GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS
IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISES:
reflections from the North and
Global South on the business of
doing good

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Para mis abuelas, que siempre me creyeron capaz de todo.

3

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"Nunca te voy a enseñar a coser. La costura es muy esclava. Tú a tus libros."

Abuela Trini.

Gracias a mis padres, por el amor incondicional. A Alejandro, por haberse vuelto imprescindible en mi vida. A mis hijos Leo y Max por todo lo que me enseñan cada día. A mi hermano, por estar siempre que le necesito. A nuestras familias, llenas de personas excepcionales. A mis amigas, que son grandes maestras. A los maravillosos profesores que me inspiraron por el camino. A todas las personas extraordinarias que aparecen en estas páginas por su infinita generosidad y su firme compromiso con cambiar el mundo.

<u>A word of special thanks</u>

In 2015, I received a box of books a couple of days before Christmas. I was still struggling to find my feet after months of concern for my younger son's health. At the time, I found myself totally unable to read two pages without my mind wondering back to hospital memories that I desperately needed to leave behind. Always an avid reader, I simply felt that I was not myself anymore and wondered if I would ever truly recover. Unknowingly, this box of books -received at what was probably the worst possible time- was to become a crucial first step in the process that ultimately resulted in this thesis. And in a much deeper and intimate sense, it also marked the beginning of a personal healing process.

It was obviously not the box: it was what the box meant at the time. Its real meaning had little to do with the books themselves, with the theories of social entrepreneurship, ethnographies and background readings on social change that had been carefully selected for me. The real meaning of the box had much more to do with the person who brought it to me, and that person was Richard. At the time, that box of books meant feeling much-needed support, confidence and trust. It meant that I had a plan and I could hope to be myself again. Life could (and would) go on after all. The gratitude I owe Richard is immense.

PREFACE

A personal introduction

Social change is at the heart of this thesis. I have always been interested in changing the world. When I was a teenager, changing the world for me was closely linked to the very basic idea of somehow helping my own community overcome its challenges. At the time, I felt uneasy about certain privileges I enjoyed. Attending an expensive international school, living in a loving structured family environment and travelling to exciting places abroad, were all luxuries that never felt fair or deserved. Looking back, I think I developed the opposite of a sense of entitlement: it was a constant sense of not-deserving and/or not belonging that I believe explains many of the decisions I have taken in my life.

In my quest to "find my place" I decided to volunteer a couple of summers at an AIDS Hospice and a camp for underprivileged children in my hometown, where I found more questions than answers. It was the 1990s and drugs and HIV and AIDS were rife in my hometown in southern Spain: two worlds co-existed and evolved in parallel without ever meeting each other. Since then, I have witnessed many similar situations of inequality and injustice across the world in contexts as diverse as Ouagadougou, Maputo or Dhaka but also in the seemingly more familiar cities of Paris, London or Brussels. These experiences always make me think about my childhood and my hometown, where certain things are fortunately changing for the better, while others remain the same. Our world is full of similarities within stark differences.

When the moment came to leave school, I decided to read politics at university. It seemed to me that politics (beautifully defined as "the art of the possible") would give me the tools I needed to somehow make a difference and contribute to notions of social change that I could not even define at the time. My encounter with Marxism, African politics and inspiring friends and professors who shared dreams of social and political transformation opened a new world of possibilities. Things were finally coming together.

When it was time to start a professional career, I chose international development, a field where cultural diversity, human rights and the quest for a

better world seemed to intersect quite uniquely. Contradictions emerged once again, mirroring the past, as I sometimes felt uneasy about my comfortable life in places troubled by poverty and human rights violations. Seventeen years later, far from vanishing, these contradictions are still part of my life, making me constantly question and challenge aspects of my work. At the same time, my initial fascination with the complexities of social change and the limits of good will when you want to change the world remain completely intact. I have not become overly critical or cynical over these years (quite a common trend for development practitioners). On the contrary, I remain as strongly committed as ever to the idea that a different world is possible. An incorrigible optimist. Maybe.

In 2015 my life was turned upside down by my younger son's illness. When he recovered, I felt an incredible impetus to engage in new things. It was like being given a second opportunity in life, a golden chance to do everything differently. This wonderful energy seemed perfect for launching a new PhD project. I already had in mind a prospective director. It could only be Richard, who is not only bright and unassuming but -above all- extremely generous. Without him, I would have never embarked on this adventure in the first place.

A personal rationale

Having initially centred my research broadly on social change, it seemed that the concept of social entrepreneurship could provide an interesting focus as a potential tool for social transformation. Beyond the Third Sector I was familiar with after 17 years of working in international development, I wanted to gain a better understanding of a dimension of social change that had only been a marginal part of my work as development practitioner until then. The notions of social entrepreneurship and economic empowerment had crept into international development discourses and I was intrigued by experiences such as the Grameen Bank, the micro-credit pioneering organisation led by Mohammed Yunus. During these years, I had witnessed the emergence of a myriad of new entities that navigated between Third Sector organisations and private businesses. I had also became increasingly interested in looking at how private sector organisations (siding with free market capitalism by default) could serve

as a driving force for change and improve the lives of people if only a social mission could substitute the money-making logic of traditional enterprises. Making the economy more social and introducing new ways of doing business seemed like an interesting avenue for bringing about change and challenging the excesses of the capitalist system from within. Four years later, this is -to me- no longer just an interesting avenue to explore, but an indispensable one if we are to change the world we live in. There are simply no shortcuts or alternatives in our pursuit of growth with equity and sustainable development when we face the growing challenges of rising inequality coupled with urgent issues such as climate change.

Social entrepreneurship does not have the answers to these problems nor does it offer comprehensive solutions to the complex ills of our time, but I do believe it can contribute to meaningful change and can support positive changes that improve the lives of others to make them "lives worth living" (Nussbaum, 2013). This thesis hopefully provides some illustrations of how this can be achieved by reflecting on various examples of social enterprises that are making a difference.

Hence, this thesis is more than an academic document. It is also the result of a personal journey of reflection that has allowed me to revisit 17 years of field experiences and explore the complex ways in which organisations contribute to social change. I have had the opportunity to apply theoretical frameworks that have deepened my understanding of social enterprises as potential agents of change. This personal and academic adventure has taken me down unexpected paths as one line of research led to another, while my own entrepreneurial experiences as aspiring cooperativist developed on the fringes of my academic work. This constant toing and froing from academia to business and from theory to practice constitutes the backdrop of this thesis and may help the reader understand its strengths and weaknesses.

INTRODUCTION

Research rationale

How can we bring about transformative social change? Where should we start and what should be our role as concerned individuals? Should it be up to our respective States and to the political institutions that represent us? Or should civil society actors play a leading role, engaging from the local to the global level? And if our market-driven capitalist system is at the heart of our concerns, how can enterprises make a difference?

I have chosen to write about social entrepreneurship because I believe it is relevant to these difficult questions given its potential to contribute to social change in various ways. It is also closely related to my professional career in international development. In my visits to Africa and South-East Asia, I have seen how social enterprises can improve people's lives by promoting a different way of doing business that makes our economic system kinder and fairer while challenging the capitalist market-driven system from within. I have also seen that social entrepreneurship can also mean *doing good* in a way that is empowering and respectful by moving away from the delivery and needs-based approaches of traditional charities. Hence, I have noted that social enterprises can play a role in driving many different types of efforts to make the world a better place.

In recent years, a significant part of the research on social enterprises has focused on establishing concrete academic categories and defining what social entrepreneurship is and what it has in common with commercial entrepreneurial activity (Nicholls, 2006: 7). However, we have now come to acknowledge that social entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon "that shapes and is being shaped through everyday practice" (Mauksch et al, 2017: 114). Far from being static organisational structures, social enterprises are living entities in constant flux that cannot be reduced to specific models or approaches for academic purposes.

I believe that the practices and perspectives that social anthropology brings to research on social entrepreneurship offer important insights into this multi-layered phenomenon by delving deeper into the details of how these organisations operate in practice, their everyday workings, singularities, coping

10

strategies and philosophies. I could have focused my research on individual entrepreneurs to consider issues around agency that are undoubtedly of relevance to debates on social entrepreneurship. However, my experience working with Third Sector organisations over the last 17 years made the issue of organisational development of central interest for the key research questions I had in mind. Hence, I decided to focus this thesis on social enterprises in an attempt to explore three core issues: a) hybridity - how do organisations balance social and commercial goals? how do "hybrids" develop and operate in different contexts?, b) gender equality - how are women participating in social entrepreneurship? what is their perceived role in social enterprises? how are they contributing and benefitting?; c) human rights - what is their relevance for social enterprises? is applying a human rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship useful or desirable?. All these questions necessarily required considering collective aspects of social change dynamics and hence, it made more sense to explore them within the context of concrete organisations, namely social enterprises. Nonetheless, to paraphrase Lund, some of these research questions turned out to be "merely a first step in a long series of gradual precisions", as the research process evolved in various directions over a period of nearly four years, and as often happens, each section of the thesis eventually addressed slightly different questions from the ones I had initially set out to answer (Lund, 2014: 227).

With this thesis, I hope to contribute to the existing literature on social entrepreneurship by unpacking the concept of hybridity with the objective of moving beyond simple socio-economic dichotomies in social enterprise research, such as welfare versus the market. I also seek to promote reflection on aspects of social entrepreneurship that cannot be easily framed in traditional academic ways, namely the hybridity of organisations, how gender dynamics affect organisational practices and how human rights can also be part of our thinking about social entrepreneurship and its contribution to transformative change. The value of tentative theoretical approaches and analytical frameworks is undeniable when it comes to helping our understanding on social enterprises and hence, I have tried to embrace various theoretical concepts in an adapted and combined manner throughout my research.

11

Chapter 1 explores questions around gender as a factor that is clearly relevant to the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship, but which is often studied in isolation, rather than as an element that conditions and/or determines aspects of the everyday practices of social enterprises. In order to illustrate the multi-layered nature of gender in social entrepreneurship, I analyse the experiences of women-led cooperatives through the lens of empowerment and discuss their potential contributions to transformative change.

Leading on from this discussion, I dedicate Chapter 2 to exploring the experience of a social enterprise operating in the same ecosystem as the cooperatives explored in Chapter 1 (Andalusia). I consider the notion of hybridity and apply principles borrowed from cultural theory to analyse this experience of social entrepreneurship. In this discussion, I argue that the question we should be asking ourselves is not whether an organisation is a hybrid or not, since everyday practices of social enterprises go beyond set frames and binary oppositions between social and economic, or social and commercial, or social and business-oriented (Mauksch et al, 2017). Instead, the research question at the core of this chapter is whether and how concrete social enterprises manage, negotiate, reinvent and address these tensions through creative strategies in each specific ecosystem and the role that context plays in determining this hybridity.

Context and environment are key for understanding social enterprises and painting "thick descriptions" of this type of phenomenon (Geertz, 1973). Chapter 3 explores the notion of social entrepreneurship in the realm of international development and illustrates some of the key issues that this phenomenon raises in a radically different ecosystem through the story of a social enterprise operating in Bangladesh. The possibilities and challenges of applying a human rights-based approach are explored by looking at the different ways in which social enterprises contribute to innovation and social change in this context.

As an overarching goal, this thesis also seeks to contribute to ongoing efforts to bridge the knowledge gap that exists between dominant discourses on social enterprises and how these discourses are applied in the everyday practices of these organisations (theory and praxis).

The empirical data I have collected has been the result of fieldwork conducted in Andalusia and Bangladesh. This fieldwork was more extensive in duration and scope, incorporating ethnographic methods in the case of the women-led cooperatives discussed in Chapter 1 and the social enterprise discussed in Chapter 2. These two chapters focus on Andalusia and involve analysing work cooperatives and a social enterprise with a feminist agenda that evolved from a community-based organisation working with women who had been victims of gender-based violence to a social enterprise. Chapter 3 focuses on the experience of a social enterprise operating in Bangladesh that provides services to vulnerable groups.

This opening chapter seeks to provide a summary of the aims and structure of the thesis by sharing a rationale for the research. I will provide an overview of the theoretical and methodological elements that have been applied to the analysis and production of the empirical data. The final section of the chapter includes considerations that will help the reader understand the background of my fieldwork and my own roles and perceptions. In this introduction I will therefore demonstrate the shared common ground of Chapters 1 to 3, and how these chapters address different aspects of the same overarching problem. Nevertheless, the three chapters can also be read alternatively as stand-alone contributions to each of the specific issues they raise.

Is another economy possible?

Our world is undergoing profound social changes that are shaping the development of an interesting field where business and action for social change intersect: a broad field that has come to be known as social entrepreneurship in which for example, a charity shop is both a charity and a business. This is the case in countries like Bangladesh, where social enterprises that are part of BRAC provide employment for vulnerable people at risk of exclusion and make goods and services available to these neglected social groups. It is also the case in Andalusia, where associations adapt to embrace commercial logics while preserving their social missions. These alternative commercial approaches are changing business enterprises by incorporating new elements and values that

13

supersede traditional entrepreneurial models that focused solely on economic gain. These notions of change are present in the inspiring accounts shared by the women members of cooperatives operating in Andalusia presented in Chapter 1, in a small social enterprise's struggle to bring social and economic goals together discussed in Chapter 2 or in the experience of a large, consolidated social enterprise operating in Bangladesh that tries to contribute to sustainable development through the alternative business model described in Chapter 3.

Underlying these actions for change is the idea that another economy is possible: an economy that can bring about social change, reduce inequalities and improve the lives of people. It is this idea that has inspired me to write about social entrepreneurship and explore social enterprises as entities with the potential to bring about transformative change.

In 2008, the world witnessed an unprecedented global economic crisis. Its devastating effects were felt across the world, bringing about rising poverty, inequality and unemployment, and creating new challenges for governments and institutions across the globe. In the context of Europe, the crisis brought to the forefront the limitations and unexpected frailty of what was deemed to be a robust welfare system that was firmly embedded in the European political culture, and ultimately caused a welfare crisis that affected not only budgets, but also the efficiency and legitimacy of welfare systems (Defourny, 2010). During these years, we witnessed how the introduction of so-called "austerity" measures to curb the effects of the crisis through expenditure cuts led to a profound questioning of the principles of the welfare system, at a time when (rather paradoxically) the need for social services and safety nets was greater than ever before. Understanding the effects of the crisis in the context of Andalusia is central for understanding some of the experiences analysed in this research. For women like Ursula, the crisis granted a decisive push to develop self-employment opportunities. We will meet Ursula in Chapter 2, where I will discuss her association's transformation into a social enterprise.

Many argue that the crisis of the welfare system and the transformation of the non-profit sector have been catalysts for the development of social entrepreneurship in recent years (Perrini, 2006). This is related to how, against

the backdrop of this global economic crisis, social entrepreneurship began to attract ever-growing attention as a phenomenon that could provide alternatives to existing solutions, products and services, respond to an existing gap or issue, defy an "unsatisfactory equilibrium" or emerge in response to a pressing social need (Martin and Osberg, 2010).

The global crisis increased the needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population, in a context marked by shrinking employment opportunities that profoundly affected many of the women I interviewed. At the same time, austerity measures meant that the scope of support policies was reduced, with "public authorities increasingly looking to private initiatives to provide solutions that they would have implemented themselves if the economic climate had been as good as in the glorious 1945-75 period" (Defourny, 2010: 61). In this context, Third Sector actors and private individuals became deeply involved in these emerging issues, seeking solutions and intervening to fill in the gaps left by the State, particularly in the provision of social services. These "crisis-oriented factors" (Perrini, 2006: 16) also included other aspects causing changes to the overall situation such as normative modifications, technological progress or new partnership opportunities unexpectedly brought about by the crisis. Against the backdrop of these imperfect balances, social entrepreneurship initiatives multiplied.

In a European context marked by high unemployment, many individuals resorted to self-employment, creating their own work opportunities in contexts where there were none. The women-led cooperatives discussed in Chapter 1 constitute relevant examples of this trend in the context of Andalusia. For those new entrepreneurs that sought alternative means of subsistence, social entrepreneurship was more a forced option than a real choice, as Chapter 1 argues in relation to certain social enterprises. This paradox of independence has been clear in cases where entrepreneurial options have been marked by the precariousness of the work, the loss of rights and a reduction in both gross income and social security status (Pfeilstetter, 2016).

15

Hence, this thesis explores different dimensions of social entrepreneurship understood as the intersection between social and business goals by discussing its potential to serve as a tool for social change in given ecosystems. Social entrepreneurship is presented as a multi-faceted phenomenon that can take many different forms and can develop in diverse ecosystems through strategies that can be innovative and empowering but also challenging and problematic when they compromise the social mandates of organisations and cause "mission drifts" that question their very foundations. This thesis also tries to look beyond debates that focus on the need for categories and definitions to look at social enterprises as "something that is done, rather than something that is" (Mauksch et al, 2017: 114).

Social entrepreneurship

For the purposes of this research, the social economy is understood as the context in which social entrepreneurship emerges, develops and thrives. The social economy can also be defined as "non-profit activities designed to combat social exclusion through socially useful goods sold in the market and which are not provided for by the state or the private sector" (Amin, Cameron and Hudson, 2002: vii). Throughout this thesis, I use the terms "social enterprise" and "social entrepreneurship" indistinctly, understanding social enterprise as embodying the concept of social entrepreneurship and being one of its possible representations. Nevertheless, the specialised literature sometimes distinguishes between social entrepreneurship as social innovation and social enterprising as addressing social problems by the means of the market. The term social enterprise also refers to the different forms of organisations that engage in social entrepreneurship activities, including associations, non-profit organisations (such as BRAC in Bangladesh) and cooperatives (Mondragon in Spain).

Much of the literature on social enterprises has focused on efforts to define the concept and create categories (Perrini, 2006). These attempts proved problematic at best, although for some authors, it is precisely this absence of clarity that explains the "extraordinary impact" of the concept, thanks to its "dynamic flexibility" (Nicholls, 2006: 10). As a result, the term social entrepreneurship is currently being used to refer to an increasingly wide range of

16

initiatives (including certain forms of traditional social services and legal structures) as the cooperatives and associations operating in the context of Andalusia and presented in Chapters 1 and 2.

In broad terms, social entrepreneurship can be described as "a process of catering to locally-existing basic needs that are not addressed by traditional organisations" (Mair, 2010: 19). It is the combination of entrepreneurship, innovation and social change that makes up social entrepreneurship (Perrini, 2006). This notion of innovation (discussed in Chapter 1) is another element highlighted by Martin and Osberg, who argue that the differentiating factor between social entrepreneurship and other initiatives is that "entrepreneurship connotes a special, innate ability to sense and act on opportunity, combining out-of-the-box thinking with a unique brand of determination to create or bring about something new to the world" (2007: 30). Some of these enterprises are also referred to as "human-based" (*empresas de base humana*), since the innovation driving them moves the focus away from technology to persons "thereby transforming the characteristics of the production process and the type of consumer" (Valenzuela and Molina, 2013: 527). Entrepreneurs expect some form of financial gain while social entrepreneurs seek a large-scale transformational benefit for a segment of society or for society at large.

In relation to this idea, one of the premises explored in this research is the notion that social entrepreneurship supports social cohesion and change by creating a better balance between these principles and the economic purposes of entrepreneurial activity. This is illustrated by the case study presented in Chapter 3, which considers BNG's contribution to reducing discrimination and promoting the integration of excluded children while functioning as a business that receives payment from families who are better off. In other words, beyond its potential to generate value, social entrepreneurship can also contribute to greater social justice (Fayolle and Matlay, 2010).

When writing about Bangladesh in Chapter 3, I also note how social entrepreneurship provides a business source of revenue for many types of socially oriented organisations and activities targeting a disadvantaged population group

that does not have the economic means or influence to access the goods and services it requires (Kerlin, 2013, Martin and Osberg, 2007). As the experience detailed in this chapter illustrates, social entrepreneurship opportunities are geographically situated and materialise in social projects that emerge only when individuals mobilise themselves in the effort to give an entrepreneurial answer to a social need. Waheed is a social entrepreneur I met in Jharkhand in 2016 who had developed an interesting business model that sought to address community needs in all areas of sustainable development while at the same time promoting social cohesion and inclusion by lending special support to the most vulnerable population groups. The type of social needs his social enterprise is addressing are not necessarily geographically situated and do not generate social projects on their own. They are therefore a necessary but insufficient condition for the emergence of social opportunities (Cajaiba-Santana, 2010). For example, there are many social issues we can identify at the local level in our communities that do not receive responses as social projects/opportunities until someone frames the issue as a problem to be addressed from a social entrepreneurial perspective.

The experiences of FEM (Chapter 2) and BNG (Chapter 3), support the view that social entrepreneurship may have an anti-establishment dimension, often stepping in to serve a population or deliver a product or service that was receiving no response from government and relevant public services. It can be considered the result of the failure of the State to provide sufficient or appropriate public goods (Nicholls, 2006). It is thus also the desire for social innovation, coupled with the identification of a concrete opportunity or need that guides social entrepreneurial development. Furthermore, it seems that it is ultimately the search for the common good and the primacy of social benefit that distinguish social entrepreneurship from other initiatives (Martin and Osberg, 2007: 35).

As the experience of the social enterprise presented in Chapter 3 tries to illustrate, social entrepreneurship can also entail a profound sense of duty towards the population benefitting from the service or purchasing the good that is being offered. However, it is to be differentiated from traditional social services in order to ensure that the concept of social entrepreneurship does not lose its meaning

and remains useful. For Mair, the key to social entrepreneurship is an explicit or implicit theory of change (2010: 20).

This thesis discusses three overarching themes at the heart of each of the central chapters: gender (Chapter 1), hybridity (Chapter 2) and international development (Chapter 3). These chapters mirror key research questions that serve as a common thread running through my thesis, namely: how is gender considered in research on social enterprises?; is the concept of hybridity useful for exploring the realities of these organisations? and is a rights-based approach relevant to the work of social enterprises? I explain how I address these issues in the sections that follow.

On gender

Chapter 1 introduces issues linked to gender in social entrepreneurship as factors that are often neglected, and this premise leads to a wider discussion on gender and empowerment issues. I decided to focus this chapter of the thesis on the experiences of three women-led cooperatives to reflect on the question of whether these particular social enterprises might be said to empower women or on the contrary, perpetuate gender roles in their context of operation. This discussion delved into deeper epistemological questions, such as whether the concept of entrepreneurship is located in the "symbolic universe of the male" and is thus a gendered concept that is far from innocent or neutral (Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio, 2005: 2). Following Brush et al, I have also sought to move beyond the tendency to consider only the three traditional Ms (money, management and markets) in my discussion by also considering the M for meso/macro environment and M for motherhood understood in terms of family and household-related matters that can condition entrepreneurial activity (2009). These are central to the discussion, since we know that "women, dramatically more so than men, are bound by family responsibilities" (Hall, 2013: 4).

On hybridity

In Chapter 2, I discuss how hybridity in social enterprises entails developing a quasi-chameleonic capacity to diversify and adopt different strategies. I have taken a case study that serves to illustrate this capacity in a given context by

19

analysing a social enterprise that works in the context of Andalusia and is driven by a strong feminist agenda (FEM). In the first section, I discuss recent literature on social entrepreneurship, with a significant focus on the study of hybridity. Hybridity as a concept applied to social entrepreneurship focuses on the socio-economic tension as a prime factor to define these organisations and practices. Following authors such as Dey and Teasdale (2016), I argue that this tendency has often reduced the strategies and work of social enterprises to a permanent tension between economic and social goals, without acknowledging that this tension is central for shaping social enterprises. Furthermore, even if for authors such as Nicholls a core discussion issue is that classification is "highly problematic", given the wide array of contexts and organisational forms (2006: 11), I argue that this complex reality should not deter us from engaging in a broader discussion on hybridity, since what is really "new and most distinctive about social entrepreneurship is not the particular organisational forms that are used but the entrepreneur's continual pursuit of greater social or environmental impact" (Young, 2006: 59). This chapter serves to explore these aspects, since FEM has developed creative survival strategies that illustrate the complexity of the tensions affecting social enterprises, particularly when their social mission is guided by a strong feminist agenda.

On development

One of the issues underlying Chapters 1 and 2 is the embeddedness of social enterprises in their socio-cultural contexts and the role that ecosystems play in determining their performance. In Chapter 3, I draw from my international experience working in the global south to consider the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship in international development discourses and practices. I analyse the experience of a large successful social enterprise to illustrate the different types of change that these organisations can help to bring about. In developing contexts, social entrepreneurship has turned into more than a marginal activity that can be "pigeon-holed under the headings of not-for-profit management or charity governance, but rather a driver of significant social change" (Nicholls, 2006: 5).

Social enterprises are increasingly present in many regions of the world, as non-governmental, market-based approaches are being increasingly applied to address social issues (Kerlin, 2010). These considerations are of special relevance in the context of development countries where Third Sector organisations have traditionally engaged in international cooperation actions that often included more commercial or entrepreneurial lines of work as part of their coping and survival strategies. In such diverse contexts, I also draw attention to the importance of reminding ourselves that apart from being an economic phenomenon, entrepreneurship can also be considered a cultural phenomenon (Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio, 2005: 1), as well as a social catalyst (Schumpeter, 1959). The discussion in Chapter 3 focuses on the case of a social enterprise operating in Bangladesh to explore the advantages and limitations of applying a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship and the relevance of human rights for discussions on transformative change.

In short, each of the three chapters focuses on a different relevant issue or field of research within social entrepreneurship -gender, hybridity and development-respectively. In the following section, I will present the three theoretical lenses I develop in each chapter to discuss these issues.

Theoretical-conceptual frameworks

> "Theorisation is about moving from observation of empirical events, through concepts to be able to say something about the inherent qualities and dynamics in contexts other than the ones studied" (Lund, 2014: 228).

Following Geertz, I believe that my use of theoretical elements throughout this thesis is not so much directed at codifying "abstract regularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them" (1973: 25). In order to do this, I have applied three different theoretical approaches that have been adapted to facilitate reflection on various aspects of social entrepreneurship. The first theoretical framework I have incorporated is the notion of women's empowerment (drawing from Kabeer's definition of empowerment as freedom to choose). This concept has served to analyse the experiences of three women-led cooperatives in Chapter 1 (INTDEV, WBEING

and CCARE) by considering gender aspects of social entrepreneurship that are often taken for granted in our heteronormative society but are relevant to our perceptions of this phenomenon and to our participation as women.

The second theoretical framework I have resorted to is Douglas's cultural theory, which is applied to the findings presented in Chapter 2 and which helps to frame my discussion on the characteristics of a particular social enterprise (FEM) and the coping strategies it has adopted to survive in a given ecosystem. The four cultures or typologies proposed by Douglas (namely fatalist, positional, individualist and enclave as we will learn further on) serve to illustrate how this organisation operates at different moments in time, according to various cultural biases and the role played by its leader. In Chapter 3, I have introduced elements of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to argue that applying this type of approach to social enterprises can contribute to transformative change by strengthening the "social" in these initiatives. I propose a set of steps to be considered in order to apply a HRBA and discuss its advantages and practical limitations in relation to the experience of a social enterprise in Bangladesh (BNG).

I have deliberately selected a combination of approaches in this thesis in order to reflect on the diversity of social enterprises that exist and to illustrate contextual aspects through various case studies. From a theoretical perspective, I have resorted to three different types of analytical tools. The first (women's empowerment) is more a concept than a theory and it is useful not only for considering women's empowerment in relation to social entrepreneurship, but also for engaging in a wider reflection on gender issues in our societies. The second (cultural theory) is an anthropological theory that is applied to organisational studies and serves as an analytical framework to consider organisational and leadership characteristics. The third (human rights-based approach) is a model composed of various practical steps that I have adapted to place human rights at the centre of social enterprises. It can help to determine how a social enterprise can contribute to the realisation of human rights.

22

These three theoretical components have proved useful for focusing attention on three aspects that are of relevance to any social entrepreneurship initiative, regardless of context, social mission or organisational structure. Through their application, I have been able to delve deeper into gender, hybridity and international development issues and discuss them in turn through the illustrations provided in the case studies. These three theoretical lenses will be presented in detail in the theory section of each of the relevant chapters, before using them to analyse and interpret the empirical material. Nevertheless, it is also my aim in this section to provide a short overview of each theoretical framework. This should help to give more coherence to the common theoretical ground underlying this text.

Women's empowerment and social entrepreneurship

> "My understanding of the notion of empowerment is that it is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability" (Kabeer, 1999: 437).

In Chapter 1, I use the concept of women's empowerment to analyse the experience of women-led cooperatives by considering three core interrelated components, namely: agency, resources and outcomes in relation to the experiences of women members (Kabeer, 2005). Empowerment can be described as a process whereby oppressed groups make sense of their worlds and experience a shift in consciousness, beliefs, values and practices in a manner that questions many aspects of their lives that had been taken for granted (Kabeer, 1994).

Women's empowerment is closely linked to the notion of choice and the processes that lead women who have been deprived of the power to choose to acquire this ability (Kabeer, 2005: 13). According to this definition, empowerment has three closely associated dimensions. Firstly, we have agency, a term that is integral to feminist research on entrepreneurship (Bianco, Lombe and Bolis, 2017). Kabeer – author I will rely on heavily - defines agency as the processes by which choices

are made and put into effect. Secondly, there are resources (the medium through which agency is exercised) which apart from including material resources, also include "human and social resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice" and which can be obtained through social interactions in different spheres of public and private life (Kabeer, 1999: 437). Thirdly, this ability to exercise choice has a third dimension that involves the achievements or results of any action (i.e. the outcomes of agency and resources taken together).

My discussion on the findings presented in Chapter 1 also engages in wider debates on the gendered nature of entrepreneurship and how existing stereotypes and perceptions of entrepreneurship also affect how women participate in these initiatives and how they perceive their work in a heteronormative context that conditions their opportunities.

Social entrepreneurship meets cultural theory

> "Cultural theory is good at explaining irreconcilable differences" (Douglas, 1999: 411).

While trying to better understand the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship in the initial phases of this research, I discovered Mary Douglas's seminal work on cultural theory. My supervisor had explored the fruitfulness of applying Douglas' theory to social enterprises (Pfeilstetter, 2017 and 2016) and during our research on the European social enterprise sector (Pfeilstetter and Gómez-Carrasco, 2016) we explored this lens further. I have used elements of this framework to analyse FEM's experience in Chapter 2 and to reflect on the hybridity of social enterprises.

Cultural theory was originally developed as a potential solution to what Douglas defined as one of anthropology's problems: the focus on uniqueness (due to its essentially ethnographic focus) and the challenge of making valid comparisons across cultures (Douglas, 2013a). Over the years, cultural theory has evolved beyond the world of academia to also permeate the world of business and organisational studies, providing inspiration for the internal organisation of a

24

wide range of different businesses. However, it has been less present in the realm of social entrepreneurship, despite its relevance to debates on how social enterprises function, what makes them social, when, how and under which organisational cultures or approaches. According to cultural theory, four different cultures emanate from a specific form of organisation. For Douglas, these are "four different types of cultural bias" or what she describes as the four solutions to be found in real life to the problems that arise when individuals live together (Douglas, 2013b: 30).These biases can be said to imply a preference for a certain set of rules over another, as well as a preference for certain forms of knowledge, beliefs and practices associated with them (Douglas, 2013c: 53). These "cultures" have received various names over time but I will use the terms that I think provide a fuller description for the purposes of this introduction, namely "powerless fatalism, hierarchical collectivism, competitive individualism and egalitarian sectarianism" (Van Heffen and Pieter-Jan, 2003: 292).

In Chapter 2, I have not attempted to present an extensive nor detailed analysis of FEM's experience from this perspective. Yet, I argue that with Douglas's cultural theory we can translate the dichotomy or tension between commercial and social goals into a conflict between the values of the individual and the values of the community. With Douglas we can see organisations as ways of "organizing" or dealing with this basic tension. This allows us to then observe how contradictions between social and commercial goals (or "mission drifts") occur and at what levels and directions. Meanwhile, the everyday practices of social enterprises resonate with different organisational cultures at different moments in time as part of the organisation's coping strategies and shaping of hybridity.

A human rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship

In Chapter 3, I look at the potential limits and advantages of using a human rights-based approach to social enterprises. I argue that a HRBA potentially contributes to the academic debate on the extent to which social enterprises are really contributing to the common good or are merely using the label "social" as a marketing strategy to boost profit. By applying this approach to BNG's case, I analyse whether human rights are at the heart of processes leading to social change. The HRBA allows scrutinising how an enterprise is conceived and run,

25

not only the goals it formally declares to achieve or the social change it hopes to contribute to. The starting point of the HRBA is a thorough social analysis and needs-assessment to identify the gap to be addressed. The ways of managing the social enterprise must be guided by the respect for human rights and its overall results must be monitored and evaluated in terms of their contribution to social change.

It has been noted that it is the failure of social and political institutions (such as markets, companies, charities and bureaucracies) that causes insufficient and/or inadequate delivery of services for different segments of the population (Mair, 2010). This has serious implications from a human rights perspective, since when basic needs are not covered, the rights of individuals are also affected. For Amartya Sen, these basic human needs are also in fact basic human rights, since they are closely linked to the *instrumental freedoms* that enable development by nurturing individual capabilities (Sen, 1999).

Social entrepreneurship steps in to fulfil the role of delivering products and/or services that existing organisations do not provide. Hence, applying a human rights based-approach to social entrepreneurship involves addressing patterns of inequality and discrimination as well as formulating responses that have taken into account the structural causes that enabled a political and societal environment to foster exclusion and marginalization and ultimately, the denial of human rights. The opportunities and challenges that applying this approach entails will be considered in the closing section of Chapter 3.

Ethnographic methods

> "Organisational ethnography is a collision of worlds that exacerbates the emotionality of the ethnographic encounter and illustrates the refusal of our case study organisations to be domesticated by the norms of academia" (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015: 74).

I have applied a combination of qualitative and/or ethnographic methods in order to conduct this research, based on the different levels of engagement with the organisations under study, contexts, preferences and opportunities. Over the

course of the last four years, I have conducted interviews with social entrepreneurs, policymakers and researchers working on aspects related to entrepreneurship and the social economy in Spain and in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Thailand. I have actively participated in the activities of one of the social enterprises operating in Andalusia (maintaining regular contacts, collaborating and lending support) and have become a member of one of the cooperatives I researched, which has involved extensive interactions with its members over the course of this period. I have also researched the experience of a social enterprise operating in Bangladesh through 10 days of fieldwork conducted in 2018.

In recent years, ethnographic research methods have become increasingly popular in organisation studies (Hill O'Connor and Baker, 2017; Gilmore and Kenny, 2015; Yanow, 2009) and have also steadily entered the field of social enterprise research (Hill O'Connor et al. 2017; Mauksch, 2016). We know that social entrepreneurship is a complex process and social impact is created not only as part of concrete outcomes, but also as part of its operational process (Nicholls, 2006: 19). Therefore, ethnographic methods add to our knowledge and understanding of these issues: they help us analyse processes beyond structure, outcomes and results.

In an introduction to a special issue on ethnography in the Social Enterprise Journal, Mauksch et al. argue that ethnography is particularly valuable in this field of study because it helps us understand aspects that are often neglected (2017). These include the complexities that lie beyond the simplistic socio-economic tension earlier mentioned, the power discourses that practitioners engage with, the more collective aspects of self-development and the "heuristic value of accepting the self as an inevitable part of research" (Mauksch et al. 2017: 114). The role of the researcher and the self-reflexive implications of this type of research are aspects that have strongly emerged during my own engagement with members of social enterprises while conducting this research. Any research study entails engaging in self-reflection about our own roles and positions as researchers in the community we interact with (Geertz, 1973). Although increasing attention is given to this methodological aspect in ethnographic

studies, certain areas (including emotions, power relations and how researchers are changed by their experiences) are still not receiving enough attention (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015: 56).

In the case of the longitudinal methods applied in the case of FEM (Chapter 2), these considerations had special weight, given my engagement with the organisation over a period of three years and the different relationships that resulted. These emerging personal links raised multiple questions. Were informants my friends or subjects of my research or both? How could I ensure a balance? Taken together, these ethnographic methods allowed for self-reflexive and emotional aspects of research to emerge for discussion and led me to question my own role as researcher in this context.

In this thesis, I have tried to openly reflect on this experience and share the internal contradictions, insecurities and fears that ensued and which (as Lutz argued) are often considered aspects to be embarrassed about and/or issues to be ultimately avoided in our writings when conducting research (Lutz, 1988 quoted in Gilmore and Kenny, 2015: 57). Bringing these issues to light is important since the ethical questions associated with these feelings and with our work as researchers do not always receive the attention they deserve. Ethnographic description is ultimately interpretative (Geertz, 1973: 20) and should in any case be understood as a form of collaboration when applied to social enterprises (Hill O'Connor et al, 2017).

Perhaps, it is worth reminding ourselves at this stage in my introduction that no inquiry in the social sciences is purely objective: our work is driven by certain concerns that we wish to investigate (Lund, 2014: 226). But then, what are the case studies telling us, what are they representative of? As Geertz wrote, "small facts speak to large issues" (1973: 23) and this is what I hope my case studies will achieve.

The case studies for each of the three chapters have been selected using different methods and criteria. All the names of informants and small organisations in this thesis have been anonymized. In this section I present the logic behind the

selection of organisations and how I got to know my informants. Contextual differences and the embeddedness of social enterprises in their own ecosystems are central features of this research. Nonetheless, the experiences of diverse social enterprises operating in a variety of contexts resonate with one another, displaying different dynamics and relations. This resonance is relevant to research since it can "inspire us to look for elements, which we had not initially thought about, but which are obviously significant in work by others. And it may help us generalise, abstract and theorise our own" (Lund, 2014: 226). Specific methodological aspects are detailed for each chapter in the sections below.

My fellow female cooperative members in Andalusia

In 2016 I presented my preliminary PhD project with a focus on women's social enterprising in Andalusia to the Cajasol Foundation's call for proposals to award research scholarships to PhD students. The application I submitted (tutored by my PhD supervisor) was successful and since then, I started to engage with women entrepreneurs in Andalusia in a more systematic manner. Ana's cooperative was one of the three service cooperatives led by women that I decided to include in my thesis together with two other cooperatives operating in the province. I had known Ana for several years and our professional paths had crossed in Andalusia and abroad. We both had similar profiles as international development practitioners and our relationship had evolved into friendship over the years. When I returned to Spain in 2012, she had set up a consultancy cooperative with two other development professionals. We started to collaborate on various projects, and our professional relationship gradually grew until I joined their evaluation team on various assignments and eventually joined the cooperative as associate member two years later. Taken together, the three selected experiences provided interesting data for discussing gender issues in relation to social entrepreneurship, and for applying a theoretical framework based on the concept of women's empowerment.

