Scotland resulted in the incorporation of Social Enterprise Network Scotland (SENScot). Then later in 2022, when SENScot and SES both submitted proposals to become the single intermediary for social enterprise, the SES bid was chosen by Scottish Government leading to the then named SENScot's closure.

understood that within the voluntary sector, and importantly public sector perceptions of certain voluntary sector organizations, discourse around community business and community enterprise with unfavorable connotations (Hayton, 2000) was still pervasive. Leading the organization and what they hoped would grow into a broader and thriving social enterprise movement would therefore require a carefully devised advocacy strategy to distinguish the discourse of social enterprise enough to gain legitimacy within the public sector (Pia, 2022) while still 'protecting' its community orientation and history. Over time there have been internal and external system fluctuations allowing social enterprise—regardless of dominant discourse surrounding it at any given moment—to remain on policy agendas. Sabatier and Weible's (2019) operationalization of this kind of policy process and impact explains how this can be attributed to the strategy of both community-oriented and business-oriented advocacy coalitions and the policy brokers working within the social enterprise policy subsystem in Scotland.

Ultimately, the social enterprise sector in Scotland attempted to negotiate these often-polarized orientations toward social enterprise through the SSEC. It was important to have a degree of consensus within the SSEC about the direction of social enterprise in order to spur major policy change around social enterprise in the Scottish context (see Sabatier and Weible, 2019). This was especially relevant against the backdrop of political obstacles the sector and the SSEC encountered throughout 2005 and 2006 (e.g., the dominant Lib-Lab philosophy against differentiating social enterprise from the broader voluntary sector). Nevertheless, after the SSEC's founding in 2005, but not necessarily due to it, the movement for a differentiated strategy for social enterprise within the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland gained enough traction to result in its publication in early 2007. This demonstrates how the social enterprise movement was becoming more organized internally

as the Scottish Executive was growing more supportive of social enterprise, and both of those forces were propelling the other (PSA 6, TSI 3 and 6, TSDP 1 and 2).

***Social enterprise in England***

In many ways, what was happening in Scotland at this time was seen in these early days to be running parallel to, or perhaps even following, some of the work being undertaken in England. Post 1997, under New Labour, 'voluntary action enjoyed a higher profile in political debate and policy planning than at almost any point in its long history' with commitments from the government to promote and support partnership with the voluntary sector (Alcock, 2010: 14). Responding to this elevated status on the national agenda, the voluntary sector embraced a climate of unity, contributing to a new 'third sector' discourse (Alcock, 2010). The sector itself expanded to embrace organizations like cooperatives and social enterprises who previously would not have been associated with the voluntary, now collective third sector. For example, In January 2001 a group of 20 different organizations across the UK including cooperatives, social firms, employee ownership businesses, new mutuals, credit unions, development trusts, community businesses, and social businesses came together and decided that they would explore the potential of establishing a national coalition for social enterprise (Thornton, 2001a, 2001b).

Within this new and emerging 'Third Way' discourse in England, 'social enterprise' gained prominence for its potential contribution to public service delivery and broader government agendas. At least in England, the cooperative movement lending its support to what was now being rebranded as the social enterprise movement was significant:[30]

[30] There were divergences between the Scottish social enterprise and cooperative movements as the third sector evolved over time, but in those early days in Scotland, "the cooperative sector, just as in the UK, were really, really important allies" (TSDP 1).

> The biggest grouping of social enterprise organisations in the country, the co-operative movement decided that for too long they had been conservative and inward looking. They had a Commission of Enquiry that recommended (amongst other things) that the co-operative movement must be part of an lend support to all forms of social enterprise (Thornton, 2001b).

Building on support from the cooperative movement, this nascent group devised a UK Social Enterprise Charter. This was an early attempt at getting the social enterprise sector 'to have a more coherent voice on the national stage' because back then there was a perception 'social enterprises [in England lost] out in terms of resources and influence in many areas where Government would naturally be sympathetic to social enterprise based solutions' (Thornton, 2001a).

In May 2001, Baroness Glenys Thornton, in her role as a Member of the House of Lords, sent out a form to people within the sector requesting comments on the proposal and for them to sign onto the UK Social Enterprise Charter (Thornton, 2001a). Later in September 2001, Baroness Thornton announced the official establishment of the Coalition for Social Enterprise. Eventually becoming known as the Social Enterprise Coalition, it had the following objectives: 'to raise the understanding and awareness of Social Enterprise, to provide a voice for social enterprise at a national level, and to work for change to legislation and funding regimes' (Thornton, 2001b). Baroness Thornton chaired the Social Enterprise Coalition until 2008, three years before it was rebranded as Social Enterprise UK, which is now the world's largest social enterprise membership organization (SEUK, 2022).

In its first year of existence, the coalition became a key partner of the new Social Enterprise Unit in England that was also established that year on 9 October 2001 within what was then known as the UK's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) (Alcock, 2009: 7; DTI, 2002a). A year later, DTI released a report titled *Social Enterprise: a strategy for success* highlighting the ways the UK Government would work through the Social Enterprise Unit to

support social enterprises and provide them with policies that recognized their potential to help achieve social change through a new 'third way' of doing business (DTI, 2002a). Local strategies also started to be drafted on the back of DTI's Strategy; the one in London had the aim 'To support the growth of a dynamic and sustainable social enterprise sector in London by creating a leading edge social enterprise support network' (Social Enterprise Network London, 2002: 15).

***Scotland and England: Diverging development***

While all this activity was occurring in England in the early 2000s, the 'social enterprise' terminology had barely begun to creep into political discourse up in Scotland. According to someone who eventually became involved with a social enterprise delivery organization and was involved with the process of working with the Social Economy Unit within Communities Scotland to develop the first Scottish social enterprise strategy, "there was an acknowledgement, maybe a bit of challenge, and evidence from down south that this stuff can work" (TDSP 1). So, when the movement in Scotland started to get more traction with the Scottish Executive about three years after England was overtly supporting the movement:

> there's a political dimension there that while the UK strategy was first, it probably set a discrete challenge to the Scottish sector. So, UK established its coalition first, and developed a strategy first, so maybe it was inevitable … Scotland would form a coalition of some type, and develop a strategy. There wasn't really a look to England and see if we can adapt that model; the discussion was really about what's right for Scotland. But there were some parallels I guess in, for me and for many others, the development of [2007] strategy was the first time there was an attempt at co-production (TSDP 1).

Using slightly different words, other Scottish actors I interviewed argued that this "attempt at co-production" was part of what was "right for Scotland" (PSA 1, TSI 3): it was through close partnership working with the Scottish social enterprise sector that Scotland could

ensure its social enterprise ecosystem was distinct from England's and reflective of the strength of Scotland's community roots.

Although in England as well, the 'shared discourse of policy and practice thus created a new third sector and placed it at the centre of a new third way for policy development' guided by partnership between policymakers and sector practitioners (Alcock, 2010: 14). Nevertheless, Alcock (2010) also cautioned that in England the strategic unity within the third sector leveraged to engage government, and the degree to which government would continue supporting a coordinated effort of engagement, could fracture. He wrote:

> that unity of discourse in policy and practice was at most only a strategic unity, based in large part on the mutual benefits which both government and the third sector could gain from the practice (and in some cases the appearance) of partnership working (15).

Perhaps in this respect, Scottish actors I interviewed were latching onto a distinctly 'Scottish approach' (Cairney et al., 2016) to developing their social enterprise ecosystem. Their policies may have taken longer to solidify, but at least they arguably held the promise of having more longevity.

When the Scottish Executive's differentiated strategy for social enterprise did get published in 2007, it was within the context of a very dynamic third sector in Scotland. Negotiating a place for 'social enterprise' explicitly and at the center of policy would continue to be a struggle marked by an evolving relationship between the public and third sector, that was simultaneously being influenced by developments elsewhere in the UK and through international collaboration on projects related to advancing Scotland's social economy. The role the SSEC played in negotiating a place for social enterprise was crucial while the first 'Better business' strategy for social enterprise was being developed in Scotland. The SSEC was working to raise the profile of social enterprise as a dynamic

business model, represent the needs and views of social enterprise in Scotland to policy and decision makers, and build the Coalition as a well-managed, membership-led organization (SSEC, 2008b). As has already been discussed in the previous chapter, this process of engaging the social enterprise sector in Scotland around the development of that first strategy was limited. It did not involve quite as many voices or as many collaborative discussions as those that occurred during the development of the second 2016 strategy, and, "In the end it was clear that the civil servants wrote the [2007] strategy … but there was an attempt to get the sector in the room, or sector agencies individually in rooms, because that was less threatening" (TSDP 1). Nevertheless, it started a process of social enterprise policy engagement in Scotland which, though trailing England temporally, could become innovative in not necessarily its content, but indeed its process.

Ultimately, during the early to mid-2000s, Scotland had similar organizations and policy vehicles for third sector policy intervention as what existed in England; however, they sat alongside a distinct and separate history of third sector engagement in Scotland (McMullin et al., 2021), and a greater governmental 'focus on local support and community activity' (Alcock, 2009: 10). Thus, despite meso-level organization and policy development that seemed to follow similar parallel trajectories between the two nations, the macro-level institutional arrangements and micro-level grassroots engagement and individual approaches to relationship building resulted in the discourse around the social economy in Scotland evolving in a manner that was distinct from England.[31]

[31] Despite this, at least up until 2010, there was not hugely significant divergence in third sector policy between the two nations (Alcock, 2012). Once the SNP had a majority government, this began to change. This change accelerated post 2013 when conversations about a new social enterprise strategy for Scotland began. This acceleration around distinct (at least between Scotland and England) social enterprise policy content and policymaking processes is the focus of the second half of this chapter.

### 5.2.2 An evolving discourse around the social economy

Many people interviewed for this research commented on how the early 2000s in Scotland was a time rife with tension as language around different organizational structures and philosophies for the third sector started to shift. Of course, social enterprise was not a new concept per se, but the terminology was still new. In interviews participants often referenced places like New Lanark as home to Scotland's earliest cooperatives, or sector leaders like John Pearce and Alan Kay who were champions of community enterprise in the eighties and nineties and then worked to help preserve Community Business Movement ideals within the rebranded social enterprise discourse. Definitionally, social enterprise was a woolly concept, and some might argue this persists despite strong attempts to provide some clarity and structure around the term. For one person working within a third sector intermediary, a lot of the early days focus on social enterprise in Scotland was connected to its independence from the state:

> … social enterprise goes back, you know, as far back as you want go really, but the term was being used in the 80s and 90s, but it did become, it was popularised by the Charles Leadbeater book … *The Rise of the Social Entrepreneur*.[32] So that was around the late 90s, 97… in those early days, it was very much about independence from local government or national government, and the trading notion was a means of giving you that independence (TSI 3).

Early documents from the Scottish Executive (2003) outlining social enterprise focus on a shift away from organizations that are driven to maximize owner and shareholder

[32] Sometimes referred to as a pamphlet rather than a 'book,' *The Rise of the Social Entrepreneur* was authored by Charles Leadbeater and published by Demos, 'an independent think tank committed to radical thinking on the long-term problems facing the UK and other advanced industrial societies' (Leadbeater, 1997: ii). This publication emphasized the role of the social entrepreneur as an individual, rather than social entrepreneurship as a collective practice with community orientations. This narrative aligns with the notion of a 'heroic entrepreneur' (see, for example, Boutillier and Uzunidis, 2014; Johnsen and Sørensen, 2017; Williams and Nadin, 2013). It also alludes to some of the early signs that discourse around social enterprise and entrepreneurship is the UK and Scotland might diverge as the focus, at least England, centered around the economic impact of social entrepreneurship as a practice, whereas Scotland's community orientation and history of community enterprise meant there was more alignment with the potential of social enterprise as a business model and tool of community rather than individual empowerment.

profits, placing the emphasis on both trading and reinvestment of surplus with little commentary on independence. It is possible that this value of independence from government that underscored the community enterprise/ Community Business Movement did not translate well as the sector worked to establish its relationship with the Scottish Executive.[33] Later, the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition also characterized social enterprise within the context of business, identifying the work of social enterprises as using business solutions to achieve public good (SSEC, 2007). The varied emphasis on social enterprise's underlying features and characteristics had some utility for building momentum around social enterprise in Scotland. It meant many people could support social enterprise, or at least a particular positioning of social enterprise, without having to necessarily deliberate over differences. Individuals in the sector had different underlying assumptions about and motivations for various positionings of social enterprise within civil society. Yet, they could get on board with a broader vision for a thriving environment for social enterprise, using that as a 'north star,' without necessarily negotiating the tensions around predetermined definitional paths that would lead there. Ultimately, discourse around inclusiveness, openness, and social enterprise as an essential component of a broader system worked to hold those tensions together. Participants wove the discourse of 'social enterprise as a broad church' and 'social enterprise as one leg of the three-legged third sector stool' into their narratives of social enterprise sector building in Scotland.

Not long after the SSEC was formed and published its report *Bigger, Better, Bolder: Social Enterprise Solutions for Scotland* (SSEC, 2007) where business rhetoric was used to

[33] Under the Lib-Lab Coalition, the Scottish Executive was still heavily influenced by Labour ideals around strong public sector service provision, which was viewed by many in opposition to a contracting model whereby social enterprise could help government deliver services. For a more in-depth discussion of this, revisit the previous chapter, Section 4.3.

position the potential value of social enterprise, research examining the role social enterprise could play, particularly in the Scottish rural economy also highlighted lots of hesitancy around social enterprise. It focused on the potential adverse impacts social enterprises could have on the voluntary sector (Farmer et al., 2008). This hesitancy was also elaborated upon in interviews with participants who recalled the period where social enterprise began to assert its legitimacy within the third sector as a rocky one. They noted that this was perhaps predominantly because of objections from SCVO and the organization's leadership. One person remembered that in the context of the EQUAL project, there was a lot of exchange between colleagues in Europe who were using terms like 'social enterprise' and the social economy. Scottish partners who were working on the EQUAL project started using the term social economy in Scotland without major objections, but SCVO told them not to use the term social enterprise and to instead "talk about the economic dimension of the voluntary sector" (TSI 2). Others noted how SCVO almost seemed intent on shutting down the idea of social enterprise at all costs because of how threatened they seemed to be by it. SCVO developed a "semantic argument against social enterprise, which was that it couldn't exist because it was either social or it was enterprise and you couldn't" have both (PSA 6).

Previous work tracing the development of Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem noted this ideological objection to business models like social enterprises: 'in the Marxist/Socialist doctrine, the only (conceivable) alternative to public provision [is] privatisation' and therefore 'third sector structures which eschew neat classification are thus looked upon with suspicion as somehow 'paving the way' to privatisation' (Roy et al., 2015: 783). While multiple people interviewed mentioned this rhetoric against social enterprise, one noted that from their perspective it was "a great argument if you want to shout

somebody down, [but] not a very good political argument because there were lots and lots of great examples of social enterprises that MSPs absolutely loved," (PSA 6) and it ultimately meant that SCVO lost political favor as the social enterprise discourse became more pervasive.[34]

In what can be characterized as an effort to keep peace within a Scottish third sector that might have otherwise splintered off into different factions, two different people who were interviewed mentioned a three-legged stool analogy as one that ended up helping settle the dust for the sector in the mid- to late-2000s (TSI 2, TSI 3). They said that once people started talking about the wider third sector as really comprising of three distinct legs (i.e., social enterprise, voluntary, and community), people were better able to get on board with the concept of social enterprise. Under this discursive positioning, each leg of the stool was necessary to support the overall sector and those more embedded in the voluntary or community 'legs' perhaps no longer saw social enterprise as a model or sector that could replace or threaten their own work, but something that would only help further support it.

The next discursive tool that emerged around the social enterprise sector (although certain people interviewed attributed its origins to those working within the public sector) was used to emphasize this common ground. It was also positioned as a 'peacekeeping' device, much like the earlier 'three-legged stool' analogy. Actors used the argument of the 'broad church' of the social economy or the third sector and specifically "close cousins" of social enterprises (PSA 1, TSDP 2) that were 'code compliant' (i.e., social enterprises that fulfilled the criteria for the SE Code in Scotland). The 'broad church' discourse, like the three-

[34] In Scotland, the voluntary sector recognizing that they would have to 'get on board with' social enterprise to maintain their engagement with the public sector has parallels to what happened in England with the cooperative movement eventually coming around to 'social enterprise' so that they wouldn't be excluded from policy discussions and resources designed to support these types of organizations.

legged stool' positioned social enterprise in a wider civil society context but was more useful for negotiating tensions internal to the social enterprise movement. It was described by someone working in a third sector delivery organization as a useful way of conceptualizing the social enterprise sector, especially as it evolved. As they said, getting to a place of common understanding and defining social enterprise was hard work because:

> You get a lot of people gravitating towards the sector and they have their own ideas about it. And thankfully there's not so much of this now as there was, but it's interesting that as people come in, they want to know what it is. And as things evolve, it doesn't exist in a vacuum so, B Corps and mission-led businesses and that sort of whole 'broad church' conversation happens. But at the time, the hard work that I was referring to was a) that, that definitional context and b) the hard work of acknowledging that actually developing, supporting learning and development for people involved in this agenda is part of the equation (TSDP 2).

Some intermediary leaders have argued that in attempting to support and educate those with desires to enter the 'social enterprise' sector, even if they may not have had the same values or beliefs as those originally championing the movement is where the sector started to split and perhaps even lose its way a little bit (TSI 3, TSI 5). At the same time, it is within the context of positioning the sector as a broad church, that conversations about a future vision for Scotland's social enterprise sector[35] and a longer-term strategy for the sector that really had a transformational capacity (i.e., going further than the first attempt in 2007) began to emerge.

When it eventually came time to develop the 2016 social enterprise strategy, this discourse was still working as a tool to promote cohesion. The 'broad church' discourse was more dominant than that of the 'three-legged stool' since by this stage social enterprise had

[35] Over time, discussion around social enterprise in Scotland gradually shifted from social enterprise as a business model or a concept, to social enterprise as a movement vying for attention and positioning within the third sector and then to mentions of social enterprise as its own unique sector (TSI 4). Mentions of the social enterprise sector, movement, and business model overlap making it hard to pin down exactly when these shifts were occurring and suggesting that it was not a sudden change.

been able to assert its position within the broader third sector and garner policy interest. The 'broad church' discourse therefore became necessary to address underlying internal (rather than external third sector) tensions within the unofficial 'advocacy coalition' lobbying for social enterprise support from the Scottish Government. One delivery partner spoke about meetings convened by a key Scottish Government leader with many of the leaders from the coalition group who had been responsible for drafting the sector's vision document in 2015 where "five or six [people] would get in the room and just talk about why [the strategy] needed to be broad brush and the language" (TSDP 2). A civil servant also reflected on some of this negotiation around the language specifically recalling that there were "things that … took some very … careful working to make sure everybody was able to be on board with it" (PSA 2). The next section explores that process of getting people on board and bringing together a seemingly fragmented third sector who spoke about the sector's priorities by placing emphasis on different, often competing, elements characterizing it.

## 5.3 Collaborative social enterprise policy development and advocacy: Three key stages

The socio-political context outlined thus far throughout this chapter and in Chapter 4, heavily influenced the ecosystem context driving the social enterprise sector's ability to come together to coalesce around a vision and strategy for social enterprise in Scotland. This context is important because it is what ultimately facilitated the 'right' environmental conditions to work toward developing a social enterprise strategy in Scotland. Now in this section, I turn my attention to the work of developing policy and strategy. I focus on how the Scottish sector capitalized on this context and positioned themselves as key partners to help the Scottish Government realize their political and policy ambitions. In charting the

development of a national social enterprise strategy for Scotland, the sector appeared to move through three key stages before they started to see tangible success in the form of a national strategy document. First, the sector focused on building national awareness for social enterprise in the form of broad advocacy. Second, they shifted their focus internally to develop a vision for the sector that would ensure their national voice was coherent. Third and finally, they began to transition into specific and targeted advocacy, lobbying explicitly for a national strategy based on their internal vision. Key events and developments within these stages, and particularly the discourses of different actors with respect to each, are presented in turn.

### 5.3.1 Building a national voice for social enterprise

In the early days of social enterprise policy engagement in Scotland, much of the action around ensuring social enterprise would feature on policy agendas came from lobbying by key leaders within the social enterprise movement. The SSEC was successful in the campaigns to elevate social enterprise as a business model with the potential to transform the Scottish economy (SSEC, 2007) and as part of that work developed many policy briefings toward the end of the EQUAL project.[36] These briefings were designed to influence the development of policies that would support the social economy in Scotland (SSEC, 2008a). With the SSEC taking the lead, social enterprise surfaced as the central element within social

[36] In total, the SSEC authored 5 briefings. The titles are as follows: (1) "Improving the range, accessibility and quality of business support to social enterprise in Scotland" (2) "Making measurement meaningful: embedding quality and impact tools in the social economy" (3) "Risks worth taking – Public investment and patient capital for the social economy" (4) "Partners in design and delivery: transforming the relationship between the public sector and the social economy" (5) "Shifting perceptions: towards a marketing strategy for the social economy" (SSEC, 2008a).

economy development and the SSEC gained recognition as a key policy development partner for Scottish Government (SSEC, 2008b).

Right before they were officially invited to be a Scottish Government Strategic Partner, SSEC published a manifesto to outlining their vision for social enterprise in Scotland (SSEC, 2007). While this vision contributed to the development of the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011* (Scottish Government, 2008b), which was often referenced by participants as one of the first policy documents to influence the 2016 strategy, it was mostly informed by the organizational interests of the intermediary and delivery bodies who were the SSEC members. It also was not a document that anyone interviewed for this research referenced. This could indicate that while it was useful at the time and helped develop a coherent voice for and objectives of the social enterprise sector, it started to lose its relevance in the new decade when a new political context emerged with the SNP's election into a majority government in 2011. The social enterprise sector itself was also evolving and attempting to respond to not only changing external context, but also dynamic internal evolution that characterizes a growing sector. For example, the SSEC decided to rebrand itself as Social Enterprise Scotland (SES) in 2011.[37] This rebrand started the process for the organization to become a broader membership body for social enterprise rather than an umbrella organization representing a few intermediary and delivery partners. It also represented the sector's ambition to become nationally recognized and engage more social enterprises as well as other partners across sectors.

[37] As already mentioned in Section 5.2.1 (see page 139), the Social Enterprise Coalition in England also rebranded in 2011 to become known as Social Enterprise UK. In this sense, both coalitions were trying to resituate themselves in their respective sectors and not just serve as big umbrella organizations or 'intermediaries of intermediaries' but also have members who were individual social enterprises so that they could, or at least argue they would, be better positioned to advocate on behalf of the entire sector and not just those delivering services and support for the sector.

Over the next four years, from 2011–2015, Scotland's intermediary and support infrastructure continued to grow and garner more support from within Scottish Government. In many ways the social enterprise sector had moved past a point of needing to prove its legitimacy and gain traction around its work, to one where they were building on significant momentum as a sector (Pia, 2022). That did not mean the rapidly growing intermediary and support infrastructure developed without conflict; in particular Senscot and SES, two of the leading membership bodies at the time, engaged in discussions on two occasions 'with a view to creating a single intermediary voice for the social enterprise community in Scotland' but failed to reach agreement around any form of a merger (Pia, 2022; 10). Both groups determined that the underlying philosophies governing their membership (i.e., who got to 'count' as a full social enterprise member) were not sufficiently compatible to merge, yet they continued to engage at various points, returning to the question of a merger. In essence, as the sector started to build momentum and more individuals and organizations were drawn to it, contestation around the boundaries of the sector began to emerge. This naturally raised questions around which membership organizations were best suited to provide membership services to the social enterprise sector in Scotland. These questions were based on the 'broad church' discourse and what it would mean for the social enterprise movement to be more inclusive of other hybrid social and economic business models at the expense of the sector's community roots.

Other organizations within the sector, particularly those more focused on service delivery to support social enterprise (e.g., Social Enterprise Academy delivering education programs and Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS) providing business support and consultancy) were positioned as distinct from the membership organizations. While all these organizations were often referred to as intermediaries in Scotland, the delivery organizations

garnered a different reputation from that of the membership bodies. In doing so, they arguably escaped the same level of scrutiny around the redundancy of their services that has subsequently been applied to the membership organizations.[38] The delivery organizations were nevertheless able to position themselves as also occupying key positions within the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem which helped them contribute to the national voice for the social enterprise sector. Unlike the membership organizations[39] whose direct remit was to support and advocate on behalf of their members, the delivery organizations also claimed to have unique insights into the needs of the sector through their daily work with social enterprises as well (i.e., by getting to know the needs of social enterprises through, for example, the financial support or business advice services they were providing).

CEIS was one such organization who was particularly successful in positioning themselves at the forefront of ecosystem building initiatives in Scotland. At the CEIS Policy Conference in 2014, one of the sessions had a representative from government and one from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).[40] It was moderated by the CEO of CEIS at the time, who began the session by asking the two participants to consider how the session could be designed to collectively surface the ambitions around where the sector wanted to be in ten years. This very public session happened on the back of discussions the Scottish

[38] In March 2021 in Scotland's *Social Enterprise Action Plan 2021-24*, the Scottish Government's commitment to funding a single strengthened intermediary (i.e., membership body) was outlined, as part of the Scottish Government's ongoing efforts to deliver the ten-year social enterprise strategy. The Scottish Government went through the process of collecting lots of views on this stated direction of travel (Scottish Government, 2021b). The entire process was met with significant contestation within the sector with some ultimately advocating for a reversal of Scottish Government's final decision (SCA, 2022). This change in relationship between the social enterprise sector and the Scottish Government over time as the ten-year strategy continues to be delivered is discussed further in the next two chapters (i.e., Chapter 6 and Chapter 7).

[39] In the period leading up to the development of the strategy—loosely beginning in 2011 with the rebrand of Social Enterprise Scotland, but more concretely in 2013 with the Scottish delegation's attendance at SEWF in Calgary—there were three prominent membership organizations: Social Enterprise Scotland, Social Firms Scotland, and Senscot.

[40] HIE is an executive non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government focused on development in the Scottish Highlands and Islands.

Government had been having with the broader third sector about the future they wanted for Scotland and the role they could play in shaping that. Yet, at this conference, the focus was more narrowly on the role social enterprises would play as a specific segment of the third sector. Someone working in the public sector at the time remembered that CEIS Policy Conference as a pivotal moment for the development of the scope for the strategy. They recounted that session saying:

> it had been based on this idea that we had to think long term and so we had this open discussion at the conference about where are we going, of interaction about what do [the conference attendees] think and what kind of ideas, and that was all captured. And so that almost was the genesis of, "We're going to do something very specific on social enterprise." In fact, we ended up doing a strategy on social enterprise and not necessarily on the third sector more broadly (PSA 1).

As this remit for a ten-year strategy emerged, some of the leading intermediaries in the sector decided it would be prudent to come together and build on the national voice and recognition they had created for the sector to develop a collective vision for its future.

### 5.3.2 Developing a vision for the sector

When the sector started coming together again to position itself and present a more unified national voice for social enterprise, the main output of these discussions was a document released in 2015: *Scotland's Vision for Social Enterprise 2025: Moving Social Enterprise in from the Margins to the Mainstream*. The vision was the product of collaboration between nine intermediaries and social enterprise delivery organizations (Coburn, 2015). The narrative around social enterprise policy engagement in 2015 was one of inclusion. In interviews participants reflected that conversations between social enterprise and government, as well as engagement opportunities between intermediaries and social enterprises, appeared to be opening up and increasing in frequency. Drawing on archival material revealed something that these narratives of inclusion would have obscured: fewer

organizations were involved in the 2015 vision development. The initial social enterprise vision document produced by the SSEC in 2007 reflected the views and ambitions of four more organizational contributors (SSEC, 2007) than the 2015 vision. In 2015, nine organizations each contributed £1,000 that was used to commission Social Value Lab (SVL), an organization that was respected and viewed mostly as an independent and unbiased stakeholder in the process. The money paid for SVL's time to synthesize organizational perspectives communicated through their representatives and then draft the vision for publication.

According to one social enterprise intermediary representative, the 2015 vision document was born out of these key organizations' desire to be included in dialogue around social enterprise policy development. They recognized that social enterprise was firmly on the Scottish Government's agenda, aligned with government policy priorities, and they did not want to miss the window of opportunity to strategically influence policy. They said:

> So that [vision] was very much I think us as a sector starting to think, "Right we don't have a, a live strategy anymore, things have moved on a wee bit from the 2008 strategy, let's start speaking to each other" because I think what we didn't want to happen was for Government to do a strategy on its own. So we wanted to inform (TSI 2).

This individual also emphasized that while this process of developing a vision for the sector was supported by nine organizations, there was still significant frontline engagement and input from social enterprises. The social enterprises were part of the conversation via the contributing intermediaries who worked to engage and involve social enterprises at every stage. From the perspective of those really focused on including the perspectives of grassroots social enterprises, the vision development process was "a really useful exercise because all of that information and intelligence [for the vision document] had been gathered from the frontline, from the sector to start influencing what was going, going to be in the

new strategy" (TSI 2). This discourse of 'frontline' engagement, and the extent to which social enterprises at the micro-level of the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem were enabled to engage in collaborative policy development processes, continued to resurface and create tension around collaboration for the Social Enterprise Strategy.

Either by design or by necessity, after the vision document was published, the approach to advocating for a strategy based on that vision became more streamlined with fewer opportunities for more extensive involvement of organizations and individuals. Considering this, efforts made by intermediaries to engage social enterprises from the 'frontline' in the vision's development were critical to surfacing that micro-level social enterprise perspective. One of the delivery partners commented on how, at that time, engaging government primarily through intermediary organizations was perceived to be the most effective strategy that would streamline messaging. When reflecting on which groups of people were leading on the early stages of strategy development, they said:

> This was to an extent a sector-led initiative … so [we] form[ed] a coalition[41] and [had] a representative and the representative [could] pull in the members depending on the topic and … try and ensure the policy for social enterprise works for the individual social enterprises (TSDP 1).

Even through various "members" were pulled in, it was still the key intermediaries pushing things forward. This "coalition" group, distinctly different from the SSEC in the earlier days of the sector, but still with some organizational overlap, ultimately led on the vision and then became the key individuals with whom public sector actors would consult about a potential strategy. In this respect, throughout interviews, civil servants who had

[41] When speaking about this 'coalition' it was a more informal group of sector intermediaries and delivery organizations, similar to the makeup of the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition which existed from 2005-2011 when it was rebranded as SES. While this new 'coalition' was unofficial and only resourced with that initial investment from the nine intermediaries, this was the group the Scottish Government ended up frequently turning to for discussions around a social enterprise strategy for Scotland. In this respect it served as a coordinating body of sorts for the current 'sector leadership.'

been involved in the strategy development process focused primarily on the intermediaries and their role facilitating outreach. They implied that they had high levels of confidence in the intermediaries and their ability to reflect the views and needs of the social enterprise sector. When asked about how they began sector engagement in advance of developing the strategy and what provided the basis for their action, one civil servant responded by saying: “there’d been the vision document that the [social enterprise] sector had produced earlier in 2015 … and that was the basis for taking forward discussions around the strategy” (PSA 2).

One of the individuals who was involved with a third sector intermediary, albeit at the time one based in the voluntary sector rather than the social enterprise sector specifically, approached a question about the Scottish Government’s impetus for action far more skeptically. They responded by saying, “I think the idea that government came to this with sort of a blank slate and said, 'Look, let's see what arises from this,' no, [that’s] not really the case at all” (TSI 4). From their perspective, it was not simply because the social enterprise sector wanted more symbolic and strategic support from government and developed a vision document that then discussions about a public sector supported social enterprise strategy accelerated. Instead, they believed it was predominantly because of Scottish Government priorities and political inclinations at the time that they put social enterprise on the policy agenda and worked to craft a strategy that would suit government needs.

The public sector actors who were involved in the direct development of the strategy all maintained that the strategy needed to be aligned with Scottish Government priorities and that there were conditions that made the 2013–2016 development period an ideal one. This held true whether the public sector actor was involved with engaging in conversations with stakeholders throughout the sector, attending roundtables and meetings, or ensuring

the document that was being written principally outside of government was translated effectively to align with Scottish Government priorities and receive ministerial support. Yet, those most closely involved with the Third Sector Division at the time were also consistent in their belief that drive for this strategy was still coming from the sector itself and in turn being responded to by Scottish Government rather than the other way around (PSA 1, 2, 4).

### 5.3.3 Transitioning to the development of a national strategy

Building off the 2015 vision, the social enterprise strategy was published in 2016. It was arguably the first social enterprise strategy to be developed in the manner it was. A leader of a social enterprise delivery organization reflected on this novelty in their interview saying:

> there had never been a strategy previously, that I've seen anywhere in the world where the priorities for the strategy were determined by a closed doors, as in government not involved, sector initiative to set the context and say, "Here is what we would want for the sector." And then government taking those priorities and making them the bedrock [of a strategy] (TSDP 1).

After the sector coalesced around their vision, the process of developing the strategy involved ten thematic roundtables with 154 representatives, 205 written submissions, and an online consultation with 3,334 votes on 71 ideas (Scottish Government, 2016c: 48).

Participants from third sector intermediaries and third sector delivery partners argued that the roundtables were the most innovative form of engagement. Those who held this perspective, believed they sufficiently differed from typical forms of online consultation that the Scottish Government used to favor when creating policy *about* the social enterprise sector, not *with* the sector (TSDP 1 and 2, TSI 1 and 2). The Scottish Government described their updated approach to social enterprise policy engagement by saying, 'We carried out a consultation in partnership with the social enterprise community between May and September 2016, which has shaped this strategy' (Scottish Government, 2016c: 48). Since so

many people were involved in this roundtable process, at least in comparison to what they were used to, they thought this phase of engagement in the early days of building the strategy offered something promising because of the sheer numbers of organizations and individuals involved.

Yet, the intermediaries and the social enterprises I interviewed still expressed some dissatisfaction with the process. The discourse of 'frontline engagement' helped materialize this dissatisfaction with this stage of the process where there was targeted lobbying for a national social enterprise strategy. From the perspective of certain intermediaries and social enterprises, the benefits of the engagement did not seem to extend to the social enterprises themselves who were operating on the frontlines and responding to community needs. In other words, the degree to which public sector actors were genuinely engaging with community members benefitting from social enterprise services, or those running and working in the social enterprises themselves, was far more limited than the interactions between the public sector and the delivery organizations and intermediaries. This perspective was shared by interview participants from social enterprises themselves, some intermediary organizations, and a delivery organization.

Some participants from intermediaries and the public sector argued that it would not be feasible for government to have engaged the thousands of social enterprises across Scotland. Instead, they argued it was ultimately the responsibility of intermediaries and delivery organizations to reflect the frontline needs and priorities they were aware of through their work with social enterprises (TSI 7 and 8, PSA 4 and 5). Most participants interviewed from delivery organizations conveyed a sense of respect toward the public sector actors who were instrumental partners during this process of designing a strategy. Even an interviewee who runs a social enterprise and who could not remember being

directly engaged with the process of designing the 2016 strategy still commented on their "huge respect for [the public sector leader]" who "was part of the engine that got [the social enterprise sector] where [it is today]." This respect came from the ways this civil servant able to bring the sector together in pursuit of a broad and ambitious goal that would support the Scottish Government's policy objectives (SEL 2). It is not entirely unexpected that delivery partners who often lead organizations receiving government funding to deliver their services would demonstrate a level of deference when speaking about the role the public sector played in the process. So, this level of regard coming directly from a social entrepreneur suggests that having the 'right' people facilitating policy co-production arrangements might be critical to perceptions of success regardless of the positionality of those involved in the process.

Other social enterprise leaders were more likely to be critical of the process and the public sector saying things about a process that:

> … wasn't ideal because it was almost like we'll get a group of stakeholders, many of whom have an element of self-interest in terms of how the resources are allocated and then they can come up with a draft outline and then we'll go out to consultation as opposed to perhaps starting with the sector and seeing what the needs and priorities are (SEL 1).

Even this individual felt as though there was some energy around moving in "the right direction" in terms of engaging the social enterprise sector in a meaningful way when it came to policy design; however, they still felt as though their interests were not sufficiently represented, perhaps especially since they were not invited to some of the smaller sector meetings with the Scottish Government to tease out the particularities of the language in the 2016 strategy. By highlighting certain findings about this development process to explore which actors felt included and who was more disenchanted with the process, I have begun

to demonstrate how exactly the process of developing Scotland's ten-year social enterprise strategy is emblematic of a joint and collaborative development process.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have also articulated how elastic discursive tools allowed existing and emerging tensions within the discourse underpinning social enterprise to be held in tandem. Specifically discourse around the social enterprise sector as 'three-legged stool' and as a 'broad church' played important roles in movement building as they were used as peacekeeping devices in the third sector and then at a more focused level within the social enterprise sector. In outlining the emergent discourse around the social enterprise *sector* in Scotland, this chapter has added to the body of literature that has explored more general social enterprise discourses in England (Teasdale, 2011) and social entrepreneurship discourse in the UK more broadly (Mason, 2011). The chapter thus also makes an important distinction between the Scottish context and that of England and the UK since the characteristics and logics governing its third sector are different as a sub-state nation (McMullin et al., 2021). Effectively, the chapter highlights how social enterprise sector development in Scotland diverged from parallel movement building in England, particularly in response to the more dominant English positioning of social enterprise within broader economic and private sector discourses. While some of these community and private sector business discursive tensions were never fully debated in Scotland, inclusive discourse facilitated the collaboration among actors with diverse perspectives on social enterprise. They were thus able to coalesce around a set of shared principles and aims that ostensibly emerged through their social enterprise strategy in 2016.

