# BY ACCIDENT OR BY DESIGN?

## Social enterprise leaders' stories of their career choice

University of Jyväskylä
School of Business and Economics

Master's Thesis

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Author: Riikka Hakanen
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Supervisor: Anna-Maija Lämsä

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

# ABSTRACT

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| **Author** Sanna Riikka Emilia Hakanen | |
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**Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to interpret and illustrate the career choice of leaders in social enterprises. Career choice in management in a social enterprise is quite an unexplored subject, and thus more research about the topic is needed to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon. Additionally, since the concept of social enterprise is still quite unknown in Finland, this thesis aims to increase the awareness of social enterprises in the surrounding society. The theoretical framework in this thesis combines aspects of leadership in social enterprises and career choice. The main presented theories of career choice are Holland's vocational personality theory, Schein's career anchor theory and personality theories the Big Five and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Narrative approach is applied to get a broader view of the topic and to gain more insights into the sense-making of social enterprise leaders. There is not only one theory that would have been used to support the results, but rather all the theories have served as resources to guide the interpretation process. The data was produced by conducting ten narrative thematic interviews with leaders of for-profit social enterprises. Based on the leaders' narration three different career choice story types were formed: career choice as a drift, career choice as a mission pursuit and career choice as an aim for professional development. In keeping with the story types, also three respective narrative identities of social enterprise leaders were formed: the Drifter, the Advocate and the Adventurer. In addition, 14 factors that the leaders narrated as significant for their career choice in a social enterprise were identified. The results show evidence of both passive and active behavior towards the career choice. The factors with most significance for the leaders were networks, family, personality, values and luck. Especially the importance of a good value fit between the leader and the social enterprise was highlighted in the career choice process.

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| Location | Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics |

# TIIVISTELMÄ

| Tekijä | |
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| Sanna Riikka Emilia Hakanen | |
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Tiivistelmä

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on tulkita ja kuvata yhteiskunnallisten yritysten johtajien uranvalintaa. Uranvalinta johtamisen parissa yhteiskunnallisissa yrityksissä on melko vähän tutkittu aihe, jonka vuoksi aiheeseen on syytä perehtyä lisää kokonaisvaltaisemman ymmärryksen saavuttamiseksi. Yhteiskunnallisen yrityksen käsite on myös vielä jokseenkin tuntematon Suomessa, ja niinpä tämä tutkimus pyrkii lisäämään tietoisuutta yhteiskunnallisista yrityksistä suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys yhdistelee näkemyksiä johtamisesta yhteiskunnallisissa yrityksissä sekä uranvalinnasta. Keskeisimmät esitellyt teoriat ovat Hollandin tyyppiteoria, Scheinin ura-ankkuriteoria sekä persoonallisuusteoriat viiden suuren persoonallisuuspiirteen teoria ja Myers-Briggsin tyyppi-indikaattori. Tutkimukseen on otettu narratiivinen lähestymistapa aiheen syvällisempää käsittelyä ja ymmärtämistä varten. Tarkoituksena ei ole ollut käyttää pelkästään yhtä teoriaa tukemaan tuloksia, vaan teorioita on käytetty kokonaisuudessaan tulkintaresursseina. Aineisto tuotettiin narratiivisilla teemahaastatteluilla, ja haastateltaviksi valittiin kymmenen voittoa tavoittelevan yhteiskunnallisen yrityksen johtajaa. Johtajien kerrontaan perustuen voitiin muodostaa kolme erilaista uratarinatyyppiä: uranvalinta ajautumisena, mission tavoitteluna ja pyrkimyksenä ammatilliseen kehittymiseen. Tarinatyyppeihin pohjautuen voitiin myös rakentaa kolme vastaavaa narratiivista identiteettiä yhteiskunnallisten yritysten johtajille: Ajautuja, Advokaatti ja Seikkailija. Lisäksi identifioitiin 14 tekijää, jotka johtajat konstruoivat merkityksellisiksi uranvalintansa kannalta. Tulokset antavat viitteitä sekä passiivisesta että aktiivisesta lähestymistavasta uranvalintaan. Tulosten mukaan johtajille tärkeimmät tekijät olivat verkostot, perhe, persoonallisuus, arvot ja onni. Uranvalintaprosessissa korostui varsinkin johtajan sekä yhteiskunnallisen yrityksen arvojen vastaavuuden tärkeys.

| Asiasanat | |
|---|---|
| yhteiskunnallinen yritys, johtaminen, uranvalinta, narratiivinen tutkimus, narratiivinen identiteetti | |
| Säilytyspaikka | Jyväskylän yliopiston kauppakorkeakoulu |

*"The best reason to start an organization is to make meaning; to create a product or service to make the world a better place."*

*- Guy Kawasaki*

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Let me tell you a story. It is a story about why I started this journey with my thesis and also why you, dear reader, are now holding the finished piece of writing in your hands. It all began about a year ago when I was reading the journal of The Finnish Business School Graduates (Suomen Ekonomit). I happened to come across with a writing concerning social enterprises, and I got immediately interested since the concept seemed to fit very well with my own thoughts about doing business. Moreover, in today's world where help is needed in various areas of the society, both locally and worldwide, social enterprises appeared to bring a fresh perspective on dealing with these issues. I let the idea rest and evolve in my head, and as the time came to write this thesis, I knew without hesitation I wanted to focus on this subject.

As the idea of social enterprises and their leaders further developed in my mind, I began by pondering on a couple of questions. Why would a leader choose to work in a social enterprise and not in a traditional one? Why do they choose to help on their own account, as they may not gain as much money as in a traditional organization? What drives a leader to make such a decision about their career? I thought about their motivations and what the moving forces behind their actions really are, but I did not quite yet know exactly how to approach this research theme.

At the same time I happened to come across some personality tests, and they really caught my attention. After completing my own surveys and immersing myself into the world of personality theories, I began to wonder the meaning that personality places on leaders' actions and decisions. I found out that a great amount of literature exists on career choice, and this kind of an approach seemed to combine my previous thoughts very well including perspectives such as motives, values and capabilities as well as personality traits and relationships. I was already very interested in social enterprises and wanted to gain more knowledge about them, but at the same time I was eager to learn new information about the forces affecting career choice. Consequently, I decided to focus my study on the career choice of social enterprise leaders.

I began my study by investigating existing literature about social enterprises. When I had given time for all these thoughts to mature in my mind and after going through some previous research about the topic, I started to under-

stand the subject and also the goal of my research better. As a social enterprise does not distribute all its profit to shareholders and thus the tangible, monetary reward to employees, leaders and owners may not be as generous as in a traditional business organization, it is interesting to know why certain leaders choose to work in social enterprises instead of traditional ones. Moreover, being quite an unknown concept in Finland, a social enterprise is an appealing research subject. All this led to the point that I finally started writing this thesis. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did discovering all kinds of intriguing details about social enterprises and career choice.

## 1.1  Purpose of the study and research questions

People are nowadays living longer than ever and with all the development that has taken place the everyday life has been made a lot easier than some decades ago (World Health Organization 2011). Still, today's society is facing many widespread challenges. The population is growing fast which causes many serious problems, including unemployment, marginalization, poverty and health issues. Natural resources are constantly diminishing, the amount of pollution is growing and climate change is taking place, which raises questions about how to preserve our planet for the next generations that are yet to come. In particular, apart from unemployment, some of the social challenges that Finland is currently facing are the ageing population, the growth of income inequality and social exclusion which easily leads to loneliness (Koskela, Oikarinen, Konsti-Laakso, Martikainen & Melkas 2015). It is very hard for public services, charities or even corporate responsibility programs alone to respond to all these pressing demands (Ernst & Young 2014).

One way to confront these existing problems is through social enterprises, which are a rising trend in the world. Still, in Finland this concept is relatively new and not yet very well known (Tykkyläinen 2015). Social enterprise is an organization that falls somewhere between a traditional business organization and a charity organization. Instead of only concentrating on making profit for the shareholders and investors, social enterprises use a fair share of their earnings to solve social and environmental issues. The main focus, thus, is not to make enormous gains but instead to provide answers to societal problems.

In recent years a number of issues with supply chains have been seen in the media, and as a result many people are concerned with the reliability of companies. That is why there is a clear demand for transparency in business life. Social enterprises are determined to lessen this mistrust by being very open and transparent with their business practices. A special focus is placed on treating all the employees and other stakeholders equally and fairly and creating an environment, where everyone's qualities are appreciated. (Ernst & Young 2014.) Consequently, ethics plays a major role in social enterprises and must always be taken into consideration in organizational activities. What is also noteworthy is that the numbers of LOHAS (*Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability*) consumers are

rising in Finland, and it is estimated that every third Finnish person does their consumption decisions based on ethical and ecological reasons (Mäki 2013). This means that the attitudes of people are changing creating a more favorable atmosphere for social enterprises to function.

Another big topic that this study concentrates on is career choice. Career is a central part of people's everyday life, and whether someone might be a bank accountant, a nurse or a gardener, career adds meaning into the lives of people and fills a considerable amount of their time. For this reason it is important to understand the processes of career choice, since it will direct people's lives into particular directions. When a person can choose their own career and feels comfortable with it, the work can bring them joy and increase their happiness (Uusikylä 2010).

Especially in the modern world, the work is not what it used to be. If before a career was considered a ladder-like climb towards the highest positions in an organization, nowadays it seems more fragmented and encompasses all different areas of life. Because of the new technology and increasing competitiveness in the world, the working life has become an integral part of people's everyday life blurring the boundaries between work and free time. The focus is shifting from making a living to finding meaning in one's work. It is not self-evident anymore that a person would necessarily accept or pursue a leading position in a company. According to research findings on values and attitudes, this is due to the fact that monetary reward or advancing in one's career are not considered as important as is the role of meaningfulness and autonomy at work. (Halava & Pantzar 2010.)

In the EVA Forum held in May 2010, Howard Gardner from Harvard University summarized the three main features of good work: Excellence, Engagement and Ethics. This means that the work is done as well as possible, employees are engaged in it and ethics is the guiding force in all actions. Work looking excellent from the outside and in which people are engaged does still not equal good work, if it is at the same time characterized by irresponsibility, immorality and egoism. Gardner also added two more E's – Empathy and Equity – on his list. The ability to feel compassion and willingness to help others are important qualities of good work. Also, every employee should feel themselves valued and equal to others. The main responsibility of creating the framework for this kind of good work is on leaders. If companies only seek their own profit while forgetting the wellbeing of their employees, the individual and societal expenses can prove very costly. A leader must therefore do their best in order to motivate employees and help them find the meaning in their work. (Uusikylä 2010.)

Social enterprises have the possibility to provide responsible and meaningful workplaces to people, and by choosing a career in a social enterprise a leader has the opportunity to have an effect on these matters. As Gardner concluded in the EVA Forum, "The society is governed by three M-words: Money, Market, Me. First the words should be turned one fourth counterclockwise to get E, E and E. The last M should be turned upside down, when the word be-

comes WE, we together, responsible for our collective wellbeing." (Uusikylä 2010, 3.)

This study aims to enhance the understanding of career choice of leaders in social enterprises. To achieve the aim an empirical qualitative research is conducted. The primary research question for this thesis is:

1. *What kind of narratives do social enterprise leaders construct of their career choice?*

The additional research questions are the following:

2. *What factors do social enterprise leaders narrate as being significant for their career choice in a social enterprise?*

3. *What kind of identities do social enterprise leaders produce in their narratives?*

A qualitative study of career choice is important because the majority of the research in the field is still being realized using quantitative methods, which place the focus on external factors of the career (Ekonen 2014). Consequently, a narrative approach was chosen to this empirical study since its benefit is that it directs the focus more on internal elements of the career. The data for this study was produced using narrative thematic interviews. The constructed narratives give voice to the social enterprise leaders, thus making it possible to reveal diverse nuances of the narration that cannot be measured by quantitative methods.

The purpose of this thesis is to interpret and illustrate why leaders in social enterprises choose that kind of a career for themselves. In other words, the study aims to investigate leaders' perceptions on why they choose to work in a social enterprise instead of a traditional one. The concentration is on for-profit social enterprises that operate in different sectors in Finland. The study of narrative identities in this context adds more in-depth comprehension of social enterprise leaders and their career choice. It helps to explain and elaborate how the leaders' characteristics and personality may be significant in directing their career related decisions towards a specific outcome. Though a narrative identity, as a narrative construction, is only one possible depiction of the reality and imperfect as such, it does provide the needed new insight into our knowledge of leaders' sense-making processes. In addition to the meaning-making of leaders' career choice, this thesis attempts to raise awareness of social enterprises in the surrounding society.

## 1.2   Contributions of the study

From a theoretical point of view, the significance of this topic stems from the context in which this study is positioned, as social enterprises are gaining interest in the world and thus should be studied more in order to understand them better. Hence, the first contribution of this study is to provide more insight into the theoretical discussion of social enterprises. Also, there are a relatively few studies about career choice of leaders, even though some research about the theme can be found (e.g. Ng, Burke & Fiksenbaum 2008; Malach-Pines & Kaspi-Baruch 2008).

The study of Ng, Burke and Fiksenbaum (2008) explores the role that values, family and non-family influences have on US MBA students' career choice in management. According to the research, family and non-family influences do not predict career decisions, but these decisions rather indicate the independent self among the students in the career choice process. The respondents placed a strong emphasis on self-development, such as education, and most of them aspired to careers instead of jobs or callings. There were no significant gender differences in the results, meaning that men and women have quite similar factors guiding their career choice. All in all, the study indicated complexity of the career choice process, and also cultural influences, e.g. values, were found to be significant for career choice. The article of Malach-Pines & Kaspi-Baruch (2008) addresses the influence of culture and gender on career choice in management among MBA students from seven different countries. Also in this study the findings showed only small gender differences among the respondents. However, large cross-cultural differences in the influences and aspirations associated with the choice of a management career were found.

To extend this theoretical discussion and to provide further understanding of leaders' career choice, another contribution of this thesis is to add a narrative element to the examination of career choice in management. A career is a complex, all-encompassing construct, which cannot be separated from people's everyday lives. Thus, studying leaders' narration opens a door to a more complete view of their career choice processes. By analyzing the leaders' narration the intention is to identify different types of career choice stories that describe the way how their career decisions have been made.

It must be noted that most of the research combining both social enterprises and leadership highlights the role of entrepreneurs and accordingly concentrates on social entrepreneurs as leaders, not just on leaders working in social enterprises. For example, the study of Maak and Stoetter (2012) examines the case of Fundación Paraguaya, which is the first and longest-running nongovernmental organization in Paraguay. The research analyzes the way how the organization solves social problems and fights against poverty, and explores the responsible leadership of Martín Burt, the organization's founder and chief executive. In this study the social entrepreneur's leadership is illustrated by using five specific leadership roles: leader as a servant, a steward, a change agent, a

citizen and a visionary. Another example is the article of Prabhu (1999), which analyzes the similarities and differences between a social entrepreneurial leader and a classical economic entrepreneurial leader. Also here the focus is on the social entrepreneur who acts as a leader. Although those studies do provide valuable information about the leadership of social enterprises in general, my study attempts to illuminate the subject without including an entrepreneurial aspect to it but by focusing explicitly on leaders working in social enterprises.

Some, yet relatively few, studies about non-entrepreneurial leadership in social enterprises can be found. As an example, Gravells (2012) concentrates in his research on investigating the nature of leadership in social enterprises, and whether commonly agreed success factors exist among chief executives of those enterprises. The findings of the research indicate that success factors in social enterprises have many similarities with those in traditional ones. Hence, the study supports the view that good leadership looks very much the same regardless of the enterprise being a socially or purely economically oriented. Even though this study is about leadership in a social enterprise and does enhance understanding of the topic in its own right, it has not been connected to career choice. As a consequence, career choice in management in a social enterprise is quite an unexplored subject, and thus a contribution of this thesis is to augment comprehension of leaders' career choice specifically in the field of social enterprises.

As a practical implication, knowing more about social enterprise leaders' career choice may cast light on understanding the underlying reasons and motives for their actions and explain, whether they actively choose and pursue to be leaders and managers in social enterprises or if it is only a sum of random coincidences. Social enterprises have a strong value base and they strive towards a social mission, which makes them different from other organizations. Thus, one contribution of this study is to shed light on the fact, whether this value base has any significance for the leaders and if it inclines them to choose a career in a social enterprise.

The societal significance of this study derives from the awareness that the concept of social enterprise is not yet very well known in Finland. However, social enterprises do make a considerable investment in the society and there exist various pressing issues that need to be dealt with, such as unemployment and social exclusion, for instance. For this reason it is important to make social enterprises more familiar to people and help them gain visibility and appreciation in the society, in which this study intends to participate by providing information about social enterprises. It is also essential to get new actors in the field of social enterprises in order to meet these increasing demands. Thus, the results of this study can be used to encourage leaders to broaden their horizons and consider the potentiality of working in a social enterprise.

In the next section I will go through the central concepts that are present in this thesis. I will start by explaining the main characteristics of a social enterprise. Afterwards I will describe the notion of a career and finish by going through what I mean by career choice in this study.

## 1.3   Defining central concepts

### 1.3.1 Social enterprise

A social enterprise is an organization that does not merely focus on doing business but at the same time is committed to solve social or environmental ills in the society and thus, in addition to profit making, it has a social mission (Tian & Smith 2014; Battilana & Lee 2014; Koskela et al. 2015). These enterprises' purpose is to function as financially sustainable organizations that can provide answers to the world's most serious problems (Smith, Besharow, Wessels & Chertok 2012). As described by Smith et al. (2012), social enterprises can exploit the creativity, efficiency and viability of commercial means and turn them into assets for reaching social objectives that strive to improve social and environmental welfare. The chosen social goals can be achieved through the enterprises' activities and also by using their generated profits in a way that helps them to promote the desired outcomes (Koskela et al. 2015; Arvo-liitto 2016).

Social enterprises cannot be considered typical corporations, but neither are they traditional not-for-profits (Battilana & Lee 2014). Instead, the organizational form of a social enterprise can be either non-profit or for-profit (Bacq & Janssen 2011), and it is both business and charity that in unison form part of the enterprise's core (Battilana & Lee 2014). Arvo-liitto, the Finnish Association for Social Enterprises, presents a chart that well shows the differences between a purely non-profit and a business orientated organization and how social enterprises are situated in between the two extremes (see Chart 1). Hence, a social enterprise can be represented by any corporate form, but not all organizations are social enterprises. (Arvo-liitto 2016.)

This thesis concentrates on Finnish for-profit social enterprises. The definition that I use recognizes a social enterprise as a company, whose commercial activity is based on a social or environmental objective, meaning that the enterprise has a social mission. Also, a significant amount of the enterprise's generated profit will be invested in accomplishing this mission. All the social enterprises, whose leaders have been interviewed for this study, fulfill these criteria in their business operations.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

| | Non-profit organization (no commercial activity) | Non-profit organization (with commercial activity) | Supported enterprise (with social activity) | The enterprise has a social mission | The enterprise has a commercial profile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Objective | social | social | social | social | commercial |
| Operations | social | social and commercial | social and commercial | social and commercial | market-based |
| Commercial activity | not at all | to some extent | significant | very important | critical |
| Resource base | subsidies, voluntary work | 1. subsidies, voluntary work 2. income from commercial activity | 1. income from commercial activity 2. subsidies, voluntary work | income from commercial activity | income from commercial activity |
| Profit | non-profit | profit will be invested in activity that supports enterprise's own goals | profit will be invested in activity that supports enterprise's own or other social goals | profit will be invested in activity that supports enterprise's own or other social goals | new investments, donations |

CHART 1 Versatile forms of social enterprises (Arvo-liitto 2016, translated by the author).

## 1.3.2 Career

A career is a concept that everyone has some idea about. We have heard about our friends' career aspirations and achievements, our parents have their careers, and we are at some point of our own career or at least we have some expectations and desires for our future career and what we hope to accomplish. Agreeing with Arthur and Rousseau's (1996, 3) words, "everyone who works has a

career. And everyone's life outside work is connected to the career." After all, as Arnold (1997, 18) notes, the concept of a career is broader than what is usually thought of. A career belongs to the individual, but still many times the employing organization can plan and manage it actively. Thus, it can be said that to a certain extent careers are also property of organizations. (Baruch 2004, 3.)

In order to have a mutual understanding of the nature of careers, a clear definition of the subject is needed. Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989, 8) define a career as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time." Arnold (1997, 16) describes a career as "the sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person." Baruch (2004, 3) summarizes that a career can be understood as "a sequencing of an individual's life, work roles and experiences", if a career is being examined from the point of view of the individual, which is the case in this study. He further explains how life stories of people are sometimes paralleled to careers, as the element of development and progress is present in people's lives the same way it is in careers. The definition of a career used in this thesis follows the views of the aforementioned researchers, and thus it can be compacted: a career is the evolving sequence of an individual's life, work roles, employment-related positions, activities and experiences over time.

In this study Arnold's (1997, 16-18) idea of careers is adopted. Ergo, when taking a closer look at his definition, it can be realized that five main propositions of careers are distinguished. First of all, a career is defined in personal terms. Hence, it is in the possession of the individual and does not mean the same thing as an occupation. A person might have a career inside the frames of a certain occupation, for example law or marketing, but that only creates the context in which the personal career takes place. An individual does not own the occupation, but they own their career in that particular field.

Secondly, a career always has a subjective element. This means that a career is partly the result of how we perceive the world. The emphasis is put on experiences, because two people always experience even similar events and circumstances differently. Even though there are aspects of a career that can be observed objectively, such as employment-related positions, for instance, the subjectivity is constantly present in a career. (Arnold 1997, 16-17.)

Thirdly, as the definition states, careers concern sequences of employment-related positions. Therefore, the focus is on how these positions along with different roles, activities and experiences are shaped and revealed over time, do they change in some ways or connect with each other, and do they match with the individual's abilities and interests and present opportunities for them to realize their whole potential. (Arnold 1997, 16-17.)

The fourth point made by Arnold (1997, 16-18) is that a career is not confined only to a particular employment. Instead, all that makes a contribution to the employment or respectively results from the employment is considered to be part of the personal career. Consequently, a career can include elements from education, leisure time activities, family roles or domestic tasks, as an example.

Finally, a career can include employment in not only one but various occupations. Additionally, promotions and other indicators of a high status, such

as high income, do not necessarily form a part of a career. Instead, everyone who is either currently employed or alternatively is seeking it and aspires to have employment, has a career. (Arnold 1997, 16-18.)

Another way to contemplate a career is by observing it from the point of view of a metaphor. According to Inkson and Amundson (2002) a career can be seen through different metaphors. Metaphors are something that everyone uses in their daily life – also when talking and thinking about careers – and that helps people to understand the world better. As an illustration, the very commonly heard expression "career ladder" is one type of a metaphor that is often used to describe careers. Yet, this kind of metaphorical thinking happens many times unconsciously. Inkson and Amundson (2002) distinguish ten archetypal metaphors that describe careers to be 'the career as a journey', 'the career as an inheritance', 'the career as fit', 'the career as a sequence of seasons', 'the career as growth', 'the career as a creative work', 'the career as a network', 'the career as a resource', 'the career as a story' and 'the career as a cultural artifact'. Even though I do not exactly examine career metaphors in this thesis, it is good to acknowledge that there are different shades of meaning associated with careers. In particular, 'the career as a story' is an interesting metaphor to reflect on, when considering the narrative approach to careers that I have taken in this study.

### 1.3.3 Career choice

Choosing a career is a complex practice, in which almost every person must engage in their lives. Whether it is about planning to be a stay-at-home mother or a CEO of a leading company, a certain kind of a career choice always takes place in the mind of an individual. To start with, this thesis supports the view that choosing a career involves a process of decision making. The cornerstones of this process are individual's self-knowledge containing understanding of one's own background, and knowledge of the world of work or occupations. The next level is having decision making skills, which are used to process information. In particular, these skills include communication, analysis, synthesis, valuing and execution. The last stage of the process concentrates on metacognitions, which manage and control the other process phases. (Inkson 2007, 257-258.)

When taking a closer look on the decision making skills, in this context 'communication' means that something communicates to the individual about a problem's existence. This can happen for example when the individual notices that he or she is not satisfied in the current job, and thus a decision must be made in order to regain that satisfaction. 'Analysis' involves gathering information about the problem at hand and reflecting on that information. 'Synthesis' refers to processing information and trying to find alternative solutions to the problem. Potential options are then pondered over and their validity is being estimated. 'Valuing' means that the possible solutions are considered taking into account the person's values and the outcomes that executing that option would have either on the person him- or herself or the people near them, such

as family members. Also, the best possible solution is chosen and the individual prepares to implement it. 'Execution' involves reaching for the goal and providing direction for the choice. During this phase a person may also try to gain relevant experiences. (Inkson 2007, 258-259.)

In this study I have adopted the idea that choosing a career often consists of a set of decisions instead of a one single decision. This includes all the choices an individual makes regarding their education that provides a direction for the future career, and then of course the actual decision concerning the first job. During the period when all these choices take place, an individual tries to evaluate him- or herself and the occupational field to find out, which is the best possible match that can be achieved between the person and a career. (Inkson 2007, 64.) However, it must be noted that there are so many factors affecting this evaluation and distorting it that it is not possible to make a choice based completely on rationality (Inkson 2007, 116, 119). Instead, aspects such as the individual's own dispositions, human capital, attitudes and personality always moderate the career choice (Özbilgin, Küskü and Erdogmus 2005).

# 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

## 2.1 Social enterprises and leadership

### 2.1.1 Emergence of social enterprises

In Finland social enterprises are still a relatively new and unknown phenomenon (Koskela et al. 2015). However, according to different accounts there are thousands of social enterprises in Finland, and it is just the concept that is unfamiliar to people. One reason to this is that the business model of social enterprises can be easily mixed with charity work, organizational activities, municipal public utilities or companies' corporate social responsibility programs. (Tykkyläinen 2015.) Where this concept first emerged and how it should be accurately defined cannot be answered precisely, since there are many differing views about it in the world. Nevertheless, the overarching element serving as a primary interest to all parties is that social enterprises strive towards the maximization of social value. (Koskela et al. 2015.)

Social enterprise is usually described as a concept of the 21st century, but actually its roots date much further back in time (Koskela et al. 2015). In the 1970s a severe period of unemployment in Western Europe led to a point where new solutions were needed and thus social integration enterprises, combining aspects of both charity and business, emerged (Battilana & Lee 2014). Later on in 1990 the concept of a social enterprise appeared in the third sector for the first time (Defourny & Nyssens 2010), and eventually it gained fame not solely in Europe but around the world. Different actors, including the media, public authorities and also investors, became interested in the notion of social enterprises and the term started to win favor with the popular press. This was the key in transmitting the concept to the public. The numbers tell about the huge popularity social enterprises received, as the amount of articles published on the issue rose extremely rapidly starting from 37 in 1997 to 529 in 2000 and up to 14 264 in 2012. (Battilana & Lee 2014.)

In Finland, in the beginning of 1900 the development towards social missions was already visible. Work centres, which later turned into Christian set-

tlement houses, rural cooperation activities as well as cooperative social insurance funds appeared being some of the early manifestations of this phenomenon. Possibly the most well-known of such is the Linnanmäki amusement park, which was founded in 1950 by six associations[1] that were engaged in child welfare. A few years later, these associations also co-founded the Children's Day Foundation (Lasten Päivän Säätiö). This foundation raises funds through managing the Linnanmäki amusement park, and uses its generated assets for child welfare work in Finland. (Koskela et al. 2015.)

In Finland, there are social enterprises among a huge variety of different kinds of organizations and fields of operation. Still, it is hard to give exact numbers of the amount of social enterprises since these kinds of business model features cannot be found in existing records. In 2004, a law concerning work integration social enterprises came into force stating that at least 30% of the enterprise's workforce must be either long-term unemployed or only partly able to work. A broader definition was characterized in the beginning of 2011 by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and based on their work the Finnish Social Enterprise Mark was launched at the end of 2011. (Tykkyläinen 2015.)

The Finnish Social Enterprise Mark is administrated by the Association for Finnish Work (Koskela et al. 2015), and it can be granted to the enterprise based on three principles. First, the enterprise's primary purpose and aim is to produce social good and it practices responsible business. Second, the enterprise uses most of its profit to produce the social good described in the business idea. This can happen either through developing the enterprise's own operations or by donating the profit according to the business plan. The third principle is that the business is open and transparent. Additional factors that can contribute to receiving the mark are ownership or decisional power by employees, measuring the created social impact and providing employment to those in a difficult industrial position. All in all, the principles are close to the European Union definition, which combines entrepreneurship, social purpose and administration that engages employees. (Tykkyläinen 2015.) The companies that finally receive this mark are then committed to follow the criteria for social enterprises (Koskela et al. 2015).

In 2014, Arvo-liitto, the Finnish Association for Social Enterprises, was founded by nine social enterprises. Arvo-liitto is a member of the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), and it was created to represent and further the cause of Finnish social enterprises. (Koskela et al. 2015.) It is hoped that the launching of this new association will encourage different companies to be identified as social enterprises, since it is very hard to recognize them based only on legislation or the Finnish Social Enterprise Mark. As an illustration, in the end of 2014 there were less than 150 official social enterprises, which in reality represent only a fraction of the total number of social enterprises in Finland. Nonetheless,

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[1]   The associations involved in establishing the Children's Day Foundation are the Swedish-speaking Barnavårdsföreningen i Finland (the Finnish Child Welfare Association), the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters, the Central Union for Child Welfare, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, Parasta Lapsille (The Best for Children) and Save the Children (Koskela et al. 2015).

the development is going forward and people are starting to recognize more the significance of social enterprises. Also, the social added value produced by these enterprises is little by little beginning to show as a competitive advantage in the market. (Tykkyläinen 2015.)

### 2.1.2 Differing definitions

There is a variety of definitions concerning social enterprises in the European public debate (Defourny & Nyssens 2006, 4). Some highlight the importance of social contribution and ethical standards affecting on the background, while others underline the specific profit distribution regulations. To clarify this notion, here I will go through some of the different ways how a social enterprise can be defined and what problems there have been in Finland when translating the concept.

To begin with, the starting point for a social enterprise and a traditional enterprise is quite the same. Nevertheless, the difference lies in the focus a social enterprise places on its business operations. To mention a few, the target can be social sustainability or the renewal of society, for instance. The philosophical stance may also play a significant role behind a social enterprise, and as an example a strong ethical attitude can be one of the company's cornerstones. (Koskela et al. 2015.)

It is important to bear in mind that as social enterprises on one hand do focus on what is traditionally understood as business operations, they simultaneously aim to create "common or social 'good' for the environment or some community" (Koskela et al. 2015, 9). Accordingly, a social enterprise is allowed to gain profit, but the social mission must be superior to the financial goals. For this reason, the business needs to be run in a sustainable way and the shareholder dividends cannot be exaggerated. (Ernst & Young 2014.) According to Arvo-liitto (2016), at least 50% of social enterprises' earnings must be used to advance social purposes. It can be said that a social enterprise is an innovation that combines both entrepreneurship and the making of common good (Koskela et al. 2015), and its objective can be seen as being successful in its social mission. Thus, a social enterprise should conduct its activities in ways that support its social mission at hand. (Bacq & Janssen 2011.)

In order to be recognized as a social enterprise by Arvo-liitto, the association presents a set of criteria that must be met. First of all, the organization's business operations are supposed to further some social objective, such as promoting health, wellbeing or culture, providing employment or enhancing ecological goals, for instance. Secondly, the enterprise must operate in the market and a considerable amount of the income must come from selling products or services. Thirdly, a social enterprise has to be independent of the public sector, which means its administration and operations are managed autonomously. The fourth criterion is that the enterprise must use its generated profits primarily to enhance social goals and only secondarily to grow the organization itself. The fifth and last criterion is that the enterprise's activity is based on ethical

guidelines, it is transparent, and managed using a good method of administration. (Arvo-liitto 2016.)

EMES[2] European Research Network has developed an internationally recognized definition of a social enterprise (Koskela et al. 2015). The definition is divided into two parts according to the perspective from which the company's social initiatives are examined (Bacq & Janssen 2011). In the first series there are four criteria that focus on the economic and entrepreneurial dimensions. To begin with, the definition emphasizes the importance of production and sale of goods and/or services, since this distinguishes a social enterprise from the third sector. Secondly, a social enterprise must have decisional authority and thus it should not be controlled by the public sector or an owner from outside the enterprise. Thirdly, a social enterprise always bears a significant economic risk. This means that the company must make enough profit in order to cover all the production costs. The fourth criterion underlines that a monetary reward must be paid to those who work, so activities cannot be based solely on voluntary work or subsidies. (Bacq & Janssen 2011; Koskela et al. 2015.)

