



**SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP REVIEW: A GAP IN THE LATIN  
AMERICAN CONTEXT**

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3 **SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP REVIEW:**  
4 **A GAP IN THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT**  
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8 **REVISIÓN DEL EMPRENDIMIENTO SOCIAL:**  
9 **UNA BRECHA EN EL CONTEXTO LATINOAMERICANO**  
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13 **REVISÃO DO EMPREENDEDORISMO SOCIAL:**  
14 **UMA BRECHA NO CONTEXTO LATINO-AMERICANO**  
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20 **ABSTRACT**  
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22 **Purpose** - Social Entrepreneurship (SE) has been a field of research that has interested researchers  
23 for over 30 years. However, there is no consensus on the concept of SE, and research in this field  
24 moves in several directions. The scope of this study is to summarize the definitions of SE, propose  
25 a unified definition of SE, and describe the state of the art of SE in the Latin American context.  
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28 **Design/methodology/approach** - This study carries out a literature review on SE from 2010 to  
29 2020 to explore the main topics in the social entrepreneurship field, searching, reviewing, and  
30 selecting the most representative articles published.  
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32 **Findings** - The findings of this study suggest agreements and disagreements in the main topics of  
33 SE and reveal a significant gap in the SE research in the Latin American scenario.  
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36 **Originality/value** - This research contributes to the future growth of SE literature under a common  
37 umbrella that allows for more and better knowledge in this field and proposes a novel research  
38 agenda for the SE field in Latin America.  
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43 **Keywords:** social entrepreneurship, Latin America, social venture, social enterprise, socially-  
44 oriented business.  
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## RESUMEN

**Objetivo** - El emprendimiento social (ES) ha sido un campo de investigación que ha interesado a los investigadores durante más de 30 años. Sin embargo, no hay consenso sobre el concepto de ES, y la investigación en este campo se mueve en varias direcciones. El objetivo de este estudio es resumir las definiciones de ES, proponer una definición unificada de ES y describir el estado del arte del ES en el contexto latinoamericano.

**Metodología** - Este estudio realiza una revisión de la literatura sobre ES desde 2010 hasta 2020 para explorar los principales temas en el campo del emprendimiento social, buscando, revisando y seleccionando los artículos publicados más representativos del área.

**Resultados** - Los hallazgos de este estudio sugieren acuerdos y desacuerdos en los principales temas del ES y revelan una importante brecha en la investigación del ES en el escenario latinoamericano.

**Originalidad/valor** - Esta investigación contribuye al crecimiento futuro de la literatura de ES bajo un paraguas común que permita un mayor y mejor conocimiento en este campo y propone una novedosa agenda de investigación para el campo del ES en América Latina.

*Palabras clave:* emprendimiento social, América Latina, iniciativa social, empresa social, empresa socialmente orientada.

## RESUMO

**Objetivo** - O empreendedorismo social (ES) tem sido um campo de investigação que tem interessado os investigadores há mais de 30 anos. Contudo, não há consenso sobre o conceito de ES, e a investigação neste campo move-se em várias direcções. O objectivo deste estudo é resumir

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3 as definições de ES, propor uma definição unificada de ES e descrever o estado da arte de ES no  
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5 contexto latino-americano.  
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8 **Metodologia** - Este estudo efectua uma revisão da literatura da ES de 2010 a 2020 para explorar  
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10 as principais questões no campo do empreendedorismo social, procurando, revendo e  
11  
12 seleccionando os artigos publicados mais representativos na área.  
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14  
15 **Resultados** - Os resultados deste estudo sugerem concordância e desacordo sobre as principais  
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17 questões relacionadas com o ES e revelam uma importante lacuna na investigação sobre o ES no  
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19 contexto latino-americano.  
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22 **Originalidade/valor** - Esta investigação contribui para o crescimento futuro da literatura sobre o  
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24 ES sob um guarda-chuva comum que permite mais e melhor conhecimento neste campo e propõe  
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26 uma nova agenda de investigação para o campo do ES na América Latina..  
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30 *Palavras-chave:* empreendedorismo social, América Latina, iniciativa social, empresa social,  
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32 empresa socialmente orientada.  
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## INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship (SE) has been a topic of interest in academia over the past 30 years (Short, Moss, and Lumpkin, 2009). In general, the SE refers to initiatives that seek to solve social problems for a group of interest users. Academics agree that the SE is a source of social value creation that forms a virtuous circle for development and social change (Corner and Ho, 2010; Ashe *et al.*, 2011; Driver, 2017). Advances in SE research have generated many different definitions that make it challenging to theorize in this field of entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin, and Matear, 2010). The lack of consensus in the definition of SE generates a challenge for the operationalization of the concept and prevents the generalization of the empirical findings (Hossain, Saleh, and Drennan, 2017; Forouharfar, Rowshan, and Salarzahi, 2018). This situation makes the discussion around the SE divergent and confusing (Robb and Gandhi, 2016). Building a unified conceptual framework is essential to advance in the study of SE; placing the conversation under a common umbrella allows laying solid foundations to continue providing more and better knowledge.