Apart from joining this experience, I also launched my own cooperative with two other members while I was in the process of conducting this research. This learning process turned me into a peer for many of my informants, since I was experiencing or had experienced many of the issues I proposed to discuss, often

driven by a very personal professional interest. I gathered the data for this chapter during 2017, 2018 and 2019, including a desk review of secondary data (including academic literature, institutional reports and internet data). This information was complemented by primary data, namely a total of 20 interviews with women entrepreneurs as well as an additional 7 interviews with some of the key institutions and services that played a role in their creation and development in Andalusia. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with women representing different types of entrepreneurial experiences and diverse profiles (various ages, levels of education, sectors of activity, etc). I decided to use a series of experiences and testimonies that could illustrate the variety of initiatives that existed in the field of social entrepreneurship in the Andalusian context (Henry, 1990). Field observation and participation in internal meetings and activities provided additional insights into some of the social entrepreneurship activities analysed.

The selection of the people interviewed was based on "snowball sampling" (Goodman, 1961). In its most basic form, this type of sampling involves "identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers to other respondents" (Atkinson and Finch, 2011). Thus, following this method, from the first interview with a cooperative member I was acquainted with, a network of experiences was woven to cover a broad spectrum of 10 women-led social enterprises. The three experiences that were finally selected for this research shared two common characteristics: they were all work cooperatives (*cooperativas de trabajo*) and were composed of women members only.

What I present in Chapter 1 corresponds to a "persuasive case study approach" (Siggelkow, 2007). Following this approach, the three selected cases were chosen because the experiences shared by the informants provided relevant insights on how women-led cooperatives were responding to the difficulties inherent in the Andalusian context and on whether or not they could be framed as "empowering" according to my model. Although the three case studies do not constitute a statistically representative sample, I would argue that some of the data inferred might be relevant to other social entrepreneurship initiatives across southern Europe. The three organisations are relevant for exploring the issue of women's empowerment and gender in social enterprises that have adopted the cooperative

30

legal form as their operating structure. Two of the three cooperatives were based in small towns in an Andalusian province. The third was based in a large city. Although the individual profiles of the women interviewed varied (in areas such as their past career and socio-economic background), they were all aged between 35-50, had attended university and in most cases had children. The experiences considered offered international consultancy services, childcare and psychological services.

Collaborating with FEM in Andalusia

Meeting Ursula was very special for me. I was immediately drawn to her work with women who had been victims of gender-based violence and impressed by her passion and activism on women's rights. She reminded me of other strong inspiring women from the global south I had met through my development work and in the first five minutes of our conversation, I had already decided that I wanted to collaborate with her organisation and write about their experience.

Ursula's organisation (FEM) provides very interesting grounds for discussing the issue of hybridity – the mixing of the social and the economic realm. The strategies and approaches adopted by FEM illustrate the complexity of these organisations and how they are shaped by everyday practices. The research methods applied to Chapter 2 draw from my collaboration in a 3-year European Union-funded research project, which examined the different factors that account for the success of social enterprises as well as the limitations faced by social entrepreneurs in 17 different countries across Europe. My participation in the project included a variety of activities that allowed me to assist my supervisor who was responsible for the Spanish project team. These experiences later filtered into this document and included presenting my preliminary PhD results at project meetings and congresses in Andalusia and abroad. In parallel, I was writing, reviewing or discussing project reports and journal articles with my supervisor (Pfeilstetter and Gómez-Carrasco, 2016 and 2019) and hosting incoming researchers and social entrepreneurs.

While conducting research on social enterprises in Spain for the production of a national report (Pfeilstetter and Gómez-Carrasco, 2016), my participation also

involved accompanying several colleagues from foreign partner organisations during their visits to Andalusia, which opened interesting windows into the work of social enterprises in other countries. Hence, I was able to develop a long-term liaison with FEM over these three years. This long period of interaction allowed me to gain interesting insights into the work of this social enterprise through observational visits, informal conversations, interviews, participation in several events, volunteering and interacting with similar initiatives and administration bodies operating in the same ecosystem. I interviewed members of the association and had the opportunity to spend time with members in their premises on several occasions, engaging in participatory observation to learn more about their work. I also attended events with members of the organisation, met for informal coffees/drinks, co-facilitated technical workshops and even served as improvised translator on at least two occasions. These varied experiences gave me the opportunity to exchange further on FEM's work in a wide range of settings and to appreciate the complex nature of this organisation.

FEM was selected as case study for several reasons. First, because its characteristics were relevant to discussions on different forms of organisational hybridity. FEM combined a twofold income strategy that involved both public funding and commercial activities as part of its business model and resorted to different strategies in order to manage emerging conflicts or tensions between social and economic goals. At the same time, FEM enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy from the State and from traditional private sector practices: it did not distribute profits to shareholders and its social mission involved providing different types of support to vulnerable groups with a focus on victims of gender-based violence. Finally, FEM also constituted a consolidated initiative, with strong local support and a high level of embeddedness in its local community that made its experience particularly relevant and meaningful.

Consulting and engaging with a social enterprise in Bangladesh

I have been working in the field of international development since 2002. During the last four years, I have been conducting consulting assignments in South-East Asia (including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Thailand) and it was during one of my missions to the region that I encountered BNG in Bangladesh. I was deeply

32

moved by my encounter with Anwar (the organisation's founder), a charismatic visionary turned entrepreneur who has dedicated over thirty years to building an impressive network of services through his social enterprise. The days I spent visiting his organisation encouraged me to write about the experience and reflect on social enterprises in a context that was radically different from the Andalusian social enterprise ecosystem I was by then familiar with. The challenges of extreme poverty, social exclusion and discrimination were at the heart of BNG's work and this dimension of their work made me reflect on issues of human rights and social justice in relation to social enterprises. Exploring the application of a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship has been my way of contributing to debates on the role of social enterprises in the quest for sustainable development in the global south.

Most of the data analysed in the case study presented in Chapter 3 was collected during a 10-day mission to Bangladesh conducted in 2018. My visit was conducted within the framework of a consultancy assignment and during the course of the visit, I had the opportunity to spend an average of 6-8 hours a day with stakeholders, travelling and liaising with them, participating in activities (school events, team meetings, etc), conducting participatory observation and visiting some of the organisation's key sites, including a school, a children's home, a hospital and a guest house.

Prior to the visit, I carried out a desk review that involved analysing several documents, including policies and government programmes, progress reports and website materials describing the different sectors of activity covered by the selected organisation, as well as its history and development since its creation. During the visit, I conducted a total of 36 interviews with a wide range of actors including: 15 representatives of organisations partnering with BNG; 12 members of BNG staff (including senior management); 4 representatives of government bodies, 4 representatives of international donors supporting BNG. Apart from these 36 semi-structured interviews, ten focus group discussions were organised with the following participants: a) 21 mothers of children supported by BNG; b) 6 groups of children aged 10-18 (49 in total); c) 23 teachers working for BNG; d)

6 students; e) 8 members of a community group. These interviews provided a solid basis for understanding how this organisation works.

I thought BNG would be an interesting case for my thesis for two main reasons: firstly, because this organisation contributes to the realisation of human rights in several ways that illustrate how a rights-based approach can serve to strengthen the impact of social enterprises in developing contexts; and secondly, because its specific features shed light on the fine dividing lines that exist between different types of social organisations. This case from the global south has also allowed me to discuss different labels existing internationally in relation to social entrepreneurship, whether organisations are called "social enterprises" or non-government organisations, for-profit or non-profit, or perceived as public or private.

My field-roles: the consultant-cooperativist-researcher's impostor syndrome

> "Fundamental to ethnographers, in developing a theory that is *grounded* in the everyday, are the continuous, abductive shifts between an insider's self-understanding and an outsider's analytical abstraction" (Mauksch et al, 2017:124).

I will end this introduction to the methodology of my thesis by briefly sharing a series of considerations and reflections that are relevant for understanding my own role in this research process. This will involve considering how my professional experience and current perspectives as researcher, cooperativist and consultant have also shaped (and been shaped) by this research.

As I mentioned earlier, in 2015, my life took a difficult turn due to family issues. At the time, I had been working as a development practitioner for almost 15 years and despite the difficulties, the new situation that followed unexpectedly opened new professional opportunities. As a result, I started to combine sporadic international development work -freelancing as independent consultant- with the

process of launching my own cooperative while also conducting research for this thesis.

When I was still unsure about my research plans, my supervisor encouraged me to work on social entrepreneurship as a theme that was close to my experience in the Third Sector but different and new to me. It has been a challenging process in many ways, especially since my decision to pursue this work from the field of anthropology has required embracing a new language and approach to research. Looking back, I think that this is partly what has made the process of writing this thesis so valuable for me and why I feel I have learned so much in the process. The other valuable part has been framing this PhD as part of a mutual learning process with my supervisor. We have struggled at times, but I feel we have managed to construct a valuable space for sharing experiences and common interests, while enjoying the sense of freedom that comes with our roles and status as consolidated professionals in our respective fields.

Throughout the research, it was also interesting for me to see how each of my three distinct professional roles dominated different stages of the research. The discussions I have developed in the first chapter made my identity as female cooperative member stand out first and foremost as I clearly identified with issues that were raised and could not avoid sharing my own experiences working in cooperatives. In the second chapter, I was clearly in the shoes of the academic researcher, albeit one who was not at ease with her role, so I chose to use my discomfort to reflect on myself in relation to my research subjects. In the third chapter, my professional role was also quite distinct from the others, since I visited Bangladesh as part of a consultancy assignment, and it was from that perspective that I engaged with my informants.

Interestingly, the discussions included in these chapters also reflected other more private roles, feelings and perceptions. Discussing women's issues and empowerment with the members of the cooperatives made me reflect on my role as daughter, wife and mother. Findings often mirrored my own experiences. Collaborating with FEM made me connect with a lot of the insecurities, contradictions and fears that come with the researcher's role and which are not

35

often written about. I decided to discuss them at length in Chapter 2. The experience described in Chapter 3 revealed personal aspects of my work in the global south, where poverty and exclusion raise issues around social justice and solidarity that are central not only to my work but also to who I am. This line of reflection led me to discuss the relevance of human rights for social entrepreneurship in Chapter 3.

Since all these elements have been the backdrop of the thesis, any self-reflection on my role must bear all these aspects in mind. It will come as no surprise that at various points during this research, I have suffered impostor syndrome. I have sometimes struggled to play the role of "the academic in the picture" when visiting and interacting with organisations and have clearly felt more like the cooperativist or international development practitioner than the researcher, when discussing or presenting my research in academic settings. At a later stage, while analysing data and writing these chapters, I have also experienced the feeling of being forcefully "pulled back into the position of distant researcher" when analysing data and writing this thesis (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015: 69). It is still the norm that all research should sound objective, detached and scientific. But how can you pretend to be detached when you are writing about people you have come to know, admire, identify with and even love? Legitimacy issues also come into play, since how can I be sure that I -as "the researcher"- am truly well-placed to make claims about what an organisation is or is not based on my limited understanding and my hidden or obvious personal biases?

When ethnographic methods involve the active participation of the researcher as collaborator or volunteer, the ethical considerations and reflexivity aspects of the work become even more relevant: the researcher is both an insider and outsider. Sometimes the issue of reflexivity is addressed in research in a reductionist manner, simplifying the complexities of the power relations that develop between different actors in a research context (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). Interestingly, it is not always the researcher who finds herself in what Gilmore and Kenny call "the powerful seat" in many of these contexts, since the new surroundings coupled with a limited understanding of issues can be truly overwhelming, as I found during my visit to Bangladesh.

36

Balancing situations to ensure enough professional distance for data collection to be adequate can be a challenge. Beyond the difficulties described, my experience suggests that there are many positive aspects of this type of ethnographic method, since it allows for more insights and better understandings of how social enterprises function, also in terms of "the everyday physical and emotional practice of involvement in a social enterprise" (Hill O'Connor et al., 2015: 185).

I also resorted to the notion of collective reflection, which is also being increasingly used during ethnographic research, a practice that is inspired by ideas from cultural and feminist anthropology (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). In order to try to address these ethical issues, I decided to openly discuss some of my own concerns with members of the organisations involved. I also shared my draft articles with key informants to elicit feedback, translating my draft into Spanish in order to facilitate communication and exchanges on their content. I remember explaining to one of the leaders of FEM that I was placing her organisation in the box of "modern hybrids" and how important it was for me to feel that I was sharing this with her, as something that I had taken the liberty to do and needed her to know about (and comment on). She expressed amusement while pointing out that putting people and things into boxes was what academic work consisted in and that it was fine by her.

Something similar happened when part of the findings on cooperatives presented in Chapter 2 were accepted for publication in a journal: I felt obliged to involve the cooperatives that had participated and elicited their feedback on my draft article. Finally, I have also tried to pay attention to the issue of dependency, since participation in the work of organisations can also create situations where informants agree to talk to the researcher because they know that she is giving something in return or because she has been recommended by someone who provided support to the organisation in the past (or is providing it now). This is another bias that must be acknowledged, even if it might be difficult to avoid altogether (Hill O'Connor et al., 2015).

37

Concluding summary

In this opening chapter of my thesis I have introduced the main components of my research by briefly outlining the objectives, key questions, theoretical frameworks, research methods and case studies that compose it. When I decided to embark on this research, I decided to explore social entrepreneurship as a contemporary phenomenon with the potential to bring about transformative social change. I soon discovered that it was a vast field of study that was highly diverse and complex. I decided to engage with cooperatives, associations, social enterprises and non-profit organisations in order to illustrate this wealth of initiatives, their richness and diverse value through my research. They all had two key drivers in common: making their society a better place and making their own lives worth living in the process of developing their social entrepreneurship activities and making them "life projects" as opposed to ordinary jobs.

Establishing certain boundaries was necessary for making my research more manageable and as focused as possible. This turned out to be one of the most difficult aspects of my work as I advanced in my reading and fieldwork. I eventually decided to work around three issues that were intertwined but had specific weight and importance in different settings, namely: a) gender issues as central for our understanding of the environments that social enterprises operate in; b) hybridity as the grey area where creative solutions are found in response to tensions between people and money; and c) the realm of international development in the global south as a scenario were social entrepreneurship discourses have different meanings and where issues of social justice and human rights gain relevance.

I explored these three research areas through a selection of case studies that took me from Andalusia (cooperatives for Chapter 1 and a social enterprise in Chapter 2) to Bangladesh in Chapter 3 with my discussion of a successful social enterprise that has been operating across the country for three decades. These three core research themes (gender, hybridity and international development) were observed through three theoretical lenses: women's empowerment as a way of considering the effects of gender on social entrepreneurship practices, Douglas's

cultural theory for analysing coping strategies and practices, and HRBA as a tool for helping to define the "social" nature of organisations.

I have also summarised the methodology I followed for analysing the empirical material gathered from three field sites through a total of 56 interviews, 10 focus groups, participant observation and collaboration (as member and volunteer) in the different organisations. The degree of involvement with each organisation varied from 2-3 interviews and exchanges (in the case of two of the cooperatives) to extensive involvement as member of the third cooperative with continuous engagement over the course of the last three years. My engagement in Andalusia spread over the entire research (nearly four years), whilst the data gathered for Chapter 3 on the experience of BNG was collected during a 10-day mission to Bangladesh. Nevertheless, I have shown how my work as a development consultant brought me regularly to South-East Asia over these four years of PhD research. Therefore, my research on BNG is also sustained by my long-standing experience with social enterprises and entrepreneurs in the global south.

Finally, I have also introduced aspects of my professional and personal (shifting) roles as scholar, development worker, cooperative, insider/outsider in Andalusia and Bangladesh in this opening chapter. These elements of self-reflection-together with theory, methodology and data - will be developed at length in each of the chapters that follow.

39

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CHAPTER 1: Women in Social Entrepreneurship: Can women-led cooperatives contribute to empowerment?

> But what about the emotional salary? Nobody ever thinks about the emotional salary that comes with any job. We often forget the invisible price we pay when we work for a stingy, authoritative boss like I did for almost 10 years. And we really have to think about all there is to gain if we are brave enough to work for ourselves and set our own rules.
>
> María, cooperative member.

Abstract

This chapter presents a review of gender-related literature on entrepreneurship and explores its relevance for understanding a series of case studies, namely three women-led cooperatives operating in Andalusia. I adapt Ahl's work on gender and entrepreneurship and Kabeer's empowerment framework to discuss these experiences. Because I am placing women's perceptions at the centre in this chapter, I draw mainly on interviews as my primary data source. The interviewees are *cooperativistas* working in Andalusia in the fields of international consultancy services, childcare and psychological services. I show how in the three cases, the potentials of women-led cooperatives outweigh their limitations. Without eschewing a critical view on women's social entrepreneurship, I conclude that the overtly positive assessments and experiences of my informants should be taken seriously.

Introduction

This first chapter explores issues around gender as a determining factor in the realm of social entrepreneurship. I will address two research questions: firstly, if there is something distinctive about women-led entrepreneurship initiatives in a given context (a different way of *doing good*) and secondly, if women-led social enterprises can contribute to empowering women by challenging traditional gender roles or if, on the contrary, they constitute *business as usual* initiatives that are not particularly conducive to gender equality.

Building on an earlier article on women-led cooperatives in Andalusia (Gómez-Carrasco, 2019), I have revised and extended my presentation of empirical data in this chapter. The wider analytical framework I have applied goes beyond the issue of women's empowerment to consider the ways in which entrepreneurship is a gendered concept and how existing biases condition our own perception of women-led social enterprises. The chapter explores a particular type of social enterprise (cooperatives) from the perspective of women members operating in the region of Andalusia. The women interviewed for this research share certain features and circumstances but are also diverse in terms of their ages, personal situations, levels of education and motivation for founding the cooperatives. The nature of their work also varies substantially, from specialised psychological treatment for children, to consultancy services in international cooperation and childcare activities for families.

The data collected during the fieldwork serves to discuss issues related to women's work-life balance, the effects of their work on their overall wellbeing, changes to their living conditions, and perceptions of empowerment and self-esteem. The analysis and discussion that follow are based on women's shared experiences of personal and professional growth, learning opportunities and challenges during the creation and development of their respective cooperatives.

As I will further discuss in Chapter 2, contextual factors are crucial for understanding how social enterprises develop. This chapter discusses the political, economic and institutional factors that conditioned the emergence of cooperatives in Andalusia during the 2008 economic crisis and its aftermath. The austerity measures implemented by the national government, coupled with high unemployment figures and emerging social needs created a situation where limited employment opportunities converged with the emergence of a market for a range of new social goods and services. At the same time, one of the decisive factors that played a key role in these women's decision to create cooperatives was the attraction of an entrepreneurial model that placed people before capital in the pursuit of social goals, coupled with the economic objective of securing the

livelihoods of its members, who were in many cases highly qualified professionals in their respective fields.

In Andalusia, despite the improvements and advances witnessed over the last two decades, underlying structural gender inequalities remain. The experiences of these cooperatives illustrate how gender constitutes a key socio-cultural determinant of social entrepreneurship, since the need to balance work-family life in a context marked by unequal opportunities constituted an important incentive for resorting to this organisational model. The women interviewed also valued how beyond economic advantages, cooperatives provided a type of employment and work environment that was better suited to their needs and personal preferences.

As part of the theoretical discussion, the concept of empowerment as a feminist strategy for social transformation deserves attention (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014: 1). Different trends of feminist theory have one core feature in common: the idea that women are subordinate to men in society, followed by a subsequent shared struggle that seeks to correct this situation. Three traditional categories of feminist theory serve to classify different research perspectives adopted over the last three decades: feminist empiricism (liberal feminism), feminist standpoint theory (radical, socialist) and post-structural feminism (post-modern, post-colonial) (Foss et al, 2019: 21). The first perspective -liberal feminist- applies feminist empiricism to research that focuses on making women and their conditions visible with the objective of suggesting equal access to available resources. The second perspective -radical or socialist- applies feminist standpoint theory to research in order to make women's unique perceptions and contributions visible with the objective of ultimately changing social structures. The third perspective -post-modern or post-colonial- focuses on making gendered discriminatory practices visible and ultimately seeks to change discriminatory social practices (Foss et al, 2019: 21).

Perspectives are important because they help us frame our research and understand why we focus on certain aspects while neglecting others. In this first chapter, my analysis of how women perceive their work and their lives as

42

members of cooperatives provides empirical evidence on the ways in which the cooperative model is enabling them to improve their overall living conditions. These include creating employment that is better suited to their needs, improving their self-esteem and enhancing their sense of empowerment while providing the necessary conditions for greater flexibility and better work-life balance. Beyond the factors that are usually associated with conventional notions of empowerment, issues such as sense of ownership, self-esteem and shifts in consciousness also emerged and are discussed in the final sections of this chapter (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014; Kabeer, 2008; Batliwala, 2007).

In my discussion, I adopt the second of these feminist perspectives, since beyond making women's situation visible, I also discuss how beyond the positive aspects of the cooperative model reported by my informants, women's perceptions also serve to make their unique realities visible in a context that is far from gender neutral. When these aspects are considered, a series of questions that significantly complicate the picture emerge, since these women-led experiences also raise serious issues related to the gendered nature of entrepreneurship and the perpetuation of gender roles. These factors are discussed throughout the chapter with the objective of making the importance of gender more visible beyond the prevalent focus on male-female comparative studies. Nonetheless, in a research field marked by a strong gender bias and gender-related assumptions about what it is to be an entrepreneur, women's quest for flexibility and their focus on their social mission versus profit-making imply that the risk of perpetuating certain traditional gender roles remains.

The three cooperatives presented in this chapter cover three distinct areas of professional activity. Their names and the names of members have been anonymised in this account. INTDEV is a social consultancy that specialises in international development and organisational support and works globally. The second cooperative is WBEING, an organisation that focuses on the delivery of psychological and therapeutic services through alternative, original methods and specialises in children's well-being. Thirdly, I discuss CCARE, a cooperative that offers innovative and holistic childcare and family support services.

43

In terms of methodology, in this chapter I focus on the interviews I have conducted with the *cooperativistas*, because I am interested in explaining their views and motivations. Nevertheless, I have used mixed research methods to conduct this study. The field work design reflects three different levels of engagement and time allocation. Part of the research I have conducted is ethnographic, building on a long-standing relationship with the members of INTDEV and on several years of direct involvement in their work. In the case of the other two cooperatives (WBEING and CCARE), my interaction and data collection were much more limited. I conducted both phone and face-to-face interviews with members, visited their premises and re-contacted them again when my first article was going to be published to elicit their feedback on the draft. In the final revision phase of my thesis I contacted them once again to discuss my findings and elicit their feedback, speaking to the women I had previously interviewed at the beginning of my research.

I will begin this chapter with an overview of theoretical debates on the issue of gender in entrepreneurship research and how this concept is gendered. After that, I will present empowerment as a framework that can shed light on how entrepreneurial experiences can contribute to transformative change in the lives of women. The third section will set the context of the case studies by providing socio-economic background data on Andalusia, as well as an account of the history of cooperativism in the region and women's participation. After detailing the methodology, I will share a discussion of the ways in which the different types of contributions shared by my informants might be interpreted as contributions to empowerment at different levels. In the concluding section of this chapter, I discuss if and how these cooperatives might be instrumental for bringing about changes in gender roles or whether they might also constitute precarious forms of employment that could perpetuate traditional gender roles.

Where are the women? Gender in social entrepreneurship research

In 2009, several authors noted that a substantial gender gap in academic research persisted on issues of entrepreneurship, even if women were among the fastest growing entrepreneurial groups (Brush, de Bruin and Welter, 2009: 9). Despite certain advances, this gap remains true to a large extent almost ten years later,

44

which suggests that the role of women in social entrepreneurship needs to be explored further. In Europe, it is surprising to find that few research projects have focused on women-led social enterprises to date, even if a growing body of literature on social entrepreneurship has emerged. This fact is even more surprising when we consider that women social entrepreneurs are more active than men in several European countries (Huysentruyt, 2014).

Two exceptions to this general dearth of research are worth mentioning, since their conclusions resonate with the findings of the research discussed in this chapter. The first of these exceptions is the WEStart project, a one-year pilot funded by the EU, the European Women's Lobby and the *Fondation d'Entreprise* Chanel in 2015. The case study on the Spanish women-led social enterprise ecosystem revealed a series of interesting findings that are aligned with opinions shared by the members of cooperatives I interviewed for this research. For example, the same context-specific factors were identified as barriers for women's entrepreneurship, namely the Spanish culture of long working hours, the obstacles to accessing credit or gender-based prejudices against women who expressed a desire to start an enterprise (WEStart, 2015). Secondly, the social mission of women-led social enterprises and women entrepreneurs' interest in issues related to gender equality and awareness were considered central to their work, which were aspects also raised by the members of INTDEV, CCARE and WBEING as I discuss later in this chapter.

The second research project relevant to these experiences is WISE (Women Innovators for Social Business in Europe) conducted from 2013-5, which produced a report concluding that women across Spain were finding in social enterprises an organisational model that was more attractive and better suited to their needs than the predominant traditional androcentric business models (Cordobés, 2016).

In her seminal study, Ahl analysed how prevalent discourses in entrepreneurship research practices constantly left women in a secondary role and how the stereotypical entrepreneur was described as male, with women emerging as "the other" in entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2002). Beyond the dearth of research on

45

women-led social entrepreneurship, one specific aspect that is largely absent from the literature is the gendered nature of this phenomenon and the assumptions that sustain it. Entrepreneurial activity is influenced by different values, perceptions and social conditions of men and women. This reality needs to be understood, since social entrepreneurship does not operate in a gender-neutral vacuum and the assumptions informing the dominant entrepreneurial discourse "shape what is taken to be normal, natural and common sense" (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 558). Furthermore, much of the mainstream research that is published is blind to gender considerations in its analysis of entrepreneurship and not based on feminist theories (Ahl, 2006).

Gender is much more than an interesting additional variable to consider and observe when analysing social entrepreneurship: it should be used as a lens in our analysis, as a cross-cutting element that is central to our understanding and interpretation of entrepreneurial activity. When gender is not considered, we find that what is taken to be *normal* is systematically male and as a result, entrepreneurial activities are analysed in terms of deviations from what is *considered* to be the entrepreneurial norm (Brush et al, 2009: 18). Overall, there is an embedded ontological gender bias in entrepreneurship research and discourse affecting gender (Aggestam and Wigren-Kristoferson, 2017; Ahl and Marlow, 2012).

In recent years, the entrepreneurship phenomenon has primarily been analysed by academia in two ways: firstly, from the perspective of something that is traditionally characterised as all-male, gender-neutral and/or non-gendered (Lewis, 2006: 453); and secondly, from a perspective that implicitly sees female entrepreneurship as something abnormal as a result of dominant stereotypes that consider entrepreneurs to be "male-shaped" almost by definition (Meyer, Tegtmeier and Pakura, 2017) or "male gendered" (Ahl, 2006). Although the factors that influence social entrepreneurship are the same for men and women, the importance of environmental factors for women entrepreneurs deserves special attention, given the fact that institutions, policies and cultural norms also condition entrepreneurial processes (Urbano et al, 2014). Socio-cultural factors play a key role in entrepreneurship activities and hence it is important to

46

distinguish between different environment-related elements that are relevant to their development: on the one hand, the macro environment affecting entrepreneurship (policies, institutions, government bodies, etc); and on the other hand, the meso environment (regional support services and initiatives) (Brush et al, 2009: 9). These factors are also key for making women's enterprises highly productive and for increasing their aspirations, in order to avoid choosing "small ventures, self-employment or subsistence entrepreneurship" (Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017: 52).

The participation of women in social entrepreneurship has been steadily growing over the years and women are more likely to be social entrepreneurs than men, since they are more frequently guided by the pursuit of social value and a desire to support others (Nicolás and Rubio, 2016). Among the socio-cultural factors that play a role in women's participation in social entrepreneurship, family context figures prominently (Brush et al, 2009), notably the issues of work-life balance and wellbeing at the centre of this chapter's discussion. A social entrepreneur's specific family or household context tends to have greater effects on women's situation than on men's (Jennings and McDougald, 2007), particularly on women's choice of becoming self-employed (Caputo and Dolinsky, 1998, cited in Ahl, 2006). Indeed, when analysing women's entrepreneurship, there is an important difference to be made between explaining choices on the basis of external factors (institutional, market, etc) and on differences between women and men or on what are often described as women's "lifestyle choices" (Ahl, 2006: 154).

It is interesting to note that even if in general terms, more men than women participate in enterprises, the gender gap decreases when we consider the situation of social enterprises worldwide (Nicolás and Rubio, 2016). Research conducted using a 49-country sample concluded that women were more likely to engage in social enterprises than men and tended to pursue social value more than men (Nicolás and Rubio, 2016). While much of the research conducted on work-life balance is indeed Western-centric (Bullough and Abdelhazer, 2013: 44), results across these 49 countries suggest that the social dimension of entrepreneurial activity is closely linked to the gender roles that have been

"traditionally allocated to them culturally, closely linked to altruism, care and protection of disadvantaged groups" (Nicolás and Rubio, 2016: 56). However, there is little evidence on the intersection between entrepreneurial processes and the ways in which gender norms can be challenged (Bianco, Lombe and Bolis, 2017). This aspect deserves special attention, since the strong presence of women in social enterprises that belong to the sector known as the "care economy" has also been noted by different studies (Cordobés, 2016; Nicolás and Rubio, 2016).

Women-focused research can help to increase the visibility of female entrepreneurs but it does not necessarily address the issue of the underlying masculine norm of entrepreneurship and the fact that the figure of the entrepreneur tends to be associated with masculinity (Aggestam and Wigren-Kristoferson, 2017; Meyer, Tegtmeier and Pakura, 2017; Bruni et al, 2014). Furthermore, research that reduces issues to the binary polarization between men and women also risks reproducing women's subordinate role (Ahl, 2006: 597).

In this section, I have summarised a selection of key debates in the realm of women entrepreneurship research, highlighting some of the challenges and difficulties that remain. The following section seeks to contribute to this area of research by analysing a concrete type or model of social enterprise (work cooperatives) with a view to illustrating some of the issues that arise when observing the different roles of women in entrepreneurship, as well as their own perceptions. One of the emerging topics that is particularly interesting within this debate is the notion of empowerment, since the effects of gender on "power relations and inequalities within the household still remain largely invisible" (Brush et al, 2009: 11). Hence, a central part of the discussion included in this chapter is devoted to analysing the different perceptions of empowerment in relation to the experiences of the women working in cooperatives and how they have "walked the tightrope" to successfully balance their work and family lives (Bullough and Abdelzaher, 2013: 44).

48

Understanding women-led entrepreneurship in a hetero-normative world

Before embarking on the analysis of the experiences of women-led cooperatives, it is important to remind ourselves of the broader context in which any entrepreneurship initiative develops, namely a business world that is evolving but has traditionally been dominated by men. Entrepreneurship is a particularly interesting phenomenon to observe in relation to gender issues because it is strongly shaped by stereotypes despite being presented as an option that is open to everyone as long as they have "the right mindset" (Meyer, Tegtmeier and Pakura, 2017: 320).

Many factors inherent in the patriarchal model in place are simply taken for granted, including various assumptions on the differences between genders (Ahl, 2002). Patriarchy allows for the existence of a

> masculine bias that is omnipresent and affects even the categories in which we think [and constitutes] a family, social, ideological and political system in which men (through force, direct pressure, rituals, traditions, law and language, customs, etiquette, and the division of labour) decide which is or not the role that women must play (Rich, 1986: 104).

In Andalusia, existing gender norms continue to place women in the position of main household and family carers and they often have to choose between staying at home and having a career in the absence of adequate family support policies (Álvarez and Miles-Touya, 2016: 1225).

In response to this global and local reality, different forms of feminism(s) place the structures that shape our societies (whether social, political or economic) at the centre when analysing power relations and situations of domination and subordination (see authors such as Millet, 2016; Pateman, 1988; De Beauvoir, 1957). Feminist theories are grounded in the belief that it is societal inequality that places women in a subordinate position, since it is the combination of social, political and economic factors that determines power relations and it is these

49

different forms of power that should be accessed by women on equal grounds (Turner and Maschi, 2015: 152).

In her work on women entrepreneurs, Ahl discusses three different discourses that are used to support the view that genders are different in the realm of entrepreneurship. These three discourses were present in the different discussions with the women interviewed for this research. First, there is what Ahl calls "making a mountain out of a molehill", in which existing similarities are not considered whilst minor differences are highlighted. For example, members of INTDEV I interviewed described how in their professional field, they considered their work to be very similar to the work carried out by other consultancy firms, but certain aspects were highlighted in their way of operating as *feminine characteristics* that separated them from the rest. These included aspects such as greater flexibility, having the capacity to listen and their generosity towards the people and organisations they served.

Secondly, there is the "self-selected woman" discourse in which any woman engaging in entrepreneurial activity is portrayed as rare or unusual. As Beatriz, one of the women I interviewed at WBEING noted "when we decided to set up a business that involved horses without any real experience in the equestrian world, many people portrayed us as madwomen who did not know what they were getting themselves into". For her, it had been interesting to see how they had later been hailed as real heroines when their success became apparent.

Thirdly, Ahl describes the "good mother" model, in which a specific "feminine model" of entrepreneurship is defended as a type of entrepreneurship that stands apart from the dominant model (Ahl, 2002). This discourse resonated with my conversation with two CCARE members. The two women insisted in their commitment to an alternative approach that stood apart from the dominant trend of childcare services provided by competitors. They stressed that their engagement with the families went "beyond what was strictly contracted and paid for by parents". By way of example, they described instances of children turning up to an activity with a brother/sister/friend without paying the fee and how they insisted on inviting them to participate because "it seemed cruel to let them just

50

look on". They also explained how they gave children snacks at times when their parents forgot to put them in their school bags without charging for them. Their generosity and sharing attitude were considered part of "their own philosophy and way of doing things for others".

As authors like Rutherford have noted, the focus on the business case favouring gender equality has not helped to challenge existing rules and power relations between men and women (Rutherford, 2011: 39, cited in Rao et al 2016: 7). If we adopt a social-constructionist view following authors like Ahl (2006), Meyer et al (2017) or Butler (1988), we move the focus away from biological sex to socially constructed sex. As a result of the context we live in and our circumstances, "male and female are really two cultures and their life experiences are utterly different" (Millet, 1969: 31). The different gender roles that lie behind this statement can be defined as the specific socially constructed behaviours that are expected of men and women according to the social norms that apply in each context and setting (Pérez-Quintana, Hormiga, Martori and Madariaga, 2017). In the case of women, these roles are closely linked to women's status as mothers, which "call for an expected role involving love, nurturing, self-sacrifice, homemaking and availability" (Lindsey, 2015: 2). Far from being a specific quality or feature of an individual, gender is "a process that people enact in everyday situations" (Kelan, 2010: 177).

Regardless of their ethnicity, age group or social class, women across the world are conditioned by society in a manner that makes them place others before themselves (Hall, 2013: 4). Given the weight of their social roles -whether as mothers or employees- there is a general expectation that women will be available to meet needs and requests both at the workplace and at home (Lindsey, 2015: 3). Hence, what we observe in practice are situations where, in the absence of any real adaptation to women's personal needs in an evolving context, their roles at home and in the workplace are in constant competition, often causing situations marked by tension and exhaustion. It is balancing these roles that constitutes a major challenge for most women, particularly since women are much more bound by family responsibilities than men (Hall, 2013: 4).

51

Even if certain gender-related issues such as the "glass ceiling" limiting women in organisations or sexual harassment in the workplace are now widely recognised and have received increasing public attention in recent years, few approaches address the power dynamics that perpetuate these gender-discriminatory "deep structures" in organisations (Rao et al, 2016). It is this gap that has motivated my use of empowerment theory for analysing experiences in this chapter. The next section introduces the core concepts of this theory and its relevance for the findings discussed in the final sections.

Women's social entrepreneurship as empowerment

The concept of empowerment has been part of social development discourses for over three decades, possibly becoming one of the most widely "used and abused" terms to have been mainstreamed in recent years, which according to some, has led to the loss of its original meaning and value (Batliwala, 2007: 557). Believing as I do that it remains relevant and useful for analysing the experiences presented in this chapter, I will draw from one of the definitions of the concept to consider its three core interrelated components as described below, namely: agency, resources and outcomes (Kabeer, 2005).

Empowerment can be described as a process whereby oppressed groups make sense of their worlds and experience a shift in consciousness, beliefs, values and practices in a manner that questions many aspects of their lives that had been taken for granted (Kabeer, 1999). However, empowerment can only be truly meaningful and distinct from other concepts, such as self-esteem, if contextual factors are duly recognised (Israel et al, 1994: 153). Women's empowerment is closely linked to the notion of choice and the processes that lead women who have been deprived of the power to choose to acquire this ability (Kabeer, 2005: 13). According to this definition, empowerment has three closely associated dimensions: resources (preconditions that do not only include material but also human and social resources); agency (the processes through which choices are made) and finally, achievements (the outcomes of resources and agency taken together).

52

Agency is a term that is integral to feminist research on entrepreneurship (Bianco, Lombe and Bolis, 2017). Understood in a positive sense, agency is the "ability/capacity to act on one's choice" versus a negative connotation in which empowerment is "power over: i.e. the capacity of certain actors to use violence or coercion to override the agency of others" (Kabeer, 2005: 15). Real agency goes beyond the notion of choice to also incorporate the idea of "challenging power relations" and self-perceptions, notably in terms of self-esteem and self-worth (Kabeer, 2008). The resources available are people's skills, abilities and capacities, which all form the medium through which agency is exercised. Thirdly, taken together, resources and agency lead to achievements which translate into different ways of realising our potential. These concepts are important for my analysis because they resonate with the perceptions shared by the women I interviewed and discussed at length later in this chapter.

