JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY
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Social Incubators

or Social Work?

Exploring Social Incubators in Mexico

Master Thesis in Business Administration

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Abstract

Alongside the evolution of incubators, research on the subject has also progressed and today constitutes an extensive field of research. However, we argue that academia has too narrowly focused on business incubators, and thus neglected other types of incubators. As such, the purpose of this study was to provide a holistic understanding of what social incubators are, their process and their impact. Through the use semi-structured interviews, observations and textual data from a single case study – Mexico University – with three sub-units of analysis, the findings we reached were threefold.

First, social incubators are physical spaces for social interaction and development in which socially vulnerable individuals, through the use of cross-sectoral partnerships and community adapted development services, are empowered to become agents of their own social transformation. Second, in the social incubation process, incubatees are first selected after which the social incubators probe to understand their needs. Subsequently, incubatees are given general services and are enrolled in social development programs that are tailored in accordance to those needs. After graduating, incubatees are anew offered different services, once again, based on probing and tailoring after-services according to their needs. Third, having completed this process, our initial understanding of social incubator impact is that their practices have a psychological and professional impact on incubatees, which then impact the communities in which they live.

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1. Background

This chapter will begin by giving an overview of the current state of literature on incubators, which will lead us into the problem and a justification of our study, building into the research purpose and questions. Last, the structure, delimitations, limitations, as well as key definitions and abbreviations used in this thesis will be presented.

Derived from the word *incubatio*, the concept of incubators can be dated back to the Roman empire where people visited Roman temples to lay down in fresh animal hide to develop visionary dreams (Aernoudt, 2004). Over time, incubators progressed into a place where infants were nurtured (Aernoudt, 2004) and now, in modern times, describe business incubators - a physical space that focuses on developing and nurturing new ventures (Leblebici & Shah, 2004). According to Aernoudt (2004, p. 127), business incubation can be defined as *"a dynamic process of business enterprise development [...] with the aim to promote people to start their own businesses and to support such businesses in their development of innovative products"*. While practices may differ, incubators can be seen as producers of business assistance programs where entrepreneurial ventures inside the incubators are consumers of those programs and have an interdependent co-production relationship with the incubator (Rice, 2002). While incubators may not always lead to venture success (Schwartz, 2012; Amezcua, 2010), the role of a business incubator is to create an environment of support in which new ventures can become established (Peters, Rice & Sundararajan, 2004; Rice, 2002; Henricson Briggs, 2016).

In his seminal paper on business incubators, Aernoudt (2004) notes that the term 'business incubators' has become more of an umbrella term encompassing different types of incubators, which also reflect the evolution of the concept. The author argues that each type of business incubator has their own main philosophy, main and secondary objective, and sector involved. The first recorded business incubator emerged in Batavia (New York) during the late 1950's (Lewis, 2008), as a response to plant closures. These initial types of incubators are referred to as mixed incubators and addressed the business gap of declining manufacturing areas through the creation of start-ups and employment opportunities (Aernoudt, 2004). Business incubators did however not become widespread until the 1970's when they started to offer support and collective office-space to start-ups throughout the United States (Adkins, 2002). This proliferation accelerated during the 1980's then used as a

tool for economic development (Adkins, 2002). These incubators, referred to as economic development incubators, aimed at regional development and business creation due to regional or local economic inequalities (Barbero, Casillas, Ramos & Guitar, 2012). Here, new ventures were gathered under the same roof and given access to shared office facilities (Aerts, Matthyssens & Vandenbempt, 2007).

During the 1990's, business incubators progressed into a new era. To speed up new venture learning, support services, such as consultancy and training sessions (Aerts, et al., 2007), were introduced to compliment the shared office space (Bruneel, Ratinho, Clarysse & Groen, 2012). Studies during the time showed that business incubators generated employment opportunities and economic development through an integrated and affordable support package (Lalkaka & Bishop, 1996). Subsequently, incubators received increased attention, resulting in outside investments targeted at the ventures themselves. This was a further development of the incubator-offerings to participating firms, as previous investments had instead targeted the incubator program (Bruneel et al., 2012). This progress however increased the influence of investors on the incubation process - what business that were spawned and their, and the incubator's, activities (Dutt, Hawn, Vidal, Chatterji, McGahan, & Mitchell, 2016).

Today, the term incubator denotes what Aerts et al. (2007) labels the third generation of business incubators, which emerged in the late 1990's (Aernoudt, 2004). As their name suggests, technology incubators aim to develop technology-based firms (Barbero, et al., 2012), a clear progression from the early business incubators, which offered their services to all types of businesses - high-, low-, and no-tech (Bruneel, et al. 2012). Without defining the concept of entrepreneurship, Aernoudt (2004) yet suggests that technology incubators address an entrepreneurial gap with the intent to stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation, tech start-ups and graduates. Hence, business incubators today hold many discrepancies from their original form having progressed from mere real estate provision, through offering intangible services, culminating to have a prominent focus on networks and fostering partnerships (Hansen, Chesbrough, Nohria & Sull, 2000). While mixed, economic development and technology incubators serve as the more common types, more deviant types of incubators exist - basic research and social incubators (Aernoudt, 2004).

Basic research incubators address the gap of discovery by linking the incubation principle to fundamental research (Barbero, Casillas, Wright, & Garcia, 2014), with the objectives to create spin-off companies and conduct blue-sky research (Aernoudt, 2004), i.e. *"research without a clear goal"* (Bell, 2005, p.33). An example comes from MIT where scientists conducted interdisciplinary research to discover ideas to nurture and launch into the market as intellectual property (Aernoudt, 2004). Contrastingly, social incubators aid early-stage social ventures, aiming to support individuals with low employment capabilities (Barbero, et al., 2012) with business development services to stimulate and support those ventures trying to bridge such social gaps (Aernoudt, 2004). Subsequently, any incubator is assumed to produce successful firms that will leave the incubator financially viable and freestanding within a reasonable delay (Aernoudt, 2004) and incubators do indeed increase the likelihood of start-ups succeeding in their efforts (Peters et al., 2004). However, to consolidate the literature on incubators, we believe that critique ought to be directed towards it in three ways.

First, if an incubator is to promote the development of enterprises, this should be signalised in their classification. Thus, we argue that such incubators should finish with the words 'business incubator'. For example, Aernoudt (2004) uses the term social incubators, which inaccurately signalises that something 'social' will grow but instead it is a business that grows to combat a social gap. Therefore, it is argued that Aernoudt's (2004) 'social incubator' should instead be labelled 'social business incubator', indicating its development of a social *business* - a logic that should apply for all incubator types that solely incubate businesses. Second, considering the definition of business incubation, it could be argued that basic research incubators are not business incubators at all, but rather signifies a category of their own as the unit of incubation is an idea rather than a business. Accordingly, with the knowledge about basic research incubators provided by Aernoudt (2004), we propose a second incubator category to encompass such incubators, namely idea incubators. Third and similarly, we argue that the rhetoric around incubators too narrowly focuses on businesses. Thus, although Aernoudt's (2004) typological clarification is highly appreciated, it further instils the common preconception and misunderstanding that the word 'incubator' is somehow equated with 'business incubator' and thus could be criticised for inadequately encompassing all types of incubators. Per example, to address an issue there are incubators that bypass the intermediate step of incubating businesses but rather address individuals who are experiencing said issue directly. While it can be argued that business incubators do indeed also allow for individual growth, its essential focus is on the business itself rather than the

individual person, thus differentiating the two. Hence, to avoid further fragmentation in incubator research, we propose a third category that embraces incubators that incubate individuals directly - individual incubators.

First, what Suranto and Rahmawati (2013) refer to as entrepreneurship incubators constitutes an example of such individual incubators. Entrepreneurship incubators aim to generate students with entrepreneurial readiness through promoting an entrepreneurial mind-set and fostering them with entrepreneurial values (Hannula & Pajari-Stylman, 2008). Encouraging individuals to act entrepreneurially (Suranto & Rahmawati, 2013) benefits not only the incubatee and society as creating an entrepreneurial environment spurs economic growth and development, but also may eradicate social and institutional voids (Dutt, et al., 2016). Second, emerging in Mexico during the last decade, and addressing social needs by combatting social issues (Guillén, García, & Giordano, 2010), social incubators help both micro-entrepreneurs and other individuals by addressing their needs and, by extension, reduce educational, social, and economic gaps in Mexico.

Due to the emergence of these idea and individual incubators, we also criticise the literature for failing to distinguish what the term incubatee refers to - the business, the idea or the individual. As such, we here provide a new typological clarification of incubators (Figure 1), and propose that the term 'incubatee' should apply to what is actually being incubated, i.e. enterprises for business incubators, ideas for idea incubators and individuals for individual incubators.
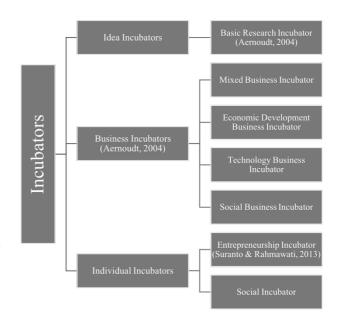
Figure 1 - Typology of Incubators

1.1   Problem

In accordance with academia's heavy focus on business incubators, they have, as noted in the background, neglected to include all types of incubators into their typology. While studies exploring individual incubators are mainly concerned with entrepreneurship incubators (e.g.

Suranto & Rahmawati, 2013; Hannula & Pajari-Stylman, 2008), social incubators have received minimal attention from the academic community (e.g. Guillén, et al., 2010), and if researched, studies have only been very brief and of a descriptive nature. The limited knowledge has left researchers without the in-depth exploration of what they and their practices are. As with business incubators (Hackett & Dilts, 2004), there is limited insight into incubatee development, which significantly harms the understanding of how their practices impact incubatees. Aside from requesting further research, Hackett and Dilts (2004) also request typological convergence within the field, i.e. what constitutes an incubator and the shape in which it can appear. While a first attempt has been presented in the background, to complete this request, additional research is required for some of the more deviant categories of incubators.

Literature has failed to close the research gap of what social incubators are, their practices and their impact. Consequently, academia is yet to establish whether their process can be distinguished from the business incubation process and if their mere nature is individual incubation or social work simply labelled as such. Thus, to classify the phenomenon and understand the aforementioned aspects, it is argued that there is a need to go beyond brief and descriptive social incubator research, and instead conduct an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon.

1.2   Purpose

The purpose of this study is exploratory in nature. In accordance with the suggestions of Hackett and Dilts (2004), our purpose is to theoretically expand the understanding of incubators by investigating the practices of social incubators. The aim is to create a holistic understanding of what social incubators are, their incubation process and the impact they may have. An important aspect of these aims, and thereby two specific sub-aims, is how their process compare to the business incubation counterpart and to establish how they are similar or different to social work.

To fulfil our purpose, this research will address the following questions:
1). What are social incubators?
    1a). How are social incubators similar or different to social work?

2). What does social incubation processes look like?

2a). How does it compare to business incubation processes?

3). What impact do the practices of social incubators have?

1.3   Structure

This thesis will, in the next chapter - frame of reference - proceed by framing the topic through an investigation and presentation of relevant theoretical themes (Chapter 2). Subsequently, this thesis will progress into providing a clarification on the methodology and method (Chapter 3). The empirical findings will then be presented (Chapter 4), followed by a thorough analysis (Chapter 5) and a discussion on the topic of social incubators (Chapter 6). The conclusions section (Chapter 7) will summarise the prominent findings of the thesis and highlight their theoretical and practical implications, concluding with a provision of limitations and recommendations for further research.

1.4   Delimitations

As this study will investigate the practices of social incubators, it is important to clarify that this does not entail identifying best practices or suggest alterations for existing social incubators, nor investigate critical factors attributed to their success or failure. In accordance, this study neither aims to quantify the impact of social incubator practices, nor to measure the extent of that impact. As such, there is no interest in evaluating the importance of the social incubators relative to other incubators in terms of producing beneficial or non-beneficial outcomes. Last, it should also be clarified that this research does not aim to investigate individual incubators as a whole, but rather the specific subsection - social incubators.

1.5   Limitations

This study is also bound by limitations. First, due to the limited time for empirical collection, long-term effects cannot be studied. The time-constraints also limit the period during which empirical data can be retrieved, and may thus limit the depth of the study. Second, while a scholarship from SIDA enables us to conduct this study, our ability to visit the social incubators is limited by financial constraints. Thus, we are only able to visit the number of social incubators that the scholarship allows for, which can inhibit the holistic findings of this study. Third, as both of us have a Swedish cultural upbringing, our ability to fully comprehend the context in which the study is conducted may be limited.

1.6   Definitions

While an elaboration of the following definitions will be provided in the frame of reference, the following section summarises those definitions believed to be the most prominent themes of this study.

BUSINESS INCUBATION	*A dynamic process of business enterprise development with the aim to promote people to start their own businesses and to support such businesses in their development of innovative products.*
EMPOWERMENT[1]	*"A multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important."*
MICRO-ENTERPRISE	*Firms with less than 10 employees, which produce and sell products or services.*
PRACTICE	*An on-going series of human activities based on shared practical understandings.*
'THE SOCIAL'	*The unification of social interaction and social aggregation.*
SOCIAL EXCLUSION	*An unequal distribution of power in economic, social, political and cultural dimensions, which results in individuals being absent in the social construct.*
SOCIAL WORK	*Social engagement aimed at promoting social change, development and well-being through social interaction and aggregation.*

1.7   Abbreviations

AMAI	*Mexican Association of Marketing Research and Public Opinion Agencies* or *Asociación Mexicana de Agencias de Investigacíon de Mercado y Ópinion Pública*

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[1] As defined by Page and Czuba (1999, p. n/a)

AMEDIRH	*Mexican Association for Human Resource Management* or *Asociación en Dirección Recurson Humanos*
INEGI	*National Institute of Statistics and Geography* or *Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía, e Informática*
GSDRC	*Governance and Social Development Resource Center*
NGO	*Non-Govermental Organisation*
OECD	*Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development*
SAP	*Strategy-as-Practice*
SEKN	*The World Health Organizations Social Exclusion Knowledge Network*

2. Frame of Reference

This section is dedicated to providing deeper insight into the research fields that we believe are prominent for this study, and which will later be used as a tool for interpreting our empirical findings. While it is acknowledged that a vital part of this research is concerned with incubators, to avoid unnecessary reiteration, theory on incubators will not be presented again as the topic has already been scrutinised in the background. Incubators will instead be revisited in the concluding parts of this section, then in the light of our theoretical lens - practice as theory. Here, as little is known about the practices of individual incubators, we are forced to rely on literature concerning business incubation instead. First, however, the initial parts of this section will be dedicated to what constitutes 'the social' of social incubators.

2.1   The Philosophy of 'The Social'

The field of sociology lingers in the intersection between social science and philosophy. While a plurality of what constitutes sociology exists, the common denominator is the prominent focus upon 'the social' (Rice, 1931). While rather dated, authors commonly support and have expanded on the concept. Vlasceanu (2011, as cited in Chipea, 2011) refer to sociology as the global science of society while Petit (2005) argues that there can be no social without individuals who act by themselves or together. While overlooking the nature of the sole individual due to his focus on the collective, Collins (2005) include topics such as social interaction, social movements, and social institutions into sociology. Contrastingly, Petit (2005) argues that the relationship between society and the individual person also must be encompassed under the term 'social', thus rectifying the limitations of Collins (2005).

Arguing that social interaction is just one component of 'the social', Petit (2005) augment sociology by including social aggregation, which refer to when actions and attitudes of actors are brought together, resulting in the establishment of social institutions. These may be based on various factors, such as gender, age, or class, and appear in several forms, e.g. groups, parties, or unions. However, only considering social institutions as a creation of social aggregation, Petit (2005) overlooks institutions formed for other reasons. Hegel (1991) contrastingly suggests three key institutions present in the social - the family, the civil society and the state, which can be connected to the three sectors in society. The first sector, i.e. the public sector, refers to the government while the second sector incorporates businesses and for-profit organisations, i.e. the market. The third sector instead refers to the civil society (Googins & Rochlin, 2000), which we, in accordance with Hegel (1991), refer to as the community, i.e. community associations, agencies, and groups (Nance, 2016). While these constellations often act upon their own intentions, they may

unconsciously also contribute to the good of society (Hegel, 1991). However, while Hegel (1991) does not directly speak of 'the social', but rather about the philosophy of right and politics, many researchers highlight the relatedness between the social and the political (e.g. Pedersen, 2012; Petit, 2005). Hence, we argue that the political must be incorporated into 'the social' to reach cohesiveness. As such, while expanding Petit's (2005) notion of institutions to include the key institutions presented by Hegel (1991) and the three sectors of society, 'the social' will in the context of this research be defined as the unification of social interaction and social aggregation.

Based on the discussion above, it is apparent that 'the social' is prominent in everyday life and does not only affect what we do, but also how we do it, which allows us to form an understanding of 'the social' in social incubation. Over the years, sociology research has placed a heavier focus on grand social challenges, such as poverty and crime (Ravetz & Ravetz, 2016), and this puts further emphasis upon social work, and its role within sociology research. Here, 'the social' also plays a vital role in social work research as social interaction and aggregation affect the social work practices.

1.1.1 Social Work

Theoretically, several attempts have been made to establish what constitutes social work. The International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (IASSW-IFSW, 2017), define social work as an attempt to enhance well-being through social change, development and the liberation and empowerment of individuals. In short, social work aims to solve issues that negatively inflict on large numbers of people and therefore receives attention from the wider community (Green & Clarke, 2016). Accordingly, Bartlett (2003) explain it as efforts that hinder inequalities by assisting individuals in their efforts to overcome these inequalities and find and enhance their potential. While social work is commonly noted as above (e.g. Berzin, 2012; Trevithick, 2000; Green & Clarke, 2016), it seems appropriate to also incorporate 'the social' into the given definition as it may be considered the driving force for social work. Hence, social work may be defined as social engagement aimed at promoting social change, development and well-being through social interaction and aggregation.

Criticising social work, Beckmann, Zeyen and Kreminska (2014) argue that social work put little focus on innovation when solving social issues. However, it should be acknowledged

that this does not necessarily entail that social work is not innovative, rather it currently enters an innovative era where alterations in research, training and service-delivery practice are expected (Okpych, 2017). Additionally, due to their donation-based financial structure and local focus, social work can collect vast amounts of resources after a specific event, such as a natural catastrophe (Beckmann, 2012). Hence, social work is strong when targeting local and single events (Beckmann, 2012). This does however not entail that social work cannot address long-term issues; here considering the efforts social work does to solve poverty, for example, child abuse, and sexual violence. Nonetheless, the question of what constitutes a social issue becomes crucial here. Rittel and Webber (1973) coined the expression 'wicked problems' to explain certain social issues - the 'wicked' illustrating the malignancy of the issues, suggesting that these issues lack a solution and attempts aimed at solving them often tend to worsen the situation. While rather dated, the parable seems rather fitting and researchers have relied on the term to explain social issues (e.g. Leisink, Boselie, van Bottenburg & Hosking, 2013). Rappoport and Kren (1975) describe social issues as matters that threaten the well-being of a larger group of people, as these issues not only are universal, but also intertwined and facilitate each other.

Now turning to the impact of social work, Beckmann (2012) differs between static and dynamic impact. Static impact refers to the impact made at a given point in time i.e. solutions to singular occurrences. Here, social work can help affected individuals mentally (Benson, Furman, Canda, Moss, & Danbolt, 2016) and restore the affected society (Mulligan, Ahmed, Shaw, Mercer, & Nadarajah, 2012). Thus, from a static point of view, social work can have a vastly beneficial effect upon society (Beckmann, 2012). Social work may also create social change i.e. dynamic impact - impact that involves change in the environment and thus leads to long-term improvements (Beckmann, 2012). This is illustrated by their impact against female oppression (Alcázar-Campos, 2013) or overcoming discrimination and social exclusion (Drakeford, 2000). However, the praise given to social work must also be questioned. Many scholars have received fierce critique for such claims (e.g. Brewer & Lait, 1980; Brewer, 2014). However, it has been established that recovery aid diminish in later stages and leaves vulnerable individuals to fend for themselves too early, thus harming their ability to develop (Mulligan, et al., 2012). Moreover, social work has also been accused of labelling vulnerable people - making them victims in the eyes of society - thus creating stigma and further discrimination (Drakeford, 2000). In the pursuit of doing good, social work may also overlook negative consequences, which can further worsen the original situation. Brewer

(2014) exemplifies this through a real-life situation where social workers resituated children from insufferable living situations but unknowingly placed them in the hands of sexual predators. Thus, to ensure that social efforts achieve the intended impact, one must sufficiently plan the efforts according to the specific social issue being addressed (Epstein & Kristi, 2013).

As the discussion above highlights, social work aim to solve social issues, this in accordance with our initial understanding of social incubators. As such, it can be argued that social work represents 'the social' in social incubators, and will thus be used as a foundation for understanding the notion. Social work fight against a number of social issues, however, one of its most prominent battles is carried out on the behalf of individuals that are excluded from 'the social'. Hence, to fully understand social work, and by extension give a foundation to the work of social incubators, the concept of social exclusion must be scrutinised.

1.1.1.1 Social Exclusion

The concept of social exclusion refers to when links between society and an individual are severed (Harris & White, 2013), a result of discrimination based on factors such as ethnicity, religion, gender, age, and place of residence (GSDRC, 2015). Here, two misconceptions about social exclusion should be highlighted. First, social exclusion is often incorrectly ascribed solely to developing nations, however, it is estimated that 24.4% of the EU-28 population live at risk of social exclusion (Eurostat, 2015). Hence, it is a global issue that has an array of negative consequences for all nations, e.g. poverty, illiteracy and lack of education, disease, stigmatisation, and unethical behaviour (SEKN, 2008). In accordance with the latter, DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2010) report that people who live in social exclusion are more likely to turn to criminal activities. While the aforementioned are effects of social exclusion, they can also be the cause for it (Panek & Czapiński, 2011), thus, shedding light upon the negative spiral social exclusion creates. Second, social exclusion has previously almost been equated with poverty, which have made measures aimed at resolving the issue mostly directed towards such. However, despite being a large part of social exclusion, it does not cover the entire issue (GSDRC, 2015). Instead, social exclusion, according to SEKN (2008) is defined as unequal distribution of power in economic, social, political and cultural dimensions, dimensions which are interconnected and overlapping, resulting in individuals being absent in 'the social'.

Being socially excluded in the social dimension may hinder an individual from having social relations (SEKN, 2008) and admission to social services (GSDRC, 2015). Often a result of 'othering', in which an individual is considered to be different, it causes exclusion from social groups (GSDRC, 2015). In the political dimension, social exclusion is expressed through unfair execution of formal political rights, regulated through legislation and policies (GSDGRC, 2015; SEKN, 2008). The cultural dimension refers to the extent to which various ways of living, with regards to norm and values, are accepted (SEKN, 2008). Here, for example, indigenous populations are often considered socially excluded to a larger extent than the non-indigenous population (Hall & Patrinos, 2005), not only in healthcare and level of education, but also in the access to labour markets. The economic dimension refers to a society's equality with regards to the three economic areas of labour, credit and insurance (GSDRC, 2015) and through that the ability to secure other resources, such as an occupation or other forms of livelihood (SEKN, 2008). This, in turn, affects the individual's ability to promote their interests and influence political agendas and policies (GSDRC, 2015).

Although difficult to resolve, common approaches to promote social inclusion exist, categorised as executed at the collective or the individual level. At the collective level, attempts are often conducted through promotion of anti-discrimination, inclusion, and human rights. Other common approaches include legislative actions and political policies, such as affirmative action (GSDRC, 2015). At the individual level, attempts either regard the provisions of resources to individuals to help them leave social exclusion or make the individual an agent of his or her own change. The former aims to ensure that people have money to cover basic necessities through donations (Beckmann, 2012) while the latter aims at empowering the individual and thus give them the ability to collect the required resources themselves, rather than just give it to them. Page and Czuba (1990, p. n/a) define empowerment as *"a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important"* and it has been argued that in order for the exclusion to be fully beaten, empowerment of the community and the individuals is crucial (SEKN, 2008).

From the presented literature in our background and up to this point in the frame of reference, we have aimed to establish a conceptual understanding of what we believe are the two main components of social incubators - social work and incubation. We argue that by

being able to identify what the two notions are and their potential impact, we can now progress into creating an understanding of the two concepts in light of our theoretical lens – practice as theory.

2.2 Practice as Theory

To study entrepreneurial learning in accelerators, Levinsohn (2015) argues one must understand the interaction between the incubatees and the accelerator, as it is what promotes development. While it is acknowledged that incubators and accelerations are not interchangeable, accelerators share many of the characteristics of incubators and may be argued to be a type of incubator (Levinsohn, 2015). Strauss (1993), further highlighting the importance of this interaction while Hackett and Dilts (2004), propose that the incubator-incubatee relationship has a vast impact upon the program and its processes. The same reasoning will be applied in this thesis, i.e. to truly understand what a social incubator is, one must not only form an understanding of the program itself and the incubatees but also understand how their interaction shapes the program. Hence, to establish this dual focus a theory allowing for attention on both incubator and incubatees is needed. This could be established through the combination of different theories. However, applying the same theoretical lens to both concepts would be beneficial in giving an equal theoretical foundation, thus, decreasing the risk of theoretical differences affecting the results. This, in our opinion, eliminates theories such as entrepreneurial learning theory and organisational theory as they either focus upon incubatees and their development, or solely upon the program - with diminished objectivity as a consequence. As such, practice as theory is utilised as it supports this dual focus and warrants us to investigate both what is being done within the organisation, but also account for all people within it (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). It also supports the investigation of external points of view, such as the perspective of other outside actors. Further, using practice as theory, or more specifically strategy-as-practice (SAP), allows for a less biased view when investigating social incubators as it does not account for social work nor incubation specifically.