This research explores the evolution of SE research, proposes a unified definition of SE, and discovers advances in SE literature in the Latin American context. This study carries out a literature review on SE from 2010 to the first semester of 2020, showing the points of consensus and disagreement to analyze the contributions to understanding the phenomenon of SE and its conceptual definition. Through this review, it was possible to visualize the evolution of the concept of SE and the different ways in which academics fit the firms into SE. Also, those aspects that generate confusion are analyzed to determine what is not SE, triangulating these elements with other disciplines and separating SE from socially-oriented entrepreneurship. Our work contributes to the SE literature by proposing a unifying conceptual framework that avoids the theoretical and methodological difficulties of theorizing about a concept on which there is no consensus. This

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3 literature review shows the advances in the SE field in the Latin American context and exposes a  
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5 critical research gap in this topic. We contribute to improving the interest in SE research on Latin  
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7 American scenarios proposing a novel research agenda in this vein.  
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12 This article is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the methodology used in this research. In  
13  
14 section three, we show the main findings and their analysis. The discussion and conclusions are in  
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16 section four. Finally, implications and future research agenda are presented in section 5.  
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## 20 21 **RESEARCH DESIGN**

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23 This research did a literature review to explore the main topics in the social entrepreneurship field  
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25 (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003), searching, reviewing, and selecting the most representative  
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27 articles. The scope of this study is to summarize the definitions of SE, propose a unified definition  
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29 of SE, and describe the state of the art of SE in the Latin American context. The Scopus and Web  
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31 of Science (WoS) databases were used to search for articles, using the fundamental concepts of  
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33 “social entrepreneurship,” “social enterprise,” “social venture,” and “social start-up.” The results  
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35 were restricted to publications from 2010 to the first semester of 2020 and only from peer-reviewed  
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37 academic journals. In the first review, the titles and keywords of each article examined and those  
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39 whose primary focus was not on SE were discarded. In the next stage, we reviewed the abstracts  
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41 of each article and selected those that best fit the area of study. The final selection of articles was  
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43 made by reading each one in-depth, resulting in a final sample of 105 articles. On selected articles,  
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45 we found nine papers specific related to SE in the Latin American context (9%), and most of these  
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47 use a qualitative research methodology.  
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3 Following an information gathering form, the elements of each article are grouped into the  
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5 following categories: type of study, keywords, the definition of SE, underlying theory, research  
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7 objective, methodology, primary findings, and conclusions. From each selected article, the  
8  
9 definition of social enterprise proposed by the authors were extracted and organized in a timeline,  
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11 including cross-references to detect whether the definition corresponded to a previous article. From  
12  
13 the overall literature review, Table 1 presents the principal metrics by year and research methods  
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15 used. In 2019, we registered more articles (18); however, we do not observe a tendency or pattern  
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17 in the number of articles by year. Qualitative research methods represent 48% of the total papers;  
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19 in second place is the conceptual methodology with 24% of studies, the quantitative works are  
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21 23%, and 5% used mixed methods.  
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33 SE research field has taken place primarily in business, management, development, and social  
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35 issues. Six journals concentrate 36% of total articles, and the remainder is fragmented in various  
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37 journals with a wide variety of scopes. Table 2 presents the journals most publishing papers in SE.  
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## 47 RESULTS

