

HOW COMMUNITY BUSINESSES (CB) SERVITIZED THEIR BUSINESS MODELS DURING THE COVID CRISIS TO CREATE BOTH FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL VALUE.

Research Motivation

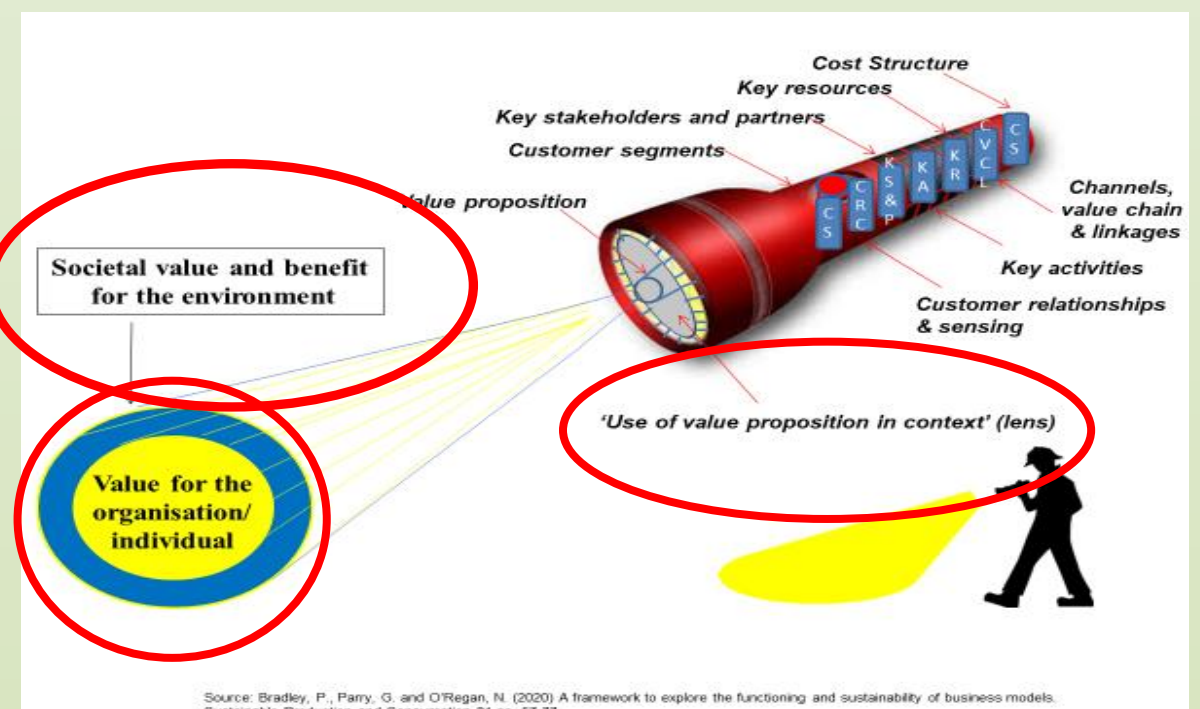
To fill the gap in the existing servitization literature and business model theory through exploring the adoption of digital services by socially trading community businesses during the COVID 19 pandemic.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Business Type	Number	Services Provided (examples)	Covid Specific (examples)
Community Development Organisation	5	Health and Well-being Business Units	Covid Food distribution Free wi-fi
Transport	2	Bike maintenance and distribution	Services for key workers
Energy	1	Renewable energy	Unaffected
Community Hub	5	Café Community health and youth services	On-line support and counselling On-line youth engagement On-line free gym sessions
Farm	4	Care Farm and nursery Well-being services	On-line Ordering and delivery Respite care for young people
Historical Venue	2	Fund-raising Mobile Cafe	On-line payments
Leisure	2	Outdoor Lido	Closed
Library	1	Health and Well-being Room hire	Live- streaming arts events On-line choir and fitness
Community Shop	2	Local volunteer-led shops	On-line ordering Contactless payments

CONTRIBUTION TO THEORY

- Previous servitization theory has mainly focused on manufacturing and not CBs.
- Explores value created by digital servitization through the lenses of: the individual, the CB and society.
- Explores digital servitization through the context of the Covid 19 initial lockdown.



CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

- Research has been used to inform the digital strategy for the Power to Change Trust.
- The evidence from the CBs regarding the 'Digital Divide' adds to a growing body of research highlighting the gap within England and is being used to lobby policy makers.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Digital services during the Covid 19 restrictions were enabled by the flexibility and support of funders. How can digital services be monetised by CBs, post-COVID, to support the long-term sustainability of CBs and to enable them to meet the needs of vulnerable members of their communities?
- Does the move to digitalised services widen the digital divide? Is this a good business model to create positive social value?

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