1.2.1 Strategy-as-Practice
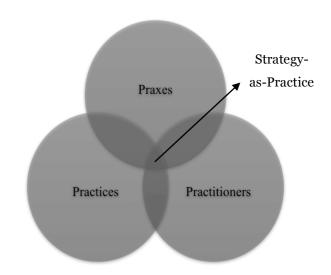
Numerous views exist regarding what constitutes practice. Based upon a definition given by Schatzki (2001), Araujo, Kjellberg and Spencer (2008, p. 6) propose that practices are *"human activities organized around shared practical understandings"*. Combining this with Giddens' (1984) claim that practice occurs as an on-going series, we define practice as an on-going series of human activity based on shared practical understandings. Within practice many different

research fields can be identified (Haag, 2012), where one of the most prominent is SAP. Strategy, be it in new ventures, established companies or incubators, is often considered a guiding path - a plan on how the company operates today (Carter, Clegg & Kornberger, 2008) in order to reach future goals (McKean, 2010). Thus, by studying the strategy of an organisation much can be revealed about the organisation as a whole and when exploring an organisational phenomenon may provide holistic insights. However, mainstream research often consider strategy as something an organisation has (Johnson, Langley, Melin, & Whittington, 2007) and its outcomes rather than strategy formulation, planning and implementation (Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, & Vaara, 2015), which reveals more about what the company wants to achieve. In result, research has remained on a macro-level, overlooking the implication of human action (Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007). However, since people form and guide strategy, human action needs be central in strategy research, as their impact upon strategy formation will otherwise be neglected (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington, 1996). To avoid this issue, an approach that focuses on actors and actions, such as SAP, is appropriate for this thesis, since it puts the actions of people at centre stage (Whittington, 2003).

With regards to SAP, activities refer to *"the day-to-day stuff of management"* (Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003, p. 15), i.e. what managers do in their daily activities (Jarzabkowski, 2005). SAP also emphasise the collective activities of individuals within an organisation (Golsorkhi, et al. 2015). However, while one specific actor performs these personal actions called micro-phenomena, they are not acting solely on their own accord. Rather actions are socially embedded and actors are influenced by, and constantly draw inspiration from, socially defined modes that arise from the social institutions where they belong (Wilson & Jarzabkowski, 2004). While these micro-activities are shaped and enabled by macro-contexts (infrastructure, technologies and discourses) (Jarzabkowski, et al., 2007), they also impact the macro-level - the organisation and its strategies (Johnson, et al., 2003). Thus, the relationship between macro and micro is bilateral, i.e. constantly drawing from, and contributing to, each other (Wilson & Jarzabkowski, 2004). It is hence crucial not to overlook the impact social actors have upon organisational strategy and SAP acknowledges how the interrelations between people and their individual behaviours and attitudes shape the organisation, its strategy and its outcome (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009).

1.2.2 The Three Components of Strategy-as-Practice

SAP consists of three perspectives (Figure 2); practitioners, praxes, and practices (Whittington, 2006). Hence, the concept considers established practices within a firm, the actors within it, and the actions that these actors take and thus allows the researcher to gain a holistic view of the organisation and what is occurring within it (Jarzabkowski, 2005). While some place emphasis upon a certain perspective, a holistic approach will be undertaken to fulfil the purpose of this research. This since considering all three

Figure 2 - The Three Components of SAP

perspectives corresponds to the given definition of practice as an on-going series of human activity based on shared practical understandings. It also accounts for the interconnectivity of the three perspectives and overcomes the issue of a partial focus - overlooking aspects by not accounting for the impact of other perspectives (Whittington, 2006).

1.2.2.1 Practitioners

Practitioners are actors who make, shape, and implement strategies (Whittington, 2006). While research often focuses upon management as practitioners, the perspective is broader and entails all people who act inside and outside of the business (Jarzabkowski, et al., 2007). The individual practitioner can have a vast impact upon the organisation as they are the ones who explain, interpret, and implement everything that occurs within it (Rouleau, 2005). While the 'inner world' of an individual affects their actions, it should also be acknowledged that the individual actor does not ultimately act individually. Instead, their actions are affected by norms, events, and interactions with others (Samra-Fredericks, 2005).

1.2.2.2 Practices

Activities often draw upon routines, cultures and elements deeply embedded in the organisation (Whittington, 2006). These elements are called practices and represents interconnected shared behaviours in organisations (Reckwitz, 2002). By studying these, a researcher may discover why things are done and why in that particular manner (Jarzabkowski, et al., 2007). Despite being embedded in the organisation, practices are not perpetual but rather dynamic and depends on who is utilising it. This, since practitioners

apply the practice to their preferences (De Certeau, 1984; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Seidl, 2007), causing practice to change (Seidl, 2007) and thus creats a discrepancy between the individual's usage of the practice and its original intent (Jarzabkowski, 2004).

1.2.2.3 Praxes

The formal and informal activities that all levels of the organisation perform are referred to as praxes (Whittington, 2006). The term consolidates the different actions performed by different practitioners, thus addressing both the individual and the collective occurrences within the organisation (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). This consideration is of great importance since praxes are not singular occurrences but occurs parallel and simultaneous, and is interconnected to other events and actions. As such, these activity streams can both hinder and promote each other (Denis, Langley & Rouleau, 2007).

2.3 Business Incubation and Social Work in Practice

Having elucidated the concept of practice as theory, we can now look upon the two main research areas of social incubators – social work and incubation – in the light of the theoretical lens.

1.3.1 Business Incubation in Practice

As incubator success depends upon a combination of the implementation of industry best-practices and successful incubation of entrepreneurial firms (Lewis, 2008), several attempts have been made to map the success factors of the incubation process. This as understanding the incubator process and its effects can increase incubator success (Ayatse, Kwahar & Iyortsuun, 2017). Campbell, Kendricks, and Samuelson (1985) propose that an incubation process initiates with the identification of a need, which serves as the basis for incubatee selection. During incubation, the authors propose that the business incubator's task is to monitor the incubatee and assure that they receive outside investments and network access, which can be utilised after graduation. Au contraire, Smilor (1987) instead highlight the importance of support systems, such as access to business expertise, administrative systems and secretariat, however, due to his external focus, fails to explain these practices in more detail. To consolidate existing research, Bergek and Norrman (2008) have developed a business incubator process based on proposed best practices. The process is not to be seen as fixed for all incubators, but be used as a guideline for how business incubators most commonly structure their program, and will be used as such in this thesis. While it is acknowledged that social incubators are argued to be individual incubators, due to the limited

research on individual incubators' practices, we are, as previously noted, forced to rely on the business incubation process as our point of departure.

1.3.1.1 Selection

Selection of incubatees is an important tool for business incubator success (Lumpkin & Ireland, 1988). The approach varies between business incubators, however, the process often involves finding promising firms that are too weak to succeed by themselves, while avoiding firms that are so weak that they are doomed to fail - with or without the help of a business incubator (Hackett & Dilts, 2004). Research show that the focus often is upon the business idea's market potential, capability of the entrepreneur (Bergek & Norrman, 2008) or a combination of both (Wulung, Takahashi & Morikawa, 2014). However, what this entail varies from business incubator to business incubator (Bergek & Norrman, 2008).

1.3.1.2 Incubation

Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the office facilities and services that many business incubators offer the incubatees (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Providing incubatees with infrastructure has been a feature in business incubator programs since the concepts early days (Adkins, 2002) and can lead to synergies, relationships and economies of scale since start-ups work in close proximity (Bøllingtoft & Ulhøi, 2005).

Business Support

Sole infrastructure cannot build businesses (Adkins, 2004), thus offering support services to incubatees is a critical success factor, both for the business incubator and the participating firms (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Most commonly, firms are offered entrepreneurial training, advice for development and services concerning accounting, legal matters, advertising and other general business matters (Chan & Lau, 2005). However, it is not only important that the business incubators offer these services to the participating firms. Rather, the quality of them and the fit to the participating venture is crucial with regards to business incubator success (Bergek & Norrman, 2008).

Mediation

A business incubator must also leverage the entrepreneurial talent further (Bergek & Norrman, 2008) and act as a bridge to connect the firm with the surrounding environment to promote success after graduation (Marrifield, 1987). This can, for example, be achieved

by helping the firm understand and connect to institutions that will affect their business and can help the incubatee survive once it has left the program (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Mediation can also help the firm create networks to other firms. Here, entrepreneurial ecosystems serve as an example, i.e. networks in which ideas and insights can be exchanged (Groth, Esposito, & Tse, 2015), entrepreneurial spirit can spur, and talent and support systems may benefit network members (Greene, Rice, & Fetters, 2010). Being an important component within the ecosystem, business incubators can connect incubatees to the network and thus to give them access to it (Fernández, Jiménez & Roura, 2015).

1.3.1.3 Graduation

While all business incubator programs have a graduation strategy, when and how firms graduate differs between incubators (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Commonly, participating firms must exit the program after a limited time (CSES, 2014), often 3-5 years (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). If the desired venture state has not been fulfilled, some business incubators allow firms to remain within the program for a limited time (Peters, et al., 2004). Despite assumed to be ready for exit by graduation, incubatees are the most vulnerable straight after it (CSES, 2014). To ensure success, after-services for graduates should be installed. Furthermore, to remain in contact with the graduated firms is not only to the benefit of the ventures, but can also be an important network source for the incubator (CSES, 2014).

1.3.2 Social Work in Practice

While it has largely been established that the practice of social work should be based upon research to a larger extent than previously, clearer directions are missing (Parton & Krik, 2010). Furthermore, while Feit (2003) highlights differences in economic, social, and political conditions, both over time and in different contexts, Green and Clark (2016) argue that different social problems require fundamentally different types of treatment. Thus, general practice or process of social work lacks cohesion. Allen-Mears and Gavin (2000) have despite these claims identified two general approaches to social work - preventing social issues and solving them.

Having previously been regarded as too impractical and costly, the former now constitutes an important aspect within social intervention practice (Fraser, Randolph, & Bennett, 2000). While prevention measures differ depending on issue, common approaches include education, acknowledging issues (Marshall, Ruth, Sisco, Bethke, Piper, Cohen & Bachman, 2011), and, legislative and regulatory action (GSDRC, 2015). Contrastingly, the latter is often

considered to gyrate around three main practices, proposed by Payne (1996). The individual-reformist approach aims to reform social services to better adhere to needs of the people. Thus, putting emphasis upon the individual needs and their solution (Mary, 2008), which requires an on-going political voice for social services to improve their practices (Abramovitz, 1998). The reflexive-therapeutic view instead aims to promote self-development, self-realisation and psychological growth through interaction between the individual and the worker. Here, individuals are helped to find the tools needed for creating an understanding of their world and their issue through discourse rather than being handed a solution. This allows them to understand their own strength and what they are truly capable of and thus reach self-fulfilment (Mary, 2008). Last, the socialist-collective approach recognises that social issues arise from social structures in society that create inequalities that hinders the empowerment of individuals (Payne, 2005). It assumes that empowerment can only be reached if people transform socially and overcome these social structures (Mary, 2008). Practically, this involves promoting cooperation and collaboration between different social groups in society (Payne, 2005), ensuring that everyone has access to social services and challenging social institutions that impose social inequalities (Mary, 2008).

Based upon previous research, Mary (2008, p.173) developed a model for social work in a sustainable world (Figure 3), which will serve as the basis of social work in practice in this thesis. The framework presents a holistic overview of social work and highlights individuals, families and groups, the international arena, neighbourhoods and communities, states and nations, as well as organisations as important actors.
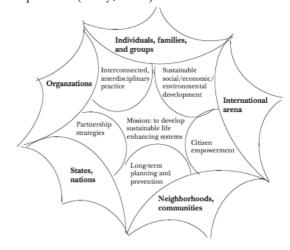
Figure 3 - A Model for Social Work in a Sustainable World

1.3.2.1   Prevention and Long-Term Planning

Mary (2008) argues that, most commonly, the issues that individuals experience are not unique, nor appeared instantly. Hence, preventing issues before the individual is affected is an important aspect in social work. This can, for example, include allowing experts to cooperatively work on solutions (Mary, 2008), education and knowledge spreading (Marshall, et al, 2011), and installing new legislation (GSDRC, 2015).

1.3.2.2 Interdisciplinary Social Work

Single actors rarely have an ultimately best solution - best practice is instead created through the combination of several approaches. This since interdisciplinary work allows for knowledge sharing and synergies and consequently to effective and efficient services (Mary, 2008). This is particularly true as many issues stem from meta-issues, which often cannot be solved solemnly by one actor, making collaboration an important cornerstone to meet social challenges. Here, Mary (2008) also speaks of collaboration between different communities, and between social workers and other societal institutions. As such, collaboration is also possible between the three sectors in society - the state, the market and the civil society (Googins & Rochlin, 2000).

1.3.2.3 Sustainable, Social and Economic Development

Many of today's social issues stem from development too rapid for society to handle, leaving negative implications of its rampage. An example is globalisation, which has resulted in decreasing employment opportunities and tax reductions so fierce that the social systems have been left incapable to function sufficiently (Fisher & Karger, 2000). Thus, development should be conducted in a manner that both respect 'the social' and its limit of growth. This can be done through inter-community projects that involve all social groups to reap benefit or involve the micro-enterprises in the local economy (Mary, 2008).

1.3.2.4 Citizen and Community Empowerment

Empowerment of individuals and communities is also important and could be established by social workers and individuals having equal influence in issue-solving. Furthermore, this equality should also be present in the individual-community relationship where individuals should have ability to influence the community in which they live. To ensure this, local councils can be established, in which all social groups are involved in decision-making for the future of the community (Mary, 2008).

1.3.2.5 Partnership Education

None of the above is however possible without collaboration and partnerships, which requires social workers to be educated in partnership practices. By always applying a partnership approach to issues best practice exchange and synergies are possible. Also the empowerment of individuals can easier be reached since positioning the vulnerable individuals as partners rather than clients, can make them more involved in finding a solution (Mary, 2008).

2.4   A Conceptual Model of Social Incubation in Practice

Due to the scarce literature on social incubators, we have, as can be seen in the sections above, chosen to combine two separate streams of research to form our theoretical foundation – social work and incubation. First, as a response to the labelling of social incubators as 'incubators', it comes natural to engage incubation literature in our research. Second, the word 'social' in social incubators and the brief description of social incubators provided by Guillén et al. (2010), incited us to turn to the philosophy of 'the social' and social work as the latter and social incubators both aim to resolve social issues. Combining these two streams of research enables us to lay the conceptual and practical foundation, which we will use as a point of departure for our empirical search.

We believe that social incubation in practice (Figure 4) starts with a social issue, such as social exclusion, which is prevailing in Mexico (Mballa, 2013). Drawing from the literature on business incubation practice, we believe that social incubation may
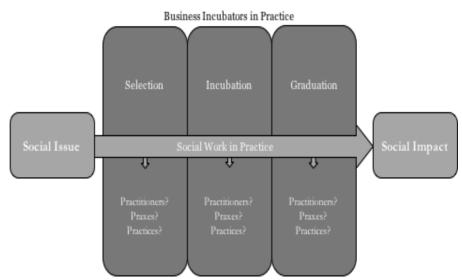
Figure 4 - A Conceptual Model of Social Incubation in Practice

occur in three consecutive steps – selection, incubation and graduation. Here, as no research has been conducted regarding the individual incubation process, we are forced to rely on the business incubation process as our point of departure. Now introducing 'the social' into our model, we believe that the practices of social work will be prevailing in each consecutive step. Furthermore, each step consists of one or more practitioners that engage in praxes that are embedded in the practices of the social incubator, leading to a social impact.

Before proceeding we would once again like to highlight that the research on social incubators is extremely limited. Consequently, the presented model should not be considered an attempt to explain social incubation practices, but rather serve as a visual representation of how the selected streams of literature is interconnected and the point of departure for our empirical search.

3. Methodology

This section will give insight into the methodological decisions taken in this study, and explain how these will affect our research throughout. Here we will also give insight into our philosophical and research perspective, and how these will affect both how our study is conducted and our results.

3.1   Research Philosophy

Before digging deeper into the methodology, we need to establish our research philosophy, as it will fundamentally impact how this research will be conducted. Here, at the ontological level, as one of the goals of this study is to understand what social incubators are, it could be argued that this study considers the 'meaning' people assign to the social incubators. As such, in line with what Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) label a 'relativist' ontology, it could be argued that several 'truths' exist in this study, thus, facts depend on who you inquire data from. Accordingly, at the epistemological level, this thesis will be guided by an interpretivist epistemology as it allows us to *"grasp the subjective meaning of social action"* (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.715). By this research having a relativist ontological stance and interpretivist epistemology, it is possible to study the complex social reality of these incubators and allow for the subjective meanings of what they are.

Our relativist ontology and interpretivist epistemology permeates our background where critique is not only directed towards the rhetoric around incubators, but also against the typological classification of the incubator literature, where arguments of previous authors are not seen as an objective truth, but rather one of many truths. Nonetheless, this research might show that there is nothing in the practices, practitioners or praxes that separate social incubators from other incubators. In such a case the positivist may indeed argue that social- and social business incubators are identical. However, by using an interpretivist epistemology it is possible to spot socially constructed differences between the two, for example, by looking at the meaning people assign to them. Our interpretivist epistemology is further visible in the empirical findings. Here, while positivism would regard contrasting opinions as error variables, interpretivism allows us to see all answers as a valid explanation of reality and account for those multiple realities.

As our interpretivist view entails understanding the meaning people assign to social incubators, the concept of meaning-making subsequently becomes a legitimate concept of

this study. Meaning-making is *"the process of how individuals make sense of knowledge, experience, relationships, and the self"* (Ignelzi, 2000, p. 5), however, it often occurs without the individual's awareness and understanding for why they assign a particular meaning to an event (Kegan, 1980). By scrutinizing the definition of meaning-making, an integrated component can be seen - sense-making - which literally means *"the making of sense"* (Weick, 1995, p.4). Elaborated further, it may be defined as *"the process through which people work to understand issues or events that are novel, ambiguous, confusing, or in some other way violate expectations"* (Maitlis & Christiansson, 2014, p.57). Here, people draw from experiences and knowledge they hold, to categorise and make sense of these issues or events (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Thus, sense-making becomes particularly important as we are researching a, at least for the academic community, novel phenomenon.

3.1.1 Inter-subjectivity

As will be elaborated on in the research strategy section, this study will apply a qualitative methodology to fulfil its purpose. Accordingly, subjectivity is intimately linked with this study, as Ratner (2002) argues that subjectivity in qualitative research guides everything from the choice of topic to interpreting the data. Subjectivity in its purest form can be considered an understanding of the outside world only held by one individual, equating the number of existing realities to human beings on earth, arguably, making research relatively futile as knowledge to one would never be knowledge to the other. A fundamental issue with subjectivity has been argued that it interferes with the concept of objectivity (Ratner, 2002), a concept which is considered the antonym of subjectivity (Solomon, 2005). Objectivity, can thus be considered a state where an independent reality indeed exists, i.e. that there is a commonly shared understanding among all human beings of what constitutes reality. However, in line with interpretivism, we do not believe in an illustration of the world as solely black or white. Rather we argue that a shared understanding may indeed exists between several individuals, but does not necessarily have to be shared by all individuals.

In line with such notions, it can be argued that a continuum between the extremes exist where one does not have to fall into either. Midway lies the point referred to as inter-subjectivism, defined as *"the sharing of subjective states by two or more individuals"* (Scheff, 2006, p. 196), or simply - shared understanding (Anderson, 2008). Inter-subjectivity affects our research in several ways. First, serving as a crucial component during the process of this thesis, it acknowledges that 'knowing' is not possible when individual minds are in a vacuum,

but rather our 'knowing' is mediated through social interaction (Anderson, 2008). Second, when analysing, we may believe to have reached a shared understanding with the research subjects about what social incubators are and their process, while we in fact, due to perceptual differences of reality, have not. This poses particular challenges when researching in a, to us, unfamiliar context like Mexico, where cultural and language barriers may block the path to inter-subjectivity. Hence, by recognising inter-subjectivity as a legitimate concept of this study, we also recognize the importance of bridging the perceptual gap that might occur between ourselves and the research subjects.

3.2   Practice Research

The following section will present how we incorporate practice into our research, and how this will affect the study.
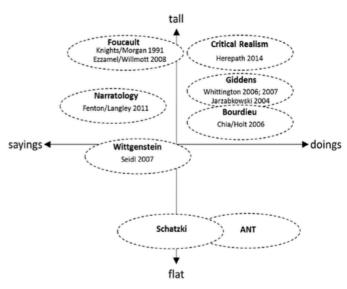
3.2.1   Theories of Action in Practice Research

To understand the subjective meaning practitioners assign to the social incubators, it is believed to be of importance to also introduce another concept, namely, theory of action. Here, Argyris and Schön (1974) argue that, despite unaware of their existence, individuals have mental perceptions of their behaviour, from which they draw to explain how or why they would act and behave in certain contexts. These 'planned behaviours' are however rarely consistent with the explicit actions they perform (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985). As such, Argyris and Schön (1974) argue that two separate maps exist simultaneously, namely, theory in use and espoused theory. In its essence, espoused theory deals with how individuals believe or explicitly state what they would do in a given situation, while the theory in use deals with how individuals actually behave in the given situation.

In a similar logic, Seidl and Whittington (2014) present the concepts of sayings and doings in SAP research. Here, sayings are expressed through discourse, while doings are expressed through actions, such as decision making or campaigning. Seidl and Whittington (2014), argue that conceptual literature is fragmented, and attempt to map previous research according to their focus by illustrating this in an explicit grid (See Figure 5 retrieved from Seid and Whittington, 2014, p. 1413). The grid's vertical axis displays tendencies in the research' ontological positioning, i.e. tall or flat. Here, a tall ontological position see SAP as a hierarchical relationship, where higher levels dictates what occurs on the lower - i.e. the macro- or meso-society has a large impact upon the micro-phenomenon, by influencing the actions of people through power relations. Flatter ontologies rather see the connection

between macro, meso, and micro as a relationship, in which they function interconnectivity, both affecting each other - and in which both are members of *"organised sets of activity"* (Schatzki, 2011, p. 8).

In this thesis, using a flatter ontology would fall short of capturing the vertical relationship between management and operational employees. Rather, taking a tall ontology allows us to, for example, see

Figure 5 - Spectrum of Theoretical Resources in Key Papers

how the strategic activities pushed out by top management on the meso-level (the social incubator) is attended to by the micro-level, i.e. the staff in the incubators and the incubatees. Second, before positioning ourselves on the axis of sayings and doing, it should be clarified that, while Seidl and Whittington (2014) regard sayings and doings as two poles on an axis, we apply the logic of Argyris and Schön (1974) and argue that these sayings (espoused theory) and doings (theory in use) exist simultaneously. Furthermore, although Argyris and Schön (1974) sees theories of action on an individual level, we argue that the same logic also may apply to the organisation as whole. Such a discrepancy between the theories of action would, in this research, be illustrated by top management saying that the incubator is operating in one way, while staff claim to be doing something completely different and incubatees perceive a third reality. With that said, Argyris and Schön (1974) suggest that effectiveness is built by bridging the gap between the two theories of action. As such, this study will be positioned midway on the axis, or in both extremes simultaneously if you will, looking at both the social incubator's espoused theory (sayings) and theory in use (doings) to gain a holistic understanding of them.

3.2.2   Research Modes in Practice Research

Orlikowski (2010) argues that there are multiple ways to attend to practice in research, distinguishing three different modes of doing so (Orlikowski, 2010), i.e. practice-as-phenomenon, -perspective and -philosophy. Aiming to diminish the gap between theory and practice, practice-as-phenomenon emphasises what is in fact happening rather than what theory says will or should happen. Hence, researchers attempt to understand what

practitioners are actually doing - the *"practical activity and direct experience"* (Orlikowski, 2010, p. 24). Contrastingly, practise-as-perspective shift the point of view onto the habits and routines of people in an organisation, and their day-to-day activities (Lave, 1988). In simpler terms, practice-as-perspective allow researchers to use practice as a lens through which one can study a particular phenomenon. Regarding practice-as-philosophy, Orlikowski (2010, p.23) refers to the mode as *"the commitment to an ontology that posits practice as constitutive of all social reality",* entailing that social phenomena is created by or through the interaction of people, and can only be explained by understanding people through facts about them. Out of the three modes, practice-as-philosophy has the strongest ontological view about the constitution of social reality.

While not mutually exclusive, the modes arise through the researchers' locus of attention and logic of their inquiry (Orlikowski, 2010). As such, it is argued to be important to clarify our standpoint in relation to these three modes. For the purpose of this thesis, using the mode of practice-as-philosophy does not allow us to account for the multiple interpretations that constitute social reality. Rather the modes that will permeate this study are practice-as-phenomenon and -perspective. First, using practice-as-phenomenon allows us to minimise the gap between theory on incubators and social work, and their practices, to gain a stronger understanding of the phenomenon. Second, using practice-as-perspective, allows for the study of routines and everyday activity of the incubators (Orlikowski, 2010), and scrutinise for differences in even the smallest of activities. Furthermore, using practice-as-perspective also allows us to use the everyday practices of the incubators as a point of departure.

3.3   Research Strategy

Stebbins (2001) notes that researchers explore when they have little or no scientific knowledge about a phenomenon believed to be worth examining. Having already established research on social incubators being minimal, taking an exploratory approach allows us to *"maximize the discovery of generalizations leading to descriptions and understanding of an area of social or psychological life"* (Stebbins, 2001, p.3). The outcomes of exploratory research are to inductively derive generalisations about a phenomenon (Stebbins, 2001), which aligns with our intent to understand and gain insights, not only into what social incubators are, but also into their processes and its impact. With the arguments of Stebbins (2001) it also becomes evident that this thesis will use an inductive reasoning style to fulfil its purpose. This is further confirmed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), arguing that theory-building from observations is

synonymous such a style. An inductive reasoning approach will thus allow us to gain an understanding of the meaning people closely involved with social incubators attach to the phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore, although Stebbins (2001) argues that exploratory research is not necessarily synonymous with qualitative research, the research strategy of this thesis will in fact be qualitative. This as it aligns with the main features of qualitative research, i.e. an inductive reasoning, an interpretivist epistemology and a constructionist ontology (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Also, using a qualitative research strategy allows us to fulfil the purpose of this thesis as it is of an exploratory nature (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016).