### 48 Evolution of the Definition of Social Entrepreneurship

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51 There is abundant literature on SE, and each work contributing from its perspective to the  
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53 development of the field (Morris, Santos, and Kuratko, 2020). However, there is little consensus  
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55 on the meaning of the concept of SE (Bacq and Janssen, 2011; Lehner and Kansikas, 2013; Smith,  
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3 Gonin and Besharov, 2013; Alegre, Kislenko and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2017). The lack of a unified  
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5 definition leads each research down a different path, making it difficult to theorize about SE (Dacin,  
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7 Dacin, and Matear, 2010). While many of the papers use definitions proposed in previous works  
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9 (Méndez-Picazo, Ribeiro-Soriano, and Galindo-Martín, 2015; Halberstadt and Kraus, 2016; Kraus  
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11 *et al.*, 2017), others try to develop their concepts (Dacin, Dacin, and Matear, 2010; Bacq and  
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13 Janssen, 2011; Kerlin, 2012; Starnawska, 2016).  
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20 Some of the most familiar concepts in the SE field are social problems (Corner and Ho, 2010;  
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22 Scheiber, 2016; Rangan and Gregg, 2019), social value (Korsgaard, 2011; Driver, 2017; Kedmenec  
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24 and Strašek, 2017), social change (Ashe *et al.*, 2011; Montesano Montessori, 2016), and innovation  
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26 (Orhei, Nandram and Vinke, 2015; Robb and Gandhi, 2016; Ówiklicki, 2019). There is tacit  
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28 approval that these concepts are central to the definition of SE, yet there are few publications that  
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30 comprehensively cover all of these ideas (Corner and Ho, 2010). The central tension in this  
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32 conceptual chaos is the type of firms covered by SE. Some authors point out that any business  
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34 initiative with social goals can be considered a SE, even those pursuing profit. Differently, some  
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36 academics suggest that any extension of an existing business towards social action, such as  
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38 corporate social responsibility or sustainability, also fits into the concept of SE (Tran and Von  
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40 Korflesch, 2016; Corbett and Montgomery, 2017). Finally, other works propose that only new non-  
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42 profit companies with a social mission can be SEs (Helm and Andersson, 2010; Claeys, 2017).  
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50 A usual perspective for studying SE is to attribute non-social business characteristics to this type  
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52 of enterprise (Witkamp, Royakkers, and Raven, 2011), for example, organizational forms  
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54 (Starnawska, 2018), management mechanisms (Wronka-Pośpiech, 2016), leadership (Asarkaya  
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56 and Keles Taysir, 2019) or processes (Defourny and Nyssens, 2017). This partnership has led to  
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3 the construction of the notion of hybrid companies (Szymanska and Jegers, 2016; Wry and York,  
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5 2017). Within this emerging category, there is also no agreement on its definition. Some authors  
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7 point out that hybrid firms combine economic goals with social goals (Young and Lecy, 2014;  
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9 Shepherd, Williams, and Zhao, 2019). Others argue that firms implement market solutions to social  
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11 problems (Garrow and Hasenfeld, 2014). As we argued earlier, some propose that hybrid firms are  
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13 those for-profit firms that extend their objectives to social goals to complement their business  
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15 activity (Tran and Von Korflesch, 2016). With the emergence of these sub-themes, new tensions  
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17 are generated when the lack of consensus in defining the primary construct that SE should be is  
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19 still not resolved (Morris, Santos, and Kuratko, 2020). Table 3 summarizes the definitions used by  
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21 various authors.  
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33 The influence of the institutional environment through policy represents an essential agent of  
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35 change in SE since many social problems are of public interest and include marginalized or  
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37 vulnerable populations (Åmo, 2014; Puumalainen *et al.*, 2015). The narrative in the SE literature  
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39 suggests that this type of entrepreneurship is desirable for society and attributes to it an overvalued  
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41 capacity to solve a large number of social problems (Dahles, Verduyn, Wakkee, Dey, *et al.*, 2010;  
42  
43 Hockerts, 2015). This view has limited research on the failure of these ventures and the adverse  
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45 effects that SE can have on their environment (Kachlami, 2016; Margiono, Kariza, and Heriyati,  
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47 2019; Talmage, Bell, and Dragomir, 2019). The difficulty in measuring the social benefits of these  
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49 ventures and their actual impact on social change represents a threat to the legitimacy of social  
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51 ventures in terms of their contribution to society (Dahles, Verduyn, Wakkee, Hervieux, *et al.*, 2010;  
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3 Trivedi, 2010; Barraket and Yousefpour, 2013; McMullen and Bergman, 2017; Nason, Bacq and  
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5 Gras, 2018).

### 6 7 8 9 10 **A Proposed Definition of Social Entrepreneurship**

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12 To reach a unified definition of social entrepreneurship, defining what a social venture is not is  
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14 necessary.

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19 *SE is not a form of social innovation:* One reason for this confusion is the constant association  
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21 between SE and innovation (DAmario and Comini, 2020; Tortia, Degavre, and Poledrini, 2020).

