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# What can Social Enterprises offer to cities for solving urban problems and foster creativity?

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## 1. Introduction

This paper will defend the position that social enterprises can and will foster creativity and improve the quality of life in any urban environment through solving the basic urban problems that many communities face. By solving these urban problems, we can hope to increase participation in social innovation, increase the number of social entrepreneurs, and increase the inclusion of all walks of life in society. To first understand these issues, a strong educational background in urban development, planning, and problems must be fostered. After awareness is created, advocacy must be implemented with the support of all community members and local governments and businesses. While discussing this topic, we must present our goals clearly to express the true need for change of our urban issues within familiarity of our own respective countries: Latvia, Germany, and the United States. These goals are as follows: to gain understanding of our society's problems as they occur in our own urban centers; to appreciate art, culture, nature, and humanities as tools that will reform our cities into "smarter," more productive cities; and to implement citizen advocacy so that this message will be disseminated to the higher officials that can further enhance these objectives; ultimately becoming the new norm. This paper will defend the position that there is a need for increased social capital in order to foster creativity, innovation, and collaboration within communities. The evolution of a "smart city" can be furthered if an increase in social productivity is present. Each of the six pillars of a "smart city" demand the importance of the individual within the community. Within this discussion, the significance of every single individual and their self-worth will determine how "smart" a community could become. The possibilities for urban growth in our societies should be the forefront of our discussion because productive community members are the foundation of enacting change and enhancing quality of life. Finally, the role of any social enterprise is at its utmost importance for solving these urban problems and producing creativity that will bring our societies into the next era of innovation.

### 1.1. Definitions

#### 1.1.1. Contemporary Issues in Urban Life

When defining the issues of urban life today, it can first be asked in what context the word "urban" can be used. According to the definition put forth by the United Nations, the expression of "urban" describes "the agglomerations of a certain number of inhabitants, having certain population densities of persons per square mile." The number of people varies for each country, so it is quite challenging finding an exact measurement of the quantity of people which qualifies a population as an "urban" population. As a result it can be said that in the context for this thesis, "urban" should be characterized with the help of certain urban features which do not exist in rural areas. In fact, life in cities differs a lot from the lifestyle existing in villages. When describing the urban lifestyle it can be stated that it often comes with a unique variety of social and cultural features. Furthermore urban areas could be seen as a melting pot of economic activities which offers challenges and opportunities concerning labor and employment. The economic transaction in cities causes a good infrastructure and, for the most part, a higher living standard than in rural areas. Finally, it can be stated that the expression of urban areas or cities on which we would like to refer in the given thesis, can be described by an urban agglomeration with economic, cultural and social features.

When discussing contemporary urban issues the term "contemporary" underlines the growing importance of urbanization in this day and age. According to the World Health Organization, the majority of the world's population lives in urban areas. This is the first time in human history that a majority of people are living in cities. The exploding growth of cities not only causes social and

economic opportunities, but it causes urban problems as well. By increasing the population in urban areas, it can be inferred that the aggregate demand for certain goods and services increases as well. As a result it can be stated that the given urban resources are not enough for that great amount of urban inhabitants. The consequence of this issue is therefore inflation. This is particularly evident in the housing sector, where rising prices are becoming a problem, because people simply are having a difficult time paying for shelter. The unfortunate result of the lack of affordable housing is the rise of homelessness.

Another urban issue is the growing demand for mobility in cities in terms of an increase in traffic, overloading of public transportation, and CO<sub>2</sub> emission. However, the growing urban population does not only raise the aggregate demand for goods and services, the supply of more people, increases at the same time. In fact, the supply of potential workforce in urban areas is much higher than it is in the rural regions. The lack of jobs in cities cause another urban problem, that is, the increasing of low-wage jobs and unemployment. Consequently the social polarization and the segregation between poor and rich society are increasing in cities. In shorter terms, there is a wealth gap that leads to economic inequality. Not only are unemployment and poverty pressing social issues in an urban environment, but demographic change is as well. The demographic change and the older population is putting a strain on the rest of society in regards to insurance.

To sum up it can be said that there is a huge amount of contemporary urban issues which are arising on the basis of urbanization and overpopulation in urban environments. Consequently, there is a strong need for solving these urban problems by finding effective and innovative answers.

#### 1.1.2. Characteristics of a Social Enterprise

A city can be defined as “smart” when investments in human and social capital and traditional transportation and modern communication infrastructure fuel sustainable economic development and a high quality of life, with a wise management of natural resources, through participatory action and engagement. (Caragliu et al. 2009). A very important aspect of the “smart city” is the social aspect; therefore cities need to focus not only to traditional business models, but alternative business models as well. Social enterprise is an alternative business model.

A social enterprise is an alternative business model that produces social and environmental value and outcomes. People in the social enterprise community are – not surprisingly – passionate in focusing on the needs of their customers, or “service users,” to whom they are often providing some form of care or support. They are also passionate about their business model and the way in which they conduct business. The changes coming to local public services, social care and health are going to create a new, transactional market in which social enterprises will need to participate, and in which they’ll need to behave in some ways more like private enterprises do today. To illustrate this point, the characteristics and indicators of social enterprises must be made clear.

Two distinct characteristics differentiate social enterprises from other types of businesses, non-profits and government agencies:

- Social enterprises directly address social needs through their products and services or through the numbers of disadvantaged people they employ. This distinguishes them from “socially responsible businesses,” which create positive social change indirectly through the practice of corporate social responsibility (e.g., creating and implementing a philanthropic foundation; paying equitable wages to their employees; using environmentally friendly raw materials; providing volunteers to help with community projects).

- Social enterprises use earned revenue strategies to pursue a double or triple bottom line, either alone (as a social sector business, in either the private or the non-profit sector) or as a significant part of a non-profit's mixed revenue stream that also includes charitable contributions and public sector subsidies. This distinguishes them from traditional non-profits, which rely primarily on philanthropic and government support (Mark Berger)

#### 1.1.2.1. Social Enterprise Indicators

- a. Social goals are evident;
- b. There is an orientation to enterprise, innovation, resourcefulness and opportunity;
- c. Community participation and ownership is noticeable;
- d. The enterprise is characterized as hybrid in nature (non-profit and for-profit);
- e. Social change and transformation are central to project goals;
- f. There is a greater understanding of stakeholder ownership;
- g. Local needs are 'turned' into markets;
- h. There is evidence of mission-market (social-business) relationships;
- i. Roles and resources rather than 'structures' are present;
- j. There is access to opportunities and ideas and the creation of supportive environments;
- k. There is a blurring of boundaries between public and private benefit. (Leo Bartlett, 2005)

A "smart city" should not only be efficient, resilient and sustainable, it should improve all of these qualities of life for its citizens. Social enterprises are one of these tools, a concept which connects innovative business and important contributions to social prosperity. Social businesses develop not only a "smart city" environment, but most importantly, the quality of life for citizens. When people are happy and fulfilled, a "smart city" can blossom.