As noted in 3.1.1, 'knowing' is mediated through social interaction (Andersson, 2008), thus to truly understand what social incubators are, it is necessary to interact with existing social incubators. One way to accomplish interaction is through conducting a case study. Having existed for numerous years, case study research has, according to Harrison, Birks, Franklin and Mills (2017), its origins in qualitative research approaches, which cut across several disciplines. However, as positivism grew strong in the latter part of the 20th century, case study research often received criticism for its lack of generalisability and validity (Harrison et al., 2017). Hence, a gap emerged between the philosophical camps, where positivistic case study researchers favoured quantitative approaches, while qualitative methods were favoured by constructivists and interpretivists (Harrison et al., 2017). Here, the latter of the two aligns with both our research philosophy (relativism and interpretivism) and research strategy (qualitative). Stake (1995, p. xi), a prominent researcher in this camp, argues that *"a case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances"* employed when one has a strong desire to understand a complex social phenomenon, which can be argued to be in line with our study.

As our research questions imply the need for a general understanding of social incubators, employing an instrumental case study allows us to broadly study one particular case to understand the phenomenon (Stake, 1995). The case chosen for our research is an NGO in Mexico - that we will refer to as Mexico University – which, to our current knowledge, is one of few operating a social incubator. Here, it could be argued that our case study is consistent with an intrinsic case study, which is conducted to understand the particularity of a case (Stake, 1995). However, considering the heavy emphasis on the business itself in literature's rhetoric of incubators, we argue that social incubators may exist in other areas without our

knowledge - without being referred to as social incubators. As such, considering that we cannot be certain about the extent of these incubators' existence and that our purpose is to understand the generic phenomenon, it is argued that an intrinsic case study will not allow us to draw such conclusions (Stake, 1995). It should also be acknowledged that while it may indeed be revealed that Mexico University's social incubators are not typical of other cases, Stake (1995) argues that this is of less relevance when conducting an instrumental case study. Instead, the social incubators at Mexico University are of secondary interest as the case is only there to help us understand the overall phenomenon (Stake, 1995). Moreover, the social incubators of Mexico University have been operating for 10 years, thus, fulfilling the fundamental criterion of case selection offered by Stake (1995), i.e. that the case chosen should maximize our learning, as it can be assumed that Mexico University has accumulated experience and knowledge regarding social incubation.

3.3.1 Structure of Case Study

In case study research, it is crucial to make clear what the unit of analysis is. Here, arguing that the appropriate unit of analysis is the unit that the researcher ultimately wants to draw conclusions about, Patton (2002) implies that the case itself and the unit of analysis are equal. This is confirmed by Stake (2005, p.443) who argues that *"a case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of what is to be studied"*. Thus, the unit of analysis for this study is Mexico University's social incubators. However, considering the size of Mexico and that it is a federation of states, it could be assumed that there are regional differences in terms of culture, laws, and socioeconomic opportunities. Moreover, as will be elaborated later on in this thesis, Mexico University's social incubators are spread all across the country. Hence, although operating within the same organisation, only considering one particular incubator in one particular city when painting the grand picture of social incubators, may fail to grasp the contextual differences in which they operate. Thus, to fulfil the purpose of this thesis, the instrumental case study will also make use of sub-units of analysis, i.e. looking at the organisation from a national perspective and regional perspective in Guadalajara and Monterrey (See Figure 6).

Using the national organisation as a sub-unit of analysis comes natural, as investigating operations on the national level may compensate for the inability to visit all geographical locations in which the social incubators operate. This assumption is based upon two separate notions. First, key practitioners on the national level are involved in directing the regional incubators' activities, and thus are part in forming their operations. Second, communication between the two levels has provided these practitioners with insights into the regional incubators operations, which they can convey to us.
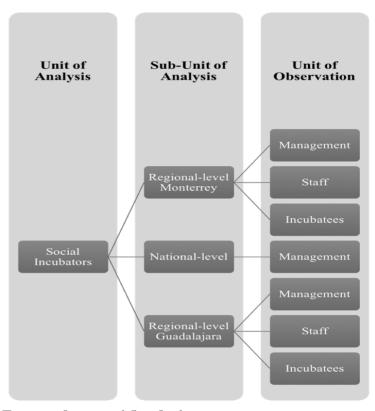
Figure 6 - Structure of Case Study

The selection of the regional sub-units of analysis is bound by two criteria. First, to facilitate a holistic view, the two cities should be among the largest in the nation. This criterion is established due to our inability to investigate social incubators in more than two locations. Here we argue that larger cities with large populations will suffer from more varied social issues, and also incorporate those of smaller cities. As such, the social incubators in larger cities will have more diverse social issues to tackle, and quite likely therefore apply more techniques for doing so. Hence, by placing our focus upon larger cities we believe that we will be able to cover more diverse social issues and solutions than an investigation on smaller cities. Second, as noted previously, Mexico is a country with vast cultural difference, which serve as the basis for our second criterion, i.e. that the two cities should represent disparate cultures. Here we argue that culture will affect not only the social issues in a region, but also 'the social' overall and thus inflict upon how individuals respond to different solutions. Hence, Guadalajara and Monterrey were chosen, both ranging in the top three largest cities in Mexico and representing different cultural settings - Monterrey having, due to its

geographical location in the north, strong influences from American culture and values while Guadalajara represents a more traditional Mexican cultural context.

The units of observation should also be addressed. In order to fulfil the purpose of a holistic understanding of social incubators, as mentioned in section 3.2.1, one must bridge the gap between the two theories of action. Here, the time constraints hamper our ability to study the doings of the social incubators, since fully grasping all doings within the program requires studying all aspects of the incubators in depth for an extensive period of time. As such, we attempt to overcome this difficulty by looking at sayings *about* doings at all levels of the organisation. The units of observation are thus chosen in order to incorporate the perspective of *all* levels of practitioners within the social incubators. As such, the empirical collection of this research will be distributed over the different units of observation; management, incubator staff, and incubatees. Here, staff refers to practitioners who have direct involvement with incubatees. While all units of observations will be addressed within the regional sub-units, only management will be considered on the national level, due to the absence of staff working in direct involvement with incubatees.

3.4   Data Collection

To fulfil the purpose of this study and to do so in a manner that strengthens the confirmability and credibility through the use of triangulation, three data collection methods was employed, i.e. interviews, direct observations and textual data, and were employed up to the point of data saturation.

3.4.1   Interviews

The first and most prominent data collection method was personal interviews. Here, possibilities include unstructured, semi-structured and structured interview techniques. Saunders et al. (2009) argue that semi-structured or unstructured interviews can be advantageous when undertaking exploratory research, there is a need of establishing personal contact, questions are open-ended or complex, and there is an importance of completing the 'questionnaire' fully. As this study fulfils all those criteria and aims to get a holistic understanding of social incubators, in line with the arguments of DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews. While acknowledging that unstructured interviews are more commonly associated with exploratory studies (Robson, 2002), as three different sub-units of analysis were used, it could be argued

that a degree of structure was needed in order to see patterns between the different sub-units. Hence, semi-structured interviews were preferred over unstructured.

The population for this study included all practitioners of the social incubator at the national- and regional-level (Guadalajara and Monterrey). As noted earlier, it was crucial to gain different perspectives across the sub-units of analysis. This is much in line with purposive sampling where *"the researcher will want to sample in order to ensure that there is a good deal of variety in the resulting sample, so that sample members differ from each other in terms of key characteristics"* (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 442). Furthermore, there was also a need for respondents to have knowledge about the social incubators, thus, also in line with arguments to use purposive sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In summary, 13 were conducted over the different sub-units of analysis and units of observation (Table 1).

	Pseudonym	Unit of Observation	Time In Incubators	Interview Date	Duration
National	Esteban	Management	10 years	March 7th	118 min
	Vianey	Management	9 years	March 9th	80 min
Guadalajara	Maria	Management	8 years	March 27th	76 min
	Cinthia	Management	10 years	March 27th	58 min
	Melissa	Staff	3 months	March 29th	40 min
	José	Staff	2 months	March 31 st	32 min
	Ophelia	Incubatee	1 year	March 29th	55 min
	Teresa	Incubatee	2 months	March 31st	58 min
Monterrey	Juan	Management	7 years	March 22nd	66 min
	Carlos	Staff	1,5 years	April 18th	42 min
	Miguel	Staff	6 months	April 20th	48 min
	Valeria	Incubatee	3 months	April 22nd	48 min
	Alice	Incubatee	3 years	April 21st	63 min

Table 1 - List of Interviewees

Due to the different roles held, and daily activities conducted, a number of the interview questions were adapted according to what sub-unit of analysis the interviewee belonged to. Here, it should first be clarified that to account for time constraints, questions were constructed to inquire about the doings of the social incubators. Per example, if top management proposed that certain doings occur within the incubators, this was checked with regional management, staff and incubatees in order to establish the validity of their claim, thus identifying any discrepancies between sayings and doings. Further, while some questions were aimed at all interviewees, others had to be altered in order to both shed light upon the particular situations upon that organisational level, but also according to the interviewees

particular knowledge. Reflected in the interview questions, this could also be visible through follow-up questions and laddering techniques used throughout the interviews.

Since translating words into a non-native language, there is a possibility that knowledge is not translated correctly, thus leading to knowledge spills (Squires, 2009). Questions aimed at interviewees at the national level and students, who are fully proficient in English, were thus not linguistically formulated in the same manner as questions aimed at participants with a lesser grasp of the language. Thus, the questions were altered in order to avoid language spills caused by interviewees not fully grasping the questions. Furthermore, to further limit this issue, all interviewees received the full set of interview questions prior to the interview to prepare and were requested not to discuss these questions amongst other interviewees. Another possible cause for knowledge spills is participants not being able to express themselves sufficiently in the English language. Words in different languages carry different weights and meanings, and when translating your own words into another language, it can be difficult to express what one truly wants to say (Squires, 2009). In order to overcome this, participants had the right to request having the interview in Spanish instead, together with a translator, which only incubatees and Guadalajara management asked for. Here, translators in close proximity to the interviewee, for example, Mexico University students translated when interviewing incubatees and Guadalajara management.

Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2012) note that when designing interview guides based upon theory, one can, by inflicting preconceptions formed from the theory, overlook the interviewees personal sense-making and thus key aspects going unnoticed. As such, while the interview guide was structured according to SAP, the actual questions were based with our research questions in mind.

With the above kept in mind, the questions were designed as follows:

(a) Questions for national management
Here, we aimed at learning more about the overall project, rather than detailed accounts for how the programs are conducted. Questions concerned the structuring of the social incubators, objectives, reasons and goals for having them, and the influence of Mexican University upon the social incubators.

(b) Questions for regional management

Here, we aimed at learning more about the structure, strategy, and operations on a regional level. Thus, the questions directed at regional managers was similar to questions directed at top management, however with a specific focus upon the specific region, and the relationship between national and regional level.

(c) Questions for regional staff

Here, we aimed at learning more about the everyday practices within the program. Thus, questions concerned daily operations and the program itself - what is being done, how it is being done, and what responsibilities and tasks employees have within the incubators. It should be noted that incubator staff were all enrolled students at Mexico University.

(d) Questions for regional incubatees

Here, we aimed at learning more about their experience within the program, and what result their participation has reaped. Furthermore, as participants had experienced the program first hand, the questions were also used to establish whether what management and employees say and think of the program, is shared by its participants.

3.4.2 Observations

Observations are a neglected part of research, but can enrich the data collected (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, to gain further insights, direct observations served as a data collection method. While the semi-structured interviews served as a

Date	Sub-Unit of Analysis	Duration	Type
March 29th	Guadalajara	3h	Observer as Participant
March 31st	Guadalajara	3h	Observer as Participant
April 22nd	Monterrey	3h	Observer as Participant

Table 2 - List of Observations

primary data collection method if you will, the observations served more as a *complementary data* to understand the data collected in the interviews. Using observations allowed us to gain direct access to the realities as they were constructed. There are four types of observation modes depending on the researcher's involvement, spanning from complete participant to complete observer (Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Here, two desires guided our decision of observation mode. First, as incubatees are in the program on the premises that they are considered socially excluded, which could be sensitive in nature, it was important for us to reveal our identities. Second, it was not desirable to manipulate the events

of the incubator but rather to allow the incubatees (as well as staff) to create their own social reality. These two factors led us to take an observer as participant nature of our role that allowed us to focus fully on our role as researchers (Saunders et al., 2009). In summary (Table 2), three observational sessions were conducted which allowed us to study social incubator activities in real-time by, for example, monitoring lectures given to incubatees.

3.4.3 Textual Data

Textual data are *"written sources of information produced for a purpose other than research, but with some relevance to a given research project"* (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015, p.130). While it is noted that textual data are a very heterogeneous group of sources (Bryman & Bell, 2011), the documents for this study include the social incubator's website, brochures, flyers and executive presentations related

Type	Format	Abbreviation
Executive Presentation	PPT	TD1
Executive Presentation	PPT	TD2
Flyer	Paper	TD3
Website	-	TD4
Brochure	Paper	TD5
Brochure	Paper	TD6
Brochure	Paper	TD7
Flyer	Paper	TD8
Executive Presentation	PPT	TD9

Table 3 - List of Textual Data

to the incubators (Table 3). This textual data served not only as valuable background information about the incubators (Bryman & Bell, 2011), but also as a complementary data source to the primary data that was collected. Here, it should also be noted that official reports or the like, were used to gain a basic understanding of the Mexican context and, rather than being included in Table 3, such textual data are properly referenced in chapter 4.

3.4.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Data Collection Methods

There are advantages with all three types of data collection methods. Strengths of qualitative interviewing include greater breadth of coverage, less intrusion in people's lives and the ability to start with a specific focus (Bryman & Bell, 2011). With regards to observations, Bryman and Bell (2011) argues that it gives researchers the opportunity to spot what interviewees take for granted, see through others' eyes and possibility encounter the unexpected. Strengths associated with textual data include high quality information with a possibility to gain a historical perspective, which could be difficult when collecting primary data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). They can also be used to triangulate findings associated with primary data collection and can result in unexpected discoveries (Saunders et al., 2009). As such, combining these three data collection methods, although two acting more as complementary sources of data, will combine the strengths of each data collection method.

While there are advantages with the methods, there are of course also weaknesses. With regards to textual data, it may not be created towards the purpose of the research and access can be costly or difficult (Saunders et al., 2009). Especially as access to the textual data is granted by Mexico University, issues in terms of biased selectivity can be posed (Yin, 2013). Contrastingly, interview weaknesses can be, for example, response bias, inaccurate answers due to poor recall or bias due to poorly articulated questions (Yin, 2013). For observations, weaknesses may include high time consumption and difficulty gaining broad coverage without a team of observers (Yin, 2013). One combined weakness of both observations and interviews is reflexivity, a topic of which will be covered later in the section of trustworthiness.

3.5   Data Analysis

Considering the minimal knowledge established on social incubators, it could be argued to be crucial to allow for the accounts of people with that particular knowledge. The aim for us as researchers was thus to make sure that the experiences of those involved in the social incubators were adequately reported. These points are in line with the fundamental assumptions of Gioia et al. (2012), who develop a holistic approach to inductive concept development, which served as the foundation for the data analysis to allow for inductive new concept development while simultaneously meeting the high standards demanded by the academic community (Gioia et al., 2012).

Before looking at the analysis process, it should be highlighted that the sub-units of analysis were chosen and analysed to complement each other to limit 'blind spots' and cover the entire phenomenon. It is also necessary to acknowledge that in order to allow for repeated and thorough examination of interviewees' answers, all interviews were recorded and transcribed (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The same logic applied for our observations where notes were continuously taken in the field. Furthermore, immediately after a data collection session we compared research notes, discussed prominent themes that emerged and clarified potential discrepancies in our notes. Having collected all data, we initiated the analysis and followed the process of Gioia et al. (2012). Transcripts, field notes and textual data were subsequently scrutinised to identify first order concepts in relation to our research questions. These concepts strictly adhered to the informants' words as full or partial quotes were then used to establish such first order concepts. It is important to note that to reduce biasing each

other, after all data had been collected, we scrutinised the transcripts and developed first order concepts individually. Subsequently, we engaged in a discussion about our personal interpretations to see if any opposing or contrasting views existed before proceeding. It should also be noted that contrastingly from when establishing the first order concepts, all subsequent analytical steps were taken together and not individually.

Having established a vast amount of first order concepts, similarities and differences emerged, allowing the establishment of second order themes. Here, in line with arguments of Gioia et al. (2012), the interviewees' terms were retained to the greatest extent possible. Having identified second order themes, Gioia et al. (2012) suggest researchers to see if there are possibilities to use existing literature or theories to help describe the collected data for the aggregate dimensions. It is here where topics included in our frame of reference once again were introduced. This approach, in accordance with Gioia et al.'s (2012) claim, helped describe the data, and establish what the data actually tell, thus creating a favourable starting point for the data analysis. However, the confession of Gioia et al. (2012, p. 21) also served as an important guidance in our analysis, i.e. that *"there is value in semi-ignorance or enforced ignorance of the literature"* as it decreases the risk of confirmation bias. As such, there was an attempt to achieve such semi-ignorance by balancing prior knowledge against no knowledge to establish the aggregated dimensions. From the aggregate dimension we, first for RQ1, identified key components of what the social incubators are, which were then used to build a definition. Second, for RQ2, interviewees were asked to narrate their practices from prior to after the program, from which we identified key concepts along with their narrative to establish the social incubation process. Third, for RQ3, a similar logic as to RQ1 was applied where key concepts could be identified to the establishment of the impact of social incubators.

We have chosen to present our empirical findings (Chapter 4) using a narrative approach. The rationale for doing so was twofold. First, by using a narrative presentation of empirical findings, we could provide a thick description of the context that increases transferability (Geertz, 1973) and, in turn, give justice to our rich and insightful findings. Second, in accordance with Gioia et al. (2012), a narrative approach allowed us to send a meta-message to the reader signalling that these quotes are the actual words of our interviewees - giving evidence of transparency. Furthermore, the narrative presentation of empirical findings combined with the methodology of Gioia et al. (2012), clarifies the links between the

collected data and the concepts that are inductively created from it. As such, throughout the empirical findings and data analysis, we allow the reader to connect first-order concepts (denoted F#), second-order themes (S#) and aggregate dimensions (A#), to the analytical data presentation provided in Appendix 6, 7 and 8.

3.6 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research often receive criticism from positivistic researchers, suggesting that it is too subjective, difficult to replicate, lacks transparency and have generalisation issues (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As such, Guba's (1981) four criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of natural inquiries served as a basis to ensure quality and trustworthiness in this study. According to Guba (1981) quality in qualitative research relies on four pillars, i.e. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

First, attempting to increase credibility, data was retrieved from different sources at different levels of the organisation, allowing us to search for convergence across those sources. Additionally, after the conducted interviews, respondents were allowed access to transcripts to confirm that their descriptions reflected their experiences. Second, with regards to transferability, a thick description of the social incubators context is provided above in the context section and in the empirical chapter. Third, to combat dependability weaknesses, the research process of the study has been externally audited by two, separate from each other, peers. Finally, aside from the triangulation using multiple data collection methods, the same peers have been allowed access to and analysed the collected data to further strengthen our findings. This to increase the confirmability of the study and reduce potential bias caused by us.

As mentioned in data collection, one of the weaknesses of personal interviews and observations is reflexivity. Reflexivity refers to *"a reflectiveness among social researchers about the implications for the knowledge of the social world they generate of their methods, values, biases, decisions and mere presence in the very situations"* (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.718). Essentially reflexivity is about how the researchers themselves may alter the reality simply through their presence. As such, to reduce such personal bias, continuous awareness has been dedicated towards the issue when crafting, interpreting and reporting the empirical material. This, for example, by using triangulation (several data collection methods) and having external auditors critically assessing the progress of the study.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Another point of consideration when conducting the study was the one of research ethics, as such issues could occur in the research process (Preissle, 2008). Bell and Bryman (2007) have identified 10 key principles in research ethics that deals with the protection of research participants and the integrity of the research community.

To achieve protection of research participants, several measures were taken. First, to ensure the confidentiality of research data, transcripts were kept on an external hard-drive where access remained in our hands and, on auditing occasions, the external auditors. Second, to ensure the full consent of research participants, signed agreements were established between us and the participants (Appendix 5). Third, to respect the dignity of research participants and protecting their privacy, interviewees were informed at the start of every interview about the opportunity to refuse any question or even terminating the interview if desired. Fourth, to ensure no harm towards participants, all interviewees were given full anonymity, which was protected by using nicknames in all aspects of the thesis process.

Measures were also taken to protect the integrity of the research community. First, to avoid any deception of the nature of the research, a research proposal for review was sent to Mexico University before the study. Second, having declared that this study is funded by SIDA (within their Minor Field Study-program) and that our research institute have established cooperation with Mexico University, it is argued that any potential source of conflict of interest have been revealed. Anonymity was given to Mexico University especially for this reason, and while it may be argued that their identity can be revealed based on the information provided in this thesis, the anonymity serves more as a symbolic gesture to avoid this study being seen as a 'marketing effort' for the organisation. Furthermore, it obviously remains crucial for us to remain honest and transparent about the research, and avoid any misleading or false reporting of research findings.

4. Empirical Findings

This section will present the empirical findings from the data collection, divided according to the sub-units of analysis and through the three components of strategy-as-practice. First however, to facilitate for the reader, empirical findings that do not completely fit into either of the categories are presented to provide a foundational understanding of the phenomenon before digging deeper into each sub-unit of analysis. Before commencing however, we do want to highlight that, while practitioners and praxes is relatively straightforward, to fully to understand the practices, i.e. routines drawing from the underlying culture, more than two months of investigation is required. As such, in the practice section, data that appear to draw from such underlying elements and cultures will be covered.

As we landed in Mexico we immediately identified the prevailing topics found in our research about the country pre-landing, i.e. the strained socioeconomic situation. Mexico is a country where a majority of people live below national poverty lines (World Bank Group, 2016b) and only 40 % of the labour force is officially employed (OECD, 2016a). Instead, 12 million people work within the black markets (Poverties, 2015), totalling 20% of Mexico's GDP (INEGI, 2017). While Western countries often divide their population into low-, middle- and upper class, due to the vast economic gaps, which can be identified in Mexican households' average income (AMEDIRH, 2017; Table 4), Mexico divide their population into seven socio-economic strata - A/B to E (AMAI, 2017a). In fact, according to OECD (2014), the wealthiest 10% has an income that is 29 times the income of the poorest 10% of the country, and states that it is only households in the A/B strata that can actually save or invest for the future AMAI (2017a).

Socio-Economic Stratum	Avg. Monthly Household Income (MXN)	% of Mexican Population
A/B	$80.458	3,90%
C+	$32.215	9,30%
C	$20.062	10,70%
C-	$14.023	12,80%
D+	$10.103	19,00%
D	$6788	31,80%
E	$3355	12,50%

Table 4 - Socioeconomic Strata in Mexico

During the initial days in the country, we received the information that a police officer had been shot dead only a few hundred meters from where we lived. As such, we were instantly reminded of our location, a nation with a homicide rate of a staggering 23.4 murders per 100'000 inhabitants, compared to the OECD average rate of 4.1 (OECD, 2016b). The social issues in the country does not only encompass the safety situation in the nation. Rather Mexico scores low in areas such as quality of education and health care (OECD, 2016a).

While having exceptional enrolment ratios for elementary schooling (World Bank Group, 2016a), only 34% of the Mexican population has finished secondary schooling, which greatly affects their ability to secure an employment later in life (OECD, 2016a). Furthermore, access to education and health care are much lower in the rural parts of the country (United Nations, 2012), in which 21% of the population live (World Bank Group, 2016c). Here, 13%, or 12.7 million people, of Mexico's population represents Mexico's indigenous population, which have long been fighting for better access to, for example, the country's social system (Minority Rights Group International, 2016). The failure to tackle these issues may be the reason to why only approximately 25% of the Mexican population report trust in their national government (OECD, 2017), and was why Mexico University started their social incubators, i.e. to meet the educational needs, encourage the creation and development of micro-enterprises, promote gender equality and inclusion, and to contribute to the reduction of existing educational, social and economic gaps in Mexico.

The social incubators, are, according to TD2, placed in marginalised in areas, which are in need of education and economic development, with close proximity to campuses of Mexico University. The 36 currently operating social incubators are physical spaces (F2) offering communities access to social development program and can be found in 19 of the 31 Mexican states (Table 5 & Figure 7). The aim is, according to TD1, to reduce the educational, economic, and social gaps in Mexico through, what TD2 explains as the *"training and professionalization of traditional micro entrepreneurs and advice to those who have the idea of establishing a business".*

State	Incubators	State	Incubators
Aguascalientes	1	Morelos	2
Coahuila	1	Nuevo León	5
Chiapas	2	Puebla	1
Chihuahua	1	San Luis Potosí	1
Distrito Federal	2	Sinaloa	1
Estado de México	3	Sonora	2
Guanajuato	4	Tamaulipas	1
Hidalgo	1	Veracruz	1
Jalisco	3	Zacatecas	2
Michoacan	2		

Table 5 - Social Incubators per State

Figure 7 - Locations of Social Incubators

The social incubators offer, according to TD1, three social development programs (Figure 8), all primarily run and structured by students at Mexico University under the supervision

of professors and program coordinators (TD2). First, the micro-enterprise development program, which, as can be seen in TD4, consists of three services - business incubation, project consulting (i.e. specific advice in certain topic areas), and training (i.e. courses, workshops, and materials related to business activities). The aim is, according to TD1, to make incubatees *"contribute to the transformation of his/her social and economic setting"* (F40). Second, the

Figure 8 - Social Development Programs

educational program offers, according TD1, both formal and community education. The former referring to preparatory education conducted through online courses (TD5 & TD9) or elementary schooling for adults (TD6) to people who wish to complement their educational qualifications. Community education may instead be non-official education, which the community desires to receive, e.g. English or math. Third, the local program offers, for example, legal advice (F98), medical services and courses on construction and technology (TD1), exercise courses (TD3) and courses in nutrition (TD8).