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23 An essential part of the definitions of SE includes some reference to innovation (Chandra, 2018;  
24  
25 Ilac, 2018; Fernández-Laviada, López-Gutiérrez and San-Martín, 2020). Innovation is a process  
26  
27 that can be part of SE and not the other way around (Kraus *et al.*, 2017). For example, Hauser,  
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29 Tellis, and Griffin (2006, p.687) define innovation as “the process of bringing new products and  
30  
31 services to market.” The process of bringing new products and services with social purposes to  
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33 users can understand as social innovation, but a social venture can develop around existing products  
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35 or services.  
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42 *SE is not sustainable entrepreneurship:* Formally, a business model based on sustainability focuses  
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44 on profitability, improving its stakeholders’ well-being, and minimizing environmental impact  
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46 (Stubbs and Cocklin, 2008). There are three central elements in this definition: profitability, well-  
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48 being, and environmental impact. SE may seek social profitability and well-being, but it will not  
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50 always reduce environmental impact.  
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3 *SE is not corporate social responsibility:* Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to the  
4 economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic expectations society has of organizations (Carroll and  
5 Shabana, 2010). CSR is a strategic choice of the company and does not fully represent its core.  
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7 CSR is not a social enterprise in itself since it can respond to any of the four dimensions specified  
8 in the definition of Carroll and Shabana (2010) and will depend on society's expectations and not  
9 on social action itself.  
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19 *SE is not a charity:* According to Cambridge Dictionary, charity is “a system of giving money, food  
20 or free help to those who need it because they are sick, poor or homeless, or any organization that  
21 has the purpose of providing money or helping in this way.” SE can do any of the things listed in  
22 this definition. However, one of the central concepts on which there is an agreement in academia  
23 is that it needs to have a process of creation of social value (Driver, 2017; Kedmenec and Strašek,  
24 2017), much more complex and with actions that go beyond just transferring products and services  
25 to the neediest like charity. In this sense, it should be noted that SE users might be marginalized or  
26 needy and society as a whole.  
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40 *SE is not a platonic organization:* The desirability of SE as a promoter of social development and  
41 an ideal solution to various social problems has been highlighted before (Dahles, Verduyn,  
42 Wakkee, Maase, *et al.*, 2010; Hockerts, 2015). This idealized vision only exposes the positive  
43 aspects of SE; however, social ventures can also negatively impact and fail, just like other  
44 businesses (Kachlami, 2016; Margiono, Kariza, and Heriyati, 2019; Talmage, Bell, and Dragomir,  
45 2019). Although the dark side of SE has not been thoroughly researched, it cannot deny that it  
46 exists (Corner and Ho, 2010); for example, social entrepreneurship in indigenous communities can  
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3 produce acculturation of the population, and its environment may consider a negative impact of SE  
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5 (Martin and Novicevic, 2010).  
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10 To build a definition of SE is necessary to start from its origin: entrepreneurship. One of the most  
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12 accepted definitions of entrepreneurship is “*any attempt to create a new commercial enterprise or*  
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14 *expand an existing enterprise by an individual, a team of individuals or an established business*”  
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16 (Zacharakis, Bygrave, and Shepherd, 2000). Considering what is not SE and taking into account  
17  
18 the global concept of entrepreneurship, SE can be defined as *any individual, group, or business*  
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20 *initiative, that locates social needs and allocates resources to satisfy them in an organization*  
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22 *exclusively destined for this purpose, creating value for a part of society. These organizations can*  
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24 *obtain resources by attracting donations or through commercial strategies that reinvest profit in*  
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26 *social action.*  
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33 According to this definition, companies that annex social objectives to their profit-making purposes  
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35 are excluded from this classification. Therefore, established for-profit companies that seek to solve  
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37 social problems through social action should create an independent organization to channel  
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39 donations and thus avoid tension between objectives that may cause conflicts of interest. This new  
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41 organization can be considered social entrepreneurship in its initial stage. The process of value  
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43 creation is proposed to generate a virtuous circle between entrepreneurship and social development.  
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45 SE should aim at definitively overcoming social needs and not at mitigating them through the  
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47 transfer of resources. A distinctive aspect of this definition is the procurement of resources. A social  
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49 venture should not be for-profit; however, it can generate economic returns through a  
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51 complementary business activity to ensure its permanence over time. These returns must be  
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53 reinvested in the social enterprise, enabling the organization to subsist and increase its coverage  
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3 over time. For-profit entrepreneurship that incorporates social elements in their management can  
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5 be considered socially-oriented entrepreneurship and differ from social entrepreneurship in several  
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7 ways.  
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### 11 **Social Entrepreneurship in Latin American context**

