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Rethinking social entrepreneurship: shifting from a founder-centric perspective to a collective effort in the gastronomy sector in Spain.

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Nerea e Iñigo

Bat, bi, hiru… ekipo!!!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1.- GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1.- Chapter introduction

In this chapter, four fundamental points that form the basis of this research on social entrepreneurship in the field of gastronomy will be addressed. Firstly, the Problem Statement will be presented, exploring the emergence and growing relevance of social entrepreneurship as a field of study within the business domain. The factors that have driven its development will be analysed, and the diversity of definitions and approaches to social entrepreneurship will be discussed, highlighting the need for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon.

Secondly, the research objectives are defined. The primary objective is to investigate the collective aspect of social entrepreneurship and analyse both the theoretical foundations and practical implications from individual and collective perspectives. The aim is to understand how collaborative efforts among founders, joiners, and other agents drive social change, with a special focus on the gastronomic sector.

Thirdly, the main contributions of the research will be presented. Finally, the structure of the study will be outlined. This fourth section will provide an overview of the thesis structure, which consists of six chapters.

1.2.- Problem Statement

In recent years, social entrepreneurship has emerged as one of the most compelling areas of study within the entrepreneurship domain, as the creation and development of companies are no longer exclusive to those seeking profit maximization (Diab, 2019).

Leadbeater (1997) emphasizes the increasing need for innovative development of new forms of social capital to address poverty eradication and solve social problems.

Social enterprises are gaining traction as a response to factors such as demographic shifts, market deregulation, governmental failure to meet social needs, and technological advancements (Nicholls, 2008; Zahra et al., 2008). While we acknowledge that social entrepreneurship is a subset of sustainable entrepreneurship, the concept undergoes constant review due to the diversity of business experiences it encompasses, as well as the plurality of existing approaches (Tan et al., 2005).

Currently, there is a tendency to associate any socially beneficial activity with social entrepreneurship (Martin & Osberg, 2007). In brief, from a broad perspective, "social" does not merely imply philanthropy, charity, or humanitarian action; rather, it denotes the creation of companies where social purposes take precedence.

A wide spectrum of definitions of the term "social entrepreneurship" exists, all influenced by two schools of thought with different visions of the phenomenon. According to the European perspective, the rise of social entrepreneurship can be attributed to governmental failure to adequately fulfil their social missions. Thus, the essence of social entrepreneurship is primarily social, with social enterprises being part of the social economy (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010). Conversely, the American viewpoint, led by Ashoka, posits that social entrepreneurship emerged when Non-Governmental Organizations began to suffer economically (Reis & Clohesy, 2001). Social enterprises were seen as an innovative means to raise funds for these organizations (Kerlin, 2006), relying on income diversification rather than depending solely on philanthropic sources (Gregory, 2006; Nicholls, 2008). Despite their differences, both schools of thought maintain the essence of social entrepreneurship: creating an impact on the resolution of social problems (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010).

This diversity has sparked debate in the literature between those arguing that commercial and social entrepreneurship should not be distinguished, based on the premise that both generate social value Acs, Bosma, & Sternberg (2011), and those asserting that social

entrepreneurship presents distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from commercial entrepreneurship (Austin et al., 2006). This debate remains ongoing in the literature.

What appears to be a consensus is that social enterprises are primarily distinguished from commercial enterprises by the entrepreneur's motivation, which is altruistic (Leadbeater, 1997; Yunus, 2009), with the ultimate goal being the creation of social value (Arthur et al., 2006). However, successful social ventures exhibit dual identities (Moss et al., 2011), as they create social impact (normative or social identity) by exploiting opportunities through economically viable business models (utilitarian or entrepreneurial identity). This duality implies that, apart from their altruistic mission, social ventures must pursue a minimum profit as a secondary objective (Yunus, 2011; Mair & Marti, 2006b; Austin et al., 2006).

In summary, literature reviews since the 1990s have primarily focused on defining and outlining the concept of social entrepreneurship (Seelos & Mair, 2007), highlighting the main distinctive characteristics of such ventures (Gintere & Licite, 2022; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006), underscoring the ethical aspects inherent in these enterprises (Zahra et al., 2008), examining possible legal structures (Dees, 1998), and delving into potential disparities between social and commercial entrepreneurship (Austin et al., 2006). Nonetheless, a significant focus of the literature lies in the exploration of the social entrepreneur's role.

Social entrepreneurs are individuals known for their innovative approaches to solving major societal issues. They possess an unwavering determination to see their vision realized, refusing to accept defeat (Bornstein, 2007).

Utilizing their entrepreneurial skills, social entrepreneurs pursue a social mission, driven by the desire to bring about meaningful change in society. They excel at finding solutions to social and environmental challenges, blending creativity, resourcefulness, and opportunity. Their unique qualities enable them to address critical community and global issues effectively (Roundy & Bonnal, 2017).

Social entrepreneurs channel their passion and interests into social ventures, which serve as platforms for addressing unmet social needs and turning ideas into action (Lee & Hwang, 2022). By scaling these ventures, they can extend their impact and reach more individuals and communities (Waddock & Post, 1991). While the primary focus of social entrepreneurs is creating social value, many of their ventures also generate economic value (Noor et al., 2022). This economic aspect often plays a crucial role in the sustainability and growth of their initiatives. By creating ventures that generate economic returns, social entrepreneurs can attract investors and reinvest profits to further their social goals (Leadbeater, 1997).

The literature extensively examines the figure of the social entrepreneur from multiple perspectives: definition, characteristics, and differences compared to commercial entrepreneurs. The predominant 'individual vision' (Bornstein, 2007; Dees, 1998) contrasts with a perspective that advocates for the collective (Drayton, 2002; Mair & Marti, 2006), where the analysis and praise extend to the rest of the team surrounding the entrepreneur.

In short, social entrepreneurship is defined as a collective rather than an individual activity, and the participation of various actors is essential for its success (Stryjan, 2006). While founder-centric theories tend to focus on the entrepreneur as the primary driver of the initiative, emphasizing the founder's vision, skills, and individual leadership, the collective approach highlights the importance of collaboration and contributions from multiple stakeholders.

Interaction with various agents not only legitimizes the project but also facilitates the attraction of the necessary human and economic resources for its sustainability (Dubini & Aldrich, 2002; Erro-Garcés, 2019). This collective approach allows for a greater diversity of perspectives and skills, fosters the creation of support networks, and strengthens the enterprise's ability to adapt and respond to environmental needs.

In contrast, founder-centric theories tend to underestimate the value of the role of other actors and may limit the social enterprise's ability to build a solid base of support and resources. The founder's vision, although crucial, should not overshadow the importance

of a collaborative team and external support networks, which are fundamental to the success and expansion of social entrepreneurship.

Bringing onboard qualified staff is essential for the growth of the social enterprise, particularly during its initial phases of development. This is mainly because in the embryonic phase of the venture, growth is slow, risk is high, and internal costs tend to be high compared to incumbent competitors in the market (Audretsch & Woolf, 1986; Smith & Miner, 1983; Wright & Thompson, 1986). New ventures confront "liability of newness" concerns, such as: a) *lack of established processes and systems*; b) *limited resources* (financial and human), facing greater difficulties in attracting investors, skilled employees, and clients; c) *weak organisational identity and reputation*, hindering credibility with clients, suppliers, and partners; d) *high risk and uncertainty*, as they must navigate untested markets, develop new products or services, etc.; e*) steep learning curve* while discovering their business model, market dynamics, and operational challenges and; f) *regulatory and compliance challenges* because new enterprises may encounter difficulties in understanding and complying with industry regulations and standards. Therefore, the risk of failure for new ventures is much higher than for established organisations (Aldrich & Auster, 1986; Stinchcombe, 1965; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). To face this situation, every social entrepreneur begins with a dream, and that in the form of "storytelling" will be the fundamental ingredient to convince and inspire some early followers who will join the social enterprise (Ashta, 2020; Haugh & Talwar, 2016; Mauksch, 2017; Nicholls, 2010).

In social ventures, one source of collaboration involves recruiting individuals who are willing to join the entrepreneurial project as initial employees motivated by non-economic incentives (Noack et al., 2018). These individuals are referred to as "joiners", since they become involved in an entrepreneurial venture (in this case, a social venture) by joining the founders but without being part of the founding team. The role of joiners is essential during the organizational emergence because they also exhibit unique entrepreneurial profiles (Roach & Sauermann, 2015), which helps to enhance the leadership needed to manage the complexity surrounding entrepreneurial ventures (Newth & Corner, 2009). Moreover, attracting and retaining motivated people, such as joiners, is among the most important factors in building successful companies (Baron

et al., 1996; Wasserman, 2013). Accordingly, recent studies have started to make a distinction between founders and joiners to analyse the motives of the latter to engage in entrepreneurship (Roach & Sauermann, 2015; Sauermann, 2018), but there is a lack of studies investigating the specific contributions of joiners to new ventures.

Taking into account that the social motivation of all the members of the company is fundamental for the implementation of the venture (Samuelsson & Witell, 2022), social entrepreneurship targets a sector of the population that seeks additional motivation by doing a job with long hours and low pay, and even sacrificing health, family life, and social life (Dempsey & Sanders, 2010; Stoffers et al., 2018). However, the continued support of the team requires a demonstration that the story is not only a good story, but also that the proposed social innovation can evolve in the following years and be sustained in the long term (Bacq & Eddleston, 2018).