In the second part of the definition attention is paid to five indicators that reflect the social dimensions of the company's initiatives. First, a social enterprise must have an aim to create benefits for the community. These benefits can be either social or environmental. Second, the enterprise's activity should be initiated by a group of people with a shared objective. The cooperation and mutual dialogue play a significant role not only in the starting phase of the company but also in the long run. Third, the decision-making power should not be tied to capital ownership. Instead, as the fourth indicator affirms, shared leadership and participation of all stakeholders is encouraged. Finally, in a social enterprise there are special limitations on profit distribution. (Bacq & Janssen 2011, Koskela et al. 2015.)

Bacq and Janssen (2011) highlight in their definition of a social enterprise, which they call 'a social entrepreneurial venture (SEV)', three criteria. First of all, the social mission of the organization must be explicit and central. As opposed to the EMES criteria, the authors state that a SEV does not necessarily have to be launched by a group of people but also individuals can take initiative. Secondly, the market orientation of the enterprise must correlate with its social mission. Hence, income must be generated continuously by producing goods and/or services. Thirdly, it is not the legal framework that should define a SEV. Therefore, these enterprises can operate both in the private and the public sector.

There are some differing views about the profit distribution in a social enterprise. According to Bacq and Janssen (2011) the Social Innovation School does not restrict the way in which the profits are distributed. If the enterprise generates financial gains, it is advisable to reinvest the earnings in the company's social mission. This, however, is not compulsory but instead the company can choose the way they want to operate. What the Social Innovation School

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[2]     Researchers and university research centres of the European Union formed a scientific network in 1996. Their first research program was about the 'Emergence of Social Enterprises in Europe', which gave the name 'EMES' to the whole network. (Bacq & Janssen 2011; Defourny & Nyssens 2006, 4.)

does emphasize is the importance of the social added value, which is expected to augment due to the business actions. The EMES network has a different approach, since they argue for a certain limit to profit distribution and the avoidance of profit maximization. Consequently, a social enterprise can distribute its financial benefits to the shareholders and investors but only in terms of specific limitations.

In Finland, there has been some confusion about the terms 'social enterprise' (yhteiskunnallinen yritys) and 'work integration social enterprise', also referred to as 'WISE' (sosiaalinen yritys). A work integration social enterprise is a social enterprise that approaches social problems from a different perspective. Their purpose is to enhance employment by creating jobs for people who have been previously long-term unemployed or have a disability that prevents them from working in a traditional way. (Koskela et al. 2015.) A Finnish law concerning work integration social enterprises came into force in 2004, and based on the law a minimum of 30 per cent of a work integration social enterprise's workforce must be either disabled or long-term unemployed (Ministry of employment and the economy 2015). The confusion between these terms has its root in the word 'social', which has a dual interpretation in Finnish, meaning either social or societal. Thus, using the term 'social' to define an enterprise can cause challenges in translation. The problem that often emerges is the false impression that a social enterprise would only function in relation to social care. This, however, is not the case, since a social enterprise can choose to operate and do business in any sector in the same way as traditional organizations do. (Koskela et al. 2015.)

## 2.1.3 Leadership in a social enterprise

It is not always easy to lead a social enterprise because of its dual focus, commercial and social orientation. Maintaining this duality concerning both financial goals and social missions brings about paradoxical tensions (Smith et al 2012). In this context paradox can be defined as referring to elements that are contradictory yet interrelated and which exist simultaneously (Smith & Lewis 2011). In a social enterprise these two paradoxical approaches are present every day, and thus a leader must be prepared to deal with the upcoming challenges.

Because of the paradoxical nature of a social enterprise, there exists a threat that the organization might lose the focus and turn either into a purely social mission-oriented enterprise or respectively a purely commercial enterprise. Another significant menace is the potential conflict among employees, as some of them may choose to support the commercial goals while others underline the importance of the social mission. This creates challenges to the leader, who needs to maintain commitment to both commercial and social orientations of the organization and simultaneously manage effectively the possible internal conflict. Nevertheless, if a leader handles these tasks successfully, the potential threats can turn into incentives of creativity, novelty and long-term organizational sustainability. (Smith et al. 2012.) Managing the tensions properly also fosters more dynamic decision making, as it helps the organization and its

members to be more flexible and resilient (Smith & Lewis 2011). Likewise, Battilana and Lee (2014) state that as a social enterprise combines both business and charity in its core and even though this dual orientation is expected to cause different tensions, it also brings forth unique possibilities that would not be attained otherwise. Moreover, the blending of two conflicting domains can unleash human potential, since it fosters creativity and learning, which in turn lead to experienced positive energy and success (Smith & Lewis 2011).

In order to understand some of the skills a leader needs in a social enterprise, it is good to start by looking at particular tensions that must be dealt with while running the business. According to Tian and Smith (2014, 43) the key challenges a leader in a social enterprise faces are "inconsistent demands, shifting boundaries, complex relationships, and identity issues." Inconsistent demands stem from the fact that the intention is to simultaneously improve social welfare and attain commercial viability. These two different approaches are based on contrasting values, since it is economic values that constitute the basis for commercial viability, while societal values dictate the ways of pursuing social goals. It is beneficial, however, for a social enterprise to integrate these competing demands. Trying to attain commercial viability fosters efficiency, performance, innovation and growth, whereas pursuing social missions brings forth passion, motivation and commitment. When the combination of performance and passion is present in an organization, it offers a great possibility to discover fresh solutions to current challenges. (Smith et al. 2012.)

The inconsistent, dualistic demands in a social enterprise are very often dynamic, which means that their boundaries cannot be strictly set (Smith & Lewis 2011). Instead, the initially chosen approaches to confront certain issues can be reconsidered over time. These shifting boundaries can be caused for example by competitive pressures, advances in technology or fluctuating business cycles. (Tian & Smith 2014.) To give an example, a new company entering the field may force the social enterprise to start acting more financially efficiently, and as a result they need to discover innovative solutions that are financially sustainable. This may demand a major change in the business strategy, but albeit it is essential to make this shift in order to survive in the competition.

Because leaders of social enterprises need to take into account many varying stakeholder groups, the relationships become more complex (Tracey & Phillips 2007; Smith & Lewis 2011). It is not enough to try to satisfy merely the owners, but instead the leaders must consider the changing needs of several stakeholder groups while concentrating on their own core activities. As it comes to identity issues, according to Tian and Smith (2014) the enterprise's inconsistent goals and values may make it difficult for the members, including leaders, to properly identify with the organization's mission. When people come from different backgrounds, some from for-profit and others from non-profit organizations, it may create difficulties for them to get accustomed to the new work environment (Tracey & Phillips 2007). This can lead to internal conflicts and formation of subgroups, as people choose sides and decide which values they want to support the most. Due to the existence of divergent stakeholder groups, social enterprise leaders need to see themselves in relation to these stakeholders.

Therefore, they must either create several differentiated identities or respectively embrace an integrated hybrid identity. (Tian & Smith 2014.)

Smith et al. (2012) argue that a social enterprise leader needs a more extensive set of skills than a traditional organization leader in order to concurrently manage social missions and commercial objectives. Thus, they list three interrelated leadership skills that are essential when dealing with challenges in a social enterprise: accepting, differentiating and integrating the organization's competing demands.

Accepting competing demands, business and social goals, signifies that these different orientations are seen as simultaneously possible. A leader must understand that both focuses are elemental to the organization and simply learn to cope with them, hence adopting an abundance mentality and embracing paradoxical thinking. (Smith et al. 2012.) Acceptance establishes the basis for organizational members to lessen anxiety, minimize conflict and consciously seek different alternatives (Tian & Smith 2014).

Differentiating refers to recognizing the unique contributions of both orientations. It places focus on the special value of each alternative, so that not only one alternative becomes permanently superior to the other. Thus, differentiation constantly reminds the leader of the existence of two competing, yet vital, domains. (Smith et al. 2012.)

Integrating entails binding social and financial demands together and seeking synergies in a way that enables fostering of productivity instead of provoking unmanageable conflicts (Smith et al. 2012). For instance, means for increasing synergy include enhancing a culture of openness, constantly seeking innovative solutions, creating opportunities to give feedback and providing the possibility to participate in mutual conversation about organization's goals (Tian & Smith 2014). In addition, developing trust and cultural sensitivity are significant factors in order to boost integration (Smith et al. 2012).

According to the study of Gravells (2012), which concentrated on successful leadership in social enterprises, social enterprise leaders expressed that values are fundamental to them in their career. For instance, values and a strong belief system made them feel passionate and enthusiastic about what they were doing. Also the social enterprise's moral and ethical guidelines served as a framework against which the leaders could self-monitor their decisions. Other common characteristics that social enterprise leaders exhibited were caring for people, having courage and self-confidence, and being self-aware of their own qualities, for which they were able to act authentically and humbly accepting the ideas and help of others when needed.

Prabhu (1999) distinguishes certain characteristics among social enterprise leaders, which may help us to better understand the reasons behind their career choice. These characteristics refer to aspects of leadership that are mostly derived from who we are and our personality, including the inbuilt traits and attributes as well as the values and beliefs about the world. Prabhu (1999, 142) describes as social enterprise leaders' possible motivations "altruism, need to be true to one's values and beliefs, need to match with one's self concept, and need to be socially responsible". Swamy (1990) adds to the list the urge to fight injus-

tice as well as the urge to experiment. Prabhu (1999) further suggests that age and risk factors play a significant role, and that older people who no longer have urgent familial responsibilities may wish to make meaningful contributions to society. Also leaders that have formerly worked in economically oriented enterprises and are satisfied with their economic growth may want to make social contributions or build a social image. Background and previous experiences are important, too, since for example education in the field of social work can give the leaders insights on social issues. In addition, a trigger event or a psychological disturbance in one's life or career can shift the focus towards working in a social enterprise.

As Prabhu (1999) depicts, cultural and societal impact is deemed significant for becoming a social enterprise leader. For example, strong family influences may be the guiding force towards a career in a social enterprise. This may be because of childhood experiences or the urge to make up for the parents' or the community's inaction in the face of a social problem. Alternatively, the childhood family and close relationships may have instilled a deep sense of values in the individual, which then may be further intensified by personal history and psychological development. Moreover, the networks and relationships are critical for social enterprise leaders to prosper in their career, and the emotional support provided by family and close networks is essential for their wellbeing in the face of immense pressure and difficult circumstances.

## 2.2 Career literature

### 2.2.1 Development of career research

Many traditions have had an influence on career research. To mention the most significant ones, sociology and psychology have played a role in shaping the study field of careers. Additionally, professional schools such as schools of education and management have made their contributions. (Arthur 2008.) Career research started to develop in the end of 1800s, as sociology was becoming a modern research field in behavioral science. The social class was believed to determine career success, and in 1950s researchers strived to explain, how the social class affects people's career accomplishments. (Ekonen 2007; 2014.) Congruently, the sociological view typically discerns the career as relative status and available social roles (Khapova, Arthur & Wilderom 2007).

From the psychological perspective the career research started in 1900s with Sir Francis Galton's study concerning the differences in individual intelligence and Frank Parsons' theory of career choice. These explorations steered the focus on the specific traits that individuals possess and the psychology of career choice was originated. (Ekonen 2007; 2014; Inkson 2007, 10) Characteristics that this approach takes into consideration are for example people's abilities, aptitudes, personality, values and interests. This philosophy led to the emergence of fit-the-person-to-the-job thinking, which is still used in the careers

guidance field, as it strives to find the job that in light of all these factors would be best suited for the individual. For example, John Holland created a theory that explains people's occupational choices based on their vocational interests. (Inkson 2007, 10.) Thus, the psychological view perceives the career as related to individual's interests and attitudes (Khapova et al. 2007).

In addition to the sociological and psychological approaches, career research can also be examined by distinguishing between subjective and objective views to careers. Subjective career is always related to the individual and can only be evaluated by the person him- or herself. (Khapova et al. 2007.) According to Inkson and King (2011), individuals are interested in their personal advantage and the opportunities that the career may provide for them. Desired career outcomes for individuals are for example optimized earnings, improved status, personal development or possibilities to combine family life with their working life.

Objective career can instead be described as seen through the eyes of others, so public observation is underlined in this tendency (Khapova et al. 2007). For instance, organizations examine careers from this perspective, and for them the focus is on organizational benefits. From this point of view, careers are expected to enhance organization's long-term competitive advantage for example by increasing expertise or improving corporate culture and institutional memory. (Inkson & King 2011.)

Even though many early career theories share the logical positivist perspective, since 1990 the notion of social constructionism has gained a strong following in career research. This philosophical position claims that people construct their own realities, and when related to careers, it suggests that also the personal realities of careers are constructed by individuals. (Inkson 2007, 11.) Social constructionism assumes that not only one truth exists, as positivist thinking states, but that there are simultaneously many "truths" which are situated in relationships and depend on the perspective (Stead 2004). Hence, in order to study careers profoundly it is important to comprehend how individuals themselves understand their own careers. (Inkson 2007, 11; Young & Collin 2004.)

In this thesis I will concentrate on the individual and subjective approach to careers, as my intention is to observe social enterprise leaders' own perceptions of their career choices. Consequently, I will not make assumptions about the objective or organizational aspects of the matter. I will examine career choice from the social constructionist perspective assuming that individuals themselves construct their own realities of their careers and career choices.

2.2.2 Contemporary career models

Traditionally a career has been seen as ascending and inflexible. The desired career used to take place in one organization, where the employee was working for a single employer. The main factors that caused people to advance in their career and get promoted were experience and tenure. There was a strong organ-

izational control of careers and people usually worked until they got old enough to get retired. (Baruch 2004, 38.)

Today's careers have developed considerably from what they used to be some decades ago. If before a career was understood as a continuum that started from one point and preferably ended up on the highest levels of an organization as a person did everything right, nowadays this concept of a rigid career ladder is yielding and more complete approaches to careers are taking place (Baruch 2004, 13). Organizations are not anymore the ones that are expected to be served by people, but vice versa, and people want to get something personal out of their careers. The main change in careers is that when they used to offer secure employment for all the organizational members mostly for their whole working life, nowadays careers can rather be seen as providing development opportunities for the individual, albeit it is possible that the time spent in the organization's service only lasts a couple of years. (Baruch 2004, 4.)

To better portray these transitions in careers, new career models have been developed to complement the traditional views. These models take into consideration all aspects of one's life instead of focusing only on people's organizational or professional life (Baruch 2004, 39), and they include the elements of uncertainty and risk taking (Ekonen 2014). Possibly the earliest one of these approaches is the concept of a *protean career* (Hall & Moss 1998). This term was first used in 1970s, which was a good indicator of the changes that were happening in Western working life starting from that decade (Ekonen 2014).

In order to have a clearer understanding of the protean career, it is good to contemplate the origins of the word 'protean'. Protean career refers to the sea-god Proteus from Greek mythology. Proteus was able to change his form according to the demands of every situation, so the word 'protean' is seen as representing flexibility and an ability to change shape as needed. (Inkson 2006.) The same way in a protean career the individual is seen as shape changing, adaptable and adjusting to the situational demands (Baruch 2004, 71).

The protean career can be described as a process which is managed by the individual instead of the organization. All the individual's experiences, including education, training, work in different organizations and other occupational transitions as well as identity changes, form the protean career. This is to say that the person's chronological age does not have much of an importance but what counts is the 'career age.' The individual's own aspirations for self-fulfillment and certain career choices are considered integrative elements in their life. Thus, success cannot be measured based on external standards but instead the individual's own internal principles are the criterion of success. (Hall & Moss 1998.)

Another perspective on careers that has recently become popular in organizational studies is the notion of a *boundaryless career* (Arthur 1994; Arthur & Rousseau 1996; Sullivan & Arthur 2006; Briscoe, Hall & Frautschy DeMuth 2006). If the term boundaryless career is taken literally, it can mean either a career with no limits and the possibility to extend freely, or that no clear lines exist to mark where the limits are (Inkson 2006). Arthur (1994) and Arthur and Rousseau (1996, 6) distinguish six specific meanings that are characteristic to a

boundaryless career. This kind of a career moves across the boundaries of separate employers and draws validation from outside the present employer. It is sustained by external networks or information and it breaks traditional organizational career boundaries. In a boundaryless career the individual places a great importance on their private life, so existing career opportunities can be rejected based on personal and family reasons. The individual's interpretation also plays a significant role, since the actor may perceive their future as boundaryless regardless of structural constraints.

Inkson (2006) emphasizes that as demonstrated by these meanings, a boundaryless career involves both objective features as well as the subjective attitude of being boundaryless. However, he criticizes the term by saying that when boundaries are crossed, they are indeed transcended but not removed. Considering the term from this perspective, as a matter of fact this kind of a career should not be described as boundary-*less* but rather as boundary-*crossing*. (Inkson 2006.)

Sullivan & Arthur (2006) explain that a boundaryless career is not something a person either has or does not have, but it can rather be contemplated taking into account the mobility that the career actor expresses, considering both the physical and psychological dimensions. Physical mobility would be for example when the individual changes their workplace often. The psychological perspective is instead related to the person's thinking and an expression of good psychological mobility would be, for instance, deciding to start an own enterprise after having worked in different workplaces. Hence, differently emphasized boundaryless careers can be distinguished depending on the career actor's levels of both mobilities. The same way as in a protean career, the individual's subjective experience is determining when defining career success, and thus it cannot be measured based on the expectations of other actors, such as employers, family, friends or even society (Sullivan & Arthur 2006).

The term *intelligent career*, which was first introduced by Arthur, Claman and DeFillippi (1995), offers one more way to examine current careers. This kind of an approach can be seen reflecting a trend nowadays (Baruch 2004, 13), as it places emphasis on the multifaceted expertise that individuals possess (Ekonen 2014). The intelligent career model can be divided into three basic competencies, which are 'knowing why', 'knowing how' and 'knowing whom'. Knowing why relates to the person's motivations, interests, beliefs and values for pursuing a certain kind of a career. Knowing how is about the skills, knowledge and competences a person has and which help them to perform well at work and complete the required assignments. Knowing whom refers to the individual's networks and interpersonal relationships, since knowing the right people can be advantageous in providing important opportunities and resources. (Arthur et al. 1995; Jones & DeFillippi 1996.)

Jones & DeFillippi (1996) further elaborate the intelligent career framework by including three additional competencies: 'knowing what', 'knowing where' and 'knowing when'. Knowing what means understanding what the industry's opportunities and threats are and realizing what criteria is needed in order to succeed. Knowing where is about how to find the way into the career.

Many geographic, spatial or cultural boundaries can hinder the entrance, training and advancement in a career, while simultaneously multiple different paths exist that can possibly lead to a career. For this reason a person must know where it is favorable to start approaching their goals. Knowing when is related to the timing and choice of activities in a career. The importance of this can be seen for example when considering for how long to stay in one function in order to learn and gain all that is possible but at the same time not letting the position limit one's opportunities. (Jones & DeFillippi 1996.)

Building on a clearer understanding of careers in general, we may start elaborating on the specific factors that make people end up in certain careers. Hence, in the next section I will go through some of the theories and previous research concerning career choice.

## 2.3 Career choice theories

### 2.3.1 Choosing a career

What makes a person choose a certain kind of a career? To answer this question many researchers have developed models that try to illustrate the phenomenon of career choice. It is not an easy task, though, since people are different and they choose their careers based on various things. Someone has always had a dream job that he or she wants to pursue, while others discover their true interests only later in life. Some even end up in a career they had never thought of before. Be it the first choice or the fifth, career forms a significant part of an individual's life and thus career choice always has some consequences. Therefore, it is good to understand the processes of career choice better.

When people go to work, they always bring their whole selves to the workplace and thus to the whole world of careers, meaning that their inner needs and values are inseparably present wherever they are. Diverse combinations of needs drive people to pursue different career goals, one aspiring for a managerial position while the other seeks to attain a secure professional occupation. Therefore, the choices they make depend on their individual preferences and their needs that are the most dominant. (Baruch 2004, 22.) Accordingly, one very traditional yet practical way to explain people's career choices is by using Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, since a career can fulfill for example individuals' needs for self-actualization or recognition. It must be argued that this approach does provide a somewhat simplistic view of the reasons behind career choice, but even so, it can be said that values as well as other individual characteristics, including needs, strongly determine people's career choice and the ways in which they progress and manage their careers. (Baruch 2004, 22.)

Baruch (2004, 23) states that the values, traits and attitudes people have affect their career choice. Inkson (2007, 116) agrees by mentioning that much of the motivation that is needed for career-related actions, such as career choice, stems from values. Values, like also perceptions of careers, are many times

learned through observation, and this is where the early experiences within the family play a significant role (Baruch 2004, 23).

Our traits are to some extent due to our inheritance. Physical traits, such as appearance and bodily dimensions, are also significant for career choice and success, but naturally the more important factor is the psychological side that focuses on intellectual capacities. These traits are determined partly by our genes, just as the physical ones, but they are also greatly shaped by environmental influences and education. Especially people's personality traits are clearly connected with career choice. (Baruch 2004, 23.)

Attitudes have also a part to play when considering career choice. Baruch (2004, 23) introduces Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975; see also Ajzen 1991) theory of planned behavior and argues that the theory can "serve to explain the 'why' of career choices." In this model, values, norms and beliefs, which are influenced by individual personality as well as the surrounding culture and environment, lead to the constitution of certain attitudes. Attitudes produce intentions, which in turn result in particular behaviors, such as choosing a specific career. As the theory proposes, career choice can be seen as a result of many disparate factors. (Baruch 2004, 23.)

According to Özbilgin et al. (2005), career choice consists of two components: the availability of alternatives and the act of preference. Availability of alternatives refers to the objective reality, presenting a set of options from which an individual can choose the best alternative. For example, a person can choose from the existing possibilities in order to find the best way to start building a career. The act of preference includes a subjective process and thus places importance on the individual. This leads to a conclusion that when making a career choice, there needs to be alternative career options available to choose from, whereas an individual preference then indicates, which one of the career routes to choose.

Other people, such as family, partner, friends or professional networks, have a significant impact on people's careers and respectively on their career choice. Also luck and random choice play a role in defining people's careers, and many times career decisions are at least to some extent unintentional, as unplanned events happen and make people reconsider their life. For instance, accidentally meeting with an inspiring person or reading about an interesting career can unexpectedly change a person's direction and lead them on new, yet undiscovered paths. (Baruch 2004, 38.) Also, the changes that happen in the environment or in the person's values, attitudes and life situation may force them to modify their career objectives. This leads to the case where the career choice can be something else than what the person initially intended. Nevertheless, it is possible that even when the choice of career is planned to the best knowledge, the goals may still stay unreached. (Baruch 2004, 40.) Considering this, it is reasonable to say that regardless of the effort that one puts in trying to figure everything out and avoid unforeseeable events, every career decision involves risk (Inkson 2007, 120).

## 2.3.2 Holland's vocational personality theory

One very common model often used to define people's career choice is John Holland's vocational personality theory, the so-called RIASEC model (Holland 1985; Holland 1973; Baruch 2004, 44; Inkson 2007, 108). This model identifies people's occupational preferences, which helps them to estimate the fit between them and different career characteristics, and categorizes individuals and occupations into certain types: *Realistic*, *Investigative*, *Artistic*, *Social*, *Enterprising* and *Conventional*. According to this model, Realistic is considered as shy, stable and practical. Investigative is analytical and independent, while Social is usually sociable and cooperative. Conventional is practical and efficient, and Enterprising is ambitious and energetic. Artistic is seen to be imaginative and idealistic. (Baruch 2004, 44-45.) These six types are arranged in a form of a hexagon (see Figure 1), when some types are considered to be opposites while others are closer to each other. Thus, an individual scoring high on one dimension is also predicted to score relatively high on the adjacent types. Even though it is very rare, some individuals can still score high on opposite types as well. (Inkson 2007, 108-109; Holland 1985, 29.)
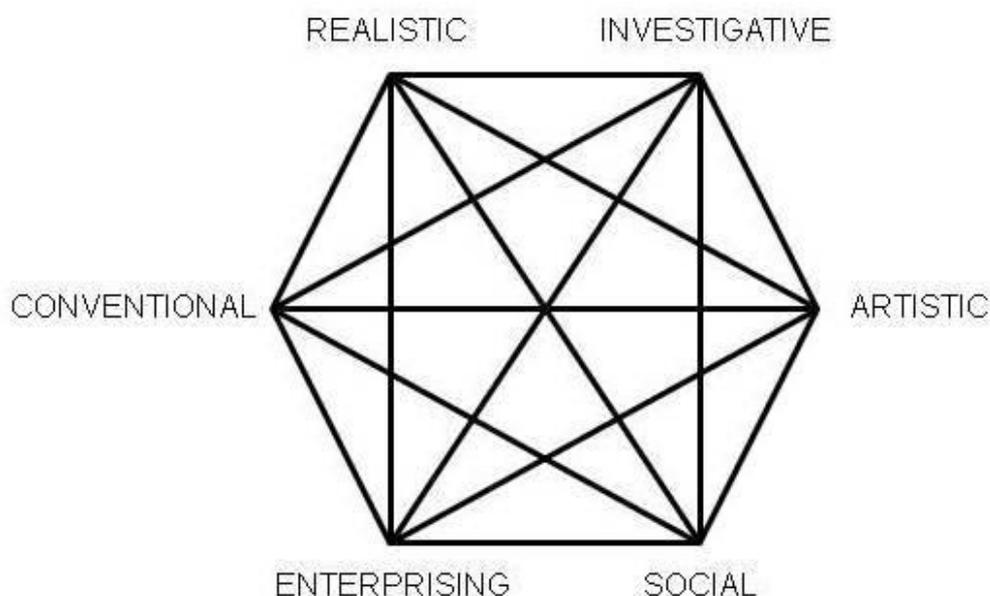


FIGURE 1 Holland's hexagonal model representing the six different personality types and their relations (Holland 1985, 29).

After the individual's correspondence with the types has been measured, the person receives as a result a combination of three letters. These letters indicate on which types he or she scored highest. For example, a letter combination AIE stands for Artistic, Investigative and Enterprising. When the right combination is found, it can be matched with different occupations. As an illustration, one suitable occupation for this AIE kind of a person would be an architect. It is good to remember that also the occupational matches with letter combinations

close to the scored one, such as IAE or ASI, could be considered when trying to figure out the best possible career choice. (Inkson 2007, 110-111.)

Even though the RIASEC gives some suggestive propositions about suitable careers, there are so many factors affecting people and their careers that the choice of a career should not be based solely on the results of this model. Nonetheless, the acquired result may serve to provide the individual with tools to deepen their understanding of themselves, and it can help them to become aware of the possible career opportunities that exist in the world of work. (Inkson 2007, 111-112.)

### 2.3.3 Schein's career anchor theory

Another widely used model to shed light on career choice is Edgar Schein's (1978) career anchor theory. Career anchors are patterns of "self-perceived talents, motives, and values", which can be used to "guide, constrain, stabilize, and integrate the person's career" (Schein 1978, 127). They are a set of forces driving the individual to make career choices and decision that best suit them. The name 'anchor' refers to the phenomenon that if a person is on a position which does not satisfy their inner aspirations, they are likely to revert or pull back into a situation that will better meet their needs. (Schein 1978, 125.)

As stated by Schein (1978, 125), career anchors can be divided into three components. First, an individual learns their talents and abilities based on their success in different work settings. Second, the understanding of motives and needs comes through the individual's self-diagnosis in real life situations and through the feedback gained from others. Third, the attitudes and values are based on the encounters between the individual and the hiring organization's norms and values.

Originally five different career anchors were distinguished. These are technical/functional competence, managerial competence, autonomy/independence, security-stability and entrepreneurial creativity. Later on three more anchors were added, which are service/dedication to a cause, pure challenge and lifestyle. (Inkson 2007, 113.) Baruch (2004, 79) suggests that on top of these established career anchors, the twenty-first century has brought its own challenges into the word of careers and thus new anchors should be added to the concept. As proposed by him, these modern career anchors would include employability, work-family balance and spiritual purpose.

When wanting to figure out one's career anchors, Schein (1978, 125) underlines the importance of actual experience. He further explains how the person's talents and abilities must be tested in real situations with meaningful outcomes in order to become an active part on one's self-concept. Consequently, career anchors are the result of interaction between the employing organization's work environment and the individual.

### 2.3.4 Personality theories

Career choice can also be viewed from the perspective of individual's personality. Personality theories assume that people behave in a somewhat consistent way and that these traits, such as extraversion or adaptability, are within us and they become visible in certain situations. This leads to the observation that they can influence in people's behavior including career decisions. (Inkson 2007, 115.) The leading current personality and work related approach is the Big Five framework. The framework measures people on five dimensions, which are neuroticism versus stability, extroversion versus introversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. It must be noted, though, that the surrounding culture plays a significant role in defining, which characteristics are deemed to be the most desirable. (Baruch 2004, 57.)

A similar kind of an assessment is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which measures people on four different dimensions. The dimensions are based on people's tendencies to process information and make decisions, and they are classified as introversion versus extraversion, sensing versus intuition, thinking versus feeling and judging versus perceiving. As a result, people can be categorized into 16 distinct personality types. (Inkson 2007, 115.) Even though the Big Five measurement is a more sophisticated tool than the MBTI, the latter can serve as a means for enhancing understanding of how personality works in shaping the career (Baruch 2004, 55). Moreover, this kind of personality inventories can provide people with increased self-awareness and insight, which will help them by indicating possible future directions as they strive to find the most suitable career for themselves (Baruch 2004, 58).

## 2.4  Narrative approach to understanding career choice

### 2.4.1 Social constructionism in this study

To better understand the significance and role of narratives in this study, I will start by explaining how social constructionism shapes the way of seeing careers. Collin (1998) states that the study of career has undergone some changes in recent times and the new ways of thinking consider a career not so much as a universal concept but more as a construct. Career is also understood to be rather a social construction and not only a social phenomenon (Collin 1998). Thus, it can be noted that nowadays social constructionism plays a bigger role in the study of career than before.

When career is being observed from the point of view of social constructionism, it means that the objectively interpreted social world and the individual's inner, subjective experience are both built together as an interactive, dynamic process (Ekonen 2007). From a social constructionist position, a career is seen as comprised by the individual in interaction with others while moving through time and space. Language is a core factor in these processes of creating,

negotiating and transforming meanings, since it simultaneously creates and reflects social realities. This makes language a crucial element of what makes us human. (Cohen, Duberley & Mallon 2004.)

As the assumption in this thesis is that the reality is socially constructed, it can be argued that people on one hand are active agents constructing their own narratives, but on the other hand they are restricted by the social and cultural world. This means that the narratives individuals tell inevitably make use of external narratives, which are discursively available to them. These external narratives are drawn from different 'personas' or social identities that we have learned to know for example through tales, film characters, books and newspapers. The personas then present us notions of who an individual might be and what this individual might be like. Hence, a storyteller has all the freedom to creatively use these discursive resources, but at the same time he or she is also limited by what is made available to them by the surrounding society with its history and culture. (Watson 2009.) This leads to the point that also people's conceptions of their leadership careers are always tied to their social reality including certain values, meanings and other structures. People are partly aware of these structures, but there are also elements they do not quite recognize. Since this is a narrative study based on social constructionism, it is central to understand this contextual engagement of knowledge. (Ekonen 2014.)

To examine career choice from the social constructionist perspective, this study is conducted by using narrative methodology so that the leaders' own voices can be heard and they are given the time and space to construct their own accounts of events leading to their career choice. That way a more profound understanding of their career choice can be attained. To better grasp the idea of narratives, I will next give a general explanation of narrative and then present some traditional story forms.

## 2.4.2 What is narrative and story?

Narratives are present everywhere in people's lives. Starting from when we are children we are told fairy tales, we hear stories, read books and watch movies and television. By using narratives we describe past events to ourselves and others and that way make sense of people's, including our own, behavior. (Polkinghorne 1988, 14.) Stories also have the potential to illuminate individuals' subjective experiences and their inner sense of reality as well as to elucidate the relationship between people and their cultural and social contexts (Cohen & Mallon 2001). In short, listening to and recalling stories help us understand the world around us (Lämsä & Sintonen 2006). People have narratives in their minds as well as surrounding them in the socially constructed realities of societies, and thus narratives and stories are an inseparable part of every person's life regardless of them being aware of it or not (Watson 2009).

'Narrative' and 'story' can be distinguished from each other and described differently, sometimes referring to a story as being less than a narrative, a so called 'antenarrative' (Boje 2001, 1), or vice versa, when a story is seen as a more developed form of a narrative (Watson 2009). However, in this thesis I will use

the terms 'narrative' and 'story' equivalently and concentrate on depicting a more general view of this multifaceted topic.