Many of the positive aspects shared by these women touched upon the resources they were acquiring through their participation in the cooperative (such as new skills, knowledge, self-confidence, etc.), which are central for exercising agency and hence contribute to empowerment. Furthermore, beyond this conceptualisation, it is also interesting to consider what have been described as the "hidden pathways of empowerment" that complement the empowerment-related elements described above leisure (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). These are the different paths that women follow in the quest for positive changes in their lives and which go beyond concrete policies or organisations to include a more holistic notion of empowerment that also includes pleasure and leisure (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). As Cornwall and Edwards argue, aspects linked to self-satisfaction might be subtle and more difficult to objectively measure. Nonetheless, they are key for understanding women's perceptions and their positive accounts of their experiences as members of cooperatives. Since my analysis is based on women's own perceptions and I have collected their voices in this chapter, I have tried not to judge or assess but rather to present their stories as they were shared with me during my fieldwork. Therefore, this chapter explores what Malinowski, one of the many male founding fathers of anthropology once called the "native point of view". In contrast, Chapter 2 focuses more on my own perceptions and feelings as ethnographer regarding the social

53

enterprise FEM. I will follow this discussion in the methodology section of this chapter.

If we return to the idea of empowerment, it seems clear that for the associated notion of choice to be real, women must have had the capacity to have decided differently as a result of the existence of real alternatives that confirmed their agency. This complicates our analysis, since we know that certain forms of behaviour that could be said to be based on real choice can sometimes in practice be "based on the denial of choice" (Kabeer, 2005). Indeed, several members of these cooperatives described how their entrepreneurial project was motivated by the need to generate income and seek a self-employment opportunity in a context marked by high unemployment. These findings are aligned with a national study conducted across Spain showing that many women entrepreneurs created their social enterprises as part of personal self-employment projects that sought to adapt work to their own family circumstances (Cordobés, 2016); and also with the results of a study on women's entrepreneurship conducted in Andalusia, which came to a similar conclusion on women's key motivations for engaging in entrepreneurial activities: namely a sense of obligation versus real choice (Suárez-Ortega and Gálvez-García, 2017).

In order to contribute to this debate, this chapter explores if the experiences of the cooperatives analysed contributed to empowering women members and to what extent the cooperative model was instrumental for achieving this. I have analysed different elements of empowerment by looking at the three aspects (resources, agency and achievements) under different themes and have illustrated each argument with anecdotes and quotes extracted from my fieldwork experience.

Entrepreneurial activities are socially constructed and embedded in each context (Bruni et al, 2004 cited in Pérez-Quintana, Hormiga, Martori and Madariaga, 2017: 9). Therefore, holistically analysing this phenomenon requires moving beyond the three basic concepts that lie at the heart of conventional entrepreneurship research, namely the "3Ms" (markets, money and management) (Brush et al, 2009). In the case of *social* entrepreneurship, the

54

social dimension of the activities would have to be integrated into this analytical equation as an additional aspect but beyond this factor, we can follow Brush et al and consider two additional Ms to provide a more gender-aware analysis: M for "meso/macro environment" and M for "motherhood" symbolising household and family contexts (Brush et al, 2009). This chapter lends special attention to these two factors as key determinants of social entrepreneurship and analyses them in relation to women-led cooperatives, in order to illustrate their relevance for debates on gender. The next section will set the scene by describing the state of play of social entrepreneurship in the region of the study.

Women's social entrepreneurship in Andalusia

In Andalusia, as in other parts of the world, the concept of social entrepreneurship is being used to refer to an increasingly diverse range of business initiatives that challenge traditional entrepreneurial models by placing people at the centre of their actions and superseding traditional business models that focused on economic gain (Kerlin, 2010; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Mair, 2010). Since the 2008 crisis, social entrepreneurship has been attracting growing attention and has been appealing to a wide range of people and business modalities (IECA, 2015).

Context is not only crucial for understanding social entrepreneurship but also for understanding empowerment. We also know that gender is one of the fundamental factors that can influence perceptions of key questions such as the barriers to entrepreneurship (Shinnar, Niacomin and Janssen, 2012). The three types of potential barriers identified by these authors resonate with the findings of this chapter, namely: a) perceived lack of support; b) fear of failure; c) perceived lack of competency. Beyond these internal barriers, in Andalusia, a recent study points to issues linked to structural gender inequality (care of children and other dependents in the absence of adequate policies) as a key external barrier (Suárez-Ortega and Gálvez-García, 2017).

The role of the above-mentioned factors in different entrepreneurial environments reveal that women's perceptions on entrepreneurship are shaped by gender and/or the institutional environment they operate in, more than by

their own cultures (Shinnar, Niacomin and Janssen, 2012: 483), with their own self-perception also playing an important role, as my discussion on women's identification with the categories of entrepreneur and success illustrates (Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2013, cited in Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017).

Andalusia is one of the largest and least advantaged autonomous communities in Spain, as well as one of the regions where the social enterprise phenomenon can be said to be most consolidated, together with the Basque Country, Valencia and Murcia (European Commission, 2015). In this region, the socio-economic context is characterised by structural unemployment and a culture of extended working hours that has negative effects on work-life balance (Álvarez and Miles-Touya, 2016). The members of the cooperatives interviewed for this chapter acknowledge that to them, the cooperative model represented (to different extents and in a variety of ways) an alternative form of organisation that enabled a different way of operating that could be more easily tailored to their needs and could also improve their quality of life.

This positive appraisal of the cooperative experience can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, the cooperative model can be seen as a solution that provides employment opportunities for women, improving their self-esteem and enhancing women's sense of empowerment while providing the necessary conditions for greater flexibility and better work-life balance. On the other hand, employment in cooperatives may not always be the result of real agency (understood as the power to choose) but a form of self-employment in an economic context where job opportunities for women are largely absent. We have seen in previous section that the entrepreneurial context is also dominated by a strong gender bias. It is invisible but affects the reality of choices and the opportunities available to women who wish to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, the type of employment they have access to is sometimes precarious in nature, mainly as a result of low salaries, uncertain working conditions and limited institutional support in areas such as family and care services.

Cooperatives remain a traditional legal form but the experience of the three cooperatives I have analysed suggests that the model (originally centred on the

56

collective production and commercialisation of agricultural goods) is being re-invented by women to respond to the challenges of the context. None of the three fields of activity I present -consultancy, child and psychological services- have been traditional fields for cooperatives. However, the experiences of these women-led organisations deserve attention not only as illustrations of successful social enterprises exploring new fields of cooperative action: they are also examples of how cooperatives are responding to a particular context -Andalusia- and to the specific needs of women members in this context. The next section presents the socioeconomic context of Andalusia and the rationale for making this region the geographical focus of this research.

The Andalusian socio-political environment for women's participation

This section considers different dimensions of the Andalusian context, since contextual factors play a key role in shaping social entrepreneurship initiatives (Sekliiuckiene and Kisielius, 2015). These are invariably conditioned by a wide range of factors such as the level of economic development, cultural and social elements and the policies in place (Fayolle and Matlay, 2010). Those factors are particularly relevant for the active participation of women in the realm of social entrepreneurship. In the case of Spain, the emergence of feminism has been closely linked to liberal doctrines that called for equal rights for women and men (Folguera, 2007). Despite the improvements witnessed over the last decades, existing gender norms place women in the position of greatest responsibility for household care and men as breadwinners. Women must often choose between home and work in the absence of adequate family support policies and programmes (Álvarez and Miles-Touya, 2016: 1225).

As in other societies, many of the equal opportunities policies introduced in Spain to date have amounted to little more than "giving women a chance under men's rules" (Rao et al. 2016: 7). Furthermore, the crisis has had uneven effects for men and women and structural gender inequalities remain. Even if it can be argued that over the last twenty years, women have improved their access to education and employment (following similar trends to those witnessed elsewhere in Europe), the crisis has increased existing inequality between men and women's

terms of employment, making women's working situation more precarious (Espinosa and Matus, 2017). Between 2005 and 2015, there was a 5.4% gender gap between female and male unemployment in the region and one third of Andalusian women had part-time contracts in 2015, with 60% of the women interviewed admitting that it was not by choice but in the absence of full-time opportunities that they had accepted these part-time positions (Espinosa and Matus, 2017: 13).

The above-mentioned factors help to explain the reasons why cooperatives are becoming the preferred organisational form of social entrepreneurship in the region (Sanjuan Jurado, 2015). The economic crisis of 2008 showed the limitations and unexpected frailty of what was deemed to be a robust welfare system across the European Union (Defourny, 2010). This had profound effects in Andalusia, where the introduction of so-called austerity measures significantly reduced the scope of existing support policies, causing a profound questioning of the principles of the welfare system at a time when the need for social services and safety nets was paradoxically on the rise. Since the crisis, the number of social enterprises has increased but the rate of consolidation of these initiatives has been low, suggesting that many were launched for self-employment generation, rather than as real entrepreneurship opportunities (GEM, 2017: 17).

As in other European countries, the crisis in Andalusia opened "new scenarios for participation and partnership between economic actors in a mixed governance framework where the social economy had increasing protagonism" (Zurbano and De la Cal, 2015: 59). Third Sector actors and private individuals became increasingly involved in emerging social issues, seeking solutions and intervening to fill in the gaps left by the State, particularly in the realm of social service provision. These "crisis-oriented factors" also included other aspects such as changes in normative situations, technological progress or new partnership opportunities unexpectedly brought about by the crisis (Perrini, 2006: 16).

Evidence from across the world suggests that growing inequality intensifies social tensions on issues of gender and increases discrimination and violence against women and girls (Rao et al, 2016). The economic crisis experienced across Europe

58

has had serious consequences on women, with Andalusia experiencing many of the trends witnessed in Europe (Espinosa Matus, 2017). As a result of the crisis, Andalusian women also undertook a type of domestic work that was traditionally assigned to them and which lacked economic or social recognition, sometimes in parallel with formal jobs (Espinosa and Matus, 2017). The increase in female participation in the job market was a result of the fact that unemployment particularly affected sectors that were "heavily masculinised" (Gálvez and Rodríguez-Modroño, 2016: 14). At the same time, the crisis also brought about a return to a situation where, in the absence of resources, social needs (such as care services for children and elderly people) were addressed "at the community and domestic level", which tended to be "informal and feminised" (Zurbano and De la Cal, 2015: 59).

The role that institutional rules, practices and processes play in holding gender inequality and perpetuating its effects was overlooked for several decades but is now receiving greater attention (Krook and Mackay 2011, cited in Rao et al, 2016). If we take the concrete case of cooperatives as an organisational/institutional model and consider their development role in Andalusia, it is important to highlight that women are highly active in these organisations. Cooperatives are the modality that is most frequently chosen by women who participate in collective entrepreneurship initiatives, providing 17,440 direct jobs and approximately 25,000 indirect jobs (equivalent to almost 80% of the female jobs in the social economy sector) in 2015 (Sanjuan Jurado, 2015: 179). In 2015, almost 50% of the women who were members of cooperatives participated directly in decision-making as advisors and 39% held executive positions mainly as presidents or administrators (Sanjuan Jurado, 2015: 179). This not only points to the high participation of women in cooperatives but also to how they are challenging traditional roles within these structures by holding positions of greater power and influence. As a result, cooperatives are increasingly considered a reference model in terms of equality between men and women versus other business models (AMECOOP, 2010). In fact, some authors argue that there is less discrimination when it comes to accessing employment in cooperatives (Delso, 2001 quoted in Elio Cemborain, 2006). However, even if women are encouraged to move into other spheres of activity in order to challenge gender roles, the socio-

59

cultural context still demands that women fulfil their traditional roles in parallel (household care, motherhood, etc.) (Marlow et al, 2012 quoting McRobbie, 2009).

Recent years have witnessed greater presence of women in various federations and associations of social entrepreneurs at the regional level. These structures include AMECOOP (women's association within FAECTA federation), AMESAL (Women's association within FEANSAL federation) and CERES (women's association in COAG- platform of farmers' and stock-breeders' organisations). These three organisations came together in 2009 to create FEMPES (Entrepreneurial Federation of Women for the Social Economy) as an umbrella organisation. These organisations aim to constitute "essential instruments for the representation of women in decision-making environments and in dialogue with public and private entities" that have also allegedly helped women entrepreneurs face those "obstacles and limitations that work as a glass ceiling or sticky floor" (AMECOOP 2015: 26).

In a context marked by increasing unemployment, it is also worth noting that many individuals resorted to self-employment across Spain with the objective of creating their own work opportunities (Valenzuela and Molina, 2013). The particularly dramatic increase in unemployment in Andalusia (from 14% in December 2007 to 36,3% in December 2013) (INE, 2018) made the social dimension of businesses gain importance, since the economic situation brought to the forefront the need to find "different and more humane" ways of doing business (Haro Pastor, 2015: 97). Existing business models in Andalusia also evolved, as an increasing number of companies placed people at the centre and promoted new consumption trends that embraced social justice, ethics and solidarity principles as key entrepreneurial values. The number of cooperatives also grew across the region, with Andalusia registering 18% of the total national cooperatives created in 2016 (INE, 2018).

The Andalusian socio-political and economic context of the aftermath of the economic crisis was marked by various factors of relevance to the theme of this research. First, it is important to note that unemployment figures in Andalusia

tend to be among the highest in the country (23% in 2017 compared to the national average of 16%) (INE, 2017), making the cooperative's employment creation potential a matter of special interest. Secondly, Andalusia is also the region with the highest number of social enterprises in Spain (6.928), amounting to 23.9% of the national total (Cabrera Blanco, 2015: 161), and employing a total of 64,950 workers (52,217 in cooperatives) (IECA, 2015: 15). The service, industry, agriculture and construction sectors constitute 60%, 20%, 12% and 8% respectively, out of the total social enterprises that existed in 2015 (Cabrera Blanco, 2015: 161). Social entrepreneurship can thus be considered a strategic segment of the regional economy in Andalusia that deserves attention. Thirdly, if we take women's participation in this sector, approximately half of the people working in social enterprises in Andalusia were women in 2015 (FAECTA, 2016). My focus on cooperatives is motivated by the fact that in Andalusia, out of the different social entrepreneurship modalities, cooperatives constitute not only the most popular legal structure for social enterprises in the region but also the most favoured by women participating in collective entrepreneurship initiatives (Sanjuan Jurado, 2015: 179).

Legal frameworks are key for ensuring an "entrepreneurial environment" (Mair, 2010) that enables social enterprises to flourish. The State and government play a central role in understanding a country's social enterprise model (Kerlin, 2009), since institutions, rules and norms in society are determining factors for shaping the kind of entrepreneurship that emerges in a country as well as its economic development model (Rueschemeyer, 2009). Furthermore, social enterprises are shaped by government decisions and actions as a result of their connection to both civil society and the economy (Baumol, 1990).

Hence, considering the Andalusian legal, institutional and policy framework is key for understanding which factors have been conducive to the creation of women-led enterprises in the region and which obstacles are hindering their development. In 2011, Spain was the first EU country to introduce a specific law on the social economy (Niṭulescu and Rimac, 2014). Laws 5/2011 and 31/2015 constitute two key legal pillars for social enterprises operating in the country and define social economy as the combination of economic and business activities

61

carried out by private entities for general economic and/or social interest (Law 5/2011). According to this law, the social economy hinges upon three basic principles: a) the primacy of individuals over capital (reflected in democratic and participatory government structures); b) the contribution of all the results of the activities to the social objective of the entity; c) the promotion of solidarity with a view to supporting society's commitment to local development, equal opportunities, the integration of people at risk of social exclusion, social cohesion, the generation of employment, personal-family-work balance and sustainability; d) independence with respect to public authorities (CEPES, 2018).

In this section I have provided an overview of some of the key socio-political factors of relevance to cooperatives in Andalusia. The next section will focus on cooperativism in the region, as opposed to other forms of social enterprise, its history and especially its legal framework with a view to providing an overview of the social enterprise ecosystem in Andalusia.

Women-led cooperatives in Andalusia: reinventing a model?

The main objective of work cooperatives can be described as "the creation of business structures that guarantee economic viability, social justice, democracy and power-sharing" (Elio Cemborain, 2006: 36). The figures for Spain suggest that cooperatives are the type of social enterprise that employ the highest percentage of women at 41% (Elio Cemborain, 2006: 38). This is also true of the Andalusian region, as I will discuss in this section. The performance of cooperatives in Spain in the crisis years received growing attention, as one of the legal structures of the social economy that showed positive features at a time marked by rising unemployment and severe economic challenges. Recent evidence from cooperatives in Spain for the period 2008-15 suggests that work cooperatives were "not less productive than capitalist organisations, survive to at least the same degree and create employment that is more stable, motivated and satisfactory" (Atienza-Montero and Rodríguez-Pacheco, 2018: 146). The authors also concluded that in terms of economic soundness, viability and financial autonomy, cooperatives rated higher and their risk of bankruptcy was lower, whilst in terms of profitability and liquidity, capitalist organisations attained a

62

higher level during the crisis years (Atienza-Moreno and Rodríguez-Pacheco, 2018: 147).

In Andalusia, the traditional popularity of cooperatives can be explained by the fact that they occupy a central role in the legal framework as one of the categories for entities operating within the social economy together with: a) labour companies; b) mutual insurance companies; c) special employment enterprises; d) labour integration social enterprises; e) fishermen's guilds; f) associations of disabled and socially excluded persons; g) foundations (Law 5/2011). Specific regional laws have further strengthened the presence of cooperatives across Andalusia and might have also increased their appeal for women. For example, Law 14/2011 of December 23 on Andalusian Cooperative Societies, established a series of unique components that did not appear in the international principles established by other cooperative norms, such as "the promotion of stable, quality employment with special emphasis on work-family balance and gender equality as a cross-cutting issue" (García Jiménez, 2015: 49). This element is relevant since it contributes to setting the legal base on which to lay the grounds for transformative measures with the potential to improve women's living conditions. Another element to be highlighted is the capacity-building principle incorporated by this law, since every cooperative must create a compulsory fund for training on issues linked to cooperativism, the promotion of gender equality as well as special training activities for members with integration difficulties at the social or professional level (García Jiménez, 2015: 49). It is also worth noting that this law includes gender equality as one of the cooperative principles in article 4 and it also appears as a cross-cutting principle to be applied in cooperatives (Law 14/2011). The recent amendment to the law (officially published in July 2018) decreasing the minimum number of cooperative members from three to two, responds to civil society demands to simplify and extend this model to a greater number of entrepreneurial projects as part of ongoing efforts to further promote cooperatives as an integral part of the social economy.

It can be argued that the legal mechanisms available in each context determine whether social enterprises choose a cooperative or an associative legal form

63

(Defourny, 2010). As a result, many social enterprises across the world are still using traditional third sector legal forms (Defourny, 2010), such as associations and foundations in Spain or cooperatives in the Andalusian region, in the absence of more specific legal structures. Cooperatives are deeply embedded in Andalusian culture as a model of organisation that was born in the mid-19th century. The arrival of democracy in the 1970s brought about a substantial development of this model (Algora Jiménez, 2015: 141). In recent years, cooperatives have become increasingly popular across Spain in the aftermath of the economic crisis after falling in numbers during the crisis years (from 14,825 at the peak of the crisis in 2008 to 11,938 in 2014) and subsequently experiencing an increase in the number of new year-on-year registrations since 2015 (11,956 in 2015; 12,038 in 2016; and 12,056 in 2017) (Annual Statistical database, INE, 2018). The three cases analysed in this chapter are part of this growing trend and its members are also representative of the dominant profile of women participating in work cooperatives in the region in terms of age group, civil status and level of education as I discuss below.

In Andalusia, cooperatives fall into four categories (services, consumption, transportation and special) and operate according to seven key principles (Rivero López, 2015: 198). These principles are at the heart of the cooperatives analysed in this study, as I will explain in the following section. First, in terms of their creation and development, the adhesion of members of the cooperative was an open and voluntary process in all cases. Secondly, the management of the cooperatives was democratic and followed the "one person, one vote rule" in decision-making processes. All partners made equitable economic contributions to the cooperative and decided on the use of funds in a consensual manner. All cooperatives worked to preserve their autonomy and independence in their collaborations and agreements with other entities while at the same time working with other cooperatives. The issue of promoting sustainable development in the communities they operated in was also important for these organisations.

Beyond these basic principles, the federations and various umbrella organisations linked to the sector mentioned earlier in this chapter argue that cooperatives are developing "new social practices in different areas of society and

are actively promoting social innovation and the democratization of the economy" (FAECTA, 2016: 58). They argue that this innovation is the result of linking values such as participation, equal opportunities, sustainability and social responsibility to their entrepreneurial activity and developing "new ideas that satisfy the needs of society" (FAECTA, 2016: 59). As we will see further on, the interviews conducted for this research show that this positive and optimistic interpretation of the work of cooperatives in relation to society and the communities they serve resonated with the views of several members.

In terms of addressing gender equality, two key laws should be considered in relation to the social economy. Firstly, Law 3/2007 of March 22 for the effective equality of men and women at the national level and at the regional level, Law 12/2007 of November 26 for the promotion of gender equality in Andalusia. These laws introduced "a set of measures to address issues such as vertical segregation, conciliation, incorporation into the labour market on equal terms [and] the effective implementation of real equality in the framework of the companies and their productive activity" in the business agenda (Sanjuan Jurado, 2015: 180). Nonetheless, just like in other countries, significant gaps between laws and practice prevail (Mair, 2010).

Cooperative values and principles explicitly include gender equality and it can be argued that their governance will not be adequate unless this principle is respected and integrated in the operations of every cooperative in a cross-cutting manner (Villafañez, 2017; Senent Vidal, 2011). However, when we analyse decision-making organs across cooperatives comprised of both men and women members and assess their relative involvement, it seems clear that there is "a lack of gender diversity at certain levels" and they "do not reflect an equal society" (Elio Cemborain, 2006: 37). Nonetheless, cooperative principles are believed to facilitate women's access to decision-making positions (Esteban Salvador, 2013).

Law 39/2006 on Personal Autonomy and Care for Dependent Persons established a system composed of social services and support measures that sought to promote adequate care services for people with special needs by resorting to private and public services. This Law was considered part of the

65

instruments devoted to the promotion of social entrepreneurship, since it allowed for service provision within the private sphere (mainly female family members) in return for economic support that had never been available in the past. Both Law 50/2002 on Foundations and a more recent Law on the Promotion of Self-Employment (31/2015) incorporated additional measures in support of social entrepreneurship in various organisational forms. Furthermore, these two laws had effects on service cooperatives in general, since they encouraged the formation of work cooperatives to provide services associated with care (such as nursing homes for elderly people or for children with special needs) through this model (often set up by the families of those requiring specialised care services).

In the case of the care economy, women have taken a leading role, as in other countries, as a result of a context that is dominated by unequal power relations that determine their levels of participation in public life and the labour market (Humbert and Roomi, 2017). Recognising the role played by women entrepreneurs, several government bodies across Spain have been developing policies and programmes that seek to encourage women's entrepreneurial involvement, such as for example, a micro-credit scheme set up by the Spanish Confederation of Banks and the Ministry of Equality in the crisis period (Urbano et al, 2014: 27). At the regional level, a key policy to note is the establishment of *Andalucía Emprende*, a Public Foundation attached to the regional government's Economic Department that lends technical assistance and subsidies to entrepreneurial projects. With an extensive network of 215 field offices known as Entrepreneurial Development Support Centres (CADE), *Andalucía Emprende* has supported the creation of over 100,000 enterprises in the region. Associate experts assist the identification of the project and the design of the initial business plan. They also help to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the prospective success of the initiative. Once the project is ready to be launched, entrepreneurs receive legal support for setting-up, creating and registering the company according to the model that is best suited to each project. Private and public funding opportunities are also sought by CADE experts in order to try to obtain advantageous loans for the entrepreneurial projects. In every province of Andalusia, there is a specific CADE office that specialises in the social economy and promotes cooperatives in urban environments (including service

cooperatives such as the three analysed in this study), particularly those composed of young people and women. Although there are no specific grants or specific training programs for women, there are clauses that favour women victims of gender violence. The economic support lent to cooperative members also varies: women receive a higher sum to cover their social security costs and they receive it until they reach the age of 35 as opposed to men, who only receive it until they turn 30. The support of CADE centres in starting and supporting each of the three cooperatives analysed was considered pivotal by most of the interviewees.

Taken together, these legal, policy and institutional measures were positively valued by the cooperative members interviewed for this chapter who considered these policies to constitute the foundations of "an enabling legal framework" that supported their projects. However, the issue of whether these policies were designed to solve women's supposed "deficiencies" in relation to a male-shaped entrepreneurial model deserves consideration. From a critical feminist perspective, the existence of such specific support programmes suggests that women have deficiencies to solve or that certain issues need to be fixed in order to meet the requirements of successful entrepreneurial activity (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 545). This viewpoint is relevant to the discussion on the concepts of "success" and "entrepreneur" as perceived by some of the women interviewed, since their rejection or uneasiness when discussing these terms in relation to their own experiences resonated with these gendered ideas. But before considering women's perceptions of their role within the Andalusian social enterprise ecosystem, I set out the methodology I have followed for this research in the next section and present details of how the fieldwork was conducted and the challenges I faced throughout.

Methodology: the voices of *autónomas* and *cooperativistas*

This part of my research uses interviews as the prime data source. As noted earlier, in this chapter I want to give space to the voices of the (mainly) women I spoke to. By portraying the stories of women entrepreneurs, I show how they speak to the gender(ed) problems identified in the literature review and the socioeconomic context of Andalusia. To do so, I conducted a total of 20 interviews

67

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with women entrepreneurs as well as 7 additional interviews (4 women and 3 men) with staff members of some of the key institutions and services that played a role in their creation and development in Andalusia.

The first of these key support actors was an NGO implementing a leading programme on the promotion of social entrepreneurship with a special focus on vulnerable groups. The contact with this NGO was strategic for several reasons. Firstly, because through my interviews and successive contacts with the two members of the programme, I gained valuable insights into the social entrepreneurship ecosystem and learned about the challenges faced by the NGO during the implementation of its training/coaching programme. A second positive aspect was that thanks to the support of this NGO, I was able to gain direct access to a selection of women entrepreneurs who agreed to liaise with me after the project manager asked them if they wished to collaborate in my research. Their generosity and availability were no doubt linked to the positive relation that existed between the programme manager and these social entrepreneurs. As part of my endeavour to avoid an extractive attitude to research -which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2- I offered to include a couple of questions in my interviews on how social entrepreneurs who had benefited from the programme valued their experience and what they believed had been the most positive and least positive aspects of the support they had received. At the end of my fieldwork, I shared the responses with the programme manager (with the consent of my interviewees), and also provided a brief summary of each social entrepreneurial project that was later used by the NGO for communication purposes.

The second actor I engaged with as part of my data collection on the social entrepreneurship ecosystem was an institute that specialised in training and promoting enterprises in the social economy, with a special focus on the development of cooperatives. The staff members I interviewed were very knowledgeable of the Andalusian ecosystem and were eager to facilitate contacts with social enterprises that had received training from their team. I was invited to attend a couple of events organised by the institute, including a conference on cooperativism and an international conference where we presented some of the

results of our research. I was also asked to prepare a workshop for a group of cooperatives.

The third institutional actor I contacted was one of the technical advisors working for the regional body lending support services to future entrepreneurs (CADE). I had visited her before embarking on this research when I decided to become self-employed (*autónoma*) and her advice was extremely valuable for navigating complex paperwork and for guiding what were very difficult decisions at the time. It was a real coincidence to discover that the three cooperatives I was studying had started as projects that had been developed with the support of this office. CADE's work was highly rated by the members of the cooperatives and my own experience with the technical advisor mirrored their appreciation. I requested an interview with the same technical advisor in order to request her views on women's participation in social entrepreneurship and on her experience advising potential social entrepreneurs. She advised me to discuss this matter further with the coordinator of one of the main women's federations of cooperatives in the region (fourth actor) who was also crucial for this research. Apart from sharing valuable documents on cooperatives in Andalusia, the coordinator invited me to attend a week-long course on female leadership and cooperatives in November 2017 that also provided interesting background information for this research and helped to deepen my understanding of the difficulties involved in setting up a cooperative in the months prior to launching my own cooperative.

Following these background interviews, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with women involved in different types of entrepreneurial experiences (self-employed *'autónomas'*, social entrepreneurs, members of cooperatives) and with diverse profiles (various age groups, levels of education and sectors of activity). I decided to use a non-probabilistic sampling method, which entailed selecting subjects on the basis of the researcher's judgement as opposed to other forms of random sampling and this allowed me to focus on experiences that could illustrate a range of social entrepreneurship initiatives operating in Andalusia (Henry, 1990).

The selection of interviewees was conducted following a "snowball sampling" method (Goodman, 1961), which basically involved the referral of respondents by the informants initially identified (Atkinson and Finch, 2011). Thus, following this method, the preliminary interviews with the NGO programme manager and one the coordinators of the training institute earlier mentioned, led to the rest of the interviews as contacts were shared and facilitated by these informants until I managed to compile a broad spectrum of experiences. In the end, I decided to select three social enterprises for this chapter that had two characteristics in common: they were not only women-led but also composed exclusively of women and they all fell into the category of work cooperatives (*cooperativas de trabajo*).

Following a "persuasive case study approach" (Siggelkow, 2007), I selected three experiences that I deemed especially illustrative from the total data I collected during the fieldwork. Altogether, this data included interviews with women entrepreneurs and with the staff of several key institutions involved in supporting social entrepreneurship in different ways: a research and education centre, two federations of women entrepreneurs and a state-funded programme supporting new entrepreneurial initiatives. The three women-led cooperatives provided relevant insights on how these organisations were responding to the difficulties inherent in the Andalusian context and on the issue of whether they could be framed as "empowering" according to my theoretical model. Despite not constituting a statistically representative sample, the data collected and analysed might resonate with other social entrepreneurship initiatives across southern Europe. It can also be argued that as Siggelkow suggests, sharing these experiences can be useful for enriching the discussion because a) it might motivate interesting research questions (as suggested in the concluding section); b) it may inspire new ideas for individuals interested in creating social enterprises; c) it may serve to illustrate the theoretical elements presented in this chapter, namely in terms of whether and how cooperatives can act as enabling structures for women's empowerment (Siggelkow, 2007).

I have deliberately not attempted any kind of comparison between men and women-led cooperatives in this research, since as mentioned earlier there is no neutral standard but a model of entrepreneurship against which experiences are

70

measured and this model has been shaped by men (Ahl, 2006). Since much of the available research on female entrepreneurship looks at the effects of gender on entrepreneurial activity from a comparative perspective between men and women, I have adopted an analytical perspective that considers gender as something that is both socially constructed and context dependent in the hope that analysing women's perspectives on their work in cooperatives will shed light on how gender is constructed and produced.

As explained in previous chapters, my different roles as a researcher in different capacities has varied as one identity has "taken over" another. While conducting the research for this chapter, it was my role as woman and cooperative member that led my approach. This allegiance was made even stronger by the fact that at the time of the research, I was in the process of creating my own cooperative. As I describe later in this chapter, I gained valuable knowledge and insights into this process through the experiences shared with me during this fieldwork, which led to what can be described as a certain co-creation of knowledge during our exchanges (Rhodes and Carlsen, 2018).

Describing my own relation with the subject of this research is important for understanding its resulting advantages (rare unlimited access and easy rapport) and limitations (direct engagement, subjectivity and biases). I am a mother of two, living in Andalusia and my main motivation for becoming part of INTDEV (and later funding my own cooperative) was the need for a better work-life balance following a period marked by my son's illness. My fieldwork has revealed that this type of personal, family-related motivation coincided with that of many of my informants. Participatory observation, active participation and involvement in internal meetings and activities provided additional insights into some of the social entrepreneurship activities analysed. I do not claim to be a neutral observer, given my deep involvement in one of these cooperatives and my familiarity with the mixed picture of cooperative work. Nonetheless, what became clear during the fieldwork is that my own experience mirrored many of the findings reflected in this chapter. I will come back to describe some of these shared experiences in the discussion.

Case studies of three 'coops'

As I have explained above, the three social enterprises considered for this chapter were selected considering their potential and interest for exploring the issue of women's empowerment in organisations that had adopted the cooperative legal form as their operating structure. Two of the three cooperatives were based in small towns in Andalusia. The third was based in one of the main cities. Although the individual profiles of the women interviewed varied (in areas such as their past career and socio-economic background), they were all aged between 35-50, had attended university and in most cases had children. If we compare these features to the individual profiles of the women creating or joining work cooperatives in Spain, a recent study concluded that 72.5% of the women who were part of a work cooperative were married or in a relationship, 69.7% were aged 35-55 and 79% had a university degree (COCETA, 2019).

The following experiences have been selected for this chapter: a) INTDEV (international consultancy services); b) CCARE (childcare) and c) WBEING (psychological services).

INTDEV worked on international development issues, providing consultancy services (mainly technical support, evaluation and training) to a wide variety of entities that ranged from international organisations and NGOs to local government bodies, academia and other civil society actors at the local and global levels. The three founding members came together attracted by the idea of developing what was to be "a life project rather than an enterprise", a professional project that would allow them "the freedom to do things their way". This cooperative had been active since 2009 and despite the challenges initially encountered as a unique organisation in the market supporting organisations in diverse social consulting areas (monitoring and evaluation, organisational development, training, etc.), it had succeeded in sustaining its activities and even growing from 3 to 6 members. My relationship with INTDEV went back to 2007, two years before its creation ten years ago. I met the three founding members in a professional setting and a personal relationship with one of the members ensued. I was in regular contact with her during the period 2007-9 as the cooperative was "in the making" and my relationship with the other two founding

72

members also developed during that period. Upon my return to Spain in 2012, we collaborated within the framework of my work as programme officer for an NGO and their consultancy assignments with this same NGO globally (as well as local events we attended together on themes of common interest). The next stage in our relationship was marked by my younger son's illness in 2015, when they offered not only valuable moral support but also the opportunity to work together on different assignments as independent consultant and researcher. This personal relationship, coupled with growing professional collaboration, eventually led to an offer to join them as associate member in 2017. This phase coincided with my PhD research, providing an invaluable opportunity to gain insights into their work as a cooperative and to effectively become "one of them". For the last two years, I have taken part in meetings, elaborated proposals, conducted different assignments in collaboration with other members and built a strong sense of ownership of the cooperative. This has also allowed me to apply ethnographic methods to this case study.

In comparison to this my experience with INTDEV, my interaction and subsequent data collection in the case of the other two cooperatives, were more limited. I encountered CCARE through the NGO I mentioned earlier, which implemented an interesting support programme to emerging entrepreneurs. The programme had provided technical support to entrepreneurship initiatives through a series of training modules for entrepreneurs, tailored guidance on formal procedures for the establishment of cooperatives, development of business plans and even the search for adequate premises. When I approached this NGO, I offered to provide them with a brief article summarising my research findings if they could connect me with women entrepreneurs who had benefited from their programme. The NGO's programme manager shared a series of contacts of women entrepreneurs who had expressed willingness to take part in my research. In the case of CCARE, we started our contact by telephone and eventually arranged a visit to their premises. I conducted phone and face-to-face interviews with members, visited their premises and re-contacted them again when my article was going to be published to elicit their feedback on the draft. CCARE offers its services to the population of a small Andalusian town, with a focus on children and their families. I spent a couple of hours with two of the

73

three founding members, conducting semi-structured interviews and visiting the beautiful space they had created only a year after their formal constitution as a cooperative. CCARE was created in 2017 by three friends with previous experience in a range of different professional fields linked to children, education and commerce. They began their social activity operating through a non-profit association that organized outreach and training activities for children and young people in collaboration with different local institutions. Over time, they decided to turn this work into a shared professional project and to establish a cooperative, driven by the need to make a living in a way that would also allow them flexibility to respond to family obligations and personal circumstances. CCARE provided child support and care services and its social mission was to support families by providing a wide range of care and educational services through a holistic approach composed of several different elements. Beyond offering thematic workshops, school dinners and after-school activities, CCARE provided other services tailored to the specific needs of each family and incorporated innovative elements such as nutritional monitoring of children attending the centre. It also included logistical support and transportation to and from school, and to evening classes across the village.

In the case of WBEING, apart from conducting semi-structured interviews, I also visited their premises and engaged in participatory observation. WBEING was created in 2007 and supported children with special needs through the provision of psychological, therapeutic and educational services that included new methodologies in combination with leisure activities that involved horses and combined different activities in a natural setting where the children played and learned together as part of their therapy. The women who originally set up the cooperative met through a training course offered by the local government on equine therapies. After the course, they discovered the existence of a hippodrome that was hardly used near their town and decided to develop a project to gain the support of the local authorities. The project was approved, and they decided to establish a cooperative, since this was the model that "best suited their philosophy of solidarity and collective effort". The project has undergone several stages since its early days, with the departure of various members resulting in a more stable and committed core group.

The women working in these three cooperatives shared their experiences of multiple identities and roles inside and outside their homes and how they differed from previous professional experiences. Often, what we see in practice are situations where, in the absence of an effective adaptation to women's new realities, women's roles at home and in the workplace are in constant competition, often causing frustration and exhaustion. As Lindsey notes, "in acting out the roles of mother and employee, women are expected to be available at given times to satisfy the needs of family and workplace" (Lindsey, 2015: 3). It is balancing these roles that constitutes a major challenge for most women. This will be discussed at length in the next section by analysing different dimensions of empowerment in relation to each of these experiences.

The contribution of cooperatives to women's empowerment

In the first part of this chapter, I introduced the Andalusian socio-economic context. I also discussed different feminist standpoints and critical concerns about how social entrepreneurship was portrayed in research and analysed as a phenomenon. In this section, I show how -notwithstanding some of the feminist concerns and difficulties discussed earlier- the perceptions of women members paint a more positive picture. From their perspective, the cooperative model appears to be enhancing their freedom and improving their quality of life. This finding emerged gradually during my fieldwork. It is supported by the different dimensions of empowerment I will prove to be present in the perceptions and everyday work experiences of my informants. In the following section, I will dedicate one section to each of these dimensions.

a) Work-life balance and women's double burden

The participation of women in entrepreneurship projects is strongly affected by their care obligations and hence, the existence of support services in their community (nurseries, day centres, etc.) is crucial (Eikhof, 2012). The experiences shared by the women interviewed emphasised the cooperative model's potential to support efforts to reconcile their work with their family life. Ángela explained how their cooperative started when none of the members had

children and their ways of working evolved to accommodate the arrival of six sons and daughters over the space of ten years.