Social entrepreneurs and their joiners are people who see the world differently: they see opportunities where others see problems. They have a unique approach: they generate ideas that provide solutions to existing problems, rather than finding solutions and then looking for problems to match them. However, the most individualistic theories vs. the theories that focus on the collective, still do not agree (Lundqvist & Middleton, 2010).

Ultimately, since the survival and success of social entrepreneurship initiatives significantly depend on the collaborative efforts of internal and external stakeholders (Deschamps & Slitine, 2024; Kovanen, 2021), understanding the specific role and participation of "joiners" in these ventures emerges as a critical and underexplored area in current literature. Therefore, the research question of this study is: *How do social entrepreneurs leverage collective efforts by involving joiners to develop their social ventures?* Joiners, defined as individuals who actively participate in and contribute to social ventures, play a fundamental role in shaping the operational dynamics and impact potential of these initiatives. Despite the increasing recognition of their importance, existing academic studies have not adequately addressed the nuanced ways in which joiners influence social enterprise and consequently impact the community. Therefore, investigating the contributions of joiners represents a vital step towards comprehensively

understanding the broader ecosystem of social entrepreneurship and enhancing its effectiveness in addressing social challenges.

1.3.- Research Objectives

Given the considerations, the primary objective of this work is to investigate the collective aspect of social entrepreneurship and analyse the theoretical foundations and practical implications of social entrepreneurship from both individual and collective perspectives. The research aims to shed light on how collaborative efforts among founders, joiners, and other agents drive social change.

The specific objectives of this research are the following:

- To examine the phenomenon of Social Entrepreneurship through examples in the field of Gastronomy.
- To understand existing theories (individual and collective) in Social Entrepreneurship.
- To analyse the social ventures from a collective perspective and the role of joiners beyond the individual entrepreneur's role.
- To explore the motivations and experiences that characterise joiners beyond the individual entrepreneur.
- To delve into how social entrepreneurs can rely on their joiners to enhance the venture's value proposition in its early stage.
- To study how joiners contribute in different ways to the life cycle of the company, especially in its early stages.

Ultimately, from a more holistic perspective, this study aims to inspire the creation of social enterprises by being aware of the ineffectiveness of traditional approaches in meeting social needs and the urgency of viable approaches and innovative solutions that achieve sustainable improvements. To this end, inspiring examples in the field of gastronomy are identified, which may also be applicable in the Basque Country.

1.4.- Main Contributions

This thesis contributes to the literature on Social Entrepreneurship in several ways. First, it provides a detailed analysis from an academic perspective of how social entrepreneurship manifests and operates in the field of Gastronomy, which has been studied from other perspectives, such as the nutritional function of food. To do this, it highlights inspiring experiences and the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in gastronomy.

Second, the research offers a comprehensive synthesis of both individual and collective theories of Social Entrepreneurship. With a special focus on the latter, this thesis analyses social ventures from the role of joiners, shedding light on the critical role they play and their essential but often overlooked contributions to the success and sustainability of social enterprises.

Third, by delving into the motivations and experiences (personal and professional) of joiners, the research reveals the diverse factors that drive joiners to participate in social ventures. This understanding enriches the narrative of social entrepreneurship by recognizing the multifaceted nature of contributions beyond the lead entrepreneur.

Fourth, the research reveals how social entrepreneurs can leverage their joiners to enhance the value proposition of the enterprise in its early stages. This practical insight provides actionable strategies for social entrepreneurs to effectively mobilize and utilize their joiners to achieve greater impact and sustainability.

Lastly, the thesis highlights the various ways joiners contribute throughout the life cycle of a social venture, with a particular focus on the early stages. This contribution underscores the importance of collective effort and the dynamic roles joiners play in fostering the growth and development of social enterprises.

From the research results, several conclusions are drawn, which will be discussed in the following sections. One key conclusion is the need for the professionalisation of social

enterprises after overcoming the period of uncertainty typical of any newly created company. As a result, the value proposition of the social enterprise will not only be based on the social aspect but also on other values characteristic of a market where they compete with other companies, not solely "social" ones.

1.5.- Structure of the Study

To accomplish these objectives, this research is structured as a monograph comprising six chapters.

After this introductory chapter, which presents the problem statement, the objectives of this thesis and its main contributions, the second chapter addresses methodological considerations to ensure the usefulness and generalizability of the research findings. It begins by defining social entrepreneurship and delineating its key characteristics, tracing its historical evolution, and reviewing the existing literature. Additionally, it explores various conceptual frameworks underpinning social entrepreneurship, including different schools of thought, individual and collective approaches, processes for identifying social opportunities, and types of organizational structures. Moreover, it examines the characteristics of social enterprises and distinguishes between what constitutes social entrepreneurship and what does not.

In the third chapter, the concept of social entrepreneurship is explored within the field of gastronomy. Like other areas of social entrepreneurship, gastronomy encompasses a diverse array of movements and activities. For instance, restaurants often play a significant role in fostering social solidarity, acting as hubs for community initiatives and leveraging social media to mobilize support. The reflections presented in this chapter are based on the article "Gastronomy as a Real Agent of Social Change", published in the International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science the (Navarro-Dols & González-Pernía, 2020). This article provides additional insights into the issues discussed here.

The fourth chapter outlines the methodology adopted to address the research objectives. It elaborates on the Case Studies Method, which forms the foundation of the research, detailing its design, sample selection, and data collection procedures. Likewise, this chapter describes the different case studies conducted and provides an overview of the research design, including adjustments made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated modifications to the original research plan.

The fifth chapter presents the findings of the empirical study, beginning with the results of a pilot test conducted to validate the research approach. The insights gained from the pilot test are discussed in the article "Team Profiles and Roles in Social Gastronomy: A Qualitative Study in Spain" (Navarro-Dols et al., 2022), published in the International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science. Additionally, the chapter reports on a subsequent study involving six other social enterprises, with the main conclusions summarized in the paper "The Role of Joiners in Social Entrepreneurship: More Than 'Simple' Employees", forthcoming in the World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management, and Sustainable Development.

Finally, the sixth chapter synthesizes the key findings from the literature review and empirical study, highlighting the significant contributions of this research.

CHAPTER 2.- GENERAL CONCEPTS IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2.1.- Chapter introduction

This chapter delves into the multifaceted landscape of social entrepreneurship, first exploring the multiple definitions and debates that arise within this phenomenon. Subsequently, it delves into one classification of social organizations to identify their common characteristics.

As the chapter progresses, there is a deeper exploration of individualistic theories where the founder assumes a pivotal role. Definitions, profiles, and distinctive personality traits of social entrepreneurs are examined, alongside typologies that categorize them based on their approaches and impact. Motivations driving social entrepreneurs are explored, contrasting them with those of commercial entrepreneurs.

The chapter further investigates the process of social entrepreneurship, starting with the origin of social ideas and the crucial role of opportunity discovery. Emphasis is placed on how social entrepreneurs identify and seize opportunities to create societal impact. The framework of the Life Cycle of a Social Venture is introduced to illustrate the stages and dynamics of these initiatives over time.

Finally, the chapter explores the pivotal role of individuals within social initiatives, transitioning from an individualistic to a collective perspective. It examines the diverse roles and contributions of team members within these organizations, highlighting their importance in achieving sustainable social outcomes. This will be the primary focus of the research, giving meaning to the title of this thesis, from a "founder-centric" perspective to a collective vision.

2.2.- Defining and distinguishing Social Entrepreneurship

2.2.1.- Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has been studied in depth in recent years, particularly due to the continuous emergence of organizations categorized as social ventures during economic crises (Mair & Marti, 2006). The traditional linear economic model has been based on rapid growth driven by short-term profit generation. However, the current economic situation has highlighted the unsustainability of this model, as it has failed to promote sustainable development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The inability of institutions to meet all the needs of the population has ushered in a new era of entrepreneurship, as described by Rae (2010).

In the pursuit of a responsible development model that is committed to people and environmentally friendly, governments have attempted large-scale actions. However, heavy bureaucracy and political changes have hindered the continuity of these actions, preventing long-term impact. Since today's societal challenges are "public" issues that are not solely the responsibility of public administrations, all stakeholders must act accordingly (Vernis, 2009). Consequently, it has become increasingly evident that future transformations must involve citizen organizations and companies.

Citizen organizations have played a significant role in the past two decades (Bornstein, 2007). These organizations operate on an unprecedented scale, using diverse organizational forms and proposing systemic approaches rather than temporary solutions. However, their scale limitations often result in specific or local actions that only reach a limited percentage of vulnerable or low-income people. On the other hand, private companies are also evolving due to: (1) the demand for greater responsibility from more engaged citizens (Moreno et al., 2010); (2) the need to open new markets (Hart & Christensen, 2002); and (3) the necessity to ensure competitiveness (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002).

Although the transformation of companies is still slow, they are beginning to implement actions that show greater concern for people and the environment, leading to growth in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives (Mataix et al., 2008).