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14 According to GEM Special Topic Report on Social Entrepreneurship 2015-2016, Latin America  
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16 and the Caribbean is the second region in social goal social entrepreneurial activity (SGSE) in the  
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18 start-up phase, with 2.36% of the adult population involved in these ventures. First is Australia and  
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20 the US region with 3.15% (Bosma *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, the country with the highest level of  
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22 SGSE in the start-up stage in the world is Colombia (6.2%), followed by Chile (5.8%) and Hungary  
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24 (5.8%). However, Latin America and the Caribbean lagged in the SGSE in the operational phase,  
25  
26 ranking fourth out of the seven regions. Although these statistics are interesting, do not has been  
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28 achieved to increase SE research in the Latin American context; moreover, García Alonso *et al.*  
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30 (2020) evidence that the Latin American institutions do not have enough attention on the  
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32 importance of SE. This study has only identified nine papers on Latin American SE, and the most  
33  
34 are qualitative. SE research in the Latin America scenario has the same challenges as the overall  
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36 SE field because it does not have a unified definition of SE and uses different approaches to identify  
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38 firms' type fit in the SE.  
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47 Ormiston and Seymour (2011) conducted case-study-based research on three Latin American  
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49 innovative social enterprises. To select these firms as SE, authors used the Mair and Marti (2006)  
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51 definition, which considers SE as entrepreneurship that addresses social issues and catalyzes social  
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53 change but recognizes the economic and the complementary social roles in value creation. This  
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55 study explores the importance of aligning mission, objectives, and strategy with impact  
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3 measurement in social entrepreneurship. The authors conclude that the Latin American social  
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5 entrepreneurs do not assess their social impacts with enough attention to their social missions. Also,  
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7 this study recognizes the importance of applied the management theories of value creation with  
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9 caution in a SE context. In this vein, Zebryte and Jorquera (2017) select this sample based on  
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11 socially-oriented for-profit firms using in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs of three Chilean  
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13 Tourism B Corporations (Bcorps). The authors focused on co-designing and implementing social  
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15 innovation and social entrepreneurship-based business models in a vulnerable community setting.  
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17 This study highlight that Latin American Bcorps need achieve better financial performance for  
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19 create and maintain sustainable social impacts.  
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26 An interesting topic in Latin American SE research is the indigenous SE. Vazquez-Maguirre and  
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28 Portales (2018) define SE as an enterprise that addresses a social problem, and at the same time,  
29  
30 creates economic wealth through the supply of a product or service. The authors explore how three  
31  
32 indigenous social enterprises from Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru, solve the paradox of  
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34 simultaneously producing social and economic value. Following the indigenous social  
35  
36 entrepreneurship scope, Vázquez-Maguirre (2020) analyzes how indigenous social enterprises  
37  
38 contribute to building sustainable rural communities. Based on case study research including four  
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40 indigenous social enterprises in Latin America, this study has found that SE encourages the well-  
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42 being and sustainability of the communities around these enterprises. Morales *et al.* (2021), in a  
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44 case study research of five indigenous communities in Colombia, analyzes how the indigenous  
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46 groups established in an enterprise dealing with distance between their community cosmovision  
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48 and the management practices imported from the business environment.  
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3 Some studies have been emphasized the capabilities and resources for SE in Latin America. For  
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5 example, Sáenz Bilbao and López Vélez (2015) focused on entrepreneurial education to develop  
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7 the individual SE capabilities of Latin American university students. The authors have been  
8  
9 proposed that the social entrepreneurial capabilities differ from traditional entrepreneurial skills  
10  
11 because the social entrepreneur's primary motivation is sustainable social change and not only  
12  
13 financial benefits. One of the social entrepreneurial competencies proposed by Sáenz Bilbao and  
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15 López Vélez (2015) is initiative and proactivity, which defines as the ability to promote initiatives,  
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17 introduce new innovative products, innovative products/services, or technology; and anticipate  
18  
19 future problems, needs, or changes.  
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26 Bonina, López-Berzosa and Scarlata, (2020) identify digital social innovations (DSI), which seek  
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28 to solve social problems while implementing commercially viable approaches through digital skills  
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30 and resources. The authors suggest the critical role that donors and funders of DSI may have in  
31  
32 enabling social impacts and the institutional context's role in developing the right legal frameworks  
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34 and support in funding and training. Besides, the authors found that few countries in Latin America  
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36 count on the right legal frameworks for firms to be registered as social enterprises and facilitate  
37  
38 these SE pursuing commercial and social objectives jointly in their ventures. Layrisse, Reficco,  
39  
40 and Barrios (2020) analyze the development of the freemium business model (FBM) in the SE  
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42 context, using a case study research on two SE, one for-profit in Latin America and one non-profit  
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44 in Asia. They found that the SE involved in FBM can create value and social impact by offering  
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46 free-cost products/services, and selling the paid versions of these products/services (often upgrade  
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48 versions) can comply with their financial goals.  
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## 56 **IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA**