## 2. Main Part

### 2.1. Contribution of Social Enterprise in Solving Urban Problems

When talking about the contribution or potential that social enterprises have brought to the countries, it is evident that they are very able to contribute creative and innovative solutions to the challenges which the countries are facing. Active in social activity, they offer jobs, produce innovative products and services, assist in achieving a more sustainable economy and give the society futures and hopes.

By observing the potential of the social enterprises in European countries, it is clear that every part of Europe is receiving benefits from them. In Basel, Switzerland, for example, Jobfactory offers 120 jobs to young adults who don't have work experience, are without training, or are jobless. Their goal is to enable young people to enter directly into the labor market and strengthen their chances of a successful career at the same time. In Lugano, Switzerland, SOTELL supports the needs of youth employment by providing temporary work. This organization creates events in order to promote a meeting between the young people and businesses seeking occasional work. In Belgium, Spullenhulp, ethics are reflected in particular to the principle of community service, helping to fight against social exclusion and poverty, working mainly in helping homeless men and providing assistance to the families. Their mission is to support people so that they gain autonomy sustainably. In Norwich, Sweet Arts creates free creative workshops, where the women who have problems with their background have the chance to both improve and develop their work skills and confidence. The Community Campus 87, which is located in Middlesbrough UK, supports homeless people by providing houses, training for personal development and construction services. This enterprise cooperates with other voluntary organizations in improving the area where people live and work to create job opportunities.

This trend is not only present in Europe. In many other countries, social enterprises are showing their competency in providing job training to increase human capital, employment opportunities, settling social and environmental problems, and creating a sustainable economic growth.

Adrenalin Events and Education, which was launched by the social enterprise Adrenalin in Singapore, organizes events to serve people (including youth) who suffer from disabilities (physical and hearing), as well as people who are recovering from psychiatric illnesses, by setting training programs to build their employment opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Adrenalin has organized numerous major events for corporate and government clients, and won the 2012 Singapore President's Challenge Social Enterprise Award (Youth Social Enterprise of the Year). In Karnataka, India, where many poor households and businesses are facing insufficient access to electricity energy or fuel, SELCO Solar (Solar Electric Light Company) offers solutions how to create and maintain sustainable energy consumption and technologies by creating products (solar light systems) based on the individual requirements, providing regional service centers and enabling users to afford buying the systems based on their income and outcome (cash flow). This enterprise has installed solar light systems in more than 100.000 houses and plans to achieve more 200,000 households in the year 2014. SELCO was awarded the prestigious Green Oscars in 2005 and 2007. While in Shanghai China, Dialogue in the Dark aims to increase and boost people who have low-esteem and potential deficiencies through creating and operating exhibitions such as workshops. Their mission is to help marginalized people throughout the world. In Taiwan, Farmer Club, which is founded by Lin Yin Chen to fight against aging population, provides employment opportunities for elders to create their own business

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<sup>1</sup> Edes, Bart. „Asian Development Blog.” The contribution of social enterprises to training and job creation: Example from the UK and Asia. 11 March 2013.

models by taking part into organic agriculture production. Elders are usually more knowledgeable, have higher education and more life experience, which is why they will be able to create a better efficient business models of the organic products.

Mama's Kitchen, which is also based in Taiwan and founded by Tseng Yen Chen, is a small restaurant that is run by group of housewives with low income. This restaurant is a great place for people who are getting bored with luxurious meals and in fact prefer home-cooked dishes. Mama's Kitchen is not only providing places for having meals but also places for children whose parents are working and are too busy to gather and play. It also offers a cooking class for travelers and people (including those who are unemployed) who are willing to learn. By that the housewives with low income can gain additional profits.

## 2.2. Problems Cities are facing in Europe and the United States

Social problems are the general factors that affect and damage society. Modern cities all over the world face similar urban problems. Different social problems occur in almost every area all over the world, but in some areas it tends to happen more frequently, and to a more severe extent. Urbanization is a factor that causes several social problems and urbanization leads to overcrowding, which often leads to a breakdown in social services.

The main cause of social problems is unemployment, which is also a social problem itself. Many industrial regions and companies have been shut down; in other companies technology replaces people, leading to less of a need to employ people, leading to unemployment. People don't have work and the lack of money in these areas attracts other social problems. There is a high rate of unemployment among young people worldwide.

Poor housing is a common social problem. People often live in old houses or huts that don't have electricity or sanitation. Even though residents of cities have a higher standard of living, there is still a high volume of poor people as well as staggering rates of homelessness, even in the most prosperous of cities. Government organizations work hard to get rid of poverty, trying to give such people better education and jobs, but still this problem is very significant. Many men, women, and children in both Europe and the United States live in the streets, abandoned vehicles or houses, cheap motels, or trailers, or live in someone else's home temporarily.

During morning and evening "rush hours" cities become packed with vehicles and daily traffic jams make it impossible for people to get to work on time. Cities face environmental risks – cars and industries are polluting city air and rivers and waste that people throw away is burned or ends up in landfills. All of these factors make urban areas unhealthy.

There are many poor urban neighborhoods with high crime rates as well as high levels of alcoholism and drug addiction, which puts stress not only on the government but on other citizens in the city. Violence and abuse are common issues in cities. There are supermarkets that lack fresh food, causing health problems similar to the pollution and waste problems that were previously discussed.

Larger multiethnic cities face conflicts between groups with different cultural backgrounds and there also are conflicts because of racial differences and different minorities. There are also problems and debates about violated human rights, inequality, feminism, sexism, immigration and emigration, disability support, abortion, marriage rights for homosexuals, and human trafficking, just to name a few.

In general there are plenty of different social problems that urban cities face nowadays and the main goal is to fight these problems, improve conditions of living and make people happier, healthier and wealthier. Different cities use different tools to achieve the same objective and social enterprise as a tool is becoming more popular every day because of its efficiency.

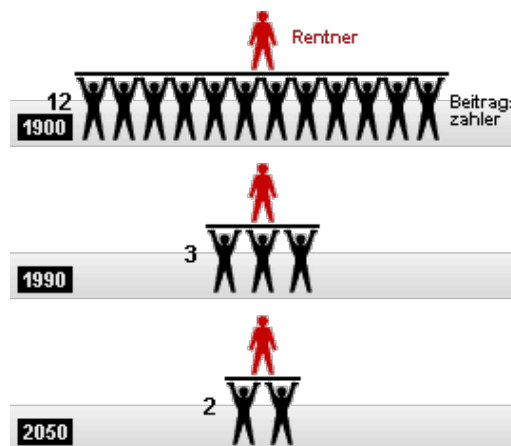


### 2.2.1. Urban Problems in Germany

The main problems German cities are currently facing are the demographic change, poverty amongst older generations, and skilled labor shortage. These problems all relate to each other, as is illustrated below.

The demographic change describes the development of the population in Germany.