According to the literature, the interest in social entrepreneurship lies mainly in the entrepreneur's ability to address social problems and improve societal well-being. Social entrepreneurs identify opportunities in problems and strive to create ventures to solve them (Sullivan, 2007). This is reflected in various ways, such as (1) creating jobs in depressed areas (Azmat et al., 2015); (2) empowering women (Datta & Gailey, 2012); (3) achieving institutional change (Nicholls, 2010); and (4) establishing powerful mechanisms for combating poverty (Bloom, 2009).

Therefore, social enterprises represent a complementary business model to market ventures (Perrini et al., 2010) and can help transform the global economic system into a more fair and efficient one. These needs are often addressed by producing goods and services in innovative ways (Drayton, 2002).

One of the challenges facing this field is measuring social value (Carraher et al., 2016), which must be sustainable and scalable over time (Gregory, 2006). However, many in the social sector implicitly assume that most elements of social value (socio-economic, environmental, and social effects) are beyond measurement and quantification.

Thus, social enterprises mainly differ from commercial entrepreneurship in that the entrepreneur's motivation is altruism (Leadbeater, 1997; Yunus, 2009), with the ultimate goal of creating social value rather than profit (Arthur et al., 2006). It should be noted, though, that necessary profit is always a secondary objective in social enterprises (Beugré, 2011; Yunus, 2011). Even at the extremes, purely social entrepreneurship and purely economic entrepreneurship share common points, as social activities must consider the economic aspect for financial independence (Mair & Marti, 2006) and economic activities must also generate social value (Austin et al., 2006).

Thus, as discussed in this introduction, social entrepreneurship has gained attention by focusing on addressing unmet social needs through innovative solutions. Although government efforts are often hindered by bureaucracy and political changes, social entrepreneurship ventures are increasingly recognized as essential for future transformations. To date, there are three main areas of study of this phenomenon from an academic perspective: (1) finding an agreed-upon definition, as social entrepreneurship can be found in various contexts (Light, 2011); (2) the hybridization of the concept necessitating a classification of social companies; and (3) the individual vision of the social entrepreneur as the origin and subsequent development of social ventures versus "collective social entrepreneurship" (Montgomery et al., 2012). The following sections will address these points and others to help contextualize the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship.

2.2.2.- A working definition of Social Entrepreneurship: the eternal debate

The term "social entrepreneurship" is generally attributed to William Drayton, who founded the Ashoka Foundation in 1980. Although the study of social entrepreneurship has evolved rapidly in recent years, with a significant number of articles published (Austin et al., 2006; Choi & Majumdar, 2014; Murphy & Coombes, 2009), it remains a concept lacking rigor. It encompasses various other concepts, leading to confusion in the literature (Chell, 2007; Dacin et al., 2011; Harding, 2004; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Short et al., 2009).

Efforts have been made to reach a consensus on the definition of social entrepreneurship (Austin et al., 2006; Murphy & Coombes, 2009; Short et al., 2009), but no single definition has emerged (Ashta, 2020; Gupta et al., 2020; Shaw & Carter, 2007). Some authors advocate for the broadest possible definitions, as regional, institutional, and cultural contexts influence what is considered social entrepreneurship (Bacq & Janssen, 2011). Others believe that achieving a single definition is unlikely (Choi & Majumdar, 2014).

Several authors have attempted to collect and organize the various definitions of social entrepreneurship. However, the debate continues as each author categorizes the terms

according to their criteria. For example, Dacin et al. (2010) compiled 37 definitions and concluded that none were balanced—some were too narrow, while others were too broad. Similarly, Bacq & Janssen (2011) offered 39 definitions and reached similar conclusions due to the abstract nature of many definitions.

Despite advances in research, the scientific field still calls for clarification of the concept of social entrepreneurship (Acs et al., 2011). The extensive debate on definition and domain issues (Dacin et al., 2011) has not led to a unified definition (Peredo & McLean, 2006; Perrini & Vurro, 2006), resulting in an ongoing increase in conflicting opinions (Short et al., 2009).

Criticisms of the definition of social entrepreneurship are often contradictory. For instance, Light (2006) suggested that current definitions are too exclusive, while Martin & Osberg (2007) argued that they are overly inclusive. Dees (1998) recognized this dilemma early on and suggested that the challenge is to avoid defining social entrepreneurship too broadly, to prevent it from becoming meaningless.

Despite this lack of consensus, and as an additional exercise, the following list of definitions of social entrepreneurship is provided (see Table 1), highlighting the diverse range and different perspectives on this phenomenon.

Table 1: Definitions of the term Social Entrepreneurship

Author	Year	Definition
Leadbeater	1997	The use of entrepreneurial behaviour for social ends rather than for profit objectives, or alternatively, that the profits generated from market activities are used for the benefit of a specific disadvantaged group.
Fowler	2000	Social Entrepreneurship is the creation of viable (socio-) economic structures, relations, institutions, organizations, and practices that yield and sustain social benefits.
Sagawa & Segal	2000	"This phenomenon may seem to some like a passing fad. But we see in these exchanges a new paradigm for business and the social sector, which eliminates barriers between sectors, preserving their fundamental missions... new paradigm of visionary companies that see how social entrepreneurs can fulfil their social mission more effectively ".
Young	2001	"The phenomenon of social entrepreneurship...has multiple roots in commercial activities, in that practiced by charitable organizations, in the historical traditions of corporate philanthropy, and more recently in social interests and energies."

Hibbert et al.	2002	The use of entrepreneurial behaviour for social ends rather than for profit objectives, or alternatively, that the profits generated are used for the benefit of a specific disadvantaged group.
Mort et al.	2002	A multidimensional construct involving the expression of entrepreneurially virtuous behaviour to achieve the social mission...the ability to recognize social value creating opportunities and key decision-making characteristics of innovation, proactiveness and risk- taking
Lasprogata & Cotten	2003	Non-profit organizations that apply entrepreneurial strategies to sustain themselves financially while having a greater impact on their social mission (i.e., the "double bottom line").
Mair & Noboa	2003	'...we define social entrepreneurship as the innovative use of resource combinations to pursue opportunities aiming at the creation of organizations and/or practices that yield and sustain social benefits.'
Dart	2004	Social enterprise differs from traditional understanding of the non-profit organization in terms of strategy, structure, norms, and values, and represents a radical innovation in the non-profit sector.
Harding	2004	They are orthodox businesses with social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximize profit for shareholders and owners.
Shaw	2004	The work of community, voluntary and public organizations as well as private firms working for social rather than only profit objectives.
Roberts & Woods	2005	SE is the construction, evaluation, and pursuit of opportunities for transformative social change carried out by visionary, passionately dedicated individuals.
Tan et al.	2005	Making profits by innovation in the face of risk with the involvement of a segment of society and where all or part of the benefits accrue to that same segment of society.
*The Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship	Saïd Business School*	2005	A professional, innovative, and sustainable approach to systematic change that resolves social market failures and grasps opportunities
Austin et al.	2006	An innovative, social value creating activity that can occur within or across the non-profit, business, or government sector.
Cho	2006	'...a quite general working definition of social entrepreneurship: a set of institutional practices combining the pursuit of financial objectives with the pursuit and promotion of substantive and terminal values.'
Clifford & Dixon	2006	'... the term "*ecopreneur*" [defines] an ecopreneurial organization as one that is a "*system-transforming, socially committed...break-through venture*", a definition that seems to encompass both ecological and social enterprise. However [this term] draws the focus too narrowly upon the environmental aspects, and we therefore apply the term "social ecopreneur" to encompass the triple drivers of these organizations: environmental, social, and economic, the latter being inherent in the concept of entrepreneurship.
Desa & Kotha	2006	TSVs [technology social ventures] ... develop and deploy technology-driven solutions to address social needs in a financially sustainable manner... TSVs address the twin cornerstones of social entrepreneurship – ownership (financial return) and mission (social impact) using advanced technology.'
Doherty et al.	2006	Social enterprises—defined simply—are organisations seeking business solutions to social problems.
Haugh	2006	'Social enterprise is a collective term for a range of organizations that trade for a social purpose. They adopt one of a variety of different legal formats but have in common the principles of pursuing business-led solutions to achieve social aims, and the reinvestment of surplus for community benefit. Their objectives focus on socially desired, nonfinancial goals and their outcomes are the nonfinancial measures of the implied demand for and supply of services.'
Hockerts	2006	'Social purpose business ventures are hybrid enterprises straddling the boundary between the for-profit business world and social mission-driven public and non-profit organizations. Thus, they do not fit completely in either sphere.'