I note that these principles and aims only ostensibly emerged through the 2016 strategy process since the history of and evolving discourse around community business and social enterprise explored through this chapter, emphasizes the 'dynamic persistence' (Nicholls and Teasdale, 2021) of these ideas. Perhaps Scotland's 'shared ambitions' (Scottish Government, 2016b) for social enterprise articulated *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026* (Scottish Government, 2016c) are actually shared, but not new. Indeed, my analysis of historic archive material, more recent grey literature and policy documents, and interviews with stakeholders in Scotland who have historically rooted perspectives on the development of social enterprise, highlighted the ways in which names of documents altered and the political champions of the concepts shifted, while the priorities remained relatively constant.

Nevertheless, to reach a point where these priorities, existing or emergent, were given significant attention on the national policy stage, there were three key stages through which the sector in Scotland needed to move. This involved external advocacy, internal visioning, and then collaborative partnership both internally and externally. First, I showed how key sector leaders and organizations worked to elevate the concept and model of social enterprise on the national stage, both leveraging work being undertaken in England to gain momentum and working against that work to instill a sense of local resonance in Scotland. In response to important socio-political contextual changes that were discussed extensively in the previous chapter, key sector leaders came together to undergo an internal visioning process. Through this process they aimed to ensure that the social enterprise sector would be at the center of the development of any future Scottish Government policy related to social enterprise. Finally, partnership and engagement within the social enterprise sector had to be negotiated, alongside the sector's relationship with the Scottish Government as

they collaboratively worked to develop a strategy that reflected collective needs and ambitions.

This staged identification has the potential to impact the way governments and practitioners consider the development of any future policy and strategy that aims to support a particular social or economic sector. It also can have an even clearer and direct impact on other countries seeking to develop their own national social enterprise strategies. Indeed, Chapter 8 uses these stages to analyze a similar process in a different context. Before the focus of this thesis shifts to the mobilization of Scotland's strategy in different contexts, I provide a deeper analysis of arrangements that governed the strategy development process in Scotland. In providing this deeper analysis in Chapter 6, I also set the scene for more in-depth comparisons between this Scottish process and other cases. Chapter 6 not only presents data on the nuanced collaboration dynamics which were at play when developing Scotland's strategy, it also explores how these arrangements shifted over time and the extent to which they created value for those involved. These temporal and value-based dimensions will allow for analysis of the strategy's delivery alongside the process of sustaining the strategy and its impacts.

# Chapter 6: Evaluating collaborative dynamics contributing to the process of designing, delivering, and sustaining Scotland's social enterprise strategy

## 6.1 Introduction

The two previous chapters approached Scotland's social enterprise policy development through a historical lens. They focused on the development of Scottish Government policy and public management philosophy and the evolution of the Scottish Third Sector from which the social enterprise movement emerged, charting how discourse was operationalized as a unifying tool to facilitate collaboration. Taken together, these chapters highlight why examination of the ten-year Scottish social enterprise strategy is a particularly strong case for the study of policy co-production in a public management context. The case is unique and worthy of study because of the embryonic policy environment post devolution and the subsequent election of the SNP. This facilitates comprehensive and longitudinal study of how policymakers might manage these collaborative arrangements from their nascent development through to their sustained implementation.

Chapter 5 specifically outlined the three key stages which the social enterprise sector in Scotland needed to move through before they could gain traction around a national social enterprise strategy for the sector. Data from this chapter was presented in a historical narrative format, following the project chronologically. This was necessary to explore how actors within what was once a broad Scottish third sector, with different historical roots, came together to coalesce around a shared set of principles and aims that, at least ostensibly, emerged through the 2016 strategy. The extent to which those principles and aims truly emerged through the process leading up to the 2016 strategy is debatable. Tensions undoubtably needed to be negotiated for everyone in the sector to get on board

with the content of the strategy. At the same time, the priorities outlined in the 2016 social enterprise strategy bear striking similarities to previous iterations of social enterprise policy in Scotland. In this respect, the underlying assumptions about the support social enterprise needed to thrive remained persistent while adapting to a dynamic political context that inconsistently embraced social enterprise terminology.

In this chapter, I shift my focus from the historical context where discourse was leveraged as a tool to unite people around historically rooted ideals for social enterprise in Scotland. Instead of conceptualizing discourse as a tool, I focus on co-production as a policy tool (Howlett et al., 2017) that also served a similar purpose of unifying the Scottish social enterprise sector, at least at varied points in time. In this respect, the empirical work presented in this thesis now shifts to contribute more to public management scholarship rather than historical studies. I closely analyze the shifts in collaboration dynamics at play when designing, delivering, and sustaining Scotland's strategy. This analysis helps reveal the underlying dynamics that characterized a process that has since been heralded as being innovative for its collaborative approach. In doing so, I enhance understanding of the extent to which the process is indeed emblematic of a joint and collaborative public management practices, and at what points in the process this may or may not be true.

## 6.2 Deriving analytical categories to contextualize shifts in collaboration dynamics

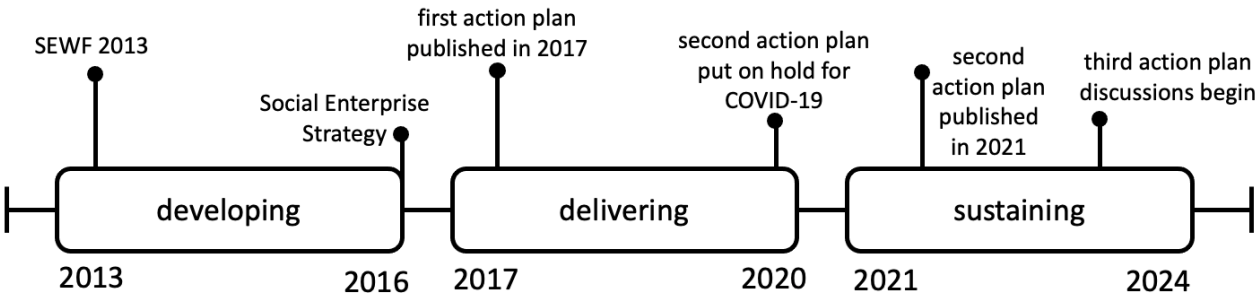
After analyzing data from these interviews that centered around the nuanced collaboration dynamics that characterized this process in Scotland, I was able to clearly distinguish three key phases based on the collaboration dynamics at play. These policy phases are my own organizational categories. I derived them after applying methods of critical discourse analysis associated with the discourse-historical approach and identifying that there were noticeable

shifts in participant discourse surrounding various time periods that could largely be mapped to various stages of this ongoing policy process. While they are not named after stages in more traditional policy cycle models (i.e., agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation) (Howlett et al., 2009), they do still broadly map to them. I have labeled these phases as periods concerned with 'developing,' 'delivering,' and 'sustaining' the strategy around social enterprise. 'Developing' links to policy formulation and decision-making, 'delivering' is the policy implementation stage, and 'sustaining,' at least in this context involves elements of policy evaluation as well as a return to decision-making and policy implementation. I intentionally consider these to be 'phases' rather than 'stages' of policy development since the model involving stages in a policy cycle 'can be misinterpreted as suggesting policy-makers go about solving public problems in a very systematic and more or less linear fashion' (Howlett, et al., 2009: 13) when the reality is that the process is more fluid and iterative than it is fixed and linear.

Figure 6.1 presents a timeline of these phases. The first phase involves the build up to and the original process of engagement for the strategy. This first phase runs from 2013–2016. I call this the 'developing' phase because it was during this period where the explicit idea to create a ten-year strategy for Scotland's social enterprise sector first emerged, followed by all the work that went into producing the strategy. The next four-year phase from 2017–2020 is the 'delivering' phase. This is the phase in which the first action plan was drafted and delivered and in which the second action plan was also drafted. The final 'sustaining' phase starts in 2021 when the second social enterprise action plan was released and continues through the present day, with the findings presented here culminating in

2022.[42]

***Figure 6.1: Policy phases associated with Scotland's social enterprise strategy***




During each of these phases, I present findings related to the behavioral, interpersonal, and functional elements informing the collaboration dynamics characterizing the given phase. Behavioral elements cover discovery, definition, deliberation, and determination, or the principled engagement in the process. Interpersonal elements cover that which contributes to shared motivation for engagement, namely, commitment, trust, understanding, and legitimacy. Functional elements related to procedural and institutional arrangements as well as leadership, resources, and knowledge all contributed to the capacity for joint/ collaborative action (see Figure 3.1; Emerson et al., 2012). After explaining the various elements of collaboration dynamics, I also introduce findings on participant discourse around value. Dominant narratives of value creation (or not) revolved around phase-dependent value discourses positioning value as a particular outcome of collaboration. Participant narratives focused on value in the negotiation of priorities to develop coherence and clarity in the sector, value in the process of resource allocation, and value in fostering accountability and joint responsibility among partners. All these narrative

[42] It would be reasonable to expect that this 2021 phase would run until 2024 when the next and final action plan associated with this strategy is scheduled to be published. The previous two phases, in terms of the social enterprise sector's relationship with the Scottish Government also run for four years, perhaps suggesting there is something rhythmic about dominant governance approaches that might only persist consistently for a finite period that is close to a four-year cycle.

themes surrounding the process are rooted in value-in-production at the meso-level of Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem (see Figure 3.2; Osborne et al., 2022). This value emanates from the collaborative governance processes surrounding Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem and the policies supporting it.

## 6.3 Collaborative dynamics: Developing Scotland's strategy (2013–2016)

As Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 detailed, the buildup to the strategy in 2016 was based on ongoing cross-sector relationships and ultimately decades of practitioner and public sector work to get social enterprise on the Scottish Government's radar. Many people interviewed remembered the 2013 Social Enterprise World Forum as a pivotal moment for starting conversations about developing a long-term national social enterprise strategy in earnest. Noticing the window of opportunity created by the Scottish Government's reception to the idea, the social enterprise sector came together to develop and internal vision for the future of the sector. They hoped it would, and indeed it did, guide a national strategy process with full public sector support.

While much of the deliberative work that teased out priorities for the national strategy appeared to occur through the visioning process, strategy specific consultations running prior to the strategy's publication in 2016 also fueled the process.[43] Someone perceived this to be a "very in-depth" consultation "over quite a long period of time" that even felt like it "might have been over the course of a year" (TSI 8). More tangibly, someone who was involved with synthesizing what emerged through the consultation process

[43] There was work done unofficially in the early parts of 2016 with key sector leaders to consult on strategic ideas, but the 'Consultation Methods' annex of *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026* notes that the Scottish Government '…carried out a consultation in partnership with the social enterprise community between May and September 2016, which has shaped this strategy' (Scottish Government, 2016c: 48).

described a “set of workshops around some themes that were potentially priorities for the sector to try and build a, a consensus or to generate ideas” (TSDP 3). They went on to note how important inclusion and perceptions of ownership were from the outset:

> it was meant to be an inclusive process, not just from the main delivery partners or strategic partners to government, but also from other parts of government, from agencies, from, from other parts of the sector, from funders, investors, etcetera, so that there was a recognition that everyone had a part to play. So it was quite important that they felt ownership of the process, their ideas were reflected so, yeah, there was really more ownership of that process (TSDP 3).

These underlying principles of inclusion and ownership influenced engagement around the strategy during this period while it was being conceived of and developed.

### 6.3.1 Behavioral elements

While the in-person thematic consultation events provided the occasion to discover and deliberate about key opportunities for the social enterprise ecosystem moving forward, they were not the only means of input. There was also an open online survey that allowed anyone interested to share their views on the developing strategy to ensure it truly reflected collective ambitions across sectors (TSDP 2 and 3; TSI 8; Scottish Government, 2016). This cross-sector engagement was not just limited to the public and social enterprise sectors:

> it was bringing together various sectors, uh with a facilitator and just asking various sectors what they think should be in a national strategy and that was private sector people, local authorities, public sector bodies, members of the public … (TSI 8).

Yet before this deliberative consultation apparatus could gain traction, there were crucial points where the social enterprise sector’s determination to have a national strategy for social enterprise helped push the process along.

On the back of conversations at SEWF 2013, and after CEIS Policy Conference discussions in 2014, it became clear to those in the Scottish Government and public sector agencies supporting social enterprise that “there was a huge set of ideas and enthusiasm in

the sector" they believed "should be enhanced" (PSA 1). So, "there was a broad general agreement … with government and various sector bodies …: 'Okay yes, let's have a strategy, this is a good idea, this will help focus our minds …'" (TSI 8). As someone in the Scottish Government recalled, it was relatively easy to reach this agreement to clearly define a process around developing a national strategy for social enterprise because "at that point, [the sector] was working quite well in terms of coalition" (PSA 1). They quickly clarified that of course this did not mean the sector was without its disagreements, but nevertheless, they were determined to push those aside, for the greater good of the sector and stand on "a unified, or a sense of common ground" to discover what could be possible with a national strategy (PSA 1).

### 6.3.2 Interpersonal elements

Generating this commitment to a national strategy and building trust and understanding within the social enterprise sector before it started to engage and collaborate with government was crucial to both parties developing a coherent shared motivation for action. As a civil servant involved in the process of discovering and defining the key ambitions for the sector recalled, it was important to have the sector's ambitions for itself articulated through the 2015 vision. Since the Scottish Government could build on their vision:

> it wasn't just a group of people coming together saying we want to do a strategy. It was a group of people who'd come together already and had a document that said this is what we want. That the government could then kind of look at a go, well actually this, this is good, this aligns with where we're going to, and we can work together on this (PSA 2).

The sector's decision to develop *Scotland's Vision for Social Enterprise 2025* also created a group of key sector leaders that Scottish Government could easily consult. It was equally important that once the sector trusted and understood itself, civil servants and public sector leaders were given the same opportunity to build trust, and understanding, while signaling

their commitment to supporting social enterprise. One of the civil servants working in the Third Sector Division at the time recalled working to "embed" themselves within the sector steering group while also attempting to connect conversations at a public agency level to "bring all that together and think about what a process looked like to … get towards a strategy" (PSA 2).

There was also an understanding that a national strategy process that could have profound impacts for a particular sector could only be legitimate if both public sector and social enterprise sector players were involved. In this respect, everyone—at least when the engagement was occurring early days and promised something new, exciting, and innovative—was motivated to make things work for those involved. As someone working within the Scottish Government phrased it:

> very often the expertise and the understanding resides external to government. … we have a job to make it into public policy … [but it] had to come from those that were experiencing it and those that understood it externally. And I think that was a huge motivating factor in the way that then … the actual Strategy was developed (PSA 1).

Even though not everyone came to think of this collaborative development as an example of true 'co-production' most people I interviewed brought up the term while describing this phase. Whether they considered this phase to be emblematic of co-production was dependent on their discourse around co-production. Nevertheless, for many, commitment to this idea of co-production helped build trust and give the process an additional level of legitimacy across actors involved. When asked what someone meant by saying that the process during this period was 'co-produced' a leader of a delivery organization responded:

> What I specifically mean is that the articulation of a particular area within the action plan or the strategy was literally co-produced and formed by consultation with practitioners and between intermediaries and civil servants. So you kind of have scribes in the shape of [SVL]. You've got civil servants, you've got intermediary, and you've got practitioners in the same room speaking about a specific thematic [area] and everyone getting a copy of the document as it develops for their theme area of

> interest. So each one of those individual themes being approached in that same way where there was genuine opportunity to contribute to the thinking and the production of the document (TSDP 2).

For this person, people were motivated knowing they would genuinely be able to contribute and that they would understand how that contribution was making its way into the strategy.

### 6.3.3 Functional elements

At this stage, a lot of the procedural and institutional arrangements centered, at least initially, around engagement between the public and social enterprise sector intermediary and delivery bodies, possibly in part because it was those social enterprise sector agencies that came together initially to deliberate and propose a future direction and vision for social enterprise. Someone working for a delivery organization at the time who was helping drive the principles around engagement acknowledged there was a choice to be made in foregrounding the voice of organizations over individual social enterprises. They said:

> There was an acceptance at the time that ten agencies who were primarily intermediaries, in a room, wasn't the complete sector, but it was more of an ask for forgiveness than permission, or don't, just because it's not perfect, don't [not] go ahead. There [was] sufficient diversity of voices in there for that to be recognised as, very few people criticised the vision. Those who weren't at the table may have criticised the process, but the vision was put out for consultation and then the strategy was put out for consultation, so if there was something major that was missed, there was really ample opportunity to lobby and to have something included (TSDP 1).

This quote begins to reveal that in the case of this process over time, there would be points where various people would take issue with the content, and others the process, while the reverse could also be true for different groups. Of course, there was always the possibility people were satisfied with both or with neither. Yet, at least during this first phase, where there was a lot of energy, enthusiasm, and determination to engage and do things differently, there seemed to be only limited discontent. The two social enterprises leaders I

interviewed were all aware of the strategy and while they did not recall directly being involved in 'roundtables' per se, or being asked to directly consult, they did not say they took issue with the content and only one faulted the process at this stage (i.e., SEL 1). Indeed, someone from an intermediary noted that they still felt quite good about the process back then and they said, "social enterprises I would hope felt quite heard in that process as well; grassroots social enterprises could really be heard" because the process stayed opened and extended beyond the organizations initially drafting potential sector priorities (TSI 8).

This perspective was ideally going to be drawn out through the extensive consultations and thematic roundtables. Social Value Lab (SVL), as the organization responsible to collecting data and drafting the text for the previous social enterprise census in 2015, as well as the commissioned partner to develop the 2015 vision for social enterprise, was also going to be the one authoring the social enterprise strategy. Yet that authorship was more about ensuring someone was responsible for coherently synthesizing ideas from the roundtables and the online consultation survey than it was about being responsible for the idea generation itself. Once the final draft, which had gone through many iterations of edits among the social enterprise agencies most closely involved, reached the Scottish Government, it really just needed to be "rubber stamped" (PSA 4). Another public sector actor reflected on that in more detail saying:

> Although it was quite unusual in a way, I still think looking back, it's one of the few [government policy] documents that's actually, I think, been principally written externally, rather than internally. I mean it was a collaboration, but yeah. Where the, you know, the kind of drafting and so on was much more, was definitely much more shared than other documents that would tend to terminate in the government (PSA 1).

Considering leadership through a lens of ownership, during this phase, a lot of the obvious leadership came from the social enterprise sector who seemed to be leading on the

strategy development. In this sense, the process at this stage belonged more to the social enterprise sector who felt as though they instigated the process through the vision and the group of intermediaries that supported it, while leading discussions through policy conferences and other means (PSA 1, TSDP 1, TSI 1 and 2). There was also strong leadership within the Scottish Government supporting this process strategically in the background, but also quite transparently through time and resources, ensuring key partners would stay at the table. As one leader of a delivery organization said, there was "exceptional, genuine desire to do that co-production and partnership working. And [this government official] kept folk in the tent and in the conversations. And when it got tricky… [they were] skill[ed] at keeping everyone at the table" (TSDP 2). It was during these key conversations about broad and inclusive language that would provide the strategy with necessary longevity where partners were continued to be enabled to act jointly and eventually publish a national strategy for social enterprise (TSDP 1 and 2; TSI 1, 7; PSA 1 and 2).

#### 6.3.4 Value as the negotiation of priorities to generate clarity

Since the sector had developed into such a broad ecosystem, some described this design phase as an effective way to create value for the sector by making sense of the ecosystem's complexities and providing the ecosystem with some much-needed structure. When discussing some of the nascent conversations about a strategy, one individual working for an intermediary recalled that "people did talk about the potential of [a strategy]" and how there seemed to be a "sense of, 'We need more focus in the sector'" (TSI 8). For this person:

> because of the number of organizations … there has been a lack of focus in the sector … It's not, not secret or anything. There's been a lot of organizations and there's been often overlap, duplication … because there's lots of organizations. And I think maybe that was one of the thoughts behind this strategy was to kind of, you know, get beyond those kind of barriers, which maybe weren't even going to be solved in the short- to medium-term, and maybe a strategy was, was a kind of way of thinking,

> to kind of, you know, harmonize things a bit more and bring people together on the same table (TSI 8).

While this person specifically named a strategy as the enabler, it was clear they thought the sentiments in the sector were less about the strategy as a *document* that could do the work of harmonizing and more about the strategy as a *process* designed to bring people together. It is possible that this individual focused on the strategy process as a way of simplifying the complicated Scottish social enterprise ecosystem to justify the intermediary review process,[44] which was ongoing at the time of the interview. It could have also been an intentional distancing of the process to make an argument linking the intermediary review back to initial conversations happening during the design phase of the strategy rather than positioning it as something opponents claimed came out of nowhere in the second action plan while the overarching process around the social enterprise strategy was more in a phase marked by sustaining the impacts of the strategy.

Nevertheless, others who were less entrenched in discourse surrounding the intermediary review at the time of their interview still spoke about how the design process, which they often referred to as a co-production process, was used as a tool to bring disparate voices within the sector together. A civil servant reflected on how the processes of teasing out the priorities for the social enterprise sector through strategy design helped build consensus, at least temporarily. When asked about tensions that may have been negotiated to reach the three key pillars in the strategy they responded:

[44] As part of the second social enterprise action plan, the Scottish Government announced their decision to only fund a single intermediary body (Scottish Government, 2021a). Senscot and Social Firms Scotland had already merged into SENScot in 2020 (Pia, 2022) so that left Social Enterprise Scotland and SENScot to develop proposals that would be reviewed by Scottish Government, effectively bidding against each other to receive the intermediary funding for the social enterprise sector. In 2022, Social Enterprise Scotland was selected to be the most representative body for a social enterprise sector and noted there would be many implications for the sector that had increasingly grown and expended since the early 2000s (SES, 2022).

> I don't think from memory, that those three priorities were particularly contentious. I think everybody agreed that you needed to stimulate the development of new social enterprises, you needed to build stronger social enterprises, and you needed to give them market opportunities. I think those three principles are really clear and really obvious and I don't recall anyone having particular issues with any of them (PSA 2).

In fact, those three priorities were clearly linked to the priorities for the social enterprise sector articulated in the ten-year social enterprise vision document (Coburn, 2015). This did not mean that there were not contentious moments during this design stage. Rather, it meant that the process of producing the strategy collectively with the involvement of many different stakeholders insured stakeholders throughout Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem had clarity around priorities for the future direction of the sector and were able to gain value by participating in discussions around those priorities. This links to discourse around ownership, where many organizations felt they had ownership over the collaborative arrangements governing this designing phase and indeed the 2016 strategy itself.

## 6.4 Collaborative dynamics: Delivering Scotland's strategy (2017–2020)

Once the Strategy was published at the end of 2016, there was an immediate move to then translate that strategic vision for the sector into actions that could be delivered upon. Those actions were articulated through the *Building a Sustainable Social Sector in Scotland: Action Plan 2017–20*. The document states: 'This action plan now sets out important first steps that we will take, working across government and with partners, to deliver on our vision for social enterprise over the next three years' (Scottish Government, 2017: 2). Two individuals who worked in the public sector and one from an intermediary recalled that there was a very quick turn-around window between the time in which the strategy was published and when an action plan was expected to be released. As a result, the ensuing public and social enterprise sector collaboration was not as extensive as it had been with the strategy (PSA 2

and 4, TSI 2). Nevertheless, those involved with the process were encouraged by the action plan's focus on partnership and joint delivery. During this policy delivery phase, partnership and collaborative delivery often came in the form of public sector finance to support initiatives the social enterprise sector wanted to develop.

Since the Scottish Government had a greater financial and political stake in social enterprise during this phase than they did ever before, the social enterprise sector would benefit from their investment. In essence, because Scottish Government was willing to move beyond one-off engagement and consider longer-term outcomes associated with an action plan, rather than being satisfied with the strategy as the final output or end point, the social enterprise movement perceived itself as on a positive trajectory, with collaboration broadly expanding during this phase. At the same time, some shared that while it was not obvious then, in retrospect this new phase could have been one where more ownership of the strategy and its delivery shifted away from the social enterprise sector and into Scottish Government (TSI 1 and 2). This was usually shared with a level of remorse, although, this was understood because "[The Scottish Government] had to own it … they were putting investment in it" (TSI 1). For others (e.g., TSDP 5 and TSI 8), this shift also made sense because those putting their government behind a policy and investing in it need to be the ones ultimately responsible for its delivery.

### 6.4.1 Behavioral elements

Behaviorally, the process from 2017–2020 differed from the previous development phase in that it was perceived to be less deliberative. While there was less debate about prioritization of focal areas for social enterprise support, there was perhaps more determination to deliver on the ambitions of the social enterprise strategy and truly realize the potential inherent

within it. The social enterprise sector wanted to take advantage of the contextual factors contributing to what they perceived to be a collaborative environment. People I interviewed also recalled that there was a general understanding of the definitional premise of the action plan process and that they agreed upon general rules for delivering the action plan (TSI 1, 2, 8). These rules, or the ways by which these potential actions could be discovered, were known to fewer people than those engaged in the strategy process. Pressed for time, and already holding the knowledge generated through the extensive strategy design process, the Third Sector Division sent out a call for proposals to organizations and individuals they had on a particular mailing list. While some wished there could have been more extensive collaboration that they came to associate with the strategy and therefore broader social enterprise policy, they still put in proposals for work (TSI 2).

In response to this call for proposals, social enterprise leaders were perhaps a little apprehensive about the quick turnaround with less time for extensive deliberation and therefore fewer opportunities to discover areas for the social enterprise sector to innovate. Yet, they were encouraged by the ask to engage that came once again from public sector partners. So, even though debates around social enterprise definitions were far from solved, co-production as a process and co-production discourse were working as tools to keep the sector united and engaged in the process. Put differently, the sector could get on board with the principled engagement during this phase even if they had residual concerns about the direction in which that engagement and the ownership around the strategy was moving. In many ways, the principled engagement during this period of 2017–2020 made people feel very positive about the way the sector's relationship with the Scottish Government was developing.

It is also possible that this stage of engagement was framed positively because this first action plan had 92 actions. In this way, many people felt heard as they could literally see the specific initiatives they had used the rapid online action plan consultation process to suggest reflected in a written policy document. When something was included in the plan, it often came with a corresponding resource to do the work. The promise of money and organizational support could be part of what kept people so determined to stay engaged. Although, with 92 actions to be delivered upon in three years, there was little room for strategic prioritization or even the ability to connect some of that funding and action into a wider government agenda.

One individual interviewed who previously worked in the public sector, but who was not working in government during this stage, described the action plan as being indicative of wider Scottish Government policymaking under the SNP. When asked about the ways in which they viewed Scottish social enterprise strategy and policy as connecting with broader economic policy and other policy areas that were perhaps viewed as less 'niche,' they responded by saying:

> … what we've got is this sort of improvement with bits added on in the front and the back and … out the side and there's no coherence to it. There's been no reset … and what they've done is they've said that some people want to deal with [x] and other people want to [y] and we're gonna give them both something and then the nation will be happy because we've catered to everyone. And there's no point at which you say we are going to go for [a] because … or we're not going to go for [a], we're going to go for [b] and sacrifice some [of a] to do that. What they want to do at every point is say, "We'll do both these things" (PSA 6).

This perception of Scottish Government policy was not explicitly expressed by many others who were interviewed; however, many spoke about the relative ease of airing ideas during this period, and some indicated that they thought this led to a lack of government accountability. It could also be argued that this signaled a lack of strategic thinking on behalf

of the Scottish Government. Further, it could also be seen to signal slow decline of collaborative dynamics—behavioral or otherwise—based on cross-sector collaboration which sought to promote effective prioritization of social enterprise ecosystem support initiatives.

**6.4.2 Interpersonal elements**

Within the social enterprise sector, organizations and individuals perceived cross-sector engagement during this phase, at least during the first couple years, as perhaps the most valuable in relation to their time and effort. There was an ease with which they could share their ideas and feel as though their voice was head and perspectives considered. When recounting the work to get the strategy published initially, it was clear many believed there was appetite for a strategy, but because there was less trust between the public and social enterprise sectors, there was almost a 'wait and see' attitude around whether the voices of social enterprise advocates would really be valued (TSDP 1, 2; TSI 7). After the strategy and action plan were published and the interpersonal dynamics between social enterprise and government leaders became more transparent, those in the social enterprise movement became more positive about this process. When one of the delivery partners attempted to summarize how they perceived co-production during this time they said:

> The other thing was in the co-production, you actually had a situation where [a Deputy Director in the Scottish Government] was actively supporting with time and resources, people to convene wide-ranging conversations, so people could feel heard … things were happening on every vertical part of the action plan where you had genuine consultation and collaboration between civil servants, practitioners and intermediaries on a thematic basis. And I think it felt like a genuine attempt to consult and engage rather than a tick-box exercise (TSDP 2).

Once the action plan was published, those in the social enterprise sector, and to a certain extent civil servants and government officials as well, started to reap the benefits of their engagement. Whether those benefits were organizational financing or political support, it

was almost as if design could only go so far: the proof of the efficacy of this new collaboration would come through tangible and intangible benefits that might only be realized in the delivery phase. In this respect, it becomes clearer how the strategy itself, and the policy resources that flowed from it, began to inform the discourse of those involved in the process.

### 6.4.3 Functional elements

From this phase, public sector discourse around mutual collaboration, and especially 'co-production,' began to intensify. No longer were teams in the public sector taking cues from social enterprise, but they were actively collaborating in mutually beneficial ways. One public sector actor who was involved in the development and delivery of the first action plan described this period as one characterized by a mutual exchange of ideas and resources that benefited both the social enterprise sector's ambitions and the Scottish Government's agenda. Since there was, "full political support [and] funding available, it create[d] lots of space for policymakers to work up proposals with the sector" (PSA 4). They provided the following example:

> So, the sector might say, 'Oh have you thought about this as a gap?' and you could sit there and help try to position it within the Scottish Government's policy framework, but not squash any innovation. It was just trying to position it gently. And money would go... (PSA 4).

As resources began flowing to the social enterprise sector to deliver on the strategy, actors started discussing the relationships between government and social enterprise less as an example of innovative engagement that could fizzle out at any moment and more as something that they were optimistic was becoming institutionalized. This could be interpreted as a signal that the strong collaborative relationships which had been developed would continue to be nurtured over time and that collaborative policymaking and public

service delivery arrangements could continue to be pursued. Many of those from social enterprise intermediaries also spoke about how important it was to have a firm channel of communication with government during this phase (TSI 1, 5, 7, 8).

A few public sector actors did mention that those relationships could have easily been criticized as being too open, resulting in a lack of democratic engagement with the potential to give a disproportionate amount of attention to those who were most vocal (PSA 1, 3, and 5). Some interviewed also expressed that even though collaborative service design and delivery seemed to be at their highest forms of genuine adoption during this phase, the fact that the social enterprise sector could ask for just about anything from the Scottish Government and then receive it led to what they perceived as a rudderless sector (PSA 6 and TDSP 5). Someone even said that during this action planning delivery phase, but especially this "approach [to action plan development] wasn't strategic … It was just a bit of a 'we've got the strategy, we've got an action plan, we've got a resource sitting here that we need to spend, how can you spend against that, what actions can you deliver against that strategy?'" (TSI 2). Again, this was because the call for input into the first action plan came out just a few months after the strategy was released, with a very tight timeline for its release and limited scope for extensive input. That said, it was noted that "generally, the subjects [that] were all covered in the action plan … were emerging from those conversations" around the strategy (TSDP 2). Ultimately, even though the action may not have been 'strategic,' or at least as deliberated in the name of reaching strategic consensus, there was still solid capacity for action during this phase. Leadership within the public sector was strong and committed to collaboration, and leaders within the social enterprise sector had significant institutional knowledge about the development and trajectory of the sector while receiving significant resources from the Scottish Government to take it in a direction they saw fit.

### 6.4.4 Value as the allocation of resources

The social enterprise sector's receipt of significant financial resources from the Scottish Government during this phase also strengthened their capacity for collaborative action and contributed to general perceptions of value various actors held regarding their engagement. During this phase, resources that had not be up for grabs in the same way during the design phase now played a central role in the negotiation among organizations in the social enterprise sector and between the sector and the Scottish Government. For example, the actions outlined across the action plan (Scottish Government, 2017) represented millions committed on behalf of the Scottish Government to promote and support social enterprise through multiple means. A significant portion of this money was allocated to intermediary and support organizations across Scotland. Some examples of this fiscal support included the following: an additional £1.2m in funding for Just Enterprise which went to a consortium of delivery partners; providing the core budget support for the three main social enterprise intermediaries (i.e., Social Enterprise Scotland, Senscot, and Social Firms Scotland); sponsoring international organizations like Social Enterprise World Forum to host conferences globally, including in Edinburgh in 2018; providing fiscal support for local policy conferences and dialogues in Scotland hosted by Scottish social enterprise delivery organizations; and supporting Social Enterprise Academy's work in schools. There were other funds set up to be directly administered to social enterprises, like the Social Entrepreneurs Fund designed to provide £1m in seed capital to various social entrepreneurs each year during the action plan. With limited time to negotiate effective distribution of those resources, there were early hints of those within the social enterprise sector perceiving the process as one that had the potential to create and distribute meso-level value in an

inequitable manner. Perspectives on this reality understandably differed between those working in the social enterprise sector and those who had public sector roles.

Both groups seemed to be pragmatic about the natural policy evolution during this stage, stating that the changes in collaborative dynamics were either by necessity or at least understandable. Yet no matter how they viewed these changes, interviewees from both sectors thought the shifts in the time made available for collaborative negotiation were worth noting. For example, when reflecting on changing dynamics between the strategy and the first action plan, one person working for an intermediary said the following:

> it felt a wee bit kinda, and I understand that, you know, the [Third Sector] Division was understaffed at the time … so you know, there's reasons why it happened in that way, but I think that … probably a lot of the sector, frontline sector … probably felt as if we kinda lost a bit of ownership around it at that time. And I think that's just a natural thing when resource becomes available (TSI 2).

It would be a mischaracterization to describe this social enterprise practitioner discourse as accusatory even though they conveyed a loss of some confidence in the process at this point. On the other hand, it also would not be fair to say those who worked in the public sector were being overly defensive about the way the process around allocating resources against service delivery priorities unfolded.

Those working in the public sector at the time when the first action plan needed to be published recalled being able to justify shifts in the functional elements impacting upon the overall collaborative dynamics and in turn, perceptions of value creation. For them, what emerged through the collaboration around the strategy was fresh and could be used to inform the action plan. Changes in collaborative dynamics did not negate the energy invested in the previous process:

> I think because we'd spent a lot of time on the strategy, … there was quite a lot of pressure to get the action plan out quickly. So, it was maybe not quite as collaborative as the strategy, but there was a lot of work done as part of the strategy

> consultation to look at particular actions … that people wanted to see and ideas that people had … There was a lot of material that had been generated from that (PSA 2).

At the same time, while the process of developing a strategy helped create value for the sector by clarifying some of the priorities held by organizations operating at the meso-level of the social enterprise ecosystem, the process was structured around keeping people engaged. In favor of broad engagement and appeasing tensions, some of the sector's deeper disagreements were deferred, keeping the focus on high-level strategic priorities. Thus, different approaches to social enterprise discourse and what could 'count' as a social enterprise started to emerge when moving into the delivery stage focused on action, resource allocation, and service provision.

The same civil servant who noted that the initial collaborative strategy conversations generated some discussion around specific future actions also noted that there had not been sufficient time for deliberation around contentious actions, particularly as it related to the social enterprise code of practice in Scotland. Some of the proposed action plan actions brought in a broader range of organizations than social enterprises as defined and recognized by the code. They believed that those who were particularly attached to the code might have felt that these issues had not been discussed sufficiently because the first action plan came out quite quickly. Even still, since there was a high level of engagement between the public and social enterprise sector, supported by strong understanding, rapport, and working relationships, it was relatively easy for most within the social enterprise sector who had been involved in the process, even if only tangentially, to feel as though there was something in it for them (PSA 6; TSI 8; TSDP 3 and 5). In this respect, the decision to try to ensure the action plan could be all things to all people, without necessarily discussing all the 'agreed upon' actions extensively, risked satisfying no one fully, while doing the work of

keeping everyone engaged. Nevertheless, participants predicated their arguments about this delivery phase where value was being created for the sector in terms of resource allocation mostly positively. Indeed, they were still largely influenced by their perceptions of the design phase because of how interlinked the 2016 strategy and 2017 action plan were in participant narratives around this ongoing policy process.

## 6.5 Collaborative dynamics: Sustaining Scotland's strategy (2021 and beyond)

As the delivery of the first action plan progressed, key leaders within social enterprise delivery organizations as well as within the public sector started to shift. In some cases, this resulted in a perceived lack of experience and/or knowledge. In others, it was an indication that a particular organization might now be led under different social enterprise philosophies than those which previously guided it. This mix up of key players who had been contributing to the collaborative arrangements between the Scottish Government and social enterprise sector was further disrupted by COVID-19. When the pandemic first took hold, there seemed to be a significant amount of grace and understanding afforded to the public sector because of the unprecedented nature of the crisis. Scottish Government decisions to pause action plan development and hold its release,[45] while met with understanding, was eventually noted as a point of concern. It created a perception within the social enterprise sector that the public sector was using this opportunity to regain more policy control from the social enterprise sector (TSI 1).