> My son was the first to arrive and because the initial years were especially tough, he spent many hours with me on the premises while we all worked. Now things have become a little easier as we have hired more staff, but our children still share a lot of time with us here. Can you imagine having your children with you while working for a traditional company? It would have been impossible! I feel that we have been very lucky in this respect. Not only because we have enjoyed being with them and it has made our logistics more manageable, but also because they have benefitted from interacting with others. For example, I think that my son's contact with children with special needs has made him more tolerant and understanding.

Ángela's experience and the accounts of other cooperative members also reflected new ways of working and producing in a more flexible manner. Flexibility (when to work and how long for) constitutes a central factor for facilitating work-life balance and women's participation in the labour market (Eikhof, 2012; Appelbaum et al, 2006). The flexibility that cooperatives allow is opening new opportunities for work-family balance, although they are not free of tensions due to the "double burden" of many women entrepreneurs. The personal situations of the women I encountered varied substantially both in terms of civil status, number of dependents, ages, etc. Despite their different situations at home, during our discussions, family was one of the limitations most frequently mentioned by women interviewed as a potential "brake" on their entrepreneurial activity in general. Nevertheless, all the women interviewed held the view that the cooperative set-up had brought about positive changes in terms of work-life balance with respect to previous work experiences, since it was more feasible to achieve a balance with a flat organisational structure based on mutual support and equal salaries. Several concrete examples were shared in this regard. For instance, in two of the cooperatives, members covered the maternity leave of another member and assumed more work when one of the members fell ill. These adjustments were made out of solidarity, understanding that all members would support each other as required.

76

In this context, the traditional barriers between the personal and the professional have also been blurred as a result of the shared use of time and resources at different times and spaces by women entrepreneurs. The flexibility that the cooperative set-up provided, translated into concrete advantages, such as having time-off as required or working a reduced number of hours when needed. During one of my visits, one of the members left to be with her mother who was about to undergo surgery at the local hospital. As we saw her off, one of her colleagues said to me "See how easy it is for us to support one another? Of course, in any company you can ask your boss for a day off to cover these types of things, but you know how difficult it can be. We care for each other and these things come easy".

The fact that most of the women interviewed had children meant that creative solutions were sought to accommodate family needs and the scope for making this possible within the cooperative was an aspect that the women particularly valued. The cooperatives opened new opportunities for work-life balance, although they were not exempt from tensions due to the "double burden" I mentioned earlier in this section. Furthermore, it is not easy to shift role and responsibilities when identities are invariably gendered and any actions that go against existing socio-cultural norms cause tension and uneasiness (Marlow et al, 2012); (Linstead and Pullen, 2006). The reversal of roles between two of the women members and their respective husbands was discussed at some length during the fieldwork, since it was an aspect that also affected family life. These women explained that additional negotiating with their partners was required whenever they needed to work more, and this sometimes strained their relationships.

Family burdens and working extended shifts also limited the time available for some of the women, who described having to complete tasks associated with the cooperative at home during their leisure time. While acknowledging the potential dangers of this, the women interviewed considered this an advantage, since it guaranteed greater room for manoeuvre than they had experienced in previous jobs as discussed with María. One of the women described an interesting evolution in her cooperative. At the beginning of their project, they all insisted on the importance of equality among the group, which translated into equal salaries.

77

Over time, the overall workload evolved in such a manner that the only member who did not have children was working more than her colleagues. Eventually, it was decided that she would become the coordinator of the cooperative and would receive a higher salary to compensate the extra time and effort she was dedicating. Our discussion on the issue of equality reminded me of similar issues we faced in my own cooperative. We also became aware of different workloads and levels of responsibility, but I initially opposed the idea of changing our salaries, convinced that it would go against the philosophy of cooperativism. At the beginning, I was convinced that if we shared resources unequally, part of our purpose as a cooperative would be defeated. While talking to María, I learned that just like in our case, it took long discussions for this cooperative to make the shift I have just described. My interviewee and I agreed that it took a certain maturity as an organisation to address this kind of issue. We also agreed that the boundaries of what is fair or just are never set in stone.

Following Cornwall and Edwards, the empirical evidence presented in this chapter shows that beyond enlarging the boundaries of action, empowerment is also about "expanding the horizons of possibility, of what people imagine themselves being able to be and do" (2014: 16). In most cases, the entrepreneurial project was the result of an important and/or life-changing personal experience of either a positive or a negative nature that opened new opportunities that one of the respondents described as 'a dream come true'. For example, Alba's illness coupled with her decision to remain in Spain and her disillusionment with her previous professional experiences made her look for an alternative professional project that was inspired from her travels and experiences living abroad. In the case of Pilar, her years looking for work after being made redundant led her to enrol in the training course on alternative therapies that ultimately inspired the creation of her cooperative with other students from the same course.

The notions of "solidarity" and "sisterhood" were also present in the three experiences, since several personal situations (such as the illness of a family member, pregnancy or maternity leave) were overcome through mutual support that involved redistributing work among fellow members to allow for the cooperative member in need of extra support to take her time before returning to

78

her duties. As one cooperative member noted, the support she received during her fertility treatment and her high-risk pregnancy would have been difficult to imagine in a traditional company. Another cooperative member was particularly grateful for the support she received during the process of adopting her son and in comparison to what she had seen in companies where she had previously worked.

Members of two of these cooperatives also spoke of how much they enjoyed working with other women and in collaboration with other women-led cooperatives as part of this sense of "sisterhood" or "sorority". As one cooperative member mentioned, "there is amazing complicity between us and even if we argue at times, there is a lot of understanding and there are many things I think we have in common just by virtue of being women". Another woman spoke in terms of "our generosity", describing how one of the things that she felt differentiated the services offered by her cooperative from those offered by other companies in the sector was how receptive and open they were to the needs of others and how their response often went beyond the needs of a concrete service and associated fees. To her, this was partly a gender-related aspect and she quoted several examples of collaborations with men where she felt that they were not "giving" as much as her and her colleagues. It was also intriguing to see how these positive accounts of women working together clashed with outside perceptions. In our conversations, there were many references to how it is generally believed that when women work together, things go wrong:

> You would have been amazed to hear some of the things the older men from the village said to us when we started our cooperative. They would come around to just watch us work and say to us that it would all end in tears because we were all women and women are prone to petty fights and arguing.

This type of argument clearly resonates with stereotypes that are still prevalent in our society and provide cause for reflexion on who is interested in defending such claims and why. I think we all know the answer.

79

b) Doing good: placing the social at the centre in the quest for social justice

Another way in which forming the cooperatives contributed to improving women member's living conditions and to empowering them was by allowing members to work in organisations that placed "the social" at the centre of their projects. This dimension was key for the women interviewed, since they expressed pride in how they had succeeded in making their social values and mission central elements of their work. As one of the women noted, "social entrepreneurship models are either coherent or not social".

It was these women's desire to "meet the needs of society" and "to address a social gap or problem" that guided the definition of their projects and they felt that the cooperative model was instrumental for achieving this. Feeling that their work contributed to society and helped other people was a key added value for all the women interviewed. For this reason, the social value of projects can be highlighted as a key factor. For some women, what pushed them to create their cooperatives above all was the need to develop an activity that could simultaneously "give back something good to society" and allow them "to make ends meet" while achieving a better work-family balance. For instance, it was their own struggles while raising their children that inspired the women who created CCARE to provide a different (more holistic) type of support. This finding was in line with the conclusions of a recent study conducted in several countries and mentioned earlier in this chapter (Nicolás and Rubio, 2016).

I will now share two specific examples of how INTDEV and WBEING were placing the social at the centre. The active involvement of two of INTDEV's members in the social committee of a credit cooperative illustrates their commitment to the ideals and principles of cooperativism. Marina explained that to her, this voluntary pro-bono engagement "is part of my activism and support for a different economic model, a different way of working and producing that gives more weight to the notion of solidarity and is coherent with my own personal values too". Another excellent example of this commitment to *doing good* was WBEING's involvement in a mentoring scheme with youth who had resorted to alternative technical education programmes often after abandoning

80

traditional secondary education. Let me illustrate this point with a short instance from my notes during a visit to WBEING:

> The day I meet Belén, I am amazed at how she manages a group of 15 youth and how inspiring she is. Observing her from a distance, I cannot help thinking how lucky they are to have somebody as energetic and determined as her in what is no doubt a difficult transition phase in their pre-adult lives. I marvel at her ability to engage with them, her assertiveness and drive. A couple of the boys seem lost, their eyes fixed on the ground. One of them arrives late. Belén tells him off as she organizes the time schedule for the week and sets tasks for the entire team. "Will we really have to paint these walls here? Are you serious?" asks one of the young men. María looks at him bemused: "Of course I am- or do you think I'm going to just sit and watch you all stand around with your arms crossed wondering what to do? In our cooperative, we all do what is required: if this is what we need to do today, we just get on with it. Understood?", she responds.

When we sit together -just the two of us- Belén admits how difficult this aspect of the work is, but her face lights up as she smiles and says "it is also incredibly rewarding because these kids are often feeling quite lost, they do not know what options they will have in life when they finish their course and seeing our work opens up a whole new world for them."

Beyond recognising that their work had intrinsic social value, several women members of the cooperatives considered that their projects and activities also contributed to the goal of achieving greater social justice (Fayolle and Matlay, 2010). The importance for cooperative members of placing people above economic benefit was observed in each of the experiences analysed. The aims of each initiative focused on people both at the team level and at the level of the people who were supported by the cooperative's services. Their achievements and results were measured based on their contribution to social changes. As one of the members interviewed noted, "we have a triple bottom line that includes the social", implying that the cooperative's achievements are also measured in terms of their contribution to social change. The importance of placing people above economic benefit was also observed in each of the experiences analysed, with

81

initiatives that tended to place members and beneficiaries firmly at the centre of their strategy. Hence it would seem that the women interviewed were succeeding (at different levels and to greater and lesser degrees) in improving the balance between their principles and values, the economic needs of their activities and the search for sustainability of their entrepreneurship projects.

c) New skills and knowledge: learning makes us stronger

All the women interviewed for this study stressed that creating the cooperatives had also empowered them by providing new skills and knowledge. These would contribute to the third dimension of empowerment, namely to the resources available, which form the medium through which agency is exercised (Kabeer, 2005: 15). Real agency goes beyond the notion of choice to also incorporate the idea of "challenging power relations" and self-perceptions (notably in terms of self-esteem and self-worth) (Kabeer, 2008). As one of the women noted, "I never imagined I would learn so much in the process". The cooperatives allowed them to use their skills and capacities in a manner that had not always been possible in their previous jobs and this was also empowering for them. It strengthened their self-esteem and sense of achievement. Some of the women interviewed expressed a certain "vertigo" when using the word "entrepreneurship", as if their activity did not fit with their perception of achievements and success. The women used phrases such as "I never thought I would be able to do it", or "discovering that I could overcome my vertigo was fantastic", which point to their sense of growing self-esteem and self-worth.

Empowerment involves "shifts in the way in which we perceive the world and our place within it" (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014: x). From a feminist perspective, it is important to recognise "that often feelings of inadequacy or failure are rooted in political and economic structures" (Turner and Maschi, 2015: 157). This apparent "vertigo" or insecurity may be linked to the existence in entrepreneurship of a strong masculine stereotype that often remains invisible but is "unconsciously used most of the time" (Ahl, 2006; Meyer et al, 2017: 320). Like gender, success can be described as a construct, since it depends on intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with gender differences emerging in the process (Weber, 2014) The fact is that in our patriarchal system, success often appears as a

masculine characteristic. It is more an attribute of the male entrepreneur than of the female entrepreneur, who must often "demonstrate more to get to the same place", as one of the women interviewed noted. This can cause a situation where women experience "a disconnection, finding it harder to connect their internal sense of self with this masculine social identity and hence experience a sense of being fake" (Lewis, 2013: 254).

The capacity-building dimension constituted another central factor. For some women, their limited knowledge of business management constituted an obstacle to entrepreneurship, especially at the beginning of the process. Several women expressed not having been aware of being social entrepreneurs at first due to lack of training in social entrepreneurship, stressing that for this it was also necessary to understand "the intangible value of a collective project, which is something that also needs to be learned". Some women undertook types of training that went beyond technical skills to include areas such as personal development and women's empowerment. Women social entrepreneurs valued these training opportunities associated with their social entrepreneurship activities because they contributed to both their professional and/or personal growth.

Many of the women recognised the importance of strengthening their capacities as one of the decisive factors for the success of their projects, giving great importance to their previous professional experience and acquired skills; coupled with ensuring a balanced distribution of tasks among the members based on their different profiles, competencies and preferences. Women members of cooperatives gave special weight to strengthening the capacities not only of their members, but also of women who received services directly or indirectly through workshops and activities that included partnerships with institutions such as the institute specialised in social economy or the federation of cooperatives. Most of the interviewees highlighted the support and advice received from CADE centres (described in the methodology section) as crucial, even if access to economic resources was not possible in their respective cases.

d) The importance of networks and family support

One of the pillars of the philosophy of cooperativism is the idea that its principles are to be promoted and strengthened through mutual collaboration. During the fieldwork, cooperative members proudly shared experiences of some of the successful synergies they had built through collaborations with various local initiatives. These included local town halls, which subcontracted the services of all three cooperatives for different events to third sector organisations, as well as various federations of cooperatives. Behind these efforts, was the belief that through their work in the cooperatives, members were effectively promoting cooperativism as "an alternative way of doing business", with one of the members describing her own attitude as that of an "activist" encouraging and promoting the model across the region through her participation in the committee of a cooperative that provides banking services to other cooperatives.

Prior professional experiences and networks were also considered very important for their businesses and several women particularly valued the personal support lent by key individuals in the process. Esther (founding member of INTDEV) had worked in various institutions before deciding to create her own social enterprise. This prior experience proved crucial for starting her cooperative, since she had developed an impressive network of contacts that helped her orient her project. Clara -another founder- told a similar story of key network support, since it was thanks to her network from her prior consulting and project management career that provided the first assignments for the cooperative when it was first created.

Apart from former colleagues and professional networks, another cooperative member interviewed -Marina- highlighted the support of a concrete individual (in her case, a family member) who provided key encouragement, daily coaching and even practical support (in areas such as web management and accounting) in the initial months of her venture. This special support aspect has been highlighted in various studies as a factor present in many of the experiences of women social entrepreneurs (Urbano et al, 2014). Family support was particularly important for women in a relationship and/or with children, with several of the women interviewed mentioning the role of their partner in the decision to set up the cooperative (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003). In this regard it is worth mentioning that the household constitutes a factor of entrepreneurship

84

that represents a key element for different types of resources and support when initiatives are launched (Brush and Manolova, 2004). Furthermore, family and personal networks are often among the most decisive factors for success in the initial phases where motivation, opportunity identification and resource acquisition are key (Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017: 59). Urbano et al quote various studies (namely Brush et al, 2009; Greve and Salaff, 2003; Sorenson et al, 2008) that suggest that women entrepreneurs have a preference for resorting to collaborative networks and the participation of members of their families and friends in these groups is usually high (Urbano et al, 2014: 30).

During my exchanges with cooperative members, many examples illustrating the importance of family and social networks emerged. This support was often crucial for the success of the initiatives, especially in its initial periods when resources were particularly limited. For example, the husband of one of the cooperative members used his talent as graphic designer to develop their logo. Interestingly, he was later invited to join a cooperative that specializes in marketing and communication issues, which points to the collaboration and exchanges that exist across cooperatives. In the case of another cooperative, it was the father of one of the members who took care of the maintenance of the website. Other key resources were also provided by family members, including one of WBEING's horses in their initial phase.

The co-responsibility aspect of social enterprises as collective initiatives was also considered empowering by the women entrepreneurs working in cooperatives. Cooperatives build their work on a principle of co-responsibility, which means that risks, decisions, resources and capacities are shared by members. Working in a group is "a very effective way of developing critical consciousness and increasing a sense of self-efficacy as members become involved and begin to identify with others who have been in similar situations" (Turner and Maschi, 2015: 159). Furthermore, other elements are also crucial for bringing about shifts in consciousness, such as community-building and organising (Turner and Maschi, 2015: 159).

85

Members resorted to constituting cooperatives as their preferred legal structure for the implementation of social entrepreneurship activities in the quest for a less hierarchical, more participatory and democratic legal set-up that would allow them to develop collective social entrepreneurship projects. As one of the members noted, "we particularly value participation and equality in decision-making". Feeling "more in control" was another key positive feature highlighted by the members, together with the sense of collective ownership they described ("we are building our own project, our own future") and collective strength in the group ("together we are stronger").

This section has analysed some of the empowerment related aspects of women's perceptions of their work as members of cooperatives. This analysis has brought to the forefront many positive elements of their experiences. However, other considerations linked to the challenges that the cooperative model entails for women are discussed in the following section. Nevertheless, I conclude that my informants' perceptions and assessments should be taken as a valid indicator of the empowerment potential of women-led cooperativism.

Sitting on the fence: personal empowerment or precarious employment?

Women's access to employment can indeed improve their living conditions and their idea of "self-reliance" provided that the working conditions are fair and not precarious (Kabeer, 2005). These three women-led cooperatives emerged during the crisis or in its aftermath and their members were moved by the need to make a living in a manner that was compatible with their personal circumstances and preferences. Some of the women interviewed had lost their sources of income during the crisis (sometimes as a result of austerity measures that reduced the public funding that supported their work in the third sector) and hence, creating the cooperative was also a self-employment opportunity.

The issue of whether these experiences constituted "an opportunity for liberation or yet another form of subordination" (Ahl, 2006: 156) is difficult to discern, given their complexity. It was interesting to note that the women interviewed did not consider gender to be an obstacle to their respective activities. The majority

86

said that people reacted more to their idea of becoming entrepreneurs than to their gender, except in the case of WBEING, whose members were told that the equestrian world was a man's world. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that gender is "often an analyst's construct, rather than a principle that individuals themselves draw upon to understand their situation" (Lewis, 2006: 457). Women might see gender as just one of the factors or issues of their entrepreneurial experience that they have to manage alongside others, but this raises the question of whether this omission might be motivated by the fear that raising any gender concerns might be seen as a sign of incompetence (Lewis, 2006: 459).

Beyond many positive perceptions, women also acknowledged the difficulties that were inherent to their respective activities (limited resources, uncertainty, long working hours or months without income). They all launched their cooperatives with limited financial resources and were faced with various degrees of financial insecurity at different stages in the development of their businesses. Some women also described having to overcome the feeling of "not being able to" before taking the step because of their low self-esteem and expressed a certain "vertigo" when using the word "entrepreneurship", as if their activity did not fit in with their perception of achievements and success. This is linked to the fact that the "typical entrepreneur is connected to a certain mindset: being innovative, being creative, exploiting opportunities and solving problems" (Meyer, Tegtmeier and Pakura, 2017: 320). Success often appears as a male characteristic that tends to be more an attribute of the male entrepreneur than of the female entrepreneur, who must often "demonstrate more to get to the same place", as one of the women interviewed noted. It has also been noted that in order for women to gain legitimacy, "they are encouraged to adopt and reproduce allegedly neutral entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours which are in fact, facsimiles of what men do and what men are within this context" (Marlow and McAdam, 2011, cited in Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 545). Thus, not fitting into the image of the pre-established model of entrepreneur (as a self-assured, competitive, middle-aged man) constitutes one of the most frequently quoted barriers for women entrepreneurs (Cordobés, 2016).

Several of the women interviewed described processes of personal and professional growth that had been a direct result of their engagement in the cooperative. Some had strengthened their self-esteem and described feeling empowered as a result of their participation and involvement. They valued being in charge of their own project and embraced a philosophy that considered their cooperative "a life project" and not "an economic project". It was interesting to note that despite the difficulties, none of the women interviewed perceived their situation as precarious, regardless of their modest salaries and the uncertainty of "how things will go in the future". From a feminist perspective, it can be argued that in using the cooperative to meet the demands of both domestic and waged labour, these experiences can be "tainted by patriarchal expectations" and can "reflect the subordination evident in other areas of women's lives" (Marlow, 1997: 208).

From the point of view of the women interviewed, the empowering elements described throughout this chapter seem to have weighed more heavily than the limitations and difficulties. Their choice seemed correct and they were pleased with the outcomes and progress of their collective efforts. As one of the women noted, "the success of our collective project lies above any of our individual concerns" and for another member, the notion of collective ownership was much more important ("we are building our own project, our own future"). Furthermore, the feeling of solidarity was one of the most highly valued aspects of the work, since "our cooperative is a great nexus point for us all and we are like family". Finally, one of the key factors that was fulfilling and empowering for the women was to feel that they were able to construct a professional project that was aligned with their social mission and social values. Many of the women had worked with associations and had acquired a "more social and alternative way of working with others" but it was the process of making their projects a feasible social enterprise that could "pay all the bills at the end of the month" that was particularly empowering for the members.

If we consider some of the theoretical issues linked to empowerment and the feminist concerns, there may not be a clear answer to the question of whether these cooperatives are contributing to social change and gender equality in a

deeper sense that goes beyond personal experiences and perceptions. But does this matter when the data collected suggests that the overall picture is positive for these women in their own context? In any case, the empirical data cannot be equated with unconditional support for cooperatives as a single formula or a one-size-fits-all organisational model that can be applied everywhere.

Following Kabeer's definition of empowerment, for this notion of choice to be real, the women involved must have had the capacity to have chosen differently as a result of the existence of real alternatives that confirmed the reality of this choice (Kabeer, 2005). Taking this argument further, authors such as Marlow argue that these forms of self-employment are "far from being the solution to problems of subordination, patriarchy and labour market discrimination, which they may wish it to be" (Marlow, 1997: 200); whilst Brush shares a similar perspective, claiming that "women's responsibility for family is turned into an individual choice, as well as a strategic advantage" (Brush, 1992 quoted in Ahl, 2006: 155).

While I agree that cooperatives are not the panacea nor a solution to all these structural problems, these findings paint a positive picture that holds, even when my role as subjective researcher with a profound personal involvement in one of the cooperatives is acknowledged as a source of bias. Even if some members were motivated by the need to generate income, they chose cooperatives over other entrepreneurial models partly as a result of the perceived advantages presented in this paper, which can be associated with various forms of empowerment. Beyond these positive dimensions, we can also speak of the previously mentioned "hidden pathways of empowerment" (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014: x). Elements such as pleasure and leisure or self-satisfaction might be subtle and more difficult to objectively measure but are nonetheless key for understanding women's perceptions since they were also part of their experiences.

Agency is transformative when gender roles are challenged, in ways that "do not simply address immediate inequalities but which are used to initiate longer-term processes of change in the structures of patriarchy" (Kabeer, 2005: 16). We know that the structures that perpetuate gender inequalities must be challenged before

89

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being collectively transformed (Rao et al., 2016) and in order to do this, it is important to identify the entry points that may allow transformative change to happen. Several studies show that women's entrepreneurship can provide this type of entry point or channel for bringing about "changes in social structures, gender perceptions and relationships as well as in the women themselves" (Bianco, Lombe and Bolis, 2017: 343). This also involves analysing the social and cultural factors, values and rules that sustain the stereotypes that dominate our societies, negatively affecting women's access to the resources they need for their entrepreneurial activities (Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017: 60).

Agency is effective when employment opportunities are created with positive results (Kabeer, 2005) and in the case of these three cooperatives, it seems possible to argue that they have the potential to enable the transformative change required for advancements on gender equality. However, in order to better understand the contribution of cooperatives to these efforts, further research is required on this model as one that can potentially "support women's empowerment and the self-perception of empowerment by the women-owners of the institution" (Datta and Galey, 2012: 573).

On the issue of contributions to social innovation, we have seen how women-led cooperatives can also contribute to social innovation in various ways. If we understand social innovation in the field of social entrepreneurship as the reinvention of non-profit actors within the existing ecosystem of entities, policies and institutions (Perrini, 2007), we could think that the existence of novel ideas of entrepreneurship among the initiatives analysed is contributing to social innovation. Cooperatives can promote social change in different areas of activity, and indeed, several new approaches were identified among the experiences analysed.

Firstly, cooperatives are innovating as a legal structure (*how* the model is being used), since it is re-inventing itself and stretching beyond the initial notion of cooperative to accommodate initiatives that fell outside the traditional definition of cooperatives. Secondly, cooperatives are contributing to social innovation by providing an enabling legal format or structure for innovative social

90

entrepreneurship projects (*what* is being contributed in terms of content). Their approaches are innovative, offering creative responses to existing problems or needs, such as the creation of an original family-centred concept of child-care; or the reconditioning of a public facility (horse racetrack) for use by children with special needs. This suggests that innovation within these sectors of activity is also occurring under the leadership of women.

Cooperatives seem to be providing a model that can contribute to women's enhanced agency and empowerment (*who* is at the heart of each cooperative) by creating a space where traditional gender roles can be challenged and the quest for better work-life balance occupies a central role. Women's entrepreneurship is believed to have the potential "to generate change towards gender equality, emancipation and empowerment" (Bianco, Lombe and Bolis, 2017). However, in principle, the three cooperatives analysed are linked to the "care economy" and sectors that are traditionally dominated by women. This trend has been noted in other places across the world, with social enterprises focusing on sectors linked to care activities (Nicolás and Rubio, 2016; EU Parliament, 2015; Hechevarría et al., 2012). Furthermore, in Spain, the evidence also suggests that women entrepreneurs tend to favour fields of activity that are more linked to people, education, commerce, leisure and tourism; sectors that may allow for better work-life balance, and this choice is often motivated by the need to obtain greater work flexibility (Cordobés, 2016).

These findings suggest that in the context of Andalusia, the cooperative structure is becoming more malleable and providing an enabling space for innovative projects that have found in the cooperative model the most adequate structure for their development. This re-interpretation is particularly interesting since, if we consider the case of the women participating in these three initiatives, it would seem that the cooperative model is allowing them to evolve and innovate within the structure of an existing (and traditional) legal form that is paradoxically better adapted to their needs than other legal forms of organisation/business models.

91

Conclusions

The theoretical discussion included in this chapter and the illustrations from the cooperatives I have discussed have allowed me to explore gender issues in relation to social entrepreneurship. I have considered how cooperatives contribute to women's empowerment by considering various aspects in the context of Andalusia. I have argued that the crisis gave impulse to the reinvention of work cooperatives as new models of engagement that are proving positive for women. I have also defended the view that their positive perceptions deserve serious consideration, since even if some critical voices speak of "self-exploitation" and question these women's empowerment, it seems difficult to contest their positive assessments without running the danger of rather arrogantly claiming to know what is best for our research subjects.

The experiences of these three women-led organisations suggest that cooperatives can be an effective tool for fighting discrimination both internally (through democratic functioning principles and inclusive organisational modes) and externally (through the focus of their activities and their social mission). They also tend to place members and beneficiaries firmly at the centre of their strategy while promoting dialogue for participatory and democratic decision-making processes in a way that is empowering and strengthens the self-esteem of women members.

The results of this research raise several interesting questions about women's role in society in general and within the field of entrepreneurship, which illustrate interesting issues at the heart of feminist debates. By claiming that the cooperative model is positive and empowering for women, this chapter is praising an organisational model on the grounds that it improves the quality of life and work-family balance for a group of women (always according to the women's own perception). But could this positive appraisal really "camouflage the perpetuation of gendered orders both within entrepreneurship and the wider socio-economic context" (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 545). For Ahl, Brush or Marlow, this same model could be criticised for reinforcing a way of working that ultimately perpetuates women's subordination, since in these women cooperatives, female traits are

92

valued and seen as strengths without really questioning the dominant construction of entrepreneurship as male shaped (Ahl, 2006).

The structures that perpetuate gender inequalities must be challenged and collectively transformed and "meaningful gender equality will not be achieved unless we understand and respond to the different experiences and needs of women and men belonging to different groups" (Marin, 2018: 36). The reinterpretation of work cooperatives we are witnessing may be contributing to these efforts. For authors such as Brush et al, it is not so much a case of developing separate theories on women's entrepreneurship but more an issue of expanding theoretical concepts "to incorporate explanations for the distinctiveness of women's entrepreneurship and give due recognition to the social context and embedded nature of gender" (Brush et al, 2009: 18).

Rao et al discuss the need to strengthen women's access to resources, to implement effective policies in support of women's rights and to push for changes in attitudes that foster discrimination and account for women's subordination to men (Rao et al, 2016). As already mentioned, some of the activities conducted by women members are part of the so-called "care economy" and thus, might be in line with traditional gender roles as well as with the social expectation of "being at the service of others, sacrificial and submissive" (Bianco, Lombe and Bolis, 2017: 348). Hence, in praising the positive aspects of this model, we might well be supporting "gendered assumptions informing entrepreneurship theory that embed prevailing hetero-normative assumptions" (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 543).

Furthermore, I have also discussed how entrepreneurship is informed by a series of masculine norms and principles that make this male model "the norm" and guided by a strong "epistemological gender bias", as opposed to being an option or real life choice that is open to all (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 545). The fact that entrepreneurship is a set of norms and values based on this symbolic universe of the male represents a cultural barrier not only against femaleness but also against other forms of masculinity that do not correspond to the hetero-normative model (Bruni et al, 2005: 2). It is this "great man" or "heroic male" that dominates entrepreneurship in our imaginary (Spear, 2006: 405). Thus, women who do not

93

fit into the predominant male-shaped entrepreneurial model are being encouraged to comply or to resort to alternative entrepreneurial options and it might be argued that cooperatives can contribute to the latter as an alternative model with the potential to improve women's lives.

For authors like Ahl and Marlow, there is also a risk of reaching a dead-end point if research on gender and entrepreneurship focuses solely on the individual experiences of women entrepreneurs, without explaining patterns and without critiquing (from a feminist perspective) the assumptions that have informed the current research agenda (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 545). I have tried to make these elements visible throughout this chapter and agree with these authors that future research should continue to construct "theoretical links between entrepreneurial behaviours, gender theory and feminist analyses" (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 557).

As Gajparia argues "being *spoken for* is a central challenge to the political project of feminist research" (2017: 88). Hence, I have tried to address this challenge by collecting several voices of cooperative members and placing them at the centre of this chapter. My approach in Chapter 2 will be different at several levels, since I will complement the discussion presented in this chapter, in terms of both content and approach. Firstly, in terms of theoretical framework, I will move away from ideas of empowerment to consider hybridity as a useful concept for analysing the work of a specific organisation (FEM) that evolved from an association to a social enterprise. Secondly, in terms of methodology, I will focus on a longitudinal single case-study, as opposed to analysing a range of experiences like I have done in this first chapter. Finally, in order to complement my preliminary discussion on how various personal experiences mirrored those shared by the cooperative members in Chapter 1, I will embark on a deeper process of self-reflection in this second chapter.

94

CHAPTER 2: Hybridity as Everyday Practice: The Shaping of a Social Enterprise with a Feminist Agenda

> Social enterprise here emerges as whatever it is for the people who enact is as a daily routine: a form, a philosophy, a self-ascription, a hope or a label. From this vanguard, more abstract understandings evolve that pose social enterprise as a discourse, a network, a mode of being or a structured practice (Mauksch et al, 2017:124).

Abstract

This chapter discusses the literature on social enterprises with a special focus on the concept of hybridity. Methodologically, I focus on the importance of ethnography in studying social enterprises as local ecosystems and present a longitudinal case study of a modern hybrid organisation operating in Andalusia. My long-term collaboration with this organisation (FEM) allows me to illustrate how hybridity is enacted in everyday life, which constitutes a widely underdeveloped aspect within the mainstream literature on social enterprises. Without abandoning the issue of gender and how women perceive their role as social entrepreneurs, in this chapter I shift my attention to the concept of hybridity and my own ethnographic reflexivity in relation to FEM and its founder.

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on a particular type of social enterprise: one that navigates between a compensatory approach that provides goods and services that address gaps in the market, thereby responding to unmet demands, and a transformative approach that seeks to bring about systemic changes by contributing to some form of evolution of the capitalist system (Newey, 2018). I will present empirical evidence from a social enterprise on how hybridity is being shaped by its everyday practices in its local ecosystem in a manner that illustrates how these two approaches intertwine.

95

Social entrepreneurship is changing the world of business by incorporating new elements and values that supersede traditional entrepreneurial models that focused solely on economic gain. Social enterprises have been portrayed as alternative solutions for many of the ills of our time including key issues of public concern such as unemployment, inequality and social exclusion (Baglione, 2017; Pereira Gonçalves et al, 2016). Other social enterprises have been presented as instrumental for reformulating the economic order by bringing in "more inclusive humanitarian ideals" (Battilana et al, 2012: 55) and by promoting an economy grounded in the principles of solidarity, respect for the environment, gender equality and the search for the common good.

Many social enterprises apply what has been described as a "compensatory" approach, while other social enterprises pursue a more "transformative" approach. Yet, they all struggle with their "anomalous condition", which invariably requires solving multiple dilemmas inherent in combining social and commercial logics to achieve "win-win" outcomes (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013). Understanding how social enterprises operate without reducing them to this polar tension between their social and economic goals -but considering the complexity of their everyday strategies- can provide interesting learning opportunities for the sector.

Over the last two decades, academic literature on social entrepreneurship has tended to focus on generating categories and definitions of social enterprises. However, even if analytical categories obviously serve an important purpose in the world of academia, these academic efforts have diverted attention from vital aspects linked to the uniqueness of each local dimension and the contextual factors that condition the development of social enterprises. These have tended to be underrepresented in current debates about hybrid organisations, as we have shown in a recent paper (Pfeilstetter and Gómez-Carrasco, 2019).

Hybridity can be defined as "the activities, structures, processes and meanings by which organisations make sense of and combine multiple organisational forms" (Battilana and Lee, 2014: 397). This concept is useful and relevant to this debate, since social and market-oriented notions ("doing good and doing business")

cannot be understood in absolute terms, without considering the fact that what is "social" about an enterprise can take many different forms. As I have argued in my discussion on cooperatives in Chapter 1, this is due to the fact that social needs are locally constructed and social problems are defined by people in many different ways, depending on the issues and things they consider to be problematic (Schneider, 1985). If hybrids are defined by their difference in relation to standard ways of organising (Battilana and Lee 2014, Gidron 2017) then it would be an oversimplification to assume that these organisations take the same form in organisational terms everywhere (and at any given time), regardless of whether they are public, private or third sector.

In order to address this gap, I have used ethnographic methods to explore how the hybridity of the organisation presented in this chapter (FEM) is shaped by its everyday practices and by the conflicting demands of its ecosystem. FEM is a social enterprise led by women with a strong feminist agenda that started as a feminist organisation and evolved over the years to include a commercial line of work. It operates in the south of Spain but is influenced by the numerous backgrounds and cultures of the members and volunteers that come together to support the organisation's objectives.

As several authors have emphasised in recent times, ethnographic methods have a key role to play in research on social enterprises, since they are uniquely placed to shed light on the narratives and practices that constitute social entrepreneurship activities (Mauksch et al, 2017). In this regard, it is also interesting to note that few studies on social enterprises have been conducted in the field of anthropology, with a study of over 100 articles suggesting that less than 1% of these articles were produced by this discipline (Pereira Gonçalves et al, 2016: 1605). Thus, it seems that most ethnographic research on social enterprises is conducted by non-anthropologists like me. This thesis aims to contribute to researching social enterprises from an anthropological, as well as an ethnographic perspective. I will show that this has significant added value, given anthropology's attention to relations, networks and socio-cultural determinants. Furthermore, social entrepreneurs must be considered agents of change since they do not operate in a vacuum but have the power to effectively

97

create a positive local environment by having direct effects on their context (Feldman, 2001). By using a range of ethnographic methods, I have tried to capture the subtle, nuanced aspects of the everyday practices of a concrete social enterprise, convinced as I am, that in social entrepreneurship, small facts speak to large issues (Geertz, 1973).

In this chapter, I navigate some of the key narratives that shape current debates on social entrepreneurship. I want to show how hybridity is constructed in the case of FEM, an organisation that started as a feminist association and gradually evolved to become a social enterprise with a commercial component while working to preserve its original social mission. I also resort to elements of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem literature, recognising the importance of the set of policy instruments, institutional bodies and initiatives that provide support for the development of social enterprises in each given context (Roy et al, 2015). Even if the idea that entrepreneurship is a local phenomenon conditioned by local context is widely recognised, the analysis of the structure, network and content that make up each entrepreneurship ecosystem in the literature remains limited (Motoyama and Knowlton, 2016: 2). These aspects are important for understanding this phenomenon since social enterprise ecosystems can represent challenges and obstacles for the development of these organisations. This can be due to multiple factors, such as existing bureaucratic procedures, limited funding, legal obstacles and market competition. Meanwhile, an enabling environment provides social enterprises "the power, the means, opportunity and authority to pursue their final objectives in society" (Biggeri, Testi and Belluci, 2017: 301).

My discussion on the defining features and everyday practices of FEM also draws from Mary Douglas's cultural theory and the four types of biases or cultures she defines, namely "powerless fatalism, hierarchical collectivism, competitive individualism and egalitarian sectarianism" (Van Heffen and Pieter-Jan, 2003: 292). Cultural theory can help us gain a better understanding of different issues of interest and concern (Douglas et al, 2013: 137). I argue that in the case of social entrepreneurship, cultural theory can help us translate one of the main dichotomies or tensions underlying social enterprises, namely the issue of

98

combining commercial and social goals in the same organisation. As I explain in this chapter through my discussion on hybridity, the logic of hybrid organisations tends to combine economic values or objectives with social values or objectives. I believe that Douglas helps us frame this complex issue better by focusing on the existing tension between the values of the individual and the values of the community and arguing that organisations are ultimately faced with a conflict between individual values and community values. This is when "mission drifts" occur at different levels in the workings of a social enterprise.

Cultural theory recognises that in any community (organisation in this case) four kinds of culture are in constant conflict and are "self-defined adversarily" (Douglas, 1999: 413) and "always potentially present in any group of persons" and "at war with each other" (Douglas, 2013c: 54). If we take this idea to the realm of social enterprises, it can be argued that this conflict resonates with the challenges of hybridity and the existing tension between social and commercial aims. The everyday practices and strategies that ensure continuation and operation beyond these challenges require constantly negotiating and reshaping ways of thinking and doing as illustrated by FEM's experience.

FEM's everyday practices resonate with different organisational cultures as defined by Douglas at different moments in time, as part of the organisation's coping strategies and shaping of hybridity. If we think of social entrepreneurship as a tool with the potential to make a difference to the world we live in, cultural theory helps us understand that we can develop social enterprises from our respective organisational cultures and that each will respond to our different (and often conflicting) ideas on what is good for society and what is good for social change.