Mair & Marti	2006	A process involving the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyse social change and/or address social needs.
Peredo & McLean	2006	Social entrepreneurship is exercised where some person or group... aim(s) at creating social value...shows a capacity to recognize and take advantage of opportunities...employ innovation...accept an above average degree of risk...and are unusually resourceful ... in pursuing their social venture.
Perrini & Vurro	2006	'...social entrepreneurs are change promoters in society; they pioneer innovation within the social sector through the entrepreneurial quality of a breaking idea, their capacity building aptitude, and their ability to concretely demonstrate the quality of the idea and to measure social impacts.' 'We define SE as a dynamic process created and managed by an individual or team (the innovative social entrepreneur), which strives to exploit social innovation with an entrepreneurial mindset and a strong need for achievement, in order to create new social value in the market and community at large.'
Robinson	2006	...I define social entrepreneurship as a *process* that includes: the identification of a specific social problem and a specific solution... to address it; the evaluation of the social impact, the business model, and the sustainability of the venture; and the creation of a social mission-oriented *for-profit* or a business-oriented *non-profit* entity that pursues the double (or triple) bottom line.'
Martin & Osberg	2007	Having the following three components: (1) identifying a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium that causes the exclusion, marginalization, or suffering of a segment of humanity that lacks the financial means or political clout to achieve any transformative benefit on its own; (2) identifying an opportunity in this unjust equilibrium, developing a social value proposition, and bringing to bear inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude, thereby challenging the stable state's hegemony; and (3) forging a new, stable equilibrium that releases trapped potential or alleviates the suffering of the targeted group, and through imitation and the creation of a stable ecosystem around the new equilibrium ensuring a better future for the targeted group and even society at large.
Tracey & Jarvis	2007	the notion of *trading for a social purpose* is at the core of social entrepreneurship, requiring that social entrepreneurs identify and exploit market opportunities, and assemble the necessary resources, to develop products and/or services that allow them to generate "entrepreneurial profit"
Yunus	2009	Any innovative initiative to help people may be described as social entrepreneurship. The initiative may be economic or non-economic, for-profit, or not-for-profit.
Zahra et al.	2009	Social entrepreneurship encompasses the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organizations in an innovative manner.
Brouard & Larivet	2010	"...represents a variety of activities and processes to create and sustain social value using more entrepreneurial and innovative approaches and constrained by the external environment".
Dacin et al.	2010	"We define social entrepreneurship by individual characteristics and the processes and activities that inevitably lead to discussion and debate…which cannot be resolved, since it is unlikely that a definitive set of characteristics can be applied to all types of entrepreneurial social activity in all contexts".
Lepoutre et al.	2013	First, we view social entrepreneurship as a process of creating value by combining resources in new ways. Second, these resource combinations are intended primarily to explore and exploit opportunities to create social value by stimulating social change or meeting social needs. And third, when viewed as a process, social entrepreneurship involves the offering of services and products but can also refer to the creation of new organizations.

Source: *own elaboration*

Thanks to extensive analysis, the work of Alegre et al. (2017) stands out. This study identified and classified 140 different definitions of the term "social entrepreneurship" from a review of 307 documents. The novelty of this study, which is the most intensive and detailed so far, lies in its identification of groups of definitions and their authors, focusing on specific aspects. Given the vast amount of information in this field, the authors decided to classify these definitions into clusters, assigning a name to each, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: *Definitions of Social Entrepreneurship. Clusters and Characteristics.*

	CLUSTER	CHARACTERISTICS		EXAMPLE OF DEFINITION
1	Social & financial	Focus on the resolution or relief of social problems with a double objective (social and economic).	Mair & Marti, (2006)	"Process involving the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyse social change and/or address social needs".
2	Community	References to the role of innovation, the production of products and/or services and the benefits to the community. Mainly in papers of European authors,	Defourny & Nyssens, (2008)	Summarizing EMES definition: "Social enterprises are not-for-profit private organizations providing goods or services directly related to their explicit aim to benefit the community. They rely on a collective dynamic involving various types of stakeholders in their governing bodies, they place a high value on their autonomy and they bear economic risks linked to their activity".
3	Innovation	The role of innovation, exploration, and exploration of opportunities to create social value. The economic results are also important, but always as a secondary objective, having the social impact as the main one.	Zahra et al. (2008)	"Social entrepreneurship encompasses the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organizations in an innovative manner. Social wealth is defined broadly to include economic, societal, health, and environmental aspects of human welfare"
4	Sustainability	The rol of sustainability, change and innovation to create social value.	Austin et al., (2006)	"... as innovative, social value creating activity that can occur within or across the non-profit, business, or government sectors"
5	Change	Definitions that emphasize a particular business behaviour to promote changes in society from a critical and ethical point of view.	Weerawardena & Mort, (2006)	Social entrepreneurship is a multidimensional construct involving the expression of entrepreneurially virtuous behaviour to achieve the social mission, a coherent unity of purpose and action in the face of moral complexity, the ability to recognize social value-creating opportunities and key decision-making characteristics of innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking.

Source: *Own elaboration from Alegre et al. (2017)*

As can be seen, these clusters are not independent of each other; in some cases, they overlap. The main difference is the relative importance and prioritization that each cluster assigns to each concept.

Mair & Marti, (2006), after a thorough review of the existing literature on social entrepreneurship, provide one of the most widely used definitions in research today (shown in Table 1). Their definition is based on several basic assumptions. First, they consider social entrepreneurship to be, like any type of entrepreneurship, a process of creating value by combining new ways of using resources. Second, they identify that what makes social entrepreneurship unique is that these combinations of resources are primarily used to explore and exploit opportunities that create social value. This is achieved through the development of a business idea that enables necessary change or meets a series of neglected social needs. Third, they affirm that, as with general entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship can give rise to a new company or develop within an already established organization (social intrapreneur).

However, the biggest challenge in defining social entrepreneurship lies in establishing the boundaries between what is considered social and what is understood as economic. At first glance, one might think that social entrepreneurship is an expression of altruism, unrelated to the profit motive of commercial entrepreneurship (Acs et al., 2011; Austin et al., 2006; Boschee, 1995; Sharir & Lerner, 2006; Sullivan Mort et al., 2003).

In social entrepreneurship, as in any economic activity, profit is necessary—not for distributing dividends, but for reinvestment to enable continuous improvement and financial self-sufficiency, avoiding reliance on public or philanthropic aid. However, it should be noted that in social enterprises, profit is always a secondary objective (Austin et al., 2006; Mair & Marti, 2006; Yunus, 2009). Conversely, the pursuit of social benefit is not exclusive to social entrepreneurship. Business entrepreneurship also has a social aspect. As Venkataraman et al. (1997) argue, commercial entrepreneurship is particularly productive from a social welfare perspective, even when the process pursues selfish ends. This generates social wealth through the creation of new markets, industries, technologies, institutional forms, jobs, and increased real productivity. While profit may be the central motive of commercial entrepreneurship, it is not opposed to social motivations (Shane, 2003).

Therefore, it is crucial to clearly establish the differences in terms of purposes. Although both types of entrepreneurship (social and commercial) can have social objectives, only in social entrepreneurship are these the true reason for existence (Gupta et al., 2018).

Lastly, social entrepreneurship focuses on creating social value, but it is worth considering whether the aim is gradual social transformation or radical social impact. Most definitions of social entrepreneurship do not address this issue, but some authors have analysed it. For example, Bornstein & Davis (2010) argue that social impact is strongly influenced by the size of the company. Small social enterprises can achieve gradual social transformation, and as they grow, either by mergers or natural expansion, they can increase the amount of social value created, thus generating a radical social impact.

Thus, it could be affirmed that the ultimate goal of social entrepreneurship is to improve the living conditions of individuals and communities by creating social value through innovative means (Kalendzhyan & Kadol, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Therefore, it does not matter whether the social change produced is gradual or radical; there can be social enterprises that gradually transform society and others that do so radically (Hidayat & Putra, 2020).

From the literature review on the concept of social entrepreneurship, and as shown in Figure 1 it can be concluded that social entrepreneurship is, above all, an entrepreneurial phenomenon. It arises from opportunities related to social problems generally neglected by institutions and solves them innovatively through business activities. The main objective of social entrepreneurship is the creation of social value, regardless of whether it is achieved gradually or radically. However, this focus on social value does not mean that economic benefit should be neglected (Belz & Binder, 2015; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

Figure 1: Domain of Social Entrepreneurship
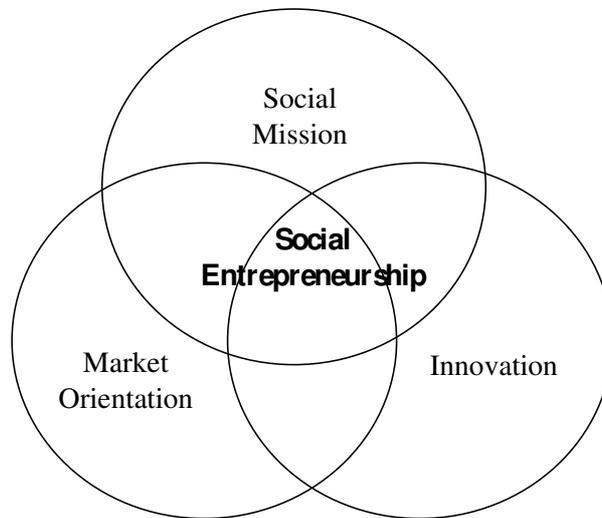
Source: own elaboration

2.2.3.- Types of Social Ventures

According to Dees (1998), although social enterprises are often associated with non-profit entities, these types of organizations are increasingly adopting hybrid and for-profit forms. Another important point to consider is that these organizational models are not fixed but rather evolve throughout their life cycle. For example, an organization may transition from a "pure" non-profit to a "pure" for-profit or commercial organization over time.