In the 1950s a regular family had two or more children. Old people didn't become as old as they do today, they died in an earlier age because of a lack of medical advancement. The retirement system in Germany counts on contributors to finance the retirements for the older people. The following graphic shows a good explanation for this:



The red one is a retired person, the black one is a contributor. At the first stage (1900), Germany had 12 working people, the contributors which are paying statutory health insurance and statutory pension insurance. With this money the government could finance the pensions for one pensioner. In 1990 Germany had only three contributors per one pensioner and statistics predict that in 2050 only two working people can be counted per one pensioner. This means that the contributors have to pay more in statutory insurance than the state can finance the pensions. But this isn't possible anymore, because as a result the contributors would have not enough income and this is the story how about poverty occurs at an older age: There is nobody who can finance the pension costs. Furthermore as a result of the decline of the birth rate, Germany has less skilled labor at the market. Many young people are studying, but there isn't enough skilled labor for the vacancies. This will not become better, because the new generation, "Generation Y", has the goal to have careers and be successful in their jobs, not start a family or think too much about the future. This is coming at a later and later age, such as 35 or 40 years old, and therefore the payment of pensions has been greatly delayed. The entire process is a "vicious cycle" of not enough contributors for pensioners, which makes older people who are impoverished, and this is all because of a declining birth rate and less population to pay the insurance charges.



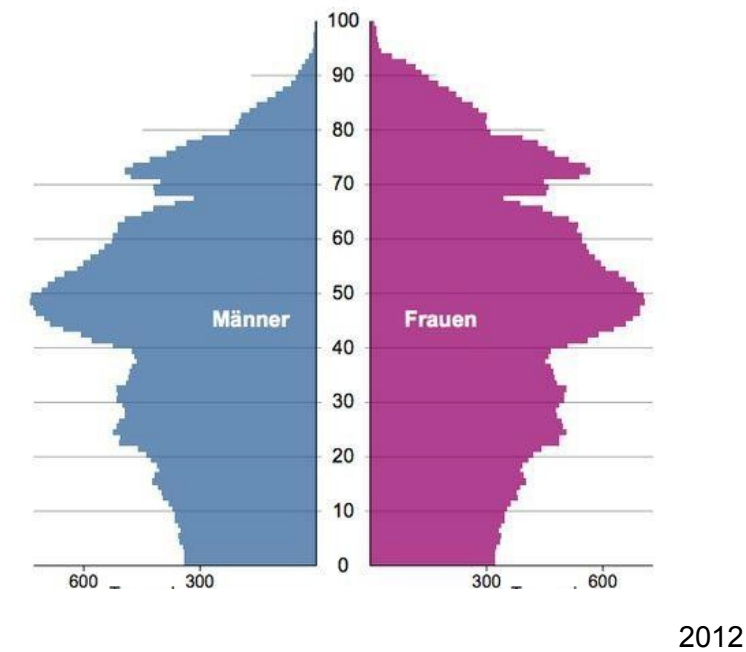
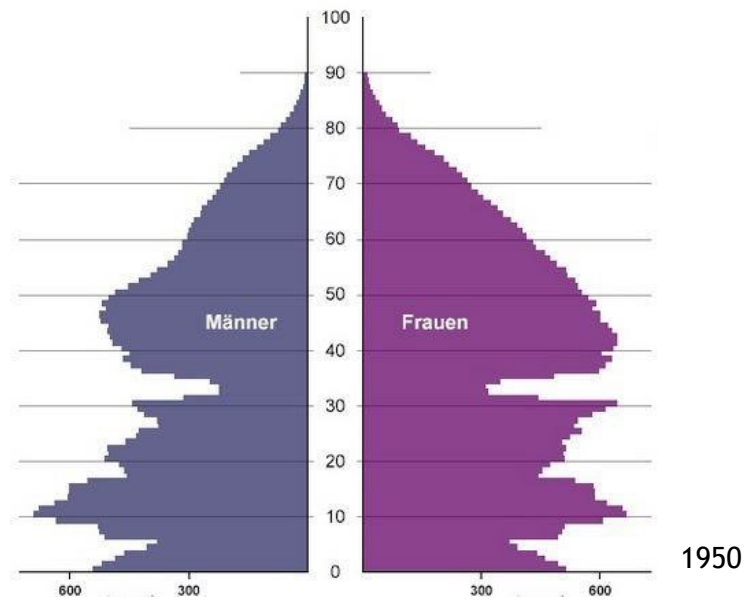
The graphic below shows the pyramid of the demographic change which shows the age poverty and the skilled labor shortage.

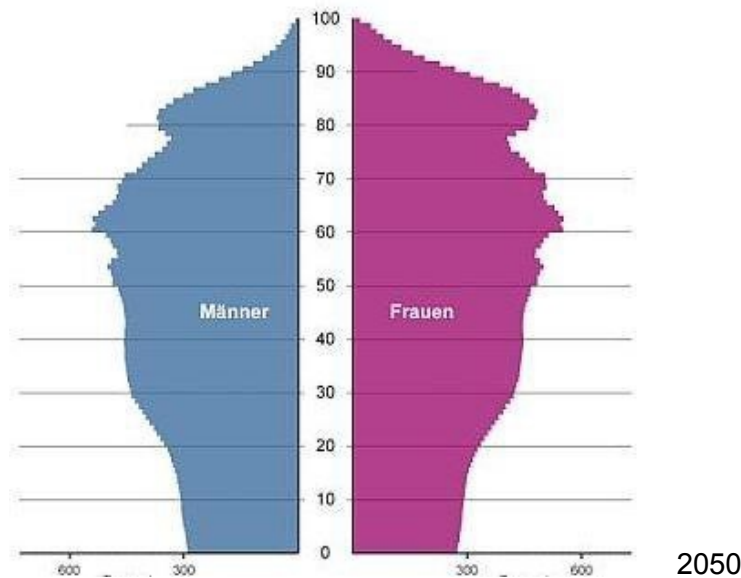
Short description:

Left side / blue one: men

Right side / violet one: women

Counts in T





Source: [www.e-follows.net](http://www.e-follows.net)

In 1950 Germany had about 600,000 youth of approximately ten years old, less around 30 years and many people older than 40 years, but less older than young people. In 2012 the middle-aged are the most represented generation, less young and more older people than before, but not more than middle-aged people. These middle-aged people will become older and older, until they are pensioners in 2050, but then we have the career-oriented generation who will have fewer children, and therefore the pyramid changes in the opposite direction, and will turn over. The problem will essentially never end until the birth rate in Germany increases.

### 2.2.2. Urban Problems in Latvia

One of the biggest social problems in Latvia is unemployment among young people and it is notably higher than in other age groups. In the end of 2013, in Latvia there were 27,100 unemployed youngsters – 22.4 % of the total number of unemployed persons aged 15 – 74. The highest number of unemployed youth in Latvia was recorded in the 1st quarter of 2010, while since 2nd quarter of 2010 the indicator has been diminishing gradually.