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3 The separation between SE and socially oriented entrepreneurship is fundamental to public policy.  
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5 Public funds for social development through third parties, such as social entrepreneurs, cannot be  
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7 given to for-profit companies as this involves conflicts of interest and generates distrust in the  
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9 beneficiaries. Since SE opportunities stem from social problems, social entrepreneurs can be active  
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11 allies of public institutions in detecting vulnerable populations that the SE can serve with  
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13 government assistance. Social entrepreneurs can also benefit from social action, accumulating  
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15 learning, and experience to diversify their organizations by creating new SE or migrating to for-  
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17 profit ventures (Ko and Liu, 2015). Social entrepreneurs need specialized advice. Therefore, it is  
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19 not convenient to train them the same as conventional entrepreneurs. Business incubation programs  
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21 should consider the altruistic nature of social entrepreneurs and develop their entrepreneurial skills  
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23 towards social goals, to increase the likelihood of success and promote the growth of these  
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25 organizations.  
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33 There is an extensive gap in Latin American SE research; in this context, future studies can  
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35 implement traditional and novel research methods and apply the overall SE constructs in samples  
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37 from Latin America. The prevalence of rural and indigenous communities in Latin America should  
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39 be a good opportunity to research SE's positive and negative consequences for these groups.  
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41 Futures studies may contribute to characterizes the Latin American SEs; identified how these  
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43 initiatives measure and assess their social impacts; and how they capture financing for their  
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45 ventures. Since most works on Latin American context are qualitative, it is interesting to achieve  
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47 empirical findings of various topics, i.e., success and failure determinants, demographical factors  
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49 that affect the SE, assessing the impact of social programs or initiatives led for SEs, and explore  
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51 the influence of cultural context on the creation of SEs in Latin America.  
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3 The emergence of a collaborative community at the global level through social networks presents  
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5 exciting opportunities for the SE, especially those with an interest in internationalization. In this  
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7 context, it would be a novelty to establish a link between digital entrepreneurship and the SE,  
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9 insofar as they can complement each other to increase the geographical coverage of the social  
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11 impact of the SE (Guerrero and Urbano, 2020; Ibáñez *et al.*, 2021). A combination of SE and digital  
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13 entrepreneurship can be a powerful mechanism for innovation in obtaining financial resources  
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15 through altruistic financing via digital platforms, for example, social crowdfunding.  
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## 21 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

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23 This research conducted a literature review to explore the main issues in SE. This study aims to  
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25 describe the evolution of the SE research, propose a definition of SE, and identify the gaps in SE  
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27 literature in the Latin American context. Our literature review differs from previous ones by  
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29 proposing a definition of SE based on some elements of consensus in the SE literature and on the  
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31 support of interdisciplinary literature to establish what is not SE (Hauser, Tellis and Griffin, 2006;  
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33 Stubbs and Cocklin, 2008; Carroll and Shabana, 2010; Martin and Novicevic, 2010; Driver, 2017;  
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35 Kedmenec and Strašek, 2017). The metrics presented in this study suggest that: SE is an essential  
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37 topic in the entrepreneurship field, SE research has been conducted primarily using qualitative  
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39 methods, and SE literature is underdeveloped in Latin America.  
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47 In the last 20 years, social entrepreneurship literature has grown significantly (Morris, Santos, and  
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49 Kuratko, 2020). However, research has disseminated along different paths, so its academic wealth  
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51 has not been consolidated into a unified theory (Dacin, Dacin, and Matear, 2010). Although the  
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53 benefits of social entrepreneurship are difficult to measure, it has become a desirable activity for  
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55 society (Dahles, Verduyn, Wakkee, Dey, *et al.*, 2010; Hockerts, 2015). There are elements of  
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3 consensus and disagreement around the definition of social entrepreneurship (Hossain, Saleh, and  
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5 Drennan, 2017; Forouharfar, Rowshan, and Salarzahi, 2018). According to the definition proposed  
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7 in this paper, it is possible to differentiate SE from socially-oriented ventures. Unlike other  
8  
9 definitions, the one proposed in this research is specific to the SE's structure, purpose, and  
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11 resources. Therefore, the concept's scope is limited by allowing for more precise identification of  
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13 ventures that fit the definition. For example, new for-profit companies with management systems  
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15 such as CRS or corporate sustainability can be classified as socially-oriented companies but not as  
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17 SE. However, for-profit socially-oriented ventures also contribute to social development through  
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19 job creation and business interactions with other actors.  
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26 From a methodological perspective, limitations and challenges were found for the empirical study  
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28 of the SE (Tasker, Westberg and Seymour, 2010; Stevens, Moray and Bruneel, 2015; Chandra,  
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30 Jiang and Wang, 2016). Most research in SE has been used a qualitative methodology or conceptual  
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32 analysis, and a high number of these studies still focused on establishing a unified definition of SE  
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34 or social entrepreneur (Robb and Gandhi, 2016; Alegre, Kislenko and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2017;  
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36 Collavo, 2018). However, the empirical research has been lagged, and many SE's constructs are  
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38 still no tested. The lack of quantitative studies represents an important gap in the SE literature that  
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40 is difficult to cover while there is no existing agreement on the SE concept.  
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47 Although the SE literature is growing, the SE research in the Latin American context is lagged.  
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49 The statistics of SE activities well-positioned Latin America in the start-up phase worldwide, but  
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51 research on this topic does not appropriately cover the extent and richness of Latin American SEs.  
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53 Research on SE in Latin America primarily defined SE as a hybrid business model that aims to  
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55 achieve financial benefit while creating a sustainable social impact (Guerrero *et al.*, 2020). An  
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3 interesting topic is indigenous SE, and we identified some studies oriented to this issue, which  
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5 analyzes the rural and ethnic development in Latin America under the value creation approach.  
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7 Unfortunately, Latin America SE research findings are based on very small samples and mainly use  
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9 case study methods; therefore, these findings are not generalizable, and their conclusions are  
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11 applied only to a small sample context.  
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**Table 1.** Metrics in SE research.