2.2.3.1.- Pure Non-profits

The traditional organizational model of a social enterprise is that of a non-profit entity. Despite their name, non-profit organizations can make a profit, but these profits must be reinvested into the organization to further its mission. This is the main difference between non-profit and for-profit organizations (Hopkins, 2001; Lasprogata & Cotten, 2003).

Non-profit enterprises have a narrower range of financial resources but include family/friends/founder (FFF) funding, gap financing, commercial bank loans, mezzanine capital, angel capital, and venture capital. These entities can survive only if these external contributions are maintained over time. They also rely heavily on volunteers who have the right profile and skills to deliver their services. Unlike commercial companies, non-profit organizations do not distribute profits (income minus expenses) to shareholders. Instead, they use surplus funds to serve different groups (Battilana & Lee, 2014).

There are several benefits associated with being organized as a non-profit organization. One is that non-profit organizations are often exempt from many taxes (local and/or state), allowing them to dedicate a greater proportion of their income to providing services (Bottiglieri et al., 2011). Another benefit is that donations to non-profits enjoy favourable tax treatment, encouraging potential donors (Noetel et al., 2020). Additionally, it may be easier for these organizations to remain "faithful" to their social mission because there is no shareholder pressure to achieve higher short-term profits (Austin et al., 2006).

Traditional philanthropy includes several types: (a) individual donations, which account for the bulk of giving; (b) foundation grants; (c) government grants; and (d) corporate donations. Although fewer in number, foundation grants are popular due to the larger amounts available (Wei-Skillern, 2007). However, competition for these grants is fierce, and administrative requirements are increasing. In countries with underdeveloped philanthropic cultures, organizations often must rely on government support to be sustainable long-term (Loblay et al., 2022).

Non-profit organizations face several limitations or challenges due to their funding methods. One challenge is that grants tend to be short-term, typically one to three years, while social problems have a long-term horizon. This forces non-profits to continuously seek funds, diverting time and effort away from their mission (Woodroof et al., 2020). Another challenge is that large funds tend to be rigid, with very specific activities for which they allocate money, forcing non-profits to seek diverse sources to cover all their economic needs, leading to inefficiency (Wei-Skillern, 2007). Additionally, many funders only seek to finance areas that provide high visibility, benefiting them at an advertising level.

The failure of non-profit companies often occurs in the long term, as they lack a self-sufficiency plan to prepare for the next stages of growth (Lichtenstein & Lyons, 2010). As a result, various forms of non-traditional philanthropy have emerged in recent years, including philanthropic social venture organizations, private market investments, electronic philanthropy, and long-term loans from foundations (Wei-Skillern, 2007).

While the purely non-profit structure offers considerable choice in funding sources, it has limitations: (a) it is restricted in the amount of earned income it generates; and (b) it depends heavily on contributions, remaining in debt to its funders. Therefore, social business initiatives often struggle with balancing control and access to capital for growth. For these reasons, many social entrepreneurs are exploring other organizational models for their ventures (Broccia et al., 2022).

2.2.3.2.- Pure For-Profits

At the origins of social entrepreneurship, some definitions focused exclusively on pure non-profit organizations. However, in recent years, an increasing number of new social enterprises have been organizing as for-profit or hybrid entities (Bauwens et al., 2019; Jayashankar et al., 2018), developing a variety of different business models with an enhanced commercial orientation (Bonfanti et al., 2024).

In some respects, the for-profit form of organization offsets some disadvantages associated with non-profit businesses. If the organization is publicly traded, it has access to a wide range of funding sources beyond donations and grants, including income from product and service sales (Darsono, 2005). For-profit businesses also inherently emphasize generating profit, compelling them to ensure that income exceeds expenses. These diverse funding sources increase the capital available to finance operating activities and investments (Hinton, 2020). Consequently, for-profit entities are better positioned to pay market rates for talented managers and employees. Unlike non-profits, they are less likely to operate at a loss or rely heavily on volunteers for day-to-day operations (Locke & Fritschle, 2022).

Purely commercial social enterprises are market-driven and provide economic value by supplying goods and services to customers at market prices. They pay wages, buy materials, and utilize resources at market rates. A social enterprise may operate as a purely commercial business, but its profits are used to address social needs (Crucke & Bockaert, 2022). For instance, a social enterprise might be established to tackle a specific social issue while functioning as a commercial enterprise. This business model can help address social needs without relying on donors or government grants (Nair, 2022)

While some social needs can be addressed through this model, others cannot. For-profit social enterprises are legally constituted as for-profit entities designed to serve a social purpose while also generating profit (Dees & Anderson, 2003). Due to this dual purpose, for-profit social enterprises must focus on a double bottom line: addressing social issues while adding economic value. Their success is thus measured in terms of both social and economic impact (Premadasa et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022).

The structure of a pure for-profit social enterprise resembles that of a for-profit commercial enterprise, with the crucial distinction of pursuing a social mission. These organizations aim to achieve positive social impact alongside financial success, adhering strictly to high ethical standards (Choi et al., 2020).

An emerging type of corporation is the "benefit corporation" ("B corporation"), which are legally tasked with pursuing both profit and a public purpose (Carvalho et al., 2021). B corporations are certified and must meet performance standards related to their community and environmental impact and their responsibility to employees and consumers. Independent monitors assess their performance in relation to the company's public purpose (Hartman et al., 2010).

While not exempt from regulation, for-profit social enterprises face less scrutiny than non-profit organizations. If privately owned, they do not need to disclose financial statements and can more easily protect their intellectual property. This autonomy is attractive to many social entrepreneurs, who, like most entrepreneurs, value control (Neessen et al., 2021).

At this stage, a comparative summary between pure non-profit and pure for-profit organizations can be provided, as depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Main differences between Pure Non-profit and Pure For-profit organizations

	Pure Non-profit	**Pure For-profit**
Mission	To create social value for members of a community	To create economic value for shareholders
Customers	Often they cannot assume the payment of the products and/or services	Pay for products and services at market prices
Employees	High reliance on volunteer work	Paid based on value or type of work
Managers	They are often paid less than in a private-business company	Paid and often incentivized to achieve better results
Profits	It can only be used to finance operations and for their beneficiaries	Paid to shareholders as dividends or reinvested in the company.
Economic resources	They primarily include donations, fundraisers, foundation or government grants, and sometimes earned income..	The main sources include profits from the sale of products and/or services, debt and equity

Source: own elaboration

Social entrepreneurs who choose a pure for-profit structure enjoy greater control over their businesses and the opportunity to generate profit. However, they must also wrestle with the challenge of running a company that aims to make a profit while simultaneously pursuing a social mission. This dual approach requires innovative strategies and business models that can harmoniously integrate these two objectives. The literature review suggests that, although these goals may appear conflicting, successful enterprises manage to find a balance through adaptation and flexibility in their business practices and decision-making processes (Bonfanti et al., 2024).

This dual objective is more challenging than it appears at first glance and can sometimes prompt for-profit social entrepreneurs to consider alternative structural options (Audretsch et al., 2021; Silva & Wright, 2019).

2.2.3.3.- Hybrids Social Ventures

As their name indicates, the hybrid structures assumed by social enterprises represent various combinations of structural elements of non-profit and/or for-profit organizations

(Dacin et al., 2010). The fundamental reason for their creation is the search for greater legal and financial flexibility by social entrepreneurs (Yi, 2020).

Social purpose business enterprises are hybrid entities that straddle the border between for-profit entities and non-profit organizations driven by a social mission (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Hockerts, 2006). For example, a social enterprise may focus on addressing a particular social problem where the beneficiaries do not pay for the products and/or services received, while also selling products intended to make a profit.

According to Dees (1998), the reasons for the shift from purely philanthropic funding for social enterprises to a hybrid model include (a) a new spirit and greater acceptance of for-profit initiatives, (b) the search for economic sustainability through income-generating activities and a reduction in dependence on donations and subsidies, and (c) a greater commercial focus as an alternative to traditional financing.

A growing number of social enterprises are trying to combine the advantages of both models by developing non-profit and for-profit operations under the same entity. This allows the for-profit entity to focus on economics, while the non-profit entity focuses on the social mission of the company. In this sense, the hybrid form has the potential to combine "the best of both worlds." Typically, these companies can balance their income statements from economic to social aspects, thus achieving continuous and stable financing (Battilana, 2018; Moizer & Tracey, 2010).

In short, ocial entrepreneurship does not have to be limited to a specific area. Social value creation can occur in a for-profit company, a non-profit company, or a company that combines elements of both for-profit and non-profit activities (Hagedoorn et al., 2022; Harsanto et al., 2022; Jewer et al., 2023; Kimura, 2021; Mair et al., 2015; Mikołajczak, 2020; Napathorn, 2020).

Managing hybrid social enterprises is a balancing act. As various scholars have argued, the tension between social missions and meeting the demands of a market economy is best managed through communication. The perspective should not be lost so that profits

are reinvested in the social enterprise, thereby helping to fulfil its mission (Austin et al., 2006). Focusing solely on business operations could undermine the social mission of a social enterprise. Although market-based income provides benefits in terms of reducing dependence on external sources of financing and increasing self-sufficiency, it also exposes the social enterprise to market risk and potential loss of legitimacy (Gras & Mendoza-Abarca, 2014).