Narrative is one way to make meaning of situations (Polkinghorne 1988, 36). The broadest definition of the term can be connected to any presentation that is in a spoken or written form (Polkinghorne 1988, 13). Narratives and stories refer to symbolized accounts of events that are organized in a certain way which includes a temporal element (Watson 2009; Frost 2009; Polkinghorne 1988, 18). They have a beginning, middle and end (Riessman 2008, 4; Frost 2009), and there can also be distinguished a plot which is enacted by characters (Riessman 2008, 4). In addition to being chronological, narratives are also meaningful and social, since there is always a particular audience for whom the narrative is intended to (Elliott 2005, 4; Riessman 2008, 3). For example, in organizational life storytelling is an important element: stories can be used to exchange information with others, instruct people to act in the right way and express thoughts about future (Boje 2003).

Narratives and stories both entertain and edify, and in addition they shape societies and cultures through their functioning in the social construction of reality (Watson 2009). They are often moral tales, which do not copy the world exactly as it is, but are rather interpretive in their nature, acting more like mirrors of the world (Riessman 2008, 4). As narratives are so many-sided along with the emotional, sentient, imaginary, spiritual, temporal and spatial dimensions (Frost 2009), they could be considered as worthwhile ends in themselves (Watson 2009). Hence, as Inkson (2007, 228) eloquently expresses it, "a story may be worth the telling, both for itself and for the meaning we attach to it."

There are certain established forms that are traditionally used when creating and telling stories. Some similar kind of patterns have been found worldwide (Hiltunen 1999, 22), and the discovery that universal patterns can be found in narratives tells us something about the nature of the human mind and the universal features of culture (Martin 1986, 90). Maybe the first stories ever told were the ones that hunters in ancient societies told each other and their families while sitting around a fire and recovering from a tiring hunting trip. Those hunting stories told about danger, bravery, sense of duty and victory, and it can be assumed that they created almost a magical experience in the ones listening to them. (Hiltunen 1999, 25-26.)

One of the oldest story forms dates back to ancient Greece, when Aristotle in his dramaturgy distinguished tragedy and comedy (Heinonen, Kivimäki, Korhonen, Korhonen, Reitala & Aristoteles 2012, 186-187). Aristotle's famous book *Poetics* is considered to be the very first scientific analysis of storytelling, and it concentrates especially in explaining what a tragedy is. Contrary to how it is understood today, for Aristotle tragedy was not completely a sad story but it could also have a happy ending. Important things to remember are that a tragedy, or a good story in general, is a complete set of actions with beginning, middle and end. These three main parts of a story can also be interpreted as the hero's motive-intention-goal structure. (Hiltunen 1999, 29, 31, 54.)

In Aristotle's dramaturgy the plot is of primary importance and it should always be logical and meaningful. There needs to be a protagonist, a hero, who

is morally good and with whom other people can identify. After the peaceful "normal state" some conflict arises and the hero must act to restore the balance. The actions must be causal, meaning that all incidents follow each other in a logical way and are related to the task at hand. The plot should also include surprising turns, culmination of actions or "peripeteia" and a proper ending, which brings back the moral order. When the task has been completed, the action has reached its end and the protagonist feels either happy or sad. Finally a well built story leads to catharsis, basically meaning that it creates strong emotions and gratification in the audience. (Hiltunen 1999, 53-55.)

Campbell (1966) has found that a certain story pattern concerning a heroic tale repeats itself in many cultures around the world. The myth of a hero has something in common in almost every culture, and even though the story may look different depending on the culture and the way how it is expressed, on the background there can normally be found the same basic stages. This common structure is called the monomyth, and it is often also referred to as the hero's journey.

Campbell (1966) divides the monomyth into three consecutive parts: departure, initiation and return. Each of these parts includes particular stages. Departure consists of The call to adventure, Refusal of the call, Supernatural aid, The crossing of the first threshold and The belly of the whale. Then in Initiation part the journey continues with The road of trials, The meeting with the goddess, Woman as the temptress, Atonement with the father, Apotheosis and The ultimate boon. Finally it is time for Return, when comes Refusal of the return, The magic flight, Rescue from without, The crossing of the return threshold, Master of the two worlds and Freedom to live.

The monomyth is one way to depict a coherent plot pattern for a story. It has been very popular already in ancient times, but even today it inspires and resonates with people around the world. (Hiltunen 1999, 27.) To give an example, Disney's The Lion King, which was released in 1994, has many of the previously described stages present. And as we all know, it has been a huge success in many countries. Thus, this model of a heroic tale has not been invented by any single writer or storyteller, but it can rather be understood as a common idea that the mankind has about a good story (Hiltunen 1999, 28).

Of course, there are also other ways to describe common plot patterns that are found in narratives. One well known story form was presented by a Russian researcher Vladimir Propp, who after studying the structures of Russian folk tales discovered in them a common action pattern (Hiltunen 1999, 66). Also Booker (2004) identifies seven basic plots that can very often be found in stories, and they are called Overcoming the monster, Rags to riches, The quest, Voyage and return, Comedy, Tragedy and Rebirth. This clearly shows that indeed there exist some general characteristics around which narratives are built. The human imagination is in a way limitless, but at the same time certain frames guide the construction of narratives (Booker 2004, 17).

2.4.3 Narrative view to careers and career choice

In this thesis I attempt to comprehend individuals' understanding of their careers and career choice and how they explain them. Hence, it is imperative to pay attention to the ways in which people talk about their careers and respectively about their career choice (Cohen et al. 2004). When considering how or what someone talks, we come into the sphere of narratives.  As Cohen et al. (2004) argue, a narrative approach to careers is needed in order to gain a more holistic view of the subject. The generation of stories and other narrative accounts is a valuable and powerful instrument when studying careers, for it reveals how individuals make sense of their personal careers, whether considering the holistic nature of career or specific career transitions (Cohen et al. 2004; Cohen & Mallon 2001). Thus, narratives are a good way to study individuals' – in this case social enterprise leaders' – career choices, which are certain kind of career transitions in their life.

The classic conceptualization of career choice has usually been considered a process, where individual traits are matched with specific job requirements. Even though the trait-factor approach is still useful especially from a theoretical point of view, the narrative approach is different to this method as it takes into consideration the complexity of career behavior. Choosing a career is at least in part a creative process, because individuals have to develop their own unique ways to deal with various issues such as obstacles, unforeseen events and inner conflicts. This leads to the notion that the process of choosing a career is also somewhat unpredictable, and not always everything works out as planned. For instance, someone might lose their interest in the work regardless of the opportunities that it presents. These paradoxes that rise from the human behavior are probably more simply tackled by using a narrative approach to study careers. (Bujold 2004.)

When someone is talking about their career, they are actually telling a story about themselves (Inkson 2007, 227). Hence, when trying to understand the complexity of career choice, it is essential to take into consideration the individual's own account of the incidents leading to their choice of career and how they relate these experiences to their whole life. Failing to do so can be compared to seeing the last scene of a film without knowing what occurrences led to that particular point. (Cohen & Mallon 2001.) A narrative approach to careers and career choice presents the possibility to better discern how people have ended up where they are right now and how they make sense of their situation (Inkson 2007, 231). Also, according to Cohen and Mallon (2001), when the person's career narrative is being heard and examined in its entirety, it enables insights into individual sense-making. For this reason I have chosen to study social enterprise leaders' narratives in this thesis, since doing so offers a more complete picture of their career choice processes.

As career narratives focus on individuals' subjective side of life, they involve emotions and are often also indecisive (Cohen & Mallon 2001). Inkson (2007, 231) agrees by mentioning that a career story is always personal since, in addition to the objective facts, it includes the person's subjective emotions and

attitudes as well as their particular career goals. Therefore, by studying career stories the researcher can understand the individual better and build a multifaceted picture of the chosen career phenomena (Cohen & Mallon 2001), which in this case is the career choice.

Cohen and Mallon (2001) distinguish four key benefits that result from using stories in career research, naturally including also the study of career choice. To begin with, stories are chronicle events and thus they establish sequence. When the form of the story is being examined, it can be noticed how people weave together certain moments from their past to be able to explain why particular events have happened. Therefore, analyzing narratives can be one possible way to shed light on the underlying reasons behind leaders' career choice. The second benefit is that when individuals create narratives, they reveal a great deal of ambiguities and inconsistencies of their career experiences, and these aspects are not often examined thoroughly in more "scientific" approaches. Hence, investigating narratives offers a great way to gain more insights about these factors. Thirdly, narratives reveal that people use retrospective sense-making when telling their stories. In this process individuals gaze backwards in time and give past events meaning that makes sense with the present (see also Inkson 2007, 231). It is not surprising, though, that individuals often apply hindsight to their stories about their lives and past occurrences are easily seen in light of the present. The fourth benefit that links all the aforementioned three features together is that narratives make it possible to see how people understand their relationship to the prominent aspects of social structure. Thus, as Cohen and Mallon (2001, 56) describe it, "story-based career research allows for a rounded, deep, and multifaceted exploration of career that recognizes its dynamic, evolving, and often ambiguous, even contradictory, character." This versatile approach is much needed also when studying and trying to comprehend career choice, a fraction of the vast sphere or career studies.

Finally, it can be argued that one ultimate truth about people's individual careers or career choice cannot be found, but instead they must be understood as personal stories, which all have their own validity (Inkson 2007, 225). Nonetheless, these stories should be told and also listened, since career storytelling for the most part is good for the teller as it is for the listener as well (Inkson 2007, 228).

### 2.4.4 Narrative identity

Narratives and storytelling also have to do with individuals' identity construction, since as Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) express, stories are important building blocks in people's identity construction process. In keeping with this idea, Stokoe and Edwards (2006) describe that people's lives are experienced and made meaningful through storytelling, which is also how their identities are constructed. Bruner (1994, 53) further elaborates that actually narratives could be considered the actual identities, since "we become who we are through telling stories about our lives and living the stories we tell".

Identity construction is also self-reflection, as the individual produces a story that gives an account of past experiences and their meaning to that particular person (Jones, Latham & Betta 2008). In order to understand this process better, one must be aware of how narratives are constructed from experiences, how these stories are then told both internally and to others, and also how individuals finally apply the generated stories to their knowledge of self, other and the surrounding world (Singer 2004). Having this kind of a personal notion of who one is, is important in order to be a competent actor in the society (Watson 2009).

When an individual is entering a new organization for example due to their choice of a certain career, they need to engage in identity work. This is when people make use of narratives and in a way "story" their career transition in order to create a sense of continuity between their past selves and the selves they are becoming. (Ibarra & Barbulescu 2010.) Especially during this kind of career changes, identity dynamics become very complex, and hence examining narrative identity opens insights into the ambiguous and even contradictory experiences of individuals (Hoyer & Steyaert 2015).

Narrative identity can be described as an individual's internalized and evolving life story, which "reconstructs the autobiographical past and imagines the future in such a way as to provide a person's life with some degree of unity, purpose, and meaning" (McAdams & McLean 2013, 233). This means that the personal life stories, or as Watson (2009) defines it, "personal myths", combine memories from the past and goals that are envisioned for the future, thus creating a consistent account of identity. Through narrative identity individuals are able to communicate to themselves as well as to others who they are and who they are going to be in the future. (McAdams & McLean 2013.)

According to Adler, Lodi-Smith, Philippe and Houle (2016), narrative identity is a unique aspect of personality, which is fundamental for understanding the individual. Narrative identity is also very much contextualized in culture, and the building of it starts already in childhood. This is when individuals start to develop story forms that would best capture their personal experiences. (McAdams & McLean 2013.) Through the generation of those stories people can express their selfhood, which means that narratives shape identity. However, it must be noted that a narrative does not determine identity, but it rather mediates the configuration of identity. For this reason identities can be perceived as multiple, ambiguous or even contradictory at the same time. (Hamilton 2014.)

## 2.5    Summary of the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis twines around four principal sections. First of all, this study focuses on social enterprises, and to begin the journey into the world of social enterprises, I started by describing how social enterprises have emerged in the first place. Because there exists a wide variety of definitions concerning these special types of organizations, I tried to open up some of

these definitions. By doing so, I aimed to create a broader view of the manifold nature of social enterprises. As I do not examine just whatever phenomenon in social enterprises, the theoretical perspective I have chosen to take on this study is leadership. Leadership itself is a vast area of research, and for that reason I have here concentrated only on a small section of it and combined it with the theory of social enterprises, thus investigating exclusively leadership in social enterprises.

There exists a lot of literature about careers, which is the third section I have focused on in the theoretical framework. I went through the development of career research and how the notion of career has evolved over time. I also exhibited new career models that have lately risen into the theoretical discussion. Focusing the scope even more to acquire relevant information concerning my research topic, I concentrated on career choice theories. Along with general previous research about career choice, I introduced Holland's vocational personality theory, Schein's career anchor theory and two of the most well known personality theories, the Big Five and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

The final theoretical perspective I have taken on this study is narrative approach. Narrative approach to careers and career choice binds together all the three previously mentioned sections by directing the attention to the storytelling of social enterprise leaders. The career stories that are constructed in a mutual interplay of the researcher and each leader reflect the social realities around us and can open up interesting viewpoints into the leaders' sense-making. Using this kind of theoretical framework presents the possibility to contemplate social enterprise leaders' career choice narratives, which is the main theoretical focus in this thesis. Below in Figure 2 I have displayed the synthesis of the theoretical framework. The picture illustrates how the different theoretical domains overlap, placing the main focus in the centre.
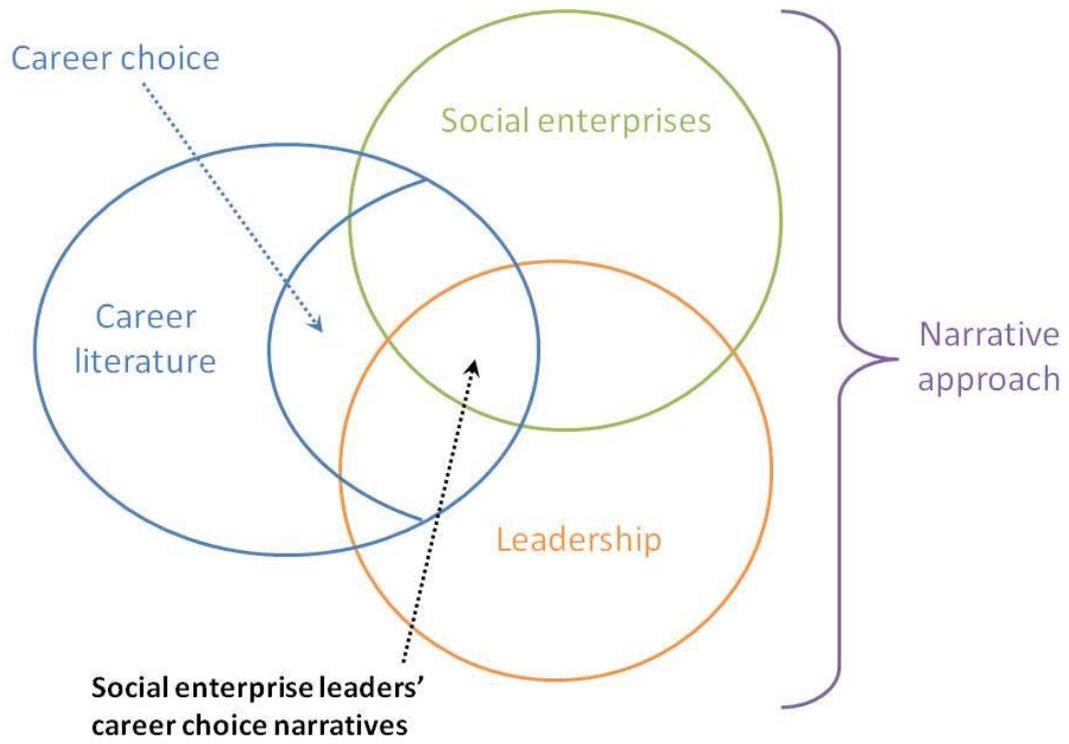
FIGURE 2 Synthesis of the theoretical framework and the main focus of the study.

# 3 CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

## 3.1 Qualitative research

This study has been realized using qualitative methods. Qualitative research focuses on depicting life in a comprehensive way since the reality is seen as comprising of manifold components (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2010, 161). It is more concerned with words than numbers, and usually theory is generated out of research. Typically qualitative research focuses on examining participants' interpretation of the social world, and by doing so the emphasis is on understanding that world. (Bryman & Bell, 2007, 402.) Thus, the goal is rather to reveal unexpected aspects and examine the data in a detailed manner than verify existing theories (Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 164). It is characteristic for qualitative research to generate detailed information about a considerably smaller amount of people and situations when compared to quantitative methods. The downside of this is that it reduces the generalizability of the results, but on the other hand it provides a much deeper and more detailed understanding of the phenomenon at hand. (Patton 2002, 14.) In order to gain a more profound understanding of social enterprise leaders' career choice, I have decided to use qualitative approach in this thesis.

The conducting of qualitative research is flexible and the plans may change in relation to how things proceed. Every case is considered unique and the data is being analyzed accordingly, paying attention to the originality of each case. In qualitative research the data is gathered in real, natural situations, and when doing this, normally the researcher trusts more his or her own observations or discussions with the research subjects than relies solely on measurement tests. What is considered important is not determined by the researcher, but attention is paid to the voice and viewpoint of the subjects. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 164.) Analogous to this, in this thesis I have formed certain career choice story types based on the interviewees' perceptions of their career choice. These story types have not been determined beforehand but they have been constructed out of the told narratives.

According to Bryman and Bell (2007, 405-407), there are certain main steps in qualitative research process. Normally the process starts by forming general research questions. After that one must select relevant sites and subjects for the research and conduct data gathering. The data is then interpreted which is followed by conceptual and theoretical work. While doing this, the research questions can be specified even more and further gathering of data may be required. The final step is then to document findings and conclusions.

In Figure 3 I have roughly presented the research process of this study. I started by forming general research questions, which guided my approach to the topic and helped me to narrow down my focus. I selected the scope within which I wanted to find the interviewees for my study and made sure I had access on them. Then I continued by defining central concepts and writing theoretical background for my thesis. As I proceeded with the theoretical part and learned more about my research topic, it helped me to further specify the research questions I had formed in the beginning. This in turn made it easier to expand on the theoretical part, as I understood my exact focus better. The next step was to select the interviewees, and after agreeing with them about when and where to conduct the interviews, I started with the production of data. When all the interviews were conducted and I had transcribed them, I began with the interpretation process. Of course, some of the interpretation happened already in the data production and transcription phases, since it is very hard to say exactly when one ends and the other begins (Riessman 2008, 26). Nevertheless, as in this thesis the theories have been used as resources for interpretation, I had to go back to the theory part and revise it many times while interpreting the data. This helped me with the interpretation process and at the same time I was able to edit the theory, so this became like a self-reinforcing cycle. Finally I was able to draw a conclusion of the topic.

Qualitative methods are suitable for a study that places importance on the meaning structures of people who have participated in certain events, or when particular cause and effect relations, which cannot be studied using an experiment, need to be examined. Also, with qualitative methods it is possible to investigate natural situations in which all the factors affecting the situation cannot be controlled. (Metsämuuronen 2005, 203.) Naturally, it is impossible to control all the factors that might have affected social enterprise leaders' career choice. Also, the leaders' meaning structures play an important role when examining their career choice narratives. Taking all this into consideration, qualitative study is a reasonable approach for this thesis.

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  1. General research questions │
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│  2. Selecting relevant subjects │
│      in a general level        │
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│  3. Definition of central     │◄────►│  3a. Specifying the research  │
│  concepts and theoretical work │      │         questions            │
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│  4. Selecting the interviewees │
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│  5. Production of data         │
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│  6. Interpretation of data     │◄────►│  6a. Editing theory          │
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│  7. Documenting findings and   │
│         conclusion             │
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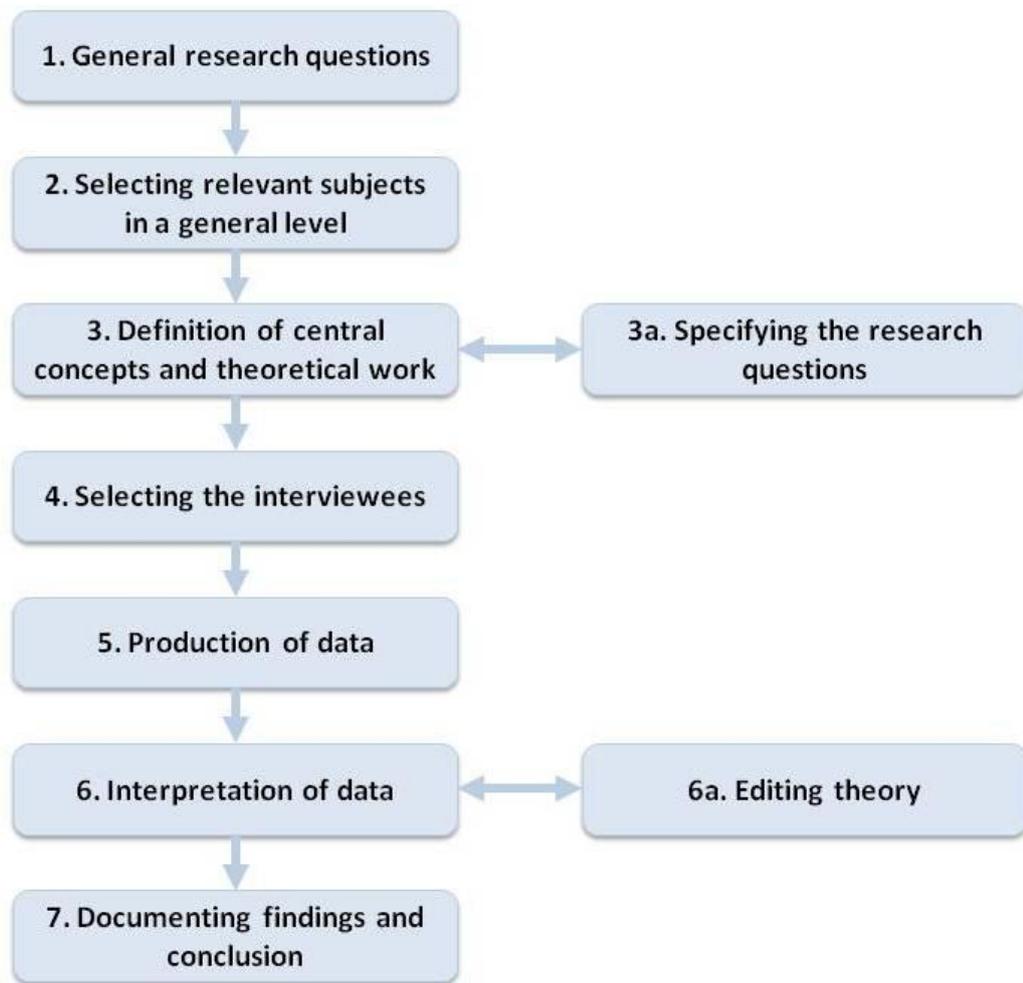
FIGURE 3 Qualitative research process of this thesis (modified from Bryman & Bell 2007, 406).

## 3.2 Producing narrative data

When doing narrative research, the data can be obtained in many ways. It can be oral, written or visual, and for example it can be acquired by using diaries, letters, government reports, historical documents, autobiographies, audio or video recordings, photographs or other such documents or images. Also, different forms of art, such as role play, can be used in the data production process. Still, the most common way to acquire narrative data is by conducting interviews, as I have done in this thesis. (Riessman 2008, 22-23, 26.) More precisely, when doing a narrative research, these are usually referred to as narrative interviews (Ekonen 2014).

Simply put, an interview is a dialogic situation where the interviewer asks a question to which the interviewee answers (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 86). However, when talking about a narrative interview in particular, the scenario

changes as the interviewee and the interviewer are rather seen as two active participants who together construct meaning and create narrative. It can thus be argued that the interviewer also has a role in constituting the career stories, as they unfold in a conversational exchange. (Riesmann 2008, 23, 58.)

In narrative interviewing the aim is to produce detailed accounts instead of only brief or general answers. For this reason the researcher must establish a climate that allows for storytelling to happen. To do this the researcher must give up control, which can cause anxiety when everything is not going as planned. Nevertheless, it is important to do so, since it fosters greater equality – yet also uncertainty – in the situation, and hence encourages the interviewee to speak in a way that he or she feels comfortable with. When listening to the interviewee's telling, it is important to pay attention to specific incidents and turning points, because that helps to better understand their experience as a whole. (Riesmann 2008, 23-24.) The facts are seen more as experiences instead of pure information, and the emphasis is placed on the interviewee's sense-making, interpretation of the events and the emotional response to them. Hence, the interviewee's story about a certain career move cannot be generalized in an objective way, but instead it will enhance understanding of how that person makes sense of the incident from their subjective point of view. (Cohen & Mallon 2001.)

When conducting narrative interviews, the interviewer must acknowledge that the questions need to be extensive enough in order to orientate the interviewee into storytelling (Ekonen 2014). There is a difference, if the interviewee is asked "When did you choose your career?" or "Tell me about choosing your career." Answering the first question would require only a short piece of information, whereas the second question invites the interviewee to present a more extended account of events. (Riessman 1993, 54.) Even though it is easier for open-ended questions to provide narrative accounts, storytelling in an interview situation may occur regardless of the form of the question. As follows, the interviewer's emotional attentiveness and engagement are more important than the specific words that are used in a question. (Riessman 2008, 24.)

The simplest way to categorize different types of interviews is by looking at how fixed the questions are and how much the interviewer acts as a moderator in the interview situation. There are four basic categories, which are structured, semi-structured, thematic and unstructured interview. Structured interview has fixed questions and lacks flexibility, whereas unstructured interview is quite the opposite of it, resembling a normal conversation. (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 87; Bryman & Bell 2007, 474; Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 208-209.) Sometimes a semi-structured and a thematic interview are referred to as the same and it may be difficult to draw a clear line between them (Metsämuuronen 2005, 226). In any case, they are both situated between structured and unstructured interviews (Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 208-209).

Different types of interviews generate different kind of information, so it is important to properly consider the best suitable interview method for the research. In this thesis the narrative data was produced using thematic interviews, which gave the interviewees extensive possibilities to freely express their

thoughts and to communicate their own interpretations of events leading to their career choice. Moreover, the interviewees were able to narrate more broadly about their careers and their responses were not tied to certain questions or frames. In keeping with this, the interviewees were understood as subjects, who create meanings and are active participants. Taking all this into consideration, a thematic interview is a good method to acquire data about career choice. (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 89; Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 205.)

In a thematic interview, the main topics have been determined beforehand and all the respective areas are covered during the interview (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 87). For this study I formed five main themes, and I used some questions under each topic to help the interviewees to elaborate their career story under those themes. However, there was not a fixed wording of questions or a specified order in which the questions were asked (Bryman & Bell 2007, 474), and depending on the interviewee's narration, not all the questions were necessarily asked but they served more as a support in the interview situation (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 87). Additional questions such as "Can you tell me more about it?" or "What happened after that?" are an integral part of narrative interviewing (Gubrium & Holstein 2002, 18), and they serve to clarify answers or deepen the information obtained (Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 205). Accordingly, as the interviewees were telling their career stories, I sometimes asked them further questions that followed up their replies to get deeper insights into their stories (Bryman & Bell 2007, 474).

Before selecting the actual interviewees, five Finnish social enterprises were chosen for this study. In order to get a diverse view about the topic, attention was paid on selecting enterprises from various fields of business. Some of the enterprises have only recently been founded, while others have been operating already for decades, and they also vary in size from one to almost 700 employees. There were two criteria behind the selection of the social enterprises. First, they needed to fulfill the main characteristics of a social enterprise: having a social mission and using a considerable amount (at least 50%) of their generated profit to promote that mission. Second, the enterprises had to operate for-profit and be successful in their business operations. The chosen social enterprises are not mentioned here by name in order to maintain their anonymity. Eventually, ten interviewees altogether from these enterprises were chosen based on the fact that they work in a leadership position. In addition, the interviewed leaders all form part of the executive group of their respective enterprises. The aim was therefore not to compare career stories of leaders from different organizational levels and try to find out how their stories differ or coincide with each other. Instead, the focus was on gaining a broader understanding of social enterprise leaders' career choice narratives in general and discerning specific factors that the leaders describe as significant for their career choice.

This thesis has been realized as a part of the research initiative *Ethics and innovativeness in social enterprises*. Hence, the interviewees for this thesis were found and contacted through the initiative. As it is of main importance to gain trust in an interview situation (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 94), I found it very valuable to have this kind of support for my thesis. An interview should always be

voluntary (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 93), and thus I started the interview process by asking for permission to conduct the interviews. The initial contact was made either by email or by phone, and when all of the leaders had agreed, I arranged a personal meeting with each of them. Some of the interviews were held in a quiet, separate room, whereas some of them were conducted in a tranquil corner of a cafeteria. I recorded the interviews, and a permission to do so was asked from each interviewee in the beginning. The interviewees were encouraged to tell their own career stories, which were then analyzed and interpreted based on previous career research. All of the interviews were conducted during March 2016.

Six of the interviewed leaders were female and four men. Their ages varied between 37 and 55 years, the average age being 47 years. They all had a spouse and from two to four children. Approximately the leaders' average work experience after studies in a traditional company was 22 years, whereas in a social enterprise it was 8 years and a half. Their experience in a leadership position in a traditional company was on average almost 6 years, while in a social enterprise their average leadership experience time was a bit over 5 years. The interviews lasted on average around 57 minutes. The range was from 31 minutes to one hour 17 minutes. Afterwards I transcribed all the interviews, and the total amount of transcribed text was 139 pages (font size 12, line spacing 1). In Chart 2 is shown a more detailed presentation of the interviewees. The names of the interviewees are changed to keep them anonymous.

The themes that I formed for this interview are *Childhood*, *Studies*, *Earlier jobs*, *Choosing a career in a social enterprise* and *Future prospects.* As a chronological order of events is an elemental part of narratives, these themes are in a temporal order to naturally guide the interviewees to tell their career stories from the beginning to this moment and also to contemplate on their future. The first theme focused on their childhood, and I asked them to think about what were the things that they were interested in as children and if they got any support for those interests. The second theme concentrated on the interviewees' studies, and among other things I was interested in hearing why they choose their fields of study, what did and did not motivate them in their studies and what were their aspirations concerning their future careers.

The third theme was about the jobs that the interviewees had had earlier. I asked them to tell about their previous working experiences and the reasons behind the changes in their career, their experience in a leading position, the importance and meaning of family for their career choice and factors that had advanced or hindered their career development. In the fourth theme I focused on the actual career choice in a social enterprise. The questions I asked concentrated on the interviewees' present career, why they had chosen that position, what motivates them to work in a social enterprise and what has affected their career decision. I also asked about values and their meaning for the interviewees, as well as about the meaning of values for their career choice. Moreover, this theme included some additional questions concerning the interviewees' leadership. The last theme was about the future, and the questions dealt with the leaders' aspirations about the future of their careers and the goals they have

for their careers. Finally, I asked them to add anything to the interview they felt like telling more about.

| "Name" | Age (years) | Experience as a leader in a traditional company | Experience as a leader in a social enterprise | Social enterprise's field of business | Duration of the interview | Pages of transcribed text |
|--------|-------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jaakko | 38 | 5 years | 4 years | home rental | 1h 16min | 17 |
| Liisa | 37 | 0 years | 6 years | home rental | 1h 5min | 15 |
| Heidi | 47 | 14 years 6 months | 1 year 6 months | social and health care | 57min | 15 |
| Kati | 40 | 2 years | 1 year 6 months | home rental | 52min | 14 |
| Tommi | 55 | 0 years | 20 years | home rental | 31min | 10 |
| Markus | 54 | 15 years | 3 years | recycling | 50min | 12 |
| Petri | 45 | 5 years | 5 years | recycling | 1h 5min | 15 |
| Johanna | 50 | 0 years | 2 years 2 months | home rental | 55min | 14 |
| Elisa | 53 | 4 years | 7 years | social and health care | 1h 17min | 15 |
| Leena | 53 | 13 years | 3 years | social and health care | 46min | 12 |

CHART 2 Presenting the interviewees.

It must be noted that when gathering qualitative data by interviewing, the researcher and the interviewees operate constantly in interaction. Therefore, also the researcher participates in the production of the interviews with his or her own subjective experiences. This, however, does not happen arbitrarily so that the results of the study would be determined beforehand by the researcher, but it simply means that the researcher understands the interviewees from his or her own subjective premises. The researcher should thus acknowledge the bias that this may cause and attempt to minimize it. (Syrjälä, Ahonen, Syrjäläinen & Saari 1994, 14.) Moreover, in an interview setting, when the interviewee is telling their story, they are actually only imitating the "real" experience they have had by talking about it. Consequently, the researcher does not have a direct access to knowledge about the event and thus he or she must be very conscious and critical about how he or she as the interpreter constitutes the narrative text, considering that it is also the researcher who must later analyze the produced

narrative. (Riessman 2008, 22.) I will discuss more the reliability of this thesis in chapter 3.4, and next I will concentrate on depicting the analysis process.