One of the reasons behind the unemployment of young people is their educational attainment level – approximately 66% of youngsters do not have professional qualifications, and their level of education is low. Approximately 22.1% of young people had acquired professional education, while 16.8% had acquired higher education. Only 24.8% of youngsters had previous working experience, moreover 23.1 % of them were employed in elementary occupations.

A staggering 56% of youngsters lack motivation to look for a job. Most of the young people that are not employed doubt their skills, evaluating them as mediocre or average. Young people in Latvia usually lack professional skills and work experience. Other reasons for unemployment among young people are lack of jobs (especially outside the capital city of Riga), and the questionable quality and nature of internships and traineeships. Unemployed youngsters in the capital city of Riga have the best chances of finding a job while chances of youngsters in the countryside are lower.

This problem is probably increasing because young people are losing self-confidence, they are not being educated with adequate knowledge and skills (especially in case of preparation for long term unemployment), there is a high amount of illegal employment, there is a high amount

of precarious and questionable jobs, and there are excessive violations of labor rights. This can and will lead to increased emigration, crime, and poverty. A smaller rate of unemployment would mean more income for the country and faster economic growth as well as more young entrepreneurs and more new jobs for the rest of the society. This could lead to the creation of a more stable and sustainable social protection system.

Another important social problem in Latvia is the presence of many unfavorable regions. These regions are quite widespread around the capital city of Riga and most of these regions are still abandoned and dangerous for people because of old, unstable buildings, criminals and drug users. These areas are abandoned industrial regions, old factories or areas with very old houses that have been left abandoned and empty for many years. These areas create a sense of uneasiness for citizens, and people generally tend to avoid them. Urban land is developed, utilized, abandoned and left to degradation in many different ways. It is related to four aspects of human activities - the extraction of resources, their transformation into goods, the production of waste and the conflicts that arise when population grows and demands increase while resources remain limited. Urban land is developed and deteriorates in the course of these activities, while cities keep spreading, consuming the green spaces surrounding them. Reconstructing these areas is risky and costs a lot of money which is the main reason why most of these areas are still left abandoned. Some of these regions are not being revitalized and are therefore at a stand-still, while some of them are getting restored, renovated and completely changed. Most of these areas are transforming into youth and art centers that bring together creative minds. Degraded territories are being transformed into leisure parks, art galleries and studios, art workshops, theaters and cafes.

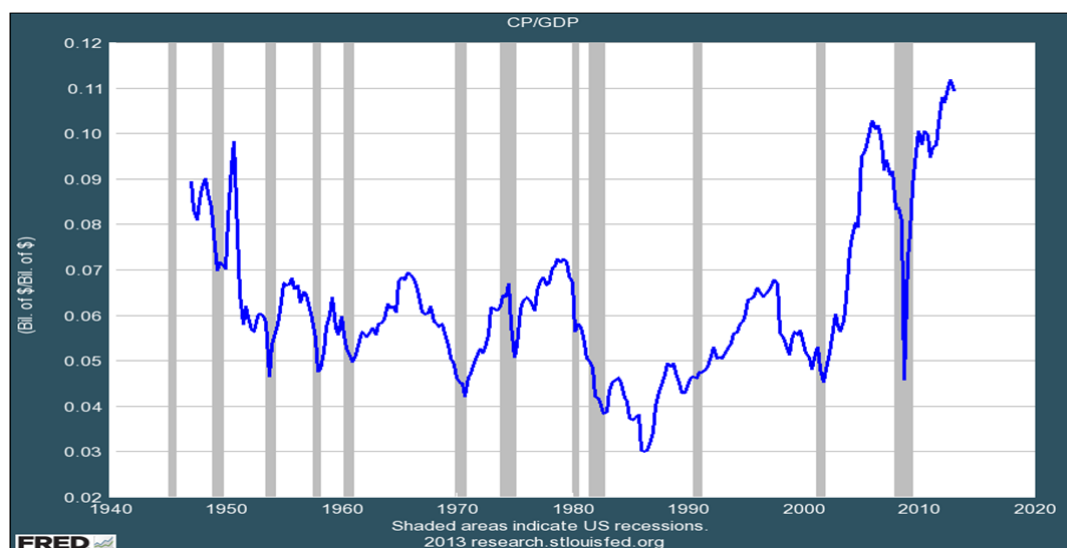
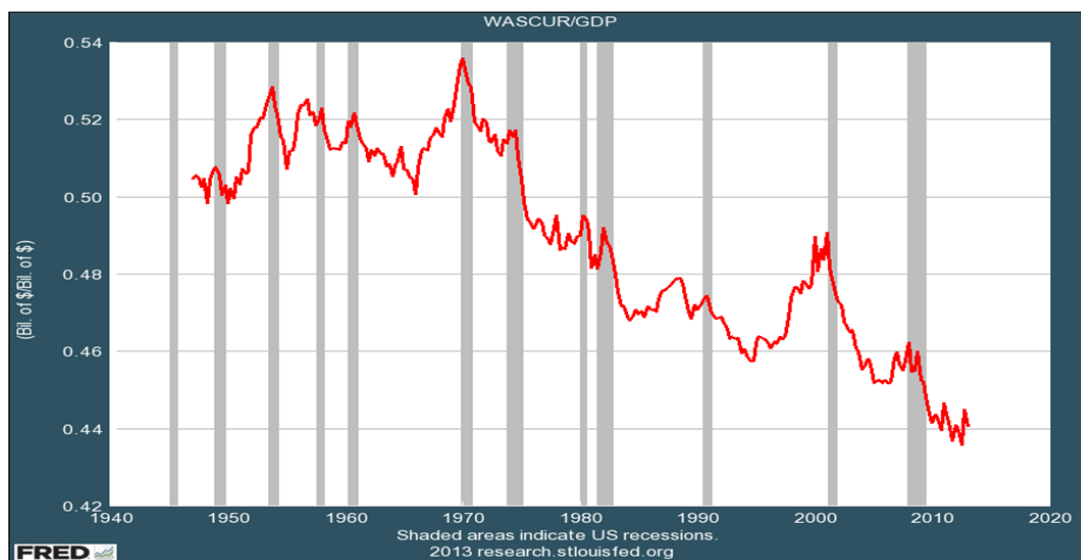
### 2.2.3. Urban Problems in the United States

Urban development is a continuing force that challenges the survival of cities within the United States of America. Democracy has played a vital role in shaping the American infrastructure, economy, and social policy. There are many factors that hinder the progression of growth and stability in the nation of free will and prosperity. The main issues that face the United States of America are: economic inequality, education, environmental sustainability, and lack of investment in urban development. Cities in America have the potential to grow far beyond their current state of development but each face unique problems based on their specific location and demographic factors. The American government on a national level has been governed by policies and regulations that no-longer fit the needs of the people. State legislatures are currently at the forefront of reform in America. Cities will need significant resources provided by the federal government moving forward to adequately address the issues facing urban development.