Over a year later after its initial scheduled release, the second action plan *Inclusive growth through social enterprise: Scotland's social enterprise action plan 2021-24* was

[45] The second action plan, initially scheduled to be released in April 2020, was paused by the Scottish Government and the social enterprise sector to ensure it was 'fit for purpose' in the wake of COVID-19 (Campbell, 2020).

published. Most people involved contended that the process surrounding the development of the second action plan engaged fewer people than those involved in the 2016 strategy. At the same time, more perspectives from individuals and organizations were integrated into the drafting of this action plan than was directly possible through the process of online proposals which formed the basis for the first action plan. Although, some people suggested in their interviews that this heightened engagement was due to intermediary advocacy and not necessarily part of plans for extensive cross-sector collaboration at the outset (TSI 1, 2, and 3). Additionally, since it was not occurring in the immediate aftermath of the extensive strategy process, and perhaps since traditional face-to-face consultation and collaboration methods had been stifled, the collaborative dynamics in this phase were perceived as being particularly distinct.

Ultimately, for many it *felt* as though fewer voices were included than at any pervious phase, even if somehow more perspectives, or at least more varied perspectives might have been captured. Depending on who was interviewed, the decreased engagement was either by design or by inevitable necessity under pandemic constraints. Importantly for some, this did not necessarily mean it was less representative (TSDP 5) or less responsive to the ongoing needs of the social enterprise sector (PSA 7). While some in the sector were more willing to accept these procedural changes emanating from public sector decisions, there was a more universal acknowledgement from those within the third sector that ownership of social enterprise policy was moving further in the direction of public sector control. One key element influencing this perception was the Scottish Government's intention 'to fund an enhanced single intermediary body with responsibility for representing the social enterprise sector across Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2021a: 36).

This decision was never explicitly articulated in policy documents before this phase. Although, many people did recall this was an ongoing ambition of the sector, and often supported from within the sector itself rather than originating as a directive from the Scottish Government (TSI 1, 3, 7, and 8; SEL 2; PSA 1). Proponents argued that this could clarify things for the sector and avoid duplication of activity (TSI 8, PSA 5). Opponents argued that this explicit commitment coming from Scottish Government when it did was emblematic of government overreach, forcing decisions where something should have been more naturally encouraged from within the sector (Pybus, 2022; Roy, 2022). Others recognized that even while they might have hoped for a particular outcome, it was a shame to see any intermediary organizations who were historically woven into the fabric of Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem coming from different origins and associated values forced to stop operating (TSI 3, 4, 5, and 8). Thus, against the backdrop of the pandemic and the intermediary review process, the collaborative dynamics which had defined engagement between the social enterprise and public sectors in Scotland started to shift more noticeably in the most recent phase of engagement.

### 6.5.1 Behavioral elements

During this phase, collaboration and coordination between the social enterprise sector and government appeared to be far less deliberative and more prescriptive on the part of both sectors. For example, the public sector was handing down directives around the development of a single intermediary. On the other hand, the social enterprise sector was self-organizing to gather opinions from frontline social enterprises about what should be included in the second action plan (TSI 1, 2, 8) because intermediaries feared these voices would not otherwise be heard (TSI 2, 3). In this respect, much of the 'discovery' that

occurred during this phase was because of the work of intermediaries acting on their own volition, rather than a process that was actively being supported and encouraged by the public sector. These sessions organized from within the sector, but not at the request of the Scottish Government (TSI 1 and 2), are specifically referenced in the introduction to the action plan:

> Strong collaboration has helped to shape this action plan. It was informed by an extensive process of consultation throughout the social enterprise sector, to reflect the views and aspirations of frontline enterprises, as well as working across government to ensure coherence with wider government policy (Scottish Government, 2021a: 10).

In the document itself, the language of collaboration and consultation is more direct and explicit than it was in either the strategy or the first action plan. Although, the wording implies a far more collaborative cross-sector process than the extent to which those in the sector perceived collaboration throughout the process.

For every individual I interviewed who was involved across more than one phase of the strategy design and delivery, this last phase focused on sustaining the policy and the engagement which surround it represented the least amount of 'co-production' as they defined it. One of the staff members from an intermediary organization shared this perspective very candidly. Since I had not mentioned the term 'co-production' in the interview and they used the absence of it to describe their dissatisfaction with the process of developing the second action plan, I asked them to explain what co-production meant to them. They replied:

> I think for me co-production's got to be — or it should be — where you feel there's a level playing field between the folk involved in it. So it doesn't matter if you're the public sector with a huge budget or you're the third sector organisation with no budget at all, that it has to be done in a meaningful and respectful way where there's equality across the organisations and participants that are involved … and for me as well I think co-production's involving the stakeholders and service users in that process (TSI 2).

Some participants in this study, especially many from intermediary organizations, felt that public sector actors, and at times leaders from delivery organizations, were acting in a way to deliberately exclude them from the engagement process (TSI 1, 2, and 3; SEL 1; TSDP 6). They perceived this to be true at least in comparison to the welcomed shift they experienced in terms of engagement and the ways in which the public sector apparently started to value their services and ability to connect with social enterprises or other community organizations during the first two phases that surrounded the strategy (TSI 1, 2, and 3).

Some individuals attributed this perception among intermediaries to changes in personnel within the public sector and the differing approach to management and engagement these people had (TSDP 1 and 2; PSA 2 and 3). Other actors commented that it might be attributable to the intermediaries' and sometimes delivery partners' unwillingness to accept that true co-production processes should change and evolve by necessity (TSDP 5 and TSI 8). The context in which the second action plan was being developed was also against the backdrop of an intermediary review process so:

> You also had the difficulty where people were hyper-sensitive to their perspectives being included as we were already in the middle of the more formal intermediary review process. So, everybody was a lot more conscious of whether or not their views were being incorporated than before that ... so a lot of people went to look for a very particular point … and that's how they approached it rather than looking at the whole document (TSDP 5).

In this way, certain people involved were behaving in a way where they were almost determined to take issue with the processes around sector engagement during this phase. It was as if they had decided ahead of time that because their own priorities were not necessarily reflected, the process could not have been representative or deliberative. This was the case even though definitionally an action plan where cuts and decisions were made

would be more reflective of deliberative behaviors than one where everything that was suggested for consideration was ultimately included.

### 6.5.2 Interpersonal elements

As time has gone on, it has become clear that the motivation shared by many actors during the earlier stages of this process has shifted as competing priorities and discourses around social enterprise and even Scotland's policy future have remerged. The competing and sometimes outright conflicting priorities were no longer masked by discursive tools or a nascent co-production process that kept significant discontent at bay. Because of this, commitment to, and understanding of, the process has by some accounts increased, and in others, decreased. Yet, regardless of where the truth lies within these varied perceptions, these shifting beliefs around the efficacy and suitability of the social enterprise sector's engagement with government has harmed the legitimacy of the process and the trust people hold in it. This is particularly true of intermediaries and delivery partners, but not necessarily those involved in the public sector, or the few social enterprise leaders interviewed as part of this project as well.

From the perspective of one of the public sector actors who was only tangentially involved during the second phase, but who played a direct role in this most recent, current phase, key ecosystem players, particularly in intermediary and delivery organizations, needed to be more willing to see beyond historical arrangements. They believed that there was a perceived lack of trust in the process because people who were always involved were not necessarily most recently. Instead, new voices and organizations emerged with greater platforms for contribution. From this person's perspective, because certain individuals were focused on what had always worked for the sector in the past, or what key points had always

been central to their work, they were potentially stifling new ways of working, engaging, and collaborating across sectors. When speaking about the interpersonal dynamics around the most recent approaches to the process they said:

> People are sharing the future vision and therefore the future actions, so I think that's been great. I don't think it's been without its difficulties or without its flaws, because again, people are at the heart of this … it's messy, but it's effective, it's shared, but there can be conflicts within that … [and external change and innovation] can be hard [to embrace] because you can only really embrace the ideologies of people you've brought into that process and there has to be a recognition that things will be changing outside that process (PSA 7).

This person articulated what they perceived to still be a level of shared motivation for action, particularly within the social enterprise sector even if it has potentially been stifled across sectors. Many others (e.g., SEL 1, 2; TSI 1, 2, 3, and 8; TSDP 1, 2, 5, and 6) widely echoed the view that even if it seemed as though motivation between the social enterprise and public sectors was not necessarily as shared as it once was, within the social enterprise sector itself, that shared motivation existed. Although it was not discussed in quite as many interviews, there was also a belief that the most recent phase of engagement could benefit from more widespread understanding around why the engagement had shifted to occur in the manner it was (PSA 7; TSDP 5). Others suggested that reframing the current phase as one where the public sector was focused on drawing out new opinions and ideas that could strengthen and grow the social enterprise sector, rather than one marked by attempts to exclude certain people whose discourse aligned with more historically rooted conceptions of social enterprise, could help restore trust in the process (TSDP 5, SEL 1, and PSA 2 and 5).

An element of skepticism that a process could have legitimacy if it was only historically focused, sat at the core of this suggestion. At least one person interviewed held the belief that commitment to the process would arise from its ability to propel the sector forward, rather than maintain a particular historical position (TSI 8). In other words, the

interpersonal dynamics that had defined the relationship between the Scottish social enterprise and public sectors needed some disrupting at this stage of their evolution. As one person working within the public sector explained, “You can’t have the same innovative 20 people at the start of a ten-year process contributing to that innovation in the same way because then you’re not recognizing everything that’s going on around that process and outside that process” (PSA 7). Perhaps if more people involved in the process shared this understanding around a ‘legitimate’ process for innovation, not as much discontent within the social enterprise sector would have emerged during this phase of sustaining the work around the social enterprise strategy.

**6.5.3 Functional elements**

It is highly likely that forced shifts in institutional arrangements (i.e., most notably through the intermediary review process) were at the heart of this discontent. These institutional shifts led to procedural changes around the sector’s engagement with government, and many attribute the procedural and institutional variations to variations in public sector leadership across the ten-year delivery period of the strategy (TSDP 1, 2, and 5; PSA 3; TSI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). Indeed, examination of the functional elements contributing to collaborative dynamics in the latest phase highlights that arrangements and leadership, along with the knowledge that comes with certain leaders, was shifting in more dramatic ways than it did during the two preceding phases. The shifting composition of key stakeholder groups is one of the most demonstrable examples of how new public sector leadership influences procedural and institutional arrangements.

Throughout the designing and delivering phases, many organizations, although primarily intermediaries alongside and delivery and public sector partners, were involved in

steering and reference groups that guided engagement between the Scottish Government and social enterprise sector. These same organizational representatives were also included in steering conversations around the 2015, 2017, and 2019 social enterprise censuses. Shifting the procedure for consultation around the second action plan, the Third Sector Division established a Social Enterprise Action Plan Steering Group drawing members 'from key delivery partners across the sector' who are responsible for 'advis[ing] on and influenc[ing] delivery of the action plan' (Scottish Government, 2022). The group had representatives from 11 organizations,[46] which is smaller than previous groups who advised on the strategy, preceding action plan, or varying censuses. This ostensibly made it more accountable and resulted in the group being more deliberate in terms of broad representation across subgroups (TSI 8, TSDP 5).

The group was comprised of a representative from Scottish Government as well as three public sector bodies, two social enterprises, one development trust, three delivery organizations, and Social Enterprise Scotland. Some people interviewed were strong advocates for changed advocacy group composition because they adopted a discourse of co-production as 'fostering innovation' intended to spark new ideas. On the other hand, the those who employed the discourse of co-production as 'promoting equality and inclusion' were frustrated by a process they perceived to be pushing out or excluding particular organizations. Even some who fell into the latter category believed that the inclusion of more social enterprises on the steering group was positive despite its formation after the action plan was already published. The inclusion of frontline enterprises over halfway through the ten-year strategy delivery period was perceived as delayed, and perhaps missing

[46] These groups listed alphabetically are: Dechomai, Firstport, Highlands and Island Enterprise, Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust, Link Group Ltd., Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Government, Social Enterprise Academy, Social Enterprise Scotland, Social Investment Scotland, and South of Scotland Enterprise.

the overall point: engaging individual social enterprises from the 'frontlines' had historically been about diversifying the perspectives of those contributing to policy dialogues (TSI 1). There was a feeling that the Scottish Government could have been less prescriptive about the steering group and associated sub-group topics and membership because while it might have been more inclusive than previous select groups, there was a perception it did little to bring in a wide range of perspectives (TSI 1 and 2; SEL 1). Nevertheless, these frontline enterprises would be able to influence the policy directly with the Scottish Government rather than having to work through the intermediaries to voice perspectives around social enterprise policy as was more emblematic of the model in the preceding two phases (TSDP 5 and 6; SEL 1).

Before more social enterprises got a 'seat at the table,' SENScot was particularly concerned about the lack of influence grassroots social enterprise leaders had in this process, adopting a discourse around 'frontline engagement' that had been operationalized at other points in this process to push for broad consultative processes. They worried that the knowledge and opinions social enterprises had about what should be included and prioritized in the next action plan would be overlooked. According to one person, this is possibly because those involved in setting the procedural and institutional arrangements for the second action plan became more focused on the outputs rather than the process (i.e., generating an action plan and not paying as much attention to why it was being generated and therefore how it should be generated). Thinking back since the release of the first action plan, this person reflected:

> Since then, I think we've lost a little bit of sight of 'has that progressed the sector the way we actually thought it would?' … the action plan and strategy … [are] meant to achieve lots for people who are on the frontline, who have challenges, who are evolving, who have new investment needs. … Now we have the second action plan,

> which I would suggest was much less co-produced. So, how do we get that back? (TSI 1)

This reflection was also linked to the transparency discourse that surrounds co-production. Some foregrounded this concept in their definitions and explanations of co-production. It was these people who perceived processes surrounding the strategy (e.g., how decisions about the content of the second action plan were reached, who was asked to advise on that plan) becoming less transparent and grew disenchanted with the process.

For those who perceived the process during this stage as one that lacked accountability, transparency, and representation, it was the social enterprise sector-led engagement sessions that countered to the wider dwindling engagement trends around this process (TSI 1 and 2). These consultation events are referenced in the second action plan:

> A series of consultation events were undertaken which engaged over 500 social enterprise representatives across the country and written responses were received from almost 300 social enterprises. The development of the action plan was also informed by evidence collected through Scotland's Social Enterprise Census; a biennial analysis of the scale, characteristics and needs of the sector (Scottish Government, 2021a: 10–11).

In this respect, because these events took place, and because there was so much existing research, the shared knowledge both groups possessed about the sector and its directions and priorities was arguably highest during this phase. Yet, the changes in procedural and institutional arrangements designed to facilitate cross-sector collaboration hindered the ability for collective action because not everyone felt included. The announced decrease in funding resources for social enterprise intermediaries during this period also contributed to degradation of the functional elements of this process. Over time, these changes in functional elements and the interpersonal dynamics (e.g., lower trust and questionable legitimacy) combined with a perceived lack of a deliberative process, led to a decrease in

most people's satisfaction with the process surrounding the social enterprise strategy during this phase.

### 6.5.4 Value as the development of accountability

During this third phase, it could be argued that the procedural arrangements had shifted to micro-level forms of co-production, in the form of elevating the perspectives of individual social enterprise leaders. This occurred at the expense of comprehensive meso-level engagement, particularly among all the intermediary and delivery organizations and has contributed to a reduction (at least temporarily) among partners' capacity for joint action. The impact of this was policy that focused a little bit more on the economic contribution of social enterprise, rather than community impact. The shift created the perception among some that the collaborative arrangements had almost disappeared altogether since there was little perceived action from the Scottish Government to build on their earlier innovative management and engagement strategies and/or push for expanded approaches. This in turn led many in the social enterprise sector to believe that the Scottish Government had become less accountable, because often those who had been involved at the start of the phased journey were no longer included in the same manner. At the same time, since the initial processes surrounding the 2016 strategy had come to be accepted as examples of co-production, and since it was designed as a ten-year strategy, it meant that the Scottish Government had to continue to be accountable to the social enterprise sector in some regard even if it was actively shifting its relationship with the sector. To a certain extent, this was a residual form of value creation that did not manifest until this later phase where different people were been pulled into the process as part of altered procedural arrangements.

It could have been seen positively that the same people were not involved if the principles of engagement remained similar; however, these principles seemed to be controlled by shifting public sector actors and when combined with changing actors within the social enterprise sector, turnover posed a potential barrier to effectively sustaining co-production (TSI 3). Someone else working in an intermediary also commented on the key importance of people involved in this process:

> When you lose people who have a good history and knowledge of the journey we've been on, other people have to get up to speed and have to understand the landscape and the politics and the tensions, so that's quite hard. So … we lost a little bit of momentum [when some key people left in the Third Sector Division] … and I think also the voice of the representative bodies was not as valued as it ought to have been (TSI 1).

For this individual, the turnover within the public sector could be conceptualized as a form of value destruction. This was especially true for intermediary and delivery organizations that had historic ties to social enterprise. They therefore had historically informed conceptions of social enterprise as a *concept* or business model, as well as a *sector* on a particular journey that had the potential to be interrupted by new political agendas that were not informed by the same historical context. Early on in this social enterprise policy journey, the social enterprise sector was positioned to drive the agenda, to inform policy through their visioning, and be more proactive in terms of agenda setting. The relationships they developed with key public sector officials ensured actors across both sectors were accountable to one another and shared in the responsibility for driving a process around Scotland's strategy that was representative of the needs and ambitions within the social enterprise sector.

This notion of accountability and representation begs the following questions: Accountable to whom and for whom? And, representative of what? As the Scottish

Government got more involved with the social enterprise sector, and as the strategy and action plans became something ministers had to be comfortable signing off on (PSA 2), the sector was almost forced to push the tent wider and include a broader set of individuals and organizations (TSI 5), often with competing priorities and certainly different histories, to placate to government. With fewer people sitting around the table in throughout the phase of sustaining impacts of the strategy, those not privy to discussions wondered how the steering group was ensuring that the knowledge held among members of previous groups remained. This uncertainty around the process created a perception that the lack of historical knowledge about the journey might lead the public sector to claim even more responsibility for social enterprise policy that used to, at least symbolically, be 'jointly owned.' The shifting ownership discourse emerged through narratives around this phase of the process. These narratives about a loss of accountability via a decline in engagement highlighted far more perceptions of value destruction than creation.

## 6.6 Conclusion

Throughout the process of designing, delivering, and sustaining Scotland's social enterprise strategy, and by the nature of a multi-year process itself, certain groups involved at the beginning were filtered out over time and newer, different perspectives were brought into the core decision-making surrounding strategies and action plans. As this happened, 'co-produced' moments were occurring without a consistent or sustained undercurrent of co-production. Drawing on these moments, public sector discourse around co-production as it related to this process appeared to intensify while multiple co-production discourses emerged. These centered around transparency, facilitating frontline engagement, and fostering innovation. Understanding the underlying assumptions and motivations, or

discourse, of people involved in this process helps explain why it may no longer have been perceived as 'co-production' for those who adopted a discourse out of alignment with public sector rhetoric. Importantly, many actors caveated arguments they made about the collaborative nature of this process at various points, aware how other parties might feel about the current dynamics within the social enterprise sector and between the social enterprise sector and the Scottish Government. This demonstrates how changed collaboration dynamics impacted discourse, which continued to impact dynamics as the process evolved.

This chapter has focused on the evolution of these collaboration dynamics between the Scottish Government and the Scottish social enterprise sector over the past 10 years (2013–2022). In highlighting the collaborative dynamics at play in this case, this chapter provided an insight into the extent to which, and when, various actors perceived the process to be collaborative and how it may have (or not) been of value to them at varying points. Indeed, collaborative governance provides the theoretical underpinnings for how Osborne and colleagues (2022) suggest value creation can be conceptualized at an organizational or meso-level. In this respect, examining the collaboration dynamics through this framework helps highlight where and for whom value might have been created throughout Scotland's process of designing, delivering, and sustaining their social enterprise strategy. Indeed, analysis using Emerson and colleagues' (2012) framework helped identify that value was perceived to be created and/or destroyed through waxing and waning levels of accountability, through resource distribution, and through the process of sector negotiation and priority setting. In the next chapter I explore value creation and destruction over time, rather than in phased increments. This feeds into a broader discussion of what my empirical findings on the Scottish case (explored through Chapters 4, 5, and 6) reveal about policy co-

production and collaborative governance arrangements over time. I then offer further reflection on the implications of these results for public management research more broadly.

# Chapter 7: Social enterprise policy co-production in Scotland

## 7.1 Introduction

Studying policy co-production through the lens of social enterprise policymaking is especially interesting because both the policy area and the style of cooperative and collaborative policymaking have roots in philosophies of community engagement and empowerment (see, for example, Finlayson and Roy, 2019; Jo and Nabatchi, 2018). Additionally, co-production is a political process that can be hindered or facilitated by public policy (Pestoff, 2009). Therefore, where policy areas like social enterprise might, at least in theory, be more predisposed to collaborative arrangements, there is a unique opportunity to study the drivers and facilitators of such arrangements and contexts alongside the dynamics governing the arrangements themselves.

Thus far this thesis has outlined the historical context surrounding general shifts in public management in Scotland while also explaining how unique drivers within the Scottish Third Sector facilitated collaboration between the growing social enterprise movement and Scottish Government. It has then provided in-depth insight into the dynamics informing this collaboration in Chapter 6. This included exploration of when and how those dynamics shifted over time, almost in alignment with different stages of a 'policy cycle' (Howlett et al., 2009) through analysis that revealed 'phases' surrounding the ten-year social enterprise strategy in Scotland. To do this, I used a framework for collaborative governance (Emerson et al., 2012) to help identify nuanced collaboration dynamics that might otherwise be opaque within 'black box' policymaking processes (see West, 2009). In choosing this analytical framework, I was also drawing on scholarship which provides the theoretical basis for

conceptualizations of service-level value creation through organizational learning and the participation of various actors in policy co-production processes (Osborne et al., 2022).

In this chapter, I further analyze the data I presented on policy co-production in Chapter 6. This analysis offers insight into value creation and/or destruction for various actors at different points in time throughout the policy co-production process. A comprehensive discussion of collaboration and value creation in the context of designing, delivering, and sustaining Scotland's social enterprise strategy necessitates a historically informed perspective on the case. Thus, this discussion also revisits Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 to explore the implications of evolving public management approaches in Scotland and the emergence of a social enterprise sector and extensive ecosystem from a movement that used to sit on the fringes of political discourse in Scotland. This discussion approaches social enterprise policy in Scotland from the perspective of content (i.e., dominant discourse) and process (i.e., extent of public participation).

## 7.2 Social enterprise and the Scottish Government: Collaborative governance drivers, outputs, and implications for action

Discourse associated with social enterprise policy is communicated in different ways as political positions and reference points shift. Therefore, to understand how and why those shifts occur, it is essential to account for 'critical junctures' informing the socio-political context in which those shifts emerge.[47] Critical junctures relate to the concept of 'distal historical causation,' which is the notion that historic events and developments in the distant past can have critically important impact on future outcomes (Capoccia, 2016). Similar to key

[47] The concept of critical junctures is rooted in historical institutionalism and 'often applied in the analysis of the historical development of institutions, broadly defined as including organizations, formal rules, public policies, as well as larger configurations of connected institutional arrangements such as political regimes and political economies' (Capoccia, 2016: 89). Critical Theory, particularly that of Habermas, is concerned with political institutions to a certain extent and therefore using this concept is aligned with this wider project.

historical events, except conceptualized more broadly, the critical junctures concept can help explain the evolution of social enterprise and collaborative management discourse in Scotland. On another level, identification of these critical junctures can also help account for drivers and conditions that led to the collaborative development and delivery around the 2016 social enterprise strategy. Utilizing approaches similar to 'post hoc plausibilization' (viz. Dey and Teasdale, 2013) I analyzed my data, particularly the arguments emerging through participant discourses around collaboration and co-production, to improve understanding of the foundations which might be necessary to drive collaborative social enterprise policy development processes forward. This approach also helped explain how and why underlying assumptions and motivations around co-production and collaborative governance shift over time. New knowledge in this arena can increase transparency around future collaborative policy design and delivery processes both in Scotland and in other national contexts.

### 7.2.1 Critical junctures and drivers of collaboration

As explored throughout Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, there were important antecedents to the development of the 2016 social enterprise strategy in Scotland. Some of these were political, such as the SNP coming into power in 2007 and then their landslide election in 2011, putting them in the position of a majority government. Others were less 'party political' in nature; they were nevertheless influenced by the political climate. For example, when the SNP came into their position as a majority government, something of a tacit license for public sector officials to engage more broadly with civil society started to emerge. Across sectors, people were engaging with broader thought experiments and questions around what a future for an independent Scotland might entail. In the context of Sabatier and Weible's (2019) theory around advocacy coalitions, these factors influencing the broader political and

socioeconomic system—both those parameters that are traditionally more stable like a system of devolved governance or those external system events that are more susceptible to change such as the election of a new majority political party—impacted the way 'social enterprise advocacy coalitions' were able to influence policy specialists and brokers within the Scottish third sector policy subsystem.

Conversations that transpired between civil servants and leaders within the social enterprise movement at SEWF 2013 in Calgary, which built off this political climate and system, held a prominent position in the narratives of many interviewed for this research. In these narratives, the undercurrent of envisioning the future for an independent Scotland that was running through Scottish Government policymaking at the time was linked to the way delegates from Scotland were inspired by the multigenerational planning of First Nations businesses they were exposed to while at SEWF. For them, SEWF 2013 was a critical juncture, but its importance as a key event in the history of Scotland's social enterprise policy was only solidified because of the political undercurrent at the time. Since SEWF 2013 was immediately prior to Scotland's independence referendum of 2014, that undercurrent of independence ignited conversations about the transformative potential of an enduring social enterprise policy.

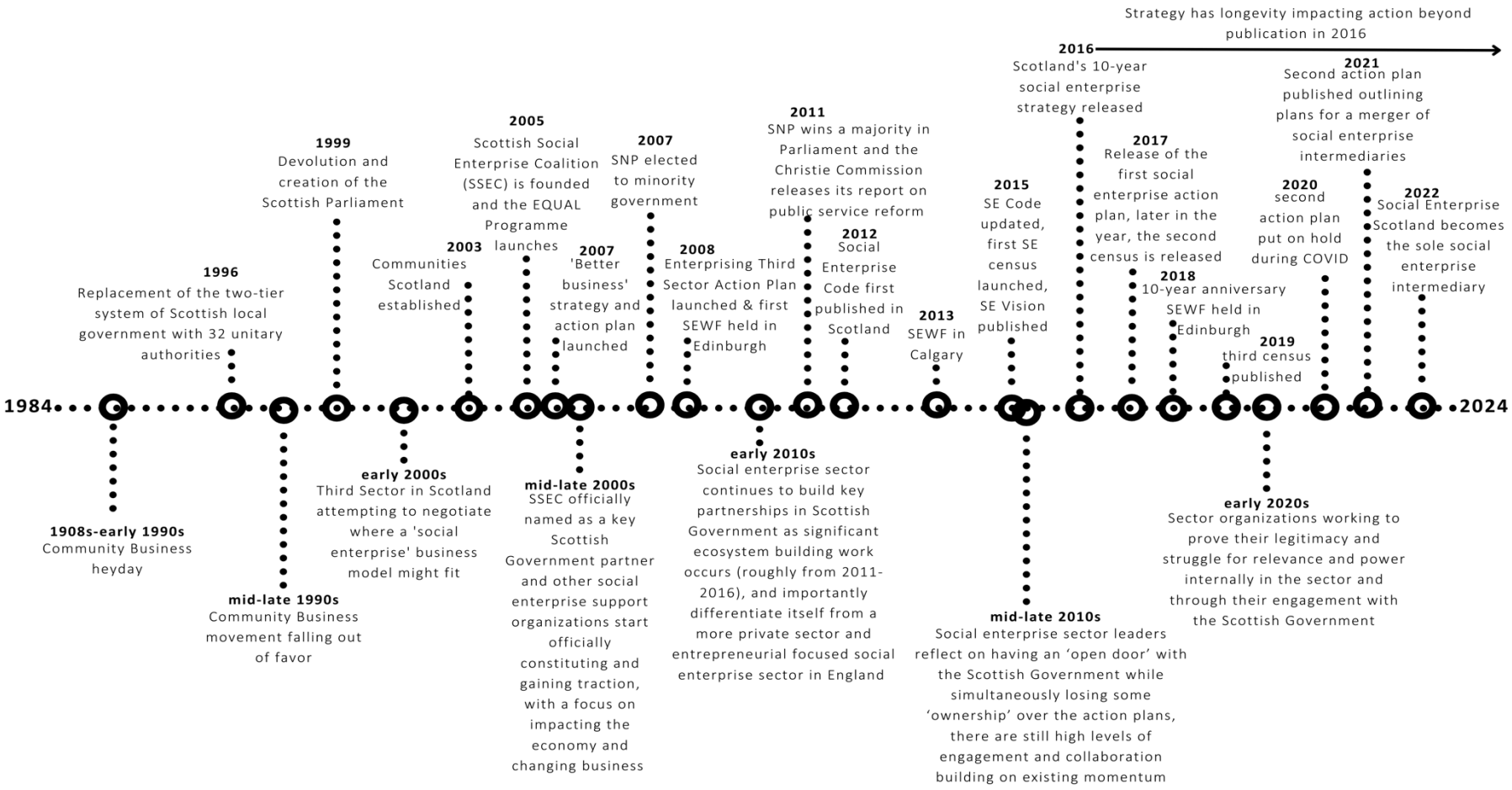
In exploring the different phases associated with the design and delivery of Scotland's strategy, Chapter 6 also highlighted other critical junctures in the form of publication of key policy documents. The discourse surrounding social enterprise among practitioners with different backgrounds and perspectives on the movement had to be negotiated throughout the development of these strategies and action plans. As the processes surrounding the development of these policy documents evolved, the changing socio-political context also impacted practitioner discourse. In other words, it was not just

historic assumptions and motivations around social enterprise influencing competing discourse, but also the dominant positioning of social enterprise in what was then the current political context. Consequently, both contemporary and historic social enterprise discourses were ultimately influencing the discursive themes that emerged through these policy documents. This manifestation of social enterprise discourse, in turn impacted practitioner discourse around co-production after the publication of these documents. In particular, the impact of policy on the discourse of those working for third sector intermediaries, delivery organizations, and even grassroots social enterprises was especially evident when the policy documents were directly linked to resource allocation. Thus, critical junctures where financial resources were at stake (e.g., the 2017 and 2021 social enterprise action plans) appeared to have an outsized impact on practitioner discourse and their perceptions of collaboration.

To visually outline these critical junctures insofar as they relate to collaborative social enterprise policy development and delivery in Scotland, I present a timeline[48] of these events in Figure 7.1. As the events listed in this figure suggest, not all these junctures were necessarily facilitators of collaboration. COVID-19, for example, aligned with shifts where there was a decline in tangible avenues for participation in the policy design and delivery process and at least *collective* co-production engagement decreased (Bovaird et al., 2015, 2016). On the other hand, external political factors like the SNP's election into a majority

[48] An earlier version of this timeline was developed via desk-based research before I began interviews with key individuals involved with the historical development of social enterprise policy and the social enterprise movement more broadly in Scotland. I included it in an interview guide sheet (see Appendix D) which participants could reference throughout the interviews (see Chapter 3 to review details regarding my interview methods). While not all participants referenced the timeline, some did comment on it, usually highlighting other events, elections, and/or publications, which for them held a particular salience in the context of Scotland's social enterprise policy narrative. These have been added and presented in Figure 7.1. Additionally, through further archival research and analysis of interviews even when participants did not directly reference my provided timeline, I was able to add other moments to this timeline. I believe these moments hold key significance and are contextually important.

***Figure 7.1: A timeline of critical junctures in Scotland's collaborative social enterprise policy development and delivery narrative***



government in 2011, is an example of a critical juncture which dramatically accelerated the creation of an 'enabling environment' for collaborative and broad policy engagement between the Scottish Government and the social enterprise sector.

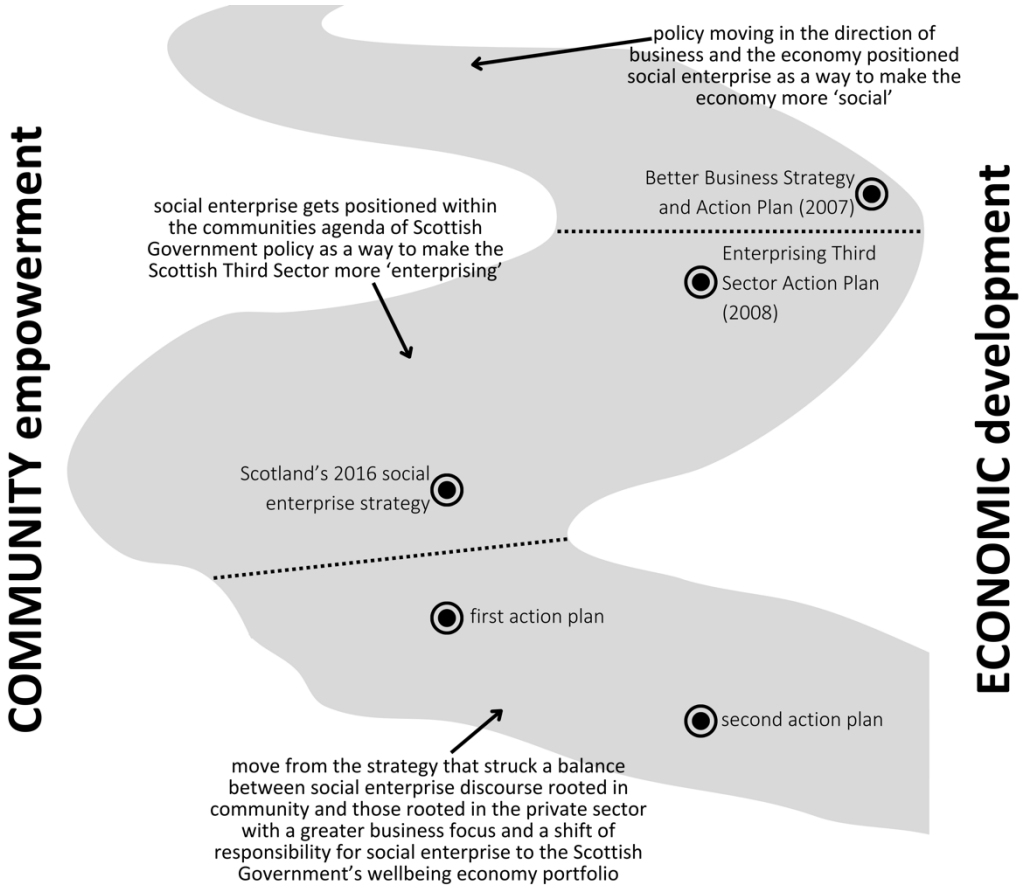
Perhaps any of these events noted within this timeline could have impacted discursive shifts around social enterprise, social enterprise policy, and policy co-production. Yet, the aim of this thesis is not to isolate which events may or may not have played the most significant roles in Scotland's social enterprise policy evolution. Nor is it to necessarily suggest causation between any of these critical junctures and discursive shifts. Shifts in discourse are indeed more easily identified over time instead of in response to any particular event, tied to allocated resources or otherwise. Rather, this thesis is arguably the most complete account of social enterprise policy evolution in Scotland written to date. In this respect, chronicling key events in the evolution of Scotland's social enterprise policies is significant in and of itself; however, there is potential to extend the significance and impact of this historical presentation. I aim to build on this significance by discussing how the combination of various junctures may correlate with dominant socio-political discourse, particularly discursive shifts around social enterprise and policy co-production in Scotland.

### 7.2.2 Manifestations of social enterprise discourse in policy outputs

The lower half of the timeline presented in Figure 7.1 adds a level of detail surrounding the loose and arguably overlapping phases through which the Community Business and then social enterprise movements moved. It notes various priorities held by key leaders within the movements and attempts to capture the essence of the relationships between the Scottish Third Sector and/or movement and the public sector. The figure is insufficient in that the straight-line depiction fails to fully capture the oscillations of social enterprise discourse

during that time. Through my analysis, I observed discursive shifts between social enterprise as 'community empowerment' and social enterprise as a 'sustainable means of economic development.' Essentially, this is oscillatory movement between social enterprise's original roots within the community sector, at least in Scotland, and perhaps what was a desire held by some within Scotland to use the language of the private sector to perhaps gain greater influence and legitimacy (i.e., using social enterprise as a tool of economic transformation). Figure 7.2 illustrates this movement down a metaphorical social enterprise policy river with these seemingly oppositional discourses sitting on the river's banks. As the river flows downward, or as policy around social enterprise in Scotland developed over time, it moved through porous phases. Extending this metaphor, I mean that these were phases where the

***Figure 7.2: Phases of social enterprise policy development in Scotland in relation to dominant discourse on social enterprise***



discursive currents could easily move back and forth making the delineations along the river more fluid rather than fixed. Importantly, the direction of policy travel tended to shift back and forth between these two dominant discourses around social enterprise. This oscillation is an accurate representation of the progression of social enterprise discourse in Scotland at least insofar as it manifested within key policy documents and the public sector.[49]

More recently, there have been two additional key events that are likely to hold significance for the future direction of policy: the move to a single intermediary body for social enterprise and the move of the responsibility for social enterprise within the Scottish Government from the communities to the economy portfolio. These critical junctures suggest that policy will continue to flow in a direction that reinforces social enterprise discourse that is increasingly about the economy and social enterprise as an influencer of 'mainstream' or profit-driven business. Interestingly, previous research highlighted support from within the Scottish social enterprise sector for a more critical review of where the Scottish Government was allocating resources so that it could more appropriately reflect the direction of policy (Mazzei and Roy, 2017). It could be argued that as Scottish Government policy, particularly in relation to the third sector, shifted more toward a focus on the economy and traditional commercial impact, this critical review of spending came in the form of the intermediary review process so that funding was channeled to intermediaries more allied with these discursive trends in social enterprise policy.