## 3.3    Narrative analysis

In a narrative research, analysis is hard to distinguish from transcription (Riessman 1993, 60). Even though I acknowledge that the interpretative process begins already during the interviews, as possible themes and patterns from the data come to mind (Riessman 2008, 26; Patton 2002, 436), here I have separated the production of data from the analysis part in order to create a more clear structure for this thesis. So, because oral data needs to be transformed into a textual form (Riessman 2008, 23), after having completed the interviews I began transcribing them. Transcription is an important part of the analysis, since it allows the researcher to repeatedly examine the interviewees' answers and correct the intuitive interpretations that might have been placed on the speech. In addition to helping the researcher remember what exactly has been said, it also makes a more thorough examination of the narratives possible. (Bryman & Bell 2007, 489.)

One important thing that must be acknowledged is that as this thesis focuses on Finnish social enterprise leaders, the interviews were naturally conducted in Finnish. Using their own primary language helped the interviewees communicate more effectively, for they were not required to speak in a language they may not feel so familiar with (Bryman & Bell 2007, 496). I have translated the speech that is quoted from the interviews and entered into the written report into English. Nevertheless, it is good to bear in mind that translating from one language into another may cause some distortion of the data, considering that words have slightly different meanings in different languages (Bryman & Bell 2007, 496; Riessman 2008, 42). In order to minimize this bias, I have presented the original Finnish versions of the quotes together with the English translations.

Narrative data can be analyzed using various methods. Riessman (2008) introduces four different approaches to narrative inquiry, which are thematic analysis, structural analysis, dialogic or performance analysis and visual analysis. The thematic narrative analysis is the most often used method in narrative research, and also in this study the constructed career stories have been analyzed using thematic narrative analysis. This kind of analysis concentrates on finding out "what" has been said (or written) instead of "how" things have been spoken, and thus the content of the text is what matters most. Structural analysis places focus on "how" a story is told, when dialogic or performance analysis studies the way in which talk is interactively produced and performed by speakers in the form of narratives. Visual analysis examines images as the data that needs to be interpreted, together with the words generated by the image-maker. (Riessman 2008, 19.)

A thematic approach to narrative analysis is many times believed to be intuitive and straightforward, yet it can be very methodical and painstaking (Riessman 2008, 73). Naturally, for narrative analysis all content is relevant, but in thematic analysis the sole focus is on content alone. In keeping with this approach, this study concentrates on "what" social enterprise leaders tell about their careers and career choice and it does not pay much attention on "how" details have been told, "to whom" the interviewees are speaking or "for what purposes" they are telling their story. Also the structure of the text and the context in which the narrative is generated are not in the focus of this analysis, even though these elements do exist in the data. Thematic analysis can be used for a wide range of narrative texts, and it is well suitable for analyzing stories that have developed in interview conversations. (Riessman 2008, 53-54.) This makes it a good method to be applied to the conducted interviews.

In this thesis the data are analyzed and interpreted using themes that I as the investigator have formed, and as Riessman (2008, 54) explains, among other factors they are influenced by prior theory, the purpose of the investigation and the data themselves. Thus, the theories that were presented before have been used as resources for interpretation (Riessman 2008, 73). A theme in this analysis refers to a certain feature that appears repeatedly in the data (Ekonen 2014). The used quotes are somewhat long in order to present sufficient narrative evidence for my interpretations. They are to some extent "cleaned up", meaning that the extra dysfluencies, break-offs, interviewer's comments and other such features have been erased. Because emphasis is placed on the content of speech, spoken language has been slightly polished in order to make it easier to read. This can be done since thematic analysis is not usually interested in language, form or interaction, even though particular word choices can be attended occasionally. (Riessman 2008, 57-59.)

I started to familiarize myself with the produced narratives by listening to the recorded interviews and reading through the transcribed data. Already as I was listening to the leaders' telling, I noticed some similarities and common features in their narration. In the transcripts I made a few notes about the things that had caught my attention and seemed to be important. Then I started to reorganize the text by putting the narratives under the themes that I had formed for the interviewing. I scrutinized the transcripts and also listened to the recordings so many times that I felt I had become familiar with them, and then I was able to see clearer the focus of my analysis, as I started to better realize certain patterns and similarities in the career narratives (Riessman 1993, 57).

After that I jotted down new themes that I constructed from the data and again started reorganizing the data to fit under these themes. I used color coding to highlight certain kinds of narratives, which helped me with the organization and interpretation process. Finally, I was able to generate three different types of social enterprise leaders' career choice stories from the data. The main story types are 1) *Career choice as a drift*, 2) *Career choice as a mission pursuit*, and 3) *Career choice as an aim for professional development*. I also distinguished different factors the leaders told to be significant for their career choice. In addition, while reading over and over the leaders' stories, I started to discern certain nar-

ratives of identity construction in their telling. By combining aspects from the social enterprise leaders' narration and following the three already constructed story types, I was able to form three different social enterprise leader identities: *the Drifter*, *the Advocate* and *the Adventurer*.

To guide me in the production of career choice story types, I used the idea of Gergen and Gergen (1988; 1986). According to them, there exist three proto-typical narrative forms: progressive narrative, regressive narrative and stability narrative. In progressive narrative one steadily progresses toward a valued state or goal, while in regressive narrative the opposite happens and one is moving away from the desired outcome. In stability narrative one remains mostly unchanged regarding the valued state of being. These three narrative forms are considered to be the only basic options how a narrative can develop in an evaluative space. (Gergen & Gergen 1986.)

The progressive, regressive and stability narrative are considered rudimentary bases for more complex variations. Theoretically, there are an infinite number of different possible variations, but culture normally limits the possibilities to a smaller set. Common narrative forms that are part of this set are tragedy, comedy, "happily-ever-after" and romantic saga. Tragedy depicts a narrative of a rapid downfall from a higher position. There an initially progressive narrative is quickly followed by a regressive narrative. Comedy instead is quite the opposite of tragedy, since there a regressive narrative turns into a progressive one. Comedy describes a story where events first become harder and harder but finally happiness is restored. "Happily-ever-after" depicts the myth where a progressive narrative is followed by a stability narrative: things keep getting better till they finally reach the ultimate "happy state" where they remain. Romantic saga is recognized as a series of progressive and regressive phases. It represents a story where one battle is continuously followed by another. (Gergen & Gergen 1988.)

When I analyzed the data for this thesis, the narrative forms described by Gergen & Gergen (1988; 1986) served as a frame that helped me to better piece together the leaders' career choice stories. I was able to connect the structure of each story type with a corresponding narrative form, thus building more coherence for the constructed stories. The interviewed social enterprise leaders are not classified according to the story types, but instead every leader told narratives belonging to all three different types, some emphasizing one story type in their narration and some highlighting the other. Hence, it can be said that the complete career stories of the leaders are somewhat incoherent in nature and they cannot be demonstrated under only one career choice story type. As a consequence, every leader's narration has to a certain extent helped to construct all of these story types. In the results section I have presented the findings following the narrative forms depicted above.

## 3.4 Ethics and trustworthiness of the study

When doing a qualitative research, it is not possible to attain objectivity in the traditional way. This is due to the fact that the researcher with their own knowledge inevitably influences in what is known of a particular matter. Consequently, the results are only conditional explanations, which are limited into a certain place and time. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 161.) Like Cohen et al. (2004) emphasize, as a researcher I need to maintain a critical stance and be aware of the frames of meaning that I myself convey to the research process, recognizing that the assumptions I have made are only versions of reality. Therefore, my interpretations might reflect, compete or even collide with the interviewees' versions, and thus this interpretation is not an all-encompassing answer but rather one possible construction of the career narratives.

Another factor that affects the research is the researcher's personality and subjective values, which guide their choices about what they investigate and how they understand the examined phenomena. The researcher cannot put these assumptions aside while doing the research but they are constantly present. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 161; Syrjälä et al. 1994, 15.) Also the things that are going on in the researcher's life can possibly be a distraction (Patton 2002, 14). Hence, I acknowledge that my own values and assumptions, regardless of being conscious of them or not, have partly affected the way how I have approached this research topic.

Because I as the researcher have been acting as the research instrument (Patton 2002, 14; Eskola & Suoranta 2014, 211) and thus I have been at least partly producing each phase of this study – initial approach, interviewing, transcription, analysis and interpretation – I understand that my own views and conceptions have guided the process framing it in a certain way (Riessman 2008, 50). To increase the reliability of this study, I have described the research process in a detailed manner. I have also provided examples of the data by inserting quotes of the interviewees' speech in the results section. This makes it easier for the reader to make their own evaluation of the research process in general, as well as of the interpretations that I have made. (Syrjälä et al. 1994, 131.)

I have tried to eliminate any bias that my own expectations or values might cause to the research by listening carefully to the social enterprise leaders' telling and focusing on what they seem to consider important. I have not tried to prompt them to tell what I want to hear, but they have had the freedom to express their thoughts and feelings in a way that feels natural to them. If I had the expression that something was important for the interviewee and they wanted to share more about a particular issue, I did not try to change the topic but instead I followed their lead and let them tell everything they felt like sharing about the matter.

In order for this thesis to be ethically accepted and reliable, I have followed the guidelines of good scientific practice (TENK 2016). Special attention is paid to protecting the privacy of the interviewees, and hence they were all

asked for permission to interview them concerning their career choice. Natural-ly, also the report is written in a way that both the interviewees and the social enterprises they represent will stay anonymous.

# 4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

## 4.1 Career choice as a drift

Many of the social enterprise leaders narrated their career choice at least partly as a drift. This story type is characterized by several narratives about luck and coincidence. Other features that often appeared in the leaders' storytelling were the meaning of networks and relationships and how family has played a significant role in the career choice process. As one interviewee put it,

> I'm still confused by the word career choice because I somehow think that I didn't kind of… (Liisa)

> Mua edelleen hämmentää toi uravalinta, ku mä jotenki ajattelen, et mä en niinku… (Liisa)

This shows that career choice as a drift is not necessarily considered an actual choice at all. This story type begins as a regressive narrative that after a certain turning point is followed by a progressive narrative. Thus, it corresponds with the narrative form of comedy described by Gergen & Gergen (1988) (Graph 1).

The constructed story of career choice as a drift starts by describing a moment when everything was still good. The interviewees often referred to this as studies or having a job in a company. Also Jaakko was satisfied and did not worry too much while he was still studying.

> For as long as I studied I didn't really mind what I was doing, just that I would get some money and I would do something related to my field. (Jaakko)

> Niin kauan kun opiskelin, niin ei ollu niin väliä, et mitä tekee, että kuhan nyt tulee rahaa ja tää on niin kun vähän alan hommia. (Jaakko)

After this positive beginning the interviewees started to narrate events that turned the narrative into a regressive form, since things were not going so well anymore. For example, graduating from his studies was a point of confusion for Jaakko, as he did not know what to do next.

> Actually I stayed in that construction site until my own graduation began to loom. And then I kind of had this crisis that now I have to think for real. (Jaakko)

> Oikeestaan olin siellä työmaalla siihen saakka, kunnes sitten tää oma valmistuminen rupes häämöttään. Ja sit mulle ehkä tuli sellanen kriisi tavallaan siihen, et nyt pitää oikeesti miettiä. (Jaakko)

Liisa also graduated and until then everything had been alright, but then she could not find a job that would have matched with her previous studies.

> Well, maybe for me it didn't go so that after graduating I would have gone to a job that corresponded with my studies… (Liisa)

> No kun mul ei oo ehkä menny silleen, et mä olisin sitten opintojen jälkeen menny niinku opintoja vastaavaan työhön. (Liisa)

Because the right career path had not been found yet, the interviewees were disoriented and thus the narrative form keeps going downwards. Jaakko explained how after thinking a lot about what to do in life he realized that he did not want to work in the same job anymore. This is the last step before the actual turning point in the story.

> Well I do remember the phone conversations with him, when I was pondering over what I wanted to do. And then I spoke out to him that now I don't want to be on the construction site any longer. (Jaakko)

> No kyllä mä muistan puhelinkeskustelut hänen kanssaan just siitä, kun mä itse pohdin sitä, et mitä mä haluun tehä. Ja sit sanoin hänelle suoraan, et nyt mä en haluu olla työmaalla pidempään. (Jaakko)

The lowest point of the story is when several adversities hit the interviewees. For Jaakko there was no more work available, which made him feel angry and frustrated. Kati wanted to move on in her life, build a house and start a family, and for that she needed a permanent job. By accident this made her to change profession. Johanna felt that the job was too burdensome for her to keep on pursuing that career, since it often included testifying in court and even being threatened by outsiders. She also started having severe health problems because of exposure to mold in the building where she was working, so she could no longer work in that particular place but had to look for other options.

> There was mold inside the walls and in my office, and I started to show symptoms and then I started to get sick leaves. So that was also the impulse that I really need to get out. (Johanna)

> Seinien sisällä oli hometta ja mun työhuoneessa, ja mä rupesin oireileen niille ja sit mulle rupes tuleen sairaslomia. Niin se oli kanssa se kimmoke, et mun on pakko päästä pois. (Johanna)

After this turning point the career choice story changes into a progressive narrative, as the interviewees start drifting towards an agreeable direction in their career. Kati happened to get a permanent job, and the changing of profession led her to a pleasing career path.

>   Then I got a permanent job, and that's how the path of housing began in my own career development. (Kati)
>
>   Sillon mä sain vakituisen työsuhteen, ja sit mulla lähti niinku tää asuttamisen tai asumisen polku mun omas urakehityksessä. (Kati)

By coincidence Liisa managed to get a job in a social enterprise, and after a while she rose into a leading position. Also several other interviewees accidentally and with the help of luck ended up having a career in a social enterprise. Here the narrative form has again reached a high level as the interviewees are satisfied and happy in their leadership roles in social enterprises.

>   I haven't at this moment figured out yet, what I would like to do differently. -- So for that reason I'm now very pleased with this. (Jaakko)
>
>   Mä en täl hetkellä oo keksiny vielä, et mitä mä haluisin tehä niinku eri tavalla. -- Niin sen takia nytte oon tosi tyytyväinen tähän. (Jaakko)
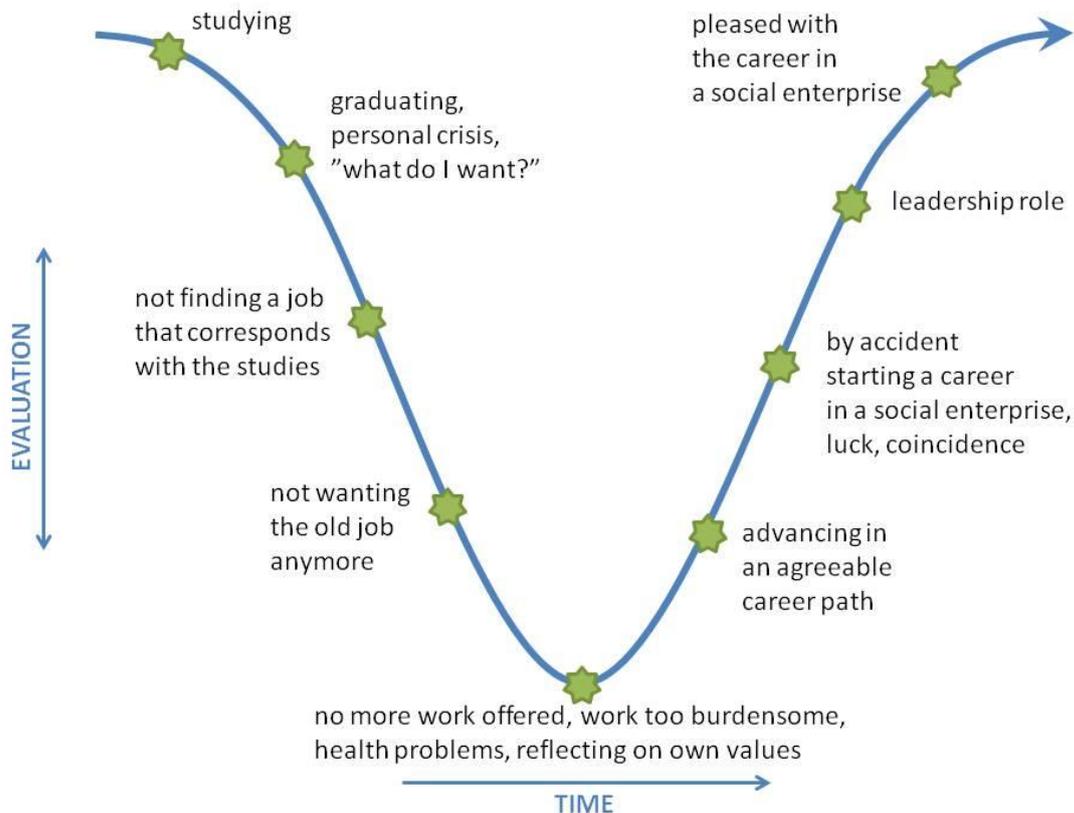


GRAPH 1 Career choice as a drift (adapted and extended from comedy narrative by Gergen & Gergen 1988, 25).

## 4.1.1 A game of chance

For many interviewees the choosing of a career has been a sum of good coincidences. Liisa, Jaakko, Tommi and Johanna described their career choice as a re-

sult of drifting, luck and random choice, which also according to Baruch (2004, 38) play a role in defining people's careers.

> I have never had any career plan how my career would progress, but I have just somehow always drifted from one job to another. -- I mean I have always been more like a drifter and I have been equally interested in everything. Maybe a renaissance person in a sense that I still don't think that I would necessarily know what I will become when I grow up. -- I'm not so career oriented that I would like aim towards something. Somehow I think more that you just end up into certain situations and then those situations come and then you make decisions. -- So in a way you can't anticipate how your career is going to go, or maybe someone can, but I feel that I haven't anticipated but it has just come. (Liisa)

> Mul ei oo siis mitään ollu koskaan mitään urasuunnitelmaa, et miten mun ura etenee, vaan niinku että mä oon sitten jotenki ajautunu aina hommasta toiseen. -- Siis mä oon ollu aina semmonen enemmän ajelehtija ja et silleen tasasesti kiinnostunu niinku kaikesta. Renessanssi-ihminen ehkä siinä mielessä, että mä en niinku ajattele edelleenkään, että mä välttämättä tietäisin, että mikä musta tulee isona. -- Mä en oo niinku silleen uraorientoitunut, että mä niinku tähtäisin johonkin. Että mä jotenkin aattelen enemmän, et sit sitä ajautuu tiettyihin tilanteisiin ja sit niitä tilaisuuksia tulee ja sit tekee valintoja. -- Et tavallaan sähän et voi ennakoida, et miten työura menee, tai joku ehkä pystyy, mutta mä koen, että mä en oo ennakoinu, vaan se on vaan niinku tullu. (Liisa)

> Kind of like also my career, well it has been more like driftwood theory and good coincidences. -- Let's say that maybe I have been more lucky here, and that my own understanding didn't have so much to do with the fact that I ended up here. (Jaakko)

> Vähän niin kun tää mun urakin tässä näin, niin kyl tää niinku enempi ollu semmost ajopuuteoriaa ja niinku hyviä sattumia tässä näin. -- Sanotaan, et mä oon ollu ehkä onnekkaampi tässä näin, että ei oo omalla ymmärryksellä ollu niin paljon tekemistä siihen, että päädyin tänne näin. (Jaakko)

Tommi and Johanna mentioned how they were reading a newspaper and suddenly found a job advertisement recruiting workers into a social enterprise. They applied and got the job, which lead them on their current career paths. As Baruch (2004, 38) puts it, reading about an interesting career can have an effect on an individual's direction in life and thus it is one possible way to influence in their career choice. This choice can be casual by nature, indicating that it is not always based on rationality (Inkson 2007, 116, 119). Tommi told how he randomly chose one of the many career options that were on display on the newspaper and applied for that position. He did not know about the organization beforehand, so it was only by chance that he happened to choose the advertisement of the social enterprise.

> I remember when we were in my friend's apartment and we were browsing through a newspaper and looking for job openings. -- There were 57 pages of vacancies, of course then we didn't have any internet where all the openings would have been, but there you could just choose that I'm gonna apply there, there, there, there… Then there were huge amounts of vacancies available for real. -- It was more just a coincidence. I didn't know this enterprise then when I applied here, and I didn't actually know what… And anyway this was such a small enterprise that it didn't even have any recognition back then, so yes it was more just a coincidence. (Tommi)

> Mä muistan sen, kun oltiin yhden kaverin kämpillä ja katsottiin siellä lehdestä työ-
> paikkailmoituksia. -- Siinä oli viiskymmentäseittemän sivua avoimia työpaikkoja, sil-
> lon ei tietysti ollu mitään internettiä, missä kaikki työpaikat oli, mutta sieltä sitten
> vaan pysty valitseen, et mä haen tonne, tonne, tonne, tonne… Sillon oli ihan oikeesti
> työpaikkoja tarjolla ihan älyttömästi. -- Kyllä se oli enemmänkin ihan sattumaa. Että
> en mä tuntenu tätä yritystä sillon, kun mä hain tänne töihin, enkä mä oikeestaan
> tienny, että mikä…  Ja tää oli muutenkin niin pieni yritys, että ei tällä ollu mitään
> tunnettavuutta edes sillon, että kyllä se oli enemmänkin sattumaa. (Tommi)

Also the choices that people make regarding their studies compose a part of the actual career choice (Inkson 2007, 64). Even though the choice may not be consciously made, as is the case in Liisa's narrative, it still partly leads the career into a certain direction. The drifting into a career was already visible in the choices that Liisa made regarding her studies. She was considering also other fields of study, but then finally she ended up studying in the faculty of social sciences. Another factor that is present in Liisa's narrative is the influence of a partner, who may cause the career to be directed in a certain way (Baruch 2004, 38). This can be seen in Liisa's narration, when she mentioned that the relationship she had with a man led her to choose that particular field of study. Even though the relationship later ended, the effect it had had on her study choice stayed: Liisa finished her studies on that chosen field.

> Well it was also maybe like a result of drifting. I thought that I would study biology,
> then I thought that I would study Finnish. And then, maybe I ended up in the faculty
> of social sciences, because I had a short but very passionate relationship with a man
> who applied to that faculty. And he aroused the interest that actually this could be an
> interesting field of study. But then we broke up already before the entrance exam, the
> man was gone, but the study path maybe came from that. Then if a year would have
> passed by, maybe I would have studied something else. (Liisa)

> No se oli kans semmonen niinku ehkä ajelehtimisen tulos. Mä ajattelin, et mä lähtisin
> opiskeleen bilsaa, sit mä aattelin, et mä lähtisin opiskeleen äidinkieltä. Ja sitten, oi-
> keestaan niinku valtsikkaan mä varmaan päädyin sen takii, koska mul oli lyhyt, mut-
> ta erittäin intohimoinen suhde mieheen, joka haki valtsikalle. Ja hän herätti sen kiin-
> nostuksen, et itse asiassa tää vois olla kiinnostava ala. Mutta me sit kyllä jo erottiin
> ennen pääsykokeita, mies jäi, mutta opintoura niinku ehkä tuli sit siitä. Sit jos ois taas
> menny vuos eteenpäin, sit mä oisin ehkä opiskellu jotain muuta. (Liisa)

Accidentally meeting with a significant person can be meaningful for an individual's career choice (Baruch 2004, 38). As Liisa recounted her career story, I noticed that this had happened to her for two times. The first time was while she was still studying. Liisa described how she was accidentally attending the same class with a person, who was working in a social enterprise. At that time they were recruiting people to work in that enterprise, and thus the person on the class asked Liisa, whether she would like to work for them alongside her studies. Without hesitation Liisa accepted the offer, and that was the first time she ended up working in a social enterprise.

The second time happened later, as Liisa was walking on a street and by chance the CEO of the former social enterprise walked towards her and their paths crossed. The CEO asked Liisa to come back to work for them, and after discussing the offer properly she agreed. This sudden meeting proved to be a

very significant one career-wise, since it led Liisa to having her current career in a social enterprise.

> I returned to [the social enterprise] and it happened so that I had been in the office building in some meeting, and then the prevailing CEO of [the social enterprise] walked towards me on a street and was like '[Liisa], I have been thinking of you and if you would come to work for us.' And then of course I acted to be elusive and I was like 'it does sound interesting, but can we meet to better discuss what this is all about.' Even though I did know immediately that if I'm even the least interested in it, I will come back, because during my studies I liked this firm and this concept, and like I believed in this cause. And I thought that if I'll ever get the chance to go back, I will go. (Liisa)

> Mä palasin [yhteiskunnalliseen yritykseen] ja se tapahtu niin, että mä olin ollu virastotalossa jossain kokouksessa, ja sit [yhteiskunnallisen yrityksen] senaikanen toimitusjohtaja käveli kadulla vastaan ja oli silleen, et '[Liisa] mä oonki miettiny sua, että tulisiksä meille töihin.' Ja sitten mä tietenki esitin vaikeesti tavoiteltavaa ja olin sillee, että 'no kuulostaa kiinnostavalta, että voidaanko tavata, että voidaan puhua tarkemmin, että mistä on kyse.' Vaikka et niinku tiesin kyllä heti, että jos nyt yhtään vähääkään kiinnostaa, niin tuun takasin, koska tykkäsin sillon opiskeluaikoina tästä firmasta ja tykkäsin tästä konseptista, ja niinku uskoin tähän asiaan. Ja ajattelin, et jos joskus pääsen takasin, niin menen. (Liisa)

Individuals try to evaluate themselves and the occupational field in order to achieve the best possible match between them and a career (Inkson 2007, 64). Heidi found her perfect match with the desired career and the optimal enterprise after evaluating herself with a coach. Even though she had found out what she wanted, she did not know if it would be possible to achieve that fit for real. Luckily for her, by chance she was asked to work in that particular social enterprise.

> Then this funny thing happened, or a pretty interesting one, that we together with my coach were doing those exercises, -- and then through those methods we identified what my dream company would be where I would like to work. And then it was so -- that this could be it. Then a few months passed, and one headhunter called and asked me to come to work here. And then I called my husband and I said that 'who did you ask to call me, this must be a joke, this can't be true,' I didn't even believe it. But it happened. So what happened here was an unbelievable match. (Heidi)

> Sit siin kävi viel silleen hassusti, tai semmonen aika mielenkiintonen, et me sen mun coachin kanssa tehtiin sit niitä harjotuksii, -- niin sit niiden metodien kautta identifioitiin, et mikä olis se ihan se unelmayritys, mihin ois hyvä päästä töihin. Nii sit se oli, -- et tää vois olla se. Sit meni pari kuukautta, ja yks headhunter soitti ja pyys tänne töihin. Ja sillon mä soitin mun miehelle, ja mä sanoin, et 'kenet sä pyysit soittaan mulle, et nyt tää on pilailua, et tää ei voi olla totta,' mä en ees uskonu sitä. Mut niin se kävi. Et täs kävi aivan semmonen niinku uskomaton mätsi. (Heidi)

### 4.1.2 The importance of relationships and networks

Relationships and networks is a theme that repeatedly could be distinguished from the interviewees' storytelling, since almost all of the interviewees narrated about events where either their professional networks or other personal relationships had guided their career choice. For Johanna the inspiration to keep

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pursuing her career came already in her youth, as her relatives and other close friends encouraged her career aspirations.

> And then when I finished the high school, I got to work for a small period in the [hospital], and then I thought that well this is quite nice. And then because I had many nurses and people from social and health care sector in my acquaintances and family friends and relatives, they encouraged me like 'go for it and you are just the right person to be there.' So the encouragement came from my close circles. (Johanna)

> Ja sitten kun mä lopetin sen lukion, niin mä pääsin sinne [sairaalaan] vielä tekeen pienen pätkän, ja sillon mä aattelin, että no täähän on ihan kivaa. Ja sieltä sitten, kun oli paljon tuttavapiirissä, perhetutuissa ja sukulaisissa hoitajia ja sosiaali- ja tervey-denhuoltoalan ihmisiä, niin ne kannusti, et 'joo mee vaan ja sä oot ihan omias sinne.' Että kyllä ihan lähipiiristä tuli se kannustus. (Johanna)

At some point of their career Leena, Heidi, Jaakko and Elisa were all asked to come to work in a company, meaning that the career initiative came through their networks and they were not actively looking for it but rather drifting in their career. The contact for Leena and Heidi was not made by the social enter-prise where they currently work but by another company before they started working in a social enterprise. Still, the choices that they made earlier in their career can be considered a part of the whole career choice process (Inkson 2007, 64). Leena got a call from a recruiting company, and they offered her a job in a traditional company. At that time in her life she accepted the offer and pro-gressed in her career. Heidi told how she had drifted in her career so that she had been asked to work in several places. From one company she knew the CEO, who ended up asking Heidi to work for them. She went there, and the reason for her choice was the fact the she was asked to do so. Of course, the per-sonal relationship with the CEO played an important role in this incident.

> I have actually drifted in my career pretty much so that I have always been asked like 'hey come to work for us.' -- Then this employment pension company contacted me. -- And I knew from before their CEO, who then asked me to work for them and then I left there. So again I went because I was actually just asked to go. (Heidi)

> Mä oon niinku ajautunu oikeestaan mun uralla hyvin pitkälti niin, et mua on pyydet-ty aina, että 'hei tuu meille.' -- Sit tuli toi tota, [työeläkeyhtiö] oli muhun yhteydessä. -- Ja mä tunsin sen toimitusjohtajan entuudestaan ja sitten [hän] pyys mua sinne töi-hin ja sit mä lähin sinne. Eli taas mä menin sitä kautta, et mut niinku vaan pyydettiin oikeestaan. (Heidi)

Also Elisa expressed how she had drifted in her career and ended up in a social enterprise with the help of networks. The incentive for her career choice came from others, who asked Elisa to work in the social enterprise. She had no previ-ous knowledge about the enterprise, so her networks proved to be essential to help her achieve a career in a social enterprise.

> But then I kind of like drifted back to this position from the customer work, without thinking that I would want to be a leader only because of the status. -- Then I, I didn't know anything about this house, but I was like asked then. (Elisa)

> Mut sitten ikään kuin ajauduin näihin tehtäviin takaisin sieltä asiakastyöstä ilman, että mä niinku ajattelisin, että mä haluan johtajaksi siis sen statuksen takia. -- Sillon mua, mä en tästä talosta tienny mitään, mut mua niinku pyydettiin sitten. (Elisa)

Jaakko had just run out of work in his earlier job, when a certain sole trader called him and asked if he would be interested in a career in a social enterprise. First he was kind of puzzled, as he did not know anything about the company from before. Then after contemplating the thought for a moment he agreed to go to an interview in the enterprise, as he was not going to have more work offered in the old job anyway and thus had nothing to lose. First Jaakko chose another company and was supposed to start working there, but after things did not go as planned the sole trader called him again and still requested that he would come to the social enterprise. Then Jaakko finally agreed to make a temporary contract with them, but what actually happened is that he never left the enterprise but stayed working with them and building his career. This story shows how a single significant contact opened up the door into a social enterprise for Jaakko.

It is important to have a vast network of people around an individual and to build good relationships with others also inside the enterprise where one works. Then the people around the person know them and what they are like and if they are suitable for a higher position. This professional network can help the individual to progress in their career and achieve the position and the kind of career they wish for. Petri told how he progressed in his career without too much planning, as people around him saw what he could do and where he was good at.

> I wasn't very goal-oriented, or like career oriented, I just did the things that I felt I was good at. And it always kind of progressed automatically, that people said that 'would you go, can you take care of that because it went so well earlier', and these kinds of things. So it went pretty much without planning. (Petri)

> Mä en ollu kauheen semmonen niinku päämäärätietonen, uraorientoitunut silleen, että mä nyt tein niitä asioita, missä mä koin, että mä olin hyvä. Ja se vähän silleen niinku itsestään aina meni eteenpäin, et sanottiin, et 'meeksä nyt, hoidaksä ton, kun se meni aikasemmin hyvin', ja kaikkee tämmöstä. Et se meni vähän niinku ilman suunnittelua. (Petri)

Also Heidi, Johanna, Liisa, Kati and Tommi narrated how they advanced in their career and rose into a leading position in a social enterprise with the help of professional networks. For Heidi it was a sum of coincidences, but as her previous manager left the organization, she was asked to be the successor and she gladly accepted the offer.