The way we refer to social entrepreneurship may have changed in recent years, but the phenomenon is not new (Short et al., 2009). There have always been "social entrepreneurs," although they have not been labelled that way. However, given the previous analysis, it is necessary to establish some boundaries of what is and what is not social entrepreneurship (Hietschold et al., 2022).

Now, more than ever, the boundaries between the public sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and market ventures are becoming blurred. Although citizen movements are not new, the mobilization of the civil sector in the last two decades presents some novel features: organizations act on an unprecedented scale, through very diverse organizational forms, and propose systemic approaches instead of provisional solutions (Khaze, 2021; Vesco & Busso, 2024).

Traditionally, private organizations were classified as either market companies or Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). Social entrepreneurship breaks the dichotomy between social value and financial value, creating new hybrid organizations that are halfway between the two classic options (Zahra & Wright, 2016). These organizations share the objective of increasing social and economic value without prioritizing one over the other. They are organizations whose priority is social impact, but which maintain economic activities that contribute to their financial sustainability. Thus, it is impossible to discuss social entrepreneurship without considering economic sustainability (Baltes et al., 2020).

2.2.4.- The common characteristics of Social Ventures

Although there is no universal agreement on the precise definition of social entrepreneurship, there is broad consensus on the common characteristics of these ventures. The European Research Network on Social Entrepreneurship (EMES) defines a social enterprise as a private, non-profit organization that provides goods and services directly related to its explicit objective of benefiting the community. This definition relies on three dimensions and their corresponding indicators, summarized by Defourny & Nyssens, 2008, as shown in Table 4.

These indicators do not imply that a company must fully meet all these requirements to be identified as "social." Instead, they serve as recommendations for an ideal type of organization (Defourny & Nyssens, 2008). These indicators can be used to identify new social enterprises and to assess existing companies that are reorganizing their internal structures.

Table 4: *Ideal criteria of the Social Enterprise*

DIMENSION	INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION
Economic and entrepreneurial dimension	A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services	The main activity of these organizations is the production of goods and / or services; opposed to other types of entities whose purpose is the capture of economic resources through grants or subsidies.
	A significant level of economic risk	Those who found a social enterprise assume the total or partial risk of the project. The viability and future of the project will therefore depend on the efforts of its members.
	A minimum amount of paid work	As in the case of traditional non-profit organizations, social enterprises can also combine economic and non-economic resources, volunteers, and salaried workers. However, the latter are essential for the good development of a social venture.
Social dimension	An explicit aim to benefit the community	One of the main objectives of social enterprises is to serve the community or a specific group of people. In the same perspective, a social enterprise promotes a sense of social responsibility at local level.
	An initiative launched by a group of citizens or civil society organizations	Social enterprises are the result of collective dynamics that involve people who belong to a community or a group that shares a well-defined need or objective; This collective dimension must be maintained over time, although the importance of leadership (by an individual or a small group of leaders) should not be neglected.
	A limited profit distribution	The social purpose is reflected in a restriction in the distribution of profits; although in some cases, a distribution of dividends is allowed, but in a limited way.
Participatory governance	A high degree of autonomy	Social enterprises are created by a group of people based on an autonomous project and are governed by these people. They may depend on public subsidies, but they are not administered, either directly or indirectly, by public authorities or other organizations (federations, private companies, etc.). They have the right to assume their own position ("voice") and to end their activity ("exit").
	A decision-making power not based on capital ownership	It refers to the principle of "one member, one vote" or at least a decision-making process in which the voting power is not distributed in accordance with the capital holdings.
	A participatory nature, which involves various parties affected by the activity	The representation and participation of users or customers, the influence of various stakeholders in decision-making and participatory management are often specific characteristics of social enterprises. In many cases, one of the objectives of social enterprises is to promote democracy at local level through economic activity.

Source: *own elaboration adapted from Defourny and Nyssens, 2008*

This movement around the "social" has promoted the concept of "shared value" in for-profit companies, which focuses on the connections between social and economic progress. There are three ways in which companies can generate this shared value creation: (a) rethinking the usefulness of products and how to reach target markets, (b) recognizing productivity in the value chain, and (c) enabling the development of local clusters (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Sinthupundaja et al., 2020). Therefore, social enterprises serve as a complementary model to market enterprises and can contribute to transforming the global economic system into a fairer and more efficient system.

The concept of the social enterprise has gained even more importance since June 2022, when Spain introduced the new legal category of Common Benefit and Interest Societies. This new designation recognizes purpose-driven companies, allowing those that generate social and environmental benefits, as well as economic returns, to take advantage of this new legal framework (Vasserot, 2022).

With the creation of this legal category, Spain advances to the forefront in promoting the impact economy. This promotion includes supporting purpose-driven businesses through legal recognition and providing incentives that the state can generate, particularly in the areas of financing and public procurement (Vasserot, 2022).

Given this scenario, the existence of this legal category will allow various agents within the business ecosystem to more easily identify social companies in which to channel their investments. Both the investor and the company will be aligned in their purpose: to generate a positive social and/or environmental impact through business activity (Lambooy et al., 2020).

2.3.- The Social Entrepreneur

2.3.1.- Definitions, profile and personality of the Social Entrepreneur

Behind each of the business initiatives there are people who, distributing economic resources, manage to create value by discovering new markets, by creating alternative ways of doing things, by seeking change and the opportunities offered by the market (Dees, 1998). However, a social entrepreneur is something more.

The interest of social entrepreneurship lies mainly in the entrepreneur's ability to address social problems, improving the well-being of society. The social entrepreneur identifies opportunities that present themselves as problems and strives to create ventures to solve them (Sullivan, 2007). This is reflected for example in creating jobs in depressed areas, empowering women, achieving institutional change and stablishing powerful mechanisms for fighting against poverty (Navarro-Dols & González-Pernía, 2020).

Since the concept of social entrepreneurship began to emerge, it has been a field in constant development and with increasing popularity. In the same way as in everything that surrounds this phenomenon, a wide literature can be found in the section of the social entrepreneur. Unsurprisingly there is no agreed definition around the social entrepreneur (Shaw & Carter, 2007), as seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Definitions of Social Entrepreneur

Author	Year	Definition
Waddock & Post	1991	Social entrepreneurs are private sector citizens who play critical roles in bringing about "catalytic" changes in the public sector agenda and the perception of certain social issues. Although not involved in direct actions to solve public problems, their work sets the stage and context for policy making and policy implementation activities.
Leadbeater	1997	Social entrepreneurs are entrepreneurial, innovative, and "transformatory" individuals who are also: leaders, storytellers, people managers, visionary opportunists, and alliance builders. They recognize a social problem and organize, create, and manage a venture to make social change.
Zadek & Thake	1997	Social entrepreneurs are driven by a desire for social justice. They seek a direct link between their actions and an improvement in the quality of life for the people with whom they work and those that they seek to serve. They aim to produce solutions which are sustainable financially, organizationally, socially and environmentally.

Dees	1998	Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector by: - Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value. - Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission. - Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning. - Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand. - Exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served for the outcomes created.
Boschee	1998	"Social entrepreneurs are non-profit executives paying increasing attention to market forces without losing sight of their core missions, somehow balancing moral imperatives and the drive for profit, and the balancing act is the heart and soul of the movement."
Bornstein	1998	A social entrepreneur is a path breaker with a powerful new idea who combines visionary and real-world problem-solving creativity, has a strong ethical fiber, and is totally possessed by his or her vision for change.
Prabhu	1999	Persons who create or manage innovative entrepreneurial organizations or ventures whose primary mission is the social change and development of their client group
Reis & Clohesy	2001	Social entrepreneurs create social value through innovation and leveraging financial resources...for social, economic and community development.
Thompson et al.	2000	Social entrepreneurs are people who realize where there is an opportunity to satisfy some unmet need that the state welfare system will not or cannot meet, and who gather the necessary resources (generally people, often volunteers, money, and premises) and use these to "make a difference".
Brinckerhoff	2000	A social entrepreneur is someone who takes reasonable risk on behalf of the people their organization serves.
LaBarre et al.	2001	Social entrepreneurs are dedicated innovators who are determined to tackle some of society's deepest challenges by embracing new ideas from business.
Drayton	2002	[They] have the same core temperament as their industry-creating, business entrepreneur peers. What defines a leading social entrepreneur? First, there is no entrepreneur without a powerful, new, system change idea. There are four other necessary ingredients: creativity, widespread impact, entrepreneurial quality, and strong ethical fiber
Thompson	2002	Individuals who can make a difference by seeing an opportunity to do good and "getting on with it".
Alvord et al.	2004	Creates innovative solutions to immediate social problems and mobilizes the ideas, capacities, resources, and social arrangements required for social transformations.
Harding	2004	Entrepreneurs motivated by social objectives to instigate some form of new activity or venture.
Bornstein	2007	People with new ideas to address major problems who are relentless in the pursuit of their visions, people who simply will not take "no" for and answer, who will not give up until they have spread their ideas as far as they possibly can.
Hibbert et al.	2005	Social entrepreneurs can be loosely defined as the people who use the entrepreneurial behaviour for social ends rather than for profit objectives, or alternatively, that the profits generated are used for the benefit of a specific disadvantaged group.
Hartigan	2006	Entrepreneurs whose work is aimed at progressive social transformation. A business to drive the transformational change. While profits are generated, the main aim is not to maximize financial returns for shareholders but to grow the social venture and reach more people in need effectively. Wealth accumulation is not a priority—revenues beyond costs are reinvested in the enterprise in order to fund expansion.
Seelos & Mair	2007	"The social entrepreneur is the individual who combines the resourcefulness of traditional entrepreneurship with a mission to change society."