Aligned with this pattern, other scholars have identified possible encroachment of private sector discourse and rhetoric on social enterprise (Dey and Teasdale, 2013). This

[49] This figurative representation charting the evolution and emphasis around social enterprise in policy documents may not map directly to the way practitioner discourse evolved; however, as seen with the social enterprise strategy and subsequent action plans in particular, the discourse of social enterprise practitioners and how social enterprise is positioned within the policy context is linked.

phenomenon is not new: Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) and Dart (2004) were discussing trends toward marketization and privitization that could be detrimental to social enterprise and civil society more broadly back in when the concept of 'social enterprise' was just starting to gather interest in Scotland. Yet the social enterprise movement in Scotland has not followed a predetermined linear path where it moved from a 'community' to a 'business' focus (at least discursively) without contestation. The perception that the Scottish Government has, especially more recently through the process of the second action plan, guided the sector toward a particular set of values aligned more closely with business rhetoric rather than social enterprise's community orientation undoubtably exists (Roy, 2022). The characterization of more recent Scottish Government policy decisions is not unfounded as they do indeed more closely align with discourse of social enterprise as an economic tool and a mediator of profit-seeking business. Beyond discourse, institutional arrangements around social enterprise potentially position the sector as a 'governable terrain' for public sector actors (Carmel and Harlock, 2008) to embed their own assumptions about social enterprise and motivations for the sector's future trajectory within the social enterprise ecosystem.

At the same time, I argue the emotionally laden reactions to these recent policy decisions do not fully account for the more comprehensive historic trajectory of social enterprise policy development in Scotland. Instead, they primarily consider the most recent 'bend in the river' that emerged soon after the release of the 2016 strategy. Looking back further to the first national policy and action plan for social enterprise published under the Scottish Executive, it could be argued that the current state of policy more carefully balances and negotiates competing discourse around social enterprise than some of the first attempts at Scottish social enterprise policy did. The continued evolution of policy has been about this

balance and negotiation. This has not necessarily been detrimental to forward momentum and progress within the sector; some could even argue it has accelerated the sector's advancement and legitimacy by ensuring social enterprise stayed on policy agendas irrespective of dominant political discourse and policy priorities at any given time (Dey and Teasdale, 2016). Other scholars have referred to this as the ''schizophrenic' or chameleon-like nature of social enterprise [that] seems to offer significant utility as a policy tool, while also providing social enterprises with a tactical advantage to position them favourably' (Mazzei and Roy, 2017: 2451).

As social enterprise advocates began to shape the concept for favorable political positioning, the different roots and philosophies from which 'social enterprise' emerged (i.e., the tradition of community business) had a persistent influence. To this day, there is a conflict between notions of radical local engagement and local democracy and radical changing of business models and a transformation of the private sector. Essentially, the consistently cited hybridity around social enterprise and the third sector (e.g., Brandsen et al., 2005; Doherty et al., 2014; Donnelly-Cox, 2015) also contributes to its challenges in Scotland where the sector is divided around whether the best way to have social enterprise radically change society is through doubling down on efforts in local communities and looking internally within the Scottish Third Sector or by focusing energy on offering an alternative to business within the private sector. In other words, to which area of the economy does social enterprise offer an alternative vision? Community or business? These questions have become increasingly relevant in the context of the Scottish Government's restructure in 2023 where the responsibility for social enterprise was moved into the Wellbeing Economy portfolio (Martin, 2023; Westwater, 2023). Perhaps returning to the 'broad church' and 'three-legged stool' discourses around the Scottish social enterprise

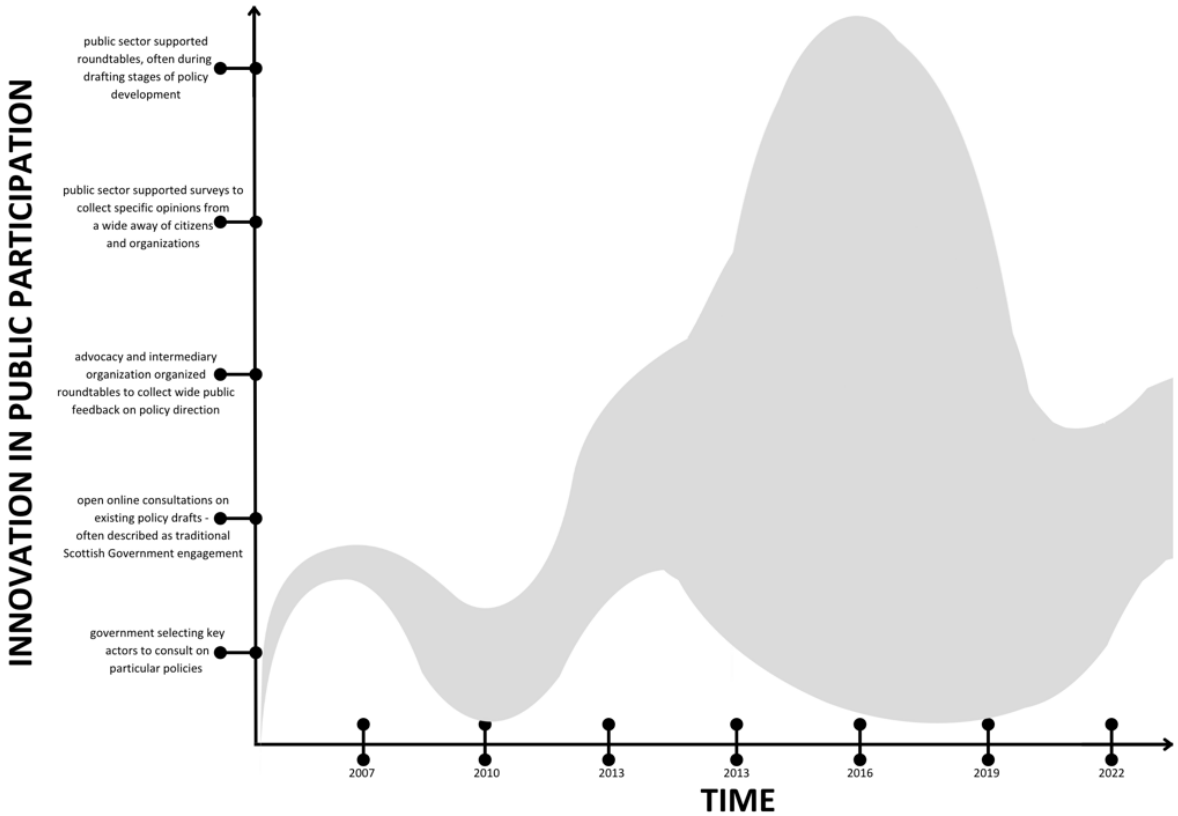
sector might provide a basis for the sector to unite in the name of greater policy opportunities and sectoral gains even amid ongoing underlying tensions. Indeed, throughout its history, elastic discourse has helped hold Scotland's social enterprise sector together. It has also facilitated the perception that while there was debate about alternative visions for the sector and where social enterprise could, and importantly *should*, influence society, most actors within the sector still consistently believed there was enough common ground on which they could continue moving forward despite any underlying conflicts (TSI 1; TSDP 1 and 6).

**7.2.3 Action and cross-sector participation over time**

The Scottish social enterprise sector's ability to navigate shifting political priorities, especially policy thinking that juxtaposes community and economy and fluctuates between its prioritization of the two, has led the sector on a course that does not have a clear trajectory. The shifting collaborative governance dynamics, especially the interpersonal dynamics contributing to power imbalances between the public and social enterprise sectors and among organizations within the social enterprise sector itself, also influence what could be described as a level of uncertainty around where the Scottish social enterprise sector is headed. Indeed, just as dominant discourse around social enterprise has oscillated, so have the collaborative governance arrangements for social enterprise policy design and delivery. Thus, while the linear timeline presented in Figure 7.1 provides important chronological context, it also fails to accurately reflect the progression of policy co-production. The co-production in this case was neither static nor linear and could be more accurately described as moving in waves.

In the context of collaborative governance, the fluctuation is between more and less participatory forms of engagement which have the potential to disrupt other traditional forms of policymaking and public sector consultation by responding to 'the urgent need for policy innovation … [through] processes of collaborative interaction' (Torfing and Ansell, 2017: 38). Considering the democratic paradigm of social innovation where innovative practices have the potential to disrupt unjust power imbalances (Montgomery, 2016), the more participatory a particular public management approach is, the more I consider it to be emblematic of socially innovative management practices. I therefore position various documented forms of cross-sector policy collaboration between the social enterprise and public sectors in Scotland on a scale from least to most innovation in terms of public participation in Figure 7.3. Continuing with the water metaphor from Figure 7.2, Figure 7.3 thus illustrates a 'wave' of co-production around Scottish social enterprise policy over time.

***Figure 7.3: Engagement around Scottish social enterprise policy — a co-production wave***



In the figure, the shaded area of the wave represents the zone of engagement between the social enterprise sector and the public sector. It was not really until 2013 and SEWF in Calgary when that engagement started to expand. After the 2016 strategy was published, the frequency of more participatory and transformative types of engagement started to decrease as the Scottish Government took up more ownership over the delivery of the action plans. Then, in 2020 with COVID-19 and some overt changes in the way the Scottish Government decided to formally engage with the social enterprise delivery agencies, intermediaries, and practitioners, this zone of engagement tightened more noticeably. Compared to the level of engagement that preceded it, this was understandably perceived to be a significant decline; however, within the broader context of Scotland's history of social enterprise policy, the sector still had more opportunity to engage with the Scottish Government around social enterprise policy than they did in the early days of its development.

That said, the argument that some opportunities for engagement, or a few open doors, are better than none, is not especially compelling. What Figure 7.3 helps demonstrate is the sheer decrease in engagement reflecting a shift in management approaches that are arguably less socially innovative. I found that when practitioners in the social enterprise sector, and even to a certain extent the public sector, were making arguments about current levels of cross-sector engagement and participation in social enterprise policy, their discontent was more closely connected to this comparative decrease rather than the observable scale and scope of current engagement. Perceptions around what had been 'lost' were hard to untangle from current policy engagement narratives. I identified this through my first two rounds of critical discourse analysis and narrative theme coding. After, I wanted

to test whether the notion of ‘collaboration dynamics’ could perhaps help explain what had gone on and why narratives around collaboration had shifted so dramatically.

Indeed, collaboration dynamics have altered in what I identified as the final phase of ‘sustaining’ Scotland’s strategy. Yet, as Emerson and colleagues' (2012) framework for collaborative governance suggests, the impacts of actions within a collaborative governance regime lead to the alteration of collaborative dynamics. Therefore, understanding the perceived impacts of various actions is important. Notably, most everyone interviewed discussed and acknowledged recent shifts in collaboration dynamics, but some predicated these changes in a positive way while the majority perceived them negatively. Specifically, the most recent phase of engagement around the second social enterprise action plan was only considered to be emblematic of ‘co-production’ by a few individuals interviewed for this research. The more pervasive narrative was one of increasing public sector control over a process in which those within the social enterprise sector slowly lost confidence.

There was also a connection between perceptions of ‘co-production’ and social enterprise discourse. For example, while most people used mitigation strategies to discuss procedural changes they interpreted as negative over time, a vocal minority of those I interviewed were more overt in their approach to intensification around negatively predicated statements related to the final phase. From a different perspective, certain people leading social enterprise delivery organizations and a social enterprise had perceptions around the process associated with developing and delivering the second action plan that were positive. These two delivery partners were working for organizations focused on supporting social entrepreneurs on their social enterprise journeys. Importantly their focus was more on the *entrepreneurs*, rather than the *enterprise*. It could be argued that therefore, at least based on the perspective of their delivery organization, their thinking

around social enterprise would more closely align with the 'economic development' social enterprise discourse rather than that of community empowerment. Thus, in perceiving benefits for individual entrepreneurs based on the discursive direction of travel of social enterprise policy in Scotland (see Figure 7.2), they were more likely to support the collaborative governance arrangements influencing collaboration during this third phase.

On the other hand, the organizations and individuals who subscribed to a particular view of social enterprise that is rooted in communities positioned this process in the third phase as a 'crowding out' of their views. This perception is nuanced, because at least one social enterprise leader representing organizational interests that were more closely aligned with community empowerment also seemed pleased with the evolution of the collaboration at this stage. They did not think the process was better for the sector overall, but they personally did not feel excluded because for the first time since conversations around the strategy began, they could finally see their key priorities for the sector reflected in social enterprise policy language. Perhaps in this respect, it might be more accurate to conclude individual orientations toward various policy discourses—in this case social enterprise as community empowerment or as economic development—impacted tendencies to accept trends toward individual over collective co-production approaches. This finding aligns with McMullin's (2023b) research highlighting how approaches to individual or collective co-production are influenced by public values that characterize groups and communities. And while it could be argued that these individuals may reject a process that does not align with their values even if the resulting outcomes and policy content are desirable on other metrics, Innes and Booher (1999) argue that process cannot be separated from outcomes during collaborative consensus building exercises like this because they are ultimately intertwined.

Therefore, the relationship between co-production discourse and narratives surrounding the state of Scottish social enterprise policy is revealing. That is, at least from 2016, discourse around social enterprise policy in Scotland became inextricably intertwined with co-production discourse, regardless of underlying perceptions and opinions about 'co-production' people held. This has in turn influenced how key actors in Scotland retrospectively reflect upon the history of social enterprise policy and present-day engagement between the Scottish Government and the social enterprise sector. They use the lens of co-production to inform many of the narratives they craft about this collaborative (or not) engagement, and constantly position various phases of engagement in the context of ones preceding or following them. In this respect, it is possible to identify moments of co-production throughout the process and highlight where engagement may be more emblematic of partnership rather than 'co-production' (either as defined in the literature or perceived by those involved in the process). Yet, this is only possible because other phases and the discourse informing narratives associated with them were analyzed. Indeed, perceptions of reality are contingent upon historical interpretations that shape how both individuals and groups experience the present and the future. As Patterson and Monroe (1998) note, 'Insofar as narratives affect our perceptions of political reality, which in turn affect our actions in response to or in anticipation of political events, narrative plays a critical role in the construction of political behavior' (315–316).

## 7.3 Dynamic persistence of community policy

Arguably, part of the reason Scottish social enterprise policy discourse has become linked with discourse around co-production is related to explicit narratives crafted to position and market Scottish social enterprise policy as emblematic of innovative political processes. This

positioning around 'innovation' is political in and of itself because it helps mask a lack of development around policy content. In Scotland, discourse of community is pervasive in the public sector and the references to 'community' within Scottish policies are abundant. Documents referencing collaborative policymaking and service design with communities also proliferate Scottish Government publications (e.g., Enterprise & Skills Strategic Board, 2018; Scottish Government and Digital Scotland, 2019). Against this community-focused policy backdrop, those interviewed for this project noted how the current social enterprise sector emerged from within the community sector (TSI 3 and 5), slowly establishing itself as a 'third leg' of the 'third sector stool' (TSI 2). This emergence coupled with the Scottish Government's desire to emphasize 'community' through its policies and policymaking approaches made the social enterprise sector a promising partner for advancing successive iterations of Scottish Government community policy.

This seemingly natural partnership was also likely, at least in part, facilitated by the responsibility for social enterprise resting within communities and the Third Sector Division with ties to the equalities agenda, since both the equalities and third sector remits had come together under an enlarged division. The Third Sector Division also had historic ties to community engagement since the remit sat there for some time before moving under public service reform. For some, the community and third sector would be considered a very natural home for social enterprise in government. Others I interviewed indicated they had different—although this was sometimes articulated as 'bigger'—ambitions for social enterprise and hopes that it would become more 'mainstream' within the business and economic policy agendas (PSA 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7; TSI 8; SEL 2; TSDP 5). Most of these individuals did not indicate the social enterprise sector was stifled by its 'relegation' to communities within the Scottish Government departmental organization, although a couple

did (PSA 3 and 6). For the majority, these comments about the social enterprise sector not reaching its full potential, were more about the sector not pushing beyond historical support programs and policy connection to community. These comments were not necessarily direct indictments of where policy responsibility sat within the Scottish Government and therefore how it was prioritized within the public sector. Instead, more people I spoke to suggested the social enterprise sector was not being ambitious enough in its advocacy for social enterprise, opposed to implying the public sector was inadequately supporting social enterprise within 'mainstream' policy arenas like business and the economy.

Regardless of which sector might be deemed more responsible for social enterprise's placement within the Scottish Government, both in terms of organizational and policy hierarchy, there is evidence for the claim that social enterprise has not advanced as much as it perhaps could have. At a policy and programmatic level, the thematic priorities for supporting and strengthening social enterprise in Scotland have hardly shifted in what is now nearly a 20-year period. Table 7.1 shows what these priority themes were as articulated within the key Scottish social enterprise policies and programs (i.e., the EQUAL Programme, the 2007 social enterprise strategy and action plan, the *Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008–2011*, S*cotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026*, and its associated first and second action plans). I also included the key themes from the sector's 2015 vision document since many interviewed connected the content of the vision and the eventual strategy.[50]

[50] "Internationalising Social Enterprise: A Strategy for Scotland" was released in 2016 and influential in the overall policy trajectory for Scottish social enterprise; however, its focus on internationalization sits in contrast to the other documents listed in Table 7.1 which had more of an internal focus on how to support and strengthen the Scottish social enterprise on a domestic level. This international strategy running in parallel to the national strategy in 2016 influenced the overall context around collaboration and co-production between the social enterprise sector and the Scottish Government. Still, with a more narrowly defined focus, it is to be expected that its strategic priorities of global citizenship, trade, investment, and education (Scottish Government, 2016a) would not have the same level of thematic overlap as what is observed between the content of other key social enterprise policies and programs in Scotland that are displayed in Table 7.1.

***Table 7.1: Themes within Scottish Government's social enterprise policies and programs***

| YEAR | POLICY / PROGRAM | THEMES |
|---|---|---|
| 2005 – 2008 | EQUAL | • Partnership and Procurement<br>• Access to Finance<br>• Business Development<br>• Quality and Impact<br>• Raising the Profile |
| 2007 – 2008 | Better business: A strategy and action plan for social enterprise in Scotland | • Raising the profile and proving the value of social enterprise<br>• Opening up markets to social enterprise<br>• Increasing the range of finance available to develop social enterprise<br>• Developing the trading capacity of social enterprises by providing better business support<br>• Monitoring the strategy and putting it in place |
| 2008 – 2011 | Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan | • Opening markets to an enterprising third sector<br>• Investing more intelligently<br>• Promoting social entrepreneurship<br>• Investing in skills, learning, and leadership across the third sector<br>• Providing support for business growth<br>• Raising the profile of enterprise in the third sector<br>• Developing the evidence base |
| *2015* | *Scotland's Vision for Social Enterprise 2025* | • *Building a movement that is more confident, more coherent, and more wide-reaching in Scotland*<br>• *Building capability through a combination of investment, business support and leadership development*<br>• *Building markets that are open to social enterprises and in which they can thrive* |
| 2016 – 2026 | Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026 | • Stimulating social enterprise (through local development, entrepreneurship and innovation, social enterprise in education, and national recognition)<br>• Developing stronger organizations (through social finance, business support, collaboration, workforce and leadership development, demonstrating social value)<br>• Realizing market opportunity (public, consumer, and business markets) |
| 2017 – 2020 | Building a sustainable social enterprise sector in Scotland: Action plan 2017-20 | 92 actions across three priority areas:<br>• Stimulating social enterprise<br>• Developing stronger organizations<br>• Realizing market opportunity |
| 2021 – 2024 | Inclusive growth through social enterprise: Scotland's Social Enterprise Action Plan / 2021-2024 | 27 actions across three priority areas:<br>• Stimulating social enterprise<br>• Developing stronger organizations<br>• Realizing market opportunity |

While these thematic priorities were consolidated in 2016 to focus on three key pillars of stimulating social enterprise, developing stronger organizations, and realizing market opportunity, these pillars encapsulate the five key EQUAL themes that were deemed to be key priority areas for social enterprise over ten years prior to the publication of the 2016 strategy. The first pillar of the 2016 strategy is 'stimulating social enterprise,' and it covers the 'raising the profile,' 'quality and impact,' and 'partnership and procurement' themes from EQUAL. 'Access to finance,' 'business development,' and 'quality and impact' as they relate to EQUAL are covered under the strategy's second 'developing strong organisations' pillar. Finally, under the 'realising market opportunity' pillar, EQUAL's 'partnership and procurement,' and 'raising the profile' focus areas would also apply. The 'raising the profile' language also emerges word-for-word in the 2007 strategy and action plan as well at the 2008 action plan, while other topics like market access, social finance, and business support and development bear striking similarity to terminology used in previous policy documents and associated programs. Despite the high levels of thematic convergence among the strategic focus areas for these key social enterprise policies and programs, there is some level of observable evolution. The introduction of discourse on marketization (e.g., strategic priorities like 'opening up markets to social enterprise' or 'realising market opportunity') is perhaps most notable when examining the thematic progression of social enterprise policy in Scotland. The introduction of 'market' terminology and associated private sector discourse is more elusive than the overt introduction of terminology might initially suggest. As already mentioned, some of the work with EQUAL would fit into present-day policy and service provision designed to help social enterprises realize market opportunities. Therefore, the discursive evolution around the content of social enterprise policies and programs in Scotland is not about a dramatic thematic

departure or innovative change from some of mid-2000s policy focus. Instead, it is more emblematic of a subtle shift in what gets foregrounded in core thematic priority areas or pillars instead of being included under broader themes.

Thus, as policy context and styles of policymaking may have changed with each of these programs and policies, the content and to a certain extent even the focal points of the documents themselves, remained relatively consistent. Despite this consistency, the ten-year social enterprise strategy was, in many ways, packaged as something new. Either inadvertently or intentionally it could be seen as a symbol in and of itself: a symbol for a bigger and better social enterprise sector in Scotland and for an innovative and forward-looking Scotland on the international stage. Although, in approaching the development of social enterprise policy in Scotland through a historical lens, it is evident that what was new and innovative about the 2016 strategy was not the content itself. In fact, the content is far more emblematic of 'dynamic persistence' as introduced by Nicholls and Teasdale (2021) in the context of policy instruments. This concept 'reflects the complex relationship between policy instrument stability and political change' where a policy instrument is positioned as a persistent solution within a dynamic context with dynamic ideas about how an instrument might be used (Nicholls and Teasdale, 2021: 2). The themes outlined in Table 7.1 could be considered policy instruments in the broadest sense in that these strategic focal 'themes' allude to programs or approaches (e.g., social finance options, business support) that could help address policy problems. In this case, the 'problem' would have been a social enterprise sector that was not reaching its full potential, that, when enabled, could be part of the solution to other policy problems. In the context of other policy problems, 'social enterprise' could also be conceptualized as a policy instrument.

A more traditional reactive approach to policymaking considers policy instruments to be the devices policymakers use to help solve problems, but there is also scholarship explaining the paradoxical relationship observed in policymaking where policy solutions can be developed ex-ante, adopted by groups who then advocate for a particular policy instrument, and used to pursue particular problems (Simons and Voß, 2018). These groups or, instrument constituencies, help explain how considering policy instruments as more mechanical 'tools' does not fully capture the webs of practices existing behind policy instruments to formulate, develop, test, disseminate, and implement any instrument (Voß and Simons, 2014), thus giving them 'their own social histories and trajectories' (Simons and Voß, 2018: 16). Instrument constituencies also have application for instrumental models of governance more generally, such as deliberative democracy or approaches to participation like co-production or citizen panels (see Amelung and Grabner, 2017; Voß and Amelung, 2016). These constituencies 'imbue policy solutions with a life of their own' creating demand for the instruments and ensuring their continued persistence and dominance within political discourse (Nicholls and Teasdale, 2021: 2).

In tracing the social history and trajectory of Scottish social enterprises policies and programs, there is a persistence to the programs and services designed to strengthen the social enterprise sector (i.e., as policy instruments that offer a solution to the problem of a social enterprise sector that could be stronger). Conceptualized differently, there is also a persistence of social enterprise as a broad policy solution to address public service reform, community wealth building, community regeneration, or whatever the 'policy problem of the day' happens to be. In essence, this positioning would suggest 'social enterprise' is a policy instrument developed independently of a particular policy problem and sustained with minimal discursive shifts, at least in this context. It was then adopted by both those

within the social enterprise sector, and sometimes key public sector champions who were able to position social enterprise as a 'new' solution in the context of changing political landscapes, embracing strategies associated with 'policy entrepreneurship' (Cairney, 2018).

Regardless of the conceptualization of policy instruments as solutions to problems (i.e., the thematic programs and services designed to strengthen the social enterprise sector) or solutions being generated independently of them (i.e., social enterprise being positioned retroactively to assist with public service reform, community wealth building, community regeneration, or whatever the 'policy problem of the day' happens to be) ideas around both how social enterprises can benefit communities and how social enterprise can best be enabled to thrive remain relatively consistent. On one level, social enterprise is continuing to be pedaled by actors across sectors as a new solution to ongoing policy problems. On the other hand, social enterprise is an enduring concept with deep historical roots in Scotland, and roots that the social enterprise sector started to battle over as they tried to discursively shape the concept of social enterprise to adapt to current public policy discourse.

Therefore, when seeking to answer the second central question to this thesis around how key actors came together across a set of shared principles, the answer is that in many ways the principles existed beforehand. This is not necessarily a bad thing: there is often a newness bias, a bias toward policy 'innovation' both in terms of content and in terms of process as necessitating new and different action to be better (Godin and Vinck, 2017). At the same time, if the pillars of support for social enterprise that were articulated through the EQUAL project truly remained those that would continue to transform the potential of social enterprise in Scotland, maybe the innovative support programs conceived of that project just needed to be sustained. That is, having a dynamic persistence around social

enterprise policy ensured the social enterprise sector could continue on a positive trajectory, focusing on the key underlying factors to its success. Simultaneously, it could be positioned as something 'new' to avoid the development of truly new support programs, which might inadvertently counteract support that was already effective. At the same time, it is just as possible to make the argument that if the ambitions developed for social enterprise in Scotland, those which emerged through the social enterprise strategy in 2016, were strikingly similar to those which were ambitions for social enterprise ten years prior, perhaps there was not enough ambition for what social enterprise could be when supported sufficiently.

Either way, the principles underpinning the 2016 strategy did not emerge in 2015 during the multitude of engagement activities surrounding strategy development, nor did they really emerge through the sector-led social enterprise vision in 2015. Effectively, they were already deeply engrained in the discourse around social enterprise support and the trajectory for social enterprise in Scotland; they had been for 10 years. Perhaps what facilitated the sector's convergence around these principles was the persistence of the pillars and the time through which key supporters would have generated a level of relative comfort with the 2016 strategy's pillars. This relative stability might have also enabled social enterprise advocates to keep their advocacy efforts coherent and avoid schisms that could stall policy efforts. Indeed, 'The core of [an advocacy coalition's] belief system, consisting of views on the nature of humankind and the ultimate desired state of affairs, is quite stable and holds the coalition together' (Howlett et al., 2009: 83).

At the same time, advocacy coalition theory researchers have found that coalitions based on normative core beliefs that are narrow in nature may struggle to facilitate policy innovation because their reach in society is insufficient (Ansell et al., 2009). There is

therefore an empirical basis for forming broad-based coalitions where negotiation is required to reach consensus, including perhaps when alterations in an existing coalition's belief system leads to competing priorities and agendas. Collaborative governance theory recognizes that 'Consensus-based policy coalitions that link problems, solutions and political opinions in contingent ways may be formed through bargaining processes that eventually lead to policy innovation' (Torfing and Ansell, 2017: 43). Frameworks of collaborative governance used as analytical tools (viz. Emerson et al., 2012) can also help add a level of nuance to dynamic processes of negotiation inherent in governance.

There was a dynamism to the governance process surrounding Scotland's social enterprise strategy that facilitated excitement among the social enterprise sector. It allowed people within the sector to feel as though they were on the cusp of something new and exciting (PSA 1 and 7; TSI 1; TSDP 1), even if the content itself was not revolutionary. Perhaps instead, the ideas around *how* the 2016 strategy would be developed were most innovative component of Scottish social enterprise policy. This perspective on the processes surrounding social enterprise policy development was not universally held by everyone interviewed for this project, nor was it consistently held by those who made claims to 'valuable' forms of collaboration at certain periods. Next, I further discuss how positionality and perspective inform organizational interpretations and individual discourse around the 'joint development' (Scottish Government, 2016b), delivery, and process of sustaining *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026*.

## 7.4 Understanding perceptions of value within 'co-production' narratives

Osborne and colleagues' (2022) work demonstrating how value can be conceptualized on multiple levels within a public service ecosystem helps provide analytical and theoretical

framing for conceptualizations of value surrounding 'joint' policy development and service delivery within the context of Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem. Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem emerged organically over several years: various organizations (e.g., CEIS) that were originally focused on supporting community enterprise and the Scottish Community Business Movement, slowly adapted to shifts in dominant discourse around enterprise. These organizations tailored their services to remain valuable and relevant for the sector as the ecosystem evolved and as other intermediary and support organizations developed to meet emergent needs. As a result, the relationships between organizations are often convoluted and the networked web of social enterprise support organizations frequently overlaps. This makes it difficult to untangle, particularly for social enterprises who are looking for specialized support (Social Value Lab, 2017). This also makes it critically important to understand the delicate balance of organizational interests, or, put more crudely, the winners and losers of collaborative social enterprise policy processes. Analysis of the Scottish case revealed that many individual stakeholders in Scotland were approaching these 'collaborative' processes from an organizational perspective, bringing with them complicated histories associated with the development of Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem.

### 7.4.1 Deriving different types of value

In the previous chapter I outlined how interviewees linked value creation (and sometimes destruction) to three key concepts: negotiating priorities to generate clarity, allocating resources, and creating accountability while fostering joint responsibility. The theoretical basis for the origination of value was at the stage of policy and service production. Here, the involvement of organizational actors in the ongoing design and/or improvement and

development processes surrounding social enterprise policy and support infrastructure led them to perceive elements of value generation or destruction in various phases of the process. Each phase (i.e., designing, delivering, sustaining) corresponds to its own form of value. In other words, the value-in-production perceived to be derived or destroyed because of these collaborative arrangements had different impacts depending on the phase of the overall process upon which someone was reflecting.

Initially, perceptions of value creation were strong and linked to how involving various organizational actors in strategy design created value in the broader social enterprise ecosystem. Broadly, people claimed to hold these perceptions about the design phase because it clarified priorities, giving the sector some coherence to its advocacy agenda. At the end of the back-and-forth design process, people were on board with the strategy and reflect on the phase associated with its design positively. In fact, when asked about who the social enterprise strategy belonged to, one of the delivery partners who was in many of those smaller negotiation meetings as well as some of the wider consultation meetings and roundtables said they thought "the agencies involved in drafting the vision and the people in government who responded to that vision, they would view that the strategy has their DNA in it" (TSDP 1). This person immediately followed that up by saying, "And nothing that happens after will change that" (TSDP 1). This individual was also aware of ongoing tensions in the sector around the intermediary review process, and perhaps added this comment as if to suggest that even as power dynamics among organizations change and people move into different roles, the genuine collaboration that occurred during the design phase and resulted in tangible action around the social enterprise strategy in 2016 would not be negated by future models of working that are influenced by different collaboration dynamics.

Considering the strategy's alignment with previous documents produced by the sector, it is not altogether surprising that during the design phase there were high levels of agreement and a willingness to come together and get on board with the overarching direction of the strategy. As previously explained, some saw bringing more coherence to the sector as a driver for the sector to collaborate. While perhaps not everyone in the social enterprise sector thought more clarity was needed, the sector still appeared to be united around the goal of a national strategy and willing to negotiate around future direction for the sector to that end. As one person working in the Scottish Government at the time put it, "in terms of kind of broad principles … that's why I felt like the strategy was able to get to a consensus … people did agree on those things" (PSA 2). In this respect, value during the design phase was generated through the process of bringing people and meso-level organizations within the sector together, to envision a future for social enterprise in Scotland, and to generate consensus and clarity around what that collective future might entail.

In the next phase more aligned with delivery, the policy became directly attached to service delivery through resource allocation. When this happened, some organizations, and in particular service delivery organizations, fared better than others. Previous research has also demonstrated the growing sentiment within the social enterprise sector that support infrastructure absorbs a significant amount of Scottish Government funding (Mazzei and Roy, 2017). Instead of grassroots social enterprises themselves, or perhaps even less known, rural social enterprise support organizations, there is a clear narrative that the funding stays concentrated in the Central Belt of Scotland, and it becomes difficult for anyone outside of the intermediaries and privileged delivery organizations to feel connected not only to the policies surrounding social enterprises but also the services those policies are ostensibly

creating. This resource allocation undoubtably created value for some organizational actors and gave them a sense of legitimacy, but at the same time, this represented value destruction for other organizations. For those who perceived the production processes during this phase to destroy value, it was because they no longer felt as though there was the same leveled-off equal playing field where everyone was advocating for something bigger than themselves in terms of a strategic prize for the sector. Instead, things turned into operational prizes for organizations and, in the worst case, individuals. Those not receiving valuable financial resources and recognition felt even more excluded than they did before they were initially invited into the collaboration around the 2016 strategy during the early phases of design. On the other hand, those organizations that were successful in receiving funding to execute a service they proposed during the rapid online consultation around the first action plan, reaped significant financial benefits. For them, that process, while imperfect, was a meaningful way to allocate resources to sector-driven, grassroots initiatives rather than top-down programs prescribed by the public sector.

Examining the final phase of 'sustaining' the policy impacts of the 2016 strategy revealed how interviewees' discourse shifted to view policy engagement as either efficient or exclusionary in terms of the way it fostered accountability, depending on their positioning in the process. This contrasts against the discourse around collaborative policy engagement as a hopeful means of clarifying contentious priorities or as a positive way to allocate resources to sector-driven initiatives and redistribute power to organizations who historically had limited say in policy and public service provision. Regardless of whether individuals I interviewed employed a discourse of this policy engagement during the 'sustaining' stage as efficient or exclusionary, most participants still predicated their arguments in an optimistic way to suggest they thought and hoped that things could start or continue to improve for

social enterprise in Scotland. This optimism is perhaps natural to avoid feelings of dissonance about the impact of work; whether someone is responsible for that sector through their government portfolio or working in the sector as a practitioner or support agency, that individual might want to maintain motivation around future opportunities. There was also an element of value-creation in terms of accountability inherent within this process that most participants did not mention: the Scottish Government, by the nature of a ten-year strategy, still had to sustain some of its impacts and remain accountable and responsible for its delivery. Perhaps this contributed to elements of optimism among key actors involved with this process even amid dominant perceptions of value destruction during this phase.

### 7.4.2 Value creation and destruction over time

As those key actors and leading intermediary and delivery organizations have shifted in the past ten years, interpretations of the goals and purpose of the process of 'co-production' have almost inevitably changed with them. This is not inherently a bad thing. A process that changes over time as people, ideas, priorities, and complementary policies also shift, would theoretically be appropriately 'of the time' and more responsive to the will of the people. There is a pervasive discourse of co-production as 'deliberative democratic engagement' where there is potential to alter unjust power relations and return policymaking power to citizens, or at least more representative organizations, in the form of agenda setting and policy control. So, if those who were intentionally brought into the collaborative process associated with Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy were more 'representative' of Scotland's social enterprise sector, more connected with grassroots social enterprises and

citizens, perhaps the evolution of this process could be viewed positively. Yet, while new voices were brought into the process, others were simultaneously excluded.

At least from the perspective of those who interpreted this process as one that became exclusive, they were intentionally excluded because they represented traditions of social enterprise as being rooted in community empowerment and viewed co-production in an emancipatory sense where it was also about empowerment and equality. In this respect, over time, this co-production process has also had very negative impacts for actors who perceived exclusion. In some cases, they have burned out or stopped being able to, or wanting to, deliver the public services they were collaboratively delivering. This was in many ways due to the more recent shifts they perceived in engagement and a deep frustration associated with their perception that their voice and their work was not afforded the same level of value and respect it had been just a few years prior. In essence, some individuals who were originally very actively engaged with social enterprise service delivery and the strategy process have more recently moved into a position where they were only tangentially involved.

Shifts in discourse around value destruction, in the form of reduced levels accountability and joint responsibility for delivering and sustaining the social enterprise strategy, help distinguish the 'delivering' and 'sustaining' phases of this process where there is the most noticeable cleavage among phases. These shifts are not just discursive: the norms informing the collaboration around social enterprise policy in Scotland have also shifted. Someone running a delivery organization acknowledged these shifts when they said, "I do think the co-production element of the strategy and the first action plan has been lost. I think partly because of resources, partly because of leadership" (TSDP 2). It is worth nothing that this individual's organization has consistently benefited from prioritization of

their service delivery programs throughout Scotland's more recent history of social enterprise policy (i.e., since the development of the 2016 strategy). Nevertheless, they can still point to and acknowledge the more recent changes in collaboration dynamics, that have led people to lose confidence in this process. This data point also highlights the normative underpinning in the discourse of all participants in the study that 'co-production' is seen as an ideal form of engagement, a gold-standard of collaborative governance arrangements where effective collaborative dynamics push the process forward rather than stall it. Further, while there were different discourses around value-creation across phases, narratives around co-production and the underpinning discourse inherent in those narratives informed the way participants discussed value creation and destruction. For most participants to feel as though this process was creating value-in-production throughout any given phase, their discourse around co-production would have needed to match the various elements of collaboration, or the collaboration dynamics, they perceived to be influencing that phase.