The chapter concludes that the meaning of "hybridity" of social enterprises is locally constructed. Ultimately, hybridity is a set of coping mechanisms and strategies adopted by social enterprises in response to the conditions that prevail in their specific ecosystems. This context largely explains why social enterprises ultimately embrace a compensatory or transformative approach (or a combination of both).

99

Theorising social enterprise

In simple terms, I would describe social enterprises as organisations that combine a core social mission with commercial or trade objectives that differentiate them from traditional Third Sector organisations. This places them at the intersection between the work of businesses and traditional charities. Social enterprises are initiatives with a social mission that place the common good firmly at the centre of their activities, while at the same time relying on market-based means to pursue their social goals (Kerlin, 2009). As Zimmer et al have noted:

> the unique position of social entrepreneurship between the "market" and the "state" allows third sector organisations to combine the best of these two worlds: the entrepreneurial spirit and energy of the market with the orientation towards the common wealth and public good that is generally associated with the state (Zimmer et al, 2018: 6).

Despite relative consensus on this co-existence of social and economic goals as a core feature, defining and classifying social entrepreneurship initiatives has been highly problematic (Nicholls, 2010). The concept of social enterprise is contested almost by definition, since its meaning is conditioned by political, historical, geographical or cultural factors (Teasdale, Lyon and Baldock 2013; Kerlin, 2010; Defourny and Nyssens, 2010; Galera and Borzaga, 2009). As a result, there is no universally accepted definition, with researchers suggesting that after two decades of research, accepting "the impossibility of a unified definition" should be the new hypothesis from which to "grasp diversity" and consider different ways of grouping social enterprises (Defourny and Nyssens, 2016 and 2017). Nonetheless, certain authors argue that it is precisely this absence of clarity regarding how social entrepreneurship is to be defined that in fact accounts for its "extraordinary impact", thanks to the associated "dynamic flexibility" of the concept (Nichols, 2006: 10).

As I explained in my introduction to this thesis, I use the concepts of social enterprise and entrepreneurship in this research indistinctly, for several reasons. Firstly, there is a deliberate attempt to limit the focus of my research to the social

100

enterprise literature and avoid engaging with an even more extensive academic field. I have already acknowledged academia's sometimes excessive insistence on categories and definitions, and I believe that delving deeper into this aspect falls beyond the scope of what I have set out to do in this thesis. Secondly, my focus is on social enterprises, although I use the term "social entrepreneur" at times to refer to individuals who develop social enterprises. This allows me to dedicate more time to Ursula, for example, who is a perfect example of a social entrepreneur who founded what was to become a social enterprise (FEM). From this perspective, the central difference between the social economy, a social enterprise and a social entrepreneur is more a question of scale than anything else. I realise that many colleagues may disagree with this approach, since the terms are often used very differently in the literature, but this is how I have chosen to proceed. Thirdly, I believe that my decision to study organisations as opposed to people or systems also played in part in my reluctance to enter other academic debates. Finally, I also believe that my ethnographic methods provide further justification, since my discussions with informants clearly showed the limited relevance of some of these debates for our discussions within the framework of this research.

Although the concept of social entrepreneurship is far from new, it has taken an unprecedented turn in recent years. Its appeal extended to an increasingly wide range of people and initiatives, while at the same time incorporating different organisational and business modalities. These range from private foundations delivering services, to third sector organisations integrating an entrepreneurial component or for-profit organisations offering services of public interest. If we consider other key features of social enterprises, I would add that most of the time, these organisations are "private, self-governed, non-compulsory" and they also place limitations on the distributions of earnings, which necessarily implies balancing their independence from economic gains and outside influences (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016 in Zimmer et al, 2018: 6).

As a result of this multiplicity of organisational forms, the field of social entrepreneurship is being developed with the participation of "a range of actors promoting different languages and practices tied to different political beliefs"

101

(Teasdale, 2011: 1). Nevertheless, the social dimension of different forms of social enterprising may be confirmed by considering certain indicators. Firstly, organisations need to have an "explicit and constitutive social goal" and their governance processes should be democratic where one individual has one vote regardless of the different degrees of capital ownership. Also, the resources generated should be reinvested in the enterprise or used to pursue its social goal (Pirni and Raffini, 2025: 139). These indicators largely match the legal definition for social enterprises in Spain (BOE, 2010). From an ethnographer's perspective, the interest lies in how these ideals are transformed into practice within a local ecosystem. My ethnographic contribution considers how key aspects such as social goals, democratic organisation or reinvestment of profit are performed in the case of FEM.

Social enterprises and the quest for social change

A fundamental aspect that differentiates social entrepreneurship from other forms of entrepreneurship is that where other enterprises expect some form of financial gain, social enterprises focus on bringing about benefits or changes for society (Martin and Osberg, 2007). Social enterprises consider issues such as fair salaries, inclusive property, collective management and environmental responsibility as central to their activities. Although generating profit does not constitute their main objective, social enterprises normally implement income-generation strategies to ensure their sustainability and survival over time (Pirni and Raffini, 2015). For authors such as Mair, the chosen modality (whether profit or non-profit) should not be considered a defining characteristic of social entrepreneurship since organisational forms are often selected by social enterprises on the basis of their suitability for attaining sustainability (Mair, 2010: 20).

For other authors, the quest for effective (and sustainable) social change can in fact hide a process whereby a Third Sector organisation becomes more business-like. Paving the way for privatisation, the provision of social services is increasingly transferred from the State to the market (Pirni and Raffini, 2015). Thus, preserving the meaningfulness of the concept of social entrepreneurship necessarily requires differentiating social enterprises from certain forms of other

102

socially valuable activities. On the one hand, the traditional delivery of social services by charity organisations, and on the other, corporate social responsibility activities conducted by traditional businesses. This aspect is important, since the definition has often been kept "deliberately loose to allow for the inclusion of almost any organisation claiming to be a social enterprise" (Teasdale, 2011: 1). This also seems to have been the motivation for the Spanish legislation allowing any organisation to be included into "the social economy" as far as they adhere to four basic and somewhat vague principles (BOE, 2010). Martin and Osberg point to two types of activity that should be differentiated in this regard: firstly, social service provision, which is limited to delivery as opposed to influence for change; and secondly, social activism, which places the quest for change at the heart of the organisation's strategy through indirect actions that influence decisionmakers and other actors. The authors also highlight three key steps in the process of social entrepreneurial development: a) identification of an unjust equilibrium (causing exclusion or marginalisation of a concrete population segment/group); b) development of a project based on creativity, inspiration, courage and fortitude; c) creation of a new equilibrium that improves the situation of the group and results in some form of positive social change (Martin and Osberg, 2007).

Beyond the notion of social change, social enterprises have also been framed as a phenomenon that can potentially provide alternatives to existing solutions, products and services, respond to an existing gap or issue and defy an "unsatisfactory equilibrium" (Martin and Osberg 2010). However, it is not the existence of a social need that automatically entails a social entrepreneurial response, since social entrepreneurship initiatives are born only when individuals take action to provide "an entrepreneurial answer to a social need" (Cajaiba-Santana, 2010: 95). It is ultimately the search for the common good and the "primacy of social benefit" that distinguish social entrepreneurship from other forms of business actions (Martin and Osberg, 2007: 35).

Another important feature that also distinguishes social enterprises is its employment-generating dimension of the type that FEM is trying to introduce through the incorporation of trading activities. As we will see in the following

103

section, FEM started a commercial line of work through its WINECOOP initiative in order to diversify its sources of income and become less dependent on public funding. This is related to the way in which some social enterprises incorporate work integration as an "instrumental element to meet their goals, such as certain types of cooperatives, mutual societies and associations", whilst for others, the provision of employment opportunities constitutes their main goal (García Jiménez, 2015: 47). This variety includes work integration social enterprises (WISE) and special employment centres (social integration-focused initiatives) as well as work cooperatives and workforce-owned companies that provide collective self-employment and associated opportunities (García Jiménez, 2015: 47).

In this brief account of the conceptual literature on social enterprises, I have tried to summarise key aspects of current theoretical debates on the nature of the social entrepreneurship phenomenon that are relevant to the empirical case study presented in the next sections of this chapter. In the following section, I will discuss the contribution of the concept of hybridity to this debate and how it can help our understanding of social enterprises by referring to FEM's concrete experience.

On hybridity and social enterprises

In recent years, the notion of hybridity has become closely linked to academic debates on the Third Sector and social enterprises in particular. Social enterprises are often showcased as the ideal type of hybrid organisation, since they combine two logics (social and commercial) at their very heart, as opposed to organisations that incorporate a social dimension to their for-profit activities (Doherty et al, 2014, Battilana and Lee 2014). Hence, the concept of "hybridity" is central to current debates within organisational theory and is part of emergent academic social enterprise discourses describing how third sector organisations combine business goals with a social mission and contribute to social change in ways that do not correspond to more traditional charities or businesses (Dey and Teasdale, 2016; Doherty et al, 2014; Battilana et al, 2012).

104

The term "hybridity" has been brought into the academic debate to describe the duality of social enterprises and the tensions inherent in the combination of social, cultural or environmental missions with commercial goals and strategies (Jaeger 2010: 85). However, it is not so much a question of choice between strategies but the idea that both social mission and commercial goals are integrated into the same strategy under the "hybrid ideal" (Battilana et al, 2012).

In our recent article, we have argued that the idea of hybridity makes us conceive social and economic value as two absolute, discrete and universal spheres (Pfeilstetter and Gómez-Carrasco, 2019). Thus, framing social enterprises as hybrids tends to disregard what is locally considered a certain "social" or "economic" value in the first place. In the following sections, I will discuss the extent to which these criteria apply to the case of FEM and how loose definitions of social enterprise are interpreted by practitioners in the Andalusian context. For example, the way in which FEM has integrated the wine trade as a commercial line of work provides a good illustration of how the value of an ordinary product such as wine can be locally framed in many ways. This will be discussed at length later in this chapter.

Some authors distinguish between "organic hybrids" (charities or associations that gradually become social enterprises) and "enacted hybrids" (social enterprises that are established and developed as such from the start) (Doherty et al, 2014: 421). As I will discuss in the following section, FEM constitutes an interesting example of the former. It gradually evolved from operating as an association to becoming a social enterprise over time while maintaining its formal or legal status as association but creating an associated cooperative to frame the development of its new business activities.

Social enterprises such as FEM are also "hybrids" because they "have never exclusively followed just one logic of action but instead have always been intertwined with the community (solidarity), the market (competition) and the State (utilitarianism), each of which stands for a particular mode of governance and legitimacy" (Zimmer et al, 2018: 5). Behind this notion lies the idea that

105

economic development and social well-being depend on the consolidation of hybrid organisations that successfully combine social and commercial means.

Zimmer et al. propose a modern hybrid category, which is in fact a combination of two different concepts: a) professionalised membership associations and b) social enterprises (Zimmer et al, 2018: 30). Professionalised membership associations are composed of a management team and a group of volunteers, who come together around a common interest without engaging in business-like activities. FEM's initial years were characterised by the evolution from a group of activists concerned with gender-based violence to an increasingly professionalised and stable team. The different technical profiles that have gradually joined the organisation since then to meet its needs have made it increasingly professional, which is having a positive effect on FEM's capacity to fundraise in a context marked by shrinking funding.

The second concept proposed by Zimmer et al. ("social enterprises"), displays more business-like features, since they work to pursue commercial aims in parallel with the pursuit of a social mission. Hence, organisations such as FEM would fall into the third category ("modern hybrid"), which is used to describe organisations that are "in between", combining elements of associations (such as volunteers or democratic governance) with entrepreneurial elements (such as market orientation or professionalism) (2018). FEM provides a fitting illustration of an organisation that tries to balance its strong activist engagement with market reliance in order to embrace both logics. Its strong political and activist stance combines elements of transformative social entrepreneurship with more traditional service delivery aspects that would correspond to compensatory social entrepreneurship. FEM is thereby also adding another dimension of hybridity linked to its constant swaying between these two social entrepreneurship approaches (Newey, 2018).

From the perspective of organisational studies, social enterprises such as FEM can be deemed hybrids because they are essentially "structures and practices that allow the coexistence of values and artefacts from two or more categories" (Doherty, Haugh and Lyon 2014: 418). In some cases, the beneficiaries of the

106

goods and services provided by these organisations are also customers (integrated hybrids) versus differentiated hybrids that organisationally separate business goals from their central social mission (Ebrahim, Battilana and Mair 2014: 83). Authors such as Jäger and Schröer also include enterprising non-profits and third sector organisations into the category of hybrid organisations, regardless of whether they are private or public (2014). Others, like Gidron, make the distinction between hybrid organisations in what concerns their chosen form (different profit distribution and governance arrangements) and hybrids in terms of their real substance (essential social mission), with their strategies and practices reconciling their twofold mission (2017).

In this section, I have introduced various definitions of "social enterprise", outlining key common features before discussing the notion of hybridity as a useful concept that can help to explain the duality of social enterprises and the tensions inherent in combining social, cultural and environmental missions with commercial goals and strategies. The following section will contextualise this concept in Spain with a focus on one of its regions (Andalusia) during the post-2008 crisis years, in order to set the scene for my discussion on FEM's ecosystem.

Social enterprises in the Spanish context

The 2008 economic crisis in Europe brought about increasing demands on the third sector. Its performance came under close scrutiny in a context marked by shrinking resources and growing competition, especially in areas such as service delivery, transparency, monitoring and evaluation (Pirni and Raffini, 2015). European welfare states underwent substantial transformations, with the State showing an "increasing openness toward the market as a social service deliverer" (Hustinx and De Waele 2015: 1668), while the unexpected frailty of what was deemed to be a robust welfare system came to light, with profound effects on its budget, efficiency and legitimacy (Defourny 2010).

These factors led to a situation where third sector organisations had to reinvent themselves in order to comply with the requirements of the new context, with many "traditional" organisations losing ground to organisations (including social enterprises) that were better equipped to evolve towards a more "market-

107

oriented" or "business-like" way of functioning. While some hoped that hybrid organisations were positively contributing to solving the crisis (Grassl 2012; Pirni and Raffini, 2015), others were concerned that good economic performance might conceal poor social performance or that the implementation of social activities might merely serve to legitimise business as usual (Ebrahim, Battilana and Mair 2014: 88).

Since the climax of the crisis, the increase in social enterprises has gone hand in hand with the growing retreat or reduction of state-financed social welfare (Kerlin 2010: 167). For third sector organisations across Europe (including social enterprises), the economic crisis and its aftermath brought about "an increasingly hostile environment in terms of the availability of resources and cooperation with government" (Zimmer et al, 2018: 5). In the case of Southern European countries like Spain, austerity measures and budget cuts caused major difficulties for third sector organisations as they struggled to reinvent themselves to guarantee their own survival and make their achievements sustainable.

Spain was one of the European countries that was worse affected by the global economic crisis, which provoked a situation marked by high unemployment, austerity measures and a widespread political and social crisis that affected society at large (Flesher Fominaya, 2015: 467). Overall, the crisis period witnessed an increase in social enterprises in the country, even if the total numbers of this type of organisation still stood under the European average (Pirni and Raffini, 2015). Although social enterprises constituted quite a new phenomenon in the Spanish context, it is worth highlighting the fact that a well-established social economy did exist in Spain at the time, including a broad range of organisations that worked for the pursuit of social and political goals (Simsa, 2017). In this context, it can be argued that many of these social enterprises were "highly marketized third sector organisations" that built on "strong social economy traditions" (Zimmer et al, 2018: 29).

Spain was also one of the countries where the collective action of citizens coming together to make claims and protest was more visible and lasting (Flesher Fominaya, 2015: 467). The so called "crisis years" also witnessed increased civil

108

society activism, as social protest movements gained force and resulted in the emergence of new associations and networks that sometimes focused on themes such as housing, health or education (Simsa, 2015). In many cases, emerging organisations combined political activism with different degrees of entrepreneurial action. Hence, in the case of Spain, it can be argued that many social enterprises developed in connection to the different social movements that emerged during the economic crisis in response to the Conservative government's austerity measures. Indeed, many third sector organisations were the "offspring of social movements" that were created at the same time as the 15-M movement started to gain institutional weight and recognition (Zimmer et al, 2018: 07).

This complex context demanded a rather difficult balancing act from organisations such as FEM, as they came under pressure to transform themselves to respond to new challenges and demands while at the same time preserving their essence or social mission without becoming excessively business or market-oriented (Hustinx and De Waele, 2015: 1669). In this context of profound change, organisations like FEM struggled to survive and reinvented themselves to strengthen their sustainability prospects. As I will discuss later in this chapter, FEM's evolution from an association to a social enterprise was closely linked to these contextual factors. The crisis brought challenges for FEM but also opportunities, as the State reduced funding but encouraged new actors to embrace social service provision, driven by the desire to save service costs.

Hybridity in the Spanish social entrepreneurship ecosystem

Hybridity means different things in different contexts, since socioeconomic factors and specific local circumstances determine the differences in how social enterprises operate (Kerlin, 2010). As Dey and Teasdale have noted, this line of research is not central in existing literature on hybridity, which tends to suggest that it is a universal feature of human organisation, thereby limiting itself to an isolated and synchronic analysis of social enterprises (Dey and Teasdale 2016: 490). Social enterprises such as FEM can be said to correspond to the hybrid category, but their hybridity is also a way of operating that is shaped by everyday practices and defined by the possibilities of the local ecosystem.

109

Since the 2000s, there has been a wealth of research applying an "ecosystem perspective" based on the idea of "a more interdependent, interactive view of entrepreneurship", understanding that entrepreneurship depends on many factors and elements that are present in a particular context of operation and compose an enabling environment (Motoyama and Knowlton, 2016: 3).

If we look at FEM's ecosystem, we need to consider two aspects: first, the key actors that have interacted with FEM, conditioning and in some cases even determining this organisation's work and approach. These actors include institutions supporting social enterprises (such as an NGO offering training and technical support or an institute offering specialised training on the social economy that will be discussed later in this section) and universities and researchers interacting with FEM. The organisation's ecosystem also includes other organisations working in the community and collaborating with FEM, as well as concrete individuals offering pro-bono support and engaging with the organisation in different ways. Secondly, there are policy factors (such as the legal framework and the regional programme lending support to social enterprises) which have been discussed at length in Chapter 1.

The focus of the ecosystem literature has tended to be on elements and dimensions, rather than on understanding connections and relations between them or on the structures of existing relationships between actors (Breznitz and Taylor, 2014). For example, when we look at the Andalusian context, existing links between cooperatives, umbrella bodies and government support programmes are crucial for understanding the dynamics affecting social entrepreneurship dynamic. As a result, it can be argued that wider factors of a systemic, cultural, socio-economic, political and historical nature remain underdeveloped, despite determining the types of social enterprise that emerge in each context (Hazenberg et al, 2016: 302).

This entrepreneurship ecosystem literature has also been criticised for not looking at processes but focusing on the elements of the ecosystem and the resources available instead of considering "the ability of these resources to flow through social networks" (Spigel and Harrison, 2018: 152). Other critical voices

110

stress that there is little understanding of the existing interdependencies between the different components of entrepreneurship ecosystems (Mack and Mayer, 2015: 2119) and the connections that exist between their social, cultural and institutional dimensions (Motoyama and Knowlton, 2016: 1).

Social entrepreneurial ecosystems have two key features which can be described as cultural attitudes and beliefs, which lead to divergent development paths and "normalise outlooks about entrepreneurship" (Spigel, 2017: 52). They therefore need to be compared across types and places in order to be better understood (Austin, 2006). Although the literature often presents social entrepreneurship ecosystems as static frameworks, their evolution over time also needs to be considered (Alvedalen and Boschma, 2017: 887). For example, political changes and their reflection in policies and funding opportunities played an important part in FEM's development, given their impact on how the organisation evolved and the strategies it had to adopt to preserve its place and continue operating. Furthermore, when organisations carry out different types of activities that have social and commercial goals, they can create "unfamiliar combinations of activities for which a supportive ecosystem may not yet exist" (Battilana et al, 2012: 51). Gaining the right kind of support has been tricky in FEM's ecosystem, even if it has benefited from the social entrepreneurship support programme implemented by a local NGO and from the CADE (Support Centre for Business Development; see also chapter 1 on the *Andalucía Emprende* programme). This support helped Ursula (the founder we will meet later in this chapter) create WINECOOP, which started as a spin-off project and led to FEM's transformation from an association to a social enterprise. WINECOOP took the legal form of a cooperative that was directly associated with FEM and shared its resources. Further details about its development process and challenges are discussed later in this section.

As I explained in Chapter 1, across Andalusia, there are specific centres (CADEs) that specialise in the social economy and promote cooperatives in urban environments, particularly among young people and women. The CADEs are therefore an important player in local Andalusian social enterprise ecosystems. Although there are no specific grants or specific training programs for women,

111

there are clauses that favour women victims of gender violence. The economic support lent to cooperative members also varies, since women receive a higher sum to cover their social security costs than men and they receive it until they reach the age of 35, as opposed to men, who only receive it until they turn 30.

Apart from the specific policies and support agencies, the welfare state model prevalent in each country also constitutes a key aspect of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Spain's welfare system followed a different development process to that of other European countries in line with what is known as the Mediterranean welfare state model, where many social functions fell into the private (family) realm and an increasingly professionalised third sector played an important role in the provision of services (Pirni and Raffini, 2015). This meant that the third sector in Spain was not viewed in terms of voluntary activity but as part of a firmly established traditional social economy that provided "avenues for doing business differently" (Zimmer et al, 2018: 13). Furthermore, a strong social economy tradition existed before the crisis and served as a base for the emergence of social enterprises in recent years (Simsa, 2017).

Spain's welfare system mainly corresponds to the Mediterranean model prevalent in southern European countries (Esping-Andersen, 1990) but in combination with various other features that make it quite unique in a European setting. On the one hand, there is universal public health and education, complemented with a redistributive social security system but on the other hand, we find that there is a traditional care system firmly in place, where family structures often provide care services for children and elderly people, and also support youth who are unable to leave home as a result of their economic situation (Rodríguez-Cabrero, 2011). The Catholic Church also remains a key actor in the provision of social and educational services in the country (Pfeilstetter and Gómez Carrasco, 2016).

Institutions shaping policies and enterprises arise as a result of a broad mix of culture, hierarchies, as well as political and economic factors. Thus, understanding the legal, institutional and policy frameworks is key for

112

contextualising the case of FEM. Analysing locally bounded meanings of hybridity in this organisation entails understanding social entrepreneurship as "a process of catering to *locally-existing* basic needs" (Mair, 2010: 19; my italics). As a small organisation in southern Spain that addresses the needs of victims of gender-based violence, FEM has developed responses that are tailored to specific needs, while undergoing processes of change and development as part of its adaptation or "strategies of resilience" (Zimmer et al, 2018). For FEM, this aspect has also generated certain tensions in the way the organisation functions, as members described how "professionalising practices" was necessary but should never compromise the organisation's activist character and strong community embeddedness.

The importance of legislation in order to have an "entrepreneurial environment" must also be highlighted even if a huge gap often exists between the scope of formal legislation, its effective implementation and social reality (Mair, 2010). In Spain, the concept of "social enterprise" does not figure explicitly in the law, which is devoted to the more general category of "social economy" (Law 5/2011) and was complemented by Law 31/2015 four years later. Falling into this broad category of social economy, social enterprises such as FEM are conceived "as part of a social movement including organisations and activities that generate a solidarity and alternative thought and practice" (Solórzano et al, 2018: 157).

In many countries, most social enterprises are using traditional third sector legal forms, even if it is ultimately the legal mechanisms available that clearly determine whether a social enterprise chooses a cooperative legal form or an associative legal form (Defourny, 2010). In the case of Spain, the law includes cooperatives, workforce-owned companies, mutual insurance companies; special employment companies; work integration social enterprises; fishermen guilds; associations for people with disabilities and experiencing social exclusion, as well as foundations. Since the democratic transition, specific laws have been introduced to regulate each of the two main types of institutionalised forms of social enterprises; namely: social initiative cooperatives (Law 27/1999); special employment companies (Law 13/1982) and work integration enterprises (Law 44/2007) (European Commission, 2014). The case of FEM supports this trend,

113

since when the members decided to launch a commercial project, they chose to create a cooperative (WINECOOP) and link it to the existing association, instead of creating a new enterprise for undertaking their business activities.

In this section, I have briefly presented the Spanish context and the local ecosystem in Andalusia that set different conditions of possibility for social enterprises. By anticipating information regarding FEM, I have argued that social enterprises face context-specific struggles with local and national administrative arrangements. This argument will be sustained in the following in-depth discussion of the workings of FEM and the methodology section, where I reflect on the conditions of my collaboration with this social enterprise.

Introducing FEM, an urban feminist organisation of the solidarity economy

FEM was originally created as a women's association with a strong feminist philosophy. It was founded by a group of women who had survived gender-based violence with the objective of providing a safe space that could offer mutual support, understanding and professional psychological and legal services to women in need. At present, the organisation also provides various training opportunities to women at risk and survivors of gender-based violence. It is also open to the wider local community through initiatives such as the new urban garden or *huerto*, which engages people from the area. FEM is based in a central barrio with a longstanding tradition of political struggle and activism. The occupation of one of its iconic buildings rapidly became a symbol of resistance during the most difficult period of the 2008 crisis and its aftermath. The building belongs to the local council, which is currently hosting FEM and its canteen, even if the organisation has also rented a co-working space in another part of town.

In terms of FEM's location and spatial organisation, the organisation fits into the proposed definition of "modern hybrid" since it operates in an urban setting and remains deeply embedded in the local community context and grass-roots activities. Modern hybrids give a lot of importance and weight to their grassroots, community-based and participatory character, which are defining features of FEM. Although the organisation lacks a strong focus on creative arts as a specific

114

area of work, some of the workshops and therapeutic activities offered by the organisation are closely linked to alternative and creative types of activity (including photo and artistic exhibitions). Furthermore, the organisation pursues what is clearly a multi-disciplinary approach and regularly serves as "multi-purpose facilitator" for a range of other local initiatives. Finally, FEM is also strongly grounded in democratic notions of participatory decision-making and horizontal structure, which are core features of modern hybrids. The organisation provides both informal and formal spaces in which members and associates can voice their views, propose activities and express their demands.

Despite its strong focus on gender-based violence, many of the activities organized by FEM (workshops, exhibitions), as well as the lunches cooked on the premises by male and female volunteers, are open to everyone. As a result of this open and inclusive approach to their work, FEM is firmly embedded in the local community. The extent of the interaction with the environment becomes clear the moment you sit in the organisation's main room and observe how neighbours, friends and visitors constantly enter the premises and interact with FEM members and volunteers. The issues discussed in this open, inclusive space are diverse and even seem a little random at times (such as the case of the recycling initiative mentioned later in this section), but they are always connected to the concerns of the local community.

As part of its quest for sustainability, FEM has developed a fundraising strategy that involves applying for public funding mainly from regional and local government agencies as well as being part of European Union consortia in various projects since 2013. This core approach has been complemented with a trade activity that was brought in with the objective of increasing the organisation's independence, strengthening its sustainability prospects and providing employment opportunities to women at risk. As a result of these efforts and its growing recognition as a credible local development actor, FEM has been able to diversify its sources of funding, leaving aside those that involved excessive bureaucratic work, while embracing the development of a wine business through the integrated cooperative earlier mentioned. FEM does not distribute profits to shareholders and its social mission involves providing different types of support

115

and employment to vulnerable groups in partnership with other organisations operating in the area.

It is also important to note that FEM can be considered part of the "social and solidarity economy" category, characterised by a transformative approach, where "debates on social change, the construction of alternative economic models, alternatives to capitalism or ways of combating poverty and social exclusion are the central focus of thought and reflection" (Solórzano et al, 2018: 157). Conversations with different members of FEM showed that the organisation clearly identified itself with the concept of solidarity economy, as well as with the idea that social entrepreneurs are change actors who engage in processes of "creative destruction" in the hope of achieving a certain balance in the capitalist system (Young and Lecy, 2014: 1316).

I will now consider some of the main features associated with organisations that identify themselves with the solidarity economy under the three EMES[1] dimensions, since they provide a useful framework for analysing FEM's experience (Defourny and Nyssens, 2012). The first dimension or level concerns the type of goods and/or services that are being offered by the organisation in question. In the case of FEM, the support services offered to victims of gender-based violence are clearly justified by a need that is not being met by the authorities and is improving the quality of life of a disadvantaged group. At a second level, the organisation also has a social component related to "processes or forms of relations among actors" (Defourny and Nyssens, 2017: 2487), by promoting opportunities to collaborate and engage through both the canteen and the wine trading component. Thirdly, FEM's mission can also be said to be "embedded in broader societal values representing a primary focus" (Defourny and Nyssens, 2017: 2487), since it has a strong advocacy component that is crosscutting and seeks to address issues of discrimination against women by engaging civil society actors and local authorities in its activities. Finally, the EMES definition highlights the importance of participatory governance and places democracy, transparency, accountability self-management and collective

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[1] EMES is an international research network on comparative research, social entrepreneurship, social and solidarity economy and social innovation.

116

decision-making at the centre (Solórzano et al, 2018: 169). Later in this chapter we will see how FEM tries to translate these principles into practice.

Several features of FEM are of special interest and relevance to the debate on hybrid organisations developed in this chapter. Firstly, modern hybrids tend to take the legal form of a traditional third sector organisation. In the case of FEM, it remains an association, but it has incorporated a cooperative to manage the wine trade with the intention of including members as employees in the future. Secondly, the fact that FEM is deeply involved in advocacy activities on a wide range of social issues suggests that it has developed various parallel forms of social engagement to become one of those hybrid organisations that simultaneously resort to both social entrepreneurship and social activism strategies (Martin and Osberg, 2007). FEM is in fact active in many different networks that cover a range of social and political issues beyond women's rights and feminism. For example, they are part of various network of migrant domestic workers. Advocacy actions, networks and other existing connections are representative of the specific culture in which FEM is embedded (Motoyama and Knowlton, 2016: 6). In this regard, feminism is another core element that lies at the very heart of the organisation, with members highlighting their rights-based approach versus the service or delivery-based modes of working adopted by other organisations working with women victims of gender-based violence. This implies a certain tension, although many would argue that if you want to bring about social change, advocating for certain policies or rights constitutes a fundamental pillar of the work of a social enterprise.

A third feature is that, as part of its coping and survival strategies, FEM resorted to developing a commercial project in response to shrinking public funding resulting from the crisis. This diversification can be considered "a side effect of a long-term development process" as well as "a response to the heterogeneity of the resources available" (Zimmer et al, 2018: 29). Their project has involved partnering with the owner of a vineyard to sell an ecological wine with a special brand name created by the organisation, thereby combining a classical business and profit-seeking activity in order to generate stable income to fund the real core areas of work of the organisation. FEM staff received specialised training that was

117

highly professional to develop the wine project, including canvas design, marketing and management. However, the founder of FEM recognised that at the current stage of the project, the type of staff profile that was required to manage this activity needed to be remunerated as opposed to being organized on a volunteer basis (which had been the case until now).

FEM fulfils many of the characteristics of the proposed type of "modern hybrid". It provides an interesting illustration of the tensions inherent in this type of organisation. Tensions exist at various levels. Therefore, I will now turn to consider the ways in which hybridity is reflected and enacted in practice. Firstly, FEM balances its activities in a rather complex middle ground between community logic and the market considerations of running a market-oriented activity (the sale of wines), even if the economic and commercial objectives of this trading component are marginal. The founder of the organisation stressed that the wine trading activities were only introduced with the objective of developing a channel that would generate some funding as part of the organisation's pursuit of economic stability and independence. Embracing the wine trade has also been challenging because balancing economic and social goals generated a certain fear among the women involved in the organisation of "losing their soul".

A second source of tension that came up repeatedly during the fieldwork was FEM's political stance on sensitive issues such as abortion in a traditional society with strong Catholic values. Maintaining outspoken feminist positions while at the same time applying for government funding during the period when the local council was governed by the conservative centre-right Popular Party (PP), proved problematic at times. It was raising the question of whether FEM's independence would be undermined as the organisation sought to secure its own survival. In this regard, the founder of FEM acknowledged that their feminist political stance had sometimes clashed with public institutions and funding bodies. Fortunately, a legal case launched against Ursula in relation to her activism concluded in her favour.

Hence, there have been various moments in time when FEM has had to adapt its programme to the demands of different government actors (by modifying the

118

content of workshops to make them more mainstream or conventional) in order to secure much-needed funding. Furthermore, its regular use of a space that is provided by the local government (town hall) has also caused a certain tension between its defence of independent action and its reliance on local government for funding and the provision of a much-needed space for their operations. Nonetheless, Ursula noted that some of the institutions that publicly rejected them on ideological grounds, often referred women in need of support to FEM without accompanying them in order to avoid legitimising or recognising FEMs' work. To Ursula, these were signs of how beyond these disagreements, a certain complicity prevailed across similar organisations.

FEM's innovative edge

Hybrid organisations are also linked to innovation and the notion of "doing things differently", in the sense that the organisational elements that compose social enterprises "would not conventionally go together" (Battilana et al, 2017: 129). For some, it is innovation that constitutes the focus of many social enterprises that place their efforts on the implementation of novel ideas that contribute to disrupting existing ways of operating (Young and Lecy, 2014: 1312). However, it seems clear that an enterprise does not have to be innovative to be social, which means that this aspect cannot be considered a key defining feature, present as it may be in many social enterprises (including FEM as I discuss below).

Innovation is also associated with how limitations in resources available can serve to bring about new business opportunities (Doherty et al, 2014: 422) and how social enterprises often display the capacity to reach vulnerable groups and deliver new services (Baglione, 2017: 2337). In this respect, it is also important to highlight two elements that point to FEM's innovative and original character and suggest that the organisation is indeed contributing to social innovation in different ways. FEM's contribution at this level can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the organisation's philosophy and approach are radically different to that of other organisations with a strong delivery and/or assistance focus with a tendency to treat women as "victims" and passive recipients of certain goods and services. FEM's founder is highly critical of what she considers to be the "patronising and judgemental" attitude of those NGOs that offer support to

119

women from a purely "assistentialist" angle. In order to avoid this, FEM applies an intervention methodology grounded in feminist ideas and, as Ana (one of the members of FEM) says, "based on a profound feeling of empathy" in order to assist survivors of gender-based violence from their perspective as former victims of violence.

Building the capacity of the women through workshops and training sessions to empower them and improve their employability prospects constitutes another key element of FEM's approach. These trainings incorporate various original elements that include philosophy, empowerment, "otherness" and a therapeutic exercise called the mapping of desires that seek to build women's self-esteem beyond the usual provision of legal and psychological services. These elements indicate that their social mission is really understood as a social transformation mission that involves taking a political stance and ultimately seeking paradigmatic changes at the economic and social level (Solórzano et al, 2018: 157).

Finally, FEM's wine trade has also been developed with a special angle that is innovative and coherent with the organisation's overall philosophy. WINECOOP was created with the intention of providing not only an alternative source of funding to the organisation, but also to generate jobs that could improve the living conditions of women at risk of exclusion and women who had suffered gender-based violence. This corresponds to another aspect that is central to the EMES definition, namely the creation of jobs based on equality with fair and adequate salaries for staff, as well as the promotion of networks and participation in different groups (Solórzano et al, 2018: 169). Furthermore, the selected wine varieties are part of a local vineyard's corporate social responsibility programme and the products have been branded by FEM with a special label that refers to women's rights and frames the wine as "feminist wine". This commercial activity suggests that, in line with the definition of modern hybrid used throughout this chapter, FEM has also been strong at monitoring its environment for new opportunities, despite the risks involved in undertaking new actions (Zimmer et al, 2018).

Methodology: ethnographic engagement with FEM

There is growing use of ethnographic methods in social enterprise research. Researchers become increasingly engaged and interested in conducting more in-depth enquiries into how social enterprises operate and the kinds of impact they have (Hill O'Connor and Baker, 2017; Mauksch, 2016). In this respect, ethnography can be said to provide useful tools for much-needed reflection, since it represents a way of engaging the researcher both with the world and with oneself (Houtbeckers, 2017: 129).

In the case of social enterprises, finding ways of experiencing both the physical and emotional practices that are part of their work and their effect on researchers is particularly important (Hill O'Connor and Baker, 2017: 181). The notion of "situated understandings" is central to ethnography and allows for adequate interpretation of the practices of social enterprises (Mauksch, 2017). At the same time, striking a balance that places the right distance between researcher and researched while avoiding objectification and protecting rapport is a difficult task (Langmead, 2017).

Any research can provide the opportunity to engage in a self-reflection process about our own roles and positions as researchers in the community we collaborate with (Geertz, 1973). Reflexivity requires exploring tensions and differences in a meaningful manner and seeing our interactions with subjects as "creative moments where researcher, researched and research make and remake each other" (Langmead, 2017: 196). Although increasing attention is given to this methodological aspect in ethnographic studies, certain areas (including emotions, power relations and how researchers are changed by their experiences) remain understated (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). In the case of a longitudinal study such as FEM's, these considerations had special weight, given my engagement with the organisation over a period of three years and the different relationships that resulted from this interaction. The relationships that ensued caused certain contradictions, insecurities and fears that resonate with matters that are sometimes considered issues to be avoided in academic articles (Langmead, 2017; Gilmore and Kenny, 2015; Lutz, 1988). I have chosen to devote both reflection time and space to these issues in this thesis, feeling that I could

121

not offer an honest account of my research process without giving these aspects some thought. This may have driven my account in the direction of authors practising "confessional ethnography" (Van Maanen, 1988). Nevertheless, by reflecting on my different roles in the field, I also hope to shed light on aspects of the workings and practices of FEM that would otherwise have gone unnoticed.

In order to address some of my concerns, I resorted to openly discussing some of these issues with informants to explore ways of balancing what I took to be an unbalanced relation. As a result of what Gilmore and Kenny describe as "identification and attachment" (2015: 63), I also became engaged in various activities with the intention of supporting the organisation by lending technical assistance on various aspects and also by bringing in the support of an expert to provide pro-bono assistance. Apart from a genuine wish to contribute to an organisation I admired, I was also driven by a certain anxiety at the thought of being perceived as an extractive researcher offering nothing in return for the time devoted by informants. Hence, my engagement also included lending my support as volunteer on a couple of occasions (helping with cooking, lending technical support in reviewing a proposal) as well as proposing support for the wine project. I also shared draft texts with the founder to elicit feedback on my work.