Year	Total Articles	Articles by Methods			
		Qualitative	Quantitative	Conceptual	Mixed
2010	13	5	1	7	
2011	6	3	1	1	1
2012	-				
2013	9	5	1	2	1
2014	3		1	2	
2015	10	4	5	1	
2016	15	7	2	5	1
2017	13	6	2	5	
2018	11	6	4	1	
2019	18	11	5	1	1
2020	7	3	2	1	1
Total	105	50	24	26	5

Note. Metrics at June 2020. Source: Clarivate (2020) and SCImago & Scopus (2020)

**Table 2.** Journals most publishing articles in SE.

Journal	N°Articles	Source	Categories
<i>Social Enterprise Journal</i>	11	Scopus	Business, Management, and Accounting; Development; Economics; Sociology.
<i>Journal of Social Entrepreneurship</i>	8	Scopus	Business and International Management; Development; Economics and Econometrics.
<i>Voluntas</i>	7	Wos	Social Issues.
<i>Journal of Enterprising Communities</i>	5	Scopus	Business and International Management; Economics and Econometrics; Strategy and Management.
<i>Entrepreneurship and Regional Development</i>	4	WoS	Social Issues.
<i>Sustainability</i>	3	WoS	Green & Sustainable Science & Technology; Environmental Sciences.

Note. Metrics at June 2020. Source: Clarivate (2020) and SCImago & Scopus (2020).



**Table 3.** Previous definitions of social entrepreneurship.

Authors	Definition	Early Reference
Dacin <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Most definitions of SE refer to an ability to leverage resources that address social problems, although there is little consensus beyond this generalization (p. 38).	Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, and Shulman (2009)
Smith and Stevens (2010)	Innovative and effective activities that focus strategically on resolving social market failures and creating opportunities to add social value systematically by using a range of organizational formats to maximize social impact and bring about change (p. 577).	Nicholl (2006)
Bacq and Janssen (2011)	SE is the process of identifying, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities aiming at social value creation by means of commercial, market-based activities and of the use of a wide range of resources (p. 388).	
Barraket and Yousefpour (2013)	We define social enterprise as organizations that exist to generate a public or community benefit, trade to fulfill their mission and reinvest a substantial proportion of their income in the fulfillment of their mission (p. 448).	Barraket and Collyer (2010)
Smith <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Social enterprises seek to solve social problems through business ventures. They combine the efficiency, innovation, and resources of a traditional for-profit firm with the passion, values, and mission of a not-for-profit organization (p. 408).	Battilana, Lee, Walker, & Dorsey (2012)
Luke and Chu (2013)	We define a social enterprise as an organization that exists for a social purpose and engages in trading to fulfill its mission, using market-based techniques to achieve social ends (p. 765).	Talbot, Tregilgas, and Harrison (2002)
Rivera-Santos <i>et al.</i> (2015)	SE is the pursuit of sustainable solutions to neglected problems with positive externalities (p. 74).	Santos (2012)
Agafonow (2015)	A social enterprise must either maximize profits to have a chance to make investments that have an impact by attracting the capital needed to scale up or must avoid profit maximization to prevent the mission drift that occurs when it forgoes less profitable opportunities that would benefit disadvantaged people (p. 1046).	
Puumalainen <i>et al.</i> (2015)	SE is said to consist of activities that are intended to create new monetary or psychological benefits that accrue to others who are external to the focal firm (p. 277).	
Kedmenec, Rebernik, and Perić (2015)	SE refers to a process of catering to locally existing basic needs that are not addressed by traditional organizations. The main objective is to change those social and/or economic arrangements that create the situation of failure to satisfy basic needs (p. 120).	Mair (2010)
Stevens <i>et al.</i> (2015)	SE is entrepreneurship with an embedded social purpose, which is sustainable through trading and not limited to a particular organizational form (p. 1053).	
Méndez-Picazo <i>et al.</i> (2015)	SE is a process that seeks out innovative solutions to outstanding social problems (p. 768).	Miller, Grimes, McMullen, and Vogus (2012)
Tran and Von Korflesch (2016)	SE is a process that includes: the identification of a specific social problem and a specific solution (or a set of solutions) to address it; the evaluation of the social impact, the business model and the sustainability of the venture; and the creation of a social mission-oriented for-profit or a business-oriented non-profit entity that pursues the double (or triple) bottom line (p. 20).	Mair, Robinson, and Hockerts (2006)
Montesano Montessori (2016)	SE is a process that catalyzes social change and addresses important social needs in a way that is not dominated by direct financial benefits for entrepreneurs. SE is seen as differing from other forms of entrepreneurship in the relatively higher priority given to promoting social value and development versus capturing economic value (p. 536).	Mair and Marti (2006)
Kedmenec and Strašek (2017)	SE is a process of creating value by combining resources in new ways; these resource combinations are intended primarily to explore and exploit opportunities to create social value by stimulating social change or meeting social needs (p. 1462).	Mair and Marti (2006)
Kraus <i>et al.</i> (2017)	SE is the process of employing market-based methods to solve social problems (p. 981).	Grimes, McMullen, Vogus, and Miller (2013)