All the actors who commented that they believed this second action plan was emblematic of co-production often were not involved in the earlier stages of the process and lacked a comparison rooted in personal experience. It was also common that they received resources through the second action plan, either for the first time or in a greater volume than before (e.g., SEL 1). These actors were not as positioned to comment on the sustainability of the co-production process, but their discourse around it highlighted that in many cases it was less about deliberation and democratic engagement and more about supporting their own work and ambitions. The only participant who commented directly on each phase of designing, delivering, and sustaining Scotland's 2016 strategy also referenced specific social enterprise policy documents going back to 2008. They were firm in their unqualified belief that this process put forward by the Scottish Government for 'co-

producing' the social enterprise strategy was not innovative. Rather than being emblematic of value creation at the meso-level, they argued that value destruction at a micro- and sub-micro-level could negate other types of value creation. As they said:

> I don't think there was anything novel done in terms of consultation or engagement in 2008, -16, or -20 … the Scottish Government always [has] this dilemma where you put out a consultation, you're going to get the loudest ... the most time spent by those who seek to benefit from any particular policy … [and] despite all the rhetoric, the ones who generally lose out are the users of facilities, or the end recipients. In our case [of] social enterprise, that would the communities or groups [they're] looking to support (PSA 3).

Most participants had general reflections on how this process might have evolved over time and how that evolution might be made more 'real' in the minds of participants because of its contrast to their past expectations. For example, one public sector actor said that they did not "think it was with the same unbounded enthusiasm and feeling that [they] were on the start of a journey," that the actors were collectively approaching the process of using the strategy as a guide to continue delivering services that could transform communities for the better by 2020 or the 'sustaining' phase (PSA 7). Thus, in the absence of sustained co-production over time, and for some any co-production at all, I argue that the strategy process has evolved with the help of a series of co-produced moments. Some of these moments involved collaborative design, others delivery, but they did not often capture the same actors nor was the collaboration motivated by the same drivers. These co-produced moments have been woven together into a narrative of co-production; this is a narrative wholeheartedly embedded within the narrative around *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026*.

This co-production narrative in relation to the social enterprise strategy, especially more recently with the action plans, does not directly reflect the broad experience of those in the social enterprise sector. As one of the participants who leads a social enterprise

responded when asked to elaborate on why they felt so much better about the process of developing the strategy than they did about the action plans, they responded: “I think there used to be a broad range of different perspectives that helped — particularly the first time around” (SEL 1). This perspective was also shared by other social enterprise leaders who were interviewed and indeed many of the social enterprise intermediaries as well. When exploring the disjuncture between policy rhetoric and its translation in practice, Mazzei and Roy (2017: 2462-3) found that the ‘rhetoric of policy documents is seldom reflected in the realities of practitioners, whose perceptions and comments reflect instead the relevance of historical and political legacies in shaping policy implementation at local level.’ The results presented throughout this thesis predominantly align with this finding, with one notable exception: the policy discourse of co-production.

Co-production rhetoric has become inextricably linked with the ways in which practitioners view social enterprise policy implementation and shape their narratives around it. They do reflect on the irony that more recent social enterprise policy documents, which they feel were least shaped by co-production processes, are the ones where co-production is mentioned most in the policy documents themselves. Yet, from the perspective of third sector intermediaries, social enterprise leaders, and third sector delivery partners, the way social enterprise policies have landed locally appears to be in direct response to the collaborative arrangements through which they were designed and are now being delivered. Thus, the discourse around social enterprise policy insofar as it is collaborative and cooperative has very real implications for the realities of practitioners’ experiences with policy. These experiences are what practitioners draw upon to articulate whether the process and resulting policies and services created or destroyed value within the social enterprise ecosystem. The evolution of these perceptions is one of the many impacts of

action feeding back into the 'collaborative governance regime' to inform future collaboration. In this regard, it has been possible to articulate changes in value derived particularly at the meso-level of the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem over time. The impact of these changing collaboration dynamics on participant discourse and narratives around the progression and evolution of the process has the potential to help highlight the relative influence various elements informing collaboration dynamics might have on any given collaborative governance process.

## 7.5 Implications for sustained policy co-production

### 7.5.1 The collaborative governance lens for examining policy co-production

Utilizing Emerson and colleagues' (2012) integrative framework for collaborative governance to analyze policy co-production in the Scottish context helped identify and categorize the diverse discourses surrounding Scotland's policy co-production process—at least as articulated by those who had been involved with the social enterprise strategy during various phases of the strategy process. In the most recent phase of sustaining the collaborative governance process in Scotland, multiple elements seemed to influence changes in participant discourse around co-production and, relatedly, value creation (or the lack thereof). These include leadership approaches in the public sector and social enterprise sector, procedural and institutional arrangements largely dictated by the Scottish Government, the resources that have been allocated to collaboration, and the knowledge about the history of the process held by those involved. All these elements are functional and impact on the capacity for joint action within a collaborative governance regime as categorized by Emerson and colleagues (2012).

In the Scottish case, especially through efforts to sustain the process over time, these functional elements seemed to contribute more to the behavioral and interpersonal elements, thus harming chances for open deliberation and in turn, the trust and confidence in, as well as commitment to, the process. Of course, these three behavioral, interpersonal, and functional elements work together and shifts across all were observed; however, it was as if the functional 'cog in the machine' was directing how the other two turned. Toward the end of this process, the functional elements of procedural and institutional arrangements seemed to lack a necessary level of transparency. When asked about the current state of collaboration around the social enterprise strategy, one interviewee replied, "If the sector can point to it, understand it, and think that they own it in some senses, there ought to be a greater degree of transparency as to where the money and what actions are being prioritized. And that for me isn't quite right yet" (TSI 1).

It is highly likely that forced shifts in institutional arrangements (i.e., most notably through the intermediary review process) were at the heart of this feeling that the process was opaque and not functioning as it should. These institutional shifts, like new leaders within the Scottish Government and the push for an intermediary review, led to procedural changes[51] around the social enterprise sector's engagement with the public sector. Many interviewed attributed the procedural and institutional variations to changes in public sector leadership across the ten-year delivery period of the strategy (TSDP 1, 2, and 5; PSA 3; TSI 1,

[51] I note that these changes occur because their pending impacts continued to emerge throughout my interviews, but in some ways, the discourse around them was speculative and very dependent on when I conducted an interview with a particular individual. While my analysis demonstrated a clear shift in discourse surrounding the process post-2020, the continued impacts on capacity for joint action, and on discourse itself, will continue to play out for years to come. Therefore, while analysis of discursive shifts over time is within the bounds of this thesis, analysis of the continued practical implications on institutional and procedural arrangements is beyond the scope of this work. Future research should more closely examine how engagement functionally changed post the emergence of a single intermediary in Scotland since time restrictions bounded most of my analysis regarding the Scottish social enterprise sector to just before the intermediary review was finalized in July 2022.

2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). This attribution suggests that at least in Scotland while designing, delivering, and sustaining the social enterprise strategy, there was an outsized impact of what Emerson and colleagues (2012) describe as 'functional elements' on this collaborative governance processes.

These functional elements contributing to capacity for joint action also seemed to have a stronger connection to perceptions of value for those within Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem. Some narratives around value creation were directly related to 'resource allocation' (i.e., the functional resource element). Another narrative related to 'clarifying priorities' arguably had more alignment with the behavioral element of deliberation, but also related to functional element of knowledge (i.e., ensuring that the sector had collective and historically informed knowledge around where it was collectively coming from and where it should be headed). The final narrative around 'accountability' linked to procedural and institutional arrangements crafted by the key leaders within the 'collaborative governance regime,' and thus also connected to the functional element of leadership. Themes around perceived lack of leadership ran through narratives related to value destruction and the loss of accountability among actors involved in the process. In this respect, the ultimate loss of accountability led to a perceived loss in joint responsibility for the strategy, indicating that at the meso-level of the social enterprise ecosystem, there was an element of value destruction as this process progressed.

Over time, this process evolved in a manner where the value it was generating, at least from the perspective of those interviewed, was slowly declining. During the first phase, narratives around how the process created value, at least value in production at the meso-level of the social enterprise ecosystem, were broad and nearly universal. Moving into the second phase where participants focused on resource allocation, narratives around value

creation and/or destruction were more evenly mixed. Then, in the final phase, they moved to focus on value destruction more consistently. The divides between the first and second phases are not as stark as the divide that emerges as the process moves into its sustaining phase. Nevertheless, reflection on distinctions between the social enterprise strategy design and delivery phases highlights two areas that may have contributed to shifting organizational perspectives on the value of the process that can also be linked back to various functional elements impacting collaboration dynamics. First, timing and resource constraints undeniably altered the functional elements that contributed to capacity for joint action. Second, the collaborative dynamics and arrangements governing the design phase of this project led to high-level action around a broad and generally agreed upon strategy. The impacts of this high-level focus influenced future outcomes and contributed to alternations in collaborative dynamics in the following delivery phase. The choice to focus on consensus building instead of deliberative democratic engagement meant that beyond procedural changes, those involved might also take issue with emerging content that had not been sufficiently explored in a collaborative manner.

### 7.5.2 Sustaining collaboration

When entering the third phase, which ultimately involved policy design and delivery and essentially the ambition to sustain both simultaneously rather than focus on one singular component, realties of policy development and implementation manifest. Arguably, this final phase is the most important to study because it reflects the realities of policy co-production—involving both design and delivery—and the challenges associated with sustaining the arrangements it necessitates. The challenges in Scotland led to some levels of discontent, at least initially and among groups who were very vocal about their

disillusionment with the process even if those perspectives were not consistently shared in the social enterprise sector.

Depending on who was interviewed, the decreased engagement over time was either by design or by inevitable necessity under pandemic constraints. Importantly for some, this did not necessarily mean it was less representative (TSDP 5) or less responsive to the ongoing needs of the social enterprise sector (PSA 7). Nor did it necessarily mean that elements of co-production and co-creation were not occurring; interviews revealed that there was more engagement with unsuspecting actors rather than the 'usual suspects' when it came to delivering social enterprise policy in the third phase. Additionally, discourse of actors was being influenced by expectations from each preceding stage. Therefore, for the Scottish Government to have maintained its position as a facilitator of value co-creation in the eyes of most actors within the social enterprise sector in Scotland, it would have needed to continue expanding its co-production arrangements for multi-level engagement. Instead, they chose to focus on different levels at different stages, often shifting between choosing to engage social enterprises directly at the micro-level of the ecosystem or sector intermediaries and delivery partners at an organizational level. These shifts in engagement occurred in a manner that was not overtly transparent for many within the social enterprise sector. While this case is not necessarily widely generalizable, the way it has evolved does provide a challenge to the notion that policy co-production processes can consistently and effectively engage actors over time in a way that they will individually perceive as valuable.

Most everyone interviewed discussed and acknowledged recent shifts in collaborative dynamics and inconsistent indicators of 'co-production.' Some predicated these changes in a positive way while the majority perceived them negatively, albeit sometimes alongside a form of cautious optimism related to finding opportunities. Specifically, the most

recent stage of engagement around the second social enterprise action plan was only considered to be emblematic of 'co-production' by a few individuals interviewed for this research. The more pervasive narrative was one of increasing public sector control over a process in which those within the social enterprise sector slowly lost confidence. This finding around diminished perceptions of value for some within the social enterprise sector nuances what has otherwise been a self-promoted narrative of Scotland as an innovative and collaborative policymaker and service provider (see Cairney et al., 2016) with the 'most supportive' global environment to create value for its social enterprise sector (see Roy et al., 2015).

## 7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how discourse was a strong political tool for advancing policy around social enterprise in Scotland over time. At least in the Scottish context, the trajectory of social enterprise policy follows a path of dynamic persistence where the underlying community, democracy, empowerment, and economic sustainability discourses remain relatively stable, shifting back and forth between a greater focus on community or business. This ability of social enterprise advocacy coalitions to effectively link elastic discourse around social enterprise to other dominant political discourses and policies related to community has allowed it to remain on the Scottish political agenda with high levels of consistency. Through various iterations of social enterprise policy in Scotland, ideas for how to best and support social enterprise have remained relatively consistent, just as 'social enterprise as a key part of various community empowerment and engagement programs as well as economic policies' has also remained a hallmark of Scottish policy rhetoric. What has changed and perhaps been more emblematic of policy innovation in the Scottish context is

the approach to and processes surrounding Scottish social enterprise policy rather than the content of those policies themselves.

This process in Scotland came to be known as 'co-production' and was used rhetorically by the Scottish Government in relation to all phases associated with this collaborative social enterprise policy process. The perceptions of this reality within the social enterprise sector, and to a certain extent within the public sector as well, were far more mixed across phases. Through this chapter, I explored how shifting collaboration dynamics ultimately impacted on perceptions of value creation and destruction over time. Indeed, public sector rhetoric of co-production led to those involved in this process to almost equate their assumptions around 'co-production' to their narratives around value derived through this process. In other words, if a certain phase was perceived as being emblematic of co-production, it created value. If not, they perceived elements of value destruction. Even with such mixed perceptions of value, this notion of Scotland 'co-producing' a national social enterprise strategy through cross-sectoral collaborative governance arrangements started to gather attention on an international level. This occurred as Scotland started to re-position its global narrative around social enterprise as one not just focused on its social enterprise ecosystem, but also on its collaborative social enterprise policy environment. In the next chapter I will therefore explore one of the outcomes of the Scottish social enterprise policy collaboration: its influence on social enterprise policy collaboration in an Australian context.

To explore this influence, the next chapter merges empirical findings with analysis to focus on the external, international impacts of this public and social enterprise sector collaboration in Scotland. It traces the development of a similar process in Australia where the sector is currently advocating for a national social enterprise strategy. Australia has been very vocal about its desire to 'learn from' the Scottish example and emulate their process of

co-producing a national social enterprise strategy. Given the uneven nature of co-production and inconsistency of collaboration dynamics over time demonstrated in the Scottish case through this chapter as well as Chapter 6, it is useful to see how the process in Australia may (or not) be different. In analyzing the ongoing process in Australia through the same collaboration dynamics framework utilized in Chapter 6, while also drawing on the three stages I identified as precursors to meaningful national strategy development in Chapter 5, I begin to uncover lessons that may be useful for future social enterprise policy design and delivery. I will specifically focus on what lessons can be learned to ensure a process might be designed to be more consistently collaborative, or at least more effectively communicated in the Australian context.

# Chapter 8: International extrapolation: Nascent social enterprise policy co-production in Australia

## 8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how the evolution of social enterprise policy in Scotland has balanced competing discourses around social enterprise. While the actual content of social enterprise policies and programs in Scotland have not extensively evolved in the past 20 years, the collaborative processes surrounding these policies have been dynamic. Moving from a place where there was limited public sector engagement with social enterprise advocacy coalitions, a 'co-production wave' formed in Scotland, swelling around the release of the 2016 social enterprise strategy and then slowly falling (at least from the perspective of certain individuals involved in the process). These changes have largely been in response to the outsized impacts of functional elements influencing the evolution of 'collaborative governance' process surrounding Scotland's social enterprise policy (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). Before this research on the context surrounding Scottish social enterprise policy was conducted, there was limited evidence for the narrative that Scotland had been consistently been embracing 'co-production' when approaching their social enterprise policy design and delivery. The empirical evidence collected through this project nuances that narrative based on the discursive strategies participants in this study used to challenge it. Nevertheless, many noted how globally this process had gained recognition, irrespective of the mixed perceptions of the degrees to which it created value within the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem.

The proliferation of the 'Scottish approach' of collaborative and consultative policy and service design and delivery (Cairney et al., 2016), particularly operationalized as a model for designing and delivering social enterprise policy, is not just a product of international

actors seeking to emulate Scotland. It is also reflective of Scotland's desire to use both its social enterprise ecosystem (Roy et al., 2015), and especially its ten-year social enterprise strategy, as soft power tools to position itself on the international stage as a forward-looking, independent nation (Mackie and Strani, 2023). This implicit and often explicit ambition underscoring the Scottish Government's investment in its social enterprise ecosystem, and the policies and services which surround it, has in many ways been realized with other jurisdictions increasingly looking to Scotland to gather insights about their own social enterprise policy processes (e.g., Government of Ireland, 2019; Province of Nova Scotia, 2017; Victoria State Government, 2017).

While a significant proportion of this 'learn from Scotland' mentality can be observed in Commonwealth countries, the global interest in social enterprise policy development is growing. This was made exceptionally clear on 18 April 2023 when the United Nations (UN) General Assembly formally adopted a resolution for 'Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy for Sustainable Development' in what the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy praised as a 'historic moment' for social enterprise (Pybus, 2023). The resolution 'Encourages Member States to promote and implement national, local and regional strategies, policies and programmes for supporting and enhancing the social and solidarity economy as a possible model for sustainable economic and social development … and encourages the participation of social and solidarity economy actors in the policymaking process' (United Nations, 2023: 3). Thus, as policy ideas around social enterprise proliferate alongside an increased experimentation with using collaboration and co-production as a policy tool to generate improved policy outcomes (Howlett et al., 2017), more needs to be known about the ways social enterprise sectors in different countries can engage with policy and strategy development that will influence their long-term development and success as a

sector. To that end, this chapter answers the following question: In what ways has the narrative of collaborative social enterprise policy development in Scotland been mobilized in different contexts as other governments and social enterprise sectors attempt to embark on their own cooperative policy development and delivery journeys?

The chapter therefore critically interrogates how Scotland's promulgated process of policy co-production (i.e., their 'joint development' of the social enterprise strategy (Scottish Government, 2016b)) and associated service delivery is being mobilized globally. It does so by examining Australia as a case, where the Australian social enterprise sector is currently engrossed in the live process of coming together as a sector with the ambition to engage the Federal Government to design and deliver their own national social enterprise strategy for Australia. The case presented in this chapter covers the period from early 2020 to early 2023, with some important references to historical antecedents dating back to 2007–2008. As the findings presented in this chapter will highlight, the activities in which the Australian sector has engaged over this three-year period bear striking similarities to events and activities within the Scottish sector discussed in detail throughout Chapters 5 and 6 (especially in Section 5.3).

This chapter's organizational structure thus draws on frameworks used and findings introduced in both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. I first use my framework for the three stages for social enterprise strategy development introduced in Section 5.3 to provide more context to the Australian process. I then use Emerson and colleagues' (2012) framework for collaborative governance, drawing specifically on the collaboration dynamics it highlights, to nuance understanding of the process and identify the collaborative dynamics which appear to be guiding early-stage engagement around an Australian social enterprise strategy. The first part of this chapter thus examines 'critical junctures' in the Australian context and uses

a historical perspective to articulate a narrative surrounding the sector's advocacy for a national social enterprise strategy. The second part approaches the data more from a public management perspective to test the comparative utility of a collaborative governance framework. I argue that weaving these approaches together enhances my ability to make both practical and theoretical contributions through an extended application of this thesis research. Thus, I continue to embrace the interdisciplinarity inherent in this project in a manner that facilitates comparison of findings between the Australian and Scottish cases. Before presenting these findings, I provide more context around, and justification for studying, the Australian case.

## 8.2 Context

### 8.2.1 The comparative case

Participatory and collaborative policy engagement is frequently positioned as being normatively good and thus, like the concept of social enterprise, can be easily co-opted and embraced by actors without strong conceptual clarity around what underpins the process. Therefore, what is collaborative to one individual in one context, may be completely different to the way someone else proposes a collaborative arrangement in another. In selecting Australia as a case, I seek to draw out the similarities, and importantly, differences, between the joint or collaborative approaches to social enterprise strategy development in Scotland and Australia. In doing so, I can begin to uncover the interconnectedness of both policy ideas and processes between places and across contexts. This comparison also has the potential to expose differences in the processes including the norms of engagement and perceived impacts among various partners involved. I recognize that this comparative case study is preliminary in nature. In this respect, its utility is linked to demonstrating the

benefits associated with interdisciplinary approaches to studying policy collaboration over time and across contexts and not necessarily providing the explanatory power to fully compare the processes in Australia and Scotland. Indeed, the processes in Scotland and Australia are not entirely comparable. For example, most of the existing collaboration in Australia is happening within the social enterprise sector and not necessarily crossing significantly into government advocacy or partnership at least at the national level. Further, Australia's and Scotland's ecosystems are at two very different stages of development. This has significant implications for discursive strategies employed by participants when discussing their respective process, particularly on perspectivization, but also predication and argumentation, and must be cautiously accounted for when comparing results.

Despite these limitations, considering the current direction of travel in global social enterprise policy development, presenting data that begins to create a comparison between Scotland and Australia is useful for two key reasons. First, the connections between public and third sector actors in both nations via exchange opportunities mean that there is significant sharing of ideas and practices. This is a growing trend, particularly in countries where policy networks 'have been constructed on the basis of deep-seated historical connections between policy actors and institutions' (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 172). In fact, Scotland's strategy for internationalizing their social enterprise agenda explicitly refers to social enterprise ambassadors who could focus on 'harnessing the potential of a supportive diaspora in Australia' (Scottish Government, 2016a: 27). In this respect, the comparison will provide a unique insight into the ways policy ideas and management processes mutate, even when there may be a degree of intended direct replication. Secondly, even when a nation may not be attempting to 'learn from' Scotland to the same extent as Australia, it is likely that their social enterprise ecosystem will be less developed with fewer roots and historical

tensions than those which exist in Scotland. Understanding how these ideas around the management of social enterprise policy and strategy development processes mutate as they are mobilized from countries with rich institutional support for social enterprises (i.e., Scotland) to those where backing and understanding of social enterprise is far less developed (i.e., Australia) is essential given the global push for nations to harness the positive potential of social enterprise policy (United Nations, 2023).

### 8.2.2 The Australian context

Australia's social enterprise roots are far-reaching and historic, often linked to the country's Indigenous communities, where the principles of Indigenous businesses have direct alignment with the features and characteristics of social enterprise today (Brueckner et al., 2010; Spencer et al., 2016)(Henry and Dana, 2019). Like so much the history of social enterprise in other countries (MacDonald and Howorth, 2018), while the term may be newer in Australia, the concept is far from it (Barraket et al., 2017). Barraket and colleagues (2017) argue that 'The concepts of "social enterprise" and "social entrepreneurship" were first popularised in Australia by civil society actors, who formed the Social Entrepreneurs' Network (SEN) in 1999' (346). At this time, federal government interest in the concept of social enterprise was linked to discourse surrounding 'social enterprise as a mechanism for community self-help and a challenge to traditions of welfare dependence' (Barraket et al., 2017: 349).

While early interest in social enterprise in Australia may have proliferated national-level political agendas in Australia, the first policy moves occurred at the state level when the Victorian Government established a 'Volunteering and Community Enterprise Strategy' in 2004 with A$4 million of resource behind it (Barraket, 2008a). Arguably one of the

significant outcomes from this investment was its role in 'establishing symbolic legitimacy of the role of intermediaries in supporting social enterprise development' (Barraket et al., 2017: 349). Eventually this led to Social Traders, one of Victoria's, and arguably Australia's leading social enterprise delivery organizations, receiving funding to establish themselves. Before the founding of Social Traders in 2008, Australia's SEN which had formed, contributed to the popularization of 'social enterprise,' and convened encouraging conferences for the sector, it eventually disbanded (Barraket, 2008a). Barraket (2008a) contended that SEN's collapse 'was underpinned by an ongoing struggle over both the values and the objects of the movement' struggling to balance competing perspectives influenced by social enterprise movements in both the US and Europe (135). This perhaps might have been an early indication that in Australia, more coherent delivery organizations like Social Traders, opposed to fragmented networks influenced by competing conceptions of social enterprise, would step into a leadership position for the Australian social enterprise movement for years to come. A year after its founding, Social Traders collaborated with another organization called Social Ventures Australia to co-host the second ever global Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF) event in Melbourne.

The sector's infrastructure continued to build, although as a federated system, policy interest and support for social enterprise largely came from individual states. Victoria persisted in its pioneering policy role (Barraket, 2008a; Barraket et al., 2017) and released the first state strategy for social enterprise in 2017 (Victoria State Government, 2017). Other states followed and eventually started to explicitly reference and support social enterprise (Queensland Government, 2019). Policy and research interest grew at the city-level as well (City of Sydney, 2020), yet this policy interest in and action around social enterprise was uneven across the country, dependent largely on key 'anchor' or delivery organizations like

Social Traders to drive the agenda. In 2020, networks in Australia once again took hold, with the formation of a social enterprise network in every state and a coordinating body of those networks to, at least in theory, convene conversations at a national level (ASENA, 2020). The momentum created by the Alliance of Social Enterprise Networks Australia (ASENA), combined with the energy surrounding the lead up to another SEWF event in Australia, which was held in Brisbane in 2022, helped facilitate the conditions to launch conversations around a national social enterprise strategy in Australia. Australia is now in the early stages of developing a national strategy.

## 8.3 Evolution of collaborative policy development and advocacy in Australia

In this next section I focus on how the Australian sector has come together to position themselves as offering unique policy solutions to government as a collective social enterprise sector. In Chapter 5, I outlined how analysis of narratives around social enterprise policy development in Scotland, with a focus on the discursive strategies of nomination and argumentation, it was possible to identify three key stages a social enterprise sector might expect to move through before effectively engaging in cross-sector policy collaboration. First, the focus should arguably be on building a national voice for social enterprise. Second, developing a sector mission and/or vision can serve as the basis for future advocacy. Third, strategically approaching the process of developing a national strategy as a coherent coalition leads to collaboration. I present findings about the ways in which the Australian sector has approached collaboration internally, chronicling developments during each of these three stages. This begins to provide information around how Australian sector is working to promote a narrative that they can be a strategic partner in delivering on a multitude of the Australian Government's priorities.

### 8.3.1 Building a national voice for social enterprise

While SEN in Australia, one of the earliest national social enterprise support and advocacy organizations, was formed organically in response to momentum within a nascent social enterprise sector with links to community enterprise (Barraket, 2008a; Barraket et al., 2017), one of the more prominent organizations in the present-day narrative around the development of Australia's social enterprise ecosystem formed instead in response to interest within the public sector. In 2008, the Victorian Government's interest in funding social enterprise initiatives at the state level accelerated through its community grants program. At the same time, a philanthropic foundation was also interested in supporting social enterprise nationally, but there was little structure or strategy around this interest. Both parties came together to commission a scoping study to understand what was happening nationally to support social enterprise in Australia and link that support to growing global interest in and recognition of social enterprise. This study was supported by other ongoing work, which was generating greater interest in social enterprise across Australia (e.g., Barraket, 2008a, 2008b). According to someone who got involved in the Australian social enterprise sector around this time, this research commissioned by the Victorian Government and the interested foundation highlighted the lack of engagement around social enterprise. The final report indicated that if foundations and governments wanted to build on their budding interest in the concept, developing and financing a specialist social enterprise support organization would be a good way to engage. In response, the Victorian Government partnered with a foundation to provide the founding capital that set up Social Traders (ATSDP 1). Social Traders—which is still operating today, but

with a narrower remit specifically focused on social procurement—became known as one of Australia's leading social enterprise intermediary organizations.[52]

Social Traders, based in Victoria, predominantly focused on engaging the Victorian Government, but they had national advocacy ambitions as well. For many years, this ambition was relegated as they faced significant challenges when attempting to put social enterprise on the national agenda. As one sector representative described:

> there was that sort of sector development sort of role that [Social Traders] played … Primarily, at that stage, in Victoria … [and nationally to] get the government more interested in [social enterprise] and so that they understood how, how it sort of fitted within the sort of community and economic sort of policy framework. But it was very, it was, it was always very difficult (ATSDP 1).

As Social Traders was trying to play a sector development and advocacy role, they found it easier to focus on workshops and tours and other programming from which social enterprises could immediately benefit. They also supported a research project called FASES, Findings Australia's Social Enterprise Sector, which launched in 2010 and has since been repeated (see Barraket et al., 2016) to understand the scale and characteristics of social enterprise in Australia while capturing its contribution to society (Barraket et al., 2010). Underlying all this work, they still tried to engage government to garner more support for the sector and "get government to understand that [social enterprise] was part of their economy and there needed to be…some supportive policy around it" (ATDSP 1).

[52] In the Australian context, there did not appear to be—at least as I observed monitoring email communications from the sector for over a year, attending various sector gatherings in-person and remotely, and through my interviews—a significant distinction between intermediaries and delivery organizations. In the Scottish context, for example, Social Traders would have been labelled more accurately as a delivery organization rather than an intermediary. It is possible this is an effect of uneven histories with membership-based social enterprise organizations in Scotland and Australia. It seemed that perhaps in Australia distinctions between the networks and the intermediaries were being promoted, at least by leaders of the networks, maybe in response to ASENA's founding in 2020 and their desire to provide legitimacy to the organization. This discursive distinction, if it persists in Australia, may end up being more akin to the intermediary and delivery organization boundary some actors in the Scottish ecosystem like to draw.

Interestingly, one of their early strategies for this engagement revolved around international actors. Rather than focusing on getting the Australian sector to collectively lobby the Federal Government (or individual state governments) they often invited international social enterprise actors to conferences. The goal was to get "those people to then engage with government to try and sort of get [government] to understand that this is not a niche Australian thing … this [was] stuff that's happening in Scotland and happening in the UK" and in other countries (ATDSP 1). The aim of this advocacy strategy was to help policymakers learn from the international experience and ensure Australia would be an international player in the social enterprise space.

While Social Traders continued to play an important role in the development of Australia's social enterprise sector, in the decade after the launch of the first FASES report in 2010, the supportive infrastructure around social enterprise in Australia grew significantly. Each state developed their own network with a focus on peer support and learning for social enterprises. In May 2020, these network leaders came together to form the Alliance of Social Enterprise Networks Australia (ASENA), which is essentially a meeting of all the networks designed to collectively advance and coordinate the social enterprise movement nationally (ASENA, 2020). Right before ASENA officially came together, the Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE) hosted the Social Enterprise Virtual Unconference in April 2020 where a Social Enterprise National Strategy (SENS) project was initiated (Hannant et al., 2021a). This gathering they called an 'unconference'—a participant-driven meeting to discuss and engage without a set agenda or formal presentations associated with more traditional conferences—to discuss the future and ambition for social enterprise in Australia. One of the sessions proposed by participants attending the unconference was to focus on the potential and possibility of a national strategy. This session itself was the most popular

breakout across the unconference and the overwhelming interest led to the launch of the SENS project (ATSI 2; ATSDP 2). Initially taken forward by sector support and intermediary organizations, the project garnered philanthropic support and a SENS Advisory Committee was established to spearhead the project 'to develop Australia's first national social enterprise strategy, and to secure Federal Government support for its implementation' (Hannant et al., 2021a: 4).

Griffith University's Yunus Centre was then commissioned to help with the design and delivery of the initial phase of the SENS project which involved extensive research to produce a roadmap for the sector. Someone who was on that initial taskforce described the Yunus Centre's research for this scoping project as being "global as well as local" and that "it was also inside the sector and outside the sector" (ATSDP 2). They went on to note how that external and global learning was particularly informative during the early stages of the project mapping a trajectory for developing national social enterprise policy in Australia. Yet this approach did not involve attempts to directly replicate global experience. Instead, this sector leader said:

> it was very much how can we gather those in the sector that have that global knowledge, and really, you know, harness that, work with that, and then work out how we can finesse, and what we need to do to localize that, those, those thinkings and learnings (ATSDP 2).

One thing that became clear through that research project, based on locally applying global learnings, was the need for something new—be it an organization, a committee, or just something else without sector ties and historical baggage—to take the project and the work of developing a mission and vision for the sector forward (Hannant et al., 2021a, 2021b). In essence, neither Social Traders nor ASENA would be best positioned to continue developing a mission and vision for the sector, despite their previous work building a

national voice for social enterprise. This was articulated by someone who was involved in that early research who noted that:

> people wanted, not just social enterprises, or not just intermediaries, and also others … there needed to be a broader tent for people involved, that could include all of those voices and perspectives. So that was one of the driving reasons for setting up something new…there wasn't anything in existence that everyone would get on board with, uh, and there needed to be something that the sector broadly developed together (ATSI 2).

In the spirit of designing something new without various allegiances and historical baggage within the sector, the SENS Advisory Committee worked to develop Social Enterprise Australia (SEA). SEA is now an incorporated organizations resourced to work collaboratively with the social enterprise sector and advocate on their behalf nationally (ATSI 2).

### 8.3.2 Developing a sector mission and vision

Just as the process of developing the sector's vision for social enterprise in Scotland was discussed a crucial antecedent to the Scottish national social enterprise strategy, the development of a mission and vision for the Australian social enterprise sector is also being positioned as the precursor for an Australian national strategy. Yet based on participant narratives, the approach to this stage of the process appears to have mutated in notable ways in Australia. In Scotland:

> initially the [Scottish Social Enterprise] Coalition was the voice of intermediaries. That was deemed to be the way to do it…where the membership was comprised of the intermediary bodies to make them more effective. Otherwise, government could say, "Oh it's all very confusing, we don't know whether to talk to [X or Y] or whoever" (TSDP 1).

This early decision to 'anoint' a particular organization made up of intermediaries and delivery organizations as the 'voice' of Scottish social enterprise ended up becoming somewhat of a 'default' model for the sector's engagement with the Scottish Government moving forward. Participants argued this was especially true when apparent motivation

within the Scottish public sector for expansive collaboration with the social enterprise sector decreased. Although, over time public sector actors did appear to attempt engagement with a multitude of social enterprise actors to collaborate with the sector and generate a strategy that could support both public sector and social enterprise sector ambitions; however, much of that engagement work often fell to representative and delivery organizations. These organizations had their own vested interests in funding at the national level. From the perspective of one intermediary representative from Scotland, "a lot of [the ongoing strategy process] became about organisational interests as much as for the benefit of the wider sector" (TSI 2).

There was thus a perception among some people in the Scottish social enterprise sector that discrete organizational interests superseded what could have been expansive and continued deliberation about broader ambitions for the social enterprise sector. Those who held this perception tended to believe engagement in early phases surrounding the strategy was strong, but that it ultimately declined as more direct organizational and individual, rather than collective, priorities were perceived to play more significant roles in the process. The impact of this perception was that over time individuals felt as though their perspectives and priorities were not as included or valued as the public sector gained more control over a process that initially originated within the sector itself. In Australia, actors used mitigation strategies to almost dismiss the notion that this could be a concern in their context.

In contrast to the Scottish vision process, where the financial contribution of nine key social enterprise intermediaries and delivery organizations afforded them 'a seat at the visioning table,' four of the five individuals interviewed in Australia seemed intent on predicating their visioning process as iterative and open to help argue that the sector was broadly engaged as 'individuals' who care about social enterprise, rather than 'organizational

representatives' who might have more institutional perspectives (ATSDP 1, 2, and 3; ATSI 2). As the Australian social enterprise sector has gathered momentum through 'co-designing' their sector mission and vision with the sector, the people who have been involved in that process have argued that their focus has been on "genuine collaboration, egos out the door" (ATSDP 3). For this person specifically, "what keeps [the process] working so effectively now, is that there's no hidden agendas and no one's trying to push a personal agenda or an organizational agenda. It's a genuine commitment to the bigger picture" (ATSDP 3). SEA, which has coordinated workshops to develop pathways in pursuit of this "bigger picture" in the form of shared principles of practice, a vision, and a mission for the social enterprise sector, has worked to open these conversations to anyone who wants to partake and hopes to continue engaging them in ongoing dialogue (ATSI 2; ATSDP 2). How long this can be sustained and/or how those participating in this process end up reflecting on the mission and vision development remains to be seen. Their reflections might not be characterized by the same almost unbridled enthusiasm in retrospect and that of course is an important consideration for comparing the processes in Scotland and Australia.

Nevertheless, the overt connections between the two cases still suggest a comparison is a useful way to nuance knowledge and perhaps highlight different and contestable constructions of truth surrounding the ways these processes have been approached and have thus unfolded. One of the individuals who has been involved in coordinating the process of developing a mission and vision for the sector and Australia said that they have been looking to "Scotland more than anywhere else" for inspiration (ATSI 2). That said, from their perspective, Scotland as a case gave them more legitimacy, in that it provided the evidence that a collaborative push for a national social enterprise strategy could be met with success. Although, they argued their approach to realizing that ambition

was far more influenced by other discourse around systems change. Instead of approaching mission and vision development using discourse around 'co-production' as has become engrained in Scottish narratives, they positioned it in this way:

> I actually think we've been far more influenced by some of the more recent conversation around systems change initiatives … I think certainly Scotland provided huge inspiration in terms of even the language of a social enterprise national strategy and the legitimacy around a social enterprise national strategy, but I think because the Yunus Centre [at Griffith University] led some of the initial work, the way that we've built, built the strategy has been very different to other places … I think that's been far more influenced by … systems change initiatives generally and how they've been built (ATSI 2).