The post-World War II era resulted in pervasive suburbanization. The post-recession age was the beginning of a vibrant urban revival in the United States. Metropolitan areas in the Great Recession's aftermath were experiencing unprecedented population expansion, with growth rates surpassing that of suburban and rural areas for the first time since the 1920s. Because of the rapid growth and boom of American cities, massive infrastructure was created without technologies that would sustain societies in the twenty-first century. In order to foster prosperity within American cities, a reexamination of our urban planning needs to be addressed with our urban problems in mind.

Economic inequality is the driving factor on the war on poverty within the United States. In 2012 alone, 46.5 million people lived under the poverty line in America. The major cities are home to the largest gaps of distribution of wealth throughout the country. It is in these cities where government programs and initiatives are established to balance the gap between the

poor and the rich while generating room for growth and opportunity. American cities are currently in a new Renaissance of creativity, innovation, and technology. The mayors of these populated cities are searching for companies and businesses that can promote solutions for urban problems while fostering innovation and inclusion within these communities. The power of education and advocacy has held an important role in American democracy. Referring to the chart below, the graphs demonstrate two financial measures that challenge one another. While the profit margins of corporations are at an all-time high, wages as a percent of the economy have reached an all-time low. This illuminates the need for the wealthy to invest in progressive companies or begin to establish social enterprises that could aid people out of poverty. State legislators are promoting the inclusion of city communities as a way of building the cities “social-culture;” while enhancing social-innovation with the help of social-entrepreneurship and the participation of community members in improving the overall quality of life.



On the forefront of American reform is its education system; both on a national and state level. The overall consensus on education is to develop the system more efficiently by starting American citizens in the education system at a younger age. This would particularly benefit people who live in big cities. The cost of childcare accumulates to 40% of the wages made by individuals who fall below the poverty line. If the kids start school at a younger age, the parents have more time to work and less time worrying about how they will pay for expensive childcare. A new trend has been launched for vocational schools to operate along big cities of America. These schools are promoting non-traditional students to pick a skill in a specific job market rather than going to school for a general discipline. Those who may not typically succeed in school could find success at vocational institutions that are experiential-learning based. Summer programs have also been enacted on a national level to promote productive activity from the months of June-September. This is the typical time period in which the young population is off of school and when they are typically introduced or involved in dangerous and non-productive activity. The United States would benefit from the improvement of their education system for multiple reasons but it is the government that needs to supplement the funding to ensure that these programs stay effective; tax paying dollars can only go so far.

The United States has a long way to go in the area of environmental sustainability. The progress of other “smart cities” around the world to reduce the human carbon footprint has proved to be somewhat effective. There are new businesses being created to help combat the issues of sustainability. America is home to high levels of waste and “Superfund sites” (areas that are essentially toxic because of the sheer amount of waste within them) that perpetuate radiation to surrounding areas. The high levels of waste and radiation over time has been linked to areas with high rates of cancer and reproductive complications. The government has done very little in terms of monitoring the harmful effects we ingest daily due to chemical pollution and the alteration of the food we grow and eat. The GMO’s in our foods have scientifically been proven to have harmful effects to the human body over time. These issues are not present in other nations due to federal restrictions on the levels of these GMO’s that are placed in the products distributed within a certain area. State legislatures are pushing companies to service their cities in efficient and specific ways. State governments are placing investment and growth in areas of sustainability within social enterprises that value profit and return on investment only as a driver to the success of their company. Stronger efforts are being put into helping restore our environment through advocacy; the more people that are knowledgeable on the health and safety of the environment, the faster it will be for society to conform to sustainable habits.

This last issue that will be discussed concerning the problems facing America is their investment in urban development and the effectiveness of legislation to act on improvements. Today’s economy is vastly different than the American economy 60-80 years ago. In this current economic climate, the physical environment of the cities is what is promoting the engines of innovation. The American government should drive funds into these big cities which promote urban development and progress rather than dividing the pool of funds into 50 states using measurements that have been proven to be outdated. There is a great and unique appeal to each big city in America; it’s the government’s job to highlight each of the locations assets and invest on improvement in those areas rather than funding money into non-useful programs or initiatives that have not been effective.

A pressure also must be put on law makers and government officials. America is the land of democracy but it takes enormous amounts of effort and time to enact any change in legislation. This is why an effort to enhance the role that social enterprises play in society should be at the forefront of American reform. These social enterprises are creating revenues, helping people, and fostering new technologies that will help fight and solve the basic urban problems that face the United States. It is now in the individual's power to help create social change and become a productive society member. In the future, social enterprises will be the drivers and catalysts in urban development and the hope for cities to grow and prosper.

### 3. Evidence of Social Enterprise Making Changes in Europe and the United States

#### 3.1. Evidence from Germany

In Germany, there are many social enterprises that are helpful and able to cope with the urban problems. Two social enterprises that can handle the problems, particularly in the issue of skilled labor shortage and aged poverty which are derived from the demographic change are VAMV and Girls' Day (Mädchen Zukunftstag).

The Girls' Day enterprise is located in Bielefeld city in Germany. It cooperates with enterprises, universities and research centers throughout Germany to organize an event which is called

Girls' Day - Future Prospects for Girls. In this event, pupils from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> class, teachers, employers, employees, parents and organizations, are welcomed and will be introduced to training for jobs and courses in IT, science, handwork/craft and technology: otherwise, any field in which women are typically a minority. This event encourages the young women to change their common attitude towards education and professions in which they are typically under-represented. Girls' Day – Girls Future is the largest career orientation project for students worldwide. Since the launch of the Girls' Day event and campaign in 2001, more than 1.3 million girls have participated. In 2013, about 109,000 girls explored the fields of science and technology. The first major event of 2014 was held on March 27.

This enterprise's task is to attract and invite new partners such as companies, organizations and associations to organize the campaign for the girls, where they can learn and test their own skills practically and can learn how to carry out the real work. This is to say that they can experience working in laboratory, office and workshop, can have direct contact with the competence trainers and instructors, and can get direct answers for their questions. About 350 regional groups work together to organize the Girls' Day. These include trade unions, employment agencies and employer associations. These groups are willing to work to increase girls' opportunities in work, open more opportunities for their future, and help them to find their dream job through providing these training workshops. Girls' Day enterprise is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the European Social Fund, while the nationwide project Girls' Day will be supported by the German Trade Unions (DGB), the D21, the Federal Employment Agency, the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA), the German Industry and Commerce (DIHK), the Federation of German Industry (BDI), the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH) and Federal Parent (BER).