> It must have been somehow, of course it is always a sum of coincidences, but then my manager left, and then we pondered who would take charge of it. And then it was natural that I was asked, and for me it wasn't at all repulsive. (Heidi)

> Siin kävi varmaan jotenkin, se on tietysti aina sattumien summa, mut siinä lähti sit mun esimies pois, ja sit mietittiin, et kuka sen ottaa vastatakseen. Ja se oli luonnollista sitten, et multa kysyttiin, ja mulle se ei ollu ollenkaan vastenmielistä. (Heidi)

Johanna and Tommi were both asked by the CEO to advance into a leadership role in the social enterprise. This shows how the professional networks indeed played a significant role in their career choice process. The coworkers, board of directors and the CEO knew what they were like, and based on that familiarity and mutual relationship they were able to suggest a higher position for Johanna and Tommi.

> The CEO, he talked to me to win me over. Or not to win over, but he asked and asked and reasoned and said and complimented and else. The thanks goes to him, I wouldn't have myself, he was determined when he asked. -- Well my [colleague] said that she doesn't have that knowledge what you have, and also this [colleague] tried a little to talk me into it, but the [CEO] must have been the main initiator in it. That this kind of experience would be needed in the field as support and guidance. (Johanna)

> Toimitusjohtaja, se puhu mua ympäri. Tai ei ympäri, mutta kysy ja kysy ja perusteli ja sano ja anto kehuja ja muuta. [Toimitusjohtajan] ansiota, en mä ite, se oli sitkee, kun se kysy. -- Niin [työkaveri] sano, et kun ei hällä oo semmosta tietämystä, mitä sulla on, ja kyllä se [työkaverikin] puhu mua vähän ympäri siihen, mut [toimitusjohtaja] oli niinku se pääpukari siinä varmaan. Et semmosta kokemusta tarvitaan tonne kentälle tueks ja ohjaukseen. (Johanna)

> I was promoted so that apparently it was discovered that I'm capable of such tasks. That's how it started. -- I didn't really apply for it, the board of directors and the CEO made their own decisions about it. So this wasn't in any way subject to applying either. (Tommi)

> Mä niinku sain ylennyksen sillä tavalla, että katottiin ilmeisesti, että mä oon kykenevä sellasiin tehtäviin. Että siitä se sitten lähti. -- En mä sinänsä hakenu, että kyllä se hallitus ja toimitusjohtaja teki ihan suoraan tästä niin kun omat ratkasunsa. Et ei tää ollu sillai millään tavalla niinku haettavana. (Tommi)

While the above presented career stories give reason to believe that relationships do matter in the career choice process, it must not be forgotten that also the lack of networks has an effect on career choice. Heidi recounts that while she was living in the United States, she did not have a close support network that would have helped her with her small children. After returning to Finland she was tired of doing things alone, and for that reason she did not consider for example a career as an entrepreneur at that point. Thus, this lack of support and meaningful networks guided Heidi's career choice in a particular way.

> And it can be that in a certain way my drifting into a particular position was partly affected also by the fact that at the end of my studies we were in the United States. And there we were completely without a close support network, we didn't have grandparents or siblings. And then we had the kids, both our little kids were born in less than one and a half years, so it really was just the two of us there with the little kids. So then somehow, when we came to Finland and the children were there and everything, somehow I didn't have the thought anymore that now I would again want to go by myself. So it was pretty natural to orient myself for example to an international company. My career could look very different, if I had stayed only in Finland and then maybe jumped to entrepreneurship or something similar. (Heidi)

> Ja se voi olla, että tietyllä tavalla siihen, -- mihin mä ajauduin, niin vaikutti osaltaan myös se, että siinä opiskelujen loppuvaiheessa me oltiin siellä Yhdysvalloissa. Ja siellä niin kun täysin ilman semmosta lähitukiverkkoo, et ei ollu isovanhempia tai sisa-

ruksia. Ja sit niitä lapsii, molemmat pienet lapset siellä vajaan puolentoista vuoden välillä synty, niin me oltiin niinku ihan siel kaksistaan vaan niiden pienten lasten kanssa. Niin jotenkin semmonen, et sit kun tuli Suomeen ja ne lapset oli siinä ja kaikki, niin siinä -- jollain tavalla ei enää ollu ajatusta, et nyt mä haluisin taas lähtee yksikseni. Et oli jotenki semmonen aika luontevaa suuntautua esimerkiks kansainväliseen yritykseen. Se vois olla hyvin erinäkönen tää mun ura, jos mä oisin ollu vaan Suomessa, ja sit ponnistanu johonki yrittäjyyteen tai johonki sellaseen. (Heidi)

## 4.1.3 Following in the family footsteps

As research also indicates, the example set by parents and grandparents has partly pushed the interviewees into a certain direction in their career and thus been meaningful for their career choice (Baruch 2004, 23, 38). Already when the interviewees chose their field of study and through that were establishing the direction for their future career, the examples from the childhood family guided their choices. The husband of Tommi's cousin was studying in the university and he tried to persuade Tommi to apply there, too. As a result, that influenced Tommi's decision to apply in the same university. Heidi was born in a family of entrepreneurs, his father was an entrepreneur and later also her brother became an entrepreneur. As Heidi narrates, the entrepreneurial orientation in her family guided her career choice to involve economic and business interests. Congruently with this trend, already in her youth Heidi chose to study business and economics, and her current career in a social enterprise is also in that area.

> The husband of my cousin was studying -- in the university and he particularly persuaded me to go there. At least it affected the fact that I happened to apply there. (Tommi)

> Mun serkun mies opiskeli -- yliopistossa ja se nimenomaan houkutteli mua sinne. Että se vaikutti ainaki siihen, että sit mä tulin sinne pyrkineeks. (Tommi)

> First of all, I come from a family of entrepreneurs, my father was an entrepreneur and nowadays also my brother is an entrepreneur, so this entrepreneurship has possibly in some way led me to the economic interests and business life interests. (Heidi)

> Mä oon ensinnäkin yrittäjäperheestä, mun isä on ollu yrittäjä ja nykyään mun velikin on yrittäjä, eli se semmonen yrittäjyys on ollu, joka on tietyllä tavalla varmaan vieny tälle talouspuolen intresseihin ja liike-elämän puolen intresseihin. (Heidi)

Jaakko depicts that his grandfather used to be busy with all kinds of construction things, even though he was not a professional builder. Also Jaakko's father used to bustle around the house where they lived fixing something here and there, and in addition he was assisting their friends when they needed help with construction. His father built various things by himself, which inspired Jaakko to use his hands and gave him an impulse to find his way into a construction related career.

> Then also my own grandfather, he was more a wanna-be doer, more effort than skill, but anyway he had all kinds of things going on. And then maybe -- well, father -- we lived in an old house, where there are always all kinds of things to do, so father used to do quite a lot of everything by himself. And then of course I got to be involved in that to some extent. -- Father also used to do many times little renovations and such

for our friends. -- This kind of doing with hands, maybe through my own father's example, has always been close to my heart. And maybe through that I have also drifted here into the field of construction. (Jaakko)

*Sitte taas oma isoisäkin, no hän oli enempi semmonen wanna be -tekijä, että enempi yritystä kun osaamista, mutta kuitenki tällasta kaiken näköstä puuhailua ja muuta. Ja sitten ehkä -- no, isä -- me asuttiin semmosessa rintamamiestalossa, missä nyt on aina kaiken näköstä tekemistä sit, et isä teki aika paljon kaikkee itse. Ja sitte tietysti siinä sain olla mukana jonkin verran. -- Isähän teki sitten paljon myös niinku tuttavillekin pikkuremppoja ja muita. -- Tommonen käsillä tekeminen ja sitten niinku oman isän esimerkki, ehkä sitä kautta on aina ollu niinku lähellä sydäntä. Ja ehkä sitä kautta tavallaan mä olen tännekin ajautunu sitten rakentamispuolelle. (Jaakko)*

When I asked Leena, where she thought that her career choice came from, she referred to her godmother, who used to be a midwife. Also the place where she lived with her family as a child had an impact on her future career aspirations in the social and health care sector, because back then she saw people going to the doctor and dentist, in addition to the encounters with her godmother. Leena's family also positively influenced in her direction by encouraging her interests and giving her a doctor play set as a present, which further boosted her inclination towards that type of a career.

Well maybe from my godmother, so my godmother was, or she still is, retired of course, since she is over 90, but she is a midwife. And when I was a small child we used to live attached to my dad's workplace which was the city hall, and there in the same house was a doctor's office and a dentist's office. The midwife lived close by, and of course I then followed the people passing by. And then I received as some present a doctor play set, which included these wonderful instruments, but of course that wasn't enough for me but then I started to give injections to dolls with a darning needle. (Leena)

*No varmaan kummitädiltä, elikkä mun kummitäti oli, tai on edelleenkin, eläkkeellä tietysti, kun on jo yli 90, mut hän on kätilö. Ja me asuttiin sillon, kun mä olin ihan pieni lapsi, niin semmosessa isän työpaikan yhteydessä elikkä kunnantalolla, ja siellä samassa talossa oli lääkärin vastaanotto ja hammaslääkärin vastaanotto. Kätilö asu siinä lähellä, ja tietysti sitä seuras sitä liikennettä siinä sitten. Ja sit mä sain joksikin lahjaks semmosen lääkärin salkun, jossa oli tämmöset ihanat välineet, mut se ei tietenkään mulle riittäny, vaan mä rupesin rokottaan nukkeja sitten parsinneulalla. (Leena)*

Kati admired her grandmother, who was very determined to instruct Kati into the right direction in life. She used to be a teacher, so Kati thought that she would be a teacher as well. Even though Kati did not end up being a teacher, she recognized the impact her grandmother had had on her. Also, she could see the correlation between her current career in a social enterprise and the vocation of a teacher, indicating that after all she had followed in her grandmother's footsteps.

I have had a very strong and guiding grandmother, who I have admired. Pretty exceptional woman of her time, very strong and independent, so I always thought that I'm gonna be like my grandmother, and my grandmother was a teacher. So then I always thought that I'll be a teacher. But then I didn't become a teacher, but in a sense I am that, if you think about the teacher's identity, that a teacher directs and sees the needs of their group and makes learning possible, so in a certain way I am in a little bit similar position right now even though I'm not a class teacher. But of

course as I've grown in the guidance of this kind of a woman, she has had a significant role in my own decisions as well. (Kati)

Mul on ollu hyvin vahva ja semmonen ohjaava isoäiti, jota mä oon ihaillu. Aika poikkeuksellinen niinku aikansa nainen, et hyvin vahva ja itsenäinen, niin mä aina ajattelin, et must tulee niin kun mun isoäiti, ja mun isoäiti oli opettaja. Niin sit mä aina aattelin, et musta tulee opettaja. Mut sit musta ei tullut opettajaa, vaan tietyl taval mä oon sitä, jos aattelee sitä opettajan identiteettiä, että opettaja ohjaa ja näkee sen ryhmänsä niinku tarpeet ja mahdollistaa sen oppimisen, et tietyllä tavalla mähän oon nyt vähän samantyyppisessä tehtävässä, vaikka mä en ole luokanopettaja. -- Mut et tietysti kun tämmösen naisen ohjauksessa kasvaa, niin hänellä on ollu niinku ihan merkittävä rooli mun omis valinnoissa myös. (Kati)

As the presented stories reveal, the influence of the family can be seen in many career related decisions, starting from studies to finally choosing to work in a social enterprise. Another factor in which the family makes a difference is the formation of values. People's values affect their career choice, and according to research, values are often learned through observation. In this learning process the early experiences within the childhood family play a significant role. (Baruch 2004, 23.) As can be interpreted from the data and in keeping with the previous research, family has shaped the interviewees' world view since they have learnt many values from their parents and other family members.

Kati learned in her family about fairness and equality. Jaakko's grandfather was a police officer who used to take for example clothes to poor people, and his father used to help in church activities. Those experiences taught Jaakko to be just and to help others. Also Johanna's childhood family valued helping other people. Liisa's family esteemed good education and being up to date with what is happening in the world. In addition to that, her grandparents taught her to share from what she owns and to help those in need.

I guess I have to go again back to the childhood, I have gotten certain values there and then the willingness to help, that I have been ok but not everyone is ok. -- I guess it is the personal upbringing and my own parents' values and ideology that affected it. (Johanna)

Kai siinäkin taas pitää palata sinne lapsuuteen, et tietynlaiset arvot oot saanu siellä ja se auttamisen halu sitten, että itellä ollu ihan hyvin asiat ja kaikilla ei oo. -- Kyllä kai se oma kotikasvatus ja ne omien vanhempien arvot ja aatteet vaikutti siihen. (Johanna)

I must say that in my childhood family education and sophistication were very much valued, we were supposed to know what was happening in the world. We watched the news a lot and… -- What they valued I remember very vividly, well educated people and so. So maybe from there originates the idea that I decided for example to study in the university. -- I guess my grandparents have been very meaningful, their world view, if you go searching very far back in time, so how they have thought about things. -- They have always emphasized that one must share from what they own and that others being in a poorer position must be supported. That has been like their philosophy. (Liisa)

Siis sen mä sanon, että mun lapsuudenperhees kyllä arvostettiin valtavasti koulutusta ja sivistystä, ja piti niinku tietää missä mennään. Että seurattiin uutisii tosi paljon ja… -- Sen, mitä he arvosti, niin mä muistan tosi elävästi, että lukeneita ihmisiä ja niinku. Et ehkä sieltä tulee semmonen, et mä oon hakeutunu esimerkiks yliopistoon sit aikanaan opiskelemaan. -- Varmaan mun isovanhemmat on ollu tosi merkityksel-

liisiä, heijän maailmankatsomus, jos oikein kaukaa alkaa hakee, et miten ne on ajatel-
lut asioista. -- He on aina ollu silleen, että omasta pitää jakaa ja huonommassa ase-
massa olevia täytyy tukea. Se on ollu se heijän niinku filosofia. (Liisa)

As these narratives show, many of the interviewed leaders demonstrated how they had learned important values already in their childhood from their family members. The operations of social enterprises are guided by values (Koskela et al. 2015), and for this reason social enterprises provided a good opportunity for the interviewees to match their values with a meaningful career. As follows, the attained values and thus also the childhood family had an impact on the inter- viewees' career choice in a social enterprise, as they wanted to pursue similar kinds of values in their career.

## 4.2 Career choice as a mission pursuit

In this story type the career choice was narrated by the social enterprise leaders as a continuous pursuit to do something that is meaningful for them or to achieve social, environmental or moral good. The story is characterized by the will to find meaning in the work, have an effect on the society and follow one's own values. The narrative form that best illustrates this story type is "happily- ever-after", since the narrative stays progressive and ends to the assumption that once the valued state has been reached it will stay that way, indicating a stability narrative (Gergen & Gergen 1988) (Graph 2).

The story of career choice as a mission pursuit starts by finding an interest that is embedded in the person and somehow part of their character. Markus tells how he already as a young child was very interested in social matters. That was something extraordinary and it partly directed his career path to a certain direction.

Well what might have affected this, I was just, I remember that as a 10-year-old boy I was watching the parliament election debates. And my father, who was a teacher back then, told me that it is very extraordinary that a boy of that age would watch the election panel discussion for three hours. So maybe that told something about the fact that I have been extremely interested in these kinds of issues since I was a child. (Markus)

Siis se, mikä saatto vaikuttaa tähän, niin mä olin ihan, mä muistan, et kymmenvuoti- aana poikana mä katoin niinku eduskuntavaalikeskusteluja. Ja niin kun mun isä, joka oli sillon opettaja, sano, et se on niinku aivan poikkeuksellista, että ton ikänen poika kattoo kolme tuntii vaalitenttii. Et ehkä se jotakin kerto sitten siitä, et mua kiinnosti hurjasti tän tyyppiset asiat ihan pienestä pitäen. (Markus)

The story continues with a stronger dedication to do something of interest. Markus for instance did his first career related choice already when he was in high school and decided not to study something that he was not interested in. Later on he was pondering over his true interests, and again he realized that so- cial influencing is something he wants to pursue. As Inkson (2007, 64) argues, choosing a career often consists of a set of decisions instead of a one single deci-

sion. Thus, also choices that individuals make concerning their education provide direction for their future career and are considered a part of the career choice process as well. Accordingly, Markus' decision to study certain subjects was the start of a systematic climb towards the desired career.

> But then at high school age I remember I was pondering, I mean the first choice was that I didn't choose to study advanced mathematics but instead I was more interested in humanistic subjects and so on. That was maybe the first choice. -- And well, when I was in the military service, I thought about what interests me, what I can do. And then I came to the harsh conclusion that I can write and I know English language well, and I was interested in societal issues. And through this conclusion I discovered that ok, that influencing is something that would be interesting to study. -- So finally the choice to study in the faculty of social sciences maybe did follow a certain logical path. -- Because I see that kind of the path that I have been walking here is my career choice. -- That is where I have been progressing consistently. (Markus)

> Mutta sitten lukioiässä mä muistan pohtineeni, siis ensimmäinen valinta oli se, että mä en menny lukemaan pitkää matikkaa, vaan mua kiinnosti enemmän humanistiset aineet ja reaaliaineet ja niin edelleen. Se oli ehkä se eka valinta. -- Ja tota, kun mä olin armeijassa, niin sit mä niin kun mietin, et mikä mua kiinnostaa, mitä mä niinku osaan. Ja sit mä tulin siihen karuun lopputulokseen, että mä osaan kirjottaa ja mä osaan englannin kieltä hyvin, ja mua kiinnostaa yhteiskunnalliset asiat. Ja tän lopputuleman myötä niin mä sitten totesin, et okei, että niinku vaikuttaminen on semmonen, mikä olis mielenkiintosta opiskella. -- Et lopulta sitten se valtiotieteellisen valinta niin ehkä jonkunlaista loogista polkuu noudatteli. -- Kun mä nään, että tavallaan se polku, mitä mä oon täs nyt tallanu, niin tää on se mun uravalinta. -- Se on se, mitä mä oon menny ihan johdonmukaisesti. (Markus)

This career story progresses as the interviewees gradually and purposefully made choices in order to end up where they wanted to be. They were trying to find a career where they could fulfill themselves and which would have a deeper meaning for them and the society at large. Petri was first trying to sell his idea about a social enterprise to his friends, but as things did not proceed as he had hoped, he realized that he must himself start taking the idea forward. Time passed and in the meantime he also had another job, but finally the time was right for the social enterprise to be launched.

> We had this original idea of a social enterprise, so I first offered it to my friends like wouldn't it be good to take this forward. And when things didn't really get going, I thought that it will truly bother me, when I'll be sitting in my rocking chair, if I don't take this forward myself. -- And then again I sold my idea to a [particular association] and that is kind of how I started working there. I told them that I have this idea and I would like to be hired by you and progress it here. -- And then when I saw that the time of the [association] was over… Things started to go smoothly forward. -- Then immediately we started launching this [social enterprise], so the idea kind of was already before I went to that [association]. -- I dug up my idea of this [social enterprise] and started gathering a network around it, like who would join me to further this cause. -- And then we launched [this social enterprise]. (Petri)

> Meillä tämä niinku [yhteiskunnallisen yrityksen] alkuperäisidea, niin mä aluks tarjosin sitä kavereille, että tuota eikö tämmöstä kannattais tehdä eteenpäin. Ja siinä nyt ei sitten asiat oikeestaan edistyny, ja sitten mä ajattelin, että tää jää niinku mua kiikkustuolissa harmittamaan, jos mä itse tätä en lähe viemään eteenpäin. -- Ja sit mä taas möin ton ideani sinne [erääseen yhdistykseen], että tavallaan niin kun sitä kautta meni sinne hommiin. Että kerroin, et mulla ois tämmönen idea ja mulla ois halua tulla teille palkkalistoille sitä niinku edistämään täällä näin. -- Ja sitten kun mä näin, että

se [yhdistyksen] aika oli, että se… Asiat lähti niinku menemään omalla painollaan eteenpäin. -- Sit heti suoraan ruvettiin perustaan tätä [yhteiskunnallista yritystä], eli se idea tavallaan oli jo ennen sitä [yhdistykseen] menoakin ollu tossa. -- Mä kaivoin tän mun ideani tästä [yhteiskunnallisesta yrityksestä] tavallaan esiin ja rupesin kasaamaan verkostoo siihen, että kuka lähtis tähän tätä asiaa niin kun viemään eteenpäin. -- Ja sitten perustettiin [kyseinen yhteiskunnallinen yritys]. (Petri)

When the interviewees had achieved a career in a social enterprise, the narrative stabilized and the focus shifted to living out the mission and values. The interviewees narrated that the career in a social enterprise gives them a sense of purpose and that values are an intrinsic part of the enterprise's operations. Meaningfulness of the chosen career in turn leads to excitement and passion for what they do.

I don't mean that working should always be fun, after all it's 80 percent pretty boring. But if then the 20 percent is very, very fun, it does compensate for that. And then the meaningfulness becomes a guiding factor, so that if for real our hypotheses, around which we have built our whole thing, if they start going forward and we can advance our aims, that is like, that is so damn good. That itself would hold us up. (Petri)

Emmä tarkota sitä, et työnteon pitää olla aina hauskaa, sehän on 80 pinnaa aika tylsää. Mutta jos siitä 20 pinnaa on sitten tosi, tosi hauskaa, niin kyl se sen niinku korvaa. Ja sitten ikään kun se merkityksellisyyshän siinä tulee se ohjaavaks tekijäks, että jos nyt oikeesti nää meijän hypoteesit, mihinkä me on tää meijän koko homma kasattu, niin jos nää lähtee viemään eteenpäin ja me saadaan näitä meijän tavotteita eteenpäin, niin ohan se nyt niinku, ohan se ihan perhanan hienoo. Kyl se niinku kantaa jo itsessään. (Petri)

trying to find
a career where
to fulfil oneself,
values

career in a social
enterprise, living
out the mission,
sense of purpose

EVALUATION

"what do I
really want?"

choosing interesting
subjects to study,
social matters,
influencing

choices at
school guided
by interests

interest in
social matters
as a child

TIME
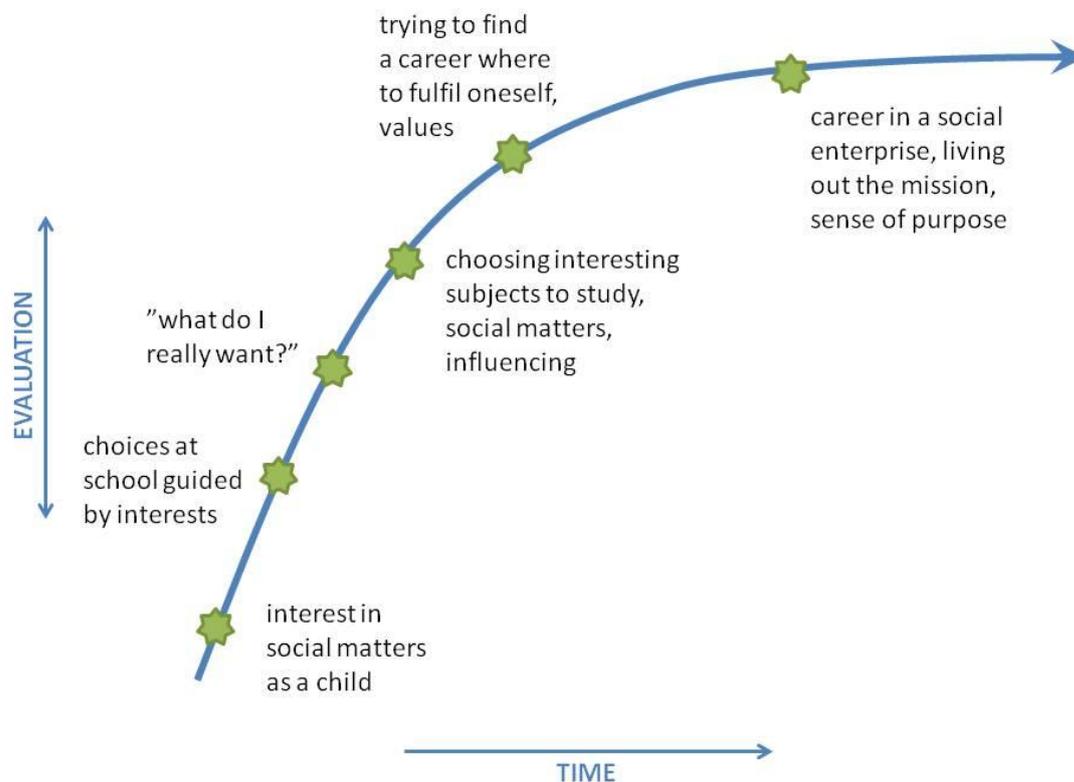
GRAPH 2 Career choice as a mission pursuit (adapted and extended from "happily-ever-after" narrative by Gergen & Gergen 1988, 26).

## 4.2.1 Reaching for a deeper meaning

The interviewees' desire to find meaning is reflected in their career choice stories. Jaakko for example explained how he feels that his current career in a social enterprise is more meaningful nationwide and it has a higher effectiveness than his previous career in a traditional company. He depicted how he feels he is doing good through his work, and that doing good also feels good. This shows how choosing a career in a social enterprise makes it possible to acquire this balance in one's life: doing good deeds also generates the feeling of personal satisfaction and meaningfulness.

> Well maybe first I could say that I do feel that this my current job has more meaning and effectiveness than my old job [in a previous company], which was a listed company, and the purpose of listed companies is to generate profit for the shareholders. So in this there is more meaning nationwide and more humanity. -- Now I feel that I'm doing good through my work. -- It feels good, of course, that we help people that are in a poorer position. (Jaakko)

> No ehkä ensinnäkin vois sanoo sen, et kyl mä niinku nyt koen, että tällä työllä on enempi merkitystä ja vaikuttavuutta kun sillä vanhalla työllä [aiemmassa yrityksessä], joka oli niin kun pörssiyhtiö, ja pörssiyhtiöiden tehtävähän on tuottaa osakkeenomistajille voittoa. Että täs niinku tällai valtakunnallisesti on enempi merkitystä ja niin kun enempi tämmöstä inhimillisyyttä. -- Nyt mä koen, et mä teen niin kun hy-

vää työni kautta. -- Se tuntuu niinku hyvältä totta kai, et autetaan heikommassa ase-
massa olevia. (Jaakko)

Tommi described the same kind of an impression and also linked the social en-
terprise's activities, in general doing something helpful, with the feeling of sat-
isfaction. Elisa added to that by mentioning how helping others motivates her.
Finding motivating and inspiring aspects at work makes the whole career more
meaningful for her, as she is able to include a personal component in it.

> In my opinion it is so that if it is like reasonable and long-term helping, so that one
> feels that it really is beneficial, then I think that it makes me feel good in the everyday
> life too, that it's something I can live with. (Tommi)

> Kyllä se mun mielestä on sillä tavalla, jos se on niinku järkevää auttamista ja pitkä-
> jänteistä ja kokee, et siitä on ihan oikeesti hyötyä, niin kyllä mun mielestä se arjessa-
> kin tuntuu niinku hyvältä, että sellasen kanssa voi itsekin elää. (Tommi)

> Maybe the meaning of the work, too. -- I get motivated when I do something for oth-
> ers. -- That I can somehow do, if I would think that I seem to have similar kinds of
> hobbies, that I can realize in my work this element also, because the work has the
> meaning. (Elisa)

> Ehkä se työn merkityskin tietysti. -- Mä saan siitä motivaatioo, että mä teen niinku
> toisille jotakin. -- Että mä saan tavallaan tehdä, jos mä ajattelisin, et mä harrastan nä-
> köjään helposti tämän tapaisia, et mä saan niinku työssä toteuttaa senkin elementin,
> koska sillä työllä on se merkitys. (Elisa)

A career in a social enterprise can make a person feel important and that their
contribution matters in this world. Liisa narrated how she feels herself signific-
ant through work where she can contribute to the wellbeing of others. Her sto-
ry also shows how emotions are constantly present in the workplace and that
indeed people take to the world of careers their whole selves and not just the
"professional self" (Baruch 2004, 22). In addition, as Liisa's story demonstrates,
in order to achieve this meaningfulness in a career it is important to see the re-
sults of one's work and be able to realize one's values.

> I thought that this is like for real very meaningful, if we can solve this situation and
> her symptoms would settle. And this is what happened. And she called me again on
> the day before Christmas Eve and she sang to me Sylvia's Christmas song, and then
> my tears were running already, because I was so touched when I thought that re-
> gardless of all her delusions I had found that connection with her. And then I
> thought that this is just amazing that I can experience these kinds of things at work.
> -- So that demonstrated well the values that we respect the other person and their re-
> ality and support their strengths. (Liisa)

> Mä aattelin, et tää on niinku oikeesti tosi merkityksellistä, että jos me saadaan tää ti-
> lanne ratkeemaan plus että hänen niinku oireet rauhottuu. Ja tota näin kävi. Ja hän
> soitti vielä mulle jouluna aaton aattona sitten, ja hän laulo mulle Sylvian joululaulun,
> ja sit kato mulla jo kyyneleet valu, kun mä olin niin liikuttunut, kun mä aattelin, et
> kaikista niinku harhoistaan huolimatta oli se yhteys tullu häneen. Ja sit mä aattelin,
> et tää on ihan mieletöntä, et mä saan työssä kokee tämmösii asioita. -- Et siinä tuli
> hyvin nää arvot, että jotenki kunnioitetaan sitä toista ihmistä ja hänen todellisuuttaan
> ja tuetaan hänen voimavarojaan. (Liisa)

Sometimes people need to stop and think about their values and what they really want in life. As Baruch (2004, 38) affirms, reconsidering one's life may change the direction of their career and lead them on new paths. This happened to Heidi, and she narrated how after working in several organizations she came to a point where she had to stop and think what she really wanted to do and whether she would find a career in which also her value base would get better satisfied. She was looking for a deeper meaning in her career and pondering the thought, what would be left of her into the world. Instead of thinking how much money she would gain or how the decision would affect her career, Heidi started to lay more weight on her values in the decision making process. Finally she chose a career in a social enterprise, since she believed that in this kind of an enterprise she could be doing something meaningful.

> Then in the meanwhile for the first time I stopped a bit and thought what I really would want to do. – Like if I would find something, where also the value base would become better satisfied. So maybe because, you know, when I started to be in my 40s, closer to 50s, that is when a person gets wiser and starts to ponder that what it is that will be left of me to this world. And if I can do something that would really matter. And I had done a lot of that already, but maybe those kinds of things started to weigh more on the basket then. -- Maybe in this decision making instead of just thinking of -- how a big salary I would gain or what this might mean in my career or something, which are things that I haven't at all thought about earlier either. But anyway, so somehow after this reasoning these things were involved in my reflection in a way they haven't been before. They were like highlighted in the decision making. -- I wasn't looking for a social enterprise, but I guess I was looking for an enterprise that would do something meaningful. Which is actually exactly the same thing, I just couldn't name it as a social enterprise then. (Heidi)

> Sit samalla siinä tein ensimmäistä kertaa semmosta niinku pysähtymistä ja et mitäs mä nyt oikeasti haluan tehdä. -- Niinku et löytäisinkö mä jotain, jossa myös arvopohja vois tulla tyydytetyksi paremmin. Et ehkä kato kun alko oleen nelkyt, alko olla lähempänä viittäkymppii, niin sit niinku sitä ihminen alkaa viisastuun ja pohtiin, että mitäköhän tähän maailmaan musta jää. Ja voinks mä tehdä jotain, millä ois oikeesti merkitystä. Ja olinhan mä tehny jo paljon sellasta, mut ne niinku ehkä semmoset vähän rupes painaan enemmän siinä korissa sitten.-- Ehkä tässä päätöksenteossa sit sen sijaan, että ois vaan miettiny sitä, -- et kuinka isoo palkkaa saa tai et mitäköhän tää mun uralla tarkottaa tai jotain, mitä mä en oo kyllä ennenkään miettiny ollenkaan. Mut kuitenki, niin jotenki niiden pohdintojen jälkeen sit ehkä semmoset asiat olikin mukana siinä pohdinnassa, miten ne ei aikasemmin ollu ollu. Ne korostu niinku siin päätöksenteossa. -- Mä en hakenu yhteiskunnallista yritystä, mut mä varmaankin hain yritystä, joka tekee jotain merkityksellistä. Joka on nyt ihan sama asia sitten, mä en osannu sillon sanottaa sitä vielä yhteiskunnalliseks yritykseks. (Heidi)

Petri recounted that it is important for him to have a specific focus at work towards which he is moving. He wants the career to offer him a meaningful way to further a good cause, which is something that makes him feel passionate about his work and career. This experience is supported by research, since pursuing social missions is expected to bring forth passion and motivation. (Smith et al. 2012)

> Everything that I will be accepting in the future, I must have some sort of a passion for it. -- It is a good indicator that if on Sunday the curve starts going up, like oh damn, tomorrow is a work day, that is nothing more than ruining your own life. So I see that somehow there must be some reason in what you're doing. That it furthers

some cause. -- So kind of that the activity must have some, can I say like a meaning or a focus. (Petri)

Kaikelle, mitä ikinä mä tuun jatkossa ottaan vastaan, niin mulla pitää jonkinlainen niin kun palo olla siihen hommaan. -- Että kyllä se hyvä mittari on se, että jos sunnuntaina alkaa käyrä nousta, että hemmetti, huomenna on työpäivä, niin eihän se oo muuta kun oman elämänsä pilaamista. Niin kyl mä nään, että jotenkin semmonen, että siinä on joku tolkku siinä hommassa. Et se niinku edistää jotain asiaa. -- Niin kun tavallaan, että sillä toiminnalla nyt pitää olla joku, voiks sanoo niinku tarkotus tai fokus. (Petri)

Leena wanted a career where she could help people. For her it was a personal experience that affected her decision to start building her career towards that direction. While trying to find the right path to arrive to the desired end where it would be possible to help others, she found her calling and the meaningful career she was looking for.