Importantly, SEA saw the *sector* as leading the dialogue and initiatives, rather than *their organization*, which those involved argued served purely a facilitation and coordinating role (like that of Social Value Lab in Scotland), there to add value to the sector through their work, but not to drive the agenda (ATSI 2). Over 500 different individuals and organizations participated in this engagement, and this participation was open and broad, capitalizing on place-based networks, thematic networks, and many different associated organizations to get the word out and ensure that everyone who really wanted to have a say in the process was able to engage in some form. According to someone leading a social enterprise support organization in Australia, these workshops ensured that any vision or mission created for the sector, was something that the sector would feel a collective ownership over because the process was done with them rather than for them or to them. When asked about the outreach strategy surrounding the mission and vision they said:

> Rather than … saying this is what the sector needs, we are running … hosting a workshop with the sector to say, "You tell us. What do you think?"… so the sector can then input and have a say and it can be theirs … so it's lots of workshops, lots of different stakeholder engagement sessions to collect those views (ATSDP 3).

It was important to those coordinating that these opportunities to feed in were sustained over time. For them, these workshops were not supposed to be one-off sessions

where people's input would be gathered and then taken away for someone to distill into a final document on which they would not be able to comment. Someone involved with these workshops argued that iterative engagement between people participating from the sector and SEA was key to some of the success around the mission and vision development:

> Through a staged process of collect all of the input and ideas. Great. Then [get a] sub-group committee to synthesize all of that and say, "I think what you said was this," and then go back again and say, "Was that it? Was that what you thought?" And for them to go, "Yeah, kind of, but a bit like this," and then a third time out to say, "Here's the thing." By the time we got to that point of "here's the thing" people were like, "Yeah, great, I love this" (ATSDP 3).

This iterative process was arguably essential for generating the buy-in from the sector that SEA would need as a coalition to develop its strategic approach toward advocating for a national social enterprise strategy.

### 8.3.3 Approaching the development of a national strategy

Using SEA to strategically channel and streamline engagement with the Federal Government, the Australian social enterprise sector is trying to position itself as a group that can be an essential partner for delivering national priorities. This harkens back to the early days of the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition (SSEC) when that one body was working to be the voice of the sector. As one social enterprise support organization described when asked about SEA's approach with government, they said their offer is that:

> We will come in and co-design with you the government, you the taskforce, with all the other stakeholders around the table, we will co-design and be the voice of the sector. You need us at the table, you need social entrepreneurs at the table … let's make this happen (ATSDP 2).

They went on to mention how it was not just about working with government to help them design and deliver a social enterprise strategy, but how collaborating with other public

sector groups like taskforces designed to better understand employment challenges, for example, was a crucial part of their strategic approach.

This was supported by someone else who, throughout their interview, mentioned how the SEA's approach to reaching the point of a national strategy has slightly altered as they have been engaged with this work:

> I had this thought that having built these foundations … we'd then move into this co-design around what was needed of the Federal Government. And then, the Government released a document around its employment white paper, and it was obvious we should respond. So, my next lesson was that the strategy won't just be, we won't just go away, sit down and go, "This is exactly what's needed." It will be developed also in response to opportunities that exist. And it may not in the first instance look like we get a national strategy. It might be that we get some program wins or, and that we can learn from those and point to the need for an overall strategy (ATSI 2).

In essence, their approach, at least in 2022 and going into 2023, became about embedding social enterprise concepts within other policy areas. They argued that attempting to help the Australian Government see where social enterprise can feed in across departments instead of trying to create one massive strategy where there is not a lot of communal ground, trust, or rapport from previous engagement might be a more fruitful approach. As a Board member also commented, "it's not us coming up with, 'Wow, this is the what, a ten-point plan should be.' It's actually feeding into existing pieces of work as well, but being able to sort of have conversations with the sector" (ATSI 2) while having these other sorts of smaller, integrated asks to the Australian Government.

In the context of a longer-term process, this has the potential for SEA to continue to engage with and gather feedback from the broader sector along the journey in a sustainable and effective manner. Currently it has meant that the sector has had time to refresh research around their economic contribution and better advocate for themselves (ATSI 2). They are now able to make an even more compelling quantitative case to the Australian Government

about how the social enterprise sector is already contributing to addressing complex socioeconomic challenges (ATSDP 2). Since they have this key research (Impact Tracks, 2022), they will be able to argue that they could build on this impact even further with the proper strategic policy support. Someone I interviewed expected that this argument would be received better at the Federal Government level because of SEA's increased contributions across policy areas that intersect with social enterprise. As they said:

> there's already pieces of work. It's not like we're going in cold, or we're now going, "Right, today we're going to start our government advocacy." It's already been building, and we are now, we will be going and doing more deliberate conversations off the back of the recent submissions to say, "This is what the sector is" (ATSDP 2).

These actions around policy submissions and other elements of integrated policy advocacy that have ramped up over time are influenced by the collaborative dynamics that characterize the collaboration within the social enterprise sector in Australia.

In is within the context of shifting dynamics that those I interviewed positioned this attempt at developing a national strategy differently from those which previously failed. According to one person working in a social enterprise support organization, they needed to be particularly aware of the personalities and characteristics of those guiding the work of the SENS committee because, "the previous failed attempts to [develop a national social enterprise strategy] in Australia were a lot to do with the personalities and the people that were involved and the politics and the dynamics" around this inherently political process of designing and delivering social enterprise policy (ATDSP 3). Beyond elements of personality influencing the leadership style of those involved, procedural and institutional arrangements were also central to these arguments (ATSDP 2; ATSI 2). When contrasting past attempts to the current one interview participants therefore seemed to concentrate most on the

observable functional elements governing the process, but still integrated arguments about interpersonal and behavioral elements into their narratives as well.

## 8.4 Identification of collaborative dynamics

Before exploring the nuanced elements of collaboration dynamics, I argue that establishing a historically informed contextual understanding of an ecosystem (e.g., a social enterprise ecosystem), the coalitions within that ecosystem, and how they might be expected to interact with broader policy ecosystems can help produce more comprehensive understanding of varied management approaches to collaborative policy development. It is in the context of perspectives around the three stages of social enterprise policy and strategy development that emerged from interviews, document analysis, and my virtual ethnography, that I now consider those same data sources through the framework proposed by Emerson and colleagues (2012). I focus specifically on the collaboration dynamics that characterize a collaborative governance regime. As outlined previously, these dynamics include behavioral elements, interpersonal elements, and functional elements. The behavioral elements are things like definitions and deliberation that lead to principled engagement throughout the process. Shared motivation to engage with the process is facilitated through interpersonal elements of mutual commitment, trust, understanding, and legitimacy for the process. Finally, the functional elements of the process, like leadership, knowledge, and resources all contribute to the capacity actors within the system have for joint action.

### 8.4.1 Behavioral elements

People involved in this process in Australia have elevated deliberation as a key part of the behaviors and actions which play an integral role in their process. Someone argued this

deliberation was two-fold: in involved reflection on internal sector capacity as well as consideration of societal gaps that might be closed through cross-sector partnership. For them, deliberative action to strategically approach national strategy development was intended to help "focus on what [they] can do together as a sector to develop and also what [they] need from the broader environment" In Australia (ATSI 2). In essence, the idea is that deliberative dialogue can help the sector develop a coherent ask from government while simultaneously capitalizing on opportunities to learn from one another and strengthen their work within the sector. This individual elaborated on this point and highlighted an opportunity associated with it:

> So, at the time, individual enterprises are engaged with government, but we're saying different things. Yeah, which is not helpful and not going to give government clear direction, and it's also, we're wasting the opportunity to learn from different perspectives and have a, have the most effective ask, you know? Different people operating in different businesses say different things, and if we can learn from one another, we can make an ask of government that is actually going to meet the collective needs of the sector, not just the needs of a particular organisation, umm from their thinking (ATSI 2).

Yet, getting to a place where there is clear alignment on those collective sector needs is a challenge for a sector where there are competing ideologies and discourses around both social enterprise and participation. Historically, these tensions in the Australian ecosystem may have led to the disintegration of various coalitions and intermediaries (Barraket, 2008a) or failed attempts at developing a national strategy (ATSDP 1, 2, and 3). From the perspective of a social enterprise intermediary leader, there is still:

> fragmentation, even in identity…camps within social enterprise… [They] call it the entrepreneurial camp, and the and the community development camp…and you see that coming through in values that get expressed in terms of what does it mean to participate. So, you need to name those things, and, and actually, you know that helps with, that actually helps everybody if you name those different interests (ATSI 1).

From their perspective, surfacing these differences, and making that a crucial component of the engagement around a national strategy, might lead to more open and honest conversations about priorities instead of getting stuck on proxy issues that may not be as important to overall aims and objectives. They also argued this has the potential to lead to discovery of new commonalities that may not have surfaced without the focus on deliberation, and importantly, deliberation across differences. Affording individuals with different and perhaps conflicting perspectives on social enterprise to engage on a behavioral level, has led to the argument that time around the processes surrounding a national social enterprise strategy more representative, therefore at least ostensibly, affording the processes a higher level of legitimacy on an interpersonal level.

**8.4.2 Interpersonal elements**

Even those who noted where there were competing interests in the sector—be that around divides between the state-based networks and organizations delivering support services for the sector, or even more fundamentally around social enterprise discourse rooted in community development or entrepreneurship—positioned the sector's motivation to realize their ambition for a national strategy as 'collective.' At least through meeting and conference attendance, and via what was communicated via interviews, the sector appears to share a deep commitment to, and understanding of, the process. This could be partially due to SEA's focus on procedural transparency as a mechanism for generating that understanding. In attempting to gain more clarity around emails that SEA periodically sent out to anyone who had engaged with SENS containing general updates on their work and upcoming engagement opportunities (e.g., Moore, 2022a, 2022b), I asked someone about their perceived importance in an interview. They responded:

> really fundamental to the work is transparency and I say that because genuinely I think we're, we're going to do our very best work if we consider the broadest possible perspectives, and that those perspectives are informed. Like you can't participate in something unless you know what's going on and can locate yourself in it (ATSI 2).

The perceived necessity for someone to locate themselves in the process was therefore used as justification for providing wider context to the sector beyond isolated details related to any individual consultation opportunity. They went on to elaborate on this contextual and procedural transparency as not only being relevant to the overall environment and aims and ambitions of a process, but also to the more granular ways it impacts of perceptions of inclusion. They described how:

> you also wanna know, like, I also wanna know if I'm participating in something that my voice was heard, even if what results is not what I said, I wanna understand the process, that it was reasonable, that I was heard and valued in being part of that process (ATSI 2).

One other person also highlighted the importance of iterative consultation events where updates were publicly shared back with the sector, alongside any relevant context to ensure people could consistently contribute and transparently understand the process. When asked about outcomes and success they replied:

> The process done right means that by the time you get to the first iteration it's already close enough that people are feeling comfortable and are feeling that their voices are heard. So because it was deliberately, "Everyone just tell us," and we got all of that feedback in, and then because people could see, "Ah yeah, I see where my voice has contributed and it hasn't come out the way I thought it would, but actually that's okay because I can see how I've shaped the broader picture" (ATSDP 3).

In essence, because people could see how their voices were contributing in a transparent and open manner, they were more likely to trust the process, and in turn believe in it or buy into it, even if their priorities did not emerge as the ones central for the broader sector. At least from the perspective of a few engaging with this process, SEA's approach has been positioned as building and nurturing comprehensive understanding of the process (ATSDP 2

and 3; ATSI 2). In turn, the expectation is that people will be more motivated to contribute because they understand how and trust that their perspectives are being considered and what the broader context is in which they are considered.

At the same time, another person I interviewed used mitigation strategies to highlight areas where they perceived SEA's approach might not sufficiently engage as many perspectives as possible. Inclusion of many voices beyond the 'usual suspects' would be necessary, at least from their perspective, to foster broad levels of trust across the sector and afford the process a needed level of legitimacy. The discourse of 'grassroots engagement' played a central role in this individual's argument. In contrasting this live process to previous failed attempts to develop a national strategy they said that this time around, "That reliance on grassroots connections is really important to that national success" (ATSI 1). They made this claim without fully revealing if they believed that inclusion was indeed felt among grassroots social enterprises, but later indicated they did not perceive it to be geographically inclusive even if many frontline social enterprises were engaged. Their assertion still adds to the evidence suggesting trust is central to this process; however, dual, although not necessarily competing, discourses around 'transparency' and 'grassroots engagement' highlight different perspectives in the sector around how that mutual commitment to and shared motivation around the process might be best fostered.

### 8.4.3 Functional elements

Even though there have been strides towards developing a process that has legitimacy and respect within the sector, and is built on mutual commitment, trust, and understanding, there are still functional elements that could help or hinder the more relational aspects of this collaboration. For example, the sector needs to collectively decide what a new

procedural and institutional approach looks like in the context of government advocacy. The leaders I interviewed argued that the sector remains committed to sharing and maintaining principles of inclusive and transparent engagement that defined their mission and vision process. They hope to apply them as they continue to pursue cross-sector, collaborative work around developing a national strategy; however, at the conclusion of my empirical research in early 2023, engagement that SEA and the broader Australian social enterprise sector had with the Federal Government was limited collectively. Thus, there have been few opportunities to translate these 'shared principles of practice' into significant and tangible work collaborating with public sector actors.

This lack of collective engagement sits alongside historic relationships that certain Australian social enterprise delivery organizations and/or intermediaries have with the Australian Government. These developed over time as ecosystem actors advocated for their own particular organizational needs. Three of individuals I interviewed (ATSDP 2 and 3; ATSI 2) mentioned they were hopeful about a new way to potentially approach procedures and strategy surrounding the sector's lobbying and advocacy work. One person argued that agreement around this approach would be central to their success of externally communicating a coherent and collective vision, particularly when speaking with national public sector representatives. They explained this potential approach for social enterprise in the context of a known lobbying technique used in a different sector:

> say you've got half an hour, the first 5 minutes you would say, "As a sector we need bang, bang, bang, bang. As an organization, I'm here to talk to you about this: blah, blah, blah." But everybody had a shared like, "Bang, this is the sector needs or issues or whatever" and that was common language, and it gave them a shared vision, a shared understanding. That's exactly what we're trying to achieve through Social Enterprise Australia (ATSDP 2).

Two others who were part of these interviews affirmed this perspective that SEA can support ecosystem development by respecting existing organizational boundaries and relationships while simultaneous elevating the work of others. They also shared an example of how this perspective informed their approach to conversations about various organizational versus sector needs (ATSI 2; ATSDP 3). Critically though, all five interviewees argued for coherent messaging at the federal government level. One described how they believed SEA could help facilitate that coherence while respecting the existing sector infrastructure. They argued:

> what we don't wanna create is a network of networks. That's not what this is about. So we want to enable, and unlock, and let them thrive, and yes, we will provide infrastructure and support whenever it's needed. But what we don't want is a hierarchy that Social Enterprise Australia sits on top of. Because we've already got the state networks, so they need to thrive and we need to … work really, really closely with them … we wanna represent, we wanna be the voice of, and we wanna have that golden thread through it, but we don't feel at this stage the appropriate path is, is a hierarchy structure (ATSDP 2).

Positioning the institutional arrangements between sector organizations in a manner that lacks hierarchy, alongside the leadership from SEA committed sharing knowledge and resources while respecting these existing arrangements, arguably has the potential to increase capacity for joint action around a national strategy for social enterprise.

This is likely to be especially true when public sector actors get introduced into this collaborative system in more meaningful and strategic ways as the sector and their policy agenda continue to evolve. Yet, as advocacy increases, and there are more opportunities to engage with the Australian Government on a multitude of policy areas, it will be important that philosophies about respecting institutionalized organizations persists. That said, not everyone within the sector perceives this respect and collaboration extending wide enough to be truly inclusive. From the perspective of someone who has a leadership position within

the sector, but is not directly connected to Social Enterprise Australia, SEA's procedural choice to be "Focus group reliant means [they] are subject to the strength of [their] existing channels rather than new ones. And … can make [focus group results and outcomes], you know, swayed towards particular areas where [their] connections are the strongest…Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane" (ATSI 1). This perspective could also be informed by historical failures around a national strategy that now weigh heavily on the coalitions championing this process currently.

For example, someone who has worked to support social enterprise for over a decade spoke about a previous process in 2012 that did not end up gaining traction because it lacked the true social enterprise voice in the process:

> there was this round table forum that came up with a manifesto around sort of social enterprise, but the problem was that there was no social enterprises around the table. It was intermediaries … But you know, it, it wasn't representative of the sector. There was no sector voice. I think there was one or so social enterprises at that table and it was … everything about them, but without them. So it didn't, it didn't succeed at all (ATSDP 2).

In this respect, the procedural choice to exclude social enterprises from this initial conversation meant that the organizations and individuals who ostensibly be key beneficiaries of a social enterprise policy or strategy, did not trust that their interests were being represented. Some intermediaries may have claimed they were able to speak on behalf of the sector effectively and that their interests also translated to direct social enterprise interests as well. Participants I interviewed who work in intermediaries themselves also mentioned that from their perspective getting support for intermediaries directly translates to support for social enterprises since those intermediaries exist to support and strengthen the social enterprise ecosystem (ATSDP 3). Nevertheless, the historical context suggests SEA's leadership, may want to pay special attention to the balance

of institutional arrangements that respect existing ecosystem players like delivery organizations as well as procedural arrangements that elevate the voices of grassroots social enterprises.

One of the sector leaders I spoke with discussed the concept of "connecting the talent" to elevate grassroots social enterprise perspectives. It is their way of recognizing that within the sector there are exceptional talents, people who have knowledge and stories that can directly influence policy development, but often that talent is not connected and leveraged as a resource as much as it could be by sector intermediaries. They highlighted what they perceived to be an opportunity for the sector to showcase "The talents in social enterprise and the lived experience people, because ultimately, it's the storytelling that helps the data and the policy ideas actually get up" (ATSI 1). For this individual, strategically partnering across the sector to better tell stories was an underutilized resource that could further facilitate collaboration. For them this was especially true if intermediaries focused on "then connecting that to governments' own agendas, own strategies, so that they see [the social enterprise sector] in a new light" (ATSI 1).

More tangible resources are also an important part of these collaboration dynamics at a functional level. While it has held less relevance to the Australian social enterprise sector, when compared with the Scottish experience, in terms of their collaborative relationships with public sector actors, it has had significant impact on their relationships and collaborative engagement with philanthropic leaders (ATSDP 2). To a certain extent, the fact that most of this work to-date has been resourced by private philanthropic organizations rather than governments, has allowed them to focus internally, really get themselves organized, and not feel beholden to particular aims of government because of their financial support. Nevertheless, the way the Australia social enterprise sector views fiscal resources

from governments at all levels is still an important part of their current and future collaboration dynamics. For one sector leader it is about making the case for the sector's added value in a compelling but also connected way. As they phrased it, "it's just about looking for different buckets of money and doing the pitch for, for everyone to realize that, you know, social enterprise is the way that we can help them achieve what they wanna do" (ATSI 1).

## 8.5 Comparing approaches across contexts

This section now further elaborates on the similarities and differences between the approaches in Scotland and Australia. I compare perspectives on collaboration dynamics and how they have influenced action in various stages leading up to national strategy development. I then offer reflections on what has been revealed about the subsequent phased process in Scotland that might hold relevance in Australia. Even though the Scottish and Australian cases are at different stages in their evolution, there are many similarities between what has been done in each case. Comparison of the cases revealed that when reflecting on the evolution of their respective social enterprise ecosystems and their policy development journeys, participants argued for the importance of similar activities in pursuit of their collaborative social enterprise policy design and delivery goals. Not approached in the same order, but still reflective of the engagement in each case over time, these key activities and approaches transcend context.

In both countries participants referenced the importance of baseline and specialized research on the social enterprise sector played in developing persuasive arguments about the sector (ATSI 2) and in understanding what type of ecosystem and policy support was most needed (TSDP 5). In both Australia and Scotland, participants positioned this research

(e.g., Barraket et al., 2010, 2016; Impact Tracks, 2022; Social Value Lab, 2015, 2019) as generating shared knowledge within the social enterprise sector and across sectors to increase the capacity for joint action among actors collaborating. Beyond the ability of this research to increase capacity for action by enhancing knowledge, it was also discussed in the context of enhancing shared motivations by giving the advocacy process additional levels of legitimacy (e.g., PSA 2 and 4; TSDP 1) and increasing mutual understanding around the sector (ATSI 2). In this respect, data in both contexts was used to "build a case" for the government's interest and investment in social enterprise and then leverage that case when engaging and lobbying government (ATDSP 1 and 2; ATSI 2; TSDP 1 and 3).

As part of this public sector engagement and lobbying, the development of representative bodies for social enterprise and delivery agencies which would both unite and support the ecosystem was also central in many narratives (TSI 3 and 8; TSDP 1; PSA 1; SEL 2; ATSI 2; ATSDP 3). These organizations had the capacity to host policy conferences or convene 'unconferences,' for example, to get actors from the social enterprise sector and/or within the public sector thinking about enabling infrastructure for social enterprise and how supportive policy might accelerate its development. Additionally, international engagement was positioned as playing a central role in both contexts. This applied to inviting 'experts' to speak about social enterprise locally (ATSDP 1) and visiting other countries to learn more (ATSDP 1; TSDP 1; TSI 1 and 2), in essence promoting the diffusion of ideas and accelerating local activity based on international action (e.g., Hannant et al., 2021a; Scottish Government, 2016a). Finally, within the social enterprise sector, actors in Scotland and Australia worked to develop a mission and/or vision for social enterprise internally (Coburn, 2015; Social Enterprise Australia, 2022) before looking to engage with government around broad and ambitious policy to support social enterprise.

These activities and themes all surfaced through the narratives of participants in Scotland and Australia when they were speaking about the stages preceding the start of their national strategy collaboration with public sector actors in earnest. They were all using various discursive strategies to position their sector's choices around procedural arrangements and engagement activities as canvassing the most essential prerequisites to collaborative social enterprise policy development. The fact that these choices, choices central to the development and changes of the respective social enterprise ecosystems in both countries, are similar deserves additional critical attention and will be discussed further in the next chapter (Chapter 9).

Differences between these cases begin to emerge when analyzing *how* these things were done rather than *what* was done. It is possible that slightly different approaches to public management in Scotland and Australia meant that these activities could be approached differently, that the historical rooting in each country necessitated they be approached differently, or that both these factors and even other more implicit forces were impacting varied approaches in cases that were ostensibly similar. These apparent similarities might have originated from a desire in Australia to "understand and look at the learnings from other countries like Scotland, like the UK and how [they could] learn from that in Australia so that [they could] understand and preempt and you know, play, play things smartly" (ATSDP 2).

Yet, the notion that what happened in Scotland can simply be 'imported' with the form of direct policy and strategy 'translation' masks the way policies and approaches materialize in different contexts and the differences that result. Indeed, this desire to learn and understand in Australia, is still approached with the recognition that it will necessarily need to be different, even when the 'Scottish approach' itself, as well as concrete strategic

steps associated with obtaining a national social enterprise strategy, may serve as very valid forms of inspiration for action. When someone in Australia was recounting the emergence of recent and explicit conversations about a national social enterprise strategy in Australia, they referenced a session someone hosted at the 2020 virtual 'unconference' which focused on that potential of a strategy. They described the ethos of that session as being "very much, 'Look what Scotland did. We could have that. What do we think?' And that opened the conversation" where people came to deliberate with blank slates as much as possible (ATSDP 3). They went on to position their SENS process in the following way: "It's that bigger purpose and Scotland as that anchor point is what has guided the whole process to-date" (ATSDP 3).

Certain participants interviewed in the Scottish context used intensification strategies to emphasize the importance of *process* in policy co-production (TSDP 1 and 2; PSA 1, 5, and 7; TSI 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8). When articulating their belief that the process surrounding the most recent phase involving the second action plan had shifted in an unfavorable direction one of these individuals reflected:

> When we talked about the strategy and the first action plan—when we promoted it, when I talked about it in Scotland and all over the world—I always said, 'The most important thing about this is the process. The end point is brilliant, but the process, let's learn from this' (TSI 1).

The assumptions and motivations surrounding collaborative terms like co-production impacts upon practical manifestations of practitioner work in ways that have consequences for how the processes are perceived. Thus, in Scotland, as the process evolved, and perhaps as new leaders with varied discourse around co-production became involved, their underlying motivation to keep engagement as broad and iterative as it once was shifted. This resulted in procedural and institutional changes associated with sustaining the process. It

seemed during this phase people were filtered out of the process leaving fewer people, often in the form of powerful stakeholder groups representing intermediary and delivery organizations in Scotland, to have direct influence in shaping, and perhaps even altering, the direction of Scotland's social enterprise ecosystem.

Considering this, the choice of actors in Australia to use intensification strategies to highlight how their process attempts to keep engagement wide and filter out both organizational and individual agendas in favor of engaging for the collective benefit of the sector is interesting. This focus on people joining conversations as individuals rather than representatives of organizations or personal positions might arguably sit in contrast to the approach taken in Scotland. It might also be in direct response to a cautionary tale from Scotland that emerged as actors from both contexts interacted and exchanged ideas. At the same time, it is also possible to argue that individuals joined the conversations in Scotland as well, but under the guise of organizational representation. This is not to say they were not representing their organizations. Indeed, there was a perception in Scotland that certain delivery organizations continued to advocate for policy and resources to support various programs for the sector that their organizations delivered, regardless of whether those programs might still have the same level of benefit for the sector as when they were initially conceived (TSI 2; TSDP 6; SEL 1). Yet, it was nevertheless clear through participant discourse and positioning of their narratives that there were apparent differences between the perceptions of processes in Scotland and Australia, even if there was not an overt acknowledgement of that reality. I further interrogate the overt and subvert interconnectedness of both policy ideas and processes between these places and across contexts from the perspective of critical policy studies in the final discussion and conclusion chapter.

## 8.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the process of working toward the development of a national social enterprise strategy in Australia. By presenting findings from preliminary interviews with key stakeholders in the Australian process, I offer not only perspectives on how this process has evolved through three key stages, but also an analysis of the central collaboration dynamics characterizing approaches to this process. As the process in Australia is still relatively nascent, at least in comparison to a context like Scotland, the ability to analyze the evolution of these dynamics over time is limited. Nevertheless, I was able to begin the discussion of similarities and differences between cooperation around social enterprise strategy development in Scotland and Australia. In doing so, I have begun to reveal the interconnectedness of both policy ideas and processes between places and across contexts, as well as the differences in the processes including the norms of engagement and perceived impacts among varied stakeholders.

Returning to the original question guiding this chapter, the Scottish narrative of collaborative social enterprise design and delivery has proliferated Australian discourse. These actors are undoubtably 'looking to' Scotland and attributing some of their work to Scottish inspiration, but even while they are, their approach to design and delivery has differed. In the context of seeking to develop policy and strategy for a group or sector with varied and often competing priorities, this chapter highlighted the importance of some key activities that might help a group coalesce around a shared set of principles while also getting public sector stakeholders on board with those principles. In these cases, it was important to have an entity that was largely seen to be independent to drive the process forward; participants argued the entity needed to be divorced from historical discourse surrounding social enterprise within the sector. The approaches in both cases were different:

forming an entirely new body in Social Enterprise Australia and utilizing an organization like Social Value Lab, which was embedded enough in the Scottish sector to have legitimacy but 'independent and tangential' enough not to have entrenched views. Further, how these facilitating organizations have engaged (or were beginning to engage) with public sector actors and social enterprise sector actors differed as well. Comparing policy co-production in Scotland and Australia through this chapter thus helped demonstrate that functional elements around resources and leadership as well as procedural and institutional arrangements play a significant role in perceptions of value creation during policy co-production processes. This chapter therefore began to shed light on how public managers, and social enterprise advocates and allies could consider future approaches to social enterprise support and policy that effectively sustain value creation at various ecosystem levels.

In bringing these cases together, this chapter used empirical data in the Australian context to illuminate broader theoretical questions of how collaborative networks or coalitions can produce the best outcomes that might create wider public value, while also generating value explicitly for the social enterprise sector and organizations at the meso-level. In the next chapter, I build on these findings by contextualizing them within existing public management and policy studies research and discuss the theoretical contributions this thesis makes. I also offer a discussion on the practical implications of this research in the context of social enterprise policy development alongside the overarching conclusions to this thesis. Finally, I will conclude the chapter and thesis by reflecting on opportunities for further research that has the potential to offer additional insights into future collaborative policy development and delivery processes, across contexts and over time.

# Chapter 9: Conclusions

## 9.1 Introduction

The two previous chapters have introduced and begun to discuss the key findings of this research in the context of public management and policy studies scholarship. Chapter 7 outlined the development of policy co-production in Scotland through the lens of social enterprise policy. It focused on exploring the critical junctures and the ongoing negotiation of social enterprise discourses that influenced how and why social enterprise policy developed in Scotland. In the context of a collaborative governance regime (Emerson et al., 2012; Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015a), this first half of the discussion in Chapter 7 explored the 'drivers,' and to a certain extent, 'barriers' of the process. It then shifted focus to the 'outputs,' and in turn, 'impacts' of the collaboration, noting how participants utilized discursive strategies to link their assumptions around value creation and destruction to their narratives of co-production. After establishing that the various realities surrounding the Scottish process of policy 'co-production' appeared to become increasingly contested over time, Chapter 8 presented perspectives surrounding a similar, albeit earlier-stage social enterprise policy co-production process in Australia. This chapter helped explain the mobilization of the more dominant and self-promoted narrative of Scotland's social enterprise policy leadership and innovation; a narrative that co-production was consistently embraced and that the Scottish experience should be considered an exemplar of both policy co-production and social enterprise ecosystem support.

In this final chapter of my thesis, I discuss the key findings of this research and outline its central methodological and theoretical contributions. I present a more extensive discussion of what this research offers for the advancement of public management and

policy studies scholarship than the preliminary discussions introduced in Chapters 7 and 8. In particular, this thesis advances understanding of collaborative governance and policy co-production by taking a historical perspective to inform understanding of how these processes evolve. In doing so it adds to the growing body of literature on the sustainability of co-production (see McMullin, 2023a; Pestoff, 2014), especially in the context of policy (viz. Vaillancourt, 2009) and public services considered together rather than viewing services as outputs isolated from wider policymaking processes.

After exploring these key theoretical contributions, I turn my attention to a discussion of the implications this research has for policy and practice. I offer practical considerations for how policy engagement and collaboration might be more effectively sustained over time as well as potential lessons there might be for social enterprise movement building across contexts. I recognize that all research has its limitations, and this project is no exception. I therefore include a discussion on some of the limitations associated with this project, how I responded to various challenges, and propose some future directions for research that can build on this work while addressing some of its limitations. I conclude by offering final reflections on this research and thoughts about the future of policy co-production as it attempts to more effectively incorporate the needs and perspectives of communities, organizations, and individuals that policy intends to support.

## 9.2 Key research findings and theoretical contributions

Before I began the research for this thesis, policy co-production was being used in practitioner settings, and even mentioned in public sector documents (e.g., Holmes, 2011), without academic literature mirroring its practical manifestations. Policymakers and practitioners were embracing collaborative governance concepts, while most 'co-production'

and ‘co-creation’ scholarship represented studies of ‘fixed,’ or relatively time-bound cases. This scholarship placed exclusionary parameters around the type of engagement that could be labeled with a ‘co-’ term. The existing research thus insufficiently captured how these processes were evolving over time, often in non-linear ways. My thesis fills this research gap, developing the concept of ‘policy co-production’ by studying examples of social enterprise strategy development and delivery. This concept is more reflective of non-linear and collaborative cross-sector policy and public service engagement than the predominant focus of research in this field to-date.

To fill this gap in research around policy co-production, the research for this thesis was designed to address the following four questions:

1. How did various political conditions, public programs, and policies preceding 2016 shape the environment in which Scotland’s social enterprise strategy was developed?
2. How did actors within what was once a broad third sector with different historical roots come together and coalesce around a set of shared principles and aims that ostensibly emerged through the 2016 social enterprise strategy?
3. What can be learned about collaborative governance practices and policy co-production by critically analyzing the design, delivery, and process of sustaining Scotland’s social enterprise strategy?
4. In what ways has the narrative of collaborative social enterprise policy development in Scotland been mobilized in different contexts as other governments and social enterprise sectors attempt to embark on their own policy co-production journeys?

The narrative I crafted through this thesis to reveal perspectives on how and why policy co-production can be embraced to varying extents over time necessitated some overlap in the presentation of findings; however, each of my four empirical chapters

predominantly concentrated on data and findings related to a specific question. In Chapter 4, 5, and 6, I focused on research questions 1, 2, and 3, respectively. This was followed by further analysis of the data and perspectives which enhanced understanding around these three research questions in Chapter 7. Finally, in Chapter 8, I addressed the fourth research question by presenting data on the evolving social enterprise policy co-production process in Australia. This additional case extended the empirical context for this research and tested the utility of my research approach for studying policy co-production. I now discuss these collective findings and my overall research approach in terms of what they contribute methodologically and theoretically to both public management and policy studies scholarship.

### 9.2.1 Contributions to public management scholarship

Ostrom (1996) initially conceptualized co-production as the process by which, 'citizens can play an active role in producing public goods and services of consequence to them' (1073).[53] This focus on public services (Bovaird, 2007) and tangible public programs or outcomes (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2021; McCulloch, 2021) in dominant academic definitions of co-production might make the processes surrounding cross-sector social enterprise policy development and delivery, at least on the surface, appear to align with widely accepted co-

[53] The notion of 'citizen' involvement in co-production raises important questions around agency and who gets to be involved in these processes. It also arguably introduces the notion of an 'individual' or 'service user' and their individual involvement, when research suggests that the benefits and impacts of co-production are likely to be stronger when they are reflective of collective action (Bovaird et al., 2015, 2016) and that there are inadequacies around the term 'service user' and the power imbalances it creates (Beresford, 2001). Regardless of terminology around who is included in these processes, the benefits and impacts of, 'both individual and collective co-production tend to be higher when respondents have a strong sense that people can make a difference ('political self-efficacy')' (Bovaird et al., 2016: 63). Thus in the Scottish case, considering this process in the context of existing research around co-production, it suggests that those individuals in Scotland who did not feel valued in the process, who perceived themselves as having limited agency in the process, or who believed that their contribution would not lead to demonstrable content or process changes were less likely to participate and perceive the engagement to be value creating.

production definitions. After all, the phases associated with the social enterprise action plans heavily revolved around service delivery and those who were involved in designing the social enterprise strategy were then also active partners in delivering services like business support programs for social enterprises during this period. On the other hand, given that co-production is often considered to be collaboration between citizens and professionals, perhaps co-management, an arrangement where third sector organizations deliver public services with or for the state (McMullin, 2022), might be the more appropriate term to describe the collaboration among organizations to deliver services during this phase.

At least public and third sector practitioners in Scotland did not seem to be predisposed to discursive influences from academic definitions of co-production. Instead, they were applying the term in a fluid and evolving policy context that reflected their realities as practitioners. Their discourse seemed to be most influenced by tangible elements of collaboration dynamics that in turn influenced their underlying assumptions and motivations about how 'co-production' could and should occur. In this regard, using empirical data to highlight the utility of Emerson and colleague's (2012) integrative framework for collaborative governance, and specifically its isolation of various elements contributing to collaboration dynamics, is one of the contributions this thesis makes in the context of public management scholarship.

Building on this framework, this research highlights the outsized impacts of certain elements influencing collaboration (i.e., functional elements like procedural and institutional arrangements) and demonstrates how those elements contribute to perceptions of co-production on a practical level and value creation on a theoretical level. In revealing insights around the shifting perceptions of value creation and co-production this research also highlights the challenges associated with sustaining policy co-production, and adds to

research on the sustainability of co-production which has primarily been limited to public service contexts (viz. McMullin, 2023a; Pestoff, 2014). The research further demonstrates how it is especially challenging to sustain *perceptions* of these processes over time where the processes evolve to intersect with complex public policy and service development and delivery arrangements. This research therefore supports broader theory around consensus building in complex systems which suggests the process of collaboration, or in this case, policy co-production, should not be separated from outcomes, because the process itself matters and is inextricably linked to the outcomes generated (Innes and Booher, 1999).

Participant discourse around what the process of co-production does or should involve did not necessarily change through the different phases of developing, delivering, and sustaining Scotland's social enterprise strategy process. It was more consistently rooted in ideals around transparency, equality, and participation; however, narratives around co-production and extent to which participants perceived it was occurring certainly shifted. These narratives also shifted across all categories of participants, including those in the public sector, but not to the same extent as social enterprise intermediaries, for example. What remained consistent was official public sector rhetoric, often via published policy documents, suggesting that this process has over time continued to be emblematic of co-production.