Certain criteria must however be fulfilled to be eligible for admission in the micro-enterprise development and educational program, noted in TD4. For the first, incubatees must be at least 18 years of age (F50), have a monthly household income between US$ 352-752 and hold no higher degree than a baccalaureate (F55). Further, TD1 also highlighted that individuals who wish to partake in the micro-enterprise development program need to *"aspire to grow in the field of education and entrepreneurship"* (F53), have an entrepreneurial spirit and a wish to professionalise their trade. For the second, and the elementary education, incubatees must be above 15 years of age and have uncompleted elementary schooling (TD7). Contrastingly, the online preparatory schooling, does not have any age restrictions, rather they are simply targeted *"to individuals who for some reason cannot complete their [preparatory] studies through a traditional education schedule"* (TD5).

4.1   National Level

Having left the Swedish winter only two days previously and arrived in Monterrey's version of the same season, we found ourselves gasping for air in the 36°C heat walking towards the national office of the social incubators. As we entered, we could finally catch our breath in the air-conditioned office, before being greeted by the office secretary in Spanish, a language in which we, at this point, barely mastered the "Hola, ¿como estas?". Here, we first were to meet the director of the social entrepreneurship department, Esteban, who was one of the pioneers behind the social incubators at Mexico University. Subsequently we were to meet Vianey, the national coordinator of the program who has been working in the organisation for 9 years. While walking to our interview room we noted the open office spaces, by which Vianey explained that *"all departments of the headquarters sits here"* before insisting to introduce us to her department. Allowing the impinging on our Swedish personal space, we greeted the entire national social incubator department with the traditional Mexican kiss on the cheek, before sitting down in a secluded office and initiating the interview.

4.1.1   Practitioners

Esteban took a seat behind his desk and explained that the majority of his hectic days are dedicated to forming the goals and strategies of the social incubator program, and creating and maintaining relationships with strategic partners. We listened attentively as he attributed his decision to work in the social incubators to his desire to fight social issues. *"It is very important for my life. It is a personal goal to work for this cause, it is not only my professional goal - but also my personal goal",* he explained. Unlike him, Vianey, who previous to this employment had not engaged herself in any type of social work, stated that the dedication to her position was founded in a desire to help people develop their businesses and try to resolve social issues. *"I can see the entrepreneurs graduating from the incubators. I can see the micro-enterprises having revenue, sales and employees, and I can see that the social issue has been resolved. I think this is amazing",* she said before bursting into a smile. She spends her days facilitating the operations of the social incubators by offering training for regional coordinators, giving advice on certain topics and linking them with advisors, mentors and, national and international organisations. Thus, it became evident that both Vianey and Esteban, despite having had, by Mexican standards, a relatively affluent upbringing, they cared deeply about social issues.

After having taken a sip of water and adjusted her clothes, Vianey explained that the ideal member of staff needed a *"strong desire to fight and find solutions to social issues"*, be organised and

innovative. Esteban agreed, but paused and considered his answer before explaining that staff often come from prosperous economic backgrounds and thus rarely share the reality of incubatees and as such, interest and motivation to solve social issues are critical factors. He continued, *"motivated students have more impact for the incubatee, simply through their attitudes"*. When focus instead shifted onto the ideal incubatee, Esteban gave a slight chuckle, and explained that incubatees often have a misconception about what the program offers, and are primarily interested in obtaining money. He wiped the chuckle off his face, and clarified with a serious tone that incubatees need instead be keen on growing and developing for the sake of their family. We had, through the textual document also realised that the lowest economic stratum was excluded from the social incubators, and upon asking Vianey to explain why, she, almost apologetically, told us that they *"need more preparation and more knowledge. You need to work more with them, and the social incubators do not have the skills or resources for that"*.

The clock approached lunch time and as the scent of grilled meat trickled in through the open window, we turned our attention to the more indirect practitioners of the social incubators. Here, Esteban explained that establishing a new incubator requires regional management to *"identify the leaders in the community"*. Gesticulating, he emphasised that *"if the leaders do not want to work with us, we have a problem since the leaders can talk bad about us to the entire community"*. While regional incubators may have different strategic partners, the overall organisation's main strategic partner is a major Mexican bank. Choosing her words carefully, Vianey argued that it *"acts as an advisor to Mexico University"* (F13) and through training of coordinators positively influence the program, but also admitted that *"sometimes they cannot understand the principal goal of the social incubators"*. Here, also Esteban was split in his appreciation of the partners, and acknowledged that while the partner indeed facilitates operation through funding, he, seemingly dejected, also explained that the bank attempt to influence the strategic direction of the program, sometimes in discrepancy to the strategic direction Mexico University wants to take.

4.1.2   Practices

It seemed important for both Vianey and Esteban to communicate that the core of the social incubators was to resolve social issues. Esteban used five words to describe the incubators; *"growth, aspiration, knowledge, empathy and a reality check"* for the program's practitioners. He continued *"I describe it as a centre of solution to problems specific of the people"* (F10)*,* and, almost preached, *"we offer a different reality of life, an aspirational life"*. Simultaneously, Vianey

metaphorically described the incubators as a large umbrella, sheltering the three programs. Here, she said, *"people of the community can come together and take courses, workshops and try to scale up their micro-enterprises. It is a physical space, but for micro-enterprises it is like an umbrella"* (F1; F7). Similarly, Esteban proudly proclaimed that the social incubators are *"[centres] where people of a community can come and forget about their problems. They always have problems - problems of family, work, community. [...] This centre offers a different reality [...] A place where they can meet and talk about other things than their problems"* (F83).

Suddenly, we started to notice an increased movement on the other side of the cubicle glass, whereupon Esteban laughingly said, *"I hope you are not hungry, because the interview must go on"*. We laughed to ourselves and looked at the clock approaching 1.30 PM, and explained to Esteban that social protocol in Sweden dictates that lunch is at noon. We then continued the interview by addressing the goals of the social incubators, whereby Esteban took a more academic view than previously. *"The principle goal is to give focus to the students, not just to the community. We are a university and the principle goal is change the student's vision of social problems"*, before summarising that *"the principal result for Mexico University is the academic results"*. He quickly added that it also includes changing people's lives and develop communities, rather than building new businesses – *"the main focus is on the individual"*, he said and continued, *"we put more emphasis on empowering the individual"* (F24) and through this change the lives of people in communities. Vianey focused more on the incubatees and their ventures, arguing that *"the main goal is to launch and develop successful social ventures, while building the capacity in the entrepreneurs and the organisations"*. This dual focus became even more obvious when asked about which of the two foci were most important when selecting candidates. *"I think it is both"* she said, and continued *"the entrepreneur of the micro-enterprise does not have the skills, so you need to work with the individual first. Then, you can work with the micro-enterprises"*, a notion that also Esteban acknowledged.

The discrepancy between Vianey's and Esteban's outlooks on goals also reflected the initiated discussion on mission and vision of the social incubator program. Esteban, once again applying an academic focus, stated that the incubator's mission is to *"offer our students the possibility to work with real social problems"*. Contrastingly, Vianey argued that *"the mission is to encourage and support the establishment and development of micro-enterprises in order to promote and stimulate the micro-enterprises' development"*. Similarly, when addressing the vision, Vianey explained that it is to *"supply a national program for micro-enterprises in order to support and assist the*

concept of social entrepreneurship, in the entrepreneur and the students of Mexico University". Esteban, however, presented a softer vision. *"The social incubators in the future will be a centre of creating empathy in different parts of society"*, he explained with hope in his voice. After having maintained a micro-enterprise focus this whole time, Vianey suddenly diverted her attention towards the students, stating that *"I think Mexico University created the social incubators first of all for the students"* and continued - *"they need to contribute to resolve social issues in Mexico"* (F17).

4.1.3   Praxes

Esteban described his daily activities as *"constant calling about problems, goals, and [working with] strategic partners"* and that a part of his day is dedicated to solving issues in the incubators - *"[they] always have problems with infrastructure, water or electricity"*. According to Vianey, her role *"is to help the social incubators to reach the KPIs, the indicators, and any process about the program"*. That role includes facilitating the operations of the social incubators by offering training for regional coordinators, giving advice on certain topics and linking them with advisors, mentors and, national and international organisations. Thus, although her schedule varies greatly, she stated that during the average work day *"50% of my time is spent working directly with the innovative social program, [...] another 25% I make trainings for employees of the social incubators. [...] finally, the other 25% I spend working directly with administration, paper work"*.

4.1.3.1   Praxes Before the Program

Initiating her story of activities associated with the social incubators, Vianey explained that regional practitioners first *"go out to the community and meet the people, invite them into the social incubators and explain the program"*. She explained how incubatees are reached through their website, *"posters, talking to people in the community, and e-mail"*. On the contrary, Esteban's story begun by explaining that the goal is for *"each incubator [to] offer what that particular community needs"* (F29; F68), where *"people choose the program they want to participate in. [...] we want people to choose the three components because it is an integrated program, however, they are allowed to only use one or two of the components as well"* (F47). As his story progressed into the application process, he explained that after receiving applications from potential incubatees, regional management conducts interviews with applicants *"to discover what their primary motivation is to get involved in the program"* (F57) and continued firmly stating that "*if I discover that the principle motivation is money, sorry. We don't offer this. But if the principal motivation is development, growth or learning new things - this is the people that we want in this program"* (F51).

4.1.3.2 Praxes During the Program

After a quick interruption by a co-worker on what appeared to be an urgent matter, Esteban re-engaged himself into his story, now having reached the stage where incubatees have been enrolled into the program. *"People pay whatever they can"* and regardless they are offered *"first-world infrastructure"*, he proudly explained and continued *"we offer computers [with Internet], tables, chairs, it's clean"* (F76) and that incubatees sometimes *"come to have talks [Skype] with people that are in the U.S."*.

When asked specifically about the local and educational programs of the social incubator, Vianey looked up from her papers and leaned forward to admit that she does *"not know much about them because I do not coordinate these programs"*, before adding that regional levels know more about this topic. With regards to the local program, she did however mention that *"the students [of Mexico University] can come to [the] social incubators and teach the community and other people about topics like chemistry, mathematics [and] Spanish"* (F87) while also underscoring that the program act as a help to the local community. As an attempt to illustrate this, she explained that if *"someone want to divorce, but do not have the money to pay the lawyer, [then] s/he can go to the social incubators and they provide a lawyer for free"* (F97). However, it is not all serious business within the local program, as Esteban described that *"in some social incubators we offer dancing classes, in which the mothers can come in the morning and take the class"* (F93). Continuing into the educational program, Esteban explained that *"one part of the educational program is online and here we have more than 100 courses with low difficulty level, so elementary courses. In addition, we also offer face-to-face courses. Our students go to these incubators and teach incubatees computation for example"*. On that note, we left the subject of the educational program as the national management appeared to have nothing more to express. Instead we turned our attention to the micro-enterprise development program, and here both Vianey and Esteban displayed more security in their voices, indicating that this was the subject they knew most about.

Esteban explained that here, the social incubators offer incubatees courses about marketing, finance, computing or business planning. Visibly eager to engage in a conversation regarding a subject she held much knowledge about, Vianey extended Esteban's words by adding that entrepreneurs who already have an established business, need to be put on a fast-track to *"work and develop the business model"* (F102). Contrastingly, incubatees who have *"an idea but does not have a micro-enterprise for incubation, must work on the idea"*. We listened carefully as Esteban continued by explaining that, after having completed the initial courses and/or worked with

the idea, interviews are held, where the micro-entrepreneurs, students and teachers meet. Here, he explained, *"the micro-entrepreneur tell them their problem, show the business and the student and teacher do diagnostics of the situation, the entrepreneur and the business"* (F61). Proudly, he highlighted that it is the students of Mexico University who then becomes consultants to the micro-entrepreneur where the end-delivery is a business model and a business plan given to the entrepreneur.

Having completed this journey, incubatees should be qualified to spread their wings and fly into the real world, Esteban explained. However, to do so, Vianey firmly explained that *"the micro-enterprise must become a part of the formal economy"* (F113). Also Esteban appeared adamant on this fact, bolstering his statement through intense hand gestures *"[it] is obligatory, if they do not become legal, they cannot graduate"*. This demand made several incubatees unable to graduate which, Vianey explained, made them very disappointed. Seeing their disappointment, she decided to add incentives for entrepreneurs to make that transition, and thus introduced diplomas for those incubatees (F119). She smiled and humbly explained that this introduction led to an increased percentage of graduated incubatees from 30% to 60%.

4.1.3.3 Praxes After the Program

Approaching the 45-minute mark on our interview, Vianey leaned back into her chair and explained that the social incubators aim to *"link them [the incubatees] with other entrepreneurs and investments"* (F123), a claim that Esteban later confirmed, while adding that graduated incubatees can gain professional mentoring. Although he admitted, *"we do not have a specific model for post-incubation"*, but rather that *"it all depends on the needs of the micro-entrepreneur. If the problem is sales, we search and find an expert on sales"* (F121; F126). Vianey elaborated further and explained that incubatees can also take part in workshops and courses, and gain access to networks. However, Esteban regretfully admitted that there is no systematic way of keeping in continuous contact with the incubatees after the program. Vianey did however declare that she personally *"try to keep in touch with a call, because I want to know how everything is with the micro-enterprise, the entrepreneur and his or her families"*, and that she sometimes *"call to link them to other more regular business incubators"*. In fact, some incubatees still visit the social incubator facilities, *"normally, the micro-entrepreneurs have contact with us for other programs the micro-entrepreneurs want to attend. For example, other courses or access to computers"*, Esteban explained.

When describing how incubatees are incubated, both Vianey and Esteban instantly emphasised the incubatees' development of soft skills. Here, Vianey argued that she can see that incubatees *"start trusting themselves more"* and claimed that incubatees *"think their life has changed from before they partook"*. Despite just having passed the 90-minute mark on the interview, embarking on the journey to discuss potential impact, Esteban seemed eager to tell us about the social incubators. He stated that the micro-entrepreneurs *"[before the program] do not know how to manage their business, nor do they know how to make a deal or gain resources for their business"* and that the social incubators *"changes the life vision of incubatees"* (F131). Also Vianey agreed with the previous and stated that *"the impact is individual because you help the entrepreneurs to learn different kinds of topics and then the entrepreneur can develop his micro-enterprises and then he can help his community"* (F152) and that the result *"is happier people"*. While the two managers explained the impact in soft terms, their claims could be supported by TD1, which gave us access to the result of a qualitative study conducted by Mexico University, showing that a majority of the participating entrepreneurs reported a 20-30% increase in sales (F140) and 10%-20% increase in profits (F143). Furthermore, 63% considered that the community had made progress thanks to the social incubators (F157) and 80% perceived an improvement in their quality of life (F136).

Upon being asked about concrete success stories, Vianey proudly told the story of an incubatee who produced candy for diabetics. After tasting his products, she liked them very much and thought he was primarily in need of advice on branding. The social incubator program changed his living situation, Vianey said, and *"now he is middle class, before he was lower"* (F46; F139). Esteban's success stories regarded the communities of San Luis de Potosí and Irapuato and we listened with fascination as he explained that an issue within these communities was the constant fights between rivalling gangs. However, *"since the social incubators came to the communities, the two gangs are closer - it's very wonderful"* Esteban explained and continued *"they have a relationship of a different kind now, because before they always fought"* (F43). As such, Vianey see the impact *"as a ripple effect"* - incubated individuals help the community to *"resolve social issues through the entrepreneur and the micro-enterprise. Then, this impacts the society"* (F150). Furthermore, Esteban argued that Mexico University can have an influence upon the national government, since they, through the social incubators, highlight the widespread existence of social issues.

While not recalling any specific communities that have rendered worse off since the introduction of a social incubator, Vianey and Esteban both acknowledged that the incubation process has occasionally failed on individual incubatees. Here, Vianey ascribed the failures to unsuitable incubatees *"they do not want to learn from the students [...] they do not understand why these students come to teach them. It is a pride issue"*. She further claimed that the requirement of making the business formal is a common reason for failure since *"many entrepreneurs do not want to be formal [...] it's too hard to change"*. Esteban highlighted failure also connected to students, claiming that *"we have students that do not take an interest in these programs, so the students do not go to the micro-entrepreneur or the teacher do not accompany the students correctly"*.

4.2   Regional Level - Guadalajara

While the heat and our level of Spanish had remained the same, when arriving to Guadalajara in the mid-west part of Mexico, we could finally comprehend how vast the differences are between Mexican cities. Here, the major American food chains were replaced with small-scaled taco stands, and the high-rise buildings were churches rather than office buildings. Having already received the information regarding the fact that the micro-enterprise development program had not been operating this year, we travelled to the social incubators located in Jocotán to find out more about active educational and local programs. As we arrived, our expectations of the community, formed by what we had previously been told, correlated well with the scenery that met us. Within two intersections we left a luxurious part of Zapopan, and found ourselves in a neighbourhood with damaged buildings and cars of a much lower standard than what we had seen just a few minutes earlier. At the entrance of the impeccably clean incubators, one of the two incubatees we were to interview, Ophelia, who took courses in computation, greeted us. Her children and their friends were playing in a small grass area located in the middle of the incubator, supervised by two students, one of which were Melissa, who became the first person we interviewed during our visit.

Coming back for further observations two days later, we encountered the English teacher José and his student Teresa. As José gave us a full tour around the incubator, we visited the five different classrooms that the small building contained. Within them we noticed approximately 25 computers, used during educational class. There were also high-speed Wi-Fi-service, projectors, countless of textbooks and other necessary tools to aid the incubatees in their learning.

4.2.1   Practitioners

The incubator in Jocotán is only one of three incubators that Mexico University's campus in Guadalajara supervises. It was here in Guadalajara the social incubators were first introduced ten years ago, Cinthia, the director of social entrepreneurship, proudly explained. She has been here since their birth and started to work with social issues because *"I felt that there was something missing in my life and that the enterprises did not give it to me"* and continued *"I knew that the place where I felt fulfilled was basically in the social area".* Maria, the social incubator coordinator, contrastingly realised that she *"could contribute, and where my result would be people growing professionally and personally"*. The social incubators rely heavily on students who do their social service at the incubators, students who according to Maria *"want to make a difference"* and *"love to share their knowledge with people".* Contrastingly, Cinthia, without hesitation, placed a heavier focus on empathy, preparedness and pedagogical abilities to describe the students working in the incubators.

At the incubator, we also got to meet two of the students that Cinthia and Maria previously had described - Melissa and José - with two completely different personalities and reasons for joining the social incubator. Melissa, studying international relations and exuberated positive energy, leads a storytelling class for children in the ages 9-13, and joined the incubators due to her concerns *"about the social development in Mexico".* Contrastingly, José, a timid electrical engineering student, teaches English to a four-student class consisting of both grown-ups and children, and attributed his engagement in the social incubators to his desire to transmit his knowledge to others.

The social incubators in Guadalajara have partnered with both enterprises (F14; F15) and governmental institutions, where they, in some cases, even share spaces with the latter. Here, both Maria and Cinthia highlighted the government organisation DIF, which they, according to Maria, *"are in a collaborative contract"* (F11) with. Maria explained that collaboration with companies also is of great importance since *"with companies, we have more impact in the community. It increases our recruitment"* and eases the process of reaching the targeted communities. As both our visit and the words of the people we interviewed made clear, the social incubators are located in socially challenged areas. José downheartedly explained that Jocotán is *"plagued with social problems, maybe problems at home, economical problems"* (F21) and, according to Maria, the individuals *"are in a vulnerable zone".* This was further cemented by Cinthia who argued that in the neighbourhoods of the social incubators *"[there is] poverty there, there is violence, economic*

problems, migration and alcoholism" (F18). Similarly, Maria argued that the principle characteristics is that they want to have a better life and be motivated because the incubatees *"only need to be helped to be able to create an innovative solution to their problem"* (F41), rather than have the incubator hand them a ready solution.

Ophelia, an incubatee who has lived in Jocotán all her life and has been in the social incubators for one year, started in the program after having been a stay-at-home-mom for a time. Despite the sensitive nature of the subject, she openly told the story of how her family started to experience economic difficulties, forcing her to get a job. Luckily, a cleaning position at the social incubators opened up, which she was offered, and *"if I did my job well, I would not have to pay for the [English] classes for my kids"*, Ophelia explained. As such, Ophelia took the employment opportunity and simultaneously started to study computation - *"something that I wanted to learn, but never had the opportunity"*. She explained that she is already enjoying benefits of being able work with a computer, but she hopes that in the future *"have another life opportunity"*. When exploring one of the five classrooms, we met another woman involved in the incubator program, Teresa, who is two months into her first course at the incubator - English 1. She, and her two daughters, enrolled in the incubators due to not being able to afford the tuition for her daughters in a bilingual school, and that she herself *"wanted to be more independent"* (F38). She stated that a better grasp of the English language will allow her to experience other cultures, and interact with people of different descends - *"I want to get to know new cultures and with the English language I can"*.

4.2.2 Practices

The desire to address and solve social issues was also highlighted in Guadalajara. The social incubators are *"spaces designed to promote social and community development through various institutional programs involving students, teachers and the community in general"* (F8), Maria explained and smiled. Cinthia used the reconciliation and unification of different realities as a description of the social incubators (F4) and stated that *"we have both the opportunity to learn and to teach, and generate a citizen dialogue"* (F82). Also Melissa noted the need for this kind of interaction and explained that the social incubators *"is a space that includes everybody in the community. Where you can ask for help. You don't come here just to ask for something like classes, you come here asking for advice or for someone to talk to"* (F6).

The social incubators were also reported to be a point of safety for the kids in the area. *"The kids growing in a more safe environment because it is not really a safe area at night and [...] I can imagine [that they have] a lot of problems at home. So this is like a 'safe haven' for them and that is the most important thing"*, José explained, in a pleased but also slightly proud manner. Melissa also used the term 'safe haven' and explained that the social incubators are *"a point of reunion for the community"* and that *"moms that bring their kids here make connections and kids make new friends and their moms can make friends"*. The incubatees themselves focused less on relational components, but more on the change that the social incubators could bring, when explaining the phenomenon. Teresa simply explained that the social incubators *"are a way to aspire for a new life"* (F78) and that the social incubators *"tell you that you can aim higher"* (F80). Similarly, Ophelia, visibly drawing from her own experiences, argued that the incubators *"represent a program that can give help and the opportunity to change your life"* (F41) and also stated that *"they try to motivate me to aspire for a better life"*, with devotion in her voice. This was also agreed upon by regional management, whereby Maria claimed that *"with our students and courses [we] can increase their motivation, make them believe that they will have better skills and opportunities to get a better job or that their children will"*.

As the interview was directed towards the goal of the social incubators, Maria, in a secure voice, explained that *"the principal goal is to provide spaces for social transformation, where the most important actors of the society come together to create projects that create value for that community"*, which was done through giving *"people tools and skills to give them better work opportunities and have a better life quality"*. However, she also explained that "each community have a different problem, profile, characteristics and our social incubators are specifically focused on those" and that *"the courses are focused on the need and the economic activities identified in these communities"*. This was also agreed upon by Cinthia who stated that, in some courses, *"[they] decide in the moment based on the necessities of the community"* (F30).

4.2.3 Praxes

At the regional level, only management devote their full time to the social incubators. Here, Cinthia joked about simply sending e-mails all day long, but then explained with a serious tone that she dedicates her days to *"articulating, joining and constructing projects"* and continued by clarifying that projects *"include the academic part, which are the professors, students, NGOs or civil society"*. This also includes having *"meetings with directors at Mexico University to see what projects to develop"*. Contrastingly, Maria argued that there are no normal days in her position because

"each social incubator is very different and each one has their own challenges and advantages" (F27). As such, she always initiates her working days with checking her email and call each social incubator to see if everything is going according to plan. Maria also explained that *"she is responsible for verifying that they are meeting recruitment goals, have already schedules and social service tutors for all the courses"* and through this helps the individual social incubators to *"make agreements with companies and with government, even with teachers of the campus, because we have projects with teacher in the social incubators"*.

4.2.3.1   Praxes Before the Program

After receiving slight help with the English wording by the translator, Maria immersed herself in her account of the social incubator process. She explained that activities in the initial program components might differ since *"each social incubator differs from each other basically because of the community"*. In agreement, Cinthia stated that *"the first thing we do is market research"* where the important part is to *"study and understand the needs of the community and know it"* (F28). This was also noted by José who explained that *"they make surveys in the neighbourhood and ask 'would you like this kind of course?' or if their children needs it"* (F66). Having established the needs of the community, Maria explained that staff *"get out of the incubators and meet people and try to inform about the program and the social incubators, what we are, what we are doing. We invite them to join us"*. According to both Maria and Cinthia, this public announcement campaign sometimes even requires them to go from house to house and inform community citizens.

When citizens have been invited to join the social incubators, they are asked to complete forms and state what activities they want to take part in, this according to both management and incubatees. *"[I had to] fill out a form, and you have to bring a copy of a photo of you. A copy of my birth certificate"* (F48), Ophelia explained as she was comforting her daughter, who, minutes earlier, had rushed in crying. Having received the applications, management investigates *"how many people who needs to be involved and what classes people want and the capacity of the building"*, Cinthia explained and continued *"here at Mexico University we look at how many students we need as tutors working in the incubator"*. The students are recruited through *"[Mexico University's] fair of social services that you can participate in"*, José explained and continued while laughing *"I just went to the fair and then a coordinator asked me if I wanted to teach and I said yes, sure"*. After having left his contact details, he was later contacted via e-mail, learning that he got accepted, an e-mail that also Melissa received. Consecutively, they participated in two workshops, one focused on administration and the other specialised in the topic they were about to teach.