Of course my grandmother, who was very close to me, she died then when I was going to the third grade of high school, died of cancer that summer. And maybe of course thinking that I could then help people. -- Maybe it came at the point when I was starting my studies, the actual calling for the job. (Leena)

Tietysti mun isoäiti, joka oli mulle hyvin läheinen, niin hän kuoli sillon just, kun mä olin lukion kolmoselle menossa, niin syöpään sillon kesällä. Ja ehkä tietysti se, että ajatteli, että voi sitten auttaa ihmisii. -- Ehkä se tuli siinä vaiheessa, kun lähti opiskelemaan, kuitenkin niinku se varsinainen kutsumus siihen työhön. (Leena)

### 4.2.2 Responding to a social need

There are many widespread challenges in the society, and social enterprises are trying to find sustainable solutions for these problems (Koskela et al. 2015; Smith et al. 2012). Accordingly, on a larger scale a career in a social enterprise has always something to do with the society. The interviewed leaders narrated as one important aspect considering their career choice the possibility to respond to a social need and to have a positive effect on the society. This validates their very decision to have a career specifically in a social enterprise. As Tommi put it, he wants to be able to do socially important work that is for the benefit of others.

Well I do appreciate the fact that in a bigger picture we aim to do socially important work and to do good, good for everyone. (Tommi)

No kyllä mä sitä arvostan, että me niin kun suuressa kuvassa pyritään tekemään yhteiskunnallisesti tärkeetä työtä ja hyvää, hyvää niin kun kaikille. (Tommi)

Markus recounted how he started at the older age to ponder the possibility to do something meaningful in a societal level. He was very interested in the idea of social enterprise and the fact that they are founded to tackle a social problem. Markus saw that a career in a social enterprise would present various opportunities to address numerous issues in the society and to have an influence on them, and that discovery directed his career choice. Markus also highlighted the

importance of sustainability. He narrated how he believes that by helping the society ultimately the whole world would benefit from it.

> Well all in all the question is about sustainability. -- Because it is sustainable development and it is like, you know, responsibility and it is everything. -- And that is like the thing, under the umbrella of which I would like to work and further these causes. I mean that for example, if we think that our solutions would help us to save different kinds of resources and materials and such, then I believe that my sons would have healthier and cleaner earth. So like nobly speaking. And it should go under the sustainability. So this is somehow how I see it. (Markus)

> Elikkä siis kokonaisuudes kysymys on tästä niin kun sustainabilitystä. -- Kun se on kestävää kehitystä ja se on niinku tiedäksä vastuullisuutta ja se on kaikkee. -- Ja niin kun se on se juttu, jonka sateenvarjon alla mä haluaisin työskennellä ja edistää näitä asioita. Siis se, että vaikka nyt ajatellen niin, että jos nää meijän tekemät ratkasut auttaa siihen, että me säästetään eri tyyppisiä resursseja ja materiaaleja ja muita, niin mä uskon, että mun pojilla on terveempi ja puhtaampi maapallo. Et noin ylevästi puhuen. Ja se pitäis mennä sen sustainabilityn alle. Et jotenki näin mä sen hahmotan. (Markus)

In his narration Markus paid a lot of attention to the actual focus of the social enterprise and the urge that it would provide employment for other people. According to him, one marginalized young person will have cost over a million euros to the society till the time the marginalized has reached the age of 65. Markus described the possibility a social enterprise has in offering work for hundreds of people and that way diminishing the cost that the society must spend on taking care of the unemployed. He described how he would like to be supporting these kinds of initiatives, and hence a career in a social enterprise gives him an opportunity to influence in these issues. As the narrative below indicates, the altruistic helping gives Markus a sense of purpose and satisfaction.

> Then they fulfill also the actual purpose, so that they provide employment for people. -- Well if I think that in Finland there are a couple of young people, who didn't become marginalized because of this and who didn't cost millions and they were able to get a hold of the working life and they came back to be members of this society, to me it is valuable as hell. That is the thing I find the most important here. (Markus)

> Sillonhan ne täyttää sen varsinaisen tavoitteenkin, elikkä että ne työllistää ihmisiä. -- Siis jos mä aattelen, et Suomes on muutama nuori ihminen, jotka ei syrjäytynyt tän ansioista ja jotka ei maksanu miljoonia ja ne pääs kiinni työelämään ja ne tuli takaisin tähän yhteiskunnan jäseniks, musta se on helvetin arvokasta. Se on se juttu, mikä täs on musta tärkeintä. (Markus)

Petri and Elisa both narrated that their career choice was not only a matter of finding personal satisfaction, but that it is also one's duty to help in the society. Petri underlined the responsibility one has as a member of the society to use their skills and abilities to do good and achieve positive change. Elisa told how it is important to take responsibility of bigger issues in the society, and that is what makes her career special.

Yeah, I somehow feel that it is also a certain kind of a responsibility, that the skill level which I have, that I should make good use of it here and bring about some change. (Petri)

*Niin, mä jotenkin koen, että se on tietynlainen myöskin velvollisuus, että se taitotaso, mikä mulla on, niin niinku hyödyntää nyt tässä ja saada jotain muutosta. (Petri)*

Well of course this kind of a social enterprise feeds the idea that we can here realize those things that are important socially. And maybe there is of course the sense of duty included also, and responsibility taking, so that must be the special characteristic in this. (Elisa)

*Niin toki sitten tämmönen yhteiskunnallinen yritys niin kun, että se ruokkii tietenkin sitä, että me saamme tässä toteuttaa niitä asioita, jotka on yhteiskunnallisesti tärkeitä. Ja ehkä siellä on sitä velvollisuudentuntoa sisällä myös tietenkin, ja vastuunottoa niinku tämmösistä laajemmista asioista, niin se on varmaan se erityispiirre tässä. (Elisa)*

Petri brought the problem of consumption in Finland as well as in the global sphere into discussion. He recounted how we must change our behavior in order to preserve our planet for the future generations and how this is an acute problem that must be solved. The social enterprise in which Petri works is trying to provide solutions to these kinds of issues. He told how he has not found another company or person that would try to influence in this problem exactly in the same ways as they do, which creates a direct need for their work and makes it important. Petri's inner urge to do something to solve the problem of consumption was one reason why he wanted to choose a career in that particular enterprise. When he is searching for answers to these concerns he feels his career meaningful also in a bigger scale.

Because the problem is so fatal here also globally. Since we don't even have the option that we could continue this current way of consuming for example, but we really must change it. Sometimes we have reflected on the idea -- that if only there was someone, who could do this so much better, that at least we could say with a good conscience that we just couldn't do it. But we haven't found the one, who would solve exactly the same problem that we are solving, we haven't found that person yet. And for that reason we have noted that our task is just to stay alive and try to further this cause. (Petri)

*Koska se ongelma on niin fataali tässä ihan niinku globaalistikin. Että meillä ei oo ees vaihtoehtoo siinä, että me voitas jatkaa tätä nykystä tapaa kuluttaa esimerkiks, vaan meijän on ihan pakko muuttaa sitä. Niin tavallaan joskus on sitä pohdiskeltu, -- että kun tuliskin joku, joka tekis tän asian niin sairaan paljon paremmin, että vois ainaki hyvällä omalla tunnolla sanoa, että ei me vaan pystytty tohon. Mut kun ei oo löytyny sitä, joka ratkasis juuri sitä ongelmaa, jota me ollaan ratkasemassa, niin sitä ei ole vielä löytynyt. Niin sitten sen takia me ollaan todettu, että kyl meijän tehtävä on tässä nyt vaan pysyä hengissä ja yrittää viedä asiaa eteenpäin. (Petri)*

For Liisa a previous workplace gave a push that made her want to direct her career in a way that she would be able to do something to help other individuals in this society. She narrated how an experience at her previous work had opened her eyes in a discouraging way to realize how the social system is not working adequately for the benefit of an individual. She continued by narrating a story about an incident at work and how she had been able to help a lonely

person. This expresses how she feels her current career in a social enterprise significant because of the solutions that they generate for example to loneliness by providing communal support.

> Well it is horrible, how alone people with mental problems often are. This must have been also about that when she felt that she is accepted and seen and she is a valuable part of that community, she kind of started feeling better. (Liisa)

> Et sehän on niinku kauheeta, miten yksin tavallaan mielenterveysongelmaiset ihmiset on usein. Et tässäkin oli varmaan kyse myös siitä, et sitten kun hän koki, et hän tulee hyväksytyksi ja nähdyksi ja hän on ihan arvokas osa sitä yhteisöä, niin hänen olo helpotti tavallaan siitä. (Liisa)

Elisa also wanted to pursue a career that would help the society. In her story she underlined the significance of creating a long lasting impact by helping people to advance in their lives and to find their own strength. In her career in a social enterprise Liisa is able to support the wellbeing, health and ability to work of various individuals, which is an important aspect for her.

> And especially so -- that I would want that from here new paths would open up for the customer. I mean that the customer would learn to see things differently and find new strength. -- That we don't only satisfy them here, like when you have this and this you are feeling good right now, but that for real we give them tools with which they can do better with their own goals also in the future. -- So in that way this theme of a social enterprise is very important. Maybe it could be so that I wouldn't be motivated enough, if I were for example selling sewing machines to someone, that would be lacking it. Even though they are very important devices. -- But I mean that the heart of this enterprise is, and the vision is, that we produce more wellbeing to the customer, support their ability to work and health, so that is probably the important thing. (Elisa)

> Ja nimenomaan niin, -- että haluaisi, että täältä asiakkaalle avautuu niitä uusia polkuja. Eli asiakas itse oppii näkemään asioita toisin ja hän niinku voimavaraistuu. -- Että ei tehdä vaan täällä tyytyväiseksi, että kun saat tätä ja tätä niin sulla on mukava olla juuri nyt, vaan että ihan oikeesti annetaan hänelle täältä sellasia apuvälineitä, joilla hän pärjää paremmin omissa tavoitteissaan jatkossakin. -- Eli sillä tavalla tää yhteiskunnallisen yrityksen teema on hirveen tärkee. Että ehkä voi olla juuri, että mä en motivoituis riittävästi siitä, että mä myisin vaikka ompelukoneita jollekin, niin siitä puuttuis se. Vaikka ne on hyvin tärkeitä välineitä. -- Mutta siis et tämän yrityksen niin kun se sydän on se, ja visio on se, et me tuodaan lisää asiakkaalle hyvinvointia, tuetaan työkykyä ja terveyttä, niin se on varmaan se tärkeä. (Elisa)

### 4.2.3 Values as guiding agents

The interviewed leaders highlighted many times the importance of values and how they wanted to be able to realize them also in their working life. This characteristic supports their career choice specifically in a social enterprise, since the operations of a social enterprise are built on ethical principles and a strong value base (Koskela et al. 2015), meaning that values are an inseparable part of the enterprise's everyday actions. All of the interviewees experienced that the social enterprise's values are for the most part in line with their own personal values, which makes their careers more satisfying for them. For example Liisa and Elisa expressed how similar values make them feel comfortable at work.

> How do you feel that the values of this enterprise and your own values go together? (Riikka)
>
> They go very well, yeah. For that very reason I have been here year after year. (Liisa)
>
> Miten koet, että nää organisaation arvot ja sun omat arvot menee yhteen? (Riikka)
>
> Menee tosi hyvin, joo. Sen takiahan mä täällä oonkin vuodesta toiseen. (Liisa)
>
> The [values] are consistent, in line. – I think that they are like all the time similar. I mean that for that very reason I feel comfortable here. – That if somehow I didn't value these things or they weren't in line, maybe I couldn't take it so much. (Elisa)
>
> Ne [arvot] on yhdenmukaisia, yhdensuuntaisia. -- Mun mielestä ne on niinku koko ajan samanlaiset. Siis että sen takiahan täällä niinku viihtyy. -- Että jos ei jotenkin näitä asioita arvostaisi tai olisi niin kun samansuuntainen, niin ei ehkä jaksaisi tehdä sitä niin paljon. (Elisa)

One feature in the interviewees' narration that I noticed was that they spoke several times about the possibility a social enterprise offers them to realize their own values. Jaakko values helping people with a lower status, and even though he believes that everyone should take responsibility of their own actions and that a difficult situation should not be used as an excuse, he wants to support people when they are trying to find the right direction for their lives. This is what Jaakko can do in his current career in a social enterprise.

Liisa appreciates sophistication and education. For her a sophisticated person is not only someone who has studied a lot, but more like someone who understands the world around them and who recognizes that people have different realities in which they live. This is what interests Liisa a lot and inspires her in her career. Tommi respects the fact that in the social enterprise where he works the results are not only measured in money and the enterprise's profit seeking does not outweigh other aspects. Instead, more attention is paid on the enterprise's social mission and so called soft values.

> The results of this work are not measured only in euros. So the economic return and profit seeking is not the most important indicator of this enterprise, but other aspects. Of course you can't deny that the euros wouldn't matter, but it's not the first thing to measure this. -- So here the hard values and euros are not the first indicator. (Tommi)
>
> Tän työn tuloksia ei niinku mitata puhtaasti pelkkinä euroina. Et se taloudellinen tulos ja voitontavoittelu ei oo se tän yrityksen tärkein mittari, vaan muut asiat. Toki eihän sitäkään voi kieltää, etteikö niillä euroillakin olis merkitystä, mutta se ei oo se ensimmäinen, millä tätä mitataan. -- Et täällä ne kovat arvot ja eurot ei oo se ensimmäinen mittari. (Tommi)

I asked Elisa why she wanted to have a career specifically in a social enterprise, and she referred to her field of study and how her vocation had guided her career choice. She also mentioned that she values work that is target-oriented and aims to increase customer satisfaction, which is what she can do in her present social enterprise. Again, Elisa emphasized the importance of values in her career and how they were significant for her career choice. She also expressed that

doing work that corresponds with her values makes the work more meaningful and enjoyable.

> It must have been from this very same basis that also the decision to study this field was. So the social and health care sectors have been those I have been for some reason thinking all the time that these are like my options. All the choices have come from this. -- I have come here specifically through my vocation. That there is the work that is done for the good of the customer, target-oriented and -- work that increases customer satisfaction, I mean it is the number one in my values as well. -- The values here are very important, it is like what makes this work nice. -- The values indeed have significance in that. And isn't it said that if you try to work against your values, you will experience anxiety at work. So kind of you can cope with a lot of work, when it is meaningful and matches with your own values. (Elisa)

> Se oli varmasti tätä ihan samaa lähtökohtaa, mitä on tälle alalle hakeutuminen. Eli niin kun sosiaali-terveysala on ollu ne, mitä jostakin syystä olen koko ajan ajatellu, että nää on niinku niitä mun vaihtoehtoja. Kaikki ne valinnat on ollu tästä. -- Mä oon tullu nimenomaan sen ammatin kautta tänne. Et on siel se asiakkaan hyväksi tehtävä, semmonen tavoitteellinen ja -- asiakastyytyväisyyttä lisäävä työ, siis se on niin kun ykkösenä mun arvoissa myöskin. -- Kyl tää arvomaailma on hyvin tärkeä tässä, ja se tekee sen työn niin kun semmoseks mukavaks. -- Arvoilla on kyllä merkitys siinä. Ja sillaihan sanotaankin, että jos arvojen vastaisesti yrittää työskennellä, niin se näkyy sitten työpahoinvointina. Et tavallaan niinku jaksaa tehdä paljonkin työtä, kun se on sitä mielekästä ja omien arvojen kanssa samansuuntaista. (Elisa)

For Markus listening to punk rock in his youth was an important factor that partly guided his career choice into a certain direction. Immersing himself into the lyrics and letting their message sink in affected his worldview and shaped his values. As the lyrics resonated within him, Markus chose already at a young age to support similar values. That desire to have an influence and to make the world a better place directed him to later choose a career in a social enterprise, where this kind of influencing and doing good were possible.

> Well absolutely punk rock. So punk rock was music, which in its lyrics very strongly took a stand on societal defects, unemployment of the youth… So I mean in that sensible age, you know like in adolescence, I used to read the lyrics of those songs, learn them by heart and I thought, they spoke to me. And there were so many of these, well of course I myself was also of the opinion that unemployment of the youth is a horrible thing as a young person, of course I thought that this kind of police state mentality and -- spying and monitoring and these things suck and so on. And those lyrics spoke to me, so above all it must have been a choice of values. (Markus)

> No ihan ehdottomasti, niin tota, punk rock. Elikkä punk rock oli musiikkia, joka sanoituksissa otti erittäin voimakkaasti kantaa yhteiskunnallisiin epäkohtiin, nuorisotyöttömyyteen… Niin siis niin kun siinä herkässä iässä, tiedäksä niinku murrosiässä, niin mä luin niitä laulujen sanoja, opettelin niitä ulkoo ja mietin, ne puhutteli mua. Ja siel oli hirveesti semmosii, siis totta kai mä niin kun olin itsekin sitä mieltä, et nuorisotyöttömyys on kauhee juttu nuorena ihmisenä, totta kai mä olin sitä mieltä, että siis semmonen niin kun poliisivaltiomentaliteetti ja -- kyttäys ja valvonta ja semmonen on perseestä ja niin edelleen. Ja ne sanat puhutteli mua, et se oli ennen kaikkee niin kun varmaan semmonen arvomaailmavalinta. (Markus)

When I asked Liisa what motivates her to work specifically in a social enterprise, she directly referred to the values that guide the enterprise's operations. She supports the same values as the enterprise and feels good to be advancing those

causes in the society. The same ways as Tommi, she also highlighted the importance of work where people are given priority over monetary achievements.

> Well this is a very easy question. I mean of course the values and the value based doing, I believe so much in [this social enterprise's] values and their way of thinking, into which belong strengthening the local community spirit and recognizing individual's strengths and supporting and then this accepting of differences and multiculturalism. And somehow I see that even though I'm not directly doing the customer work, I think it is great that I can be advancing these causes in this society. That it's not only about the quarter and its result, but somehow our actions are more persevering and human-oriented. (Liisa)

> No täähän nyt on tosi helppo kysymys. Siis tietenkin ne arvot ja se arvopohjanen tekeminen, että mää uskon valtavasti [tämän yhteiskunnallisen yrityksen] niinku arvoihin ja ajattelumaailmaan, mihin kuuluu tää paikallisyhteisöllisyyden vahvistaminen ja yksilön voimavarojen tunnistaminen ja kannustaminen ja sitten tää erilaisuuden hyväksyminen ja monikulttuurisuus. Ja niinku jotenki mä nään, että vaikka mä en suoraan tee sitä asiakastyötä, et niinku mun mielestä on hienoo, et voi olla edistämässä näitä asioita tässä yhteiskunnassa. Että ei oo vaan niinku se kvartaali ja sen tulos, että niinku jotenki semmosta pitkäjänteisempää toimintaa ja ihmislähtöistä. (Liisa)

Heidi became to a conclusion about which career to choose by pondering her own values. She went through an inner process, after which she wanted to find a career that would better match with what she finds important.

> Actually it came, like I said, through this own inner process. I thought that I could have this values base, or like I could do something that somehow feels that it's close to my heart. (Heidi)

> Oikeestaan se tuli, niinku mä sanoin, et semmosen niinku oman sisäisen prosessin kautta. Et ajatteli, et vois tämmöstä niinku arvopohjaa, tai niinku vois tehdä jotain, joka niinku jollain tavalla tuntuu, et on lähellä niinku sydäntä. (Heidi)

Both Kati and Heidi narrated that they are persons who do not consider people's differences as something odd but they accept and respect everyone. They explained how every person is precious and should be helped regardless of their looks, situation, social class or other such thing. This kind of way of thinking goes well together with the value base of a social enterprise. The possibility to help others and similar values motivated Kati and Heidi to choose their career in a social enterprise.

> Well I have always been, I have this temperament that if I see that someone is in trouble, I always go to help. -- And kind of I don't, if some see that isn't that a strange, weird person, and stay away from them, I'm not bothered by them but I see that one must be just. And no one should be bullied, this way of thinking, and if someone needs help, of course everyone will help them. So this kind of way of thinking fits pretty well then. I don't experience any inconsistency in this enterprise's models of operating or values, so compared to my own values they are very similar. (Kati)

> Kun mä oon aina ollu, mul on semmonen luonteenlaatu, et jos mä nään, että joku on pulassa, niin mä meen aina auttamaan. -- Ja mä en niinku, jos jotkut näkee, et onpas omituinen, kummallinen ihminen, et pysyy kaukana, niin mua ei niinku häiritse semmoset, vaan mä nään, että pitää olla reilu. Eikä ketään ei saa kiusata, tätä ajatusmaailmaa, ja jos joku tarvii apua, niin totta kai kaikki auttaa. Niin se sopii aika hyvin

tämmönen ajatusmaailma sitten. Mä en koe niin kun mitään ristiriitaa tän yrityksen -- toimintamalleissa tai arvoissa, et mun omiin arvoihin nähden ne on hyvin saman-kaltaisia. (Kati)

I have naturally this [feature] that I can be and I understand and I feel that all people must be helped, no matter what they are like or in what kind of a situation they are. So I found from my own background and my own everyday life these points of re-semblance to the activities that are done here. And it was clearly a thing that was sought already in the recruitment phase, that how I can internalize and how well I know the things that are done here, how I respond to them. And the first question that the headhunter ever asked me in the interview was that '[Heidi], how would you describe your values.' And when I described my values, which I luckily had thought very well over with my coach, they are very similar. (Heidi)

*Mul on luonnostaan semmonen, et mä niin kun pystyn oleen ja mä ymmärrän ja must tuntuu, et kaikkii ihmisii pitää auttaa, oli ne mimmosii tahansa ja mimmoses ti-lantees tahansa. Joten mä löysin niin kun omasta taustastani ja omasta arkipäivän elämästä semmosia yhtymäkohtia siihen toimintaan, mitä täällä tehdään. Ja se oli selkeesti semmonen asia, jota jo siinä rekrytointivaiheessa kovasti haettiin, et miten mä osaan niin kun sisäistää ja miten mä tunnen ne asiat mitä täällä tehdään, miten mä suhtaudun niihin. Ja ensimmäinen kysymys, minkä se headhunter mulle koskaan haastattelussa esitti, niin oli, et '[Heidi], miten sä kuvaisit sun arvosi.' Ja kun mä ku-vasin mun arvot, jotka mä onneks olin hyvin miettiny sen mun coachin kanssa, niin ne on hyvin samanlaiset. (Heidi)*

However, as Heidi expresses it, social enterprise's strong value base is not al-ways seen only as a positive thing but it can turn against itself. She described how very strong appreciation of certain values can turn the enterprise's actions discriminatory in a sense that only people with a clear, visible conviction are considered suitable to be in charge of particular tasks. Even though Heidi has not taken that kind of pressure too personally, she still feels that it does take a little shine off the brilliant picture of a social enterprise. After all, social enter-prises are still enterprises with normal people in them, and nothing is as perfect as is looks from the outside.

Maybe I can also say that sometimes this kind of very strong value base can also be pretty discriminating. -- For example when we started to think about the strategy, how would we take this [enterprise] forward and what kind of service production and how. So they thought that a financial officer can't have anything to give in that matter, because how could she understand this kind of -- social service work. Which is completely rubbish. And that is like pretty discriminating. So you can see it here in good and bad. Well, one should never be crushed under such or anything, but it does make a little fracture in the fine social enterprise and the value base, when you think that it can be twisted like that. And if it is twisted like this in the executive group, I wonder how it is twisted there in other areas. So that is something to think about then. (Heidi)

*Ehkä myös voi sanoo sitten sen, että joskus tämmönen kovin voimakas arvopohja niin se voi olla joskus myös aika diskriminoivaakin. -- Esimerkiks kun lähdettiin miettimään niinku strategiaa, et kuinka me viedään tätä [yritystä] eteenpäin ja min-kälaista palvelutuotantoa ja miten. Nii ajateltiin, et ei talousjohtajalla voi olla siihen mitään annettavaa, kun eihän se voi ymmärtää niinku tämmöstä -- sosiaalipalvelu-työtä. Joka on niinku täysin roskaa. Ja sehän on semmosta aika diskriminoivaakin. Et se näkyy täällä hyvässä ja huonossa. -- Sinänsä semmosen allehan ei pidä koskaan niinku musertua tai jotain, mut kyllähän se semmosen pienen särön tekee siihen hie-noon yhteiskunnalliseen yritykseen ja arvopohjaan, kun sä ajattelet, et se voi kääntyy*

noin. Ja jos se kääntyy johtoryhmässä näin, niin mitenköhän se kääntyy tuolla muual-
la. Et sitä miettii sitten. (Heidi)

## 4.2.4 Value paradox

One issue that I noticed from the social enterprise leaders' narration was the
tension between social missions and financial goals. As Smith et al. (2012) ex-
plain, this paradoxical nature of social enterprises is based on contrasting val-
ues, economic and societal. Hence, when other employees concentrate on fur-
thering the financial viability of the enterprise, at the same time others strive to
advance the social objectives or deem them to be superior. This dichotomy may
create some confusion as not everyone realizes the worth of the other side of the
operations, and thus a leader must be well prepared to deal with issues rising
from separate values. (Smith et al. 2012.) As can be interpreted from Liisa's nar-
ration, even though one understands the importance of these contrasting ap-
proaches, it can still be sometimes emotionally tough to balance both domains
adequately.

> Sometimes I think that I can't take this ideological nonsense anymore, that I will just
> go to some cold business. Because it's so straightforward and easy that… This com-
> bining of social and business focus, it is not always so easy. -- The finances are al-
> ways there, no matter what, so the mere ideology is not enough. So the cash flow
> should also come from somewhere. (Liisa)

> Välillä ajattelenkin, että mä en kestä tätä niinku tämmöstä ideologista diipadaapaa,
> että mää lähen johonki ihan kylmään bisnekseen. Että tota, se on niin yksoikosta ja
> helppoo, että… Tää yhteiskunnallisuuden ja bisnestoiminnan yhdistäminen, niin se-
> hän ei oo aina mitenkään helppoo. -- Se talous on siel kuitenkin aina, että pelkkä
> ideologia ei riitä. Että pitäs sit sitä rahavirtaakin jostain kuitenkin tulla. (Liisa)

Heidi and Elisa narrated how they have seen and understood this paradox in
their daily operations as a leader in a social enterprise. Heidi described that
some people in her enterprise do not quite understand the relation between fi-
nances and a value based work. She explained that many times the societal val-
ues and helping people are considered more important than taking care of the
economical side. However, in reality it is not possible even for a social enter-
prise to keep functioning without income or with poor finances, since when the
enterprise runs out of money, so does the pursuit of social missions end as well.
As a leader, Heidi acknowledges the tensions that these two competing de-
mands create. Still, she sees them as inseparable components that both must be
present at all times in order for the social enterprise to operate.

> In these, which very much arise from some values and ideology, then these economi-
> cal matters, they are not considered interesting at all. -- Here we actually have the
> contradiction, I don't see it as a contradiction, but some experience it as a contradic-
> tion. And maybe the fact that we don't really have a mutual understanding of what
> the relationship between the finances and this [value based] work is. -- But today
> here we are somehow living in a world that somehow we feel it unpleasant to think
> about the economic value of the service we provide. And it is in my opinion, it is not
> right, since the finances are part of the heart of the [work]. It is an indispensable part
> of the realization. If, when the money has been used, then the [work] can't be done

either. What will you do then? And I don't see them as opposed but I see them like as best friends, who are going hand in hand all the time. (Heidi)

Tämmösis niinku, jotka kovasti ponnistaa jostain arvo ja ideologiasta, nii sit niinku tämmöset talousasiat, nehän ei tunnu ollenkaan mielenkiintosilta. -- Täällä on oikeestaan semmonen ristiriita, mä en nää siitä ristiriitana, mut jotkut kokee sen ristiriitana. Ja ehkä se, että meil ei oo oikein yhteistä ymmärrystä siitä, et mikä tän talouden ja tän tämmösen [arvopohjaisen] työn suhde on. -- Mutta tänä päivänä täällä niin me eletään jotenki sellasessa maailmassa, et jotenki koetaan niin kun epämiellyttävänä ajatella sitä sen tehtävän palvelun taloudellista arvoa. Ja se on mun mielestä, se ei oo oikein, koska se talous on osa sitä [työn] sydäntä. Se on ihan välttämätön osa sitä toteuttamista. Jos, sit kun ne rahat on syöty, niin sit ei sitä [työtäkään] voi tehä. Mitäs sä sitten teet? Ja mä en nää niitä vastakkaisina vaan nään ne niinku parhaina kavereina, niinku jotka kulkee käsi kädessä koko ajan. (Heidi)

Elisa described the same feature in her narration, but she especially referred to industries that are dominated by women. She recounted how many employees may see the economical aspect as something unappealing, even though it is a natural and necessary part of the enterprise's and in a bigger picture the whole society's functioning. Elisa as a leader wants to be able to conceive both elements, social and economical, and she realizes that binding these contrasting values together offers a possibility to exercise creativity in the enterprise. Research also supports the emergence of increased creativity as a result of this kind of blending of two conflicting domains (Smith & Lewis 2011; Smith et al. 2012).

But many employees in these industries, which are dominated by women, they kind of shut out completely the administration and finances and those are even considered to be contrary to the work and values and else. And of course I have to do in my job, like to see those both, but I maybe take it more like a certain challenge and such, which presents an opportunity for creativity. That these just must be matched and both of these elements must be seen. -- But in my opinion there really are present the different rationalities and I haven't experienced them as something strange. I do recognize them, I maybe take it as a challenge that -- we don't only rebel against it and shut it out, like I'm not even gonna talk about money, because I only want to focus on this good work. Many employees in the social and health care sector feel that money and administration is a contradictory element and they rebel against it, they see it as a bad thing. That when you are taking care of your [customer], they should receive all the good possible. And indeed it is like this. But this society can't work like that, but someone is always setting boundaries and so. So I want to see more widely here. (Elisa)

Mutta monet työntekijät näillä aloilla, jotka on naisvaltaisia aloja, niin he tavallaan sulkee kokonaan sen hallinnon ja talouden pois ja ne on jotenkin jopa vastakkaisia sille työlle ja arvoille ja muulle. Ja mä nyt sit tietysti joudunkin tekeen työssäni, niinku näkemään ne molemmat, mutta mä otan sen ehkä enemmän semmosena tietynlaisena haasteena ja semmosena, joka tarjoaa tietynlaiselle luovuudelle taas mahdollisuutta. Että nää vaan pitää niin kun sovittaa yhteen ja nähdä molemmat elementit. -- Mutta et siinä on todella mun mielestä läsnä nää erilaiset rationaliteetit, ja mä en niitä oo kokenu vieraana. Että tunnistan ne kyllä, mä otan ehkä haasteena sen, että -- ei pelkästään niinku kapinoida sitä vastaan ja sulkea pois, että en puhukaan rahasta, koska haluan keskittyä vain tähän hyvään työhön. Että monet sosiaali- ja terveysalan työntekijähän kokee, et se on vastakkainen elementti se raha ja hallinto ja sitä kohtaan kapinoidaan, nähdään niin kun, et se on paha asia. Et kun sä hoidat sitä [asiakasta], niin hänen tulee saada se kaikki mahdollinen hyvä. Ja näinhän se on. Mutta sitten kun tää yhteiskunta ei voi toimia niin, vaan siihen joku asettaa aina rajoja ja näin. Niin mä haluan nähdä tässä laajemminkin sitten. (Elisa)

Also Markus and Petri referred to this value paradox in their telling. They did not, however, speak about the enterprises in which they work, but about other social enterprises they had met along the way. Markus told how he had seen enterprises that did not function according to financial principles but instead focused more on the social impact and mission at hand. He criticized their low interest in the financial side of operations and mentioned that problems arise because they only measure social impact, forgetting that they have a double role in their functioning. Petri was concerned that some social enterprises are not guided by business-like thinking. Even though he appreciates their efforts and understands that they are doing their best to advance social goals, still he feels that some enterprises might be focusing their energy into a wrong direction and a little improving should take place. In keeping with the interviewees' perception, also Smith et al. (2012) state that it would be beneficial for all social enterprises to try their best to integrate these competing demands, thus eluding the threat of losing focus and turning into a purely social mission-oriented enterprise, for instance.