One of the aspects that was particularly surprising in this process was something that has been described as an "entanglement" between the personal stories of informants and the researcher, which is exacerbated by how emotions are evoked when there is a social mission involved (Houtbeckers, 2017: 131). This "entanglement" occurred at several levels, between persons and objects (Nordstrom, 2015). Some aspects were linked to my condition as a woman speaking primarily to women in a predominantly female setting. For example, some of the women I spoke to had children and shared stories of their grown-up children when they were of similar ages to mine. This immediately eased communication. Also, when I spoke about my work, my assignments within the framework of projects addressing gender-based violence in South-East Asia also brought interesting opportunities to discuss women's struggles and share multiple perspectives on issues that were clearly of common concern. I quote these two aspects as examples of commonalities that brought me closer to

informants and made my research easier. This "active positioning" of myself as a female and feminist researcher was positive in the context of this research in the sense that it facilitated exchanges (Mazzei and O'Brien, 2009). Nonetheless, there were also moments when I felt distanced from FEM members and self-conscious of my status and role. I go deeper into these aspects in the next sections, particularly when reflecting on what I describe as my four different roles during the fieldwork. Before doing so, I will share some technical details and contexts of my fieldwork.

Fieldwork duration and timeframe

In order to research the experience of FEM, I applied mixed longitudinal methods that combined participant observation and interviews with members of the association, as well as active participation in a wide range of activities (from seminars to demonstrations to lunches at FEM's canteen). These allowed me to exchange on their work in different settings. Participant observation was also key for capturing more subtle aspects of organisational life (Kenny, 2010: 862), while trying to remain aware of my own role as participant observer and its effect on the organisation as I was studying (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015; Van Maanen, 1988).

Most of the fieldwork discussed in this chapter was conducted within the framework of a European Commission-funded research project that analysed the experiences of social enterprises operating in different socio-political and economic ecosystems. It included a series of exchanges or "shadowing" experiences between academics and social entrepreneurs working in partner institutions in 17 research centres and 11 social enterprises across 17 countries. As member of the national team conducting research on social enterprises in Spain within the framework of this project, I was very lucky to liaise with members of FEM from an early stage. Applying a collaborative approach allowed me to gain first-hand evidence and insights into their activities while sharing moments and participating in different events. As partner of the project, the organisation was willing to welcome associated researchers and share their experience with newcomers. This played a very positive role in terms of both

123

gaining access to informants and constructing rapport, which made contacting members a relatively straightforward task.

As part of my collaboration with this research project, I also accompanied several colleagues from foreign partner organisations. We visited a series of local social enterprises, including FEM, with a view to helping them gather information on the Spanish context and review national social entrepreneurship experiences. These visits were interesting for several reasons. Firstly, because the visiting scholars and social entrepreneurs provided impressions and insights into FEM that undoubtedly enriched my longitudinal study and the account shared in this chapter. Secondly, I found it interesting to observe how my own accompanying role swayed between outsider and insider during these visits, as I translated discussions with FEM or asked members what were sometimes difficult questions on behalf of the visiting researchers. At different moments, I felt closer to the FEM members I was interviewing than to the fellow-researcher I was supporting and this "altered" role allowed me to produce a different form of knowledge or understanding, as I found myself weaving my own comments and impressions into the conversations and even struggling not to use "we" instead of "they". There were also other moments when I felt I was being overly self-critical of my own role, as the discussion on the researched also led to questioning my role as researcher and how a prospective reader would interpret the subject of my research (Schultze, 2000).

Finally, the findings discussed in this chapter also draw on collaborative research with practitioners from the Spanish social enterprise sector through observational visits, informal conversations, interviews and the analysis of documents from social enterprise support organisations and the local and national administration. I recorded notes during these interviews and visits and transcribed them at the end of the day (Schultze, 2000).

Understanding locally negotiated scripts is crucial for helping us place what are allegedly absolute terms, such as "competition versus compassion" or "social versus business", into perspective, since these tensions are also socially constructed and conditioned by each ecosystem. Given the importance of

124

context-related factors for understanding how social enterprises function, the following section will present and discuss FEM's experience and how it has evolved to adapt to an ever-changing local context. In order to do so, I will share what can be described as a series of "productive moments" or shared events because they shed light on FEM's work and nurture my analysis on hybridity (Langmead, 2017: 196).

Four ethnographic roles: portraying FEM through "productive moments"

One of the reasons for focusing this chapter on FEM's "hybrid experience" is that social enterprises cannot be reduced to a single abstract construct and it is therefore important to look at specific cases to consider their diversity and complexity (Young and Lecy, 2014: 1310). Furthermore, a social enterprise can be considered a human product or practice more than a concept (Mauksch et al, 2017). Hence, it is important to understand the dynamics that shape social entrepreneurship as a phenomenon through these everyday practices.

Hence, in this section of Chapter 2, I have chosen to discuss FEM from four different perspectives. I have both shaped and been shaped by my experience of interacting with FEM in different capacities. I have decided to discuss them by sharing various "productive moments" that serve as evidence for illustrating some of the everyday practices I was able to observe during my fieldwork. At the same time, these four perspectives constitute distinctive standpoints or roles I believe I have played during my fieldwork. No role is neutral or innocent in any research because it affects how you observe the reality around you and the problem is really more about how to be receptive to the unexpected and to things that you are not looking for (Lund, 2014: 228). In this case, the roles correspond to what I was having to do, how I was observing and what I was identifying myself with the most during each given situation. These considerations are important because, as Mauksch et al. argue, they involved entering the particular universe of the subject in a way that has made certain ideas more comprehensible while at the same time not "claiming to create a transparent account of *their* realities at any point of time" (2017:124). Therefore, the following four short ethnographic

125

summaries describe FEM through an exploration of the different moments and relationships I lived with the people I met during my field work.

The visiting researcher: a lovely lunch and various fortuitous encounters

The first time I met FEM members, I was introduced as a researcher working on her PhD, collaborating with a European research project and with an impressive professional career in international development that was described in a way that made me blush. Far from putting me in what is often described as the "powerful seat" when the researcher meets her research subject, my emotions were marked by a clear uneasiness and sense of otherness (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). The words of that first description brought to me the image of a rather privileged and well-off consultant who was worlds apart from the reality of the organisation she had just walked into. Thankfully, it took one conversation with Ursula to overcome my discomfort as our conversation quickly turned to feminism and to a shared passion for women's rights that had just taken me to Pakistan and India on various assignments. More intimate exchanges on how our children had changed our lives followed. It was the chemistry between us that I think made this first conversation flow so easily, leading us to discuss personal matters almost immediately and leading me (undergoing some difficult family issues at the time) to feel a sense of warmth that I remain grateful for. I was already falling in love with FEM, which makes everything I write in this chapter biased and quite possibly one-sided, but which, nonetheless, needs to be acknowledged for honesty's sake.

That first morning, the canteen was full of people and around twenty of us ended up sitting around a large rectangular table for a lunch of lentils, salad and watermelon. I was soon to discover through my visits that the chaotic, buzzing environment that surprised me in the canteen on that very first day, far from being something special and unique to that Wednesday, was almost the norm. Several things were happening at the same time, with multiple conversations across the table, volunteers cooking and serving, other people crossing the room to access a separate area, a small group making colourful posters and a woman walking in to leave some old clothes in search of new owners.

126

From the start, FEM's canteen was conceived in an innovative manner, since it was firmly grounded in an approach that builds on women's active participation to ensure that the food that was offered would not be perceived as simple free "hand-outs". Men and women volunteered to cook, serve and clean-up together and efforts were made to generate a communication space that was pleasant and comfortable for everyone, with special attention to women in difficult situations. The canteen was popular among a wide variety of people (including the odd tourist in search of real Andalusian experiences) and had become a unique space for interesting exchanges among people who would not normally sit together in other spaces. My visits over the last three years suggest that the uniqueness of this atmosphere has been preserved over time and this constitutes an incredible achievement at a time when social initiatives seem particularly fragile and ephemerous.

The second time I met FEM members, I was also in my visiting researcher role, notebook in hand and with interview plans. I offered to help cook and ended up chopping courgettes and chatting to Alba and Teodora, two of the women volunteering that morning. A man collaborating with FEM walked in enquiring about the state of play of a recycling initiative that was being implemented with the support of a local environmental NGO. The exchange showed that despite FEM's commitment to supporting a fellow activist organisation by providing them with their organic waste, the partner organisation was not delivering and as a result, delays in rubbish collection were beginning to be a concern. How this collaborator expressed his views and acted provided interesting insights into FEM's local connections and the importance of the *barrio*. Members were receptive to his comments and let him act in a display of participatory decision-making and what seemed to be organically delegated functions.

However, what was most eventful that second morning was somehow ending up featuring in a short clip about the organisation. It happened by pure chance in the midst of a conversation with other researchers who were gathering for lunch. A group of students were interviewing FEM members for a feminist project on associations working for women's rights in the city. I was asked to go out into the

127

street with one of the shopping trolleys kept in a corner of the room and to walk alongside two other women with our backs to the camera as we moved away from the young woman filming us. To me, this anecdote denotes the level of integration, inclusiveness and openness that characterises FEM's spirit and the sense of belonging that is promoted. I was clearly in my role of visiting researcher that day, only just beginning to know the organisation and its members, but it felt good to be part of the group, it felt good to experience that sense of belonging.

On another visit to the canteen, a woman who had just returned to the neighbourhood after spending several years abroad came to a gathering and asked for information about accommodation in the *barrio*. She sat with us, offered her help, started peeling carrots and ended up staying for lunch. To me, the importance and value of FEM's embeddedness for its social mission became apparent immediately, as two of the women present in the room rapidly made suggestions about possible contacts and offered their support to find accommodation in a shared flat. The woman expressed gratitude and spoke of the difficulties of returning and feeling a certain loneliness while struggling to find an affordable place to rent.

The translator: external researchers hit the town

FEM's work also reflects the experience of many small social enterprises that are motivated by aspects such as flexibility, independence and being their own bosses, rather than by growing and expanding their businesses (Young and Lecy, 2014: 1316). During one of the sessions with visiting researchers from abroad, I had to translate a question about FEM's prospective future. The foreign visiting researcher was asking the two members we were interviewing where they could picture FEM in 5-years-time. It was difficult for me to convey in my translation their puzzlement at the question. They explained that their sense of achievement having survived such a long time was so central to their narrative that the idea of growing or accessing funding to scale up their activities was simply not in their plans and not part of their aspirations. Interestingly, during this interview and others I translated for other foreign researchers, I felt closer to the FEM members I was interviewing than to the fellow-researcher I was supporting. This "altered" role allowed me to produce a different form of knowledge or understanding as I

128

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found myself weaving my own comments and impressions into our conversation and even struggling not to use "we" instead of "they". It was an opportunity to see things in a different light. This moment of shifting from outsider to insider perspectives mirrored the feelings I experienced at other moments in time, when my engagement and collaboration created a sense of belonging to FEM.

The facilitator: workshops with the volunteer trade expert

On the first day we met, Ursula proudly presented the activity that marked FEM's transformation into a social enterprise: the sale of what she described as "an ecological feminist wine that celebrates life and happiness". The beautiful label symbolised women's freedom through the picture of a young woman with maple leaves in her long hair. Poetic verses evoked freedom, dreams of liberty and sisterhood. The four different wines that were being traded were produced by a local family of wine growers and sold to FEM as part of their corporate social responsibility strategy. As a result of this partnership, the company was receiving extensive media attention with several articles and internet references showcasing its support to women's issues. FEM members were grateful for the company's trust but expressed concern about a pending payment that they were reimbursing little by little. One of my informants later referred to the asymmetry of this relationship, given the positive benefits of the marketing strategy for the company and the limited income that FEM was generating through the sale of the wine.

Ursula explained that they had struggled to sell the wine in the absence of an effective strategy but that they saw the wine trade as an opportunity for achieving the sustainability and the long-term approach that FEM needed to thrive. The first time we met, the wine was being kept in a warehouse outside the city centre, which (as Ana was quick to point out) negatively affected deliveries for the few gourmet shops and restaurants partnering with the project at the time and in the absence of a real distribution plan. I asked if I could buy some wine but only a couple of bottles were available on their premises. When we shared the story of the wine with friends willing to purchase it, they reported struggling to make an order online and finally resorting to calling Ursula. Several months later, Ursula was happy to show us a small glass cabinet in her office, where the bottles were

129

displayed under lock and key. She also opened a drawer full of cash where she was keeping the money "separate from the rest" to keep track of how sales were going. She told me that these were signs of her organisation's willingness to give the wine trading project new impetus.

During other events, I also witnessed how FEM's wine was offered to participants for free. Ana explained that bottles were sometimes offered as gifts in return for various contributions outside these events too. This was also the case when I participated in a technical session on trading and sales with the expert consultant who volunteered his time to the organisation and received a bottle at the end of the session. Ana also explained that the income from the wine that was sold was typically used in a haphazardly manner to cover costs associated with FEM's canteen or to meet the emergency needs of victims of violence.

The consultant suggested a tentative price schedule and marketing plan to help establish when it made sense to provide a free bottle and how to regulate this practice to ensure compliance with the income generating goals of the venture. Participants in the session expressed their doubts about how to change current practices but agreed on the need for a new approach. At another point in the session, the consultant raised the rather thorny issue of the link between alcoholism and gender-based violence. This caused a certain uneasiness in the group, but the conversation quickly reverted to the symbolic value they had chosen for their wine, based on ideas of freedom, joy and celebration.

The academic: seminars and conferences with the founder

I also had the opportunity to spend time with FEM's founder in several academic settings that took us outside their premises, their *barrio* and on one occasion, even outside their city. FEM displays what I would describe as a series of chameleonic or versatile characteristics that mirror those of its founder. Ursula is charismatic and her strong personality constitutes a clear asset for the organisation, given her enormous capacity to fit into different contexts and to liaise at many levels. Her case provides a colourful illustration of how actors develop various narratives to shape their social enterprise in the eyes of policymakers, donors and the public, depending on their needs and

130

circumstances (Teasdale, 2012). Meanwhile, the essence and philosophy of the organisation can be preserved, because the hybrid nature of social enterprising allows a certain flexibility in incorporating different (and sometimes competing) goals.

Ursula is great at conveying powerful messages in academic settings and communicates with the audience effectively everywhere. The first opportunity I had to see her participating in an academic setting was during a seminar, organized within the framework of our European research project. Her ability to establish rapport with the group and spark an interesting discussion on FEM's work was remarkable. The second time I saw her in this type of academic setting was in a conference on the social economy. She co-presented the experience of the European research project together with other members of the international team. Ursula also took part in the project's final conference, where I translated her words into English and was once again impressed by how versatile her narrative could be depending on the setting. On this occasion, she highlighted elements of FEM's collaboration with the project that had been strategic for the organisation. She valued the collaboration on the grounds that it had given FEM's work a different type of legitimacy thanks to the attention and support received from academia.

What was maybe more significant and relevant to the discussions included in this chapter is how witnessing Ursula's "performance" and interactions in very different settings highlighted the importance of her leadership and personal characteristics to convey credibility and meaningfulness to the general public. This shows the extent to which the personal or agency dimension of her organisation is central for its success and proves the need for charismatic persons that believably incorporate (and indeed embody) the alleged social mission as another defining factor of social enterprises.

The central role played by FEM's leader constitutes a determining aspect of the organisation's development and its way of operating. Ursula is a strong leader who drives FEM in a manner that can be considered characteristic of an agent of change. Her multiple roles and profound engagement clearly correspond to the

131

idea of a "social entrepreneur". At the same time, it seems impossible to imagine FEM without Ursula: she embodies FEM and FEM embodies Ursula's values and relies on her stamina and determination to survive. This case illustrates some of the points discussed in the theory section on the differences and similarities between three core concepts: social entrepreneur, social enterprise and social economy. If Ursula is a social entrepreneur and her work cannot be separated from FEM as a social enterprise, my decision to use both terms indistinctly seems to be justified in the context of this research. Furthermore, it seems impossible to judge who or what is more important (FEM or Ursula) because she cannot be disassociated from FEM. Hence, if Ursula is FEM, this line of discussion seems coherent with my previous theoretical stance of non-distinction between these terms. This overlap may seem problematic at first but when we consider the empirical findings it seems that there is no difference for our analysis, since they cannot be separated, and Ursula and FEM can only be considered together.

Discussing social enterprise as everyday practice

My account of different productive moments with FEM moves us away from the abstract question of whether the organisation could be said to be a hybrid or not. Rather, my ethnographic account provides various illustrations of the practical ways in which hybridity was interpreted, enacted, neglected, ignored or talked about by FEM or experienced by me. To further analyse my involvement with this organisation, I will try to extract three lessons from these four ethnographic role-experiences. These lessons speak to the larger theoretical issues of the social enterprise literature discussed in the first part of this chapter, namely the limits of applying restrictive categories to social enterprises. More specifically, I consider how their social nature develops and is shaped as discourses or networks or philosophies or distinctive ways of doing things that are always uniquely framed by the actors who make them (Mauksch, 2017: 214).

First, different time horizons correspond to different business logics and ways of prioritising within an organisation. In a local context marked by an economic crisis that conditions access to resources; long-term goals and financial sustainability are not considered to be central. The second aspect concerns the role of leadership. It is interesting to note that even if the focus of social

132

entrepreneurship is often on participation, democratic decision-making, horizontal structures, etc., having a leader who embodies the organisation proves fundamental (as in the case of FEM). A third aspect concerns how the "social" in social enterprises is inextricably linked to the more social, human side of interacting with others. Developing a sense of belonging and group allegiance is central to the organisation's identity and influences its performance. I will now discuss these three issues in more detail in relation to my perception of FEM's work by drawing on aspects of Douglas's cultural theory.

With Douglas's cultural theory we can translate the tension between commercial and social goals into a conflict between the values of the individual and the values of the community. The logic of hybrids tends to combine economic values or objectives with social values or objectives. Framing this issue by focusing on how the individual and the community relate through social enterprising, shifts our analytical attention to what is considered self-responsibility and communal responsibility by the organisation. Meanwhile, the everyday practices of social enterprises resonate with different organisational cultures at different moments in time as part of the organisation's coping strategies and shaping of hybridity.

If hybridity is to be ultimately understood as an everyday practice, I have argued that ethnography provides an interesting avenue for achieving a deeper understanding of how hybrid organisations function. In this regard, the first lesson I would like to highlight in this final section relates to different perceptions and understandings of time and value in a crisis-driven social enterprise. My ethnographic account showed that -to the surprise of visiting scholars- the main concern of FEM members was not to plan the future by finding ways of being more economically efficient. I witnessed another interesting illustration of this relative time horizon during the wine trade workshops I attended with members of the team. It was rather surprising to see how the enthusiasm of the international trade expert and his long-term perspective and insistence on the wine trade's incredible potential to improve FEM's sustainability prospects did not convince FEM's team. This was shown by their insistence on pursuing short-term goals and the constant turnover of staff assigned to "the wine project", which made clear that it was not considered a priority. It seemed that the tension

133

between the economic and the social rationale identified as the core problem of social enterprises was if any, a secondary problem to Ursula and her fellow supporters. It was more a question of ensuring short-term survival as an organisation in order to keep working on core activities.

As mentioned earlier in this section, Ursula's own biography and her charisma were crucial for conveying a sense of authenticity and the real social motives of the organisation. If we go back to consider elements of cultural theory for our analysis, FEM's experience suggests that even if competitive individualism is not present in this initiative, nonetheless, a different form of leadership that is individualistic is encouraged and indeed vital for organisations like FEM. Ursula's charismatic presence and her weight in the organisation are closely related to the individual culture of organisations and it is impossible to understand its social mission without considering the unique qualities of her leadership. Hence, is important to stress the founder's role in managing the organisation. In contrast with hierarchical collectivism culture, FEM is characterised by strong leadership that makes principles of authority within the organisation clear. Decisions may be taken in a participatory manner and the organisation's spirit is inclusive but at the same time, there is clear guidance and control from the organisation's leader.

Beyond any abstract social or economic goals that might be ascribed to the organisation, the aspect that constitutes a defining feature of FEM as a social enterprise is the organisation's ability to integrate newcomers and create a sense of community for people who are diverse and may have little in common. If we resort to elements of Douglas's cultural theory, it might be argued that FEM has developed a positional or hierarchical collectivist approach in the sense that the organisation is guided by a strong integration of the members that belong to it.

Throughout the findings discussed in this chapter, we have seen various ways in which FEM corresponds to both the egalitarian sectarism (D) and hierarchical collectivism (B) cultures earlier described. The social enterprise that develops a positional or hierarchical collectivist approach is guided by strong integration of the members that belong to it, coupled with strong regulation determining (and

134

limiting) their actions. FEM's members display a strong commitment to the group, an aspect that is often present in conversations and confirmed by a clear sense of group identity and belonging. Nonetheless, the organisation's rules and regulations are flexible and the role that each individual plays in the social enterprise is not predetermined nor clearly defined by some form of job description that sets out its roles and responsibilities within the organisation. On the contrary, roles and responsibilities are in constant flux, depending on emerging needs and interests as well as on the turnover of staff and volunteers.

Overall, FEM is not as structured as the hierarchical collectivism culture presupposes but it is structured enough to function and has shown its ability to survive over time. It is in this sense that FEM can also be associated with an egalitarian sectarism culture (D). FEM members have a strong sense of allegiance to the organisation, but overall regulation is rather weak. Existing rules are negotiated within the group and serve to regulate contact with outside but avoid social differentiation inside. However, the main aspect on which FEM does not fit into this model is on the fact that the organisation's leadership is not weak and establishing authority is not difficult.

FEM's grassroots character and its embeddedness in the local context features suggest that the community is first and centre, with a clear subordination of individual interests and needs to those of the group. The organisation clearly encourages respect among members and loyalty with no internal competition encouraged but a profound sense of solidarity and commitment to sharing available resources among its members, especially since there seems to be a clear preference for distributing resources according to needs and protecting those who are worse-off.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have considered issues of definition and categorisation to conclude that social enterprises are multi-faceted, complex and changing structures. They cannot be easily pigeon-holed for academic convenience. Emphasising the importance of specific local particularities complicates comparisons and classifications. Nevertheless, when the locally-constructed

135

diversity of social enterprises is considered, it seems clear that the local dimension and contextual factors that condition the development of social enterprises tend to be underrepresented in current debates about social enterprises and their relevance is underestimated as a result.

Hybridity theory has proved relevant to the analysis of FEM's experience and has helped to frame the everyday practices of this social enterprise as a reality that cannot be restricted to limited analytical or academic boundaries. At the same time, FEM's experience also illustrates the challenges and opportunities that hybridity can provide to organisations that seek to balance commercial and social goals (Doherty et al, 2014: 427). This central conclusion does not suggest that this case-sensitive way of approaching hybridity in organisations is the only or the most accurate method to study these organisational phenomena but to show that hybridity is not static: it is a way of recreating, reinventing and adapting to contextual challenges.

I have used the case of FEM to showcase how the locally-constructed nature of the organisation's script and its workings are conditioned by institutional arrangements, policies and other elements of each local ecosystem. FEM displays formal and legal features associated with hybrid organisations, since it was originally established as an association and incorporated a cooperative for the development of its wine trade. As I have discussed, in practice for FEM, this meant pursuing clear social goals while at the same time relying both on market activity and public funding to fulfil its mission and strengthen its sustainability. Furthermore, despite sometimes being politically incorrect and controversial, the organisation still relies on certain local government funds to support its canteen and still depends on the local council for the use of the premises it operates in. Hence, despite its formal independence, FEM can also be considered "a creature of public funding" (Peattie and Morley, 2008: 43 quoted in Teasdale, 2012: 106).

Finally, there is also the issue of how the commercial logic introduced through WINECOOP clashed with the organisation's philosophy, causing a certain struggle for FEM members. As I earlier noted, one of the members explained that the income from the wine that was sold was typically used in a haphazardly

136

manner to cover costs associated with FEM's canteen or to meet the emergency needs of victims of violence. This provides a good illustration of a certain underlying reluctance to engage in sales activities due to moral questions of what is right and wrong in the eyes of an organisation like FEM.

This chapter has also shown that the definition of social enterprise cannot be reduced to inherent tensions between social and economic goals, since we risk simplifying what are rich, complex and multifaceted organisations. A closer analysis of social enterprises reveals that the types of juggling acts they engage in to survive/operate/thrive are not so different from the strategies of other organisations. This suggests that the relationship between the social and the economic is not as antagonistic as might seem in many academic framings of this phenomenon (Mauksch et al, 2017).

Finally, this chapter has also used ethnography to understand not only FEM's work but also to explore my own emotional and introspective experience as researcher touched by the subject of my research. From a personal perspective, I can also conclude that my relationship with FEM transcended the original research plan to become an ongoing form of collaboration, shifting between my own personal emotional engagement and the need to ensure a certain distance and level of abstraction to write these pages (Mauksch et al, 2017).

In Chapter 3 I will continue to explore issues related to social entrepreneurship, but my attention will shift to the global south to focus on the work of a social enterprise operating in Bangladesh. I decided to integrate this experience in my thesis because I believe it adds a relevant perspective to the discussions on empowerment and hybridity. In the following chapter, I focus on what I believe is an underlying aspect of any organisation with a social mission by exploring how beyond providing a good or service, it can also contribute to the realization of human rights. The protection and promotion of human rights are part of the implicit and explicit goals of social enterprise. I explore these aspects by proposing a human rights-based framework for my analysis.

CHAPTER 3: From Social Change to Human Rights: Applying a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship

> Whereas a needs-based approach focuses on securing additional resources for delivery of services to particular groups, a rights-based approach calls for existing resources to be shared more equally and for assisting the marginalised people to assert their rights to those resources (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004: 1417).

Abstract

In this chapter, I move the geographic focus of my research from the European south to the global south. I explore an under-researched aspect of social entrepreneurship, namely the existing links between social enterprises and human rights in the context of the current 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development. I discuss whether social enterprises can bridge the gap between service delivery and the realisation of human rights. To answer this question, I propose a tentative analytical rights-based approach. This framework will serve to examine the different dimensions of the work of a social enterprise operating in Bangladesh. BNG (anonymised) delivers a range of services, -from education and health services to microfinance- with a focus on the most underprivileged social groups in the country. I encountered BNG as part of the work in international development consulting that has periodically taken me to South East Asia over the last four years. In my conclusions, I argue that social enterprises have a key role to play in development processes, alongside States, NGOs and international organisations. Rights-based social entrepreneurship may not only support social cohesion and well-being, but may also contribute to greater social justice, particularly in contexts where poverty and inequality are rife.

Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis explored gender issues in relation to social enterprises. I discussed entrepreneurship as a gendered concept in our

138

heteronormative society by considering the implications of this reality for women working in social enterprises. The selected case studies included three work cooperatives and shared women's perceptions on how their cooperatives were contributing to changes in their lives. I asked whether and how these changes might be considered empowering or on the contrary, contributing to the perpetuation of traditional gender roles. Chapter 2 explored social enterprises as hybrid organisations that balanced their commercial and social goals through diverse coping strategies. My discussion on FEM stressed the importance of understanding the contextual factors conditioning social entrepreneurship and the need to pay greater attention to the everyday practices that shape the way social enterprises function.

These debates on gender and hybridity resonated with my own experiences in international development as a development practitioner who has travelled to over 25 countries in the global south over the last 17 years. In fact, while I was conducting fieldwork in Andalusia, I travelled to India three times and interviewed women creating self-help groups as part of two different consulting assignments. It was impossible not to see parallels between these women and the experiences of women creating cooperatives in the Andalusia, especially since there were surprising similarities between my conversations in Sevilla and in remote areas of Jharkhand: different realities but similar desires. The quest for a better life and the importance of work-life balance were always at the centre. At the same time, it was painful for me to remember concerns about the absence of air conditioning in our children's classrooms in Sevilla while listening to worried mothers in Jharkhand struggling to protect their children from leopards on their way to school.

These parallel experiences, coupled with my continued professional engagement in international development, help to explain why Chapter 3 shifts the geographic focus of my research to discuss social entrepreneurship in the global south. Authors such as Kerlin claim that a distinction must be made between what social entrepreneurship means in the North and South (2010). Furthermore, studies analysing the advantages and limitations of social enterprises have tended to focus mainly on western countries, with conclusions sometimes extended to other

139

geographic areas without the necessary specific analysis (Hackett, 2016). My supervisor encouraged me to explore this dimension, given my professional experience, in order to gain comparative insights of relevance to this area of research. In this chapter, I draw from my experience providing consulting services to a social enterprise operating in Bangladesh to think about social enterprises as actors with the potential to effectively contribute to human rights and sustainable development. Recent years have witnessed the emergence of a broad range of inspiring examples of social entrepreneurship in developing countries that are successfully addressing social issues with important implications for sustainable development and the realisation of human rights, particularly for the most deprived communities of the world. Several high-profile experiences in the realm of international development operating in Bangladesh (such as the Grameen Bank and BRAC) have attracted increasing interest and attention. Such cases have helped the general public understand social entrepreneurship by illustrating the ways in which profit and charity can go hand in hand and by showing how new types of business models can help to address basic needs by targeting issues such as access to water or employment integration (Hummels, 2018; Santos, 2012; Seelos and Mair, 2005).

As I have discussed at length in Chapter 2, most of the academic debates on social entrepreneurship to date have focused on defining the concept of social entrepreneurship, or on determining success factors as well as on differentiating social from commercial goals. Despite conceptual disagreements, there has been widespread consensus on the potential of social entrepreneurship to contribute to social change, cohesion and social justice, and this consensus is very relevant to the issues I discuss in this chapter (Fayolle and Matlay, 2010; Nicholls, 2006; Seelos and Mair, 2004). This of course does not mean that there are no critics of the proliferation of social enterprises in the global south, especially among anthropologists (Huang 2017, Schwittay 2011). In this chapter I want to show how an analytical rights-based approach can help answer some of these questions on empirical grounds. My framework wants to also facilitate the assessment of social enterprise performance. Ultimately, this would contribute to our ability to distinguish between organisations in terms of their effectiveness when it comes

140

to promoting human rights. The experience of BNG will serve as an example to explore whether my model is operational and suggestive.

Social change, cohesion and social justice are closely related to human rights dialectic, particularly in the field of international development. Nonetheless, rights-based language has been surprisingly absent, even though human rights discourses and rights-based approaches have permeated many of the fields of activity in which social entrepreneurship initiatives operate, particularly in the global south. Human rights often resonate with the social mission and goals of social enterprises, even if the link between the concepts of social entrepreneurship and rights is rarely explicitly made. This existing link is mainly grounded in the fact that social enterprises are value-based, since they ultimately seek to bring about social change and transform communities by contributing solutions to issues of concern (Santos, 2012). Rights-based approaches are designed and applied by organisations with similar objectives in mind and can therefore strengthen the performance of social enterprises with positive results for the realisation of human rights.

This chapter is devoted to exploring this understudied dimension of social entrepreneurship, namely the intersection between social entrepreneurship and human rights in the context of developing countries. I seek to contribute to this knowledge gap by analysing the links between social entrepreneurship, sustainable development and human rights; and by presenting an analytical framework that can help us understand whether social enterprises are contributing (implicitly or explicitly) to the realisation of human rights.

I have applied this analytical framework to the above-mentioned social enterprise from Bangladesh with a strong focus on women. I visited BNG in 2018 within the framework of a consulting assignment with the objective of monitoring the organisation's activities and reporting on ongoing results and challenges for one of its funders. I spent ten days visiting different lines of work, learning about the organisation's history, its performance and interviewing a wide range of stakeholders involved in the organisation's work as well as beneficiaries of the services provided. BNG covers a broad range of development-related areas that

141

include education, health, microcredit and agricultural services. It has evolved from a small association working locally in the founder's home region to working nationally and setting up over 300 offices around the country.

My discussion seeks to explore the different dimensions of this social enterprise's work and analyse how it can contribute to changes that are conducive to the realisation of human rights through elements that are implicitly or explicitly part of a rights-based approach. Following this framework, I suggest that social enterprises have the potential to contribute to the realisation of human rights and have an important role to play alongside States, NGOs and international organisations within the current quest to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

BNG is an interesting story that showcases the potential changes that a social enterprise can bring about in a community. During my years travelling and working in the global south, I have encountered many different types of social enterprises. They all faced complex challenges while also displaying interesting advantages thanks to aspects such as their independence from political or financial forces or their ability to develop grassroots solutions that were often better tailored to local needs. I have chosen to focus on BNG in order to explore these issues because I believe that its experience can shed light on the role that other actors can play in the fight against poverty in a context marked by the loss of credibility of international development initiatives and traditional international development actors such as NGOs and international organisations. I believe that this experience reveals some of the ways in which social entrepreneurship has the potential to contribute to the realisation of human rights by promoting social change at different levels. My findings illustrate the advantages of applying a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship and the practical challenges involved. Finally, I conclude with various arguments in defence of the proposed model. I suggest that if a social enterprise effectively applies a rights-based approach to its work, it can better implement, justify and monitor its social value. As I have discussed in Chapter 2, social value is difficult to pinpoint and the concept of human rights-based enterprise I propose in the

142

next sections might be a way of solving some of the grey areas affecting the concept of social entrepreneurship.

I believe that my contribution to current debates is three-fold. Firstly, I propose a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship, which has rarely been explored, but not explicitly proposed before. Secondly, I argue that this approach can play a role in helping us better understand what is really "social" about social entrepreneurship. Thirdly, I also defend the view that social enterprises have the potential to play a significant role alongside the State and civil society organisations in the quest for sustainable development in the global south.

Social entrepreneurship and international development: an effective tandem?

The concept of social entrepreneurship has been present in the international development discourses of funding agencies, banks and INGOs for several years, with increasing examples of collaboration between international organisations, NGOs and different development actors (Seelos and Mair, 2005: 244). Over the last two decades, several authors have analysed the potential of social enterprises in relation to development processes in developing countries, arguing that social enterprises may be better placed to effectively address issues such as poverty than development organisations and multinationals (Seelos and Mair, 2004). Other authors have looked at how social enterprises can contribute to the UN Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) (Littlewood and Holt, 2018); and more recently, at the ways in which social enterprises can contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), (Rahdari, Sepasi and Moradi, 2016; Apostoulos et al., 2018).

Since the Sustainable Development Goals were announced in 2015, several studies on the contribution of social enterprises to the SDGs have been published, suggesting that the role that social entrepreneurs can play in the quest for sustainable development is being widely recognised by key actors and stakeholders across the globe (Holt and Littlewood, 2015). Numerous programmes implemented by international organisations (such as UNDP, UNIDO or UNFPA) and third sector organisations working globally (such as

143

CARE or Oxfam) have incorporated entrepreneurial and income generation activities into their work. Many believe that entrepreneurial approaches to poverty alleviation constitute a way of countering the increasing dominance of neo-liberal economics (Thekaekara and Thekaekara, 2007: 9). Others in turn see social entrepreneurship as the trojan horse of neo-liberalism in international development (Huang 2017, Schwittay 2011).

The integration of social entrepreneurship into the international development realm can be said to be part of a continuous reinvention of the third sector that goes back several decades (Dees, 2007: 27). Over the last twenty years, international NGOs have undergone dramatic changes that have made them gradually become more influential and entrepreneurial (Nicholls, 2006: 4). For many, the added value of social entrepreneurship is the fact that it can combine both the creativity or resourcefulness of more traditional forms of entrepreneurship with social goals that seek to bring about social change (Seelos and Mair, 2005: 241). Practitioners and academics argue that for social changes to have the greatest possible impact and guarantee their sustainability, it is necessary to merge the different approaches of social justice, development and social entrepreneurship (Thekaekara and Thekaekara, 2007: 10).

The perceived role that the private sector could and/or should play in poverty reduction has also evolved over the years, from the decades when it was considered instrumental for economic development in the 70s and 80s, to the years that saw an increase in efforts to strengthen small and medium enterprises in developing countries (in the 90s and 00s) (Gibb, Foster and Weston, 2008: 13). The 1990s witnessed the emergence of numerous social enterprises that sought to generate income by improving general access to the market, particularly of those worse off (Thekaekara and Thekaekara, 2007: 4). During the next two decades, social entrepreneurs emerged as new actors that could also partner with multilateral development organisations (Seelos et al., 2006: 255). However, not all development actors have embraced the idea of social entrepreneurship. As with other terms and concepts used in the international development arena, social entrepreneurship has become a buzzword that has been broadly incorporated in the discourses of organisations as far apart

144

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ideologically from each other as the World Bank and certain activist organisations and NGOs. For example, BRAC is one of the biggest NGOs in the world in terms of employees and is present in 14 countries around the world. It can be described as a combination of NGO, public forum, knowledge hub, social investors, university, policy advocates and social enterprises covering all areas of development work (from health to education, microcredit or women's empowerment). In recent years, its income generation programmes have given way to the creation of a series of social enterprises (such as Aarong, BRAC Chicken, BRAC fisheries or BRAC seeds). BRAC defines social enterprises as "self-sustaining cause-driven business entities that create social impact by offering solutions to social challenges and reinvesting their surplus to sustain and generate greater impact" (www.brac.net/enterprises). As part of this institutional development process, BRAC's branding has evolved to include the following phrase: "BRAC: a social enterprise" (as seen in communication materials across the city of Dhaka in 2018).

BRAC's rebranding provides an interesting illustration of how the concept of social enterprise is being strategically used in different settings in the global south. In practice, many social enterprises operating in developing countries take a holistic approach and function in a wide range of ways, with structures ranging from for profit to non-profit or hybrid organisations (Mair and Noboa, 2003). Writing from a European perspective, Pirni and Raffini warn that hybridisation (as mentioned in Chapter two) can endanger the rights of citizens, the universality of the welfare state and the quality of the services delivered if private actors and market dynamics take over (Pirni and Raffini, 2015). However, in developing countries facing severe economic and political constraints, the outlook might be different. Hybrid organisations can sometimes provide much-needed goods and services to people in desperate need of support in areas neglected by their governments or where the necessary means and resources to support vulnerable groups are lacking.

In the context of developing countries, many social entrepreneurs appear to be ultimately concerned with "crafting effective and sustainable solutions using whatever combination of institutional means is deemed effective" (Santos 2012:

145

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Nº registro	DIRECCIÓN DE VALIDACIÓN	Validez del documento
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345). Furthermore, social enterprises tend to work in areas of activity that are seen as a responsibility of the government but which are not adequately covered by the relevant authorities as a result of factors such as weak capacity, limited resources, corrupt practices and/or different levels of political will and engagement (Seelos et al., 2006).