**Table 3. (continued)**

Authors	Definition	Early Reference
Tiwari, Bhat, and Tikoria (2017)	SE is a process that begins with perceived social opportunity, transfers it into an enterprise model, determines and achieves the wealth essential to execute the enterprise, initiates and grows the enterprise, and yields the future upon goal achievement of the enterprise's goal (p. 3).	
Araslanov and Zelinskaya (2018)	SE is a socially responsible activity of economic entities in the field of small and medium-sized businesses, which is aimed at solving emerging social problems in society under certain conditions (p. 123).	
Bae et al. (2018)	Social enterprises are organizations that provide goods or services to achieve explicit social aims, such as providing jobs and benefiting the community (p. 75).	Defourny and Nyssens (2008)
Pathak and Muralidharan (2018)	SE is the recognition, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities stemming from the basic and long-standing needs of society, which subsequently result in the creation and establishment of social values (p. 1152).	Austin <i>et al.</i> (2006)
Littlewood and Holt (2018)	SE is the process of identifying, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities aiming at social value creation by means of commercial, market-based activities and of the use of a wide range of resources (p. 532).	Bacq and Janssen (2011)
Collavo (2018)	SE is any action combining the pursuit of social impact with entrepreneurial techniques or business models (p. 50).	Bacq and Janssen (2011); Corner and Ho (2010)
Forouharfar <i>et al.</i> (2018)	SE is a socially mission-oriented innovation that seeks beneficial transformative social change by creativity and recognition of social opportunities in any sector (p. 33).	
García-Uceda <i>et al.</i> (2019)	El emprendimiento social consiste en una iniciativa cuya misión principal es la creación de valor social aportando soluciones a problemas sociales, tratando de lograr al mismo tiempo un complicado equilibrio con la creación de valor económico; cuestión esta última que, sin ser su misión principal, resulta crucial para este tipo de iniciativas y, por extensión, para la creación de valor social (p. 221).	Dacin <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Cho <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Social enterprises pursue social purposes, such as offering jobs or social services to vulnerable social groups. They also promote the development of the local community and public interest, promote the democratic decision-making process (with the participation of stakeholders including the recipients of services, workers, and local residents), and reinvest profits toward realizing social purposes (p. 191).	
Rangan and Gregg (2019)	SE involves individuals or groups who have a mission to solve a social problem by pursuing opportunities, engaging in innovation, and undertaking high degrees of risk with limited resources (p. 54).	Dees (1998); Peredo and McLean (2006)
Ćwiklicki (2019)	SE is the process of creatively discovering and exploiting social entrepreneurial opportunities overseas with the application of business expertise and market-based skills, with innovative social goods and services, either with or without profit orientation, but with the pivotal objective of creating societal value rather than shareholder wealth in the overseas territories where the enterprise functions (p. 47).	Tukamushaba, Orobia, and George (2011)
Hsu and Wang (2019)	Social enterprise is defined as a business created to fulfill a social purpose. While creating social benefits is the priority of social entrepreneurs, the social benefits may include environmental sustainability, employment, social development, economic growth, and preserve cultural assets and social value (p. 386).	Mander, Helming, and Wiggering (2007); Vitiello and Wolf-Powers (2014); York and Venkataraman (2010)
Alarifi, Robson, and Kromidha (2019)	SEs strive to create a sustainable venture by acquiring and managing resources effectively and building the capabilities of their venture. SEs must attain multiple stakeholders either to serve them or to gain their support (p. 309).	Desa and Basu (2013); Meyskens, Robb-Post, Stamp, Carsrud, and Reynolds (2010); Renko (2013)
Tortia <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Social enterprises (SEs) are organizations that combine entrepreneurial dynamics and social missions to provide goods or services with the primary objective of meeting not only economical but also social needs (p. 2).	Borzaga and Defourny (2001)