Roberts & Woods	2005	"…there is a benevolent attitude that is motivated by a deep-seated need to give to others, but it goes beyond this".
Peredo & McLean	2006	some person or persons (1) aim either exclusively or in some prominent way to create social value of some kind and pursue that goal through some combination of (2) recognizing and exploiting opportunities to create this value, (3) employing innovation, (4) tolerating risk and (5) declining to accept limitations in available resources.
Sharir & Lerner	2006	The social entrepreneur is acting as a change agent to create and sustain social value without being limited to resources currently in hand.
Korosec & Berman	2006	Social entrepreneurs are defined as individuals or private organizations that take the initiative to identify and address important social problems in their communities. Organizations and individuals that develop new programs, services, and solutions to specific problems and those that address the needs of special populations.
Light	2006	A social entrepreneur is an individual, group, network, organization, or alliance of organizations that seeks sustainable, large-scale change through pattern-breaking ideas in what or how governments, non-profits, and businesses do to address significant social problems.
Tracey & Phillips	2007	Individuals who will develop the organisations, services, technologies, and products to address our most important social problems.
Zahra et al.	2009	The social entrepreneur is that person who encompasses the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organizations in an innovative manner.
Brinckerhoff	2009	A social entrepreneur is someone who takes reasonable risk on behalf of the people their organization serves.
Brouard & Larivet	2010	Social entrepreneurs are any individuals who with their entrepreneurial spirit and personality will act as change agents and leaders to tackle social problems by recognizing new opportunities and finding innovative solutions; and are more concerned with creating social value than financial value.

Source: own elaboration

Initially, the concept of a social entrepreneur predominated as a person who does not seek personal economic compensation but rather the creation of social value (Bornstein, 2007; Boschee, 1995; Thompson et al., 2000). However, over the years, an increasing number of definitions have emerged in which social entrepreneurs are acknowledged to obtain economic benefits (Light, 2011; Zahra et al., 2009).

The social entrepreneur is an individual who chooses to establish a company with an explicit social mission, aiming to make the world a better place. Their measure of success, therefore, is not the amount of economic benefit they achieve, but the magnitude of the social change produced (Dees, 1998). This type of entrepreneur creates social value through business activities. To achieve their desired social impact, they utilize business

management tools, engaging in a continuous process of innovation, adaptability, and learning (Dees, 1998; Santos, 2009; Zahra et al., 2009).

Likewise, social entrepreneurs often address niches neglected by governments and public institutions (Santos, 2009; Thompson et al., 2000). Consequently, it is not surprising that public institutions increasingly promote policies and programs in this sector. This not only increases the number of social enterprises addressing societal issues but also enhances public awareness of social entrepreneurship, thereby fostering the creation of more social enterprises (Nicholls, 2010) seen as an additional job opportunity for citizens.

In addition to the multiple definitions of a social entrepreneur found in the literature, some unique skills are also highlighted, such as: (1) have a set of values and emotional connections in their labour relations; (2) consider trust among company members as a crucial element in management; (3) employ a highly participatory management style with direct contact with beneficiaries; (4) experience higher job satisfaction despite lower wages, valuing self-realization, recognition, and positive work relationships; (5) occupy a central rather than top position in the company's hierarchical pyramid; and (6) tend to stay longer in their positions because their work is a lifestyle rather than just a professional option (Kliksberg, 2004; Moulden, 2009; Zandonai & Pezzini, 2004).

Additionally, Santocildes et al. (2012) identify the main five features that a social entrepreneur must have: a powerful idea, creativity, potential to extend impact, business quality, and strong ethical sensitivity. The ability to creatively envision opportunities instead of perceiving problems, along with a clear entrepreneurial capacity, are emphasized by Drayton (2002) and Germak & Robinson (2014). While some social entrepreneurs focus on local problems, others envision change from a global perspective (Zahra et al., 2009).

From the analysis of literature in this field, the characteristics of this entrepreneur are often summarized in a concise list, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: *Social entrepreneurs' core characteristics*

Categories	Core characteristics	Source
Entrepreneur	Creativity	Dees (1998); Drayton (2002); Mair & Marti (2006); Santocildes et al. (2012)
	Opportunity recognition	Germak & Robinson (2014)
	Risk taking	Bargsted et al., (2013)
	Entrepreneurial quality skills	Dees (1998); Drayton (2002); Mair & Marti (2006); Santocildes et al. (2012)
	Initiative taker	Curto (2012), Zahra et al. (2009)
	Powerful idea	Dees (1998); Drayton (2002); Mair & Marti (2006); Santocildes et al. (2012)
Innovator	Change agent	Dees (1998)
	Continuous training	Bargsted et al. (2013)
	Innovator	Curto (2012), Zahra et al. (2009)
Leadership	Credibility among the different interest groups	Waddock & Post (1991)
	Leader	Leadbeater (1997)
	Mission leader	Bornstein (2007)
	Opinion leader	Brinckerhoff (2000)
	Potential to extend its impact	Dees (1998); Drayton (2002); Mair & Marti (2006); Santocildes et al. (2012)
Manager	Ability to generate commitment	Waddock & Post (1991)
	Confidence in the role and participation of the beneficiaries of the social action	Bornstein (2007)
	Highly accountable	Dees (1998)
	Manager / Professional	Leadbeater (1997), Bargsted et al. (2013)
	Persistent	Bornstein (2007)
Personality	Dedicated	Dees (1998)
	Emotionally charged	Thompson et al. (2000)
Socially engagement	Social value creator / help for others	Thompson et al. (2000) , Bargsted et al. (2013)
	Socially alert	Dees (1998)
	Strong ethical sensitivity	Dees (1998); Drayton (2002); Mair & Marti (2006); Santocildes et al. (2012)

Source: *own elaboration*

Thus, the social entrepreneur acts as an agent of change, alleviating the effects of system inefficiencies by establishing companies whose primary purpose is social. They are driven by a vocation to address social needs, where the viability of the company is essential for its continuity. Despite their undeniable importance and interests, the economic literature lacks explicit and clear recognition of social entrepreneurship and the figure of the social entrepreneur.

Compared to other types of entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs exhibit distinctive characteristics. Their conviction in the project and solidarity to address specific, often

vulnerable, needs, or the opportunity to create jobs, outweigh their pursuit of personal wealth. Their value systems are deeply personal, fostering emotional connections and promoting a horizontal organizational structure based on trust, with a more participatory management style.

Social entrepreneurs are not motivated by the desire for immense personal fortune. Instead, they are driven by the desire to achieve sustained social impact over time. Their true satisfaction lies in creating solutions and positively impacting their environment. Despite common beliefs, social entrepreneurs are not superheroes; they are simply individuals committed to a cause and willing to turn a solution into reality, whether they have identified it already or not.

In conclusion, the social entrepreneur is a leader who initiates innovative business activities, recognizing neglected social problems as business opportunities. Their primary objective is to achieve community, social, or environmental good, while also potentially benefiting economically from their daily business practices.

2.3.2.- Social Entrepreneur Typologies

As more and more people choose to harness their entrepreneurial abilities for the betterment of society, the primary objective of a social entrepreneur is to achieve social objectives rather than purely commercial or financial goals (while ensuring the company's survival in the market). Given the significance of social entrepreneurs in driving social progress, it is crucial to classify them rigorously.

The diverse range of characteristics defining social entrepreneurs allows for their classification into various types. One of the most studied classifications is formulated by Zahra et al. (2009) which distinguishes three types of social entrepreneurs, as outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: *Typology of social entrepreneurs*

		Social Entrepreneur		
		Social Bricoleur	**Social Constructionist**	**Social Engineer**
Description	**Scale**	Focused on local and small-scale problems, mainly due to scarce resources.	Even focusing on local problems, they suggest innovative solutions (products or services) that can be applied to other different situations (small or large scale).	They face current social problems but from a larger scale (national, transnational or global), proposing revolutionary changes that deconstruct and rebuild the system itself in order to make it newer and more efficient.
	Resources	Only a greater availability of resources would allow these entrepreneurs to expand their activities on a larger scale. They are virtually independent of suppliers and do not need external or specialized resources.	However, they need considerable financial and human resources that must be sought and managed efficiently. Hybrid structures and collaborative projects help the entrepreneurs to obtain these resources.	Economic resources are important, but much more the legitimacy of the masses.
	Knowledge	They are essential for society because without them many needs would not be identified.	They may have specific knowledge in the field, but their main characteristic is the ability to identify if a problem is recurrent in different contexts.	Prior knowledge in the field is not crucial when identifying a problem.