There is a story from a participant of Girls' Day whose name is Stefanie Schuster, who now has become an electronic technician. During Girls' Day in 2004 and 2005, she had visited the Robert Bosch Company in Bamberg. There she was led through the process of work and received explanations and introductions to the products and various job positions. She was allowed to participate in a couple of wire bending exercises and combining pieces of wires and metals with solder. After her participation in Girls' Day, she decided to do her internship in a



technical field. After the internship, she had applied to three companies in the mechanics and electronics field for training. In 2006 she had started her training at the Robert Bosch Company and succeeded in finishing it. Now she works at Bosch Company in Bamberg as an electronic technician in nozzle production. About 180 girls are invited in the Bosch Company on the Girls' Day event. Afterwards more than 30 percent of women work as a trainee at the Bosch Company in the technical field, which is very impressive for the Bosch Company.

Girls' Day has a positive impact on the technical qualifications and job prospects of the participants. Despite the fact that many young women in Germany are provided a very good education, most of them are still choosing "typically female" jobs and courses. From the list of top ten jobs that women have taken in 2012, none were related with science and IT, which shows women are not using their chances and taking advantage of opportunities in all professional fields. One year later, in 2013, there was positive news that according to the results of the evaluation in 2013, there was a development of skilled labor for women in Germany in IT fields, an increase of women's rate as craftsman in the industry and a rise in women students in IT, mechanical, and electrical engineering. This shows that women can help solve the skilled labor shortage in technology, science, crafts, and IT if more workers or employees are needed in these professional fields and women are able to work in both "typically male" and "typically female" jobs.

Besides dealing with the skilled labor shortage with the help of Girls' Day enterprise, there is an age poverty problem which can be solved by VAMV, an association of single parents that is located in 13 states including the capital city, Berlin.

VAMV is an information and counseling center for single (pregnant) mothers and fathers. This association acts as a counselor, who provides helpful information, helps single parent in searching solutions to deal with their problems and strengthen their skills in taking care of their children. Their goal is to resolve the conflict caused by the status of single parents. VAMV offers individual consultation, family courses, group meetings in VAMV Café, detailed information about childcare, and maternity protection during pregnancy, compatibility of career and family, studying with children, financial support for children and parents, housing benefits and various exciting vacation trips for children and teenager. There is a cost for the consultation, which has various prices for members and non-members of VAMV. All consultation fees are set up at a low affordable price for the non-members, while the members receive an even lower price. Some programs and consultations are free of charge for both members and non-members.

### 3.1.1. Individual consultation and family course

Single parents, families that are expected to divorce/separate and pregnant women are welcomed to individual consultation which is provided by an expert counselor of VAMV. There they will receive advice on topics such as child support, livelihood security, custody, crisis intervention, conflict resolution, etc.

In the family course, the single parents, along with their children from age 3 – 12 years old are welcomed and will learn how to become strong parents, build a strong family, recognize the family values, and expand the abilities to listen, negotiate and solve the family problems.

### 3.1.2. VAMV Café

VAMV Café is an open place, where single parents are gathering to get to know each other and share their experience while having a meal from a small breakfast buffet.



### 3.1.3. Helpful information

To be able to build a good career and have children at the same time is absolutely possible if the parents have good knowledge and skillful in taking care of their children.

Some single parents who have dropped their children off at the daycare center are still unable to take care of them due to work when the daycare center has already closed. By reading the information and following the advice which are provided by VAMV on their website, the single parents have the rights to ask for extra childcare from the youth offices whose contact and address are listed in detail.

Pregnant women, who fear job and financial loss, can apply for maternity protection, maternity benefits and also can demand goods such as maternity clothes or necessary household item from the foundation to help the family if they are ever in an emergency.

Single parents, who want to take further training/education program for a job, are allowed to demand childcare benefits from the job agency. Also single parents, who have the custody of children, can primarily receive child benefits, child benefit supplements and parent benefits from the government.

### 3.1.4. Vacations trips for children and teenagers

The VAMV website offers some associations whose task is to plan, organize and carry out the vacation trips for the children and teenagers. One of the associations is KinderGlück-Berlin. During the trips, the children and teenagers will be watched and taken care of by young people such as students from social education, educators and leaders from various sports fields.

Many people are worried about financial, work/career and family problems when they start having and raising children with their partner, but with the help of VAMV, they can resolve all problems and worries such as financial deficiency, lack of time for childcare due to work/education and fear of divorce and being a single parent. Because of this, people will have less to worry about in regards to having and raising their children, which can increase the population rate and solve the aged poverty problem in Germany.

## 2. Evidence from Latvia

Latvia is at the beginning of building the concept of social entrepreneurship because social entrepreneurship is a fairly new concept in Latvia. There are no secure and settled legislation or funds regarding social entrepreneurship, but in spite of that, there are several organizations that are social businesses. There are roughly 10 to 20 visibly noticeable social businesses in the country and most of them are related to charity and helping people with handicap. Mostly there are hybrid social enterprises - regular enterprises that are running their businesses, while helping to solve one or more social problems.

Many of these businesses are work integration social enterprises that help to solve one of the biggest social problems in Latvia – unemployment, especially among young people. For instance, Latvian supermarket chain “*Rimi*” has started a youth development program called “*Go Beyond*” which helps to create new potential managers, giving opportunity to earn some new leadership, communication skills, English skills and it involves them into different social projects. This program prepares youngsters for labor market and it provides some youngsters with a job in the company. This program lasts 10 months and it has been successfully working for 2 years.

Latvian fuel company “*Statoil*” and another supermarket chain “*Maxima*” also gives preference to young people when it comes to hiring people, helping to build a strong future workforce in Latvia.

There also are some homepages with databases of available jobs especially for youngsters in different occupational fields, for example [www.varam.lv](http://www.varam.lv). Youngsters can apply for internship or job interviews through these homepages.

If we look into unfavorable regions in Riga, the best examples are „Brasalona”, „Andrejsala” and „VEF” territory. „Brasalona” was an abandoned industrial area next to the railway until last year when a group of Latvian artists decided to create a place for art and culture events, creative workshops, concerts and performances. Right now „Brasalona” is already the home of The Artists’ Union of Latvia gallery “Art”, Latvian music label “Dirty Deal Audio”, “Rīgas Darbnīca,” which popularizes the use of recycled materials in the creation of design and practical objects as well as other creative initiatives. All the participants share a vision of Brasalona Centre as a creative space where art, culture, music and nature awareness freely interact in the urban environment. They are cleaning the area and people are starting to attend this place, making it a center for artists and creative people.

“Andrejsala” is a region next to the Daugava River which was completely abandoned a few years ago. It was an industrial area full with old factories, warehouses and an industrial harbor. Over the past few years it was turned into an aesthetically pleasing and multifunctional urban environment with high quality architecture. Now it’s a place for exclusive restaurants, nightclubs, art galleries, shops and even a business incubator “Creative Andrejsala”. People like to spend their free time in this area and it is very popular among young people.

“VEF” territory is still in the reconstruction process. This area is very big and it has been separated from the city for a long time. It also was an old industrial area which started to degrade approximately 40 years ago. Right now there are many enterprises working on reconstructing and cleaning up the area, such as “STATS Invest”. At the moment there is an art center and cafe „Totaldobže”, art gallery „Galerija Ziema”, different design studios and local designer shops in this area, but there are even more serious projects that are being introduced because of the potential of this territory.