Across developing countries, social enterprises aim to have positive impact on many different fields of development, ranging from environmental issues to education, health or women's economic empowerment (Seelos et al., 2006). The examples of inspiring experiences of social enterprises that have developed new products, services and approaches that are better suited to meet local needs and contribute to the different dimensions of sustainable development, have multiplied over the last decade in ways that "challenge the status quo and our conventional thinking about what is feasible" (Seelos and Mair, 2005: 243).

Furthermore, there is extensive evidence suggesting that social entrepreneurship is serving to find new solutions to long-standing social problems and to build new pathways for development in the countries of the global south. Already back in 1996, Seelos et al. analysed a selection of 75 social enterprises operating across the world and concluded that on the whole, these enterprises were having the strongest impact on the following Millenium Development Goals (MDGs): poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, achieving gender equality and creating a global partnership for development (1996: 250). The study noted that social entrepreneurs often impacted "more than one target or goal and sometimes a great many goals in their quest to fulfil a social mission" (Seelos et at, 2006: 252).

More recently, international institutions such as the World Bank have conducted studies focusing on social enterprises in developing countries (World Bank, 2017a; 2017b). These studies argue that social enterprises can contribute to sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by providing social services to the poorest segment of the population in a context where existing public and private services often do not reach the poor (World Bank, 2017: 4). As in the case of many other concepts and

146

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buzzwords that are indistinctly used by organisations as ideologically far apart as the World Bank and radical left-wing NGOs, social enterprises mean different things for different actors. It is also here that I think the rights-based approach can be of use, in order to distinguish between the delivery and market focus of organisations such as the World Bank and the underlying human rights discourses that guide the work of other organisations seeking transformative change. For change to be transformative, it must embrace the elements that compose a human rights-based approach as I discuss in the sections that follow.

Another aspect to consider is how the endorsement of the concept of social entrepreneurship by development actors has coincided with strong criticisms of aid efforts and with the growing recognition that the usual development strategies implemented across the developing world had failed to deliver. In this context, development practitioners and academics alike have acknowledged the fact that efforts in the field of international development had not solved problems such as poverty, hunger and access to basic services, and that social entrepreneurship could provide useful tools to address these issues and complement the work of governments in areas of public concern (Hummels, 2018; Dees, 2007). At the same time, they have increasingly recognised the need to strengthen their fundraising efforts to avoid dependence and gain legitimacy among the communities they worked in (Fowler, 2000).

Over the last two decades, the sustainability concerns of NGOs have also grown as funding devoted to development aid suffered substantial cuts across the world (Fowler, 2000). There are many examples of how in this context, NGOs and associations have incorporated commercial strategies in order to improve their sustainability prospects. In this new context, entrepreneurship emerged as a possible solution to the growing need to find new sources of funding through the generation of resources in a way that sometimes mirrored the commercial practices of traditional businesses. As a result of this process, many third sector organisations transformed their structures to become more business-oriented and adopted new strategies with the objective of becoming resilient (Zimmer et al., 2018).

147

As previous chapters of this thesis have discussed, many definitions of social entrepreneurship co-exist, and it is not within the scope of this chapter to delve further into the epistemological dimension of this discussion. In the framework of this chapter, I will follow the definition of social entrepreneurship presented by Seelos and Mair, who link social entrepreneurship to the notion of sustainable development as "a widely recognised and global goal that integrates social needs to which many institutions and businesses have committed themselves" (Seelos and Mair, 2005: 244).

In this opening section, I have briefly summarised the current state of play of debates on social entrepreneurship in the field of international development. Before presenting an analytical framework in the second part of this chapter, I will present three key concepts and debates that are central for my discussion, since they frame the context that social entrepreneurship is operating in across developing countries. I will begin by presenting social entrepreneurship within the framework of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs, which covers many of the thematic areas addressed by social enterprises before presenting the principles of a rights-based approach.

The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs: a new role for social entrepreneurship?

The concept of sustainable development was first defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (known as the Brundtland Commission), in its landmark report *Our Common Future*, which stated that "sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life" (UNGA, 1987: 37). An aspect highlighted by this definition is the fact that needs are socially and culturally determined. Furthermore, attaining sustainable development requires economic growth in places where it is absent while at the same time ensuring equitable opportunities for all, as

> sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the
> present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future.
> Far from requiring the cessation of economic growth, it recognises that
> the problems of poverty and underdevelopment cannot be solved unless

148

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we have a new era of growth in which developing countries play a large
role and reap large benefits (UNGA, 1987: 34).

Since 2015, the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its 17 Sustainable
Development Goals and 169 associated targets have framed many of the
discussions around international development issues globally (UN, 2017). These
targets touch upon many of the areas of work of social enterprises (including
areas such as poverty reduction, education, food security, health, gender equality
or climate change. It is in relation to these thematic areas that social enterprises
have been identified as critical agents for sustainable development and the
achievement of the SDGs (Rhadari, Sepasi and Moradi, 2016). The contribution
of social enterprises to development has been analysed in relation to various
dimensions of their potential social and environmental impact and by looking at
the following elements of the value chain: a) input stage; b) operations (*how* they
function); c) products and services (*what* they provide); d) re-distribution and/or
profit sharing; e) direct programmes and interventions (Holt and Littlewood,
2015 and 2018). These authors present an interesting conceptual framework that
seeks to better understand the contribution of social enterprises and how social
enterprises can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, given the ways in
which they create social value along their value chains (Holt and Littlewood,
2018: 6).

In a similar way, social enterprises contribute to the SDGs not just by working on
themes that are closely related to a particular right (whether the right to health
or the right to water, etc.) but also implicitly through their own pathways for
change (whether advocacy, local economic development, access to basic services,
arts for development, women's economic empowerment, etc.). Furthermore, as
Brine points out,

> the unsaid "social" of social enterprises may, in fact, be an *implicit
> knowledge of a desire to apply human rights*. The human rights
> thinking behind these social enterprises reflects an *attempt to resolve
> the ambiguity of the "social"* in social enterprise, an attempt to appeal
> to some agreed upon ethical framework by which to justify their actions
> (2010: 110; my italics).

149

This idea that the human rights dimension might be implicit in the work of some social enterprises and may translate into a particular way of operating suggests that one way of ending the ambiguity that exists in the sector might be to establish a clear framework to facilitate the practical application of a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship. This framework would allow us to analyse the features and business strategies of social enterprises in relation to a set of values that define what it is to really seek transformative change. In this section I have made the case for lending greater attention to the implicit links that exist between human rights and social entrepreneurship in the quest for sustainable development. I argue that by doing so, the pathways for the integration of a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship and the relevance of this approach in an international development context might become clearer.

The following section provides an overview of human rights and their relevance for this debate before going on to explain how the human rights and social entrepreneurship fields have developed in parallel over the years but how opportunities for greater interaction are beginning to emerge.

Human rights, development and social entrepreneurship

It has been noted that it is the failure of social and political institutions (such as markets, companies, charities and bureaucracies) that causes an insufficient and/or inadequate delivery of services required by different segments of the population (Mair, 2010). This has serious implications from a human rights perspective, since when basic needs are not covered, the rights of individuals are also affected. For Amartya Sen, these basic human needs are also basic human rights, since they are closely linked to the *instrumental freedoms* that enable development and a "life worth living" by nurturing individual capabilities (Sen, 1981; Nussbaum, 2013).

Human rights can be described as: a) universal legal guarantees protecting individuals and groups against actions and omissions that affect their freedom and human dignity; b) basic minimum standards based on human needs; c) universal and inalienable i.e. all people are born with the same human rights

150

everywhere, at all times, and they cannot be taken away or given up; d) indivisible and interdependent, i.e. all rights are equally necessary for human life and dignity (Kirkemann Boesen and Martin, 2007: 11). Thus, they are guaranteed, standardised, universal and indivisible.

Human rights are divided into civil and political (including the following: to choose government; to a fair trial; to own property; to work; to freedom of thought and religion; to leave and return to your country; to freedom of opinion and expression; to hold meetings; to join groups; to life; to be free from slavery) and social, economic and cultural rights (including the right to have enough food, clothing, medical care, welfare, education and housing; the right to enjoy one's culture). However, it is also important to note that it is also people's struggles that shape rights on the basis of how people understand their own entitlements (Nyamu-Musembi, 2002: 1). Furthermore, human rights are often present in how organisations think and the importance of existing connections between the government as responsibility bearer and the rights that people can claim is widely recognised (Brine, 2010: 4).

Key human rights principles include universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and interrelatedness; non-discrimination and equality; participation and inclusion; accountability and the rule of law (ESCR, 2015). Human rights are universal and inalienable: they are common to all human beings just by virtue of being human and cannot be given up or taken away by anyone. Human rights are also indivisible in the sense that they are all inherent to human beings and despite existing differences between human rights, they are all equal in status and cannot be ranked. They are also interdependent and interrelated since fulfilling a specific right might require the fulfilment of another right. Equality and non-discrimination are also key elements of a rights-based approach and any initiative must include safeguards to protect the rights of all the individuals involved. Ensuring adequate participation and inclusion of everyone involved is also key for guaranteeing that a rights-based approach is applied. Another key principle is empowerment, which allows individuals to gain a sense of entitlement that allows them to demand for their rights to be respected, protected and fulfilled by the relevant duty bearers (UNICEF/UNESCO, 2007).

While many of these concepts might seem abstract, together they make up a sophisticated language that can name and pin-down what social value creation for enterprises might actually mean.

Another relevant right for this discussion that is not always considered is the right to development. In 1986, the Declaration on the Right to Development defined this right as "an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realised" (UNGA, 1986: 1). Nonetheless, as Uvin notes, the right to development was adopted as a UN General Assembly resolution (without any binding force) as opposed to as a treaty (2007: 598).

Human rights and social entrepreneurship are two areas of work that have experienced significant development over recent years as "sub-disciplines of management and economics and of law and political science respectively" but it is interesting to note that "they have done so with virtually no interaction" (Asthana, 2011: 9905). Although international organisations have experience partnering with the private sector on poverty reduction strategies and have also extensively applied rights-based approaches to poverty reduction, the possibility of applying rights-based approaches to the private sector has not been fully explored (Gibb, Foster and Weston, 2008).

In international development, human rights and social entrepreneurship share different fields of activity and objectives. In the global south, participating in the economy is inextricably linked with respecting human rights and ensuring access to key goods and services. Some see the contribution of social enterprises to human rights as a moral imperative but beyond ethical discussions, it is important to acknowledge the fact that as private actors they are well-placed to make a difference and are concerned not only with "necessary outcomes for improving the lives of the people but also with better processes" (Asthana, 2011: 9905). Incorporating human rights ultimately serves the idea that society can be transformed, which is a belief shared by many social entrepreneurs in developing countries (Bornstein and Davis, 2010).

152

In the following section, I will introduce the context of the case study by outlining the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Bangladesh and the factors that have traditionally conditioned (and sometimes enabled) the emergence of social entrepreneurship initiatives across the country.

Social enterprises in Bangladesh

Although Bangladesh has made important progress in the fight against poverty, it still has one of the highest poverty rates in South-East Asia and ranked 136th in the Human Development Index in 2018 (UN, 2018). Furthermore, an important segment of the population still lacks access to many basic goods and services as a result of multiple market failures (Hackett, 2016). At present, many of the core social entrepreneurship objectives in Bangladesh are framed around poverty reduction and focus on vulnerable groups such as women, rural communities and the ultra-poor as main target populations (Oxfam, 2015: 29). Social entrepreneurship has been popular across the country, historically emerging through various programmes linked to NGOs and initiated by various development actors in the 70s and 80s (Oxfam, 2015). These projects gradually evolved and adopted several entrepreneurial modalities that included programme support enterprises and for-profit companies with a social mission (Rachid, 2007: 445). In the context of Bangladesh, it has been argued that the emergence of social enterprises was more the result of changing donor and NGO priorities rather than radical new forms of development, given the shift from donor to market-driven models witnessed over the last two decades (Huang, 2017). The concept of social entrepreneurship is also heavily influenced by microfinance, which also rests on the principle of including the poor in market processes in ways that are financially sustainable (Cho et al, 2019).

Four categories of social entrepreneurship activity can be outlined: a) a model similar to the previously mentioned BRAC brand of social enterprises covering different sectors and using profits to fund social programmes; b) a social business model closer to Grameen Bank that seeks the inclusion of poor consumers and promotes joint ventures; c) traditional commercial ventures that incorporate specific social or environmental aspects; d) local product trading ventures

153

(particularly handicraft and fair trade) and other income-generating social enterprises (Oxfam, 2015: 8-9). BNG's model appears to be a BRAC-inspired modality. As I will explain in part three, its work includes a series of commercial services that are charged (or free) depending on each family's economic situation. The income generated serves to fund social programmes that include a children's home, various medical facilities and a school.

The social enterprise ecosystem in Bangladesh is marked by several factors, including multiple market failures, complex informal markets, local power structures and unequal donor relations (Hackett, 2010: 211). The experience of BNG can be seen as a direct response to these issues, since the limited capacity and resources of the government for meeting social needs remains a major obstacle for development, coupled with government deficiencies that make social enterprises seem well placed to address issues of market failure (Hackett, 2010). As a result of these contextual factors, social enterprises work in a wide range of sectors, including food and agriculture, education, energy, microfinance, health care, housing, financial services, information and communications technology and water and sanitation (Cho et al, 2019: 193).

Finally, it is worth noting that Bangladesh is also one of the countries in the region where more progress has been made in terms of promoting and supporting social enterprises and creating an enabling ecosystem for their development, including supporting laws, programmes and the existence of incubators through different programmes (World Bank, 2017b: 59). Two bodies of legislation exist in the country: those affecting social enterprises that are being run as commercial businesses and those which -like BNG- fall under NGO laws as a result of their status as non-profit organisations (Oxfam, 2015). Nonetheless, no policies directly governing social enterprise activities exist in the country (British Council, 2016: 5).

This brief introduction to the Bangladeshi context will help to contextualise the case study I will discuss in the third part of this chapter. I will now dedicate the following section to introducing the rights-based approach through my own experiences before going on to summarise the evolution of this concept, its

154

definition and scope. I will then discuss some of its advantages and criticisms as raised in international development debates and end the section by proposing a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship that will provide the analytical framework for my case study.

Towards human rights-based social entrepreneurship?

The first thing to understand about a rights-based approach (RBA) is that it takes a progressive view of international development actions, understanding that no real transformative change is possible unless we move away from conservative ideas of development as charity or aid. In contrast with needs-based approaches, rights-based approaches frame issues such as poverty or hunger as infringements that require actions that go beyond the delivery of a bag of rice during a famine in the Sahel or the construction of a school in a remote area of Mali. By framing these issues in terms of human rights, individuals become rights-holders as opposed to passive recipients of aid. Speaking of rights and entitlements involves redefining inequality as social injustice. This change in approach alters power relations between the different actors involved, as duty-bearers become accountable for their actions to ensure that human rights can be realised, and rights-holders gain the space to make claims and demand that their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. Traditionally, when we think of duty-bearers we think of State actors who are primarily responsible for providing for their people and protecting their rights. But what about other actors such as social enterprises, who also work for the most vulnerable in the global south? Cannot we also argue that -if they truly pursue social goals- social enterprises should also frame their provision of goods and services as contributions to the realisation of human rights in the communities they work in?

I have had the opportunity to work with organisations that applied rights-based approaches to development in different parts of the world within the framework of initiatives that included culturally appropriate responses to HIV and AIDS in East Africa or local food security and resilience in the Sahel. Rights-based approaches have not only gained a lot of ground in the implementation of development projects, they have also been central to new ways of evaluating the impact of development activities. As external monitor and evaluator, I have also

155

had the opportunity to see how this approach was applied by a wide range of organisations in different parts of the world. For example, in Bangladesh, the rights-based approach was implicit in how BNG's education support was framed. Far from just focusing on the act of delivering schooling or on providing schoolbooks and stationery (which they also did), this line of work placed children's rights at the centre. This was done in several concrete ways that connected with key RBA principles (namely participation, non-discrimination and equality). It included actions such as the representation of minority groups in local development committees or promoting the engagement of marginalised groups in decision-making. Another aspect to highlight was the inclusion of all children in BNG's school and children's home, irrespective of ethnic background in a context marked by serious discrimination.

Before discussing this approach in more detail in relation to my case study, I will devote the following section to providing background on the RBA and summarising current debates on the advantages and challenges involved in its practical application.

RBA history in a nutshell

The human rights-based approach has been the result of the increasing recognition of the link between human rights and development, witnessed since the 1990s (Noh, 2016). The 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development already linked goals such as poverty eradication to rights-based frameworks (Nyamu-Musembi, 2002: 12). The decade that followed saw a dramatic redefinition of the concept of development as a multi-layered and complex process that could not be solely reduced to economic growth. In this context, the incorporation of human rights introduced a way of constructing a more holistic definition of the concept of development, including more social and cultural dimensions (Uvin, 2007).

In 2003, United Nations agencies agreed to endorse what is now known as a "Common understanding on human rights-based approaches to development cooperation and programming" (UN, 2003). This has involved applying key human rights principles in all stages of programme implementation. Since then,

156

UN agencies, international NGOs, bilateral agencies and development banks have been mainstreaming rights-based approaches into their work in the realm of international development and cooperation (Offenheiser and Holcombe, 2001; Magrath, 2014; European Commission, 2014; Olawoore, 2017). Several donors have also adopted a rights-based approach, including 6 EU Member States (i.e. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Spain and Sweden), which apply a comprehensive rights-based approach (European Commission, 2014: 13).

Many of the third sector organisations that have integrated the rights-based approach into their actions, previously based their activities on service delivery in existing welfare models in European countries (Offenheiser and Holcombe, 2001). In this context, the successful participation of social enterprises in service delivery and in the quest for creative solutions in developing countries highlighted the importance of maximising the potential of private sector actors and the resources they could contribute (Dees, 2007: 25).

It is commonly believed that development organisations are rights-based because of the sheer nature of their work. But the links that exist between the concept of development and the concept of rights are much more complex (Gibb, Foster and Weston, 2008). If we take the example of BNG and the type of services it provides for vulnerable populations in service areas such as health or education, this becomes apparent: the impact of service delivery on the wellbeing of the population and the advantages of providing those in need with basic resources are clear from a development perspective. But the question of how these actions contribute to the realisation of human rights is less clear. A fundamental difference exists between providing a service in a way that makes the customer or beneficiary a passive recipient and providing this same service in a way that turns the individual into a rights holder who is entitled to receive that service and who can exercise his/her right to claim it. So what makes an organisation rights-based? What actions are required? With what types of outcomes? It is these questions that the tentative analytical framework I propose in the next sections of this chapter tries to help answer.

What is a rights-based approach?

Until the emergence of the human rights-based approach, the human rights movement seemed disconnected when it came to addressing core development issues such as the fight against poverty or the quest for social justice (Offenheiser and Holcombe, 2001: 8). The emergence of the rights-based approach as an analytical framework allowed for the incorporation of practical tools that integrated international human rights norms, principles, standards and goals into development plans and processes (Kirkemann Boesen and Martin, 2007: 10). This approach combines the core notions of sustenance (economic and social rights) and freedom (civil and political rights) and recognises that they are both necessary for human rights to be realised (Nyamu-Musembi, 2002: 14). It also recognises human rights while contemplating other rights (such as intellectual property rights or sexual and reproductive rights), and hence covers a broader category of rights (European Commission, 2014: 7).

For some critical voices, this type of approach is little more than rights-based jargon that has been adopted by political organisations to give the impression that their programmes are being conducted in a manner that is conducive to transformative change rather than charity or delivery-based. Indeed, the practical implementation of the rights-based approach faces many complex challenges. In many countries, the integration of these dimensions has not been easy, since traditionally, most countries have been more open to the notions of political and civil rights whilst economic, social and cultural rights have been more problematic (Offenheiser and Holcombe, 2001). Following authors such as Nyamu-Musembi and Kabeer, the purpose of any rights-based framework is ultimately to ensure that individuals have agency and freedom of action. It builds on the notion that economic growth and wealth are not enough to guarantee social development and reduce poverty. It seeks to help understand the more complex causes of poverty such as the powerlessness or discrimination of the most disadvantaged groups and other contextual underlying factors (Gibb, Foster and Weston, 2008). Bearing this in mind, "both freedom from coercion (civil and political rights) and the freedom to access material resources serve the complementary purposes of protection and promotion of the ability to act. None is adequate without the other" (Nyamu-Musembi, 2002: 12).

Gready (2008) argues that the value of rights-based approaches is that they bring together both economic and social rights on the one hand and the Right to Development on the other in a practical manner. By translating laws into operational steps and principles, they allow for integrating human rights and development in a mutually transforming manner (Gready, 2008: 736, quoted in Brine, 2010). It is impossible to speak of a single rights-based approach, since there are multiple frameworks that consider different starting points in each context and ultimately imply different things for development practices (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004: 1415). I argue that in the same way that it can be applied to different contexts, it can also be adapted and applied to different types of social enterprises driven by a desire to bring about transformative change.

However, beyond the positive arguments, applying this type of approach is complex. It raises several concerns that affect the practical implementation when it comes to social enterprises. Firstly, if social enterprises are independent non-state actors, how can we make them accountable if they have not been democratically elected? And why should we? The rights-based approach has also been criticised for endangering the perceived independence of non-state actors, but this criticism raises the following question: how independent can social enterprises be if they truly seek transformative social change? Authors such as Nyamu-Musembi argue for the extension of rights obligations to non-state actors (2002). Nonetheless, there are also certain limits to the role that social enterprises can play in the human rights sphere as private actors, since they are not the key duty-bearers.

Secondly, the universalist versus relativist debate has also been present in discussions about the relevance of the rights-based approach. Cultural relativists claim that human rights instruments and related principles are western-centric. Only local cultures can establish rights and rules according to values relative to these cultures. Meanwhile universalistic authors defend the view that human rights are common to all by virtue of being human (Nyamu-Musembi, 2002). Human rights have been criticised for being eurocentric, even if there is widespread agreement that basic values are shared across cultures, even if they

159

are "prioritised differently and the difference often leads to clashes" (Noh, 2016: 458).

Thirdly, the rights-based approach has also been criticised for being idealistic (Robinson, 2005). However, the innovative character of entrepreneurs, coupled with their tendency to engage in advocacy-related activities is likely to facilitate the operationalisation of the principles of this approach. Social enterprises should be willing to engage on rights issues because of their social goals, the nature of their work and the types of long-lasting social changes that many of them ultimately seek to achieve through their actions. However, evidence suggests that practical difficulties in implementing this approach do exist, particularly given the resistance to change common to many organisations, even in situations where the change is widely considered desirable and necessary (Magrath, 2014).

In this section, I have explored the existing linkages between human rights and social entrepreneurship by presenting some of the key arguments that support the relevance of the rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship. I have also shared some of the criticisms that have been raised by those who claim that the practical application of this approach is marred with difficulties. While recognising the complexities of applying this approach, in the next section, I contribute to this debate by proposing a four-step approach that can serve to analyse the contribution of social enterprises to human rights.

Developing a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship

Building on the previous parts of this chapter, this section will propose concrete steps that could be taken to ensure the application of this approach to social enterprises in developing country contexts. The proposed framework draws from some of the most commonly used frameworks in development practice, adapting them to the social entrepreneurship realm. The key components of the approach can be summarised as "inclusion and non-discrimination, national and local ownership, accountability and transparency, and participation and empowerment" (Robinson, 2005: 37, quoted in Brine, 2010: 60).

160

Applying this type of analysis to a social enterprise necessarily affects every single step in the process of setting up the enterprise and making it function. Once the enterprise is functioning, the ways of managing the social enterprise must be guided by the respect for human rights and its overall results must be monitored and evaluated in terms of their contribution to social change. In order to operationalise a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship, I have drawn from the concrete practical principles and stages that the EU compiled for its international development work in the global south (adapted from European Commission, 2014) and from the UN's HRBA portal. I have chosen to adapt a combination of existing operational principles because they provide a comprehensive summary of steps and stages that cover the entire process from design to measuring outcomes achieved by social enterprises and including management aspects that are central to the work of organisations. I suggest applying four consecutive steps as follows:

During the planning and inception phase, prospective social entrepreneurs should conduct a contextual analysis that goes beyond the business idea or market failure to be corrected to also identify any rights issues to be addressed, their root causes, as well as the different needs of relevant stakeholders. They should also familiarize themselves with the local human rights rules and regulations in place in relation to the goods and/or services that their social enterprise will provide for the local community.

Secondly, the social enterprise development phase should include the active participation of stakeholders in order to ensure that any issues that may affect their rights (including discrimination, inequality, poverty, access to services, participation, etc.) are considered during the design of the social enterprise. This process should ensure that their voices are heard, and that their needs and preferences are taken into consideration. Furthermore, the social enterprise under development should ultimately seek to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders involved so that they are better placed to claim their rights in relation to the goods and/or services delivered and to make the relevant authorities accountable for any existing gaps. This advocacy component or political dimension constitutes a core aspect of the rights-based approach.

161

Thirdly, once the enterprise is functioning, the ways of managing the social enterprise must be guided by the respect for human rights both within the staff and also towards all stakeholders, with particular attention to vulnerable groups in the community. As has already been mentioned earlier in this chapter, issues of legality, participation, rule of law, non-discrimination, equality, accountability and transparency should be considered, and non-discriminatory practices and safeguards should be applied.

Fourthly, the social enterprise should incorporate effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that all these aspects are duly considered. These practices must serve to promote learning within the organisation, improve practices and also ensure transparency and accountability within the organisation.

In this section, I have tried to briefly describe the four steps that a social enterprise might follow to ensure that a rights-based approach is pursued at each stage of the development process. This adapted approach is particularly appropriate for analysing social enterprises because it allows studying processes affecting organisations that are not as self-contained as those of more traditional organisations (Santos, 2012: 346). Furthermore, the value-creation dimension of social enterprises discussed earlier in this chapter means that social enterprises do not need to use a "logic of control" to ensure value capture but they use a "logic of empowerment" instead (Santos, 2012: 346). I believe that the RBA is particularly useful for exploring this dimension in relation to the realisation of human rights. The next sections will present and discuss empirical data from BNG to further illustrate the advantages and limitations of this approach.

Methodology: consulting as a form of engagement

As I have previously mentioned, I have worked in international development for nearly two decades as a practitioner in different capacities, with international organisations and NGOs. These years have given me the opportunity to live and work in the global south and to travel extensively on consultancy assignments to conduct independent monitoring and evaluation missions for projects funded by

162

international donors. In the last five years, my work has included several missions to the Asia-Pacific region (India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia) and this particular research was conducted within the framework of a consultancy assignment that involved monitoring the work of this social enterprise in Bangladesh.

As I discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, I have experienced a mixture of feelings during the process of drafting this thesis and conducting fieldwork both in Andalusia and in Bangladesh. These feelings were closely linked to the multiple identities that emerged at different moments in time throughout the process as I simultaneously combined the roles of researcher, consultant and cooperative member. A kind of impostor syndrome was always present -albeit to different levels- as I found myself resorting to one identity or even openly confronting my own identities with my informants at different moments in time. Furthermore, when visiting Bangladesh, it was not easy to keep a healthy distance for the sake of objectivity while being so deeply touched by the reality I was witnessing.

Most of the data analysed in the case study presented in this chapter was collected during a 10-day mission to Bangladesh. Between 2016 and 2019 I conducted several monitoring missions to South-East Asia. During these assignments, I came into contact with a wide range of experiences of social entrepreneurship that ranged from self-help groups to a figure known as village entrepreneur operating in different parts of India. These initiatives were always grounded in the work of NGOs but had gradually turned into more independent structures as they gained sustainability. Prior to the visit, I carried out a desk review that involved analysing several documents, including policies and government programmes, progress reports and website materials describing the different sectors of activity covered by BNG, as well as its history and development since its creation.

During the course of my visit to Bangladesh, I had the opportunity to spend an average of 6-8 hours a day with stakeholders. I was travelling and liaising with them, participating in activities (school events, team meetings, etc) and

163

conducting participatory observation. I visited some of the organisation's key sites, namely a school, a training centre, a children's home, a hospital and the main offices. In addition, I visited local institutions (police forces, social services) and one of the largest brothels in the country. I met with members of volunteer groups working with BNG staff. These volunteers were operating in the community from their respective positions as policemen, doctors, activists, politicians and private sector actors; and their partnership with BNG involved supporting social cohesion and the integration of vulnerable children. The monitoring committee included a wide range of duty bearers (politicians, journalists, activists, doctors, police, etc) and identified issues of concern linked to children's rights, collaborating with BNG to address them. Various community groups offered food, medicines or clothes for free or at lower prices, and also played a key role identifying and referring children to existing services.

I conducted a total of 36 interviews with a wide range of actors including the following: 15 representatives of organisations partnering with BNG; 12 members of BNG staff (including senior management); 4 representatives of government bodies, 4 representatives of international donors supporting BNG. Apart from these 36 semi-structured interviews, ten focus group discussions were organised with the following participants: a) 21 sex workers and mothers of children supported by BNG; b) 6 groups of children aged 10-18 (49 in total); c) 23 teachers working for BNG; d) 6 students; e) 8 members of a community support group. These interviews, together with the follow up conversations with the participants, provided a basis for understanding how this organisation works.

During my time in Bangladesh, I discussed my on-going research with some of the staff. I mentioned the relevance of the work of social enterprises for the university work I was doing, but I did not consider the possibility of dedicating a chapter of my thesis to BNG until several months later. The idea of writing about this experience gained strength in hindsight, as I became increasingly convinced of BNG's demonstrative value for illustrating many of the questions linked to human rights and sustainable development that I wished to explore in the final chapter of my thesis. I approached my employer to inquire about consent issues and was informed that even if obtaining formal permission would be difficult, if

164

no concrete elements of my reports were reproduced, writing an anonymised case study would not be problematic. I also took maximum care to ensure that the organisation would not be easily identifiable and reviewing every word to avoid any possible discomfort.

In deciding to select a single case study (following Yin, 1994), I realised the limits of the claims I would make throughout this chapter and the criticisms that might ensue. However, I still believe that even if the experience I share cannot be considered representative, it holds considerable demonstrative value that can serve to inspire possibilities for other organisations and individuals. Furthermore, a human rights-based approach is not a single formula that can be easily applied but a set of principles that can guide an organisation's work when its ultimate objective is to contribute to social change.

BNG was the only organisation out of the three I had the opportunity to visit that functioned as a social enterprise and I selected this case study for two main reasons: firstly, because this organisation contributes to the realisation of human rights in several ways that illustrate how a rights-based approach can serve to strengthen the impact of social enterprises in developing contexts; and secondly, because its specific features serve to illustrate the fine dividing lines that exist between different types of social organisations (whether they label themselves as social enterprises or non-government organisations, for-profit or non-profit, public or private). In addition, I thought that including an experience from the global south could add a comparative angle to my more long-term research in Andalusia. Finally, my supervisor also encouraged me to include experiences from my two professional lives into my research: one as a member of a cooperative in Sevilla, and another as international development consultant in South-East Asia. I hoped this could contribute to the overall credibility of my writing, because I was speaking of issues largely related to my own lived experiences.

The following sections of this chapter will introduce the case study and discuss the BNG experience from a rights-based perspective. First, I will tell a short ethnographic story of my arrival and the people I met during my stay in

165

Bangladesh. Secondly, I will give a more technical outline of the BNG as a social enterprise, its aims and scope. In the third part, I will analyse those two different sets of data from a rights-based perspective. I will pick up the 4-stages model I have developed earlier in order to verify the extent to which BNG -and in extension social enterprises- may contribute to the realisation of human rights.

From Andalusia to Bangladesh: discovering and reflecting on BNG's experience

I arrive in Bangladesh in early 2018 to visit the country for the first time in my life after several years of regular visits to the region. I am excited about coming to a country I have always wanted to visit but also concerned about the work I am going to conduct, already anticipating the sadness and helplessness that comes with witnessing situations of unbearable injustice. This time, the assignment focuses on the work of three organisations (including a social enterprise) working on a range of development issues (health, education and microcredit) but with a current focus on preventing the commercial sexual exploitation of vulnerable children. I know from prior experiences that coming into contact with harsh realities invariably requires a type of strength and emotional control that I do not always have, and this is always cause for concern. I sometimes find it difficult to hold back the tears and face insomnia when I travel on these assignments. On the morning of my arrival, far from feeling "in the powerful seat" of the consultant or researcher, I feel worried as I jump in a taxi at the airport. I know that taking at least a little distance from the realities I witness is necessary for my work, since I can only share good advice if I remain as pragmatic and focused as possible. At the same time, I also know that I cannot stay emotionally detached. I always tell myself that if there comes a day when I feel distanced in any way, I will abandon my work in international development altogether. Empathy is a central element of my work, coupled with a desire to change the world and make a difference. This may sound both naïve and pretentious, but it still holds true for me. As I make my way to the guest house in Dhaka, I try to focus my thoughts on how to be as useful as possible for the organisations I am going to visit and for the people they serve.

At the logistical level, things have been meticulously organised by diligent staff from the organisations I will visit. The areas of the country I will travel to have already been decided sometime in advance, following a month of e-mail discussions. As a result, my assignment is to focus on two specific areas of the country. Over the course of the following 10 days, I share invaluable time with inspiring people who are devoting their lives to helping others: from young teachers working in day centres for street children to policewomen working with girls who have been sexually exploited.

Dhaka is a chaotic city with constant traffic jams, and leaving the city feels like a never-ending adventure. It takes us several hours to reach our destination in the area of the country where BNG was born in the 1990s. BNG started as a local initiative led by a small group of community members and the core team of the organisation is still based there, working from an impressive office building that could have been the headquarters of any international organisation.

I meet the founder of BNG as soon as we arrive at the guest house ran by BNG, which is part of a new line of commercial work that serves to generate income and provides a venue for hosting and organising events. It is simple, comfortable and smells of vegetarian curry and rice. Several people meet us at the entrance as we sit in the main dining hall to introduce ourselves and start the discussion. The founder of the organisation is part of the group and I am immediately drawn to speaking to him. Anwar is one of those people who has the special aura and charisma of a leader. He does not speak very much and appears to be constantly reflecting, pausing before speaking, sometimes almost quite dramatically as he smokes one cigarette after another. His presence fills the enormous room we are in. He is hospitable and open to discuss the questions I raise, sharing the story of BNG's creation and its development. I hear the story of how a bilateral development programme provided a small grant as seed money for his work and how by promoting microcredit, fundraising and re-investing income, his dream project gradually transformed into the current organisation. Today, it serves millions of people across Bangladesh. BNG supports all social groups, with a strong focus on the most vulnerable and those at risk of exclusion and discrimination. Our conversation quickly turns to their work supporting sex

167

workers and their children, a group that I am told has traditionally been neglected by programmes and policies in the region. This neglect is common to programmes implemented by government bodies and by non-profit organisations operating in the area.

Hearing my inevitable praise of BNG's remarkable story, Anwar is humble and unassuming. I cannot even sense a trace of pride in his organisation's outstanding achievements. His words clearly show a profound commitment to his community and to serving others. He does not seem to give himself any importance at all. In our conversation (the first of several we will have over the next few days), there is no mention of human rights but a constant reference to how every single person in the community deserves to live with dignity. Anwar also expresses concern about the high levels of discrimination affecting ethnic minority groups and sex workers as a particularly vulnerable and excluded group: "the excluded of the excluded" before stressing that "no one is more stigmatised in the community than those women's children".

Over the next three days, I meet several individuals from relevant local institutions as well as independent professionals collaborating with BNG from different walks of life (from an outspoken journalist to a local paediatrician). These encounters are very telling, since they provide insights into a dimension of the work of social enterprises that is often invisible when we limit our idea of this type of organisation to the provision of a good or service with a social mission. To me, it is this type of political engagement and advocacy that makes a social enterprise move beyond needs to become rights-based, as I will discuss in more detail below. One of these encounters takes place in a local police station, where I meet two policewomen who have received special training in order to ensure child-friendly interventions. They raise recent cases of children who were bought to the police station following minor incidents of petty theft or fights in the street and explain how after the training, their team is much more sensitive to the needs of children and efforts are made to protect their rights. The policewomen are very active in the community and share stories of BNG's work and how the school and the children's home have helped vulnerable children escape high-risk contexts such as the brothel they lived in with their mothers.

168

On my last day I join a large group meeting composed of the members of the community lending technical and advocacy support to BNG on key thematic issues. This group includes journalists, doctors, policewomen and people who have special weight and status in the community. Many concerns are raised at the meeting as they share various cases of discrimination and exclusion affecting children. They are also keen to highlight the types of improvements in the well-being of BNG's clients and beneficiaries they are witnessing. Later that evening, I speak to a group of youth who have graduated from the school and have lived in the children's home. It is particularly moving to note the extent to which these youth are committed to helping their mothers (most of whom are still working in brothels).

Asmaa is one of the young women I speak to that evening and her case provides an excellent illustration of how BNG's support can touch a child's life and, in this case, also have a profound impact on her mother. Asmaa is a 24-year old woman from one of the minority groups in the area who is the daughter of a sex worker and left the brothel she lived in with her mother to live in the children's home. Throughout her childhood, BNG has provided health services and full education until she completed secondary school. She has also received financial support to pursue her studies further until she became a nurse. This work has allowed her to make a living and rent a shared flat with other young nurses. Another young girl -let us call her Anupoma- expresses how BNG's support has strengthened her self-esteem and has effectively protected her from a high-risk context (living in the brothel with her mother). She has received full care and protection in the children's home, providing an environment that was conducive to personal growth and development. As one of the managers noted,

> in BNG's context of operation it seems morally wrong to exclude the
> most vulnerable segment of the population. In order to overcome this
> situation, we have established different fees for each family according to
> their situation. This approach has allowed us to ensure access for all
> while avoiding discrimination and encouraging equality. As a result,
> everyone shares the facilities, services and resources available (whether

169

at the hospital or the school or through the microcredit support programme).