Maria continued her story by explaining that, for the incubatees, the process for the online education is formal, that they ensure that *"the incubatee has their certificate, and fulfil all the requirements"* (F59) before being admitted. The process is less formal in the English courses where she explained that *"we make an exam, to establish what level they are on"* (F63) while in the computation course *"people say honestly if they have no knowledge and want to learn, then they get into the first level"*. Here, teachers structure the courses according to the needs of the students, *"I made a test to see what they already knew [... and then] I adapt. [...] for the mother, I make her listen more. To the fourth one I make her write more. And for the daughters I give them a little bit of both because they already know [both things well]"* (F64), José explained. The practice of adapting the courses according to the needs of the incubatees is evident throughout the programs, and Maria explained that the first step is to diagnose the incubatee to understand his or her particular issues. In the micro-enterprise development program Maria explained that this is initiated by *"students diagnosing the little business [...] and determine in which area they want to work with the incubatee. They define these areas and the incubatees say ok, "I like to work with that"* (F62). In the local program, Cinthia explained that the program is adapted together with the incubatees – *"we start building it [the courses] together"*. This adaption is needed since *"each community have a different problem, profile, characteristics"*, Maria explained, and continued by noting that *"our social incubators are specifically focused on those [problems]"* (F31; F67). Ophelia used her own history to exemplify the adaption, explaining that *"computation is something that I wanted to learn, but never had the opportunity, and when I had it I really liked it [...] I really wanted to get that skill"* (F71).

4.2.3.2   Praxes During the Program

According to Maria the social incubators generally offer incubatees tools and skills, which was agreed upon by Cinthia who argued that they *"basically focus on making people capable of developing"*. Melissa elaborated this further, and claimed that *"they [the incubatees] are learning something new, new abilities. Skills, that they did not have, skills that will make them prepared people so that they can get their jobs or even better study opportunities"* (F34; F145). However, not all activities within the incubator are dead serious, *"we play football, soccer, or dodgeball"* (F70; F92) Melissa explained, noticeably stressed over the kids standing outside demanding their 'after-class candy'.

While the micro-enterprise development program was not currently in progress in Guadalajara, Maria explained that incubatees are given support *"between mixed groups [of*

students], where they have finance students, law students, [and students] from different areas" (F105) which, according to Cinthia, *"goes to the incubator at least 5-6 times per semester where they see the improvements and verify with the entrepreneurs the advices and the skills we are teaching them"* (F110). What was however currently on-going but attributed as a part of the local program, was a basic entrepreneurship course, which José mentioned (F106) and Teresa argued that she was eager to enrol in after her graduation.

With regards to the educational program, Maria explained that there *"we are giving the skills for basic education",* however, here it is believed that what she is referring to is education that are taught in school. This was exemplified when Maria argued that there are places in the social incubators *"where they come and regularise people who have no primary or secondary schooling"* (F89). This is primarily conducted in collaboration with INEA, which *"is a governmental program [...and] only for people who have not finished primary or secondary school"* Maria explained, and continued that, in this case, the social incubators *"only give the space, and the tutors"* (F88). Within the framework of the educational program, Mexico University also offer preparatory school, aimed to prepare people for higher education or as Maria expressed it *"Mexico University's online education, which is high school [...] in which Mexico University offer a high-quality program where people realise their studies online"* (F90). Here, Maria highlighted that Mexico University's online education is an official educational program, by the Secretariat Custom Publica - *"it is part of their next preparation to their professional career"* (F91). This educational program is further complemented with courses in English, which José is a teacher for, and computation, this since, as Maria explained it, *"we consider that the basic to have good preparation".* These courses are referred to as community education, which constitute an additional component within the framework of the educational program.

Within the local program, Maria highlighted a specific course in which incubatees are taught *"how to make local products with the things that they have",* such as for example soap. Here, Cinthia explained that people could sometimes not afford the cost of participating, as such, they allow them to join for free and make *"an exchange instead, we teach them and they teach us another course. Exchange the knowledge"* (F100), or as Maria, visibly satisfied, explained *"[they] pay with courses or other products in their houses"* (F101). As a tutor in the local program, Melissa holds a workshop for children, which initially was just about storytelling, but after noticing that some children were bored by it, she also started to do other activities (F70). After reprimanding one of the children outside of the interview room, Melissa told us that the local program also

offers additional courses, such as courses in math, and *"homework class, where kids can come and do their homework with a tutor"*. Maria extended this by illustrating how medical students from Mexico University, in the local program, go to the social incubators to *"diagnose people, children and adults, and give them the correct diet, and help them with basic medical analysis"* (F95).

While Cinthia argued that the local program has no particular desired objectives to be fulfilled to graduate, it is different in the micro-enterprise development and educational program. For the previous, Maria explained that incubatees graduate *"when they finish their semester"* and *"when they have at least implemented one suggestion"* (F115) without specifying it further. For the latter, specifically in the official education, incubatees graduate when they have reached the objectives set out by the governmental body. For example, Maria explained that those in the preparatory education graduate *"when they finish their 33 classes"*. In the community education, Cinthia argued that the incubatees graduate *"when passing the tests"* (F116), which was further elaborated by Maria stating that they graduate *"when they finish their six levels of English, or their two levels of computer science"* (F117). Having fulfilled these objectives in both official and community education, Maria explained that *"we give them a certificate and we have also graduation here when they finish all the levels"* (F118). This was also acknowledged by Ophelia who stated that Mexico University *"give you a certificate and have a ceremony at Mexico University"* before she broke into a smile and explained that it was something she very much looked forward too.

4.2.3.3 Praxes After the Program

Maria explained that after graduation, based on the needs of the graduated incubatee (F122), *"we offer the other programs"* (F125). More than that was not mentioned about activities after the program. What interviewees across the units of observation were more eager to discuss was however the impact of the programs on incubatees. Cinthia argued that *"they [incubatees] become more secure of themselves"* (F127), which was similar to a story Melissa shared about a five-year-old girl in her class that initially was very quiet. We listened attentively as Melissa's voice echoed in the classroom describing that *"[Now,] she speaks all the time. She is giving orders to the big ones, her confidence has improved so much, and I am so happy for her because she was so tiny, and could not even speak in front of anyone, and now she enters the classroom and she is the boss. [...] Maybe it is not like skills of learning English, but I can see that the kids are improving their confidence"* (F129). In such a manner, it was also clear how proud Ophelia was of herself as she explained that through her computation courses, she has been able to help her daughter with homework and explained that she thinks *"that my daughter is happy, because I can help her with her homework"*.

As Ophelia addressed what she would do after the program, the children had finished their class and instead taken an interest in what was going on in our room. While eight children were staring at her through the window, Ophelia, explained that after completing her courses *"I will be prepared for a better job"* (F36; F147) since *"so many people who came here and studied in Mexico University's online education or computation have now another type of jobs, better jobs"*. As for the entrepreneurs, Cinthia stated, that *"they see their business from a different perspective - more professional and they start taking risks to do more"* and about non-entrepreneurs she explained, for the first time during the interview in English, that *"I have seen significant changes in the people that the people prepare themselves to become entrepreneurs"* (F149). However, the desire to be more prepared for the future is visible in the other programs as well. Ophelia explained that *"I think that when I graduate I will know how to apply those practical things to the real life."* and hoped that through this *"I can have another life opportunity"* (F36). She also explained that her computation course helps her in - *"daily things, when I want to research something or when I want to print something, like images or if I have to make a letter in the computer"*. Similarly, Teresa stated that, thanks to her English courses, she could help a foreigner in a local laundromat and smilingly explained that *"I felt that I have my knowledge and I can actually apply it"* (F146).

Teresa argued that the courses given by the social incubators *"tend to unlock people's potential because they did not know they had it in them"*. More specifically, expressing annoyance over society's prejudice, she said *"people have potentials too, they have intelligence and the social incubators are there to incubate this potential and intelligence"* (F132). Melissa touched upon the same subject and argued that many incubatees *"do not like school and they do not have goals of going to university. So when you try to help them with math or this, you are pushing them to pursue those dreams"*, before she hesitated and specified *"if they did not have those dreams, you help them to create them"*. On that notion, she also stated that *"you can tell them that their life does not have to be the way that they know, you have the same opportunities as everyone and you can have a career, or get a good job, be a professional"* and that the social incubators generally *"try to remind people in the community that they have the same opportunities that everyone could have"* (F133). Maria concurred and explained that, because of the social incubators *"[incubatees] are more ambitious. They make it so that they have another vision"* (F130) and exemplifying by telling a story about a previous incubatee who *"said in her testimony that she had no confidence in herself and that she had no work"*. She continued, *"Being in the incubator pushed her to into a personal process. In the community in where she lives, people are saying that they see her differently. Right now she wants to start a professional career with her own business"* (F45), obviously proud over what the social incubators had helped the woman accomplish. When looking at the children,

Maria argued that *"before they used to say 'I want to be like my father', but now they say that they want to be like the social service students, 'I want to be a lawyer, I want to be an administrator', so it's a changing paradigm"* (F81). Similarly, upon asked about how she would feel when graduating, Teresa explained that *"there is a phrase that says 'when someone stops learning, he starts dying' so at my age it will be a great achievement"* and that by completing the course she can *"also to put forward to my daughters as an example that you can do what you want"*.

Having lived all her life in Jocotán, Ophelia, holding her daughter affectionately, noted that she has seen that *"the social incubators give the people in the community a lot of opportunities"* (F156). In agreement, Maria noted that the incubators contribute to *"better opportunities in their communities"* (F153). Going a step further, Teresa argued that, as a result of partaking in the incubator program, incubatees *"know that they have it in them and can help other people"* (F151), thus contributing to further positive development in the community. When asked to exemplify changes in the community, Ophelia instinctively highlighted the reduction of crimes in the community, saying that *"things have finally changed, before there were a lot of gangs, and now there are less"* (F158), attributing this to the social incubators offering a different way to go - *"here, they give you ways to distract your mind instead of going to join a gang"* (F161). Also José claimed that the social incubators have led to a safer community, where *"the kids are growing in a more safe environment"* (F160). Before picking her daughter up and leaving the room, Ophelia made one last comment regarding how the social incubators have impacted her life – *"I think that now finally my life quality has changed for the better"* (F137).

4.3   Regional Level - Monterrey

Back in Monterrey, 'winter' had turned to 'spring', the blistering heat reached temperatures over 35 degrees Celsius. We had now realised that we would never master the Spanish language, and while our previous visit in Guadalajara had a heavy focus upon the educational and local programs, the opposite could be said for Monterrey. Here, most our interviewees were involved in the micro-enterprise development program. As our Uber approached the social incubator, the transition from luxury to social vulnerability was not as prominent as in Jocotán, however, there was no question that Caracol was considered the latter - rows of colourful, slightly torn houses stretched along the streets where crummy cars stood parked. After introducing us to the entrance security guard, our guide explained that the incubator building was an old convent, donated by a Mexico University board member. This history was evident - long stone corridors filled the incubator, with classrooms on one side while the

other consisted of large vaults opening into gardens full of flowers and trees. In the many open spaces and classrooms, groups of children were sitting on the floor painting, assembling pipes or reading books.

4.3.1 Practitioners

Despite previously having operated several social incubators in the Monterrey area, Mexico University currently only have one incubator here - the social incubator in Caracol. Monterrey's local coordinator of the micro-enterprise development program - Juan - leaned back in his chair and explained that he accepted the opportunity to work in the social incubators because *"my main interest is social development"*. He continued, *"at the beginning of my career, I started working in social development, I worked with NGOs and in several types of areas not related with the economic development, for example indigenous topics, environmental topics. That made me interested in this kind of stuff"*. It was evident that Juan worked specifically with the micro-enterprise development program, as he heavily related questions about the incubators to business aspects. For example, he explained that staff in the incubators should *"be [the] same as for a junior consultant at any company"* and equated incubatees with micro-entrepreneurs.

Juan had been the supervisor of Carlos and Miguel, both previous staff in the micro-enterprise development program. Carlos, studying business creation and development at Mexico University, engaged in the social incubators to gain experience of mentoring businesses for his learning and future career. He had worked in the incubators during 1,5 years, and expressed his desire to continue operating in the incubator but could not do so due to time constraint. Contrastingly, Miguel, studying business administration, joined the incubator with a desire to develop his own social side and use his business knowledge to *"help other people"*. We listened carefully as Miguel told us how he previously volunteered in a religious group that, similarly to the social incubators, aimed for development, however, then among individuals who were between 12-24 years old. The expectation Carlos had when he entered the social incubators was that he would consult entrepreneurs leading large or medium-sized firms, but soon realised that *"the real thing was poor middle-class people that want to make a business"* (F22), he said with a shrug and laughed but mentioned that this was not negative, just different from his expectations.

One of those Carlos aimed to describe was Alicia, a mid-aged woman currently studying English in the local program, who highlighted that the social incubators are for *"those who do*

not have the basic knowledge, or can acquire it, but want to" (F20). We were surprised when Alicia explained that she had previously been enrolled in the micro-enterprise development program with her hobby, bread baking, previously *"an informal business for 20 years. People would just call me [to order products]"*, and now a formal micro-enterprise. To the interview, she had brought samples of her products, and as we tasted the home-made cinnamon and chocolate bun, we listened as she enthusiastically explained that *"the reason I started was to find economic aid for my family"*, and continued *"I expected to learn everything, all the basics - cost, sales. I was eager to hear about the topics and to meet new people"*. Contrastingly, Valeria, enrolled in the local program having workshops about food and nutrition (F96), in a humble voice told us that she joined the incubator because *"I think that everything that is good for me will be good for my family, so if I learn something they will learn something too"*.

As for external practitioners, Juan explained that the social incubators in Monterrey previously had partnerships with the government, large enterprises and NGOs, but today have no such regional alliances, as they did not add any significant value to the program. He continued to explain that while these external practitioners facilitate incubatee recruitment, he does not consider them strategic alliances. Visibly disappointed regarding the fact, he explained - *"Scaling, that's the only thing they have helped. They do not put money usually, they do not put the professionals, [...] the main purpose of them was to share my service to other people to bring in more enterprises [micro-entrepreneurs]"*.

4.3.2   Practices

Once again placing a heavy focus upon the micro-enterprise development program, Juan, visibly proud of the program, described social incubators as *"a place where we can connect students with micro-business that are interested in growing"* (F5) where operations are focused on the entrepreneur. On the same topic, Carlos hesitated before choosing his words carefully and described the social incubators as *"an incubator that dedicates their main focus on achieving... trying to... solve social issues with no lucrative means"* (F9)*,* claiming that they *"are opening doors to people that never thought that those doors would open. You teach them how to do things that they didn't think they could make"* (F135). In agreement, Valeria also placed emphasis upon learning when she almost appreciatively said *"it is a place to learn and a place to grow"*. In the same humble voice, Alicia, appreciative towards the work the social incubators do, said that *"it is important that they are there, the social incubators, because they are a way to help the community to create the opportunities that are not there"* (F154).

Midway through the interview, we heard Valeria speak passionately about the social incubators. *"The most important thing that they do is to help society"*, she explained and elaborated her thoughts further *"many universities help a hospital, or an orphanage or in a specific place. However, in this one, anyone from the public who wants to get knowledge or build skills can come"* (F31). Contrastingly, Miguel tried to generalise the phenomenon of social incubators - *"the social incubator for me, it would be a place or an organisation that focuses on solving or facilitating the response to social problems with a different view"*, and then concurring that the social incubators of Mexico University are just that. Juan, after taking a sip of water, explained that *"[the social incubator's] mission is to provide skills and tools to the operation of micro-entrepreneurs and students, to create value in the lives and businesses in general"*. Suddenly, we were startled by Juan's cell-phone ringing. He quickly excused himself, putting his phone into silent mode, and returned to his description of the duality of the social incubator's goals - *"[the goals are] to develop skills for entrepreneurs and maybe for students as consultants. On the one side, it is for the entrepreneur, but for the students is to make them better consultants and to train them to be better entrepreneurs"*, he explained. He continued by surprising us with his view upon the benefits Mexico University gains from having social incubators - *"prestige"* he said in, what we perceived to be quite an indifferent tone, and continued *"that's it, that is our return on investment"*. Here, Alicia offered an alternate explanation when discussing the goals of the social incubators. *"I think that it is a gain for the university, because it is a place where their students can do social service and come to learn. At the same time, those activities, that the university does for their students, will help the people and develop their skills and needs"*, she explained based on her three months long participation in the incubators.

4.3.3 Praxes

Also in Monterrey management are the only ones devoting their full time to the social incubators. Here, Juan explained with disappointment that *"a lot of other campuses have more resources. Even though we are the biggest campus, we have fewer resources, at least in this area"*, and continued *"Monterrey had in the beginning of the social incubators five people in the team, and now I am alone. I have nobody to support micro-enterprises"*. His heavy workload is currently primarily designated *"to develop curricular programs like social service forms, in the form of social services where students could invest extra hours to develop courses for helping the micro-businesses"*. He further elaborated *"mainly what we do with the micro-businesses are courses, and different types of training. [...] That is one of the usual things that I do"* and concluded *"the second thing would be having special mentorships with the micro-businesses. That is more eventual - I do that once a week. Those are my main functions related to the social incubators"*.

4.3.3.1   Praxes Before the Program

Leaning back in his black office chair, Juan dragged his hand through his hair and explained that *"first we must identify the social issues of our incubatees"* (F26)*,* an activity followed by inviting incubatees into the program, where *"our first source is recommendation"*. Also Alicia gave witness to this when she said *"I received an e-mail from Juan where he invited me, and I think somebody that took his course passed my e-mail to him"*. However, other actors also play an important role in reaching incubatees. Juan continued on his earlier sentiment that *"second, it will be the government. We have relations with for example the economic secretary of Monterrey municipality. They send people to us. Third, we have relations with NGOs, of course they have incubatees and databases of people who need this help, and they send us this"* (F12; F18). He went on to confidently state *"we do not need to look for entrepreneurs - they come"*. Having received applicants, Juan explained that *"at the beginning we make an interview, the guy comes, we try to understand what his or her profile is. Based on that we accept the entrepreneur"* (F58). This however, was an interview that Alicia did not explicitly mention took place before her program, instead she mentioned that *"moms come with their children and they are always looking to get practice in guitar, English or computer"*, which was actually how Valeria got involved. She had learned about the social incubators through Facebook and *"I came to the social incubators because my daughters are taking English here, so I was here and the students invited me to take their class, so that's how I started taking classes here"*. It should however be noted that Valeria, due to her enrolment in the local program, did not follow the same procedure as described by Juan.

The students who work in the social incubators are, similar to in Guadalajara, recruited through a service fair, hosted by Mexico University, Carlos explained. He continued by telling us how he got involved in the social incubators, where he *"went around the fair, and I met up with Juan. He told me that we were going to an incubator and help people"*. Also Miguel gave a similar story, and explained that as he approached the social incubators at the social service fair *"I presented myself and left a little bit of information about myself and I got code so I could get in the service. That was it basically"*. As the interview progressed, both staff reported that they rarely came into contact with incubatees before the program. However, Carlos did explain that the recruited staff could recommend individuals who they met in their daily life for participation, and expressed that *"the students [staff] know people, people who may need it [the micro-enterprise development program]. The people who cut your hair, or the lady that tell me that her son needs it. There, we got the right target"*.

4.3.3.2   Praxes During the Program

"We form and develop skills [among incubatees]" (F111), Juan explained and continued *"[incubatees] participate in programs that the students take to the incubator"*. When visiting the incubator, we noticed several of the programs being on-going, and while there was an emphasis on the micro-enterprise development program during our interviews, all interviewees were familiar with the other programs. Carlos tried to summarise the overall activities and explained that *"In the incubator I was in Caracol, there was this part of entrepreneurship, teaching kids computers [and] English"* (F86; F107). Enrolled in the educational program, Alicia explained that *"I took four levels of English. Each level was one semester, so I have been in it for two years"* (F84). Contrastingly, Valeria explained that, in her local program about foods and beverages, *"students ask us 'what do you want to learn right now' [...] So every session we are learning what we want to learn"* (F73) and smilingly admitted *"it is very interesting and I like it"*.

Juan was eager to make it clear that the micro-enterprise development program is not designed to directly develop the incubatee's business, but rather the incubatees themselves. *"we will not help your business, we will help your skills. That's the difference, we cannot make the promise that their business will grow because of the tools that we will give them, but we can give them tools"* (F39; F112) he said and continued *"we make more professionals and give tools to the people who lead micro-businesses to survive, and make initiatives grow"*. Miguel explained that this is conducted through a combination of consulting and classes, the former which Carlos explained as *"you have to be with the entrepreneur, help him, be there for him"* (F60; F103) and continued by sharing an anecdote where he had not only given a t-shirt manufacturer advice, but also offered to wear his shirts during school events as a marketing effort. The classes contrastingly aim to *"develop [the incubatees'] profession"*, where Juan, exemplifying such, said *"they learn marketing, operations and finance"* (F109). Offering an incubatee perspective, Alicia explained that *"I took marketing as the first course where I acquired the logo [and] the FB-page [for my business]"*, while proudly showing us her business' Facebook page and continued *"then accounting, where I learned mostly about the costs for my basic products. [...] There was also a little course about sales which I took that contained negotiation techniques"*.

Continuing her praise of the micro-enterprise development program, Alicia highlighted that she could choose the course that she wanted and needed the most - *"I learned a little bit about everything at first and researched about all the future courses, I started to decide which course I was going to take. So first I wanted to study marketing, and then I decided I wanted to learn accounting"*. The notion

that the incubatees are a contributing factor in the program design was confirmed by Carlos, who explained that the program initially is constructed in a similar manner for all incubatees, *"but as you start watching and hearing what they really want, you start making exceptions [...] so you adapt to them"* (F72). This was further supported by Miguel who mentioned that *"we have to adapt according to the entrepreneur. [...] it is basically adapting to the needs of the person"* (F69).

Contrastingly to Guadalajara, requirements for graduation were not mentioned in Monterrey. Rather, it was explained that graduation occurs when the course reaches its conclusion, where Alicia explained that *"after each semester by the end of their course, there is a little ceremony where they receive a diploma"*. This was further supported, although quite indifferently, by Juan who mentioned *"we just finish, we give them their certificate"* (F120). While this may seem rather simple, Valeria showed appreciation towards said graduation, claiming that *"I do not know exactly if I will get a certificate or a diploma or something, but I want one"*.

4.3.3.3 Praxes After the Program

Juan smiled and said that the social incubators on occasion call graduated incubatees to see how things are going, however also admitted that there are no systematic ways of staying in contact with incubatees. Carlos supported this but also explained that he is still in contact with one of his former micro-entrepreneurs, as the latter wanted to keep his assistance after the program had finished. Incubatees also have the possibility to remain within the social incubators, where Miguel confirmed that his former incubatees had drawn advantage from this possibility - *"whenever they finished from the entrepreneur program [micro-enterprise development program] they did maybe move to another program"*. This is in fact what Alicia already had done, and what not only she (F124) but also Valeria expressed excitement about - enrolling into another course or program after the current finishes.

"The social incubators have an impact on people because they open a new reality" (F79), Miguel explained and received support from Carlos - *"[incubatees in the social incubators] meet someone that can say yes you can do it, you can make it [and] it helps a lot"* and continued *"the main thing was you can do a great impact in the community by targeting a specific area on their main needs and try to teach them how to fish instead of giving them fish"* (F37). We then listened attentively as he went on to share a success story about the earlier mentioned entrepreneur with the t-shirt company. *"It was really awesome, he had formal t-shirts, buttons and all that, and he has a store in the centre of Monterrey. He wanted to get recognised, get some publicity"* he explained and, visibly content, continued to tell us that after

having taken a course in marketing *"[the incubatee] paid people from multi-media that are a TV-channel from here. In my opinion, I hate the shows they give, but his target market loves the show. So he had an increase in sales. He had about 100 likes on Facebook when he came to me, and now he has 1000, and [now] he sells more"* (F141).

As for the incubatees, Valeria still spoke passionately about the social incubators - this time about the food and beverage program's impact on her. *"I have learned a lot of things that I did not know"* she smiled and continued *"I feel better physically, I feel that I have more energy and can do more things during the day and thus sleep better"* (F138). This impact, she said, was also applicable to other people - *"I have seen people who have taken this course lose weight, people and family feeling better because they are applying everything they learn here"*. Also Alicia reported that the social incubators had given her skills that she could use for her benefit - *"I am more secure of applying my knowledge in practice and I am excited because I have a weapon against ignorance now"*, she said and continued *"I am much more secure when I launch new products because I now can calculate the costs. I am more organised when it comes to sales, reports and the structure of the expense forecasting"* (F144). While she claimed that the social incubators had mainly focused on the development of her business and helped improve it (F142), she also happily highlighted personal growth from participation when she said *"I also grew. [...] I received much motivation from the people. There were times when I wanted to quit everything, but they motivated me to stay, and I continued"*. For Carlos, the time that he spent in the incubators allowed him to see the change and development of incubatees. While this development varies between individuals, his main observation is that they leave their comfort zone (F128) and are more eager to learn - *"they stop saying 'only in the incubator' but instead 'let me do some research - read videos, read books'. It unlocks the wanting in them, their desire. The entrepreneurship it [they] has in them"*.