Emerson and colleagues (2012) note that it is difficult to study collaborative action and the performance of collaborative governance because of the continuously evolving system context and actions unfolding within it over a long period of time. Yet through this research, by focusing on the temporal and historic aspects of this policy co-production process, I have shown how the levels of engagement within this process changed over time throughout phases of policy development and delivery, even as the discourse to describe

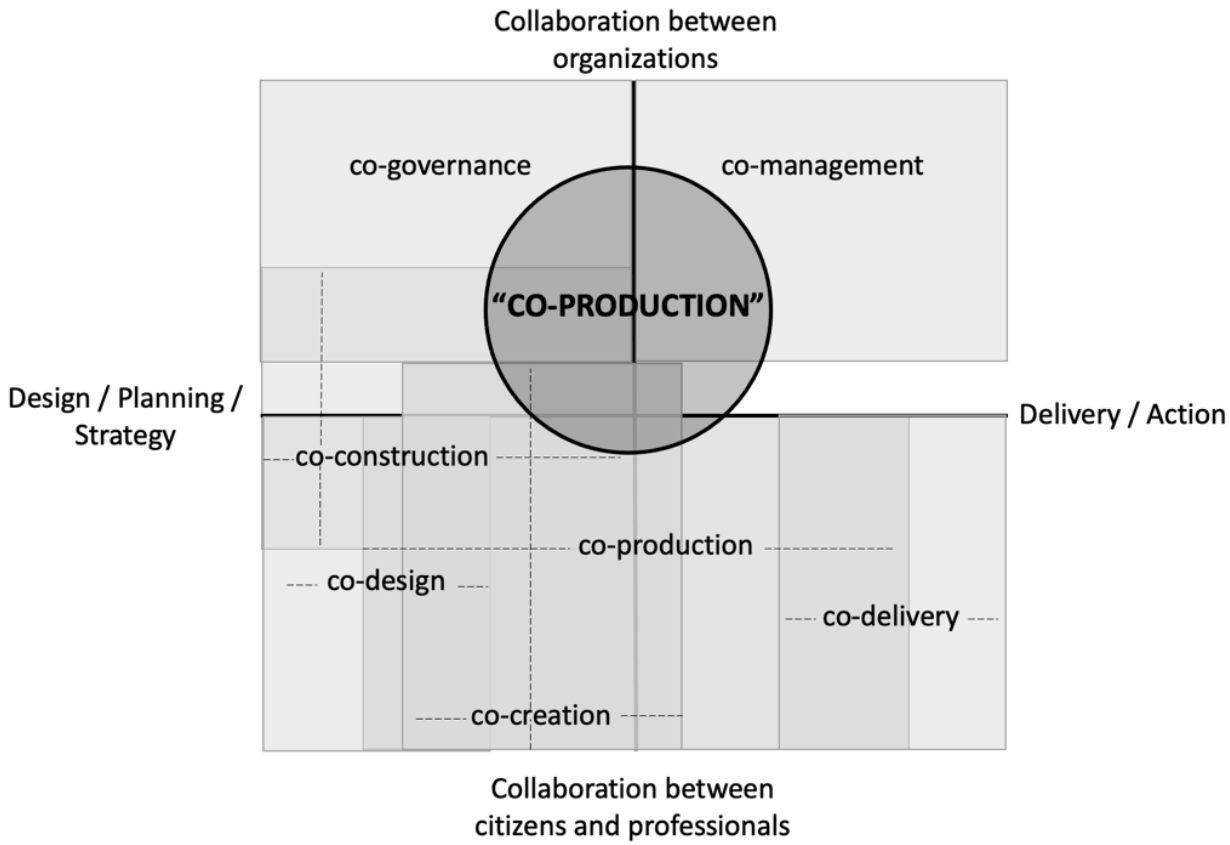
what was happening from public sector actors remained persistent. Aligned with this concept of design and delivery, I introduced a third 'sustaining' analytical phase with high relevance to the realities of policy development and implementation. In practice, policy and service development and delivery is iterative and often needs to be nurtured and sustained. Thus, by focusing on the ongoing interplay between these dimensions that are often isolated for analytical purposes, I have begun to show that the conceptual lines between 'co-production' and 'co-creation' are blurrier in practice than public management scholarship has arguably acknowledged.

There is significant overlap with lots of 'co-' terms in the academic literature, but I argue the current state of the literature suggests engagement with one precludes the other. Instead, this case demonstrates how they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As I discussed more extensively in Chapter 2, there are two central debates used to help distinguish these terms. First, *when* in a policy or service cycle the collaboration is occurring (i.e., design or delivery). This is often positioned as a binary and central definitions do not reflect reality in practice where these processes are blurred and not linear. For example, in the case of the social enterprise strategy in Scotland, the overall process moved back and forth between design, delivery, and then to a certain extent evaluation of subsequent action plans. Second, the third sector has increasingly been recognized for their role in delivering public services on behalf of, or alongside, the public sector. Therefore, the second central debate concerns *who* is involved in the process. The 'who' boundary centers around whether the collaboration is between organizations (often in the third sector and sometimes public sector) or between public service professionals and citizens or service users.

In offering a discussion of appropriate terminology for collaborative processes informed by this research in Scotland and the dominant academic literature, this thesis

provides a challenge to the most dogmatic of management scholars who have historically subscribed to academic definitions of 'co-' terms with less nuanced reflection on and acknowledgment of the way these terms are being operationalized in practice. As shown in Figure 9.1, the broad usage of 'co-production' in the Scottish context, particularly as it relates to collaboration around social enterprise policy does not align with the boxed in boundaries around the term imposed by the literature. This analysis revealed how co-production is broadly used in Scotland, or at least among these research respondents with connection to Scottish social enterprise policy, encapsulating what otherwise might be described as co-governance or co-management in prevailing scholarship.

***Figure 9.1: Practitioner terminology around 'co-production' in Scotland mapped against dominant academic definitions of 'co-' processes***




Understanding how language and terminology impact upon process is important. It is also critically important to understand the underlying discourse surrounding a term in

practice so that there is transparency around expectations for subsequent engagement. In Scotland, as soon as the process of engagement around social enterprise policy development started being referred to as 'co-production,' actors expected to experience a process that resembled their personal understandings of the term (e.g., a process that is transparent, that engages, or that perhaps disrupts traditional power relations). For many within the third sector, they expected engagement that looked similar to the design phase for the strategy when those in the public sector subsequently labeled any further engagement as 'co-production.' This initial design phase was almost universally perceived by respondents across sectors as the period in the overall strategy process which involved the most productive, transparent, and 'genuine' forms of collaboration. They were acutely aware of any procedural and institutional changes where they perceived their voice was being excluded, even if it meant widening perspectives in other areas.

In Scotland, the proliferation of the term co-production impacted the activity of social enterprise practitioners, and importantly their engagement with or buy-in to the process. This held true regardless of what discursive themes around co-production (e.g., co-production as simple participation or co-production as an emancipatory process rooted in equality) dominated claims made by the actors involved. The sensitivities in the Scottish case support Loeffler's (2021) assertion that when practioners are applying co-production, 'They need to find a common understanding and language for co-production which has to be context-specific' (29). This argument is furthered by the suggestion 'that a definition of co-production should be co-produced by the stakeholders who wish to undertake a co-production initiative' (Loeffler, 2021: 29).

Thus, in the context of public management scholarship, we need to be cautious of how the once necessary project of defining these terms in the name of conceptual clarity

has started to reorient the way practitioners are using language, and in doing so reorienting practitioners themselves with tangible impacts on their engagement. In this respect, focusing collaboration research on the 'big questions' (Behn, 1995) around, for example, how collaborative policy development and delivery can be sustained over time, and at what points and for whom is it creating value, instead of debates about the definitional lenses through which that process can be analyzed will help further advance the field and ensure research is conducted in a way that is more easily translatable to a practical context. It is therefore important to conceive of co-production in a relative and not absolute sense. There is a spectrum of engagement around policy co-production, and even co-production more broadly, and even though these different types and levels have very different impacts on the stakeholders involved, they have all been labeled as co-production by most of the actors interviewed for this case study. This suggests that while co-production and co-creation are useful concepts, they have perhaps become too broad to define what occurs on a practical level, and that a more granular understanding of what is going on underneath and within each of these processes is necessary for advancing scholarship.

This case therefore provides the basis for the argument that the public management field has reached an inflection point where it might now be important to shift scholarly focus to the discourse and mechanisms underpinning these processes and away from terminological labels. I argue that evolving practitioner discourse around collaborative management practices necessitates this. Further, there is now more research, including the research conducted for this thesis, which has the potential to trace these collaboration processes over longer time periods where the longitudinal cases transcend most existing definitions of 'co-' processes that are time-bound.

The Australian case also supports the argument that focusing on the discourse and mechanisms underpinning collaborative management practices, rather than terminology that has the potential to limit comparative research and create conflicts in practice, is essential for advancing scholarship. In Australia, there was an acknowledgement that there were lessons to be gleaned from Scotland, but that the Australian sector wanted to build a process that had more local resonance. In Australia, 'co-design' is a popular term, and design thinking and systems change dominate lots of discussions across sectors (Blomkamp, 2018; Lewis et al., 2020; van Buuren et al., 2020). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the process mutated into something influenced not by the Scottish language, but terminology that was more locally rooted: most of those interviewed used the term 'co-design' to describe their process of collaborative social enterprise policy design and delivery. If I had limited the scope of this research to only focus on 'co-production' it might have eliminated that as a viable case for comparison. Indeed, the comparability of and connections between the Scottish and Australian case led to the development of interesting findings that build on existing research. Through the process of conceptualizing policy co-production as a broad collaborative management practice that encompasses many other components of discrete 'co-' processes, it was possible to reveal and analyze these findings, including those in relation to policy studies that I will now discuss.

### 9.2.2 Contributions to policy studies scholarship

Previous research on social enterprise ecosystems has demonstrated that socio-political, regulatory, and historical-cultural differences often lead to diverging social enterprise ecosystems (Hazenberg, Bajwa-Patel, Mazzei, et al., 2016; Hazenberg, Bajwa-Patel, Roy, et al., 2016). Chapter 8 highlighted the many similarities in approaches to social enterprise

ecosystem development, rooted in a desire to lay the foundation for strong collaborative policy action, between Scotland and Australia. This might suggest that socio-political, regulatory, and historical-cultural differences between Scotland and Australia may not be so pronounced, or at least pronounced in a way that demonstrably impacts upon social enterprise ecosystem development. Both countries have social enterprise movements rooted in community business and community enterprise and a strong history of social enterprise networks igniting and building the movement at key critical junctures (Barraket, 2008a; Barraket et al., 2017; Roy et al., 2015). Although, it is possible that there was significant overlap in the arguments embedded in these precursory narratives not because of the symbolic and contextual connections between the nations, but rather because of the practical connections between their social enterprise sectors. After all, many individuals who had been instrumental throughout the process in Scotland were interviewed as part of the early work around the SENS project in Australia (Hannant et al., 2021a).

At the same time, the local mobilization of these activities did differ, at least in certain approaches, or arguments surrounding approaches. This suggests these experiences may still offer some insight into potential paths forward for countries who wish to embark on their own collaborative social enterprise policy design and service delivery journeys, regardless of their implicit or explicit connections to Australia and/or Scotland. Understanding these experiences requires not just analysis and discussion of precursory activities, but also the discourse around those activities to help reveal assumptions and motivations about the 'proper' ways to approach social enterprise strategy building on a national level. It is this approach to discourse analysis which helps reveal how the model of a 'Scottish approach' to collaborative and consultative policy design and delivery (Cairney et al., 2016) has been applied in the social enterprise field and mobilized globally. I argue that

the differences between perspectives on the Scottish and Australian cases suggest this policy mobilization can be characterized as a 'nonlinear reproduction' process whereby these policy concepts have moved 'in bits and pieces—as selective discourses, inchoate ideas, and synthesized models—[that] therefore "arrive" not as replicas but as policies already-in-transformation' (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 170). Indeed, this applies to both the content of a 'co-produced' or 'co-designed' social enterprise strategy and to approaches around co-production or co-design.

While comparing the content of social enterprise policies between Scotland and Australia was beyond the scope of this thesis, comparison between the processes was essential. Perspectives on individual versus organizational engagement in policy co-production emerged as one of the most significant differentiators between purported approaches. As the process evolved in Scotland, a few intermediary and grassroots social enterprise representatives lamented the influence a few powerful stakeholder groups, representing intermediary and delivery organizations, had increasingly been able to exert on the ongoing policy co-production process and direction of the social enterprise ecosystem. What this research revealed about the influence of stakeholder groups builds on work from Nicholls (2010) that highlights the significant impact various stakeholder groups (like government actors or formalized social enterprise delivery organizations) can have on shaping discourse around social enterprise. This PhD further highlights how this influence also extends to social enterprise policy and ecosystems, via individual access to power and other resources these actors possess.

There was an acknowledgement among those interviewed in Scotland that the leaders of those intermediary organizations would feel an undeniable obligation to shape the direction of policy in a personally or organizationally advantageous manner since they

were dependent on public sector funding. It could therefore be argued they were intent on maintaining the power and resources affording them the ability to continue shaping Scotland's social enterprise policy and ecosystem that generated benefits at the meso- and micro-level (Nicholls, 2010), perhaps to the detriment of macro-level public value creation for the sector. This was the perspective held by those who lost confidence in the Scottish process and who argued collective public value would only be generated through a return to more collective co-production approaches seeking to reach consensus among many individuals, rather than individual co-production approaches consulting groups and individuals in a more isolated manner (viz. Bovaird et al., 2015, 2016; McMullin, 2023b).

In effect, the process in Scotland developed into something that at least in phases following the initial strategy design and development, might more accurately be defined by third sector organizations serving as proxies for the voices of citizens and individual social enterprises, a trend in Scottish policy approaches with the social enterprise sector identified in previous research (see Mazzei et al., 2019; Mazzei and Roy, 2017). In contrast, those in the Australian sector seemed adamant, at least in their early stages, that they were intent on upholding engagement of individuals in collective and deliberate engagement processes, rather than ones that occurred on a more individual and isolated basis. Thus, the Australian narrative about broad inclusion of individual voices seeking to collaborate and deliberate on the future for social enterprise was not exactly, or at least not consistently, emblematic of Scotland's approach.

This research has revealed perspectives that contradict the dominant public narrative of *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026* as a living document developed, delivered, and sustained through a process of policy co-production that remained consistently open and collaborative. Nevertheless, many in Australia still engaged in the

process of ‘anointing’ a favored policy model (Peck and Theodore, 2010) via their ongoing references around seeking to emulate, or at least build on, Scotland’s approach for this type of engagement. This contradiction between the reality of the Scottish case and the way it was operationalized in Australia is aligned with Peck and Theodore's (2010: 170) notion that policy models ‘take on lives of their own, often with little more than symbolic connection to their (supposed) places of origin.’ Thus these findings support research that has re-conceptualized policy transfer as a process of mobilization and mutation (viz. Peck and Theodore, 2010).

It is therefore essential that public sector actors and policy advocates operating in coalitions to advance policy are aware of how these policy processes and ideas have the potential to be packaged in misleading ways and get mobilized locally with incomplete information. This research also offers a cautionary tale around promoting a policy process as socially innovative without critical examination of that discourse and its impacts on the expectations it creates for fostering capacity for joint action. Sinclair and Baglioni (2014) have similarly cautioned how the social innovation discourse in social policy contexts can just as easily be co-opted in a manner that leads to further withdraw of community engagement and support rather than one that empowers communities and sectors through transformative participation.

In Australia, the discourse around Scotland as championing socially innovative and transformative policy was almost leveraged as a tool to help inspire action and build enthusiasm. While this process is ongoing, it appears to be a positive strategy that has helped provide legitimacy to the Australian process while allowing it to ‘mutate’ into something that has the propensity to meet the local needs of the social enterprise sector. It also offers what could be viewed as an optimistic development in social policy years after

the Australian Government signaled a commitment to meaningful engagement of citizens, service users, and organizations in their policymaking and service delivery (Holmes, 2011). Beresford (2001) has also highlighted how 'The 'them' and 'us' of social policy … is the result of exclusions operating in social policy itself' (507), and that social policy needs to change to allow the 'Service users and their organisations [who] can and want to offer their own analyses, interpretations and plans for action' (508). In this respect, this thesis specifically examining policy co-production through the lens of social enterprise policy in Scotland and Australia is some of the only work in this realm, and now offers insights into *how* social policy approaches, and specifically those around social enterprise, can develop in a meaningful way to reduce the us and them divide in traditional social policymaking and empower 'service users' and their organizations to be equal partners in the process of policy and service design and delivery over time.

### 9.2.3 Methodological contributions

Beyond the theoretical contributions this research makes, an additional contribution of this research relates to its interdisciplinarity. In bringing complementary theory and frameworks together, I enhanced understanding of social enterprise movement building from a policy perspective, while nuancing understanding around policy co-production from a longitudinal perspective. Both historical and sociological inquiry allowed me to establish key context for understanding various 'truth claims' people made about the processes under investigation. For example, the system context surrounding a collaborative governance regime informed my understanding of the drivers and barriers to collaboration as well as the impacts of that collaboration (see Figure 3.1). Conceptualizing the social enterprise ecosystem context in which those impacts were felt (Figure 3.2) was also essential to understanding perspectives

around value generated through what was at least ostensibly a co-produced policymaking process. Then, considering the ACF (Figure 3.3), without the historical perspective, it would have been more challenging to understand advocacy and lobbying activity within the third sector policy subsystem in question. Indeed, it was these factors which ultimately led to an embrace – at least by some – of policy co-production in both contexts. Understanding the external factors alongside internal factors impacting upon a coalition's chances of success, such as the availability of resources or their approach to negotiating competing discourses, was also essential to understand how policy decisions were made, how outputs were generated, and therefore what those policy impacts were. The strength of this research was therefore its ability to open a 'black box' of policymaking to illuminate perspectives on how the 'puzzle pieces' within that box might fit together in various contexts. In the next section, I will contextualize answers to my four research questions, summarizing how this research has improved collective understanding of social enterprise movement building and a policy co-production over time.

## 9.3 Policy and practice implications

While this research concentrates on Scotland and Australia as cases to enhance understanding around collaborative social enterprise policy development, the implications are broader. Findings from this research have the potential to improve understanding of policy co-production and mobilization of collaborative policy and governance ideas on a global scale. I highlight some of these broader lessons that could be mobilized in different countries and other policy areas beyond social enterprise before returning to offer some concluding thoughts on the state of the Scottish case as of October 2023. Then, I reflect

more on this project and research around collaborative policy development and delivery more broadly in the final sections of this chapter.

### 9.3.1 Social enterprise movement building

*Collaboration and co-creation are key in all the work we do.*

—Kate Raworth, Founder of Doughnut Economics Action Lab at SEWF in 2022

Over the course of this research, I have seen the 'collaboration' discourse within the social enterprise movement be operationalized almost as a panacea for the challenges the movement faces globally. This is not to say that the global challenges social enterprises seek to address do not require high levels of cross-sector cooperation to develop innovative solutions. Nor is it to say that organizations and individuals looking to shift systems, whether systems of governance, economic systems, or otherwise, will be able to capitalize on even the most supportive socio-political contextual and external system factors to accelerate that change alone. Yet, sometimes, it appears that both internally and externally discussions around co-creation, co-production, and collaboration begin well-intentioned and then slowly the ongoing commitment to that way of working falters. This can happen within the social enterprise sector when intermediary organizations get protective of their perceived 'market share' and are wary of what might happen to their resources by continuing to work and share with others. It can happen when trust and confidence break down across sectors, such as during policy 'co-production' processes between government and their local social enterprise ecosystem.

This research has highlighted some key foundational 'building blocks' which seem to be important on the journey toward strong and sustainable social enterprise movement building. Importantly on journeys where strong social enterprise ecosystems are viewed as

the destination, I argue that internal social enterprise sector collaboration must occur before cross-sector co-production has hopes of succeeding. Perspectives aligned with this conclusion were shared in both the Australian and Scottish cases. Leaders of a social enterprise movement can use inclusive discourse to grow and strengthen their movement, helping to build a coherent national voice, but at the same time must be conscientious of the elasticity of social enterprise discourse (see Teasdale, 2011). Sectors should be wary of internal missions and visions that are developed without significant coherence or direction, or which have discursively shifted too much in the direction of one polarizing set of assumptions about social enterprise and its success. These elements of incoherence or shifts risk jeopardizing the foundation on which collective social enterprise movements can then enter collaborative governance arrangements to develop cross-sector strategy and programs.

Before Scotland embarked on their collaborative social enterprise policy journey, there was an apparent ambition to 'marry up' the social enterprise as community empowerment and as economic development discourses as something that transcended both rather than just bounced back between the two. Perspectives around whether this was achieved in Scotland, when it may have been, and who benefited most varied across those interviewed. There was a notion among some that as long as social enterprise was seen as something alternative, they would never be seen as equals. Those who held this perspective positioned policy engagement in the context of more mainstream business 'players' and their ambition to influence government in that same context. This perspective was not exclusive to Scotland or Australia but held by some individuals in both contexts. Others seemed motivated by the benefits of offering social enterprise as an appealing policy 'alternative' to gain traction. What this reveals for movement building is perhaps that so

long as internal collaboration and foundational aims are strong and coherent, different approaches to subsequent collaboration and co-production in pursuit of those goals can be negotiated on a basis of mutual trust and understanding. These reflections might help inform continued work of social enterprise advocacy coalitions in the United States (Grewall, 2021), ecosystem development programs across Asia (ASEAN SEDP, 2023), and ongoing collaborative strategy and plan development in Europe (European Commission, 2021) and Africa (African Union, 2022; ILO and Research EQ, 2021).

### 9.3.2 Sustained collaboration through phases of policy design and delivery

*So, in terms of public policymaking, I still think, and you know I would be very disappointed I think if we ever stopped thinking that [co-production] wasn't an important way to engage. It's time consuming; that's the issue. There can be dangers that you raise people's expectations because you want to create change and to move forward, but I think it's positive.*

—PSA 1, reflecting on the potential of policy collaboration over time

When using the term co-production, co-design, collaborative governance, policy collaboration, or something else entirely to capture roughly the same underlying assumptions and motivations surrounding a particular collaborative process, there is a level of assumed 'good' associated with this discourse. These processes are seen to have normative benefits, but this thesis has also demonstrated the drawbacks with uneven buy-in to the underpinning philosophies governing these approaches and the 'cost' associated with raising expectations around processes which may be difficult to sustain. Discourse around trust and confidence highlighted that maintaining these sentiments within a particular policy subsystem or broader ecosystem is important. Further, although some research suggests initiatives aimed at improving the transparency and accountability associated with participation in public services does not always necessarily improve their quality and

accessibility (Joshi, 2013), the surfacing of the discourse around 'co-production as a necessarily transparent process' remains relevant. It can help actors involved in collaborative processes, and even coalition members who may subscribe to views that are not necessarily being successfully integrated into policy, perceive the processes as transparent and inclusive, perhaps generating macro-level, strategic value for a movement even if the impacts at the meso- and micro-level are more unevenly felt.

Even when there is a strong foundation of trust and understanding, as was the case in Scotland and as the sector was attempting to build in Australia, the foundational context does not guarantee sustainability within a dynamic system. For policymakers attempting to experiment with more consistent cross-sector collaboration around policies and public services that foundation is still nevertheless important. I also argue that this research highlights the need to prioritize certain leadership styles, levels of resource allocation, knowledge generation and sharing activities, as well as procedural and institutional arrangements that are designed to facilitate trust and understanding rather than stifle it. In Scotland, these functional elements were inconsistent and different arrangements shifted as the phases of 'co-production' progressed. The arrangements moved not necessarily to eliminate co-production practices, but between more collective co-production approaches to individual ones that were perhaps less resource intensive, both financially and in terms of time. Even though those policy choices might have been aligned with conventional policy implementation practices that evolve into more top-down rather than bottom-up approaches to governance (Hill and Hupe, 2002), it created conflict and strife within the Scottish social enterprise sector.

Those I interviewed in Australia used intensification strategies to emphasize their perceptions of intentionality and collective action associated with SEA's and the sector's

approach to their ongoing and developing process. For them, this approach would sustain their long-term ability to build consensus in a diverse sector and create value for the Australian social enterprise ecosystem. Given the general predication around arguments in Australia, it might have been possible to conclude their process was and is more collaborative than Scotland's and better sustained. Yet the two are not necessarily directly comparable. Notably, discourse was predicated more positively and optimistically in Australia, but this is perhaps natural given their positionality in their policy design and delivery journey. Australian actors made arguments around the need for what Bovaird and colleagues (2015, 2016) term 'collective co-production,' supported by the needs of many individuals, but individuals who were divorced from individual and organizational interests while engaging in what they called their 'co-design' processes. This positioning almost suggests an ongoing and iterative process by nature of the design terminology. Narratives around co-production on the other hand, have in certain cases been linked to an output-centric framing (McMullin, 2022). That is, the notion of 'producing' something can arguably overshadow the process of production.

This thesis demonstrates that for most, the process in Scotland started out guided by these same principles of inclusion and iterative consensus building, that then for many of those same people evolved into something more closely resembling individual co-production. This supports research indicating that co-production is challenging to sustain (McMullin, 2023a), and that collective co-production in particular is perceived to generate more benefits for those involved simply through their involvement as well as producing better outputs (e.g., policy) (Bovaird et al., 2015, 2016). Some speculated that this move toward more individualized, or even 'group' co-production where the benefits remain isolated to a smaller group involved (McMullin, 2023b), was a way to control the sector

especially by individuals who did not have the historical context surrounding the way it came to be. Others suggested it was a desire to point to an action plan that was more limited and targeted in scope than the first (Scottish Government, 2017) and be able to assert that most elements were indeed achieved. Whether this was truly because of public sector actors making conscious procedural choices, people in the social enterprise sector impacting the process, or some degree of both, and whether the process in Australia may succumb to a similar evolution, is beside the point. The point is that individuals play a critical role in the sustained execution of collective policy co-production.

Most people I interviewed in Scotland seemed almost necessarily indifferent, although nevertheless a little disappointed that they had perceived the process to evolve away from one characterized by collective co-production. Some deemed this individual co-production approach as the way to do it during the phases more focused on delivery, in a fairly matter of fact manner, arguing the process was driven by the needs of delivering upon actions. This perhaps signaled a preservation mentality in the social enterprise sector where, as the process progressed and was sustained, the public sector had far more influence over the functional elements governing the arrangements. With the functional elements holding the most significant influence on perceptions of co-production and value, at least in this case in Scotland, those who were still involved with the process did what they could to re-frame its evolution. These attempts to find 'opportunities' rather than 'obstacles' within shifting relationships between the social enterprise sector and the Scottish Government emerged not just through interviews, but were also documented in publications from the sector (e.g., Martin, 2023; Westwater, 2023). This 'opportunity' discourse could be described as a new negotiating tool within the social enterprise sector to help various actors hold onto perceptions around this process as something that creates rather than destroys value.

Ultimately, from a practical perspective, this level of sustained collaboration requires tangible and emotional commitment from all actors involved to maintain engagement and buy-in to the process. This investment is necessary to withstand the occasionally necessary shifts in arrangements, while still ensuring the process can contribute to value creation within the broader ecosystem and can progress policy action within a particular subsystem.

On a more theoretical level, the phases I identified based on shifts in collaboration dynamics, alongside shifts in perceptions of value creation and shifting discourse around co-production might offer future researchers a simple yet useful way of conceptualizing the iterative ways these processes develop in practice. While policy cycle stages (Howlett et al., 2009) provided a helpful basis informing this conceptualization of policy phases, at least in the context of long-term strategy, *stages* of a policy cycle fail to capture the role action plans spanning shorter time-periods play in ongoing development, implementation, and evaluation, for example. This ten-year strategy and action plan concept is gaining some traction globally, at least in the context of third sector policy development (e.g., African Union, 2022). As a result, I believe it is important that conceptual frameworks used to make sense of this type of sustained policy development and delivery, which has a particular longevity to it, respond to the realities of how policy unfolds in practice through a series of blurred and not necessarily linear or even cyclical phases.

This theoretical contribution in turn has practical implications. Even outside of the social enterprise and third sector policy subsystems, policy co-production and collaborative governance has potential to bring diverse individuals working across sectors together to achieve broader policy ambitions. When long-term policy implementation and evaluation transitions into a 'sustaining' phase where the process of design and delivery blends alongside other management practices, there is the potential for a process to lose some of

its original character. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Especially if the 'right' leaders are facilitating a process based on principles of transparent collaboration to build trust and understanding, and then resourcing that process appropriately, the potential of these arrangements—irrespective of applicable ecosystem or policy subsystem—have potential.

Across both the Scottish and Australian case, the findings demonstrate a seemingly intuitive, but nevertheless elusive truth inherent in the process surrounding how to sustain the collaborative design and delivery of policy: the 'right' leaders are absolutely necessary. Indeed, 'the willingness of a leader to absorb the high (and potentially constraining) transaction costs of initiating a collaborative effort' is critical to that effort's success (Emerson et al., 2012: 9). Perhaps it has been the 'wrong' forms of leadership, from people in the wrong positions at the wrong time that stalled attempts for a national strategy process in Australia and have now, for certain people, damaged the perceptions around the process in Scotland as it has evolved. Beyond leadership as both a driver and a functional element informing collaboration dynamics (Emerson et al., 2012), I argue this adds to the evidence suggesting that procedural and institutional arrangements that are put in place in attempt to guard against vested interest—individual or organizational—have significant influence as well. In fact, this research may be some of the first to empirically validate Emerson and colleagues' (2012: 18) proposition that 'collaborative actions are more likely to be implemented if … the collaborative dynamics function to generate the needed capacity for joint action.'

Thus, when attempting to engage in policy development and subsequent service delivery in this collaborative manner, policymakers and practitioners alike should watch for the unintended consequences and impacts of shifting arrangements, or the functional elements which contribute to capacity for joint action, on perceptions of value creation.

Keeping open lines of communication within the 'collaborative governance regime' can allow for continuous adaptation and better outcomes. This research demonstrated how important transparent communication and responsive adaptation is, even when overlapping philosophies of community engagement and empowerment underpinning both policy co-production and social enterprise arguably facilitated high levels of synergy between the policy area and the policy approach. It could be argued that when the policy subsystem or broader ecosystem does not have the same 'synergistic' roots, a continuously evaluative and conscientious approach would be even more important.

**9.3.3 What's next in Scotland?**

Throughout this thesis, I have highlighted how the SNP election in Scotland was an important precursor for thinking differently, and perhaps innovatively, about social enterprise policy in Scotland and its relationship to Scottish independence. First, the Scottish Government began rethinking collaboration in policymaking in attempt to improve public services, promote inclusive growth, and reconceptualize notions of national performance. Second, they began exploring extending policymaking horizons as part of the work to achieve these political ambitions. These political conditions, which actors throughout this research perceived to be essential in facilitating action around a national social enterprise strategy within the Scottish third sector policy subsystem, were linked via narratives of participants highlighting 'policy innovation' in the Scottish context.

*Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026* was in turn at least promoted as an example of policy innovation on two important dimensions. First, the process which surrounded its development was characterized by deference to the social enterprise sector and its needs and priorities. This process evoked broader public management trends

characterized by a promotion of philosophies that prioritized community engagement, social inclusion, and citizen participation. Second, the strategy itself went against traditional policy trends characterized by short-termism with a timeline and trajectory that would span budget cycles and had the potential to transcend administrative changes and other seismic political shifts. This has ultimately meant it has been challenging to sustain the 'innovative' collaboration that those involved in the process remember characterizing early phases of the policy co-production process. At the same time, this thesis has highlighted that while perhaps the longevity of the strategy was innovative, its content was more emblematic of a longer history of negotiating tensions between competing discourses surrounding social enterprise. At their core, the general priorities for social enterprise ecosystem support in the 2016 strategy were reflected in documentation around EQUAL over ten years prior. Thus, claims around innovation in policy *content* in this case are contestable. Further, claims around the innovation in policy *process* in the Scottish context, insofar as the strategy was positioned as 'jointly developed' (Scottish Government, 2016b) and narratives around the strategy became linked to co-production discourse were shown to have merit, but not without elements of contestation, particularly as the process evolved.

In terms of collaborative policy design and delivery and the future direction of travel for the Scottish social enterprise movement, a lot remains unknown for the sector as of October 2023. There is of course potential to carefully evaluate the state of social enterprise policy 'co-production' and adapt the collaboration dynamics dominating this current phase. A certain level of adaptation might mean that more ecosystem players are excited about, rather than just accepting of, the current state of the process. In considering how to continue sustaining collaboration in the Scottish context, it is important to note that at least rhetorically support for social enterprise remains strong.

On 22 February 2023, Paul McLennan MSP published a motion called 'Social Enterprise and Scotland's Economy' where he praised the 'vital economic and social contribution of what [Scottish Parliament] believes is Scotland's world-leading social enterprise movement' (McLennan, 2023). Motions, which are known for their ability to promote an issue or cause and demonstrate MSP support behind it lack the substantive legislative teeth of formal government policy, which in and of itself can often be solely symbolic. As Convener of the Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Social Enterprise, MSP McLennan's introduction of the motion is predicable, but more notable is that 24 hours after the motion was introduced, neither the Deputy Convener of the CPG, nor the other three members had joined the other 18 MSPs supporting the motion. This lack of consistent support highlights what has been demonstrated throughout the PhD: without the engagement of champions who will work to ensure a policy is elevated across government the degree to which that policy has any hope of transforming a system of governance is limited.

In 2014, support for social enterprise was conveniently linked to Scotland's National Performance Framework and broader ideas about an independent Scotland. Later, through waves of cyclical policy rhetoric around community within the Scottish Government it was attached to programs and ideas like community planning partnerships, community wealth building, and community empowerment. I argue that none of these ideas became entrenched enough to change the fabric of governance in Scotland before the communications apparatus within the Scottish Government shifted public attention to a newer, 'novel' idea about community engagement and the ways in which social enterprise could support it. Most recently, calls for a wellbeing economy appear to be the banner across the current cycle of policy rhetoric. The most recent motion is explicit about how 'social enterprises support the most excluded in society, improve the natural environment

and local regeneration and are building a wellbeing economy' (McLennan, 2023). The current connection between social enterprise and the 'wellbeing economy' agenda was reinforced at the October 2023 Social Enterprise Policy & Practice Conference when Richard Lochhead MSP told the sector, "Scottish ministers view social enterprise as a key partner on that journey to a wellbeing economy" and that they "want to ensure [the sector] is enabled to deliver on the ambitions articulated through [the social enterprise sector's] strategy and action plan." Whether these words are translated into any meaningful action is a story that remains to be written, arguably through the third and final social enterprise action plan.

I argue that the process of collaboration around the third and final action plan related to *Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016–2026* should once again engage and value the voices of more individuals, rather than a few. From my perspective, this would require embracing the action plan process as an opportunity to generate accountability and shared responsibility for the strategy over time. This embrace might mean there is a greater perception that cross-sector collaboration could once again lead to value creation across varied levels of the Scottish social enterprise ecosystem. Based on my interviews, I would argue that more even value creation is preferable over unevenly generating value, or sometimes even destroying it at different levels, at least as demonstrated through the Scottish case presented in this thesis. Further, in pursuit of a process that is more likely to be perceived as 'collective co-production,' we might see a balancing out of this co-production wave (see Figure 7.3) or an expanse in the zone of engagement leading to another peak representing high levels of genuine engagement.

Of course there is an element of speculation in these suggestions; however, in offering them as considerations rather than dogmatic 'truth' associated with sustaining policy collaboration over time, I can more effectively realize some of the practical application

ambitions I had in conducting this research. How (2017) notes that indeed, 'For Critical Theory, 'speculation' was a vital element of reason' since 'The speculative person is one who does not dogmatically accept this or that appearance as being all there is, but recognises that appearances mirror a particular historical relation between subject and object' (3). In attempting to understand the history and context informing these collaborative policy processes, I can offer more nuanced perspectives on how positive experiences with, and perceptions of, these processes might be more consistently sustained over time.

Indeed, understanding all the negotiation and debate which has led to key policy outputs around social enterprise adds a layer of complexity to interpretations of collaborative governance actions. The policy actions and outputs often appear to be supportive of the social enterprise sector but might signal varied levels of public sector support and trust depending on how they were developed and who was afforded the opportunity to be involved in that process. I argue that the extent to which consultation and engagement can become more open—to both people and newer, alternative, and perhaps contested, ideas around the future direction for social enterprise in Scotland—will have a significant influence on the overall perceptions of this long-term process as it reaches its conclusion toward the end of the delivery period for the third and final action plan.

## 9.4 Research limitations

With a research design and strategy focused on case studies, this study is susceptible to a common criticism around the general subjectivity of case study research insofar as case studies are heavily influenced by the researcher's position and own perspectives (Patton and Appelbaum, 2003). Rather than harming the ability of this research to represent 'objective' truth, I came to view my position and perspectives as elements that helped nuance my data

analysis and strengthen the findings presented throughout this thesis. I believe my limited experience working in the Scottish social enterprise sector before beginning this PhD, in addition to my ongoing policy work for a global social enterprise organization, was an asset throughout my research process. For example, the quality of data I was able to collect because of the rapport I had developed with many of the individuals who candidly shared their time, stories, and experiences with me throughout our interviews was likely stronger than it might have been without this background. My background also helped me focus on more specific process-oriented, rather than contextual, questions and identify subversive discourse that I might have struggled to capture, at least initially without my previous experiences.

At the same time, having these experience and knowledge meant I had to continually check my own biases as a researcher to ensure preconceptions I had about the sector's evolution and/or my perceptions of organizational positioning and discourse. In this regard, the wisdom and expertise of my supervisory team as well as participants who agreed to have informal and ongoing conversations with me about how I was interpreting the data helped me identify where my analysis may have been inadvertently biased or where my presentation of arguments might have been obscuring other claims to truth. Patton and Appelbaum (2003) suggest that 'the identity and interpretation of the researcher need not affect the validity of the study' (68) and I used this reflexive process with outside input to ensure the results presented throughout this thesis maintained a strong level of validity.