There are other good examples of Latvian social enterprises. Charity shops „Otrā elpa” and „Ziedot” give away their profit for social support projects (supporting asylums, orphanages, animal shelters, poor people and social assistance centers), designer scarf company „Mammu” provides young mothers with a job in their company, and the company „HOPP” makes special tricycles for seniors and people with handicaps. The social enterprise „Lude” hires seniors that cannot find work anywhere else and this enterprise also provides seniors with yoga lessons, tea evenings and other leisure activities. „Wooly World” enterprise sells toys from raw materials and these toys are made by people with special needs as well as another enterprise’s tea cups „Jū hū” which are made by people with handicaps.

### 3. Evidence from the United States

In a country as vast and as diverse as the United States, there is undoubtedly an impact made by social enterprises. The United States has every class of people present, from different cultures to varying socioeconomic classes, to varying ideologies, which fosters an environment where people can help others and make a lasting impact through social enterprises. The effects of social enterprise on the United States are as vast as the country is, and therefore it is impossible to cover every success story and every example in just one part of this thesis. The smart city idea as it pertains to social enterprise, innovation, and creativity largely addresses Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. In the subsequent paragraphs, it becomes evident that once the most basic needs of people are met – shelter, food, money, self-esteem, knowledge – they can

become productive, creative, positive, and innovative members of society. In essence, a social enterprise, no matter how large or small, is laying the foundation for the future.

In terms of social enterprise, the best words to describe what must occur come from an article titled "Digital Urban Renewal: Retro-fitting existing cities with smart solutions is the urban challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century" by Jeremy Green. This article was published on the website of the popular technology company Cisco Systems, and discusses the term "open collaboration." This undoubtedly applies to social enterprise, because for a social enterprise to be successful there must be open collaboration between community members and business, businesses and businesses, and businesses and government. The subsequent paragraphs will illustrate the importance for social enterprise to connect with the community (at local, domestic, and international levels) as well as the importance for social entrepreneurs to connect with each other.

Before discussing the impact that social enterprises have had on the people of the United States, it is important to note how a social entrepreneur in the United States goes about his or her work, and how there are a variety of opportunities available to them to make their work meaningful and as productive as possible. There are a collection of think tanks around the United States for social enterprise, and one such think tank is Propeller, located in New Orleans. It has the same characteristics as other social enterprise work spaces and think tanks, so it will be used as the example. This think tank rents office spaces to entrepreneurs so that they can keep their costs low and focus on making a difference, it offers competitions for social enterprises to make money and expand, it offers seminars and courses so that social entrepreneurs can expand their skill sets and enhance their knowledge, and they encourage an open, community-oriented environment that really fosters the creativity of the social entrepreneur so that he or she can make the biggest difference possible. A think tank and group that also fosters the abilities of the social entrepreneur is the Social Enterprise Alliance. This is a membership alliance that offers social entrepreneurs and aspiring social entrepreneurs the chances to learn more and have a network to learn from. They host an annual Social Enterprise Summit that offers classes, inspiring keynote speakers, and the ability for social entrepreneurs and students to gain a better understanding as to how being in business can make a positive impact on society and inspire others.

The Social Enterprise Alliance is hosting its annual Social Enterprise Summit this year in Nashville, Tennessee, which is an area ripe with social enterprise. The city is home to a number of very important social enterprises, which include: Rocketown, Thistle Farms, Emerge, fashion-ABLE, and Teach Twice. Rocketown is a community center devoted to providing the nurturing environment that children and adolescents need. They offer after school programs, and indoor skate park, programs for at-risk youth, summer camps, community service, and bible studies. Their mission is to create a sense of acceptance for the youth that they help, and instill self-esteem in them so that they become productive members of society. Thistle Farms provides women who have suffered through lives of prostitution, addiction, trafficking, and other horrible situations with the opportunity to learn about manufacturing, acquire a marketable skill, and generate an income for themselves through making bath products – without these opportunities, the women would still be in the horrible situations that they were in, and they could never contribute to the "smart city" because they were working in or dealing with situations that compose the antithesis of the "smart city." Emerge works towards providing financial stability to those who have little to no financial education, in the hopes of someday lessening the economic inequality that is experienced in the United States. In the United States, approximately 70% of people live "paycheck to paycheck," meaning they usually spend all of their wages, and have to wait for the next check before they can purchase anything or even survive (financially speaking, of course) again. A financially stressed employee can cost a company over \$400 per month.

The stress of not having enough money to live comfortably leads to an increase in workplace accidents, and Emerge can help to create a sense of financial security among employees so that they may not need to be paid more, but can change their outlook and return to being productive employees. The Emerge website states:

“With nearly 70% of workers living paycheck to paycheck, financial stress can cost employers an average of \$400 per employee each year. Workers living paycheck to paycheck have high turnover rates and are more prone to workplace accidents. By helping employees reduce financial stress, Emerge improves your bottom line with:

- a. Improved retention rates
- b. Limited distractions and increased productivity
- c. Lowered sick time usage
- d. Reduced errors and accidents
- e. Lowered impact of high deductible health insurance plans
- f. Increased retirement savings

For most employees, financial wellness is more about feeling financially secure than about monetary compensation; find out more from this Gallup study. Emerge builds a culture that promotes financial security and gives employees tools to strengthen their financial future.”

Source: [www.emergebenefit.com](http://www.emergebenefit.com)

Fashion-ABLE is unique in that it does not provide social assistance domestically within the United States. The board of directors of the company are based in the United States, but the scarves and leather products that the company sells are manufactured by women in Africa, which has not only provided jobs for women in some of the most impoverished nations in the world but has also provided them with a sense of pride in that they need not rely on charity, but can instead rely on the fact that they make their own income. Finally, Teach Twice contributes to the crucial “smart city” component of culturally educated citizens. It encourages authors from around the world to write children’s books that teach a lesson about the culture, and sells them in the United States in the hopes that children will become more socially and culturally aware, and more tolerant and accepting of the various beautiful cultures around the world. Where the education system in the United States lacks a strong moral education and cultural education, Teach Twice seems to be trying to provide one. While the American South is typically considered to be a close-minded place, it seems like they are making leaps and bounds with creating social enterprises that have a positive impact on society and are creating innovative and creative individuals, all while providing jobs, decreasing the economic inequality experienced in the United States, and making up for what the education system does not teach in areas such as self-esteem and acceptance.