The following day, I am faced with one the most difficult experiences of my life when I visit a local brothel to speak to sex workers about the different types of support their children are receiving from BNG. The alleyways are narrow and there are old wooden doors on both sides as we go deeper into the compound. There are many women of different ages and they smile at me with curiosity. A couple of small children are running around. I am walking with Rosa, one of BNG's social workers who visits the brothel three times a week, and some of the women are keen to ask questions about me. We stop several times as Rosa responds to their questions. By the time we reach the small opening where around twenty women have gathered to speak to us, I have a really empty feeling in the pit of my stomach. My own feelings contrast quite sharply with the stories I hear from them that morning, the pride in their voices and their expression of satisfaction and gratitude as they detail their children's school achievements, their artistic work and their music and dancing shows. They tell me how they regularly attend these school events and participate in the activities promoted by BNG.

I meet some of these women again on my last evening at a talent show prepared in BNG's children's home and see tears of pride and happiness in their eyes as they watch their children's incredible performances. Seeing these stigmatised women who are totally excluded from society play a central role in a public event, beautifully dressed for the occasion, chatting to other spectators and receiving praise for their children's achievements remains one of the most moving experiences of my life.

In this field account, I have tried to summarise some of the impressions and perceptions that seem relevant to the discussion on human rights presented in this chapter. One of the most interesting aspects of this experience is the subtle ways in which rights issues are implicit in many of the actions I describe and the situations I witnessed. Despite not being openly discussed by my informants as such, various words and references were made at different points during my visit

170

to refer to rights issues without using any of the buzzwords. The most telling illustration was the conversation with the founder I previously shared, in which he referred to rights issues without using this type of language. I also witnessed the absence of human rights language in other conversations. This consideration serves to strengthen the point I made in the theory section of this chapter, when I discussed the surprising absence of rights language in social entrepreneurship literature. The rights jargon prevalent in development discourses was clearly missing but the families spoke in terms of "opportunities for change" or "necessary support". The notions of participation and inclusion were also present, since as one of the mothers noted, "coming to these events is very important for us because we feel part of the community and we are proud of our children who are doing so well at school". Overall, there were no buzzwords in these conversations, but constant references to improved wellbeing and living conditions that resonated with elements of the rights-based approach, as I illustrate later in this chapter.

In the following section, I will provide an overview of BNG's work and its main areas of work and scope before analysing and discussing the findings in relation to the practical application of the rights-based approach.

Introducing BNG's work and mission

BNG is a large organisation that describes itself as non-governmental and non-profit. Its main goal is to help vulnerable people overcome their lack of skills and resources through inclusive financial services for thousands of families, across over thirty districts and with hundreds of branch offices across Bangladesh. In its quest for inclusive sustainable development, BNG offers a wide range of services that cover several sectors, including healthcare, nutrition, education and child development, technical and vocational education, agro-fishery and livestock development, support to elderly people, poverty eradication and disaster preparedness. BNG has extensive experience working on the provision of health and education services to children at risk of exclusion.

BNG can be considered a hybrid social enterprise for several reasons. Firstly, because it has developed various commercial lines of work (namely in the areas

171

of education, health and finance) that are open to all social sectors but have a strong social mission. These services serve to fund its social and philanthropic activities with a clear rights-based approach, since they seek "to establish the rights of underprivileged people" through their holistic approach. Secondly, BNG can also be considered a social enterprise because it is funded according to a mixed model of private funding (foundations and commercial banks of Bangladesh) as well as public national and international donors. Thirdly, its financial services (funded by commercial banks) are not limited to the poor: lower and middle classes can also gain access to credit through different schemes and under different conditions. These services seek to eradicate poverty by increasing the income and assets of the poorest and providing credit through a group-based approach. Specific agricultural credits are also available for different socio-economic segments of the population, depending on their needs and status.

The resources generated serve to fund a comprehensive support programme for the poorest segments of the population, covering several fields. For example, the organisation supports children who are malnourished through its nutrition programme. It has also trained the local community in disaster preparedness and rehabilitation. Another aspect that connects BNG's actions to rights issues is its systematic referral to social programmes implemented by government bodies, which serves to inform the population of the availability of these services and their entitlement. BNG specifically dedicates part of the resources it generates through its inclusive banking programme to the provision of holistic services to children in need with a focus on education. The fact that the school is now recognised as a high-quality centre means that there is demand from the community to pay fees in order to take their children there. Hence, children from families who are better-off and can afford to cover their children's schooling pay fees and these resources support the schooling costs of vulnerable children. The same payment system is implemented in the hospital run by BNG, where healthcare is free for those who cannot afford it but entails a cost for families with resources. To complement these basic services and strengthen their skills and employment prospects, BNG is also providing different technical and vocational education courses for children and youth. Offering this type of education is challenging in many ways. As one of the tutors noted,

172

> it is difficult for us to provide the necessary support to all our students and ensure that as many young people as possible attend our courses. One of the major challenges is including girls in our courses. This is difficult for two reasons: first, because families are reluctant to allow girls to travel on their own and we have no allocation for transport. In any case, the communities are spread out around our college, which means that the distances are long. We are building a hostel, but we are not sure girls will be allowed by their families to stay. Secondly, there is the issue of the nature of our courses: plumbing and electrical engineering may not be very appealing for girls.

In this section, I have outlined some of the key areas of work covered by BNG in order to introduce the organisation and contextualise the fieldwork accounts shared throughout the chapter. I will now turn to analysing the organisation from a rights-based perspective to test various aspects of this approach.

Understanding BNG from a rights-based perspective

In the previous section I have described elements of my fieldwork, discussions and impressions that provide insights into BNG's work. If we think back to the main stages of the HRBA and its five core principles (participation; accountability and transparency; non-discrimination and equality; empowerment of rights holders; legality) it can be argued that a rights-based approach is present in BNG at several levels, implicitly and explicitly, even if the data I was able to gather cannot be considered to be conclusive. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I was only able to gather limited information on areas of relevance to stages 3 and 4 of RBA application. Nonetheless, I think the analysis -and its limitations- shed light on the added value of this approach, as well as on the practical challenges in relation to BNG's experience.

Stage 1: designing a social enterprise from a rights-based perspective

Engaging a wide range of actors from the initial stages constitutes a key element of an RBA that also helps to ensure community ownership through responses that are better tailored to local needs. The first stage in the practical application of an

173

RBA requires conducting a contextual analysis that beyond focusing on the delivery of a particular service (such as for example education, microfinance or health in the case of BNG) also considers issues related to the rights situation in the social enterprise's area of operation. As I have shared in the previous section, my conversations with the founder of the social enterprise and members of his staff revealed that the work of the organisation was grounded in a thorough understanding of the local context after several decades of local engagement with the community. As one of the managers described:

> We have always been here. We are part of this community and we know what concerns everyone here and what can make their lives a little better. We all have friends and relatives who provide information about what is happening and where. This is why we are succeeding in providing things that are good for people. Having the support of the authorities and a good understanding of the political scene is almost just as important. It allows us to do more.

Key issues of concern from a rights-based perspective that had been mapped by the organisation included the discrimination of the children of sex workers and of various ethnic minority groups. BNG staff described how their discrimination resulted in a situation marked by poverty, difficulties accessing health and education services and limited political participation in local development processes. All these elements had been considered from the initial stages of BNG's work, since the organisation was born with a clear social mandate to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable in the founder's hometown. When I met BNG's founder, I realised that any question on BNG's work rapidly turned into a discussion on the rights of the most vulnerable groups of the community: their right to education, health services and all the other things that -to quote Nussbaum once again- guarantee human dignity and a life worth living (2013). It seems impossible to understand BNG's work without this commitment to improving the lives of others in ways that clearly resonate with core human rights issues.

From a more formal legal perspective, it was difficult during my visit to understand the extent to which human rights norms, laws and policies enacted

174

by the government had been considered in how BNG's actions were framed during the organisation's inception phase. BNG has contributed to changes affecting the formal policies and regulations prevalent in Bangladesh. At the national level, existing laws and policies on child protection have major implementation gaps. The contribution of BNG at this level has been positive thanks to its capacity to effectively partner with key human rights actors and relevant government bodies. Several concrete achievements in the realm of rules and policies were identified in connection with the advocacy actions implemented by the children (including access to green areas, prevention of child marriages or reducing the cost of birth certificates).

As I have previously noted, the limited explicit references to human rights in my conversations with BNG staff can also be due to BNG's history, since the organisation was initially a small project that grew over three decades and when the founder shared the story of the birth of the organisation, these formal aspects were not part of the narrative. Nonetheless, what I did witness was how BNG had adopted cross referral practices and was coordinating its activities with government bodies working on human rights issues, which might be seen as BNG's way of implicitly recognising government's role as duty bearer that is ultimately responsible for providing for its population.

Stage 2: ensuring participation and engagement for effectiveness (and success)

Participation plays a central role in the second step or stage of the application of an RBA. In relation to this second aspect, I can say that my conversations with both project staff and BNG beneficiaries showed that the organisation responded to the real needs as identified by the local population that it was trying to serve and there were constant exchanges on what was needed and how to address emerging concerns. One of the managers described the participation of community members in various meetings that served as a channel for communicating these concerns and identifying needs. My interviews with institutional actors also showed strong collaboration with the local administration that were also geared towards ensuring the complementarity of

175

BNG's actions and avoiding any overlaps in the services offered. As one of the district officers noted

> we do our best to coordinate on issues of common concern to try to come up with solutions and flag problems as soon as they happen. Resources are extremely limited so it's always good to talk before taking action. We don't always manage, but we try.

Another key aspect of the second stage of RBA is to build the capacity of customers and beneficiaries to ensure that they can better claim their rights and they are better equipped to demand relevant authorities to act. As I argue throughout this chapter, transformative change requires going beyond service provision to touch upon existing structures. It requires providing better access to information, enhancing local capacities and promoting advocacy so that claims can be made, and rights can be regained and exercised. This is why BNG's collaborations with local institutions and professionals are so important: they can be considered a reflection of the ways in which BNG's work is permeating existing structures and contributing to changes that can impact the human rights situation of stakeholders.

BNG has embraced several advocacy activities, which focus on awareness raising and empowerment, including the creation of children's associations that provide a channel through which children's voices can be heard. These organisations are self-governed by the children and have been created to promote inclusion and participation through structures that go from the local to the national, building on existing advocacy networks working on child rights. When I spoke to a group of children participating in one of these organisations, I was particularly impressed by one of the girls leading the group. Ayla was articulate and self-confident despite belonging to one of the excluded minorities. Clearly her engagement in issues of concern for her community through the group had helped her raise her voice and this was allowing the group to raise her community's visibility and improve their participation in structures such as the school council.

Another key element of BNG's rights-based strategy is its focus on capacity building and the provision of financial services, since they help to empower populations and support the realisation of human rights. If we go back to Asmaa's case, it would seem that beyond her wellbeing, living conditions and self-esteem, BNG's support has also had a direct impact on her rights by allowing her to not only receive a certain type of support at a given moment in time but to totally transform her life and exercise her rights as an adult. Her ongoing collaboration with the BNG Hospital and her support to her mother (common to other BNG-supported adults) also point to the ways in which this social enterprise's values permeate and impact the children as they grow up.

The inclusion of an advocacy component to promote child protection issues at the national level has helped to bridge the gap between service delivery and policy problems by showcasing how vulnerable children can be supported. According to one of the government stakeholders, the fact that BNG actions identify children who require support is very useful, since it will allow duty bearers to better address the issue in the future, particularly in the absence of consistent national efforts in this regard and limited national capacity. These forms of advocacy and collaboration are helping them influence policy by placing children's rights on the country's development agenda. Advocacy and awareness-raising elements are also incorporated into income generation activities (fishery, livestock, agriculture), health services (delivered through a series of medical camps and also at the BNG hospital established in 2000). Advocacy activities address issues that affect human rights such as early marriage prevention or family planning. Referral to services provided by government bodies as required ensures that the role of duty bearer remains clear, since it is ultimately the responsibility of the government to provide the services required.

The education services provided by BNG also seek to establish child-rights through increased awareness and efforts to promote equality and inclusion. Over one third of the students attending BNG School, belong to ethnic minority groups. BNG Children's Home provides services for the children of sex workers and other children at risk of exclusion, such as child servants deprived of access to education. BNG's Technical Institute provides training in mechanics, plumbing

and construction as part of the organisation's efforts to cater to the different needs of children and adolescents.

Stage 3: change starts from within: ensuring that management practices respect human rights

Under the third stage of the proposed RBA, many positive elements were witnessed that follow this approach to different degrees. This idea of "starting the change from within" concerns respecting human rights both among staff and towards other stakeholders. It also implies a focus on the five core principles of the HRBA (namely inclusion and non-discrimination, national and local ownership, accountability and transparency, and participation and empowerment). For example, when I visited BNG's school, I had the opportunity to discuss the organisation's work with a group of teachers and students. One of the most interesting aspects that made the school unique was how it was becoming a vehicle for social integration. The school was open to all children but only free for those who could not afford to pay its fees as part of its focus on ensuring access to all as opposed to just delivering services. The teachers were proud of how the high-quality level reached by the school had led to its formal recognition by the Ministry. This meant that a school that had been set up for children from vulnerable groups had become a highly valued school attended by children from all social status, including well-off families.

BNG has succeeded in ensuring that children who were stigmatised within their community and neglected by the local government authorities attend school. Beyond improving their access to education, BNG has taken special care to ensure that the composition of the different school councils and structures reflect the diversity of the community. Including children and parents from the different minority groups has served to install a feeling of inclusion and belonging, as well as allowing representatives to participate in various decision-making processes governing the school.

Beyond the provision of concrete services, BNG's strategies have allowed the organisation to protect and strengthen children's rights by placing children at the centre of their actions as opposed to treating them as passive recipients of

178

different services. This has been done in several ways. Firstly, through active participation in specific spaces where children could openly voice their concerns about the services they are receiving and express their needs. Secondly, BNG had provided tools and resources that had helped to build children's knowledge and capacities and had facilitated interactions between the children and human rights actors I met during my visit.

In terms of the management practices of the organisation, during my visit I was unable to gather conclusive data on the internal management dynamics of the organisation. As Uvin argues, "organisations seeking to promote human rights outcomes have a very easy place from which to start: themselves. Ensuring that their internal personnel management and decision-making procedures are non-discriminatory, non-exclusionary, transparent, and accountable may well be a minor revolution" (Uvin, 2007: 604). This is a key dimension of RBA that is not always considered. It is important for organisations to also be coherent with these principles internally, in relation to how employees are selected, the management practices that ensure respect for issues such as maternity/paternity rights and non-discriminatory practices. What I did witness and discuss with BNG staff was how promoting the active participation of women inside the organisation remained a challenge. Despite the changes that BNG is promoting in terms of encouraging women to participate at all levels, many contextual and cultural difficulties persist. For example, young women were encouraged to take part in the technical training courses offered by the BNG institute but only males attended because families were reluctant to let their girls travel there due to security concerns.

This type of situation provides a good illustration of the contextual challenges than applying an RBA entails: a social enterprise may try to ensure greater inclusion as part of its approach, but socio-cultural factors might hinder overall success. In Bangladesh, women are regularly discriminated against and I witnessed first-hand how a male member of staff made his discomfort clear when I asked him to provide information. His colleagues explained that he did not want to have contact with women.

179

Despite these challenges, BNG's history reflects an organisation's passage from focusing on addressing urgent needs in its initial stages to adopting a long-term approach. This long-term vision was more concerned with building the capacities of vulnerable children and youth in a sustainable manner in order to improve their opportunities in life and help them overcome stigma and discrimination in their communities.

Stage 4: monitoring, evaluating and learning from experiences

BNG described various accountability and transparency mechanisms in place. I was told that it regularly audits and publishes information about its work and finance, but I could not delve into the details of these arrangements. Nevertheless, I could look at other aspects of their monitoring and evaluation practices, which seemed to consider accountability and transparency. For example, detailed records of the different forms of support received by children were kept in order to monitor their progress and efforts to learn from experiences were evident, since there seemed to be discussions among the team to analyse what types of support were working better and why in each particular case.

BNG actively conducts research and publishing activities to share information about issues related to their work, including the above-mentioned advocacy campaigns on child rights. Promoting transparency through this means also helps accountability and strengthens legitimacy among stakeholders. In relation to this, BNG has established a referral system with other complementary services (government and private) in order to ensure that children also access services that lie outside the scope of BNG. Beyond service delivery, other forms of collaboration have been sought by BNG on research and knowledge management related issues as part of efforts to improve its own practices.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were also implemented to follow up on activities with reference to specific issues affecting child rights. However, rights issues were not always explicitly mentioned. For example, the monitoring committee (composed of a group of professionals from different backgrounds including journalists, doctors, lawyers, policewomen and teachers) played an important role in making certain rights-issues visible and denouncing specific

180

situations. In the monitoring committee meeting I attended, one of the members described an example of their collaboration as follows:

> We work together as a team to identify cases of violence against children. Often it is our journalist colleagues who receive information and call us. Thanks to our network and the support of BNG we can quickly act to provide the support required, whether it is legal, medical or it requires the police to intervene. These cases serve to highlight violence issues and give them visibility so that the authorities are more aware that it is really their duty to intervene.

I would also argue that BNG's rights-based approach was also implicit in the commitment of the group I met working specifically on child rights, since their advocacy initiatives were helping to challenge social norms and change social perceptions. As one of the district officers noted during our discussion:

> Our advocacy actions are directed both at the higher authorities and at the community. We have been working hard to improve the legal framework and ensure that children are protected from violence and that the existing law that protects them is not violated in schools operated by the government and also those ran by communities. As a result of local advocacy and awareness raising with the community and the support of the children in this group, we have succeeded in preventing three child marriages.

In this section, my discussion of the four tentative steps of an RBA in relation to BNG has tried to provide examples related to its practical application, while acknowledging my limited knowledge of the organisation given the short time I spent with its team. Beyond these shortcomings, I have tried to focus more on how these principles can guide our analysis and help us understand how social enterprises can more meaningfully contribute to social change.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have used theoretical arguments and concrete illustrations from my case study to defend the view that applying a rights-based approach allows a social enterprise to contribute to the realisation of human rights. The implicit and

explicit dimensions are used to show that far from being black and white, rights-based approaches are complex and prone to different interpretations that make straightforward conclusions on their practical implementation impossible.

However, we know that social enterprises emerge with the objective of delivering products and/or services that existing organisations do not provide. Hence in theory they have great potential to support areas of work that are conducive to the realisation of human rights in developing countries. From this perspective, it seems logical that social enterprises should build on the fact that many of them implicitly refer to and use human rights in their work. They should be encouraged to adopt a rights-based approach to maximise their impact if they are really about promoting social change and transforming the communities they work in.

I have also argued that in order for social entrepreneurship to attain its full potential as a catalyst for social change, social entrepreneurs must be ready to engage in deeper issues that go beyond service delivery and that applying a rights-based approach provides an effective channel for maximising this potential. Rights-based approaches are designed to build the capacity of people to challenge power structures, instead of focusing on remedies to their particular circumstances (Brine, 2010: 60). To move beyond delivery, social enterprises must also empower vulnerable groups, challenge exclusion and change power relations, which all touch upon the political dimension (Uvin, 2007: 604).

In relation to this, certain critical voices defend the view that entrepreneurship is "part of the political ideology of capitalism and not in the interest of developing countries" (Haugh and Talwar, 2016: 655). Although a deeper exploration of the relation between social entrepreneurship and critical development literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, I would argue that applying a rights-based approach might be a way of ensuring that entrepreneurship is in the interest of social change. This is why I have also tried to show that applying a rights-based approach to social entrepreneurship involves formulating responses that take into account the structural causes that created poverty, inequality, exclusion and ultimately, the denial of human rights. Critical voices might argue that social enterprises should not engage in political action. To me, this ultimately depends

182

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on the role we wish to ascribe to social enterprises and whether we believe they have a role to play in bringing about transformative social change. I have to recognise my own personal bias in this, since my commitment to the development sector and the experiences I have witnessed have reinforced my belief that enterprises are key actors with a fundamental role to play in changing the system from within.

As the example of BNG illustrates, social enterprises can effectively bring together key actors, both duty-bearers and rights-holders. They can play a bridging role between both by embracing an approach that involves resorting to activism and advocacy, as well as building synergies with other key stakeholders engaged on the issues, as well as with government authorities, since

> taking a rights-based approach to social enterprise ultimately means serving as a bridge between the current situation and a future in which democratic governments are able to provide effective and reliable service to their constituents (Brine, 2010: 120).

A rights-based approach was present (at time explicitly, at times implicitly) in the different strategies and lines of work developed by BNG, whether at the level of objectives, mission, vision or values of the different initiatives implemented. This rights-based approach was included explicitly in social enterprises working to remedy unmet basic needs that affected the rights of individuals and particularly children. Contributions to the exercise of different rights were noted through the analysis presented in the discussion section, while acknowledging the limitations of focusing on a single case study. The findings are not representative of a particular trend or type of social enterprise, but I believe the suggested framework can help us understand the contribution of social entrepreneurship to social change while recognising the limitations that social enterprises will most likely face when working to address "the entrenched development problems of the most marginalized, both economically and politically" (Hackett, 2016:335).

At the end of the day, the challenge is ultimately to strike a balance "between the individual and the larger community or stakeholders, between the economics and the politics, between social justice and social entrepreneurship" (Thekaekara and

Thekaekara, 2007: 10). I believe that rights-based approaches help social enterprises achieve this balance. Furthermore, the idea that placing rights at the heart of these organisations can morally strengthen social entrepreneurship is endorsed by social justice movement actors, who argue that the rights-based approach should focus on achieving justice as a central goal (Kirkemann Boesen and Martin, 2007: 35). Finally, it is possible to also conclude that rights-based social entrepreneurship may not only support social cohesion and well-being by creating a better balance between these principles and the economic purposes of entrepreneurial activity, but it may also contribute to greater social justice (Fayolle and Matlay, 2010).

CONCLUSIONS: CLOSING A CYCLE

> I find an old notebook in my parents' garage. Subject: Social Studies. Year: 1988-9. As I run through its pages, I suddenly come across a list of UN agencies with various descriptions and an exercise where my 12-year-old self asks the following questions: "Is Oxfam efficient? Is Oxfam honest? Is Oxfam useful? What can Oxfam do that other organisations cannot do or cannot do so well?". I am a little shaken to discover that despite having absolutely no recollection, I was already thinking and writing about development issues 30 years ago. I tell myself that maybe I always wanted to be a development practitioner after all. Itzíar-the-external-evaluator is clearly also there, since my 12-year-old self takes a rather critical stance and writes: "I don't think that Oxfam is doing all it can to help refugees. I suppose that could be improved in some way". She does not say how, which is a little disappointing (where are your recommendations, Itzíar?). Then she writes that "there are people who do not have the same possibilities as us, so if we help them with a bit of money, we could maybe save a life". Mr. Hutchingson gives the exercise 36 marks out of 50 and rightly notes: "some -though not all- thoughtful and quite good answers". I remember liking Mr. Hutchingson very much: almost as much as I enjoyed working for Oxfam 25 years later.

Extract from my diary, July 2017

It has been thirty years since I wrote these lines, three decades in which I have evolved from being a curious teenager interested in changing the world to a development practitioner who has travelled widely, set up a cooperative, conducted research and embarked on a PhD project that is now (almost) over. As I read my old school notebook, I cannot help wondering what thoughts will cross my mind when I read this thesis in 30 years' time, and how many of these reflections will seem relevant to my life and experiences then. Will I think that my positive outlook on social entrepreneurship was naïve? That my analysis was overly encouraging? Will I have developed a more critical point of view on social enterprises and their possibilities by then? And will I remain convinced that international development can make a difference?

In these conclusions, I aim to provide both a reflexive summary and a critical outlook on these issues. In order to do so, I have connected my arguments with

critical development literature to reflect on various elements of my professional biography that have shaped these views and positions.

With every passing day, I realise the extent to which this research has helped me gain insights into my own experience of 17 years of development practice. My discussions on various dimensions of social change have unfolded against the backdrop of social entrepreneurship, anthropology and development in the same way that these themes have been part of my professional life as development practitioner and researcher. In the process of undertaking this research, I have come to realise that numerous parallels between social entrepreneurship and development can be drawn, since both spheres of activity struggle with the dilemmas faced by anyone striving "to do good" in different organisational structures and contexts. They are both, in a sense "an anomaly which seems difficult to resolve" (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013: 237).

This research has contributed to debates that bring social entrepreneurship, anthropology and development together by reflecting on the specific nature of various social entrepreneurship experiences and sharing their stories. The rich complexity of social entrepreneurship necessarily requires using knowledge from many different research fields in order to understand it as a phenomenon and create "a potential for the importation of concepts and theories from many other fields of research" (Landström, 2014: 24). This explains why I have applied anthropological methods to reflect on core dimensions of social entrepreneurship, namely hybridity, gender issues and human rights.

Like anthropology, development engages with different realities in an attempt to reach a better understanding of the world we live in. In the context of my work as development practitioner, I have come across anthropologists who criticised the post-colonial, neo-liberal, top-down discourses dominating certain international development organisations while denouncing how efforts to fight poverty sometimes had the reverse effect of perpetuating existing forms of inequality (Yarrow and Venkatessan, 2012: 2). During my research, these criticisms resonated with some of the voices that challenged positive portrayals of social entrepreneurship and questioned its potential to serve as a vehicle for

186

transformative social change. These critical voices expressed discomfort with the depiction of social entrepreneurship as a perfect solution that left little scope for the possibility of real critique (Dey and Steyaert, 2012: 102) or simply considered it an excessively utopian concept (Dey and Steyaert, 2010). A similar notion of "pro-social fantasy" (Kenny et al, 2019: 1) can certainly also be found in the development realm as part of the quest for "doing good".

Further along the spectrum of critical voices, there are authors who are also uncomfortable with social entrepreneurship because they consider it a buzzword that is glorified as part of the marketisation of society (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013: 237). These critical voices dislike the fact that social enterprises are not violently opposed to capitalism and indeed "sometimes use free market mechanisms to fill the space left by governments and programmes of sustainability and corporate social responsibility" (Pereira Gonçalves et al, 2016: 1605). I have defended a more conciliatory view, since I believe that social enterprises have the potential to change the system *from the inside*, by incorporating humanitarian principles into capitalism in creative ways (Battilana et al, 2012: 55). By showcasing the complexities and rich diversity of social enterprises, my research has contributed to illustrating the ways in which certain aspects of the economic system might be challenged from within by engaging in activities that are more humane, empathic and positive for the common good. As with post-colonial development critiques, I believe it is important to acknowledge the variety of initiatives that exist and to avoid rejecting social entrepreneurship as if it were a single homogeneous entity, without recognizing the multiple forms it can take.

Other colleagues criticise the frequent representation of social entrepreneurs as heroes who can bring about social change (Nicholls, 2010; Dempsey and Sanders, 2010) and question their portrayals as morally superior subjects "whose ethical decisions and deeds are merely the material representation of some innate ethical traits" (Dey and Steyaert, 2018: 629). I agree that some of these representations fail to consider how practices and meanings shape social enterprises and do not take into account that they also include "anomaly and disharmonies grounded in the incongruities of everyday practices" (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013: 243). This

187

is a critique I have tried to illustrate across the different experiences presented in this thesis, by showing how just like development, social entrepreneurship is enacted through practices and meanings. I have also challenged the so-called "grand narrative that incorporates a messianistic script of harmonious social change" and engenders the de-politicisation of social change (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 93) by discussing FEM's political stance and highlighting BNG's contribution to social change from a rights-based perspective that is also political in nature.

Having briefly introduced some of the general criticisms raised in the literature, I will now refer back to the findings of the three core chapters in turn, in order to address more concrete critiques that might be raised in relation to my findings. In chapter 1, I analysed women-led cooperatives and presented women's perceptions of their involvement in these initiatives from an empowerment perspective. In response to my claims, some colleagues might argue that empowerment lost its political content in the 1990s when it was adopted by liberal development paradigms (Huang, 2017: 607). However, if social change is understood as the removal of constraints that prevent or hinder progress (Rindova et al, 2009), then I believe that empowerment still constitutes a relevant and useful concept for analysing women's perceptions of aspects such as work/life balance or wellbeing, as I have tried to show. Ahl eloquently argues that, as researchers, we are co-producers of social reality and I have tried to remain vigilant throughout the research of the fact that my study would inevitably result in "a certain picture of women entrepreneurs and their role and place in society" (Ahl, 2002: 10). Furthermore, I find the claim that social economy initiatives can be a form of self-exploitation problematic when we place the positive perceptions shared by the women interviewed at the centre of our discussions. If these women expressed general satisfaction with their situation and clearly valued empowerment-related aspects, how can we question or criticise these perceptions without appearing patronising or indeed superior?

Nonetheless, my defence of these arguments does not mean that I do not acknowledge that what might seem as overly positive pictures of empowerment or "obvious win-win situations" might sometimes be "more win-lose or even more

lose-lose" (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013: 239). I am well aware of the limitations involved, particularly given the challenges of achieving work/life balance these organisations, since sometimes developing a successful social enterprise is possible "at the expense of health, family and other aspects of social reproduction" (Dempsey and Sanders, 2010: 437). Although my research did not find these elements to be central to the experiences analysed, I recognise the importance of acknowledging that the reality of social enterprises varies enormously across experiences and certain experiences might not be as positive as the experiences I have shared in my account.

Other critical voices also argue that empowerment is much more than just a job and an increase in income, which is something I have tried to make clear in my discussion by analysing different dimensions of wellbeing (Leach and Sitaram, 2002). I have also aligned my discussion of empowerment with the notion of meaningful work understood as the "ability to exercise individual agency in determining the shape of their work lives, to choose alternative career paths and to pursue work that contributes to the greater common good" (Dempsey and Sanders, 2010: 445). In relation to this, I have also stressed the need to consider the gendered nature of concepts such as entrepreneurship and success, given the "traditional entrepreneurship discourse of the successful, Western, self-made businessman whose creation of a kingdom is deemed his contribution to society" (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013: 239). This is why I consider my discussion on the gendered nature of entrepreneurship in chapter 1 particularly relevant to ongoing debates on gender justice.

In Chapter 2, I have argued that cultural theory helps us understand that we can develop social enterprises from our respective organisational cultures that respond to our different (and often conflicting) ideas on what is good for society and what is good for social change, on what is good for us as individuals and what serves the common good. I have also discussed how the adaptability of organisations that analyse the local context to successfully mitigate any effects on its operation is a characteristic that clearly resonates with the hybridity discourse. However, what I believe makes a difference is that their social mission is really understood as a social transformation mission that involves taking a political

189

stance and ultimately seeking paradigmatic changes at the economic and social level (Solórzano et al, 2018: 157). The role played by the founder of FEM as an activist also illustrates the need for leadership and resistance in order to achieve success (Battilana et al, 2012: 55).

In Chapter 2, my discussion on hybridity focuses more on how social entrepreneurship is enacted as a practice rather than in establishing definitions and categories of social entrepreneurship. Anthropology tends to differentiate "understanding from action, abstracting anthropological theories and knowledge from the specific social relations through which they emerge" (Yarrow and Venkatessan, 2012: 14). This line of argument partly mirrors issues of hybridity when I refer to the excessive academic focus on definitions and categories of social enterprises that fail to consider that they are constantly being shaped by everyday practices and local contexts. Like in the other two chapters, I argue that the most interesting dimension of social entrepreneurship does not lie in our ways of defining it as a concept or phenomenon but "in what is done in mundane everyday life by people wanting to, and actually being, part of creating social change" (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013: 239).

In Chapter 3, I have defended the view that arguments in favour of applying a rights-based approach to the field of international development also serve to justify the relevance of this approach for social entrepreneurship, given existing parallels between these two fields of activity. If we understand social entrepreneurship as a process by which we build or transform institutions that solve social problems, in order to improve our lives, these parallels become quite clear (Bornstein and Davis, 2010: 10). The rights-based approach is also relevant and necessary for social enterprises because it defies the view that issues such as poverty are an inevitable part of the status quo by focusing on root causes and structural barriers as opposed to symptoms of problems such as poverty (Offenheiser and Holcombe, 2001).

In my view, two key arguments can be defended: firstly, that social entrepreneurship is on the one hand, well-placed to embrace rights-based approaches and secondly, that social enterprises and society at large would

190

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benefit from this approach. By this, I argue that it is not only desirable for social enterprises to implement a rights-based approach but also that it is feasible for them to do so, given the characteristics of social entrepreneurship and the types of transformative change that they seek to achieve. Furthermore, I also believe that social value is difficult to pin-point and the concept of a rights-based enterprise might be a way of solving some of the grey areas affecting the concept of social entrepreneurship, as well as a way of building linkages across organisations and promoting a collaborative culture. The concept of "rights-based enterprise" that I have developed in chapter 3 might be a fruitful area for my future research, since it would be interesting to apply it to organisations in order to test its advantages and challenges in different contexts, particularly within the framework of evaluation exercises.

In the global south, where countries face similar but also issues of a very different nature, we need to rethink our own social entrepreneurship debates to consider more general development issues of concern. Issues such as poverty capitalism and the marketisation of poverty (Schwittay, 2011; Huang 2017) constitute perverse dimensions of social entrepreneurship in contexts where it is not only traditional social issues that require a response but also other types of market failures (Hackett, 2010). In such contexts, the idea that development is merely a discourse does not recognise that, just like social entrepreneurship, development is enacted through a range of practices, choices, interactions and ideas that cannot be ignored in a critical analysis (Yarrow and Venkatesan, 2012: 3). This parallel constitutes another relevant aspect that I believe should also be borne in mind when considering areas for future research.

From a methodological perspective, I have acknowledged throughout this PhD that one of its weaknesses is the limited fieldwork and case studies that have served as the empirical base for my findings, since they are far from being representative of what constitutes a highly complex phenomenon. While recognising the limitations that this implies, I have defended the advantages of applying an approach that sought to go deeper into experiences by providing detailed illustrations of my claims and by placing the voices of my informants at the centre. This methodological choice is also in line with those who argue that

191

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"the more radical possibilities of social entrepreneurship can be fostered through interventionist research" (Dey and Steyaert, 2012: 90) and who encourage the adoption of "a performative view of research as enactment" (Steyaert and Dey, 2010: 232).

We know that the current global context is marked by serious challenges affecting the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). The limitations of the dominant economic paradigm have recently been highlighted during the Conference of Parties (COP25) on Climate Change that ended with only lukewarm measures while the findings of UNDP's Human Development Report 2019 and Oxfam's Time to Care report have highlighted increasing inequalities across the world. The challenges of our times require the creation of spaces for critical thinking and acting. They also require new solutions that place people at the centre.

Social entrepreneurship is of course not the panacea, but I believe it provides an interesting bridging concept that allows for many different types of efforts towards transformative social change to come together. I consider destructive criticisms (whether of development or social entrepreneurship) to be counter-productive, since when taken to the extreme, they seem to defend total inaction, leaving us wondering "how or whether it is possible to retain hope in the vision of a better or more just future" (Porter, 1995). To me, these criticisms are problematic unless they recognise the potential of these initiatives to make a difference. In the same way that some authors emphasise the need to move beyond the ideologically charged rhetoric that has attended many of the anthropological critiques of development, I believe that certain critical voices of social entrepreneurship should follow a similar path (Yarrow and Venkatessan, 2012: 17).

I have always believed that a fruitful middle ground exists in all contexts, that social change can be supported in a culturally appropriate manner and that solutions to problems can be co-created respectfully both in the North and in the global South. In this regard, I probably still agree with my 12-year-old self. As anthropologists and development workers, we have an important experience in

192

common: we spend years of our lives talking to people across the world and learning about their needs, concerns and desires, while reflecting on our own. Once we acquire this experience, it seems impossible to deny that -as Nussbaum convincingly argues- cultures have more in common than we might think, and that these similarities are related to our common quest for wellbeing, happiness and "lives worth living" (Nussbaum, 2013). A father in Niger who has lost four children will tell you he would like better healthcare services in his community to protect his surviving son's life. A mother in Pakistan who has suffered discrimination for being a Christian will tell you that she wants to ensure that her daughters receive good quality education. A young HIV-positive homosexual facing stigma in India will tell you that he would like to be respected by his community and have equal access to goods and services. We can all agree that these are examples of universal concerns that cannot be addressed using single formulas, but which call for action, since we have a moral obligation to support one another. Incidentally, this moral discourse of contributing to something greater than the self is also inherent in social entrepreneurship (Dempsey and Sanders, 2010: 441).

However, while we can argue that social enterprises create social value, their impact on the social order in each society tends to be less clear and difficult to measure (Haugh and Talwar, 2016: 644). This is a key direction that I believe future research should take, in order to gain a better understanding of how these local practices of social entrepreneurship might contribute to wider structural changes.

EPILOGUE

> "Every start has something magical" writes Richard from Seville, wondering if he is quoting Herman Hesse. It is indeed a new start for me: new city, new job, new life. I have signed a contract exactly 17 years to the day after signing the very first contract of my life in this same city. Returning to the same place but feeling completely different. Quite magical for somebody who does not believe in coincidences. At the same time, it feels like I am closing a chapter in my life in more ways than one: I am concluding my PhD while also ending four years of multiple roles as researcher-cooperativist-consultant, at least for the time being. There's certainly magic, but also many other mixed emotions.

Extract from my diary, November 2019

These final thoughts are difficult to put into words. It seems impossible to do justice to the multiple ways in which I have been shaped by this research process, by the extraordinary people I have met, the books and articles I have had the opportunity to read, the stimulating exchanges with colleagues and by so many hours of thinking and writing in libraries and cafes. In my word of thanks, I mentioned the beginning of a personal healing process. Four years later I can say that my PhD research has been instrumental for my recovery. I wanted to be myself again, but the fact is, that four years down the line, I feel that I have become a different (and possibly better) version of myself. Engaging in a long research process can do this to you. Or rather, having the opportunity to interact with outstanding people and to feel inspired by their commitment and passion can do this to you.

During this research, I have shared personal feelings with informants and have even shed some tears with them. More than once, a person I had just met has said to me "I don't really know why I'm telling you this because I have never told anyone before", seconds before sharing a very personal story. I have also felt a sudden urge to recall some of my worst memories with informants for reasons that remain unclear to me today. Intimacy, complicity, empathy. In the field of anthropology, we often speak of building rapport, defined as "a method to gain

194

trust with participants and access sites through gate keepers (…) and a common approach used by feminist researchers" (Gajparia 2017: 89). However, I believe there was a lot of magic there too.

And finally, there has certainly been something very magical about writing these conclusions in Brussels at this precise moment in my life.

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