## 4.3    Career choice as an aim for professional development

There were many social enterprise leaders that in their career choice stories expressed their desire for professional development. The main characteristics of this story type are the will to advance one's career and the desire for more challenges and change. The narrative progresses when a new inspiring job has been found, and then regresses respectively when one gets bored in their old job or wants something else. These kinds of phases alternate many times, and hence the story of career choice as an aim for professional development can be described as romantic saga (Gergen & Gergen 1988) (Graph 3).

There is not really an all-encompassing starting point for this story type, since the progressive and regressive phases take turns in a different order and deviate among the interviewees. However, to cast light on this story type I will concentrate in more detail on the narration of one particular interviewee, whose career choice story has for the most part complied with this kind of narrative form.

Heidi's story began as she returned to Finland from abroad, where she had been with her husband. She had already graduated, so she quickly got a job and everything was going fine. But then her children got sick and Heidi needed to stay at home with them for a certain period. After some time, though, she was able to start working again.

> And then our family moved back at the end of 90's, and then I left to work in a [particular organization]. But then I came back and again stayed at home, both of these kids were a bit sick, only allergic, and nowadays they're completely normal already. But so I got back home, and then back to the working life. (Heidi)

*Ja sit meijän perhe muutti takasin 90-luvun lopulla, ja sit mä lähdin [erääseen yritykseen] töihin. Mut sit mä palasin ja olin viel sit uudestaan kotona, et nää molemmat lapset oli vähän sairaita, semmosii niinku vaan allergisia ja nyt nykyään ihan niinku normi-ihmisiä jo. Mutta palasin sit kotiin, ja sit takaisin työelämään. (Heidi)*

Coming to Finland and having a job indicates a progressive narrative. Then the narrative turns regressive, as Heidi's children got sick and she had to give up her job. She won this battle, and the narrative rises again into a progressive one as she got another job. So, getting a job means that the narrative has a high positive peak, but soon Heidi realized that the job was not what she wanted and the narrative turns downward again. Then she however changed her job again and progressed in her career, thus turning the narrative positive.

And actually then I realized, when I went to that [particular organization], that the world of engineers was not very familiar to me... Or like it's always very nice when I can somehow connect myself to what I'm doing, so that I understand also what I'm counting and I don't just count something. And that is how I ended up changing very soon from that [organization] to a [banking and finance company]. -- And there in one year I rose to lead their financial administration unit, so then I kind of like ended up back to the world of banking and finances. (Heidi)

*Ja oikeestaan sillon hoksasin, kun mä menin [kyseiseen yritykseen], että se insinöörimaailma ei ollu mulle kauheen lähei--... Tai niinku, musta on aina hirveen kiva kun mä voin liittyä siihen, mitä tehdään, et mä ymmärränkin sit, mitä mä lasken, enkä mä vaan laske jotakin. Ja sitä kautta sitten päädyin vaihtamaan hyvin pian sieltä [yrityksestä] sit semmoseen [pankki- ja rahoitusalan yritykseen]. -- Ja siellä sitten niinku vuoden sisällä nousin vetämään sitä niiden varainhoitoyksikköä, eli sitten päädyin taas takaisin niinku vähän tonne varainhoidon ja pankkimaailman puolelle. (Heidi)*

The same trend continues, as Heidi got used to the old job and a new job was offered to her. Again, changing job brings new positivity into the story, as Heidi was excited about her new position and her career developed more. But then she decided to end a function that she was leading in the company. This creates a new regressive turn in the narrative, and again a choice must be made concerning the next workplace.

It was a very appealing position and again I left since I was contacted. -- So for the first time I did something that I have done also later in my career, but I kind of like cut the branch I was sitting on. (Heidi)

*Se oli tosi houkutteleva paikka ja taas mä lähdin, kun mut kontaktoitiin. -- Eli ensimmäistä kertaa mä tein nyt sit sellasen, näin mä oon tehny muutenkin mun urallani, mut mä niinku sahasin oksan pois itseltäni. (Heidi)*

Again a new progressive narrative takes place, as Heidi got the next job and was very interested in it. But, as anticipated, she soon got bored of it and did not want to commit herself to that job for a too long period. This makes another regressive turn in the narrative.

Well, then I got there. And it was absolutely intriguing. -- Then it would have required about from five to seven years of commitment to that, and then I just realized that I'm not willing to do that. -- I spoke with the CEO immediately after the one and a half years. I said that this is not the thing for me. -- Well, then I finished the acquisi-

tion there, as I said that you must always do your job well, although you have decided to leave. (Heidi)

*No, sit mä pääsin sinne. Ja kauheen mielenkiintonen. -- Sillon se ois vaatinut semmoset viidest seittemään vuotta varmaan sitoutumista siihen touhuun, jonka jälkeen mä sit vaan totesin, että sitä mä en oo halukas tekemään. -- Mä puhuin sen toimitusjohtajan kanssa sit heti sillon puolentoistavuoden jälkeen. Mä sanoin, että tää ei oo mulle se juttu. -- No sit mä vein sen yrityskaupan siellä loppuun, niinku sanoin, et aina pitää työt tehdä hyvin loppuun, vaik on päättäny lähteekin. (Heidi)*

An interesting section in this story is the last regressive-progressive pair. For the first time values came in, as Heidi left the previous company and started to think about her motivations and what she really wanted to achieve in life. She had a long history of changes, challenges and development in her career, and now she was finally ready to stop for a moment. As a result of this reflection, Heidi finally advanced in her career to a point where she chose to work in a social enterprise. This is the last progressive narrative, as she is content in her current job and finds the work interesting. Nevertheless, in accordance with the romantic saga narrative, also this story is inclined to have a new regressive phase after the bliss. This anticipated turn can be seen also in Heidi's narration, when she tells about her current career.

Are you, however, satisfied with your current career? (Riikka)

Yes, yes. Like I said, it's professionally extremely interesting. What worries me is that if for example after a year there wouldn't be so interesting work to do. What I'm always reminded of is that I know how impatient I am and that I get bored easily, so I might come to a sad end. (Heidi)

*Ootko kuitenkin tyytyväinen tähän sun nykyiseen uraan? (Riikka)*

*Oon oon. Niinku mä sanoin, ammatillisesti hirveen mielenkiintosta. Et se mua huolettaa, et jos tässä vaikka vuoden päästä ei ookaan enää näin mielenkiintosia hommia. Se mua niinku takaraivossa aina vähän kolkuttais, et mä tiedän, miten kärsimätön mä oon ja kyllästyvä, niin mullehan käy huonosti. (Heidi)*

getting back to Finland,
graduating, getting a job

new exciting job,
career development

career in a social
enterprise, excitement

EVALUATION

getting bored
again?

children's health problems,
work not meeting expectations
cutting the branch one is sitting on

not wanting to commit,
reflecting on own values,
searching for a meaning

TIME
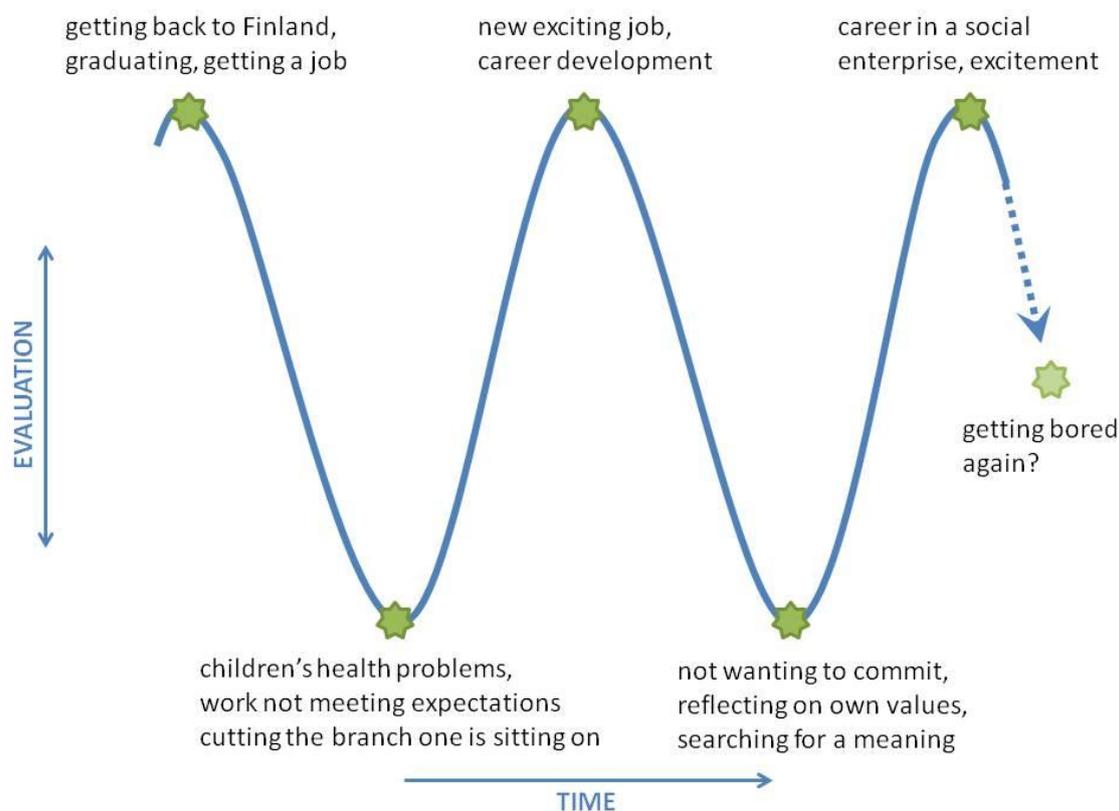
GRAPH 3 Career choice as an aim for professional development (adapted and extended from romantic saga narrative by Gergen & Gergen 1988, 26).

### 4.3.1 Striving for advancing the career

Advancing the career one wants to achieve can start already at a young age. For example, after his graduation Jaakko wanted to get a job that would correspond with his studies and he did not want to settle for something less. Also Markus wanted to start building a career that would give him many opportunities in the future. He was eager to develop himself and to broaden his skills, and thus he realized that he should begin progressing in his career already when he was young and search for job openings that would build his expertise. Also Kati and Liisa wanted to develop their expertise, and that led them to move away from an old workplace and to look for new, more challenging career opportunities.

> I was convinced that I don't want to go back to the old job. That it doesn't develop me. (Kati)

> Mä vakuutuin siitä, et mä en haluu palata siihen vanhaan tehtävään. Et se ei kehitä mua. (Kati)

> How would I express it nicely, but well the work atmosphere and the work community was not feeling well, and there I wasn't able to develop myself professionally either. (Liisa)

> Miten sen nyt kauniisti ilmaisee, mut siis se työilmapiiri ja se työyhteisö ei voinu hyvin, ja siellä ei päässy itse niinku ammatillisesti myöskään kehittymään. (Liisa)

Elisa told how she had previously changed her job because she wanted to progress in her career. Jaakko described how he wanted to have a career path with a meaningful focus, and when he noticed that he finally was on that path, he felt satisfied. It can thus be interpreted, that finding a clear career path and progressing in the chosen career creates satisfaction and contentment in people. Liisa narrated how she had a willingness to develop herself and advance in her career. She was broad-minded and had the courage to throw herself into the new and unknown.

> And then I have thought that, well, I absolutely must check this card out while this is offered. Because if you want to develop and advance in your career, you should take the opportunities that are given to you, rather than hold back and then think afterwards that why you didn't take it when you had the chance. A different thing was whether I was ready, possibly I wasn't, but kind of the fact that I did so. (Liisa)

> Ja sit mä oon aatellu, että no pakkohan tää kortti on nyt kattoo, kun tätä tarjotaan. Että jos haluu niinku kehittyy ja mennä uralla eteenpäin, niin et tarttuu niihin tilaisuuksiin, mitä avautuu, kuin että sitte himmailee ja miettii jälkikäteen, että miksei tarttunu, kun oli tilaisuus. Eri asia oli, olinko mä valmis, en varmaan ollu, mutta niinku tavallaan se, että teki näin. (Liisa)

Heidi and Liisa expressed in their narration that they have always worked hard in order to achieve their goals. They also mentioned that their career development has been an outcome of the hard work they have done. They both have a high self-confidence; Heidi has always trusted in herself and Liisa has worked ambitiously.

> I have always been very trusting, I'm a little simple in a way that I think that when you work hard, your [goals] will be fulfilled. (Heidi)

> Mä oon ollu aina kauheen luottavainen, mä oon vähän silleen yksinkertanen, mä aattelen, et kun kovasti tekee töitä, niin ne [tavoitteet] kyllä toteutuu. (Heidi)

> But I have always done my work ambitiously, and like I have wanted to do it well. And that has possibly led to the forming of my career development. (Liisa)

> Mutta kunnianhimoisesti oon tehny aina työni, ja niinku halunnu tehä ne hyvin. Ja se on varmaan johtanu sit siihen, et tavallaan on syntynyt myös se urakehitys. (Liisa)

Leena was determined already as a child, when she decided the career she wanted to pursue in her life. She did not have close relatives with the same vocation, so it was purely her own personal choice. Leena started to systematically develop her career aspirations to the desired direction, which finally led to the actual career choice. Later in life she began to gain interest in leadership, and even though she recounted that she grew to be a leader, she already had that willingness in her to take responsibility and pursue a leading position. After gaining work experience in various companies, Leena decided to continue her career in a social enterprise. She applied to a job opening and got accepted.

Leena expressed that for her the career choice in a social enterprise was a natural continuum for her career advancement.

> And then to this [social enterprise] I sought my way, I noticed the announcement and I applied. -- I do believe that it has been progressing in my career. So I don't think I would have gotten into that [particular company] -- if I didn't have had that experience. -- And then on one other hand, when I was actively developing the public utility, I was asked to be the CEO there. And then on the other hand, when I was acting as the CEO of this [other company], from there I was asked to [another company]. So yeah, this has been consistent. (Leena)

> Ja sitten tänne [yhteiskunnalliseen yritykseen] mä kyllä ihan hakeuduin itse, että huomasin ilmotuksen ja hain. -- Kyl mä uskon, että se on ollu uralla etenemistä. Elikkä en mä varmaan [erääseen yritykseen] olis -- päässy, ellei mulla ois ollu sitä kokemusta. -- Ja sitten toisaalta taas niin, kun mä olin aktiivisesti sitä liikelaitosta kehittämässä, niin mut pyydettiin siihen toimitusjohtajaksi. Ja sitten toisaalta, kun mä toimin siellä [toisen yrityksen] toimitusjohtajana, niin mut sieltä sitten pyydettiin sinne [kolmanteen yritykseen]. Ja silleen, et kyl tää niinku ihan johdonmukasta on ollu. (Leena)

Jaakko narrated that a career in a social enterprise offers him more appealing challenges and is more versatile than a career in his previous, traditional company. He depicted that without his career in a social enterprise his professional skills would be more restricted, and that he enjoys more his current career with diverse activities. Kati was very pleased when she was asked to be a part of the executive group of the social enterprise in which she works. She felt that it was a considerable advancement in her career, and it also motivated her to keep on pursuing more development and learning both for herself and for the unit she is responsible for at work.

> And I did feel good, when in November I was asked to be a member of the executive group. It is though a rise in a career, so I'm extremely pleased with this current situation at the moment. Actually my only worry or such is that how should I now develop myself, my career needs to develop, my own competence, and then on the other hand how can I develop this unit, which I'm responsible for. -- My thought is to possibly get some more training again. -- But then, organizations change, so maybe there are some things that will naturally move to the background from my responsibilities and then some new things will come which I could learn more about. (Kati)

> Ja kyl must tuntu hyvältä, kun marraskuussa mut kutsuttiin johtoryhmän jäseneks. Että kyllähän se on niin kun semmonen urapompsaus, että mä oon valtavan tyytyväinen tän hetkiseen, vallitsevaan tilanteeseen. Että oikeestaan ainut semmonen mun vähän niinku huoli, et miten mun pitää nyt kehittyä itse, mun uran pitää kehittyä, mun oman osaamisen, ja toisaalta miten mä voin kehittää tätä yksikköä, josta mä vastaan. -- Mulla on ajatuksena mahdollisesti jotain lisäkoulutusta taas hankkia. -- Ja toisaalta sitten organisaatiot elää, että onko sitten joitain asioita, jotka tästä mun vastuukentästä ehkä jossain vaiheessa luonnollisesti siirtyy taka-alalle ja sit tulee jotain uusia asioita, joita vois oppia sitten itse lisää. (Kati)

Also Elisa and Tommi expressed their desire to keep advancing their career more in the future, as they underlined the importance of continuous development and learning.

> Yeah I would like this continuous learning and studying, these kinds of goals I still have, like to study still more. (Tommi)

> *Kyllä mä niinku tollasta jatkuvaa oppimista ja opiskelua, sellasia tavotteita on vielä, vielä niinku opiskellakin lisää. (Tommi)*

## 4.3.2 Challenge quest

Wanting more challenges is a feature that repeats itself many times in the interviewees' career stories. It can already be seen in the study choices they made in their youth and what made them change their jobs earlier in their career. For example, Petri narrated how already when he was choosing his studies he was not afraid of setbacks but decided to pursue a particular study place regardless of the fact that it was very hard to get accepted. Instead, he wanted to look for a little challenge already back then. Jaakko told how in his previous workplace he found the courage to run a risk and step into a leading position. Even though he explained that being out of one's comfort zone is not always a pleasant experience, it still can create much bigger feelings of success. This sense of excitement when mastering a difficult situation pushed Jaakko to move forward in his career. Heidi also described that she got excited about an interesting position in a company, and thus she changed from her old job the new one because she was looking for more challenges in her career.

> And then [one company] contacted me, and they were looking for a manager. -- It was a very inviting position and again I left as I was contacted, so then I left there. (Heidi)
>
> Why did you decide to leave? (Riikka)
>
> Oh well, actually I went after the bigger challenge, after all it was so cool. (Heidi)
>
> *Ja sit [eräs yritys] otti yhteyttä, ja he haki johtajaa. -- Se oli tosi houkutteleva paikka ja taas mä lähdin, kun mut kontaktoitiin, ja mä lähin sit sinne. (Heidi)*
>
> *Miks sä päätit lähtee? (Riikka)*
>
> *No tota, oikeestaan sen suuremman haasteen perässä, kyl se oli kuitenkin sit makee. (Heidi)*

Kati and Heidi expressed in their storytelling their determination to go through whatever may lie ahead in their career. They believe in themselves and are not afraid of challenges, which has guided their progress in their career and their career choice.

> I never say no. That no I won't. I don't have that, even though the task seems as impossible as can be, my starting point is always that I begin to think, how I would solve the issue. (Kati)
>
> *Mä en koskaan sano ei. Et ei käy. Et mulla ei oo niinku semmosta, vaikka ois miten mahdoton asia, niin mun lähtökohta on aina se, et mä rupeen miettiin, et no miten se asia nyt sit hoidetaan. (Kati)*
>
> I'm interested in holistic responsibilities and such. So again I left, actually only after new challenges. And I have always been very trusting, I thought that I'll manage and I'll just go, and I have managed very well indeed. (Heidi)

> Mua kiinnostaa semmoset kokonaisvaltaset vastuut ja semmoset. Eli mä lähdin sit taas vaan niinku oikeestaan uusien haasteiden perässä. Ja mä oon ollu aina kauheen luottavainen, et mä aattelin, et kyllä mä pärjään ja kato niinku meen, ja kauheen hyvin oon pärjännykin. (Heidi)

Petri wanted to have something to tell to the future generations. In his career choice he was looking for adventure and excitement, and he has what can be described an "all or nothing" -mentality: even if what he is aiming for did not come to reality, he still would want to pursue it because of the possibility for it to succeed. Petri narrated the one should have an altruistic attitude and be willing to go all in when aspiring for something good and meaningful.

> Surely I think that it would be nice to have something to tell about when I'll be sitting in my rocking chair, if this thing goes forward. Of course in good and bad, like there is also something to recount even if it failed, so I don't mean that. But somehow I feel that there just needs to be people -- that if there is a reasonable thing to do, you would put all in and take the job forward. (Petri)

> Toki mä niinku aattelen, että olis ite kiikkustuolissa kerrottavaakin joskus, jos tää menee eteenpäin. Tietysti hyvässä ja pahassa, et jäähän siitäkin puseroon, vaikka se menis pieleen, niin ei silleen. Mut jotenkin mä koen, että täällä vaan pitää olla ihmisiä, -- että jos on jotain tolkun juttua, niin sitä pistää ittensä likoon ja vie eteenpäin sitä hommaa. (Petri)

Elisa narrated that it would have been too easy an option to stay in her old workplace and thus she wanted and pursue more challenges in her career. Similarly Leena was looking for special expertise and broad knowledge of her field, since it would provide her with more challenges than a specialization in one single area. This multidisciplinary nature was what made her feel excited about her work and career.

> Then at the point when I started specializing -- I was actually most interested in everything that was cross-disciplinary, that you needed to know about psychology and then also about chemistry and these kinds of things. If you think about the different exposures at workplace, they were very wide-ranging, so that the general -- knowledge wasn't enough anymore, that is what felt very interesting. (Leena)

> Sitten siinä vaiheessa, kun mä lähin erikoistuun, -- niin mua oikeestaan kiinnosti eniten kaikki tämmönen poikkitieteellisyys, et piti niin kun tietää psykologiasta ja sitten myös ihan kemiasta ja tällasista asioista. Jos ajattelee työpaikan erilaisii altisteita, niin hyvin laaja-alaisesti, et siihen ei se tavallinen -- osaaminen enää riittäny, niin se tuntu hyvin mielenkiintoselta. (Leena)

Liisa recounted that in a social enterprise she feels motivated by the challenges and experiences the enterprise offers. She enjoys tasks that arise strong emotions in her, since completing them successfully is rewarding for her and makes her feel that she has exceeded herself. Liisa described that all the challenges she faces make her grow professionally, which brings her great satisfaction. She looks for situations to grow and learn, and that has also made her stronger as a person. To quench this thirst for learning, a career in a social enterprise has proven a great choice for Liisa, since it has made possible the pursuit of challenges and career development.

And then the single successes at work and also that the work offers on a regular basis challenges that sometimes make my heart beat faster, like is this gonna work out. But then somehow at least I am the type of a person that I enjoy very much those situations where I need to kind of excel myself. And I must, I drift into situations where I haven't been before. Because you can't develop if you always keep doing the same things. -- Kind of I enjoy maybe professionally that I'm again one degree more ready when I have lived through a very hard process. So I don't get startled very easily. (Liisa)

Ja sitten yksittäiset onnistumiset työssä ja myös se, että työ tarjoaa tasasesti myös semmosii haasteita, jotka saa välillä silleen sydämen tykyttään, että onnistuuks tää. Mut sit jotenki mä ainakin oon sen tyyppinen, et sit mä nautinkin tosi paljon niistä tilanteista, et pitää vähän niinku ylittää itsensä. Ja pitää niinku, ajautuu niinku tilanteisiin, joissa ei aiemmin oo ollu. Koska eihän muuten voi kehittyy, että jos vaan aina tekee niinku niitä samoja juttuja. -- Tavallaan mä nautin ehkä ammatillisesti siitä, et mä oon taas niinku astetta valmiimpi, ku mä oon eläny läpi tavallaan semmosen tosi raskaan prosessin. Että mä en niinku hätkähdä enää kauheen helposti. (Liisa)

### 4.3.3 Desire for change

Many interviewees expressed that already in their study field choice they were aspiring for a career that would be varying in nature. Hence, they chose studies that would give them a lot of different career possibilities later in life. Petri chose his study field partly based on his impression that that particular field would give him the most opportunities to orient in different directions in his career. Leena mentioned the same thing, saying that she enjoys her profession because of all the different possibilities it offers. Kati narrated that when she was completing her first studies, she realized that she did not want to remain only in that field. She explained that she cannot keep performing only one job in one and same place but she needs change. Also Markus chose his studies because they did not educate him for a certain profession but instead gave possibilities for many different orientations.

My choice about [the field of study] was very much about the idea that from there you don't graduate into a certain profession, and I saw that as a richness. So I perceived that it would give me possibilities and paths to orient into many different fields. (Markus)

Mun se [opiskelualan] valinta oli pitkälti sitä, et ku sielt ei valmistuta mihinkään ammattiin, niin mä näin sen rikkautena. Elikkä mä näin, että se antaa mulle niin kun mahollisuuksia ja polkuja suunnata monillekin eri aloille. (Markus)

Kati got bored with her old job. As Inkson (2007, 258-259) explains, when a person notices that they are not satisfied in their current job, they must make a decision to regain that satisfaction. Kati felt that her career was not progressing in that company, so she decided to take a job alternation leave. She also wanted some time to think what she would do in the future in her life and career, and that is when she found the social enterprise where she is currently working.

Then I got tired of that job. It wasn't going anywhere, the organization was too small, -- and my boss didn't have professional competence to direct that group, our team. So I got tired of it and took a job alternation leave. I decided that now I will take an alternation leave and I will think what I will do when I grow up. And then I stayed a

bit over a year on alternation leave and then I started to look for a new job. And [this social enterprise] was seeking -- a project manager, so then I kind of from a competitor came here. (Kati)

*Sit mä kyllästyin siihen hommaan. Se ei edenny mihinkään, se organisaatio oli liian pieni, -- ja mun esimiehellä ei ollu ammatillista osaamista ohjata sitä ryhmää, sitä meijän tiimiä. Niinpä mä väsyin siihen ja jäin vuorotteluvapaalle. Mä päätin, että mä jään nyt vuorotteluvapaalle, ja mä mietin, mitä mä teen isona. Ja sit mä olin reilun vuoden vuorotteluvapaalla ja sit mä lähin hakeen uutta työpaikkaa. Ja [tämä yhteiskunnallinen yritys] haki -- projektipäällikköä, niin sit mä vähän niinku kilpailijalta tulin tänne. (Kati)*

Petri got tired with the continuous redundancies in his previous company and he decided to leave the organization. He knew he would receive a fair compensation if he accepted the layoff package the company was offering to him, and he was also presented an opportunity to get further training for half a year. So when the time came to decide who would give up their jobs, Petri was ready to do so. He explained that he would have felt sorry if he did not have left the company at that time.

Markus had some problems in his old workplace. That made him lose his motivation and finally he ended up leaving his job. Markus rethought his future aspirations, and that is when the social enterprise came into picture. He got excited about the enterprise and wanted to be a part of their operations.

Heidi was hoping for her position to change, but when it did not happen and hence she did not have the possibility to receive new assignments, she decided it was time for her to look for something new in her career. She left the old job and began her search for new opportunities.

Elisa had been doing similar kind of work in the social enterprise for quite some time, when the opportunity came for her to move into a leading position. When I asked her why she had moved into that position, she responded that she wanted to have change and new challenge in her career.

But of course you will encounter the limit, when you do similar kind of work, so I needed change. -- Maybe for me it was so that as I had done that customer work for so long, I wanted something else. Because when you do for ten years something similar, you want a new challenge then. (Elisa)

*Mutta siinä tulee tietysti rajansa sitten, kun tekee samantyyppistä työtä, niin kaipas vaihtelua. -- Se oli mulle varmaan semmonen, että kun oli niin pitkän aikaa tehny sitä asiakastyötä, niin halus jotain muuta. Et vaik kuitenkin, kun kymmenen vuotta teet samantyyppistä, että haluaa niin kun uutta haastetta sitten. (Elisa)*

Liisa narrated that she wants to be able to be renewed and not be stuck in one place. She described how change and further education are good in order to keep one lively. Liisa continuously desires new things in her career, as she does not want to be doing the same thing for many years and possibly ending up to a position where she cannot adapt to the situation at hand anymore.

I think that this can't be it, that all the time I must study more and so. Otherwise, if I get stuck, then I get stuck, so to keep myself a bit awake. -- My career goal is that I would have the courage to be renewed. That I wouldn't get stuck, the fear of getting stuck, like the fear of getting frozen is maybe my great fear, that I can't keep going

anymore. Because you see many people who are all the time in a massive hurry. And then when some development project should be organized, which would probably help to reduce the rush, then there is never time for it. And that is scary that you can't change your ways of behaving anymore. So that is what I'm afraid of. That will people laugh at me then when I'll be fifty plus, like 'look at that poor one, she has been doing these things in the same way for the last twenty years.' (Liisa)

*Et ite aattelen, että eikä tää varmaan oo tässä, että koko ajanhan sitä pitää opiskella lisää ja niinku. Muuten, jos jämähtää, niin sit jämähtää, että pitää ittensä vähän virkeenä. -- Se on mun uratavoite, et mä uskaltaisin niinku uudistua. Ettei jää jumiin, se jumittamisen pelko, semmonen jähmettymisen pelko on ehkä mun semmonen suuri pelko, ettei jaksa enää. Kato kun näkee paljon ihmisii, joilla on koko ajan hirvee kiire. Ja sit kun pitäs tehä joku kehittämisprojekti, mikä kenties jopa auttais vähentämään sitä kiirettä, ni sit ei oo koskaan aikaa siihen. Ja se on pelottavaa, ettei niinku enää pysty muuttaan toimintatapojaan. Niin sitä mä niinku pelkään. Että naureskellaanko mulle sitten, kun mä oon viiskyt plus, että 'toikin ressukka, on tehnyt näitä juttuja samalla tavalla viimeset kakskyt vuotta.' (Liisa)*

Overall, the desire for change has driven the interviewees forward in their career and directed their career choice. For example Johanna was bored in her old job, she thought that the work there was too similar everyday and thus she was interested in trying something else in her career. Leena depicted that it was possibly the midlife crisis that made her realize that she would still have 25 years career left and hence she wanted to try something new. Heidi explained that what has shaped her career is the fact that she gets bored easily but then she is also brave to try new things.

And I thought that now I'm brave and I want to do something else. -- I'm horrible, but I'm so, I get bored so quickly. (Heidi)

*Ja mä aattelin, että nyt mä oon rohkee ja mä haluun tehdä jotain muuta. -- Mä oon ihan kammottava, mutta mä oon niin, mä kyllästyn niin nopeasti. (Heidi)*

Finally, Kati summed up very well the characteristic that unites the interviewees who desire for change in their career. It is about being curious about the world around and finding interesting things here and there. It is also about lifelong learning and a will to progress in one's life and career.

So maybe it's the temperament that I always think like what should be done next. -- Since I'm never ready, I'm still not ready. I'm pretty much so that when something is becoming ready, I immediately start to think that what all the other nice things are that I could do. I have this life situation that I have thought that I will run out of time in this life. For real. The older I get, the more I realize how many interesting things there are still out there that I should learn and get to know and find out. (Kati)

*Et ehkä se on semmonen luonteenlaatu, että kun aina ajattelee, et mitäs sit seuraavaksi. -- Kun mä en oo koskaan valmis, mä en oo vieläkään valmis. Mä oon aika semmonen, et kun joku asia alkaa valmistumaan, niin mä rupeen heti miettimään, et mitä kaikkee kivaa muuta mä voin tehä. Et mul on semmonen elämäntilanne, et mä oon aatellu, et mulla jää, mulla niinku loppuu aika kesken täs elämässä. Oikeesti. Et mitä vanhemmaksi mä tulen, niin mä hoksaan, et miten paljon mielenkiintosia asioita on vielä, mitä mun pitäs oppii ja tutustua ja selvittää. (Kati)*

## 4.4    Significant factors for the career choice


The secondary research question for this thesis was to find out, what kinds of factors social enterprise leaders narrate as significant for their career choice in a social enterprise. Of course, there are many things that have had an impact on the leaders' career choice and sometimes even the ones telling their career stories are not aware of all the forces affecting this decision. This is due to the fact that there are plenty of factors affecting people's opinions and distorting their evaluation, and thus a career choice is never based completely on rationality. (Baruch 2004, 23; Inkson 2007, 116, 119.) For this reason it is not possible for the interviewees to narrate all possible factors that have been significant for their career choice, let alone for me as a researcher to interpret them from a large amount of data. Nevertheless, to answer this research question and to cast some light on this topic, I have here presented the most prominent factors that I was able to discern from the data.