After the natural disaster in 2005 of Hurricane Katrina, communities and businesses came together to make a difference and respond. Across the country, companies like Habitat for Humanity worked to make a difference and respond effectively. Habitat for Humanity is an organization devoted to building homes and creating shelters for people. Other, smaller and more local companies participated in the relief effort as well. Common Ground Relief is a grassroots social enterprise that is dedicated to rebuilding the wetlands and rebuilding homes and schools in New Orleans, and is run by people who are not in business to make money, but are in business to make a lasting impact and change lives. New Orleans also experiences a huge amount of poverty, so there are social enterprises that help those who are disadvantaged and would otherwise be living their lives on the street. One such business is Café Reconcile, which helps underprivileged and at risk youth learn a trade and become marketable and productive members of society. Adolescents who work with Café Reconcile learn about the

various aspects of the food service industry, and learn valuable interpersonal skills through interacting with customers. These adolescents then have a feeling of importance, which in turn can lead to a positive change in their lives – they may pursue higher education or find a job elsewhere and move up the “corporate ladder” to reach their full potential. Like Café Reconcile, Old Skool Café in San Francisco employs and teaches at-risk youth about how to operate a club and provide not only food and excellent service, but music and entertainment as well. The importance of Café Reconcile and Old Skool Café in aiding young people and unlocking their potential at its core embodies the essence of a “smart city.” Once people are given the opportunity to use their skills positively and unlock their potential, they will become productive members of society who may in turn be inspired to further aid the community and unlock potential in others. As potential is continually unlocked, a domino effect takes place, and the result is a happier, more productive, more innovative and creative society.

The impact of social enterprise is not limited to New Orleans and San Francisco. In South Dakota, Lakota Native Americans face a terrible plight every day. The Lakota nation suffers from astronomically high suicide rates, life expectancy as low as Haiti (Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere, with a life expectancy of only 62 years), high infant mortality rates, unemployment of 87%, and poverty levels of 90%. Imagine, in the United States, a country that is so proud of being progressive, that people are living in conditions that are just as bad (if not worse) as those in third world countries. Luckily, social enterprises such as One Spirit can help the Lakota people and provide them with food and heat, and can give them outlets for selling their wares and making money. Again, by providing the Lakota people with their most basic needs (food and warm shelter), they can focus on other outlets, such as making money, which in turn leads to a positive feeling, and a sense of wondering what is beyond the confines of the reservation, and perhaps a shift towards a desire for higher education and increased community involvement.

The Harlem area of New York City also experiences levels of economic inequality that are ridiculous compared to the rest of New York, which is typically considered to be a wealthy city. Most people around the world consider New York City to be a progressive, innovative, wealthy, and grand place, but the reality can be quite different – and the people of Harlem are truly the backbone of the city, performing the low-wage jobs and paying the price, both financially and physically, to live in such a great city. With over 46% of people in New York City living in poverty, there is a need for better access to fresh food and nutrition. A social enterprise such as the Corbin Hill Food Project helps to provide nutritional and fresh foods to families who are suffering in Harlem. With a dedicated group of farmers and community organizers, the company can provide for and improve the lives of the people in Harlem, and when the basic need of good, nutritional food is met, then increased participation in school or increased job performance can occur, which is vital to creating a “smart city.” Also in Harlem is an organization called Hot Bread Kitchen that teaches low-income men and women about the specialty food industry, and provides them with training and resources so that they may have successful careers and provide for their families.

Finally, sustainable tourism is a small segment of the American economy that is working towards creating connections between cultures. The company G Adventures has founded an organization called Planeterra that exposes travelers to local living, fair trade, and sustainable travel, and uses donations made by travelers to help finance projects all over the world to help others. There is a true investment by the company into both the travelers and the people who live in the countries that the company operates tours in. It is a perfect example of those in fortunate situations helping those who are perhaps less fortunate.

These are just some of the examples of social enterprises at work in the United States. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of other examples, but the aforementioned social enterprises truly reinforce the idea that social enterprises are improving the quality of life for people in the United States and will continue to do so.



### 3. Conclusion

#### 3.1. Result

After an extensive examination of social issues within the countries of Germany, Latvia, and the United States, it is evident that social innovation and creativity can happen within a society in multiple ways. The presence of social enterprises within these nations can promote a tangible and productive environment that lays the foundation for the other pillars of the “smart city” to come to fruition. Through the research conducted, it has become clear that in order for these countries to address the pressing problems against them, significant resources must be present and available for use. Germany and the United States have been using social enterprises to their advantage, which lends itself to the conclusion that these countries possess the necessary human capital and resources to create networks of social businesses. Latvia, on the other hand, is currently not as advanced as the other countries, but if an increase in resources was to become present, the country could reap the benefits of social enterprise. Social enterprise does not only solve urban problems, but it also provides participation in government from citizens, new aspects of social entrepreneurship, and inclusive communities. The advocacy for social enterprise has forged paths for sustainability, social innovation, and creativity. This movement of upward social mobility through the profits reaped from social entrepreneurship is working to solve the problem of economic inequality through the marriage of advocacy for social change and conscious capitalism. Overall, improving the urban environment with the use of social enterprise is a fundamental step for any society to become a “smarter” society.

#### 3.2. Authors' Thoughts

The mindset of the United States team is such that there is value in all individuals within every society. The greatest asset for any social enterprise is a creative and innovative mind. Finding a way for communities to come together and create social change will allow the sustainability of any society to succeed. Within the United States alone, it is imperative that each individual has a sense of community and willingness to use their resources to address the social problems that face urban development. In conclusion, the federal government of the United States should be promoting and incentivizing more social enterprises to play a larger role in the economic climate of the United States. The progress of the “smart city” model within the United States will depend solely on how we use efficiency to improve the quality of life.

While in Germany, although there are potential social enterprises and entrepreneurs that are in active support of decreasing the negative effects of skilled labor shortage and age poverty, the government thoroughly and continuously observe the action of reducing the problems until they no longer exist. They should take part in supporting the increase of the skilled labor shortage by creating an attractive jobs and employment market for skillful immigrants and preventing the recurrence of the issues. In dealing with the age poverty issue, the government has offered significant financial support in the form of child benefits for parents, but still few people want to have children, which can be attributed low desire and interest in the benefits. The real causes should be searched for more thoroughly by improving the communication between the society and government. By creating great cooperation and performance between social enterprise, government and society, Germany will surely be able to combat any kind of urban problems.

The Latvian government works diligently to find a way to incorporate social entrepreneurship in society. Despite the confusion over how to incorporate social enterprises into society, the



government and the people should still try. If Riga is ever to become a “smart city,” the satisfaction of the citizens should be on the forefront just as much as creating better technology. Although this paper only discusses two of the urban problems found in Riga (unemployment of young people and unfavorable regions in cities), there are a plethora of other issues that can be addressed by both the government and social enterprises. The government of Latvia is slowly creating a favorable environment for social enterprises, but they still need a lot of time to actively promote entrepreneurs to establish social enterprises. This action could be taken by taking actions comparable to those in the United Kingdom. The mindset of the Latvian team is that social entrepreneurs can do more to benefit citizens in a shorter amount of time than the government can. Therefore, awareness of social entrepreneurship should be raised so that it can be assured that social enterprises will be the best way how to develop cities for citizens in near future.

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