Despite my iterative and reflexive analytical process, there is also the criticism that case study research is not especially generalizable. Such a perspective would suggest that while this research was useful in revealing insights about collaboration for social enterprise policy and ecosystem building in Scotland, its applications in other countries and to policy

subsystems beyond the third sector might be limited. I attempted to overcome this to a certain extent by incorporating the Australian case. The Australian data was used to test both the applicability and utility of two things. First, the staged process framework I developed associated with momentum building around national sector-based strategies. Second, the relevance of using collaboration dynamics in the organization and analysis of empirical findings around collaborative social enterprise strategy development. Both cases demonstrated that the integrative framework for collaborative governance has empirical relevance and suggested that other sectors may also move through a similar staged process when attempting to develop national strategy. Although the Australian case is at a different point in time and offers little in terms of the phases around designing, delivering, and sustaining social enterprise policy over time, interviews did reveal perspectives around why past attempt were not met with success. These claims aligned with challenges and barriers also observed in the Scottish context. To ensure that these collaborative processes with ambitions to develop strong social enterprise ecosystems supported by policy and strategy align with experiences in other contexts, I would have required far more case studies, which within the constraints of this project, could not have been analyzed at the same depth. Perhaps a wider comparative approach would have also required an entirely different research strategy based on quantitative methods and a different operationalization of conceptual frameworks for understanding the discourse and narratives of participants and across relevant policy documents.

Finally, the sampling strategy I used to gain participants for this research also had its limitations. These limitations applied to the initial convenience sample where I was relying on my trusted network and through the referral process, where participants seemed more predisposed to recommend others who were likely to share perspectives similar to their

own. I was nevertheless still able to uncover competing perspectives. Further, my approach to discourse analysis allowed me to reveal where people from the same organization who would hold ostensibly similar perspectives on an issue might approach a topic using mitigation strategies while the other would use intensification, ultimately creating different accounts. The limited number of interviews in Australia posed a challenge for how many nuanced accounts around the same topic might be revealed, but even in this context, there was a diversity of perspective.

Through this work I was ultimately attempting to illuminate different and perhaps contested perspectives on the sustainability of policy collaboration and co-production rather than provide a definitive account of 'truth' in the Scottish or Australian case. My approach to recruitment facilitated this type of understanding and did result in a level of data saturation where I was no longer encountering dramatically different perspectives at the conclusion of my fieldwork. This approach still left room for further research which might uncover other perspectives, by concentrating sampling on different levels of the social enterprise ecosystem or studying different countries and policy contexts.

## 9.5 Future research directions

At its core, this research is about understanding policy co-production and collaboration through discourse analysis informed by research rooted in history, policy studies, and public management. Asking questions around what creates an effective environment or system context to facilitate collaborative governance, how coalitions negotiate competing priorities, and how policy and governance ideas mobilize and mutate should not be limited to the social enterprise sectors in Scotland and Australia. Of course, these processes are still ongoing and to complete the narrative accounts I began crafting through this research,

ongoing empirical work studying how these processes continue to unfold in both contexts would be welcome. Research in other countries and indeed other policy subsystems would be welcome as well.

Throughout my research, participants speculated whether the process in Scotland would have unfolded in the manner it did if there was not such a clear alignment between what the Scottish Government was attempting to accomplish with their policy agenda and the way the work of the social enterprise movement clearly connected to those ambitions. Future research could thus test the longevity of policy co-production in policy arenas that may not be philosophically as predisposed to collaborative engagement as the Third Sector Division of the Scottish Government. What might it look like to co-produce, for example, a national health and social care strategy? Or a strategy around housing? What about co-producing a national technology policy or education policy? These questions would not have to be asked in a Scottish context, but doing so could directly build on this work and reveal more about policy subsystems and how different or similar governance practices and approaches are perceived in various subsystem contexts. In the Scottish context as well, this research only cursorily engaged with the Scottish Government's repackaging around community policy ideas where social enterprise is consistently referenced as a key part of that agenda. Understanding the discursive evolution of not just social enterprise policy in Scotland, but also broader policies with community orientation could reveal additional insights that add nuance and context around the 'Scottish approach' to policymaking.

Beyond Scotland, much more research could be designed to examine social enterprise ecosystem building and social enterprise policy development and delivery. When this research began, the examples of policies explicitly referencing social enterprise and foregrounding their support for strengthening social enterprise ecosystems were limited and

most existed at provincial/ state or local levels. Scotland had a social enterprise strategy which had been published in English, and for the longest amount of time, making it the most practical example of a strategy which could be analyzed by native English speakers. Now many more examples exist, including at the national level. National social finance strategies in Canada and Malaysia have also been developed. Ireland, Tunisia, and South Africa have national policies and action plans supporting social enterprise or the social and solidarity economy. This chapter has already noted various places where insights around social enterprise movement building articulated through this research could be leveraged, but research into the practices in these contexts, insofar as it relates to their policy collaboration with social enterprise and social and solidarity economy actors remains limited. For example, future research might ask the following: How is the ongoing design and delivery of social enterprise action plans and strategies evolving at the regional African Union and European Union levels? I would argue that as one of the first movers in national social enterprise strategy, Scotland will remain a relevant case for all these emerging examples, but that these geographically varied cases will in turn reveal new and important insights to strengthen social enterprise ecosystems and policy co-production processes alike.

## 9.6 Final conclusions and reflections

I often found myself torn between what others hoped this project might be, what I hoped it would become, and what it evolved into as it progressed. In reflecting on my hopes for future research in this field, some ideas emerged from conversations with those I interviewed who might have even shared as an aside, “You should do a PhD on that!” Sometimes they came from less formal conversations about my research with others who had their own perspectives on its utility and where I should really be focusing. Although, as

our own harshest critics, most of these recommendations stem from what, at least in some ways, I hoped I would have been able to accomplish over the course of my PhD.

Of course, a PhD is time limited, and it cannot cover everything. The challenges associated with beginning and conducting most of this research in the wake of COVID-19 and successive lockdowns also should not be underestimated. I benefited from the ability to design my staged research process in the context of COVID-19 and therefore was never forced to dramatically re-work methods or approaches in response to the pandemic. When I adjusted, these changes had mostly been anticipated (e.g., scanning archive material and relying on digitized material to begin research where possible). Where I inevitably lost out was on all the opportunities to attend sector events, cross-party group meetings at Holyrood, or other in-person sector gatherings where I believe that conversations about the exciting potential of this research might have inspired a journey down a slightly different path. This might have meant different or additional case studies beyond my research in Australia. It could have inspired the use of different conceptual frameworks based on how any preliminary results I shared were then perceived and interpreted. Indeed, after every brief conversation I was able to have around this work, I walked away feeling re-energized, re-engaged, and ready to perhaps consider a slightly different interpretation of my data or a new reflection around its utility in practice.

I introduced this thesis by sharing my desire to explore more responsive policy development and implementation, motivated by the needs of communities, organizations, and individuals policies are designed to support. Now at the conclusion of this project, my drive to conduct research that has tangible and translatable impact for policymakers and practitioners has only intensified. It is this perspective that leads me to feel so strongly about interdisciplinary research on collaboration that allows us to understand multiple

perspectives around not just the processes, but the systems and the context in which they are occurring. It is why I am more interested in future research that will examine the mechanisms and motivations surrounding co-production and underlying collaborative discourses rather than that which will concentrate on definitional boundaries in a way that perhaps obscures the realities of how these processes are experienced in practice and over time.

By embracing principles of interdisciplinarity and a willingness to unite theory and push definitional boundaries, I believe we can strengthen our knowledge in an area that only seems to have increasing importance on both political and practical levels. Through this research I endeavored to approach contested claims to truth about policy collaboration and co-production in a manner aligned with practical discourse. Examining these theoretical concepts in-line with practical discourse and informed by historical and political context, I believe I revealed more about what exists underneath and around these processes, which influences their manifestations in practice. I hope this work will help accelerate other research into policy co-production and cross-sector movement building that is ultimately underpinned by a desire to facilitate systems change and global impact.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Documents listed for digitization

***TO DIGITIZE FIRST:***

- **GB 1847 SECS-GB/1/1**
    - Three convention programmes
- **GB 1847 SECS-GB/4/3**
- **GB 1847 SECS-GB/4/4**

***TO WORK THROUGH DIGITIZATION NEXT:***

- **GB 1847 SECS-CBSN/1/1/1** (all three documents)
- **GB 1847 SECS-CBSN/1/1/2** (both reports)
- **GB 1847 SECS-CBSN/2/1/3** (magazine)

- **GB 1847 SECS-CBSN/2/1/5** (entire folder)
- **GB 1847 SECS-CBSN/2/1/6**
    - CBS, 'Submission to the Secretary of State for Scotland' with proposals for a programme of funding to support community businesses in Scotland, c1981
    - CBS, 'Proposal to the Scottish Development Agency' for support for community businesses, June 1983
    - CBS document 'What is a community business' with the definition on page 1 and subsequent pages describing named community businesses in Scotland
    - CBS response to 'Scottish Enterprise' white paper on integration of the enterprise development functions of the SDA and the Training Agency and decentralisation of services to a more local level through the creation of Local Agencies, March 1989
    - 'Manifesto 85' lobbying campaign documents

- **GB 1847 SECS-CBSN/2/2/2**
    - Defining the social economy, social enterprise and social capital: discussion paper
    - Mapping support organisations in the social economy in Scotland: discussion paper, 2002
- **GB 1847 SECS-CBSN/4/2**
    - CBSN and Social Enterprise Network, 'Social accounting and audit for social economy and community-based organisations: training courses', information on workshops available and accreditation
    - What does CBS mean? Mind your own business, leaflet about CBS with insert, application for membership 1989-90

- **GB 1847 SECS-CBSN/4/1**
    - 1990
    - 1999-2007 (7 reports)

## Appendix B: Initial thematic codes for document analysis

- Activities
- Aspirations
    - Employment
    - Independence
- Business support
    - Activities
    - Funding
- Challenges
    - Market v Community
- Collaboration
    - Networks
- Finance
- Founding
    - Founders
- Leadership
    - In Scotland
    - Globally
- Legal Structures
- Measurement & Reporting
- Opportunities
- Ownership
    - Community Ownership
    - Of community enterprises
- Place
- Policy
    - Funding
    - Lobbying
- Profit
- Public services
- Raising awareness / public awareness
- Resilience
- Size & scale

## Appendix C: Topic Guide for Scotland

*Note: A separate guide was developed for Australian interviews, but it followed a very similar format.*

### A history of co-production and co-operation? Looking back to the future of social enterprise in Scotland

**Interview Topic Guide – Scotland**

**Aim**

*To explore how, and in what ways, Scotland's 'shared ambitions' for social enterprise came about and developed into the Social Enterprise Strategy and what can be learned from that process to be shared and applied elsewhere.*

**Introduction**

*Aim: To introduce the research and set the context for the proceeding discussion.*

- Introduce myself, GCU and Yunus Centre (where applicable and people are unaware)
- Introduce the study
    - Purpose and length of interview – discussion, no right or wrong answers, about an hour long (but will work around time constraints)
    - Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw
    - Recording of interview – to ensure accuracy, no/very little note taking
    - No right or wrong answers, simply want to capture a perspective, there is an archive to check facts and dates and names, but opinions and recollections are valuable
    - Confidentiality v. anonymity and how findings will be reported
- Any questions?

***START RECORDING***

*Ask them to confirm for the benefit of the recording that the background to the study has been explained in full including issues of confidentiality and anonymity and that they are happy to be recorded.*

**Background**

*Aim: To get to know the participant, how and why they got involved with the social enterprise sector.*

- Background, work history, how and why they got involved with the social enterprise movement/community business movement (where applicable)
- What their role was with developing the Strategy and/or is in the sector today
- How they would describe the Scottish social enterprise sector (at time of work and/or currently)

- What do they see as the biggest opportunity for social enterprise in Scotland

**Evolution of the Strategy**

*Aim: To understand key moments and actions that impacted upon the Strategy's development (i.e. how the Strategy came about) and how various actors frame the history (e.g. what they choose to emphasize and what they don't discuss).*

- How would they define social enterprise
    - Has their thinking changed over time and if so, in what ways
    - Who/what is informing this 'definition' of social enterprise
    - Key framings to look out for:
        - "Community Business"
        - "Enterprising Third Sector"
        - "Social Enterprise"
- When was the first time they remember hearing about the idea of developing a national social enterprise strategy for Scotland
    - Key inflection points that might be good for prompting:
        - Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan in 2008-2011
        - 'Community Scotland' (2001-2008) was responsible for social enterprise → came into government with lots of reorganization and social enterprise moved into the Third Sector Division
- Why did the sector/government/those involved want a Strategy
    - What was the assumed value of such a document
    - Did the motivation seem to be the same across the sector/within your organization or department or division

**The process of developing the Strategy**

*Aim: To investigate and characterize the process of developing the Strategy and to understand perceptions of those within the sector about the process and the concept of 'jointly developing' policy.*

- Was, or in what ways, was the development of Scotland's Strategy "jointly developed"
- Was someone 'leading' the process
    - Was this completely 'mutual collaboration'
    - If someone/organisation was 'leading' who was it and how so
    - Did this person/organisation/body make sense to be in this role
    - From their perspective, did the person/group 'in control' ever shift
- From their perspective who does the Strategy 'belong to'
    - Who had/has ownership over the Strategy
    - Tease out differences between 'Scottish Government Strategy' and 'Scottish Strategy'
- How were people included in the discussions

    - How were questions/points of contention/discussion framed
    - Were there people left out who should have been present in discussions
- Did they feel heard / think all the relevant voices were being heard
    - How were priorities they shared reflected in the Strategy if at all
- Which priorities were most important and why
    - Stimulating social enterprise
    - Developing stronger organisations
    - Realising market opportunity
- Were there priorities that were shared and didn't end up making it into the Strategy
- Were compromises made
    - What were they
- What do they make of the 'shared ambitions' framing in light of answers above
- What worked really well about the consultations and other engagement
- What could have been improved about the process
- Most important lessons learned from developing the Strategy and being part of the process

**<u>The Strategy's impact</u>**

*Aim: To capture the Strategy's impact on work today (i.e. how policy in turn impacts discourse) and understand the assumed impacts of the Strategy both locally and internationally.*

- Impact of the Strategy on views on public policy generally (i.e. the process of developing policy)
    - Personal perceptions of developing policy and how to do this
- Changing views (if at all) of 'social enterprise' because of the Strategy
    - How, and in what ways, have conceptions about social enterprise changed
- How the Strategy impacts upon practitioner work today
- What has it been like developing the action plans
    - First and second
    - To what degree do the action plans represent 'shared ambitions'
    - Are the action plans 'jointly developed'
- The perceived role Scotland's Strategy has played in other countries with their social enterprise ecosystem development
    - Role in the UK
    - Role for localities across Scotland
    - Intention (if they remember/it is relevant) versus current perceived impact

**Next steps**
Thank the participant. Check whether they have any further questions about my research. Ask if they wish to be sent any papers or results of the research project beyond the thesis itself and give anticipated dates for those outputs.

## Appendix D: Interview guide sheet for Scottish interviews

### Global Social Enterprise Policy Research

**Aim**

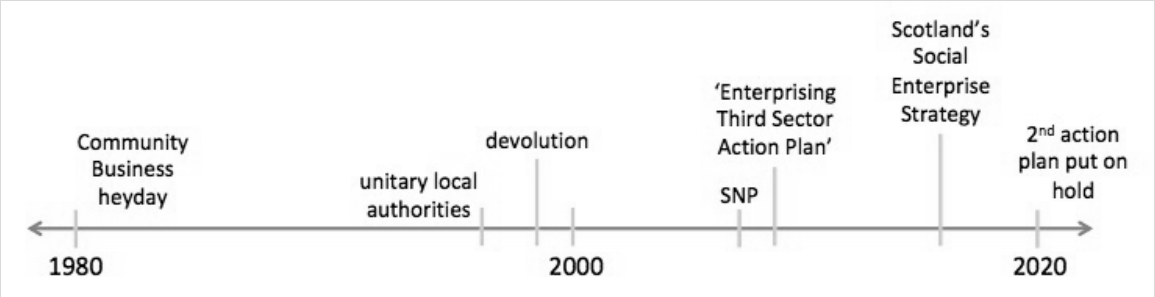
*To explore how, and in what ways, Scotland's 'shared ambitions' for social enterprise came about and developed into the Social Enterprise Strategy and what can be learned from that process to be shared and applied elsewhere.*

**Scottish Government Framing of the Strategy**


"A ten-year, national social enterprise strategy, which sets out our **shared ambitions** for social enterprise in Scotland, **jointly developed** with the sector."

1. How did these 'shared ambitions' come about?
2. What does 'jointly developed' mean?

**Context and a Brief History of Social Enterprise Policy in Scotland**




- Talk about any of these events or periods in time as they seem relevant to your work or our discussion
- What other factors or events are important to the history of Scottish social enterprise policy?

**Thank You**

Contact me at: Maeve.Curtin@gcu.ac.uk. I'm always happy to talk more if there are other things that come to you.

## Appendix E: GSBS ethics approvals

*Note: the first application was approved in December 2020 and the second in January 2022.*

**EC1/2020**

**GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY**

### Applications for Ethical Approval for Research Involving Human Participants

| | |
|---|---|
| **1. Reason for Submission to Committee (tick as many as appropriate)** | |
| a) minor method or procedure | ☒ |
| b) minor extended method or procedure | ☐ |
| c) major invasive research method or procedure involved | ☐ |
| d) submission to School Committee | ☐ |
| e) to place an appeal before the University Committee subsequent to School refusal | ☐ |
| f) failure to reach agreement at School level | ☐ |
| g) School seeks advice and/or guidance | ☐ |
| **2. School: Glasgow School for Business in Society** | |
| **3. Category of Researcher** | |
| Staff ☐ Temporary ☐ Permanent ☐ | |
| Postgraduate ☒ | |
| Post-Doctoral ☐ | |
| Contract ☐ | |
| Other ☐ | |
| **4. If contract staff please give date of termination of contract: N/A** | |
| **5. Researcher's Name:** Maeve Curtin | |
| Dean of School: Professor John Lennon | |
| **Director of Studies (where appropriate):** Professor Michael Roy | |
| **6. Title of Study:** A history of co-production and co-operation? Looking back to the future of social enterprise in Scotland | |
| *7. Outline the aims and objectives of the study:* | |
| To explore how, and in what ways, Scotland's 'shared ambitions' for social enterprise came about and developed into the Social Enterprise Strategy and what can be learned from that process to be shared and applied elsewhere. | |

**8. Research Participants:**

i) Approximate numbers:
40

ii) Inclusion criteria:

- People who were involved in the development of the Scottish Social Enterprise Strategy in 2016
- People who were influential in Scotland's sector (community business, third sector, or social enterprise) in a way that ultimately shaped thinking in the lead up to 2016
- People who are now involved in the sector and being influenced by the Strategy
- People who are currently involved in the development of Australia's national social enterprise strategy and/or who played a pivotal role in the sector up until this point
- People who have been involved with the formation of social enterprise strategies in other countries around the world who have looked to Scotland as part of the process

iii) Recruitment method:
Personalized emails sent to targeted participants for their experience and expertise. These participants will also be asked for recommendations of others to talk to using a 'snowballing' technique to ensure the most relevant participants are included and that no one is overlooked.

**9 (a). Methods/Procedures to be used – non-invasive procedures**
*(for definition see guidelines paragraph 2.3.2(a))*

i) Non-invasive Procedure:
One-off, hour to 90-minute long, semi-structured Interviews with participants as described above that will be recorded with participant consent to ensure accuracy

**9 (b). Name of Approved Supervisor (if the researcher is a student)**

Professor Michael Roy

**10 (a). Methods/Procedures to be Used – Minor invasive research method**
*(for definition see guidelines paragraph 2.3.2 (b))*

NONE

**10 (b). Name of Approved Supervisor (if the researcher is a student)** N/A

**11. Implications of any of the above non-invasive/ minor invasive procedure(s):**
(Outline any stress or discomfort to research participants which may be involved in any of the above minor/extended minor procedures which have not been approved)

No additional implications for the non-invasive procedures.

**12. Major Invasive research methods and procedure(s):** *(for definition see guidelines paragraph 2.3.2(c)*
(Please describe each procedure and state number of times it is to be performed on each subject and over what time period)

NONE

**13. Potential hazards of major invasive research methods and procedures, and precautions taken to meet them:**

**N/A**

**14. Please state the name of a qualified and suitably experienced person who will be available during the conduct of the major invasive research methods and procedures.**

**N/A**

**15. Will the participants be paid?** (for research involving major invasive procedures only) Yes ☐ No ☒

**If yes, please state amount:** £

**16. Start Date: 01-02-2021** **Estimated Completion Date: 31-12-2021**

**17. Location(s) in which study/project will be undertaken:**

**Scotland (either in private conference rooms at GCU or other locations mutually agreed upon with participants to improve flexibility in scheduling – these locations would be public office spaces where private meeting rooms are available) and/or virtually**

**18. Ethical principles incorporated into the study:**

**(i) Explanation of the aims and benefits of the study for research participants:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | Written explanation (please enclose copy for major procedures) | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (ii) | Oral explanation | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (iii) | If the procedure involves justifiable deception will explanation be offered following participation? * | Yes ☐ | No ☒ |
| (iv) | Consent form (please enclose a copy for major procedures) | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (v) | Oral consent | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |

*This research does not involve justifiable deception

**(ii) Safeguarding the rights of subject in respect of participation:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | Subject offered opportunity to decline to take part | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (ii) | Subject offered opportunity to withdraw at any stage | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (iii) | Expert advice available if required | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (iv) | Participants informed there may be no benefit to them | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |

**(iii) Safeguarding the rights of subject in respect of participation:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | Subject guaranteed confidentiality | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (ii) | Subject guaranteed anonymity | Yes ☐ | No ☒ |
| (iii) | Provisions of the Data Protection Act met https://www.gov.uk/data-protection | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (iv) | Safe data storage secured | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |

**19. Has this application been considered by a School Ethics Committee?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

**20. Protection for the researcher:**

Will the researcher be at any risk of sustaining either physical or psychological harm as a result of the research? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please specify and give details of precautions which will be taken to protect the researcher:

N/A

**21. Academic scrutiny of the research proposal:**

Will the research proposal be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee? Yes ☒ No ☐

If no, will the research proposal be subject to peer review within the School? Yes ☐ No ☐

**22. Data Storage & Data Protection/Privacy:**

How will you ensure that participants are informed about how their personal data will be used/processed? How will you ensure that information collected is limited to what is adequate, relevant and necessary for your project.

Please provide a short statement on data storage. This should include your steps to securely store your data, control access to the data, the length of time you expect to retain data, and your plans for its eventual destruction.

When collecting data initially, the interviews will be recorded on the researcher's work computer or phone, both of which are password protected with dual identification procedures for accessing the data stored on the device. The data will quickly be transferred to and stored on GCU's secured OneDrive. The recordings and transcripts will be saved under pseudonyms and the master document, also password protected, with the corresponding participant ID's, pseudonyms, and other PII, will be stored in a separate secured file for additional protection. Only essential personal data will be collected and interview participants will not be asked to provide personal data beyond what is essential to the study. Only the researcher will have access to the interview recordings and relevant personal data using the aforementioned secure password protected data storage methods. After the completion of the thesis, the data will be anonymised and the data will eventually be destroyed confidentially.

**23. Declaration:**

I declare that the proposed investigation described in this application will be carried out as detailed and that if any changes to the procedures are planned, written permission will be sought from the School Ethics Committee.

[redacted] Date: 1 December 2020

**24. School Approval:**

This study was considered by the School Ethics Committee on (Date):

[redacted]

*Position:* ***Professor of Public Policy. Date:. 2 December 2020***

**25. University Ethics Committee Approval:**

This study was approved by the University Ethics Committee on (date):

*Signed:* _____

*Position:*

# GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY

## Applications for Ethical Approval for Research Involving Human Participants

| | |
|---|---|
| **9. Reason for Submission to Committee (tick as many as appropriate)** | |
| h) minor method or procedure | ☒ |
| i) minor extended method or procedure | ☐ |
| j) major invasive research method or procedure involved | ☐ |
| k) submission to School Committee | ☐ |
| l) to place an appeal before the University Committee subsequent to School refusal | ☐ |
| m) failure to reach agreement at School level | ☐ |
| n) School seeks advice and/or guidance | ☐ |
| **10. School: Glasgow School for Business in Society** | |
| **11. Category of Researcher** | |
| Staff ☐ Temporary ☐ Permanent ☐ | |
| Postgraduate ☒ | |
| Post-Doctoral ☐ | |
| Contract ☐ | |
| Other ☐ | |
| **12. If contract staff please give date of termination of contract: N/A** | |
| **13. Researcher's Name:** Maeve Curtin | |
| Dean of School: Professor John Lennon | |
| **Director of Studies (where appropriate):** Professor Michael Roy | |
| **14. Title of Study:** A history of co-production and co-operation? Looking back to the future of social enterprise in Scotland | |
| *15. Outline the aims and objectives of the study:* | |
| To explore how, and in what ways, Scotland's 'shared ambitions' for social enterprise came about and developed into the Social Enterprise Strategy and what can be learned from that process to be shared and applied elsewhere. | |

**16. Research Participants:**

iv) Approximate numbers:
40

v) Inclusion criteria:

- People who were involved in the development of the Scottish Social Enterprise Strategy in 2016
- People who were influential in Scotland's sector (community business, third sector, or social enterprise) in a way that ultimately shaped thinking in the lead up to 2016
- People who are now involved in the sector and being influenced by the Strategy
- People who are currently involved in the development of Australia's national social enterprise strategy and/or who played a pivotal role in the sector up until this point
- People who have been involved with the formation of social enterprise strategies in other countries around the world who have looked to Scotland as part of the process

vi) Recruitment method:
Personalized emails sent to targeted participants for their experience and expertise. These participants will also be asked for recommendations of others to talk to using a 'snowballing' technique to ensure the most relevant participants are included and that no one is overlooked.

**9 (a). Methods/Procedures to be used – non-invasive procedures**
*(for definition see guidelines paragraph 2.3.2(a))*

ii) Non-invasive Procedure:

One-off, hour to 90-minute long, semi-structured interviews with participants as described above that will be recorded with participant consent to ensure accuracy

Some participants who are based outside of Scotland may also be approached to participate in focus groups in place of interviews. The focus groups will be designed to capture the current (i.e. live) development of their national strategies with insights that build off other actors. Like the interviews, these focus groups would also be recorded with participant consent to ensure accuracy.

**10 (b). Name of Approved Supervisor (if the researcher is a student)**

Professor Michael Roy

**10 (a). Methods/Procedures to be Used – Minor invasive research method**
*(for definition see guidelines paragraph 2.3.2 (b))*

NONE

**11 (b). Name of Approved Supervisor (if the researcher is a student)** N/A

**12. Implications of any of the above non-invasive/ minor invasive procedure(s):**
(Outline any stress or discomfort to research participants which may be involved in any of the above minor/extended minor procedures which have not been approved)

No additional implications for the non-invasive procedures.

**12. Major Invasive research methods and procedure(s):** *(for definition see guidelines paragraph 2.3.2(c)*
(Please describe each procedure and state number of times it is to be performed on each subject and over what time period)

NONE

**13. Potential hazards of major invasive research methods and procedures, and precautions taken to meet them:**

**N/A**

**14. Please state the name of a qualified and suitably experienced person who will be available during the conduct of the major invasive research methods and procedures.**

**N/A**

**15. Will the participants be paid?** (for research involving major invasive procedures only) Yes ☐ No ☒

**If yes, please state amount:** £

**26. Start Date: 01-02-2021** **Estimated Completion Date: 31-12-2022**

**27. Location(s) in which study/project will be undertaken:**

**Scotland (either in private conference rooms at GCU or other locations mutually agreed upon with participants to improve flexibility in scheduling – these locations would be public office spaces where private meeting rooms are available) and/or virtually**

**28. Ethical principles incorporated into the study:**

**(iv) Explanation of the aims and benefits of the study for research participants:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (vi) | Written explanation (please enclose copy for major procedures) | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (vii) | Oral explanation | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (viii) | If the procedure involves justifiable deception will explanation be offered following participation? * | Yes ☐ | No ☒ |
| (ix) | Consent form (please enclose a copy for major procedures) | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (x) | Oral consent | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |

*This research does not involve justifiable deception

**(v) Safeguarding the rights of subject in respect of participation:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (v) | Subject offered opportunity to decline to take part | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (vi) | Subject offered opportunity to withdraw at any stage | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (vii) | Expert advice available if required | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (viii) | Participants informed there may be no benefit to them | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |

**(vi) Safeguarding the rights of subject in respect of participation:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (v) | Subject guaranteed confidentiality | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (vi) | Subject guaranteed anonymity | Yes ☐ | No ☒ |
| (vii) | Provisions of the Data Protection Act met https://www.gov.uk/data-protection | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |
| (viii) | Safe data storage secured | Yes ☒ | No ☐ |

**29. Has this application been considered by a School Ethics Committee?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

**30. Protection for the researcher:**

Will the researcher be at any risk of sustaining either physical or psychological harm as a result of the research? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please specify and give details of precautions which will be taken to protect the researcher:

N/A

**31. Academic scrutiny of the research proposal:**

Will the research proposal be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee? Yes ☒ No ☐

If no, will the research proposal be subject to peer review within the School? Yes ☐ No ☐

**32. Data Storage & Data Protection/Privacy:**

How will you ensure that participants are informed about how their personal data will be used/processed? How will you ensure that information collected is limited to what is adequate, relevant and necessary for your project.

Please provide a short statement on data storage. This should include your steps to securely store your data, control access to the data, the length of time you expect to retain data, and your plans for its eventual destruction.

When collecting data initially, the interviews will be recorded on the researcher's work computer or phone, both of which are password protected with dual identification procedures for accessing the data stored on the device. The data will quickly be transferred to and stored on GCU's secured OneDrive. The recordings and transcripts will be saved under pseudonyms and the master document, also password protected, with the corresponding participant ID's, pseudonyms, and other PII, will be stored in a separate secured file for additional protection. Only essential personal data will be collected and interview participants will not be asked to provide personal data beyond what is essential to the study. Only the researcher will have access to the interview recordings and relevant personal data using the aforementioned secure password protected data storage methods. After the completion of the thesis, the data will be anonymised and the data will eventually be destroyed confidentially.

**33. Declaration:**

I declare that the proposed investigation described in this application will be carried out as detailed and that if any changes to the procedures are planned, written permission will be sought from the School Ethics Committee.

[redacted] Date: 11 January 2022

**34. School Approval:**

This study was considered by the School Ethics Committee on (Date): 13/01/2022

[redacted]

*Position:* ***Chair, GSBS Ethics Committee***

**35. University Ethics Committee Approval:**

This study was approved by the University Ethics Committee on (date):

*Signed:* _____

*Position:*

## Appendix F: Participant information sheet

### The Emergence of Global Social Enterprise Strategies: A PhD Research Project

### Interview Participant Information Sheet

**Introduction**

The goal of this project is to explore how, and in what ways, Scotland's 'shared ambitions' for social enterprise came about and developed into the Social Enterprise Strategy and what can be learned from that process to be shared and applied elsewhere. Maeve Curtin, PhD Candidate in Social Policy at the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University, is conducting this research. Professor Michael Roy, Dr Gillian Murray, and Dr Yvonne Strachan CBE all jointly supervise this research.

Before you decide whether or not to take part in this project by interviewing with Maeve, it is important for you to fully understand what participation in the study will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. For more information, please email Maeve at Maeve.Curtin@gcu.ac.uk.

**Why is this study important?**

This is an important study because governments around the world are attempting to develop social policies that better support communities and our planet and social enterprise strategies are often a crucial part of those policy portfolios. Yet we know very little about the process of developing these strategies or how these ideas about social enterprise policy transfer around the world. This study will help us better understand effective ways to develop this type of policy, learning lessons from Scotland and beyond.

**What will I have to do if I take part?**

If you are interested in taking part, you will be invited to give consent. Giving consent will involve signing a consent form (or indicating consent electronically, such as by email, to create a record of consent), which will be provided to you by Maeve in advance of your interview with her. You will receive a copy of your consent for your records. Please note you will be able to withdraw your consent at any time. Once you have given consent, Maeve will arrange a time to meet with you for an interview, either in person or online via a secure video conferencing platform depending on COVID-19 guidelines and your preference. The interview should last around an hour and Maeve will work around your schedule to ensure the discussion is a least disruptive as possible.

**Do I have to take part?**

No. You decide whether or not you want to take part. You can stop taking part in the study at any time, including after you have completed your interview, without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw, any personal data we hold on you will be erased.

**What are the possible risks with taking part?**

All studies involve some level of risk and inconvenience. In this study, personal questions about your involvement with the social enterprise strategy development and your role in the sector will be asked. You do not have to answer any interview questions you do not wish to and any personal questions will be asked sensitively.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

This study may not help you personally; however, the results should improve our understanding of how to effectively develop social policies that better support and advance social enterprise ecosystems. This may lead to an advance of the international social enterprise movement.

**What happens when the study stops?**

Written reports on the findings of this study will be available from Maeve Curtin. She will also provide any journal articles related to the project and supported by your interview upon request.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you are concerned about your participation in the study and would like to speak with someone outside of the study team, please contact Professor Rachel Baker, Director, Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University, at Rachel.Baker@gcu.ac.uk. You can also contact the study supervisors at the following addresses:

- Michael Roy, Michael.Roy@gcu.ac.uk
- Gillian Murray, Gillian.Murray2@gcu.ac.uk
- Yvonne Strachan, y.strachan@btinternet.com

**What will happen to the information given during the study?**

Personal data will be collected from participants (name, job title, employment status, nationality) and data will be stored in an encrypted, password-protected computer. When collecting data initially, the interviews will be recorded on the researcher's work computer or phone, both of which are password protected with dual identification procedures for accessing the data stored on the device. The data will quickly be transferred to and stored on GCU's secured OneDrive. The recordings and transcripts will be saved under pseudonyms and the master document, also password protected, with the corresponding participant ID's, pseudonyms, and other PII, will be stored in a separate secured file for additional protection. Only personal data essential to the study (name, job title, employment status, nationality) will be collected. Only the researcher will have access to the interview recordings and relevant personal data using the aforementioned secure password protected data storage methods. After the completion of the thesis, the data will be anonymised and the data will be destroyed confidentially after 5 years.

No personal data will be processed or shared outside the UK or European Economic Area. The study complies with the Data Protection Act (2018) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The data controller is Glasgow Caledonian University. Information is being processed on the basis of Article 6(1)(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation and to perform a task carried out in the public interest.

Enquiries specifically relating to data protection should be made to the University's Data Protection Officer (DPO). The DPO can be contacted by email: dataprotection@gcu.ac.uk. If

you are unhappy with the response from the University, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted by email: casework@ico.org.uk. GDPR also gives study participants the right to ask for their personal data to be erased. If you would like us to stop using your personal data, then you can contact Mrs Margaret Munro, Centre Senior Administrator on margaret.munro@gcu.ac.uk and ask for your personal data to be erased. However, it will only be possible to erase data that has not been anonymised and/or published. Further information about your rights can be found at: https://www.gcu.ac.uk/dataprotection/rights/

**Who is organising and funding the study?**

This study is being organised by Maeve Curtin as part of her PhD degree programme. Her research is funded by a grant from the Scottish Government.

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

The study results will be written up and made widely available to a range of people including e.g. social enterprise practitioners, researchers, and the public. It will not be possible to identify any individual participant or group from any reports or publications.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

All studies involving human participants carried out at Glasgow Caledonian University are reviewed by an ethics committee. The role of the ethics committee is the protect the safety, rights, wellbeing, and dignity of study participants. This study was reviewed by the Glasgow School for Business in Society Ethics Committee and given ethical approval on 2 December 2020.

**What happens next? How do I make contact with the study team?**

If you are interested in participating and would like to know more then please contact Maeve Curtin at Maeve.Curtin@gcu.ac.uk. Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

## Appendix G: Informed consent form

### The Emergence of Global Social Enterprise Strategies: A PhD Research Project

### Interview Participant Consent Form

**Research Overview**

The goal of this project is to explore how, and in what ways, Scotland's 'shared ambitions' for social enterprise came about and developed into the Social Enterprise Strategy and what can be learned from that process to be shared and applied elsewhere. Maeve Curtin, PhD Candidate in Social Policy at the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University, is conducting this research. Professor Michael Roy, Dr Gillian Murray, and Dr Yvonne Strachan CBE all jointly supervise this research.

This consent form is referenced in another document entitled "Participant Information Sheet – Global Social Enterprise Strategies Research" Final Version June 2021. Before signing this consent form, you should ensure you have received this documented dated June 2021 and read it in full to completely understand the study and the implications of your participation. Should you have any additional questions about participating or need to request another copy, please email Maeve at Maeve.Curtin@gcu.ac.uk before signing this consent form.

**By signing below I confirm that:**

- I agree to take part in this PhD research project examining the development of social enterprise strategies around the world as described above and on the participant information sheet.
- I understand that the interviews will be recorded for accuracy.
- I understand that these recordings will be transcribed and that my words may be used in written reports for the research, but that they will not be attributed to me.
- I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary.
- I understand I am able to withdraw my consent after signing this form and that if I wish to do so I can email Maeve requesting that any information including interview recordings and transcripts be confidentially destroyed.
- I understand I have a right to request data securely stored related to me for this project, but that after that data has been anonymised post the completion of the PhD thesis that this will not be possible.
- I understand that all data supporting this project will be erased after 5 years, but that publications related to this research will still be available and publically accessible.
- I understand that participating in these interviews may have no direct benefit to me personally.
- I have had any questions about the study answered in full and that if I have any additional questions I can contact Maeve or her supervisors:
    - Michael Roy, Michael.Roy@gcu.ac.uk

- Gillian Murray, Gillian.Murray2@gcu.ac.uk
- Yvonne Strachan, y.strachan@btinternet.com

| **Name** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Signature** | | **Date** | |

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