To begin with, eight interviewees (Jaakko, Liisa, Heidi, Kati, Tommi, Johanna, Petri, Elisa) narrated relationships and networks significant for their career choice in a social enterprise. The significance of relationships and networks was constructed in three different ways. First, networks were told to be important because they had helped the interviewees in concrete ways to attain a desired career in a social enterprise. For example, Liisa was asked to come to work in a social enterprise, because the person asking knew her from before. The same happened to Elisa, who was also asked to make a change in her career and come into a social enterprise. Later on, Liisa as well as Kati and Tommi were assigned to managerial duties in their enterprises, as they were already known by the management. This can happen, since when you have a vast network of people around you and good relationships with others also inside the enterprise where you work, then your fellow workers and the management know you and what kind of a person you are and if you are suitable for a certain position. Second, the interviewees' professional networks and guidance from outside their personal circles helped them achieve the career they had aspired for. As an illustration, Heidi described that her coach and headhunted were crucial in attaining her current position. Congruently, mentors, coaches and headhunters have been key persons in this sense. Third, networks and relationships had provided the interviewees with support and encouragement. For example, Johanna got encouragement from her close relatives and friends to progress in her chosen career. All in all, Petri articulated well the importance of networks: whatever you do, you should not do it alone, because then you would just have too little opportunity.

Another factor that was narrated significant by eight interviewees (Jaakko, Liisa, Heidi, Kati, Petri, Johanna, Elisa, Leena) was family. There could be distinguished two kinds of family significance: impact of the childhood family and support from the actual family and spouse. Johanna described how childhood has partly affected everything in her career. Also Liisa mentioned that her prin-

ciple to do things as good as possible has come from her childhood family, and following that philosophy has been significant for her career choice. For most of the interviewees their current family did not directly affect their career choice, but it influenced indirectly through supporting the leaders in their career choice and making it possible for them. This enabling to realize their career aspirations was demonstrated by the spouses for example through encouraging, discussing, showing understanding, giving advice and being flexible. For many interviewees an essential element in the support was the practical help their spouses offered. This included for example taking care of the children, doing laundry, buying groceries and other such daily tasks. In addition, family encouraged to ponder the direction of one's life and career in general.

Personality was also mentioned as a significant factor by eight interviewees (Jaakko, Liisa, Heidi, Kati, Markus, Johanna, Elisa, Leena). For example, personality guided Kati's actions already when she was choosing her studies, and she explained that she has always had an interest to be with people and to help others, this quality being something intrinsic in her. Heidi described that because of her self-confidence and stable personality she has had the courage to make even risky choices in her career. Johanna has always been social and hardworking, Elisa likes organizing and communicating with people, and since her childhood Liisa has been interested in versatile things. Also, personality tests made by career psychologists or the advice given by a student counselor guided the career choice for Jaakko, Leena and Johanna, as it made them realize the vocations for which they have natural abilities and what their strengths are. As Johanna put it, all the tests that she made confirmed the direction of her career.

Values were constructed significant for career choice by seven interviewees (Liisa, Heidi, Kati, Petri, Johanna, Elisa, Leena). Jaakko told that for him values had no significance at the point when he decided to start a career in a social enterprise, meaning that for his actual career choice they had no importance. However, he further explained that values have been significant for staying in the enterprise, and without the value base he would probably have left the job. Johanna and Heidi recounted that when choosing their career, it was important for them that the values of the enterprise and their own values would match. Kati described that keeping track of only monetary results feels unfamiliar to her, and thus she wanted to choose a career where more humane values would be emphasized. Liisa and Elisa reasoned that the significance of values was rather unconscious for them at the moment of the decision, whether or not to work in a social enterprise, but they are still aware that even though they did not realize it, the social enterprise's value base did have an impact on their career choice.

Seven interviewees (Jaakko, Liisa, Heidi, Kati, Tommi, Johanna, Leena) narrated their career choice being more of luck and coincidence. Liisa recounted that her career path has not been planned but it is a result of coincidences. For Kati rising to a leading position in the social enterprise came as a surprise, and she described this overwhelming news as "a stroke of good fortune". Even though Leena depicted that her career advancement has been partly planned, she added that it has also been partly a sum of coincidences.

Coworkers and managers was a factor that was constructed significant by four interviewees (Jaakko, Liisa, Markus, Elisa). Jaakko and Liisa got to know their fellow workers in the social enterprise and they felt comfortable working with them, which was one reason that supported their career choice. Markus felt that the passion to solve a social problem had united him with the other people working in the social enterprise. Liisa and Elisa underlined the importance of managers, since for example Elisa explained that it was because of her manager that she got accepted to her position in the first place.

Four interviewees mentioned education (Liisa, Markus, Elisa, Leena) and other four content of the job (Heidi, Tommi, Elisa, Leena) as a significant factor for their career choice. Liisa, Markus and Elisa narrated that they got interested in a career in a social enterprise due to their previous education. For each of them the enterprise's field of operations is closely linked to their studies. Leena recounted that she believes her educational background was also one reason why she got accepted into the social enterprise. Content of the job was important for Heidi, and she narrated that one reason she chose that career was that it was professionally so intriguing. Leena was attracted by the versatility a career in the social enterprise would offer her. For Elisa it was the creative element in her work that fascinated her and directed her career choice.

Three interviewees (Heidi, Johanna, Elisa) highlighted the significance of previous work experience. Possibility to influence was constructed significant by two interviewees (Markus, Petri), as was also the significance of friends (Liisa, Heidi). Factors that were mentioned only once were competitive salary and respected position (Tommi), past incidents at work (Johanna) and reputation of the enterprise (Leena). To conclude, I have presented the significant factors with their respective example quotes in Chart 3.

| Significant factor | How many narrated as significant | Example quote |
|---|---|---|
| Relationships & networks | 8 | Actually for this [position] I never applied, but I was like asked to come here. (Elisa) |
| Family (support) | 8 | Of course my spouse, he takes care of my children like they were his own. So no, otherwise this wouldn't be possible. -- Yes it does have a great significance. (Kati) |
| Personality | 8 | I guess I believe that it's pretty much due to my own character, quite like a personality thing, that I want to appear in public and perform and do group works and influence in the progress of matters. (Leena) |

| Values | 7 | Already then, when I was about to come here, in a certain way I contemplated the thought that I would find a good match for my value base. So yeah [the importance of values] was there. (Heidi) |
| Luck & coincidence | 7 | I do feel that I've had more luck here than my own understanding or skill to choose it this way. (Jaakko) |
| Coworkers & managers | 4 | Well I just thought, I knew from before that this is an interesting work community and in-spiring people, who kind of like attracted me. (Liisa) |
| Education | 4 | And of course also because of my educational background I'm interested in social matters, and that's where I got the interest in social en-trepreneurship, too. (Markus) |
| Content of the job | 4 | And when I was in the interview, where I heard what this [enterprise] does, what it as-pires for, I did feel that I want or can be in-volved in this kind of [activity]. (Tommi) |
| Previous work experience | 3 | The fact that I sought for [that position] and had the courage to seek it, well it must have been because of my past experience. Since when I had that education and experience as a leader, it was possible for me to apply for it. (Elisa) |
| Possibility to influence | 2 | My own goal here is that this would be for me a job with a reasonable salary and [a career] where I get to influence in matters. (Petri) |
| Friends | 2 | So I can mention that all in all [my friends] have been a lot involved in my career devel-opment. That they have always given a little boost, like 'go for it', when someone has asked [me to come to work]. (Heidi) |
| Competitive salary & respected position | 1 | At least I do remember that a big motivator was the matter of salary. (Tommi) |
| Past incidents at work | 1 | And like I told, the violence [in a previous job] was so grave, be it physical or mental. The children there were about the same age as mine, so that somehow touched me, it came too close. So that was the reason I drifted into a lighter [job]. (Johanna) |
| Reputation of the enterprise | 1 | To my mind, especially the fact that this enter-prise has a good reputation is an important thing for me. I want to work in a Finnish or-ganization, and I see this as a very good place in that sense. (Leena) |

CHART 3 Significant factors for the career choice in a social enterprise.

## 4.5 Constructing identities

In the social enterprise leaders' storytelling there could be distinguished features of narrative identity construction. By analyzing the leaders' career narratives and following the generated career choice story types, I was able to produce three separate narrative identities of social enterprise leaders: the Drifter, the Advocate and the Adventurer. These identity types combine different characteristics from all the interviewed leaders, and thus they do not necessarily apply completely to one person. On the contrary and like the theory also proposes (Hamilton 2014), the leaders may seem to possess multiple identities simultaneously. Hence, one may possibly be inclined to a certain identity type, but at the same time they may find features of the other types in themselves. Next, I will present each constructed identity in further detail.

### 4.5.1 The Drifter

*"It has been more like driftwood theory and good coincidences."*

The Drifter is the one who does not have a fixed plan about how to progress in their life or career but rather goes with the flow. As the name expresses, the career progression and career choice, if it can even be called a choice at all, has pretty much emerged as a result of drifting in a career and accidentally ending up to a certain position. The Drifter lives in the moment and takes the opportunities as they present themselves. They are interested in pretty much everything and count on good coincidences to happen. Having flexibility and an open mindset is one of their core qualities, since one can never know what awaits on the other side of the corner and when the next stroke of luck is about to happen. This happy-go-lucky attitude is what takes the Drifter from one situation to another, as they do not worry about unnecessary matters and focus too much on consequences, but instead let life carry them.

What also characterizes the Drifter is having a vast network of people around them. In addition to the actual family members, there are many personal acquaintances and friends as well as professional contacts such as coworkers and managers that constitute the Drifter's relationships. The Drifter is quite easily influenced, and thus the relationships and networks play an important role in their career development. For example, it can be a romance that turns the tide into a specific direction and takes the Drifter further in their career, or likewise it might be a sudden encounter with a significant person that causes their career to drift in an unanticipated way. The Drifter welcomes a lot of support and encouragement for example from relatives and close friends, who inspire them to progress in their career. They are usually not actively seeking a certain position, but instead they are often asked to come to work in a company by people who have seen their potential. Hence, the incentive for a particular career choice comes many times through other people who push them forward, not due to their own effort.

The example set by childhood family has a high importance for the Drifter. Parents, grandparents and other relatives have often guided the Drifter into a certain direction in their career by introducing them to specific thinking patterns, values and lifestyles. Also a special person from the childhood, such as a grandmother who the Drifter admires a lot, has probably pushed their career forward by giving them an idea of a desired way of living, which they wish to achieve some day. Thus, the Drifter sees family as a positive influence for their career, and in a moment of hesitation they can always draw strength from their roots.

### 4.5.2 The Advocate

*"Sustainability. That is the thing, under the umbrella of which I would like to work."*

The Advocate wants to make the world a better place. They are passionate "eager beavers", tirelessly fighting for the greater good, and there is this fire burning inside of them that drives them forward in their pursuit of a social mission. The Advocate wants to feel that their contribution matters in this world, and they have a deep-rooted desire to have an influence in the society. This entrepreneurial attitude pushes them towards living out their mission, which in turn gives them a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

The Advocate has always been interested in social matters. Beginning from their childhood, social issues have drawn their attention and they have had a strong dedication to do something which would have social value. For example, they have been eager to help those in need and provide solutions to difficult social problems. This inner devotion is something that is intrinsic to them and forms a significant part of their character, thus also guiding their life and career choice. In a career the Advocate searches for a deeper meaning both personally and from the point of view of the society. Finding meaning becomes a guiding factor in all their decisions, as they want to live their life for something bigger than themselves. With their excitement, motivation and commitment to a good cause they ignite the flame also in other people and inspire them to act in a socially and environmentally responsible ways.

The Advocate is altruistic by nature and helping others gives them gratification and a feeling of importance. They are ready to walk the extra mile for the benefit of someone in need and sacrifice themselves for the moral good and for the good of the society. A general thinking pattern for the Advocate would be "do good, feel good", since doing good gives them personal satisfaction and creates a sense of meaningfulness. Meaningfulness in turn makes the Advocate feel passionate and excited about what they do.

Value based doing and following one's heart is of primary importance for the Advocate in order to feel good and contented. They could not imagine life or work where they could not realize their own inner values but would have to perform tasks that only benefit those with money and power. Even so, it is not only about finding personal satisfaction, but the Advocate feels that it is also one's duty and responsibility to help in the society. This means that as a mem-

ber of the society, one should use the skills and abilities they have to promote positive change. The Advocate aspires for work that is humane, advances good causes and has a long lasting positive influence in the society. To put it short, not the money but the people, not the profit but the impact. Also, the importance of sustainability is highlighted, and thus the Advocate has an inner urge to promote sustainable values and preserve the planet for the generations that are yet to come.

### 4.5.3 The Adventurer

*"And again I left – actually after the bigger challenge."*

The Adventurer is always in the look for something new and exciting. They love experimenting and would never turn down an interesting opportunity to learn and gain more experiences. For the Adventurer life is a never-ending journey of breathtaking wonders and thrilling discoveries, and they know that there is so much more out there just waiting to be revealed. The Adventurer enjoys diverse activities, and in order to have the maximum amount of opportunities and possibilities in their life, they want to keep options open. They believe in themselves and are not afraid of setbacks, since they want to feel their heart beating faster and the harder the challenge, the sweeter the feeling afterwards.

The Adventurer feels that they are never ready, and thus they want to continuously develop their own competence and progress in their career. They are ambitious and determined in their actions, and they work hard to systematically build their expertise. The Adventurer is prepared to go through the hardest thing in order to learn all that is possible, since advancing in their career brings them satisfaction and contentment. Even in the face of an impossible dare, the Adventurer keeps their head cold and thinks how the problem would best be solved. New position in a career is something that makes them excited, because they understand the professional value it offers and that one must all the time accept new challenges in order to learn and grow.

The Adventurer does not want to settle for something less because they know they have what it takes. They are self-confident, brave and curious, continuously looking for new challenges to overcome and mountains to conquer. Surpassing one's own limits further boosts their self-esteem and releases the rush of adrenaline in their veins. However, as good as it might feel for a moment to slay the beast and be the hero, life will inevitably fall back into its old patterns and even the most blissful moment will become just a memory. As the Adventurer detests routines and gets bored very easily, this is exactly what keeps them going. Like the old saying goes, a rolling stone gathers no moss. This is especially true for the Adventurer, since it is not probable they would stay in one place for too long.

One more thing about the Adventurer is that they never say no to a challenge. It is not necessarily about being ready, it is about being willing and broad-minded to throw oneself into the new and unknown. And most certainly, when a new adventure knocks on their door, there is no holding back.

# 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

## 5.1 Discussion of the results

In this thesis my aim was to increase understanding of leaders' career choice specifically in the field of social enterprises. The study contributes to the theoretical discussion of social enterprises and career choice in management by combining these two different domains, since this combination has not been paid much attention in the previous research. I approached this topic narratively, for taking a narrative approach opens a more complete view into the leaders' career choice and sense-making processes. As the results suggest, social enterprise leaders make meaning of their careers and career choice in versatile ways combining various aspects of their private and working life, also including elements of uncertainty and risk taking. Hence, it can be observed that the produced career choice stories exhibit features of the contemporary career models, such as protean career, boundaryless career and intelligent career (Hall & Moss 1998; Arthur 1994; Arthur & Rousseau 1996; Sullivan & Arthur 2006; Briscoe et al. 2006; Arthur et al. 1995).

Especially the basic competencies of intelligent career were represented in the results. The social enterprise leaders expressed the importance of their values, interests and personality as a guiding force affecting their career choice. This can be linked to *knowing why* -aspect, which refers to people's motivations, interests, beliefs and values for pursuing a certain kind of a career for themselves. The leaders also narrated their education and previous work experience as significant for their career choice, which in turn can be related to *knowing how*. This is because the knowing how -aspect of the intelligent career relates to people's skills, knowledge and competencies. Relationships and networks had had a strong impact on the leaders' career choice, and thus also *knowing whom* - aspect was represented in the results. Knowing whom is about people's networks and interpersonal relationships, as knowing the right people can provide important opportunities and resources and hence be advantageous in that sense. The benefits that relationships and networks had provided for the leaders could be observed from their narration. (Arthur et al. 1995; Jones & DeFillippi 1996.)

One more additional component of intelligent career that could be distinguished from the results was *knowing when*. Knowing when relates to the timing and choice of activities in a career, and its importance can be seen especially when considering for how long one wants to stay in a certain position in order to learn all that the position can offer, without letting it limit one's opportunities. This aspect was represented in the way how the leaders wanted to pursue career development and change, staying in one position for a certain period of time and then heading for new challenges. (Jones & DeFillippi 1996.)

My primary research question for this study was to find out, what kind of narratives social enterprise leaders construct of their career choice. Based on the leaders' narration I was able to generate three different types of career choice stories: *career choice as a drift*, *career choice as a mission pursuit* and *career choice as an aim for professional development*. The first story type, career choice as a drift, mainly tells about progressing in one's career without a clear focus and finally ending up to having a career in a social enterprise. It is characterized by luck and good coincidences as guiding forces for the leaders' career choice. Additionally, networks and relationships have a role to play in this story type, since fortunate encounters and meaningful relationships have directed the leaders' choice of career. The importance of family is also part of this story type, for the family's example has pushed the leaders into a certain direction in their career and among other things it has taught them important values, which have then affected their career choice later on.

The second story type, career choice as a mission pursuit, mainly focuses on a continuous pursuit to do something meaningful and to achieve social, environmental or moral good. In this story type it is characteristic for the leaders to strive for finding meaning in their work, which can be achieved for example through helping someone in need. Also, having a positive effect on the society and influencing are important elements of this story type, not to forget the importance that following one's own values has for the leaders' career choice. The third story type, career choice as an aim for professional development, is about wanting to advance and develop in one's career. It includes aspiring for new challenges and the desire for change as meaningful elements behind the social enterprise leaders' career choice, since those both can offer the leaders opportunities for continuous learning and career advancement.

In keeping with the story types, I was also able to construct three narrative identities of social enterprise leaders. The identities are *the Drifter*, *the Advocate* and *the Adventurer*, and they represent specific characteristics that the leaders narrated to possess. The main characteristics of the Drifter include being flexible and having an open mindset towards life. They live in the moment letting life carry them. The Drifter is interested in about everything and has a vast network of people around them. The example set by childhood family is a strength that takes them forward in their life and career. The Advocate is passionate and motivated to work for the greater good. They are interested in social matters and desire to have a long lasting positive influence in the society. The Advocate is altruistic by nature and helping others gives them personal satisfaction. They want to follow their heart and values and strongly believe in sustainability. The

Adventurer is always ready for a new challenge. Because of their curiosity they love experimenting and want to keep options open for new possibilities. The Adventurer is ambitious, self-confident and determined, and thus they want to continuously learn and develop their competence. They are not afraid of setbacks but rather seek opportunities to surpass themselves. The Adventurer gets bored easily and detests routines, which is why they probably will not stay in one place for too long.

The other additional research question for this thesis considered what factors social enterprise leaders would narrate as being significant for their career choice in a social enterprise. There were altogether 14 significant factors that I was able to distinguish from the data: relationships and networks (8), family (support) (8), personality (8), values (7), luck and coincidence (7), coworkers and managers (4), education (4), content of the job (4), previous work experience (3), possibility to influence (2), friends (2), competitive salary and respected position (1), past incidents at work (1), and reputation of the enterprise (1).

Research shows that networks and relationships have a significant impact on people's careers and on their career choice (Baruch 2004, 38). Also Prabhu (1999) mentions the cruciality of networks and relationships in order for social enterprise leaders to prosper in their career. The results of this study support this theory, since relationships and networks was a factor that was clearly described meaningful in the social enterprise leaders' narration. Many of the leaders told how significant relationships have advanced their career and how knowing the right people – or the right people knowing them – have been critical steps in their career choice process. The importance of building professional networks was also highlighted in the results, which leads to the deduction that it is beneficial for the leaders to actively build relationships with various people in their work setting, both inside their respective enterprises and outside their common circles. These networks can then further their careers by providing interesting opportunities, and also help and direct them in the pursuit of choosing a meaningful career. It must be noted that also the lack of meaningful relationships and networks can guide the career choice, since without a support network one may not have the strength to pursue very challenging careers. Thus, both the existence and the lack of networks can be deemed significant for social enterprise leaders' career choice.

Family was another factor that was narrated significant by many social enterprise leaders. It was constructed meaningful in two different ways: relating to the impact of the childhood family and emphasizing the support from the actual family and spouse. The example set by parents, grandparents and godparents has had a strong influence in the social enterprise leaders guiding their career into a certain direction and thus affecting their choice of career in a social enterprise. The importance of childhood family in directing social enterprise leaders' career choice is also supported by theory (Prabhu 1999; Baruch 2004, 23, 38). One reason why the impact of childhood family is so strong on career choice may stem from early experiences within the family, for example when the parents have not been able to act properly in the face of a social problem, which the child has understood and hence later on feels urge to make up for

that (Prabhu 1999). Other reasons may be the inspiration that close family members have caused in the individual, making them esteem certain characteristics or professions, or the feeling of belonging into a certain family, mainly referring to one's identity in a sense that "this is who we are". The results support the theory also in a sense that childhood family could be interpreted to have a role to play in the early formation of values in individuals (Prabhu 1999; Baruch 2004, 23). Accordingly, the social enterprise leaders have learnt already in their childhood family many of their values, which have then later on directed them to pursue a career in a social enterprise. This inclination towards a social enterprise may be due to the fact that the operations of social enterprises are very much guided by values, and thus these enterprises offer a great opportunity for leaders to match their values with a meaningful career (Koskela et al. 2015).

The other importance of family stems from the support that the current family or spouse offers to the social enterprise leader. Even though according to the results the significance of spousal support for the career choice has not been direct, its indirect influence was constructed meaningful by various leaders. The spouses had made possible the career choice in management in a social enterprise by providing their partners with different kinds of support, for example through encouragement and by taking care of daily tasks. This was constructed as an essential element that had enabled the leaders' career choice and career advancement. Theory goes hand in hand also with this observation, since as Prabhu (1999) has noted, the emotional support provided by close family members is essential for social enterprise leaders to feel good at their work and to cope with all the pressure caused by a leadership position.

The significance of personality and values as influencing factors to social enterprise leaders' career choice are components that were repeatedly found in the results and which also are supported by previous career research (Baruch 2004, 23; Inkson 2007, 115-116; Gravells 2012; Prabhu 1999). Personality influences people's values (Baruch 2004, 23), and hence in order to understand their career choice we must pay attention to the specific values that social enterprise leaders possess. The theory proposes that social enterprise leaders' possible motivations may be altruism, need to be true to their values and beliefs as well as need to match with their self concept (Prabhu 1999).

Altruism was shown in the results, since many of the social enterprise leaders emphasized values such as helping people, doing good and accepting everyone despite their differences. Caring for people is a feature that also according to research is characteristic to social enterprise leaders (Gravells 2012), and from this part the results are in accordance with the theory. Also values such as sophistication, target-orientation, customer satisfaction and influencing in the society were mentioned. Having an influence in the society is a factor that has support from previous research, since the theory mentions that for social enterprise leaders it is important to be socially responsible and to fight injustice (Prabhu 1999; Swamy 1990). The urge to provide responses to social needs and hence to fight injustice in the surrounding society was an element that could be distinguished from the narration of social enterprise leaders.

Being true to one's values was an aspect that was also seen in the results, as many social enterprise leaders narrated that the value base of the social enterprise is important for them. Moreover, all of them experienced that the enterprise's values are in line with their own personal values, and thus this kind of a good value fit can at least partly explain why they chose to work in a social enterprise in the first place. When the values are in accordance, it arouses feelings of passion and enthusiasm in the leaders (Gravells 2012), which could be observed from the results as well.

The results also showed evidence that social enterprise leaders want to find a deeper meaning in their career and the work they do, thus matching the career with their self concept. For some this quest towards meaningfulness started already at a young age, while to others this longing came only later in life, after having a successful career in traditional enterprises. As the theory suggests, age plays a role in affecting people's careers, since when people get older and have no longer urgent familial responsibilities, they may wish to start making meaningful contributions to the society. Also, having worked in economically oriented enterprises and being satisfied with the current economical state may arouse this willingness to make social contributions. (Prabhu 1999.) The age factor was seen in the results, as some of the leaders narrated how they started to reflect on their life and values at a later age, after having worked in various companies. This contemplating then led to their choice of career in a social enterprise.

According to the study of Gravells (2012), another set of common characteristics that social enterprise leaders exhibit are having courage and self-confidence as also being self-aware of their own qualities. The results of this study support the possession of these qualities, as there were quite a few leaders that expressed their willingness to receive more challenges and change in their career. Searching for new challenges and opportunities to learn was one reason behind the social enterprise leaders' career choice, since they wanted to advance their careers and aim for professional development. Continuous learning was mentioned by many leaders, and that also tells about the motivation they have to keep progressing in their career. A social enterprise that provides opportunities for development and growth hence presents appealing career options for leaders pursuing new and inspiring challenges.

Additional factors that were constructed significant by social enterprise leaders and which are also referred to in the previous research were education, previous work experience, friends and past incidents at work (Prabhu 1999; Baruch 2004, 38). Factors that were not mentioned in the literature review but of which the results showed evidence were content of the job, competitive salary and respected position, as well as reputation of the enterprise. Consequently, it is good to remember that also the motivational aspects of economical side and the "hard values" are still present in social enterprises, even though many times the focus is placed on ethics and the "soft values" intrinsic for those types of enterprises.

The practical implications of this thesis for the working life stem from the increased understanding of the reasons and motives behind social enterprise

leaders' career choice. In addition, this study gives suggestions whether this choice of career is actively made or passively accepted by the leaders. As the results have indicated, there are different factors affecting the leaders' career choice in a social enterprise. Partly it truly is just a sum of random coincidences and drifting from one workplace to another, as career choice as a drift -story type proposes. However, it cannot be said that for social enterprise leaders their career choice would be purely a result of drifting, since the all three story types were constructed from many narratives from various leaders and respectively every one leader had narratives belonging to different story types. Hence, drifting in a career is one reason behind their career choice, but it is not the only one. Following the story types, other reasons for the leaders' career choice in a social enterprise are pursuing social missions and aiming for professional development. These two latter patterns describe a more active approach to career choice, where the social enterprise leader him- or herself makes decisions and strives towards the desired career outcome. The results also give reason to believe that the value base of a social enterprise indeed is significant for the leaders when choosing their career, and that a good value fit between the person and the enterprise inclines leaders to choose a career in a social enterprise.

The societal significance of this thesis is that it provides more up-to-date information and discussion about social enterprises, thus increasing their visibility, familiarity and appreciation in the surrounding society. This is important, since social enterprises are much needed to respond to the complex problems of the society, and to prosper they should be provided more opportunities to be seen. Visibility is essential so that other actors, such as investors and partners, would realize their existence and understand their mission. Problems are created especially by wrong assumptions of the nature of social enterprises, since many times they are confused with non-profits or associations with little or no interest in economic profit. The reality, however, is different, as there are many for-profit social enterprises in Finland striving towards economic growth and good profit. The only difference is then that the profit does not go so much directly to the owners, but it should not and does not decrease the intention to build an economically viable and functioning business. Visibility and appreciation of social enterprises can also be predicted to encourage new actors, such as leaders, to consider the potentiality of working in such an enterprise.

## 5.2    Limitations and further study

This study was realized using a narrative approach, which made it possible to gain a more holistic view of the topic and better understand how social enterprise leaders themselves make sense of their career choice (Cohen et al. 2004; Cohen & Mallon 2001). The ten interviewed leaders chosen for this study represented different social enterprises of various fields and sizes, and considering the moderate amount of for-profit social enterprises that are currently recognized in Finland, this serves as an acceptable proportion within the framework

of this thesis. However, even though a narrative study does open a door into the sense-making of social enterprise leaders and thus depict a more comprehensive picture of their career choice, it is not meant to produce information that could be generalized to apply to all social enterprise leaders and their career choice. Moreover, an interview setting is always unique and narratives are interactively produced in a certain time and space, and for this reason the interviews or the whole study cannot be reproduced exactly the same way as it was done. The results of this thesis are also not meant to depict the career choice of traditional enterprise leaders, but the focus was specifically on the leaders of social enterprises.

As this study concentrated solely on Finnish social enterprises and their leaders, the cultural aspects have not been taken into consideration. Thus, it is very propable that the examination of social enterprise leaders in other countries and cultures would provide different kinds of results. Also, increasing the amount of interviewees would possibly reveal new significant factors for career choice in a social enterprise. This study only examined leaders of social enterprises, and hence based on this study it cannot be argued, whether the other employees of those enterprises would narrate similar kinds of factors affecting their career choice. This, however, would be an interesting aspect to look into in the future.

Factors such as social enterprise leaders' salary, the appreciation of a respected position or the enterprise's reputation have not been in a very close examination in the previous research. This may be because the focus in research concentrating on social enterprises is easily directed more on ethical considerations and values, since a strong ethical stand is something intrinsic for social enterprises. Nevertheless, also the motivational aspects of the economical side and the so called "hard values" should be taken into consideration when trying to find out possible motivations and reasons behind social enterprise leaders' career choice. This study has shown some evidence of the importance of these factors, but more research about the topic would be needed in order to understand the phenomenon more fully.

The data of this thesis showed indications of the importance of spousal support for social enterprise leaders, since it was narrated as one significant factor for their career choice. However, spousal support in itself is such a vast topic that it would require much more research, and thus it cannot be properly examined within the limits of this thesis. Hence, another interesting topic to examine in further detail would be the support that social enterprise leaders experience from their spouses (see also Heikkinen, Lämsä & Hiillos 2014). Also the idea of whether there are differences between men and women social enterprise leaders' career choice narratives and the factors that they consider significant would be an interesting research topic to investigate.

One more interesting finding of this study was the existence of a value paradox among social enterprise leaders. Nevertheless, as it was not the actual scope of this study, the research setting should have been differently inclined right from the beginning in order to examine it better. For that reason, in this study the investigation of the value paradox could not be given the sufficient

space and attention it would have needed. To better understand the phenomenon and its meaning for social enterprise leaders, more studies concerning the topic are required.

## 5.3    Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to identify different narratives about how social enterprise leaders have chosen their career in a social enterprise. Also, the aim was to examine whether there are some similar patterns in their sense-making and in the factors they construct significant for their career choice. A special attention was paid on values and the significance that the value base of social enterprises has on the leaders' career choice.

As this study presents, social enterprise leaders made sense of their careers and career choice in manifold ways and constructed narratives that reflected their career choice process. The narratives were interpreted as belonging to three respective story types and representing different identities, where the career choice was seen either as a result of drifting (the Drifter), mission pursuit (the Advocate) or aiming for professional development (the Adventurer). The leaders' actual career choice in a social enterprise could be discerned as consisting of various significant factors, the meaning of relationships and networks, family influence and support, personality and values, as well as luck and coincidence being the most commonly mentioned causes.

The results of this study provide further support for the theoretical discussion that careers are moving away from the traditional linear form, and instead new, all life aspects encompassing career models are taking place. Especially the intelligent career model was represented in the results, since factors belonging to different components, knowing why, knowing how, knowing whom and knowing when, could be distinguished from the social enterprise leaders' narration and interpreted as significant for their career choice in a social enterprise. The study also agrees with theory in stating that family plays a significant role in the total career choice process of social enterprise leaders. This significance stems from different reasons, depending on if the focus is placed on the childhood family or the current family and spouse. Nevertheless, whether it is about learning specific values and motivations in the childhood family or the support offered by spouse, family guides the social enterprise leaders into a certain direction in their career and thus affects their career choice.

Based on this study it can be concluded that there exists both passive drifting into a career and active pursuit of a meaningful career among the social enterprise leaders. There are also several factors that incline the leaders to choose their career particularly in a social enterprise. Social enterprises are value driven and social mission oriented by nature, and thus the results suggest that a good value fit between the leader and the social enterprise is a factor that directs leaders into choosing a career in a social enterprise. As this thesis has provided more discussion concerning social enterprises, it is expected that it will

also increase their recognition in the Finnish society. This contribution is hoped to enhance the understanding of and interest towards social enterprises.

## EPILOGUE

Congratulations, dear reader! You have now travelled the whole journey with me and finally reached the last page of my thesis. As you reflect on the leaders' stories you just read about and the decisions they made, I would like to ask you to take a moment and contemplate your own story. Can you still recall how it all started? Where is it that you want to finally end up? And what are the choices you have to make in order to get there?

As this story ends and it is time for you and me to head for new adventures, just keep one simple thing in mind:

*Your story is yet to be written, and you, dear reader, are the author.*

*THE END*

*and*

*THE BEGINNING*

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