Alicia was certain that, aside from an individual impact, *"there must be some change in the community but it's gradual and slow"*, a claim that Juan contradicted, arguing that there is no impact on the communities and cities in which incubatees live and incubators operate. In a disappointed voice, he gave the example of the entrepreneurs, where he claimed that the social incubators help *"in general skills, I would not say in sales. We just help the entrepreneurs to be better commercials [businessmen]"*, thus contradicting TD1 and TD2 who both reported increased sales among micro-entrepreneurs. Despite his negative outlook upon the possible impact of the social incubators on communities or society overall, Juan did claim that the incubators have had an impact upon himself *"I understood that you can help in different levels and still do social*

development [...] So I think that's the main learning, I could apply many of the concepts from my degree in industrial engineering and marketing into the real life, and that helped me as an entrepreneur". Carlos has also been affected by his work in the social incubators, it has even affected his daily life - *"I buy locally from the local store. I try to buy from them because they are real entrepreneurs, they are businessmen but being slaughtered by big corporations".*

5. Analysis

The analysis section will be dedicated to examining our empirical findings in the light of the theoretical framework. Through contemplating our data from different angles and perspectives, we aim to make sense of and generate insights about the phenomenon social incubators. Here, to facilitate for the reader second-order themes generated through Gioia et al.'s (2012) methodology will be denoted S# and the aggregate dimensions marked with in italics and denoted A#. Furthermore and as noted earlier, these are linked with a consolidated version of our analytical framework found in Appendix 6, 7 and 8.

5.1 The Social Incubator Phenomenon

In our first research question we set out to establish what social incubators are and how they are similar and different to social work. Our main findings here suggest that social incubators are *physical spaces for social interaction and development in which socially vulnerable individuals, through the use of cross-sectoral partnerships and community adapted development services, are empowered to become agents of their own social transformation.* It has also been established that, on a theoretical level, the social incubators strongly coincide with social work, however on a practical level, the two differ with regards to partnership education. Furthermore, the social incubators only partly engage in sustainable development practices, individual and community empowerment as well as prevention work. In fact, the only social work practice that the social incubators appear to fully engage in is interdisciplinary social work. The following section will elaborate further on these insights.

The first, and perhaps the clearest insight given by our empirical findings is that social incubators are physical spaces (S1). While first mentioned by Vianey, also the executive presentations (TD1 & TD2) described the incubators as 'physical spaces'. Here, it should be acknowledged that TD1 and TD2 were presumably written by national management, and as such may be biased, portraying an image which they want to deliver, and should thus not be considered to strengthen the claim. However, while regional levels rarely used the full expression, they did use expressions like 'in the social incubator' or 'here at the social incubator' while being in, or referring to, a building labelled as such, thus making a clarification futile to even mention.

Our findings also suggested that these physical spaces also put their focus on developing and nurturing, similar to Leblebici and Shah's (2004) definition of business incubators as physical

spaces developing and nurturing new ventures. Here, however, the focus was on developing and nurturing the individual rather than a business. This was confirmed by the interviewees where all sub-units of analysis, in their own terms, spoke of the incubators as advocates of development, more specifically social development (S3). Further contrastingly from Leblebici and Shah's (2004) definition, our findings also suggested another component of social incubators. Acknowledged by all sub-units of analysis, social incubators, aside from developing and nurturing individuals, also serve as physical spaces unifying different parts of 'the social'. This interaction is not only an important part of 'the social' (Petit, 2005; Collins, 2005), but it is also an important component of how we in this thesis define social work. Often expressed using terminology such as 'a place for the community to come together', social incubators appear to be 'the living room of the community' - or simply a space for social interaction (S2). These claims were further supported during our observations, where we saw people of different ages, social classes and genders interacting during classes - playing football or other activities. Thus, making social incubators, up to this point, *physical spaces of social interaction and development* (A1).

Up until this point of the thesis, we have, to simplify for the reader, chosen to refer to the components within social incubators as 'programs', in the same manner as the sub-units of analysis did. However, just reiterating these names would not only be rather descriptive, but also possibly inaccurate, as calling them programs may imply that they are established plans, followed meticulously. Social incubators are, on the contrary, flexible paths towards a goal, in which praxes are adapted according to the needs of the incubatees (S10) established through an identification of community needs (S9). As such, we argue that the specific value-offerings of social incubators instead encompass three types of services - educational services, micro-enterprise development services and community-specific services – all of which students of Mexico University act as 'leaders' for. At the national level, these community adapted development services were illustrated as integrated components operating parallel to each other. Contrastingly, in Monterrey all programs were operating, however organised and run as separate components, while in Guadalajara only the educational and local programs were active. While theoretically intriguing to attribute these discrepancies as divergences of theories of action (Argyris and Schön, 1974), or sayings and doings (Seidl & Whittington, 2014), we suggest an alternative explanation, i.e. *community adapted development services* (A4). A recurring notion across all sub-units of analysis was namely the service alteration based on community needs, which may have prompted national

management to incorporate praxes across all Mexico University's incubators in their answers, while regional incubators spoke solely of their own activities.

Discrepancies between saying and doings (Seidl & Whittington, 2014) could however be identified with regards to the prevention of social issues. Here, while none of the sub-units of analysis claimed to engage in prevention work, it should be acknowledged that, although not working actively with it, social incubators might still prevent social issues from occurring. Here, while Mary (2008) propose that prevention measures requires having such intentions, Bartlett (2003) approach social work as efforts that hinder the occurrence of inequalities, achieved through education and knowledge spreading (Marshall et al., 2011). Thus, as community adapted development services aim to make incubatees more capable, hindering the risk of social issues occurring, social incubators may actually engage in prevention measures. However, establishing the outcomes of such indirect approaches to prevention is out of scope for this study and would perhaps require a longitudinal study. As such, while indications of indirectly prevention measures exist, it cannot be fully supported by this study.

Inside social incubators, our findings suggest that the ever so important partnerships (Mary, 2008) are made use of by including governmental institutions, companies and civil society as its practitioners (S4; S5; S6). As such, while being different across sub-units of analysis, by encompassing all sectors included in 'the social', these *partnerships are of a cross-sectoral nature* (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; A2). At the national level, the main strategic partner is the Mexican bank who, through offering monetary and advisory aid across the entire organisation, facilitates social incubator services. In both Guadalajara and Monterrey, regionally located governmental institutions and enterprises served as strategic partners. However, contrasting to Mary's (2008) suggestions, practitioners of social incubators are not taught how to form and sustain such partnerships through partnership education. While that is the case, social incubators do employ interdisciplinary social work (Mary, 2008), through the high involvement of civil society. In both Guadalajara and Monterrey, the primary people serving as tutors, advisors or similar, are students from Mexico University supported by their professors at the university. Here, for example, incubatees are aided by business students on business-related issues, by medical students on health concerns, and by law students on judicial inquiries. Also, in Monterrey, NGOs help to identify potential incubatees that are in need of help. As such, it can be argued that social incubators draw expertise from several different subject areas in their praxes.

Turning the analysis to the 'other side' of practitioners in the incubators - the incubatees. Here, the official sayings of national management were that the incubatees constitute individuals who live under difficult social circumstances as, for example, in the dimensions of social exclusion (SEKN, 2008). While the geographic location of the incubators and most incubatees indeed appear to be aligned with this description, we believe that there are exceptions to the rule. For example, Teresa and her children are all enrolled in the social incubator, despite appearing to belong to a higher social stratum compared to other incubatees. While not specifically asked about her economic situation, she did reveal that she is a stay-at-home mother, with a degree in technical engineering. Furthermore, when discussing socially vulnerable individuals, Teresa engaged in 'othering' of said individuals (GSDRC, 2015), by referring to these as 'them' rather than 'people like us' - clearly separating herself from such individuals. Accordingly, her answers did not signalise an individual who were in desperate need of developing socially. Rather, her reasons for joining the social incubators related to gaining an understanding of movies and songs in English, and even to travel more. This can be contrasted against Ophelia, who could not be a stay-at-home mother due to the strained economic situation and who attend the social incubators to secure an employment. While we acknowledge this discrepancy, other findings do however strictly point towards the target group being socially vulnerable people. First, as mentioned by several interviewees, and in line with individual incubators, the focus of social incubators is on the individual (S8). Second, the location of social incubators who appear to be in areas of social exclusion (S7). As noticeable during our visits to the social incubators in both Guadalajara and Monterrey, their locations are visibly in areas plagued by social problems, areas which, in accordance with United Nations (2012), are more likely to be excluded from social services. While this was proposed by many of the interviewees, it was especially noted by Ophelia, who, as a lifetime resident of Jocotán, could give witness to the social situation in the community. Hence, while flexibility of the situation of incubatees is acknowledged, the chosen locations of social incubators suggest that, while not limiting the incubation to only unprivileged people, social incubators indeed primarily target *socially vulnerable individuals* (A3).

While our findings uniformly point towards social incubators aiming to ensure social change for incubatees, one should not assume that social incubators are the creators of such development. Rather, our empirical findings suggest the contrary. Consensus between both national management, regional management and incubatees indicate that the focus is to

incubate individuals, i.e. assist individuals in their efforts for overcoming inequalities, and find and enhance the potential of these individuals (Bartlett, 2003). Hence it is the incubatees who are responsible for creating the change they desire, and thus could be aligned with Payne's (1996) reflexive-therapeutic approach to social work, and be agents of their own change (S13). Melissa provided a perfect example of such, saying *"you can tell them [incubatees] [...] you have the same opportunities as everyone and you can have a career, or get a good job, be a professional"*, clearly illustrating an attempt to use discourse to help individuals understand their own strengths to reach self-fulfilment (Mary, 2008). It was further suggested by all sub-units of analysis that the goal of social incubators is to make incubatees and their communities socially transform (S14), suggesting incubatees should become *agents of their own social transformation* (A6). This, for example, through gaining new opportunities as a result of attaining a better job or through developing their micro-enterprise to help advance the community. Ensuring that vulnerable individuals become part of their communities' development is an important component of social work as it promotes sustainable development (Mary, 2008). When the incubatees are part of the development of their communities they can, as a result, be a part of societal and economical advancements. Mary (2008) also argue that one should work toward influencing current societal actors to aim for sustainable development and respect the boundaries of growth, something we did not find any empirical support of. However, it should be acknowledged that since social incubators also aim to raise social awareness among students, it may in the future result in said students respecting the boundaries of growth in their professional lives. As such, although indications exist, it cannot be established in this study due to its scope.

If incubatees are supposed to be actors of their own social transformation, a logical follow up question is how such is achieved. To succeed with a social transformation, it has been argued that *empowerment* of both individuals and communities is crucial (SEKN, 2008), and our empirical findings suggest that this is also the primary approach employed by social incubators (A5). Here, several sub-units of analysis claimed that social incubators provide incubatees with tools and develop their skills (S11), which may give them the opportunity for continuous development and regain power of their own life (S12), this in line with Page and Czuba's (1990) definition of empowerment. Furthermore, Mary (2008) argued that empowerment is ensured through the vulnerable individuals being a part of forming the solution to their problems. Our findings show that social incubators do not just investigate the issues of incubatees, but they also structure their praxes accordingly. As such, our belief

is that empowerment is not only the cornerstone of social work, but also of the praxes of social incubators. On the other hand, Mary (2008) also propose that vulnerable individuals should be given power to influence their communities, for example through the creation of local councils. In this respect, we have not found any empirical evidence suggesting that social incubators distribute communital power to incubatees, but rather give them the tools to attain said power.

5.2 The Social Incubation Process

The main findings with regards to our second research question, which aimed to map out the social incubation process and compare it to its business counterpart, are that, in accordance with business incubation, social incubation consists of three consecutive steps. First, the pre-incubation stage consists of *selection* and, *probing and program tailoring*. Second, the incubation stage consists of community adapted development services where incubatees can, aside from receiving *general services* that are accessible to all, partake in *educational*, *micro-enterprise development* or *community-specific services*. Third, the post-incubation stage consists of *graduation* and, *probing and after-service tailoring* practices. As such, while the social incubation process is typologically different from its business counterpart, social incubation practices remain very similar but more complex, with probing and service tailoring acting as the main distinguisher.

Having gone towards a definition of social incubators, it is now possible to initiate an attempt to determine the structure of the social incubation process. While not labelled the same, on a theoretical level, the social incubation process, similarly to the business incubation process (Bergek & Norrman, 2008), may be divided into three consecutive steps; pre-incubation, incubation and post-incubation, that stepwise lead incubatees through their development.

5.2.1 Pre-incubation

Our empirical findings suggest that social incubators do not simply let any individual into its services, which is also the case in business incubators (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Selection of incubatees is an important tool for business incubator success

Selection

(Lumpkin & Ireland, 1988), and while our empirical findings do not give support to establish such an argument, it is however possible to establish that the social incubation process, similar to its business counterpart (Bergek & Norrman, 2008), is initiated by a *selection of*

incubatees (A7). This was displayed by the words of interviewees across all sub-units of analysis, who acknowledged either having filled out application forms or conducting interviews before being denied or allowed access into the service (S15). Subsequently, social incubators investigate incubatees' fulfilment with regards to certain characteristics needed for participation (S17), however, large discrepancies existed in our empirical findings on what such requirements were (S16). While research suggests that business incubators focus on the business idea or the entrepreneur's capabilities (Bergek & Norrman, 2008), or a combination of both (Wulung et al., 2014), one common denominator among social incubators was the state of the individual, a notion mentioned by all sub-units of analysis. However, here discrepancies could also be seen, now between the sayings of interviewees and the actual doings of the incubators.

First, in the micro-enterprise development service, TD1 and TD2 revealed several hard criteria that the incubatees must fulfil, such as an established income level. Here, however, the responses from our interviews left us under the impression that interest and motivation carry a heavier weight in the selection process. As such, it appears as if the requirements for participation are based upon personal characteristics to a larger extent than the economic or demographic factors proposed in TD1. Second, with regards to the educational service, our empirical findings indicated several soft criteria for participation, such as social vulnerability, however, also hard criteria for participation exist, established based on governmental regulations rather than being imposed by the social incubators themselves. Third, considering the community education service, here our empirical search has shown that participant's knowledge need to be on a course-appropriate level, and all participants should be socially vulnerable. However, as mentioned earlier, Teresa, who took part in the community education service, appeared to live under far better standards than what is proposed to be permitted for participation, thus contradicting claims of social vulnerability being a deal breaker for participation. Last, concerning the community-specific service, our empirical search has not revealed any criteria for participation. Consequently, while it is indicated that some criteria exist to be allowed access to social incubator services, based on our empirical findings, we cannot establish what these are more than that criteria do exist, as not all applicants are granted access to the service. Instead, we believe the main point for social incubators are, similar to business incubators (Hackett & Dilts, 2004), that incubatees are weak enough to need incubation, but strong enough to succeed. This becomes particularly

evident when remembering Vianey's explanation that the social incubators do not offer micro-enterprise development services to individuals within the lowest stratum.

Having been accepted into social incubator, our empirical findings indicate an additional stage before moving into incubation, which serves as the most evident differentiator between the two processes, i.e. *probing and service tailoring* (A8).

Probing and Service Tailoring

While appearing to be vital for social incubation, the step is not incorporated into the business incubation process more than incubators evaluating whether there are certain business areas that need special focus in the venture (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). In this step, similarly to how social incubators retrieve information from communities to build their service offerings, the same logic applies when enrolling incubatees into their community adapted development services. Here, after incubatee selection, social incubators examine the need of the incubatee against the development services they have chosen (S18; S19; S20). For example, as noted by Maria, incubatees wishing to take courses in English must first take an exam so that the needs of the incubatee may be established. Similarly, in the micro-enterprise development service, it was established by Esteban and later also by Juan that having been accepted into the micro-enterprise development service, students initially performs a screening of the business and have a dialogue with the entrepreneur to understand the business' need. As such, our empirical findings suggest that, after selection, social incubators probe to understand the needs of the incubatee and subsequently tailor the incubation stage based on those needs (S21).

5.2.2 Incubation

Contrastingly from the business incubation process where incubation services are applicable to all incubatees to draw benefit from (Adkins, 2002; Bergek & Norrman, 2008), in social incubators, incubatees may freely choose which value propositions to take part in. However, some social incubation praxes offerings may be applicable to all, thus, here referred to as *general services* (A9).

First, infrastructure is tangible and intangible offerings required for the completion of the program, for example, computers, Wi-Fi and furniture (S22). Similarly, also business incubators offer infrastructure, however, here solely referring to the physical space in which the incubatees can work and gather (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Second, our empirical

findings also give indications of social incubators facilitating the creation of a communital and citizen dialogue (S24), which aim to give the incubatees the opportunity to interact with other people in their community,

General Services

much like the infrastructure in business incubators bring incubatees together and thus facilitate synergies, relationships and economies of scale (Bøllingtoft & Ulhøi, 2005). The citizen and community dialogue also have similarities to the business incubator component mediation, in which business incubators put their incubatees in contact with other businesses (Marrifield, 1987) or connect them to entrepreneurial ecosystems (Fernández, et al., 2015). Here, clear parallels can be drawn to social incubators, as Vianey proposed that the social incubators aim to connect their incubatees to an entrepreneurial ecosystem as well. Third and ending the similarities between the two's general services, our empirical findings suggest that social incubators also offer the general service of aspiration through role-modelling (S23) as a general service, this by offering incubatees 'a different reality'. Specifying this further, those working in social incubators aim to give incubatees the understanding that they are equally capable of advancing in the socioeconomic strata as anyone else. This may especially be true in the case of staff such as Melissa, who is raised in a community much like Jocotán, and is currently studying at Mexico University, one of the leading educational institutions in Mexico. Similarly, Maria mentioned that children of the community, instead of aspiring to be like their parents, now aspired to be like their social service students. As such, it is indicated that through the work of social incubators, incubatees are also offered lives to aspire for, this through the role-modelling of the staff.

Business incubators also offer incubatees support services needed for incubation (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Here, the most common practices are entrepreneurial training, advice for development, as well as services concerning accounting, legal matters, advertising and other general business matters (Chan & Lau, 2005). While business incubators offer these services to all their incubatees, and all activities are focused on business matters, social incubators offer similar support services divided into three types – *educational* (A10)*, micro-enterprise development* (A12) *and community-specific services* (A11). In business incubators, the quality of services and its fit to incubatees is crucial for incubatee development (Bergek & Norrman, 2008), a logic which also may apply to social incubators considering the emphasis put on tailoring all services to fit the incubatee.

The educational services have, based on our analysis, two components - official education (S26; S27) and community-specific education (S25). First, with regards to official education, these are educational services that are sanctioned by the government, for example, elementary and preparatory schooling. Such education follows the requirements posed by government institutions about its content, process and requirements

Educational Services

for graduation. Second and contrastingly, community-specific education has no anchor in governmental regulations or institutions, rather this is education that a specific social incubator has deemed to be interesting to meet communital needs. In the social incubators at Mexico University, heavy emphasis was paid to English and computation, however, classes like math, chemistry and Spanish were also mentioned. While it could be argued that such courses are parts of official education, we point out that the distinguisher between the two is that these act as independent courses based on community needs, rather than being part of an integrated program.

The micro-enterprise development services included advisory and consultancy services (S32), basic business education (S33) and develop the skills of and the entrepreneur, much like in the business incubation process (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). First, the empirical findings on advisory and consultancy services suggest large discrepancies between sayings and doings in all sub-units of analysis. As noted in the initial sections of this analysis, national management suggested that advisory and consultancy services were part of praxes, similar to the business incubation process (Chan & Lau, 2005; Aerts et al. 2007), however, at the point of our visit, this was not a 'doing' at neither of the social incubators in Guadalajara or Monterrey. It should however be acknowledged that all units of observations were aware of this service and argued that these had previously been conducted, which we took to indicate as an only temporary halt of an otherwise existing service. Second, with regards to basic business education, social incubators offer incubatees courses in, for example, entrepreneurship and marketing, while also working with their business idea or already established business. Thus, the goal is to increase the capability of incubatees to either establish new micro-enterprises or to make an already established micro-enterprise grow, which is similar to the entrepreneurial training and services on general business matters offered by business incubators (Chan & Lau, 2005).

Micro-enterprise Development Services

As alluded in earlier sections, our findings suggest that community-specific services combine various areas and disciplines into one category. Here, as the name suggests, our findings imply that offerings within this category is forged upon the needs of the specific community. Furthermore, our findings imply that some of the services offered are available to the entire community in which the incubator operates, and not only to the individuals enrolled within it, thus broadening the potential issues to be addressed significantly. Within this category at Mexico University, the empirical data revealed some concrete examples of praxes. One example is recreational activities (S28) such as dance classes and sport activities. Other examples, encompassing more serious subjects, were legal support (S30) or health services (S29) provided to incubatees, where the latter included courses on nutrition, dietary advice and medical check-ups. The category also created a space for the promotion of inter-communital knowledge sharing (S31). With regards to Mexico University, incubatees are allowed to give their own courses, thus sharing their knowledge with the rest of the community, and in return the social incubators will give the community another course free of charge.

Community-Specific Services

5.2.3 Post-incubation

While not applicable in the community-specific services, incubatees in both the educational and micro-enterprise development services, can reach a state where they are no longer eligible to take part of the specific services they are

Graduation

enrolled in and thus, like incubatees in business incubators (Bergek & Norrman, 2008), *graduate* (A13). Further similar to business incubators (Bergek and Norrman, 2008; CSES, 2014), the time allotted to and the requirements for fulfilling this state appear to be different between services and thus difficult to establish based on our empirical data, however, some indications can be drawn with regards to graduation criteria. For example, the eligibility for graduation of an incubatee is perhaps most clear with regards to educational services (S36), where incubatees graduate when they have completed their courses. Contrastingly, in the micro-enterprise development service, the requirement for graduation (S35) appear ambiguous, as there were large discrepancies between the points of view of the sub-unit of analysis. Here, Maria argued that incubatees graduate when the semester is finished, while Vianey claimed that micro-enterprises must have an established business plan. Differently,

Esteban proposed that an entrepreneur had to complete all assigned business courses and join the formal economy to be eligible for graduation. Controversially, Juan simply stated that *"we just finish"*. As such, the same logic as for the selection criteria applies here - the discrepancies between interviewees were too large to draw conclusions, thus, we can only argue that graduation criteria exist, but not specifically state them. Our findings do however suggest that incubatees who have not reached the desired progress upon graduation will remain within the program, this in accordance with some business incubators (Peters et al., 2004). Those incubatees who have reached the requirements for graduation, are celebrated through ceremonial activities (S37) where their achievements are acknowledge through a diploma or the like.

After graduation, many business incubators offer after-services (CSES, 2014), and our findings propose that also social incubators, although not systematically, remain in contact with the incubatees after they have left. The after-

Probing and After-Service Tailoring

services of a business incubator often include access to networks, advisors or investors (CSES, 2014), and while this may on occasion be applicable for social incubators as well, this does not appear to be the most prominent social incubator praxes after graduation. Instead, similar to when being accepted in the program, our findings suggest that social incubators examine the remaining needs of graduated incubatees (S38) and offer appropriate services based on those needs (S39). Thus, the last step of the social incubator process is *probing and after-service tailoring* (A14). The after-services, may be then located inside or outside the incubator. For the previous, one may take Teresa as an example who, after completing her English course, desires to start a micro-enterprise and thus may need to take part of the micro-enterprise development services. If so, she will retrogress back to the 'probing and service-tailoring' stage of the incubation process. Contrastingly, a micro-entrepreneur who has graduated from the micro-enterprise development services may not want to partake in the other services but needs a mentor to help with, for example, marketing. He or she would not retrogress into the process, but rather be offered after-services tailored to his or her needs, much in accordance with the business incubator after-service praxes (CSES, 2014).
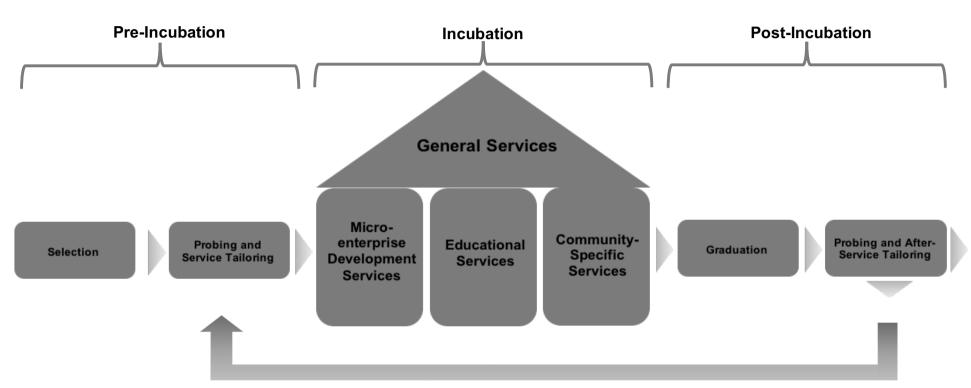
Figure 9 - The Social Incubation Process

5.3   Towards an Initial Understanding of Social Incubator Impact

> The main findings in relation to our third research question suggest social incubators having a threefold impact. First, social incubators appear to have a *psychological impact* on incubatees by improving their self-esteem, belief in their potential and perceived life quality. Second, the incubators have also been found to have a *communital impact* where the individual incubatees' development leads to community progression. This community progression allows for greater opportunities and increased safety for its citizens. Third, our findings also suggest that social incubators have a *professional impact* by strengthening incubatees' skills and abilities, increase micro-entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial mind-set and their business' performance. Hence, our findings suggest that social incubators have a dynamic impact on the communities in which they operate.

Having defined social incubators, and epitomised the social incubation process, we can provide an initial understanding of their impact. Here, the expression 'towards an initial understanding' is utilised as the impact of social incubators has not been established or seen by us first-hand. Instead, to form an understanding of social incubator impact, we had to, due to the time-constraints limiting this study, rely upon 'sayings' found in our empirical findings. Having acknowledged this, our findings suggest a threefold impact; psychological, communital and professional.

Starting with the *psychological impact* (A15), the first acumen is the effect social incubators have upon the incubatee's self-esteem. In accordance with Payne's (1996) reflexive-therapeutic social work, it is here suggested that social incubators lead incubatees to personal-growth, where all sub-units of analysis proposed that incubatees are more secure of themselves and experience improved self-esteem after incubation (S40). Providing a superb illustration, Melissa told the story of a shy five-year-old who, as her participation in the service advanced, progressively started to claim her well-deserved space in the incubation group. Moreover, our findings suggest that social incubators contribute to the development of the incubatees' belief in their own potential (S41), thus promoting empowerment (Mary, 2008). As such, our findings suggest that social incubators may ensure the realisation that they have the same opportunities as everyone else, that it is up to them to decide if they will succeed or not, and thus attain the power of their own life (Page & Czuba, 1990). Here, indication of social

incubators contributing to the self-realisation of incubatees, as mentioned by Payne (1996), can also be seen. In the context of her own life, Teresa phrased it as the learning she has gained in incubators has allowed her to become an example for her daughters, so that they will think *"I can do what I want"*. As such, in accordance with Page and Czuba (1990), our findings suggest that social incubators may lead empowerment, and enable incubatees to devote their life to whatever they find important. Last, our findings suggest that social incubators improve the life quality of the incubatees (S42) in several ways. Vianey proposed that people are happier, a claim supported by Ophelia, who said *"my daughter is happy"*, illustrating that not only the participating individual enjoy the benefits of the social incubators. Moreover, our findings further suggest that the economic life-quality can be improved through incubation. Here, Vianey's success story of a man who after incubation became middle class is a dainty example, which also illustrate his social transformation - a necessity for empowerment according to Payne's (1996) socialist-collective view of social work.

The second impact identified in our empirical findings is *communital impact* (A17). While social incubators incubate individuals, the incubated individuals subsequently have an impact upon the community (S46), an equally important part of social development (SEKN, 2008). As an illustration, helping micro-enterprises succeed, may for example, create more employment opportunities in their communities. As such, it is possible to develop these communities by enhancing the opportunities within them (S47) since lowering unemployment rates can lead to greater social inclusion (GSDRC, 2015). The last communital impact that our findings suggest is an increased sense of security (S48). Here, Esteban and José reported lower levels of gang violence in two areas in which social incubators operate and Ophelia first-hand supported this impact. She attributed this to the social incubators giving people something to occupy their minds with, so that they do not join local gangs. This is further supported by SEKN (2008) who also claim that, as a result of lack of opportunities and income, people turn to criminal activities as an attempt to solve their issues. As such, the impact of social incubators, similar to social work, may be seen as a dynamic impact as suggested by Beckmann (2012), as the incubators change the environment in which they operate and lead to long-term improvements.

Finally, addressing the third and final social incubator impact - *professional impact* - (A16) our findings suggest that the utilisation of educational services has strengthened the incubatees'

skills and abilities (S44). Here, incubatees can be helped out of social exclusion by giving them the abilities needed to secure an income (SEKN, 2008) as low education is attributed to be a cause for social exclusion (Panek & Czapiński 2011). This was supported by both Ophelia and Melissa, where Ophelia anticipated that *"I will be prepared for a better job",* while Melissa proposed that social incubators give incubatees the skills they need to get a job. However, the professional impact of the community adapted development services was also asserted by management, where both Cinthia and Vianey reported to have seen an increased entrepreneurial mindset (S45) among entrepreneurs who partook in micro-enterprise development services. Further, our findings suggest that this, in combination with the increased learning, make the entrepreneurs more competent business people, which may lead to an improved business performance (S46). As an example, phone interviews conducted by Mexico University, showed that 55% of the previous participants in the micro-enterprise development service reported a 10%-20% increase in sales after participation. This impact may be compared to the role business incubators play in new venture development, where successful incubatees in business incubators are supposed to leave the incubator financially viable within a reasonable delay (Aernoudt, 2004). The numbers above also suggest that social incubators' micro-enterprise development services increase the likelihood of the micro-enterprises succeeding in their efforts, which also is the case for incubatees in business incubators (Peters et al., 2004).

Based on the discussion above, the impact of social incubators are to that of both social work and business incubators. Hence, in our understanding, the effects of social incubators, in its most simplistic form, appears to be dual in nature and reside in the intersection of impact of social work and business incubation (Figure 10).
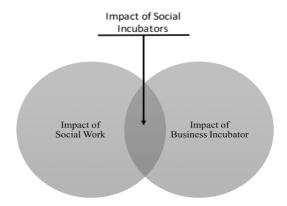
Figure 10 - The Impact of Social Incubators

6. Discussion

During our data analysis we discovered two reoccurring themes, which, while not directly applicable to our research questions, appear important to fulfil our purpose of establishing a holistic understanding social incubators. The following sections will deal these, as they were excluded from the analysis chapter since they were not directly applicable to our research questions. However, they are believed to be prominent components of social incubation practice and crucial to bear in mind when conducting research on social incubators, as falling to do so may inhibit the full understanding of a complex phenomenon. Finally, we also considered it to be of importance to discuss how sense-making may have impacted our study and, by doing so, displaying our reflexivity.

6.1   Cross-Sectoral Involvement in Social Incubation

Cross-sectoral partnership is a key component of social incubators, where researchers propose that such partnerships are increasingly deployed as solutions to the most urgent social issues (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010). Here, Googins and Rochlin (2000) argue that no sector has all the resources needed to sufficiently address social issues single-handedly, but rather that all sectors hold their own distinctive capabilities, which they can contribute with (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Gazley & Brudney, 2007). As such, cross-sector partnerships can unite these capabilities, and thus deliver outcomes that no single sector could accomplish by themselves (Googins & Rochlin, 2000). Here, Andrews and Entwistle (2010) argue that, due to the power it holds, the first sector (public sector) is suitable for tackling wicked issues, while the second sector (the market), due to its profit-maximising nature (Beckmann, 2012), can contribute with their competencies on how to lower costs and get the highest value for money. Last, the third sector (civil society) often have a closer relationship to the communities in which they function, and can thus establish the connection to the vulnerable individuals and enhance the outcomes of the social engagement (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010).

A similar situation, where the three sectors all bring distinct advantages to the table, can be identified in social incubators, at least regarding Mexico University. Here, collaborative measures with the first sector, i.e. the government (Googins & Rochlin, 2000), enables social incubators to offer elementary schooling to its incubatees and ensures that awareness of social incubators is raised among the public. The second sector, i.e. the market (Googins & Rochlin, 2000), instead provides the program with financial resources, while the third sector, i.e. civil society (Googins & Rochlin, 2000), contributes with all tutors and human resources in social incubators. However, despite the amount of praise cross-sectoral partnerships has

received (e.g. Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Gazley & Brudney, 2007), Andrews and Entwistle (2010) found, in their research on two-sector partnerships, that while collaboration between two public actors increase effectiveness and efficiency, partnerships between the public and civil sector have no effect on outcome and that public-private partnerships may harm the effectiveness of social efforts. As such, we will below assume a situation where one sector withdraws from the initiative, as an attempt to illustrate the importance of accounting for all sectors when researching social incubators.

First, removing the collaborative measures of the first sector practitioners could not only seriously harm social incubators' value-offerings and decrease awareness among potential incubatees, but perhaps also decrease awareness of social issues among governmental actors. Second, by removing involvement of market practitioners in social incubators, it is likely that fewer socially vulnerable individuals could take part in the community adapted development services, as it is heavily funded by this sector. Finally, removing the third sector as practitioners would most likely have the most obvious and disastrous consequences. This entails removing all staff from social incubators, and by doings so, considering that the staff conducts all activities in the incubation free of charge, the cost of social incubators could skyrocket. Moreover, and on an indirect note, the high citizen distrust towards governmental institutions (OECD, 2017) make, according to Cinthia, citizens in excluded communities reluctant to engage in any activities conducted by governmental institutions, regardless if it helps said citizens or not. Instead, similar to the arguments of Andrews and Entwistle (2010) it is citizens' trust towards civil society that make them partake in social incubator initiatives. Thus, a cross-sectoral partnership without the third sector may not even have the support of the vulnerable individuals and its potential impact could have been impaired.

Building on the discussion above, and by considering the contributions of each sector in the social incubators at Mexico University, it is our belief that understanding the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships in social incubators are crucial to fully grasping the phenomenon.

6.2   The Symbiotic Nature of Social Incubation

The knowledge-sharing practices of social incubators do not only benefit incubatees, but rather our empirical data suggest they are transactional, meaning that practitioners also develop simply by interacting with incubatees. In accordance, Alford (2002) has claimed that the relationship between the helper and the beneficiary is of a social-exchange nature rather

than a one-way augmentation practice. Here, Esteban argued that the main reason to why the social incubators were first started, was so that their students, who often come from prosperous economic backgrounds and rarely share the realities of incubatees, could draw benefit from this social-exchange by increasing their social awareness. This is in line with Tesoriero's (2006) findings that when students interact with 'difference', i.e. divergent worldviews and life conditions, they increase their understanding for people whose social situations are different from their own. Melissa illustrated this by explaining that her colleagues were previously unaware of the existence of vulnerable communities in such proximity to them, and José, who, after working in the social incubators, now has started to give money to individuals who beg in the streets, as he has gained an understanding of the fact that said individuals live on a day-to-day basis.

Despite Esteban claiming that the primary goal of the social incubators being student's social development, it also appears to inflict on other practitioners, such as national and regional management. Vianey, for example, explained that her involvement in the social incubators have made her able to *"see all the problems Mexico have"*, indicating an increased social awareness. A similar indication was also provided by Maria, who explained that when arriving to the social incubators you receive *"a different perspective of reality"*, and also noting that she has realised that social issues are not solved solely through giving help, but rather by working together with the vulnerable individuals. On that latter notion, Esteban explained that working with social incubators has given him a similar insight - when launching social development initiatives, it is important to listen to the socially vulnerable communities - and admitting that *"this is the hard reflection for me"*. Juan claimed that by working with incubatees, he now understands that he can apply his engineering background also to solve social issues. Finally, Cinthia explained that the social incubators have made her *"better understand my role"*, and today see the combat against social issues as a global battle thus applying a macro-perspective rather than a micro-perspective.

The discussion above illustrates how social incubators make all practitioners draw learnings, expertise and insights from interacting with each other, specifically by instilling social awareness. Thus, our findings suggest that social incubators are symbiotic in nature, which we urge other researchers to consider when investigating the impact of social incubators more in depth.

6.3   Making Sense of Social Incubators

As already addressed in the method section of this thesis, sense-making refers to how we make sense of novel issues or events (Maitlis & Christiansson, 2014). According to Gregory (2000), all human beings apply their own frameworks for interpreting and making sense of new experiences. Louis (1980) proposes that all human beings hold individual frameworks, which they rarely are aware of (Kegan, 1980), shaped by personal characteristics, previous experiences, outside influences and local context patterns. As such, sense-making appears difficult to circumvent, especially in qualitative research like this study, as its intent was to understand a novel phenomenon. This is also true when arriving in unfamiliar contexts (Glanz, Williams & Hoeksema, 2001), as, for example, when we arrived in Mexico without cultural or linguistic knowledge. Accordingly, sense-making processes may cause researchers, like us, to impose their own meaning on findings, as they are influenced by their values, attitudes and behaviours in their attempt to relate to others (Gregory, 2000). Here, the issue of reflexivity, previously discussed in section 3.5, becomes highly topical again as it was sometimes difficult for us to fully grasp the contextual circumstances of social incubators. Attempting to overcome this, we, in some cases, automatically relied upon previous experiences to make sense of the new context. To illustrate our reflexive awareness, we will now continue by depicting how sense-making could have appeared in this research.

First, as our field of research is business administration, this is also the normative perspective for us. As such, when interviewees initially illustrated, for example, educational services like the preparatory schooling, we found ourselves quite lost with regards to how to interpret it. Here, we - to use a metaphor - opened our Swedish backpacks to find similar experiences in order to make sense of what constituted preparatory schooling in Mexico. Thus, we drew our interpretations from the Swedish school system's equivalent schooling. While it is acknowledged that they may not be directly interchangeable, this at least allowed us to form a meaningful foundation, which could then serve as the point of departure from which we could draw inspiration for follow up questions, to bridge the perceptual gap between us and to reach shared understanding, or inter-subjectivity.

It was however not only our personal sense-making that may have influenced this thesis, but also the way interviewees make sense of social incubators affect our study. For example, both José and Melissa described the social incubators as 'safe havens', and while staff indeed had more advanced vocabularies, such an unusual and specific expression is rarely used on a daily

basis and felt fabricated, making us suspect that this particular saying had been communicated to them by a third-party. While this may or may not have been the case, we yet found ourselves caught in a dilemma, facing two alternative roads for interpreting their sayings. The first route included disallowing the description, since an unequivocal acceptance of the expression, could mean accepting a description disseminated by a third-party. The second route meant using the literal expression 'safe haven', however, the term itself may differ between individuals and thus by interpreting the expression ourselves, we would have imposed our own beliefs of the term into our findings. Instead of departing into any of these, we chose a third route, where we put less emphasis on their wording and instead focused on understanding the meaning they assigned to the expression, and once again bridge our understanding to reach inter-subjectivity.

7. Conclusion

The initial part of this section will be dedicated to summarising the main findings of our study in relation to our purpose and research questions. It will then progress into a presentation of the implications this study has for both theory and practice and, finally, conclude by highlighting the limitations to this study, and give recommendations for further research.

Alongside the evolution of incubators, research on the subject has also progressed and today constitutes an extensive field of research. However, we argue that academia has too narrowly focused on business incubators, and thus neglected other types of incubators. As such, we took it upon us to explore the phenomenon of social incubators through practice theory, aiming to provide a holistic understanding of what social incubators are (RQ1 & 1a), their process (RQ2 & 2a) and impact (RQ3).

First, to answer RQ1 and 1a, social incubators are physical spaces for social interaction and development, in which socially vulnerable individuals, through the use of cross-sectoral partnerships and community adapted development services, are empowered to become agents of their own social transformation. Here, while social incubators employ interdisciplinary social work, they only partly engage in prevention and long-term planning, sustainable social and economic development, and citizen and community empowerment, while not to any extent applying partnership education in their practices. As such, while social incubators are conceptually similar to social work and employ some of its activities, it does not fully engage in the practices proposed by Mary (2008), thus distinguishing themselves from social work.

Second, to answer RQ2 and 2a, the social incubation process can be divided into three stages, i.e. pre-incubation, incubation and post-incubation, all of which contain several components. In the first stage, the process encompasses selection and probing and service tailoring. In the second stage, incubatees may choose between three different community adapted development paths - through educational, micro-enterprise development, and community-specific services. However, regardless of the service offerings an incubatee chooses to take part in, all incubatees receive general services such as infrastructure, aspiration through role-modelling and a place for communital and citizen dialogue. In the third and final stage, incubatees graduate and the social incubators once again probe to understand the remaining

needs of the incubatee and then tailor their after-service accordingly, which also may include retrogressing and enrolling into other services offered by the incubator. Although theoretically labelled differently, many similarities exist between practices in the social incubation process and the business incubation process. Here, can be divided into three consecutive stages, which contain similar components within them. However, the probing and program tailoring stages, to which the social incubation process devote a large emphasis, serve as the main distinguisher between the two due to its absence in the business incubation process.

Third and finally, to answer RQ3, we propose that social incubators have a psychological, professional and communital impact. First, social incubators have a psychological impact by increasing the self-esteem of incubatees, instilling an improved belief in their own potential and improving their quality of life. Second, social incubators also have a professional impact, this by building incubatees' skills and abilities, increasing their entrepreneurial mind-set and improving the performance of micro-entrepreneurs' businesses. Last, through the aforementioned individual impacts, incubatees can in turn have a communital impact through which they increase opportunities and security in the communities where they live. With that said, while psychological and communital impact resembles the impact of social work, professional impact in large parts has a similar impact as business incubators have on their incubatees. Thus, we propose that, in its most simplistic form, social incubator impact may be found in the intersection between the impact of business incubators and social work.

7.1   Practical and Theoretical Contributions

This study may have implication for both the academic community and practitioners. First turning to the theoretical implications, this thesis has attempted to bring coordination to incubator research. Here, approaching a very dispersed research field, we built on the work of Aernoudt (2004) and categorised existing incubators into categories according to what they actually incubate, and thus also proposed a departure from the common preconception and misunderstanding that the word 'incubator' somehow is equated with 'business incubator'. As such, we have attempted to consolidate the fragmented research field and illuminate that the label 'incubator' does not have a causal relationship with incubating new ventures. Furthermore, by first introducing idea and individual incubators, and second, focusing our research on one type of individual incubator, social incubators, we expanded

the research field and may thus have opened 'Pandora's box' to the research area of social incubators - enabling more research in the future.

On a more practical note, this study may have offered practitioners combatting social exclusion with yet another tool of doing so. It is our firm belief that this study is not only of importance to said practitioners in developing countries, but also to those in the western world after the recent refugee crisis, which was the largest since the second world war (The UN Refugee Agency, 2016). These refugees are likely to arrive in countries where they do not speak the language, understand the culture, have a connection to the labour market or have a valid formal education. As such, even if they are not currently socially excluded, this may be what the future holds, as many of the aforementioned factors contribute to social exclusion (Panek & Czapiński 2011). Hence, these nations may not only have been given a tool to combat current social issues, but tools to prevent them from happening in the first place. Furthermore, by bringing coordination to the incubator research, and highlighting alternative incubators, this thesis may have diminished the fallacy that the incubation process cannot be utilised for other purposes than business growth. Without the knowledge of the versatility of the incubation process, it seems unlikely that others will mimic their practices, and thus our thesis may contribute to practitioners who are searching for tools to achieve social development or growth.

7.2   Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The main limitation of this study may perhaps be attributed to the research design. Here, the use of a single case study may have had an impeding effect upon the holistic understanding of social incubators this study pursued. This constraint may have been further limited by the mere use of three sub-units of analysis of 19 potential regional incubators. Here, our inability to visit more areas is attributed to the monetary constraints, mentioned in section 1.5. As such, we suggest a comparative case study of the phenomenon of social incubators, not only within the Mexico University organisation but also world-wide, to expand the understanding of what they are and how they might differ between contexts.

A second limitation, also associated with research design, is the weakness of not studying social incubators over time. Here, the interval for data collection only spanned over eight weeks, this due to the time constraints stated in section 1.5. As such, while it was possible to rely on the 'doings' of the social incubators during the incubation stage, we were forced to

rely on 'sayings' for activities that did not encompass our stay in Mexico. This may have had particular inflicting results for the findings regarding the impact of social incubators since incubatees could not be followed from pre-incubation to long after post-incubation as a means to understand the impact social incubators have on them. Furthermore, while we found indications of societal impact of social incubators, such indications were too weak to draw conclusions about. Hence, to overcome this knowledge gap, we argue that longitudinal studies may be necessary to fully establish the process of social incubators and its long-term impact on incubatees. On a similar note, we also propose the need for a quantitative study to confirm the impact social incubators have on a society.

Another limitation may be attributed to the choice of theory - SAP. While chosen due to its neutrality, thus, enabling us to bridge the concepts of social work and incubation, SAP may also have caused us to overlook aspects that a social or organisational lens would have caught. While it may be argued that we indeed have used theory concerning social work, our interview questions were still anchored in SAP. As such, it might be that from a social or organisational perspective we did not ask the *right* questions required to understand the phenomenon of social incubators. As such, to promote further understanding of social incubators, we argue for future research applying different theoretical lenses that encompass the most crucial components of social incubators.

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Appendix 1 - Interview Guide for National Management

About you

- Tell us about yourself, and your role/how you are involved in the incubators.
- Explain a normal day at the job for you in as much detail as you can..
- Why did you choose to work here?
- How would you describe the ultimate employee, student and incubatee of the social incubators?
- Have you worked with any kind of social activities before this? If so, please elaborate.
- What characteristics in your opinion are needed to work with these types of incubators?
- How would you say that you have changed since you started working here? Exemplify.
- Has your perception of social issues changed since started working here? If so, please elaborate
- What do you do differently today than before to reduce social issues? Both in life and professionally. Please exemplify.
- What do you believe is the most important part of your job? Why?

RQ. What are social incubators?

- How would you describe the social incubators? Why?
- What do the social incubators stand for, in your opinion? Why?
- What is the goal of the social incubators?
- What is in it for you as an organization to have this social incubator?
- How would you comment on the focus of the incubators? Do you put more emphasis on empowering the individual or that the micro-enterprise succeeds.
- How come you started them?
- How do you evaluate the social incubator program?
- What is the mission and vision of the incubators?
- What kind of services do you offer incubatees both concrete and abstract?
- What kind of incubatee are you looking for to have in your incubators?
- How is the social incubators intertwined with the other university sections?
- Do you have any strategic alliances? If so, how do they affect the programme?
- How does outside actors (government, NGO's etc) influence the programme?
- If you are to bring about change in the programme, how would that change process look like (hierachal/decentralized)?
- Do you conduct surveys in or another way investigate how the participants feel about the programme? Exemplify.
- When starting a new incubator, how do you choose the location of your incubators?
- Is there a way for employees, students or incubatees to raise ideas or question regarding the programme and its development?
- What is the capacity of your social incubators?
- When were the social incubators started?

RQ. What impact do the practices of social incubators have?

- How is success measured?
- On what levels do the social incubators have an impact (i.e. individual, community or societal-level) and how? Please give success stories and failure stories.
- What are reasons to why the incubation fails?
- How do you contribute to the success or failure of incubatees?

RQ. What does the social incubation process look like?

Please take us through the process of your incubator. From getting in contact with potential incubatees to post-graduation services.

Before

- How do you get in contact with potential incubatees?
- Are there any criteria for becoming an incubatee?
- What are they and why?
- Who and how do you select participants when they have applied?
- What "aspects" is more emphasized when choosing participants?
- When can one apply to the social incubators?
- Do you bring in people termwise, or at any time?
- How are incubatees notified that they are accepted to the program?
- How often do you bring in new incubatees?
- How many applicants do you have and how many are chosen?

During

- What does the incubators offer to help the incubatees with? Exemplify.
- Could you describe how you in fact "incubate" the individuals? How do they grow in the incubators?
- At what times are incubatee expected to be there (full-time, part-time, a few times a week)?
- When do incubatees graduate?
- Is there a "desired state" for graduation?
- What happens if an incubatee cannot accomplish this "desired state"?
- How do you measure the level of success of an incubatee?
- How long between notification of acceptance to program start?
- How long is the program?

After

- How do you keep in contact with the incubatees after they leave the programme?
- Do you offer any "after programme services"? What? Why?
- Do current incubatees come into contact with previous incubatees? How?

Appendix 2 - Interview Guide for Regional Management

Please answer the questions in the context of your regional incubator.

About you

- Tell us about yourself, and your role/how you are involved in the incubator.
- Explain a normal day at the job for you in as much detail as you can.
- Why did you choose to work here?
- How would you describe the ultimate employee, student and incubatee of the social incubators?
- Have you worked with any kind of social activities before this? If so, please elaborate.
- What characteristics in your opinion are needed to work with these types of incubators?
- How would you say that you have changed since you started working here? Exemplify.
- Has your perception of social issues changed since started working here? If so, please elaborate
- What do you do differently today than before to reduce social issues? Both in life and professionally. Please exemplify.
- What do you believe is the most important part of your job? Why?

RQ. What are social incubators?

- How would you describe the social incubators? Why?
- What do the social incubators stand for, in your opinion? Why?
- What does the social incubator in your region do for the communities in GDL/MTY?
- How does the social incubators in your region help the communities in GDL/MTY?
- What is the goal of the social incubators?
- How would you say your regional incubator differ and are similar from other regions?
- What is in it for you as a campus to have this social incubator?
- How would you comment on the focus of the incubators in your region? Do you put more emphasis on empowering the individual or that the micro-enterprise succeeds.
- How come you started a social incubator in this region?
- How do you in GDL/MTY evaluate the social incubator program?
- What is the mission and vision of the incubators?
- What kind of services do you offer incubatees in GDL/MTY? Both concrete and abstract.
- What kind of incubatee characteristics are in your social incubator?
- Are there regional conditions that affect the incubatee selection? If so, how?
- How is the social incubators in GDL/MTY intertwined with the other university sections?
- Explain the relationship between the national and the regional level.
- Explain the relationship between the different regions.
- Please tell us about the educational program:

- o Different program components
- o Impact of the program
- o Activities within the program
- Please tell us about the local program
  - o Different program components
  - o Impact of the program
  - o Activities within the program
- Do you have any strategic alliances in GDL/MTY? If so, how do they affect the program?
- How does outside actors (government, NGO's etc) influence the program?
- If you are to bring about change in the program, how would that change process look like (hierarchical/decentralized (with regards to national - regional and regional-down))?
- Do you conduct surveys in or another way investigate how the participants feel about the GDL/MTY program? Exemplify.
- How can employees, students or incubatees raise ideas or question regarding the GDL/MTY program and its development?

RQ. What impact do the practices of social incubators have?

- How you measure success of a regional level, and how does this differ from the national level?
- On what levels do the social incubators have an impact in you GDL/MTY (i.e. individual, community or societal-level) and how? Please give success stories and failure stories.
- What are reasons to why the incubation fail in your region?
- How does the social incubator in your region contribute to the success or failure of incubatees?
- Do you in any way work with prevention matters, i.e. prevent social issues before they occur or affect more people

RQ. What does the social incubation process look like?

Please take us through the process of your regional incubator. From getting in contact with potential incubatees to post-graduation services. Further, please consider all three program components within the social incubators (i.e. the educational-, local-, and micro-enterprise development program).

Before
- How do you get in contact with potential incubatees?
- What are the criteria for becoming an incubatee in the:
  - o Educational Program
  - o Local Program
  - o Micro-enterprise Development Program?
- Who and how do you select participants when they have applied?
  - o What "aspects" are more emphasized when choosing participants?
  - o Does it differ between the programs?

During

- What does the incubators in GDL/MTY offer to help the incubatees with in the:
  - Educational Program
  - Local Program
  - Micro-enterprise Development Program
- Could you describe how you in fact "incubate" the individuals? How do they grow in the incubators?
  - Educational Program
  - Local Program
  - Micro-enterprise Development Program
- When do incubatees graduate in GDL/MTY in the?
  - Educational Program
  - Local Program
  - Micro-enterprise Development Program
- How do you measure the level of success of an incubate in the
  - Educational Program
  - Local Program
  - Micro-enterprise Development Program
- How long is the program?
  - Educational Program
  - Local Program
  - Micro-enterprise Development Program

After
- How do you keep in contact with the incubatees after they leave the social incubator program in GDL/MTY?
- Do you offer any "after program services" in GDL/MTY? What? Why?
- Do current incubatees come into contact with previous incubatees? How?

Appendix 3 - Interview Guide for Regional Staff

About you

- Tell us about yourself, and your role/how you are involved in the incubator.
- Explain what you have been doing within the incubators.
- Why did you choose to get involved in the social incubators?
- Have you worked with any kind of social activities before this? If so, please elaborate.
- What characteristics do you think are important when working in these types of incubators?
- How would you say that working in the social incubators has affected you? Exemplify.
- Has your perception of social issues changed since you got involved in the social incubators? If so, please elaborate.
- What do you do differently today than before to reduce social issues? Both in life and professionally. Please exemplify.
- What do you want to gain from taking part in the social incubators? What is in it for you?
- What do you believe is the most important part of the social incubators? Why?

RQ. What are social incubators?
- How would you describe the social incubators?
- What do the social incubators stand for, in your opinion?
- What is the goal for you when working in the social incubators?
- To what extent can you influence what happens in the incubators?
- How is your relationship with management (top-down, bottom-up)?
- Which of the different programs are you involved in?
  - Please tell us about you role in the micro-enterprise development program
    - Different tasks
    - Impact of the program
    - Activities within the program
  - Please tell us about your role in the educational program:
    - Different tasks
    - Impact of the program
    - Activities within the program
  - Please tell us about your role in the local program
    - Different tasks
    - Impact of the program
    - Activities within the program

RQ. What impact do the practices of social incubators have?
- To what extent do you believe that the social incubators have an impact on individual, community and societal level? Please give examples to illustrate.
- Are you aware of any incubatees who have been unsuccessful in the program? If so, please elaborate (how, why etc.).
- Do you in any way work with prevention matters, i.e. prevent social issues before they occur or affect more people?

RQ. What does the social incubation process look like?

Please walk us through the entire incubation process - from the moment you take part in the program, to the moment you no longer participate.

Before
- What do you do before the actual incubation starts?
- Do you believe that the incubators are targeting the right people? Why (not)?
- What preparation were you given/did you do before starting in the program?
- Did you get to choose which incubatee to work with, or were they assigned to you?

During
- What do you help the incubatees with?
- How would you say that incubatees are incubated – in what way do they "grow"?
- Do you work with several incubatees simultaneously?
- Can you structure the program how you want, or do you have to follow a set structure?
- Do you treat all incubatees the same, or do you adapt accordingly?
- How much time do you spend with the incubatees?
- Do you feel that this time is sufficient to reach the goals?
- How much does professors or management take part/help in the program?
- How do you develop during the program? Would you say that you are, in some ways, also incubated? Please elaborate.

After
- Do you stay in contact with the incubatees?
- How do you think your before-program expectations of incubatee development compare the reality of the incubatee development after graduation?
- What do you do after the program has finished (is there a after-program or similar)?

Appendix 4 - Interview Guide for Regional Incubatees

About you

- Tell us about yourself.
- Explain a normal day at the incubator for you.
- How long have you been within the incubator program?
- Why did you choose to participate?
- What did your situation look like before you joined the program?
- What do/did you expect to gain from being part of the social incubator program?

RQ. What are social incubators?
- How would you describe the social incubators?
- What do the social incubators stand for, in your opinion?
- Why do you think/know you were chosen?
- What would you say the program focus most on - your individual development or the development of your micro-enterprise?
- To what extent can you influence what happens in the incubators?
- What did you like the most with the incubator?
- What would you change if you could?
- Would you recommend others to participate? Why?
- What characteristics are in your opinion important to participate in this program?

RQ. What impact do the practices of social incubators have?
- How would you say that your situation has changed since you started the program?
- Can you see a change in your community since the social incubators moved there?
- What do you believe is the most important part of the social incubators? Why?
- What would you say has changed the most from since before participating in the social incubators?
- How would you say the program helped you the most (education, finances etc?)?

RQ: What does the social incubation process look like?
Before
- How did you learn of the incubator program?
- What did you have to do to become a participant?

During
- Can you explain what you did during the program?
- How/why was it decided that your program would look the way it did/does?
- What courses/education were you given?
- How did you feel upon graduation (ready to leave, scared, uncertain)?
- Did the program offer any measure for preparing you for leaving the program, if yes - what?

After
- At what stage did you leave the program?
- Why did you leave the program/how was it determined that you were ready to leave?
- Do you keep in contact with any of the of the other incubatees? How?
- Do you have contact with current incubatees?
- What are your plans after graduation?

Appendix 5 - Consent Form for Interviewees

<u>**Consent Form**</u>

Social Incubator or Social Work? Exploring Social Incubators in Mexico
Fares Youcefi & Kristina Lundgren
Hans Lundberg
Jönköping University - Jönköping International Business School (JIBS)
004636 10 10 00
██████████@gmail.com

You are invited to take part in a research study on the social incubators that you are involved in.

What the study is about: The study aims at understanding the phenomena that is social incubators and how their processes differ from regular business incubator processes

What you will be asked to do: You will be asked questions about yourself, the social incubators, your role in them and their impact on you, communities and the Mexican society. The interview is expected to take about 1,5 hours and maximum up to two hours.

Risks and benefits:
There are no anticipated risks to you if you participate in this study. By participating in this study, you allow for contributions to the researcher's field of knowledge.

Taking part is voluntary:
Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to be in the study you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You remain the right to refuse to answer any questions that are given. Participating in this study does not mean that you are giving up any of your legal rights.

Your answers will be confidential: The records of this study will be kept private. Any report of this research that is made available to the public will not include your name or any other individual information by which you could be identified. After the final hand-in of the study, recordings will be deleted and transcripts will be given to Marcela Ramirez-Pasillas (Assistant Professor at JIBS; ██████████████████@ju.se) to potentially be used in further research. As a pseudonym will be used in the transcripts, you will also remain anonymous potential further studies. You do remain the right to refuse such use, however, this must be noted to Marcela Ramirez-Pasillas.

If you have questions or want a copy or summary of the study results: Contact the researcher at the email address or phone number above. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records. If you have any questions about whether you have been treated in an illegal or unethical way, contact the Hans Lundberg at +46 7██████ or ██████████@lnu.se.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions. I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I consent to take part in the research study on the social incubators that I am involved in.

_____   _____

Signature   City and Date

Appendix 6 - Analysis Framework for RQ1

First-order Concepts (F)	Second-order Themes (S)	Aggregate Dimensions (A)
F1: *"It is a physical space [...]"* - **Vianey** F2: Observations suggested that social incubators are physical spaces F3: *"Social incubators are physical spaces [...]"*. - **TD2**	S1: Physical spaces	A1: Physical Spaces of Social Interaction and Development
F4: *"They are spaces where many different realities meet and unify. Here, we have both the opportunity to learn and to teach, and generate a citizen dialogue."* - **Cinthia** F5: *"They are a place, a place where we can connect students with micro-business that are interested in growing".* - **Juan** F6: *"It is a space that includes everybody in the community."* - **Melissa** F7: *"[...] people of the community can come together".* - **Vianey**	S2: Places of social interaction	
F8: *"spaces designed to promote social and community development"* - **Maria** F9: *"an incubator that dedicates their main focus on achieving... trying to... solve social issues with no lucrative means"* - **Carlos** F10: *"I describe it as a centre of solution to problems specific of the people.* - **Esteban**	S3: Places of social development	
F11: *"The government is a very important alliance, because we are in their spaces. We are in a collaborative contract [...]"*. - **Maria** F12: *"We have relations with for example the economic secretary of Monterrey municipality"* - **Juan**	S4: Govermental institutions as practitioners	A2: Cross-Sectoral Partnerships
F13: *"[...The Mexican Bank] act as an advisor to Mexico University".* - **Vianey** F14: *"We have alliances with [...] Mexican Bank [...] [and] little companies as well".* - **Maria** F15: *"[...]we have alliances with enterprises".* - **Cinthia**	S5: Companies as practitioners	
F16: *"We have alliances with [...] academics here - all the professors to create better programs"* - **Maria** F17: *"[...] they [the students] need to contribute to resolve social issues in Mexico"* - **Vianey** F18: *"we have relations with NGOs, of course they have users and databases of people who need this help, and they send us this"* - **Juan**	S6: Civil society as practitioners	
F19: *"[...there is] poverty there, there is violence, economic problems, migration and alcoholism".* - **Cinthia** F20: *"Also that those who do not have the basic knowledge, or can acquire it, but want to"* - **Alicia** F21: *"It's (Jocotan) plagued with social problems, maybe problems at home, economical problems."* - **José** F22: *"poor middle-class people that want to make a business."* - **Carlos**	S7: Areas of social exclusion	A3: Socially Vulnerable Individuals
F23: *"We focus on the entrepreneur".* - **Juan** F24: *"The main focus is on the individual. We put more emphasis on empowering the individual [...]"* - **Esteban** F25: *"It's individual. Develop abilities to be competitive in the workplace"* - **Cinthia**	S8: Focusing on the individual	
F26: *"First we must identify the social issues of our users".* - **Juan** F27: *"Each social incubator is very different and each one has their own challenges and advantages".* - **Maria** F28: *"[...] we also need to study and understand the needs of the community and know it"*. - **Cinthia**	S9: Identifying community needs	A4: Community Adapted Development Services
F29: *"Each incubator offer what that particular community needs"* - **Esteban** F30: *"We decide in the moment based on the neccessities of the community."* - **Cinthia** F31: *"Each community have a different problem, profile, characteristics and our social incubators are specifically focused on those"* - **Maria**	S10: Adapting services according to community needs	

[   ] = Not explicitly quoted in emprical findings

F32:"*Develop abilities to be competitive in the workplace*". - **Cinthia** F33: "*[...] anyone from the public who wants to get knowledge or build skills can come*" - **Valeria** F34: "*They are learning something new, new abilities. Skills, that they did not have, skills that will make them prepared people so that they can get their jobs or even better study opportunities.*" - **Melissa**	**S11:** Providing individuals with new tools, skills, and abilities	**A5:** **Empowerment**
F35: "*[...] we basically are focusing to give people the opportunity to keep developing*". - **Cinthia** F36: "*I hope that when I graduate that I can have another life opportunity. I will be prepared for a better job*" - **Ophelia** F37: "*teach them how to fish instead of giving them fish*". - **Carlos** F38:"*I wanted to be more independent*" - **Teresa**	**S12:** Fostering power in people to develop control of their own life	
F39: "*we will not help your business, we will help your skills. That's the difference, we cannot make the promise that their business will grow because of the tools that we will give them, but we can give them tools*" - **Juan** F40: "*[The incubatee] contributes to the transformation of his/her social and economic setting*". - **TD2** F41: "*they represent a program that can give help and the opportunity to change your life.*" - **Ophelia** F42: "*[...] people sometime only need to be helped to be able to create an innovative solution to their problem.*" - **Maria**	**S13:** Incubatees as agents of change	**A6:** **Agents of Social Transformation**
F43: "*So since the social incubators came to the community, the two gangs are closer - it's very wonderful. They have a relationship of a different kind now, because before they were always fighted.*" - **Esteban** F44: "*I believe that, what we want to do is make Monterrey great, make it better, its people better and more competitive*" - **Carlos** F45: *She had a low confidence, bad self-esteem. [...] Right now she wants to start a professional career with her own business*". - **Maria** F46:"*It was an entrepreneur who made candy in Mexico, called marzipan. He was diabetic, and he made this candy sugar free. [...] When I taste the candy we told him that the candy is awesome, but you need good branding. Now he is middle class, and before he was lower*". - **Vianey**	**S14:** Social transformation of the incubatee and community	

	= Not explicitly quoted in empricial findings

Appendix 7 - Analysis Framework for RQ2

First-order Concepts (F)	Second-order Themes (S)	Aggregate Dimensions (A)
F47: *"[...] people choose the program they want to participate in".* - **Esteban** **F48:** *"[I had to] fill out a form"* - **Ophelia** **F49:** *"There you only fill out the form, pay and say what level you want to be on".* - **Maria**	**S15:** Application for participation	**A7:** Selection of Incubatees
F50: They need to be older than 18 years old. - **TD4** **F51:** *"[...] if the principal motivation is development, growth or learning new things - this is the people that we want in this program".* - **Esteban** **F52:** *"This is for people that want to create a change".* - **Cinthia** **F53:** *"[...] aspire to grow in the field of education and entrepreneurship".* - **TD1** **F54:** *"The level of income is pretty important".* - **Juan** **F55:** *"Education: maximum baccalaureate".* - **TD4** **F56:** *"[...] for Mexican University online education , they need to have finished their secondary schooling and have their official certificate".* - **Maria**	**S16:** Requirements for participation and desirable characteristics of incubatees	
F57: *"[...] to discover what their primary motivation is to get involved in the program".* - **Esteban** **F58:** *"[...] we make an interview, the guy comes, we try to understand what his or her profile is".* - **Juan** **F59:** *"[...] we have coordinators and they receive all the papers and they check that the user has their certificate, and fulfil all the requirements".* - **Maria**	**S17:** Investigation of incubatees' fulfilment with regards to participation requirement	
F60: *"You have to be with the entrepreneur then, help him, be there for him. If he has questions you need to listen".* - **Carlos** **F61:** *"[...] the microentrepreneur tell them their problem, show the business and the student and teacher do diagnostics of the situation, the entrepreneur and the business".* - **Esteban** **F62:** *"Students diagnose and determine in which area they want to work with the user. They define these areas and the incubatees say ok, "I like to work with that".* - **Maria**	**S18:** Understanding the needs for incubatees enrolled in the micro-enterprise development program	**A8:** Probing and Service Tailoring
F63: *"For English, we make an exam, to establish what level they are on".* - **Maria** **F64:** *"I made a test to see what they already knew"* - **José**	**S19:** Understanding the needs of incubatees of educational program	
F65: *"[...] and we also talk to them and we diagnose where the benefit is".* - **Maria** **F66:** *"I think they make surveys in the neighborhood and ask 'would you like this kind of course?' or if their children needs it and I think that is the way they make it."* - **José** **F67:** *"Each community have a different problem, profile, characteristics and our social incubators are specifically focused on those [...]".* - **Maria**	**S20:** Understanding the needs of the community for courses given in the local program	
F68: *"Each incubator offer what that particular community needs".* - **Esteban** **F69:** *"We have to adapt according to the entrepreneur. [...] it is basically adapting to the needs of the person".* - **Miguel** **F70:** We realised that they do not like it that much, they get bored [...] So we try to do other things, like handcrafts and to compliment all the stories that we tell. We play football, soccer, or dodgeball. - **Melissa** **F71:** *"computation is something that I wanted to learn, but never had the opportunity, and when I had it I really liked it [...] I really wanted to get that skill"* - **Ophelia** **F72:** *"you adapt to them".* - **Carlos** **F73:** *"the students ask us what do you want to learn right now [...] So every session we are learning what we want to learn".* - **Valeria** **F74:** *"With regards to [starting] new programs we first need to go to the people and ask do you really need this program, yes or no?".* - **Esteban**	**S21:** Tailor programs according to incubatees' needs	

◻ = Not explicitly quoted in empricial findings

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F75: "*Offers facilities [...]*". - **TD2**	S22: Infrastructure to complete the services	
F76: "*We have first-world infrastructure, we offer computers, tables, chairs, its clean [...]*". - **Esteban**		
F77: Observation showed classrooms, books, WIFI connection etc.		A9: **General Services**
F78: "*[...] the social incubators are a way to aspire for a new life [...]*" - **Teresa**	S23: Aspiration through role-modeling	
F79: "*The social incubators have an impact on people because they open a new reality*" - **Miguel**		
F80: "*Yes, after the social incubators come in they tell you that you can aim higher*" - **Teresa**		
F81: "*[...] before they used to say "I want to be like my father", but now they say that they want to be like the social service students, "I want to be a lawyer, I want to be an administrator", so its a changing paradigm*". - **Maria**		
F82: "*Here, we have both the opportunity to learn and to teach, and generate a citizen dialogue*". - **Cinthia**	S24: Communital and citizen dialogue	
F83: *[...] a space of the community where they can talk and interact between the families. A place where they can meet and talk about other things than their problems.* - **Esteban**		
F84: "*I took four levels of English. Each level was one semester, so I have been in it for two years*" - **Alicia**	S25: Community-Specific Education	
F85: "*English classes, computation classes, develop entrepreneurial skills.*" - **Cinthia**		
F86: "*teaching kids computers, english*" - **Carlos**		
F87: "*The students can come to social incubators and teach the community and other people about topics like chemistry, mathematics, Spanish etc.*". - **Vianey**		
F88: "*We have these spaces in our social incubators where they come and regularise people who have no primary or secondary schooling*". - **Maria**	S26: Official Education - Primary and secondary schooling	A10: **Educational Services**
F89: "*We give them extra service - INEA - which I told you, which is primary and secondary school. But it is like, only a support, because INEA is a governmental program, and we only give the space, and the tutors. INEA is only for people who have not finished primary or secondary school*". - **Maria**		
F90: "*Mexico University's online education, which is high school [...] in which Mexico University offer a high-quality program where people realise their studies online*" - **Maria**	S27: Official Education - Prepatory schooling (high school)	
F91: "*It is an official program, by the secretariat custom publica, when they finish their 33 classes, they graduate the preparatory. [...] it is part of their next preparation to their professional career*" - **Maria**		
F92: "*We play football, soccer, or dodgeball.*" - **Melissa**	S28: Recreational activities for community citizens	
F93: "*In some social incubators we offer dancing classes, in which the mothers can come in the morning and take the class*". - **Esteban**		
F94: "*Sometimes we have had [...] nutrition classes*". - **Cinthia**	S29: Health related activities for community citizens	
F95: "*They [students] diagnose people, children and adults, and give them the correct diet, and help them with basic medical analysis*". - **Maria**		
F96: "*I am taking the workshop of foods and beverages*". **Valeria**		A11: **Community-Specific Services**
F97: "*[...] someone want to divorce, but do not have the money to pay the lawyer, [then] s/he can go to the social incubators and they provide a lawyer for free*". - **Vianey**	S30: Legal support for community citizens	
F98: Legal advice is a component of the local program. - **TD1**		
F99: "*We give local courses, because we find that our users want to share with other users*". - **Maria**	S31: Inter-communital knowledge sharing	
F100: "*For example there is one program, the one with the soap, people cannot afford it. So we do an exchange instead, we teach them and they teach us another course. Change the knowledge*". - **Cinthia**		
F101: "*So we make a program where they pay with courses or other products in their houses. People who know how to make something that could transform into a little company, it is important for us to share with the others*". - **Maria**		

	= Not explicitly quoted in empricial findings

Findings	Subcategory	Category
F102: *[...] the student and the microentrepreneur] work and develop the business model.* - **Vianey** F103: *You have to be with the entrepreneur then, help him, be there for him. If he has questions you need to listen.* - F104: *"I made the consulting for a business".* - **Miguel** F105: *[...] and the students give them support between mixed groups, were they have financial students, legal students, from different areas.* - **Maria**	**S32:** Advisory and consultancy services to the entrepreneur	**A12:** Microenterprise Development Services
F106: *There is also an entrepreneurship course* - **José** F107: *[...] there was this part of entrepreneurship [...]* - **Carlos** F108: *"The first is the interview with the microentrepreneur, second they must take elementary courses of business".* - **Esteban** F109: *"In the course they learn marketing, operations and finance" .* - **Juan**	**S33:** Basic business education	
F110: *"[...] the student goes to the incubator at least 5-6 times per semester where they see the improvements and we verify with the entrepreneurs with the advices and the skills we are teaching them".* - **Cinthia** F111: *"We form and develop skills".* - **Juan** F112: *"[...] we will not help your business, we will help your skills". Thats the difference, we cannot make the promise that their business will grow because of the tools that we will give them, but we can give them tools".* - **Juan**	**S34:** Skills development and training of the entrepreneur	
F113: *"[...] the incubatee must have a business model and the microenterprise must become a part of the formal economy".* - **Vianey** F114: *"When have taken the specific courses, when their business is legal and when they have specific problems that cannot be resolved through the incubator".* - **Esteban** F115: *"When they finish their semester [in the microenterprise developmnet program]. When they finish the course with the classmates, and when they have at least implemented one suggestion".* - **Maria**	**S35:** Requirements for microenterprise development service completion	**A13:** Graduation
F116: *"Graduating from the education program when passing the tests".* - **Cinthia** F117: *"When they finish their six levels of English, or their two levels of computer science. So it is based on the course".* - **Maria**	**S36:** Requirements for educational program service	
F118: *"we give them a certificate and we have also graduation here when they finish all the levels"* - **Maria** F119: *"When I noticed that incubatees did not want to become a part of the [formal economy] and dropping of before the graduation, I started to give them a diploma when they finalized the incubation."* - **Vianey** F120: *"We just finish, we give them their certificate".* - **Juan**	**S37:** Ceremonial activities at service completion	
F121: *"[...] it all depends on the needs of the microentrepreneur".* - **Esteban** F122: *"If you want to initiate your business, something like that".* - **Maria**	**S38:** Examining the needs of the incubatee after the service	**A14:** Probing and After-Service Tailoring
F123: *"[...] post incubation is a way to link them with other entrepreneurs and investments".* - **Vianey** F124: *"I acknowledged to myself that I need to keep studying - gather more information. So I will have more courses".* - **Alicia** F125: *"We offer the other programs".* - **Maria** F126: *"If the problem is sales, we search and find an expert on sales".* - **Esteban**	**S39:** Offering appropriate activities based on needs	

⬜ = Not explicitly quoted in empricial findings

Appendix 8 - Analysis Framework for RQ3

First-order Concepts (F)	Second-order Themes (S)	Aggregate Dimensions (A)
F127: "*They become more secure of themselves*". - **Cinthia** F128: "*they get out of their comfort zone*". - **Carlos** F129: "*There is a little girl, she is five, and when she came here she was so quiet. I think that was because she was so small, but now she speaks all the time. She is giving orders to the big ones, her confidence has improved so much, and I am so happy for her because she was so tiny, and could not even speak in front of anyone, and now she enters the class room and she is the boss. [...] Maybe it is not like skills of learning English, but I can see that the kids are improving their confidence.*" - **Melissa**	S40: Improved self-esteem	A15: Psychological Impact
F130: "*They are more ambitious. They make it so that they have another vision*". - **Maria** F131: "*[...] changes the life vision of incubatees*" - **Esteban** F132: "*Then I thought, people have potentials too, they have intelligence and the social incubators are there to incubate this potential and intelligence.* - **Teresa** F133: "*I think they try to remind people in the community that they have the same opportunities that everyone could have*" - **Melissa** F134: "*[...] there is this feeling where they don't think it is possible. [...] the impact of this program is that it makes you believe that its not that far away from you. [...] they change the mindset they have*" - **Miguel** F135: "*you are opening doors to people that never thought that those door would open.*" - **Carlos**	S41: Improved belief in one's potential	
F136: "*80 % perceived an improvement in their quality of life*". - **TD1** F137: "*I think that now finally my life quality has changed for the better*" - **Ophelia** F138: "*I feel better physically, I feel that I have more energy and can do more things during the day and thus sleep better*". - **Valeria** F139: "*[...] now he is middle class, before he was lower*". - **Vianey**	S42: Improved life quality	
F140: "*[...] a majority of the participating entrepreneurs reported a 20-30% increase in sales*". - **TD1** F141: "*he had an increase in sales. He had about 100 likes on Facebook when he came to me, and now he has 1000, and he sells more*" - **Carlos** F142: "*So in my case it has really helped my business*". - **Alicia** F143: "*55 % reported a 10%-20% increase in profit*". - **TD2**	S43: Improved business performance	A16: Professional Impact
F144: "*I am much more secure when I launch new products because I know can calculate the costs. I am more organised when it comes to sales, reports and the structure of the expense forecasting*" - **Alicia** F145: "*They are learning something new, new abilities. Skills, that they did not have, skills that will make them prepared people so that they can get their jobs or even better study opportunities.*" - **Melissa** F146: "*I felt that I have my knowledge and I can actually apply it*" - **Teresa** F147: "*I will be prepared for a better job*" - **Ophelia**	S44: Strengthened skills and abilities	
F148: "*the impact is individual because you help the entrepreneurs to learn different kinds of topics and then the entrepreneur can develop his micro-enterprise*" - **Vianey** F149: "*I have seen significant changes in the people that the people prepare themselves to become entrepreneurs*". - **Cinthia**	S45: Increased entrepreneurial mindset	

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F150: *"a ripple effect [...] incubated individuals help the community to resolve social issues through the entrepreneur and the micro-enterprise"* - **Vianey** F151: *"Now they do know that they have it in them and can help other people."* - **Teresa** F152: *"[...] and then he [the microentrepreneur] can help his community".* - **Vianey**	**S46:** Individual's impact on community	
F153: *"[...] better opportunities in their communities".* - **Maria** F154: *"a way to help the community to create the opportunities that are not there".* - **Alicia** F155: *"[...] it stands for making the community better."* - **Carlos** F156: *"The social incubators give the people in the community a lot of opportunities".* - **Ophelia** F157: *"63% considered that the community had made progress thanks to the social incubators".* - **TD1**	**S47:** Community development through increased opportunities	**A17:** **Communital Impact**
F158: *"Things have finally changed, before there were a lot of gangs, and now there are less".* - **Ophelia** F159: *"I believe that they make them safe"* - **Carlos** F160: *"The changes that are being made for the people around here. The kids growing in a more safe environment because it is not really a safe area at night [...]"* - **José** F161: *"they give you ways to distract your mind instead of going to join a gang"* - **Ophelia**	**S48:** Increased security of the community	

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