Source: *own elaboration adapted from Zahra et al. (2009).*

On one hand, there are entrepreneurs known as social bricoleurs who focus on small-scale opportunities, identifying and addressing local social needs. These individuals play a crucial social role as they tackle issues that might otherwise go unrecognized. Despite often operating on a small scale, they contribute significantly to mitigating large local social problems (Zahra et al., 2009).

Social bricoleurs embody what Parsons (1971) described as an ideal, 'social equilibrium', where peace and social order prevail. By being in the right place at the right time and possessing the necessary skills, social bricoleurs are empowered to act effectively. Their localized knowledge enables them to identify social needs and leverage their motivation, expertise, and personal resources to create and enhance social wealth (Zahra et al., 2009).

On the other hand, there are social constructionists who capitalize on market opportunities and failures to serve underserved clients, thereby introducing reforms and innovations into the broader social system (Zahra et al., 2009).

According to Kirzner (1979), opportunities arise not solely from an entrepreneur's local knowledge but also from their alertness to capitalize on opportunities by developing products, goods, and services. Social constructionists build, launch, and operate

companies that address social needs inadequately met by institutions, companies, NGOs, and government agencies (Zahra et al., 2009).

Finally, social engineers are entrepreneurs who identify systemic problems within social structures and introduce revolutionary changes to address them. Despite being challenging, some social needs cannot be resolved within existing institutions. These social entrepreneurs drive innovation and change, ushering in creative destruction to replace outdated systems, structures, and processes with more suitable ones (Zahra et al., 2009).

A prime example of a social engineer is Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his endeavours. Yunus observed economically disadvantaged people trapped in a cycle of debt to moneylenders and, in 1976, initiated microfinance by providing small loans to forty-two women in the village of Jobra, Bangladesh.

2.3.3.- Social Entrepreneur's motivations

Before studying the reasons why ventures are started in the social field, studying business motivation at a general level is important. Entrepreneurial motivation is defined as having the drive to find a new business. Just as in all human actions, motivation plays a fundamental role in the business process. And it is key to consider the role of motivation when studying the reasons why a person decides to direct their activities towards helping others. It is the missing link between intention and action (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011).

The "push theory" and the "pull theory" explain entrepreneurial motivation (Schjoedt & Shaver, 2007). The "Push theory" indicates that there are negative external forces that push people to become entrepreneurs, such as little or no job satisfaction, difficulty finding a job, etc., being a type of "entrepreneurship out of necessity." This type of entrepreneurship plays an important role in developing countries and is less relevant in developed countries (Gilad & Levine, 1986).

The "Pull Theory", on the contrary, states that people who decide to start a business project seek independence, personal fulfilment, wealth, etc. (Amit & Muller, 1995). This theory would explain the majority of business activities launched in developed countries (Hessels et al., 2008).

The study of the motivation of social entrepreneurs has received little attention in the literature. Although the motivations for social entrepreneurs to undertake a social venture are very diverse (Hoogendoorn et al., 2010), the outstanding fundamental characteristic that surrounds the social entrepreneur has been their prosocial motivation, defined as "the desire to benefit other people without financial compensation" (Grant, 2008). The studies that have been carried out in relation to its effects show that this type of motivation increases persistence, performance and productivity (Bing & Burroughs, 2001; Korsgaard et al., 1997), basic qualities in the field of entrepreneurship.

Some authors have tried to explain the motivations why people decide to become social entrepreneurs, for example, Germak & Robinson (2014) show that social entrepreneurs are motivated by five factors: personal fulfilment; help society; non-monetary approach; achievement orientation and proximity to social problems. In other words, social entrepreneurs tend to engage in prosocial motivations. If the goal of social entrepreneurship is to address social issues, then focusing on tangible resources, such as financial resources, will not be the main driver of the social entrepreneur. Other factors, such as compassion (Grimes et al., 2013; T. L. Miller et al., 2012), moral commitment (Bandura, 1999) and the pursuit of social justice (Kickul & Lyons, 2020; Van Ryzin et al., 2009) could explain the tendency of some people to become involved in social entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, Mair & Noboa (2003) argue that what they call "background" and "content" are the main contributors to the motivation of social entrepreneurs.

"Background" refers to how the entrepreneur was raised and socialized (influences from family, friends, religion, etc.). Likewise, those personal characteristics that increase the individual's sensitivity towards a particular social problem and that help empathize with

the problems of others are included. They often have a strong sense of justice and are sensitive to equality among human beings (Anderson, 1998; Yujuico, 2008).

Another aspect that can motivate social entrepreneurship is previous experience as an entrepreneur (Mair & Noboa, 2003). Many successful social entrepreneurs were previously successful business entrepreneurs.

The "content" refers to the environment in which the social entrepreneur interacts. For example, seeing homeless people on the street, volunteering at a soup kitchen, seeing a friend die of an incurable disease, or reading about war crimes can be factors that stimulate creativity and drive social entrepreneurs to seek new approaches to address unmet social needs (Lee & Venkataraman, 2006; Mair & Noboa, 2003; Sarasvathy, 2001; Zahra et al., 2008, 2009).

This means that social entrepreneurs are motivated by internal and external factors. Internal motivation comes from personal values that foster empathy for the situation of others and from a self-confidence born of relevant experience. External motivation comes from encountering a social problem and the support of others who share the concern about that problem. Together, these forces give the social entrepreneur the strength to act.

2.3.4.- Social entrepreneur vs commercial entrepreneur

Even though literature acknowledges more similarities than differences between the two types of entrepreneurs (Thompson et al., 2000), comparisons between social entrepreneurs and profit-oriented entrepreneurs are frequent.

Several authors (Kliksberg, 2004; Moulden, 2009; Zandonai & Pezzini, 2004) highlight unique characteristics of social entrepreneurs compared to profit-oriented entrepreneurs. These include: (1) possessing a set of values and emotional connections in their established labour relations; (2) viewing trust among team members as a crucial aspect of management; (3) adopting a highly participatory management style with direct engagement with the beneficiaries of social action; (4) deriving higher job satisfaction

despite lower wages, prioritizing self-realization, recognition, and positive labour relations; (5) not necessarily occupying the top hierarchical position within the company but holding a more central role; (6) exhibiting longer tenures in their positions as their work is perceived as a lifestyle rather than just a professional option.

Conversely, other studies delineate five main elements that distinguish social entrepreneurs from commercial entrepreneurs: their objectives (Austin et al., 2006; Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Nicholls, 2008; Sharir & Lerner, 2006), their network (Sharir & Lerner, 2006; Shaw & Carter, 2007; Spear, 2006), their approach to innovation (Alvord et al., 2004), their organizational structures (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006), and their management of resources (Baker & Nelson, 2005).

a) The objective of the social entrepreneur

As previously discussed, Batson (1987) elucidates prosocial motivation by noting that "efforts are made to help others not as an end, but as an instrument to make ourselves feel better through feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, and joy derived from these actions." Thus, we assist others when our well-being is positively affected.

Empathy, defined as the act of "feeling the same emotion that another person is feeling" (Batson et al., 1987), is one reason why the distress of one person can affect another. Through empathic processes, the mood of one person is transmitted to others.

Consequently, for a person to feel prosocial motivation, they must be close to the focus of the social problem (Grant, 2008), as it is empathy that fosters prosocial behaviours in individuals (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987), increasing the likelihood that they will try to help people experiencing distress.

Austin et al. (2006) suggested that the "problem" faced by the commercial entrepreneur ultimately presents an "opportunity" for the social entrepreneur. Similarly, both entrepreneurs operate in the same market but with different objectives. However, despite an initial emphasis on social goals, the evolution of the social venture market may

necessitate entrepreneurs to intensify their efforts and leverage their resources by adopting a more commercial approach for financial independence (Austin et al., 2006; Beugré, 2011; Grassl, 2012; Jokela & Elo, 2016; Mair & Marti, 2006; Yunus, 2011).

b) The social entrepreneur's network

Another aspect worth highlighting is that social entrepreneurs are individuals who seek to reform society; they are not content with merely addressing specific social problems in isolation. Their aim is to effect sustainable changes over time that benefit as many people as possible. To achieve this, they seek scalable and replicable solutions, moving beyond the concept of competition. What may be a competitor for a commercial entrepreneur can become an ally for the social entrepreneur, forming part of their network (Waddock & Post, 1991).

Networks offer valuable assets to the entrepreneur by providing access to crucial information, resources, and other networks (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Ozgen & Baron, 2007). Moreover, through this social capital, social ventures gain greater legitimacy, recognition, and realization of their ideas (Arenius & De Clercq, 2005; Bygrave & Minniti, 2000; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Elfring & Hulsink, 2003; Jenssen & Koenig, 2002; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

In addition to being dynamic, creative, and efficient (Dees, 1998), social entrepreneurs are characterized by their strong social values. They are change agents with robust leadership skills, significant credibility, integrity, and the ability to rally supporters around their objectives or projects (Mair & Marti, 2006). To accomplish this, they demonstrate balanced judgment and a coherent unity of purpose and action when confronted with social complexity (Sullivan Mort et al., 2003).

c) Innovation

Innovation serves as a fundamental pillar for social enterprises. It involves creatively leveraging resources to identify and capitalize on opportunities that address social needs

in a sustainable manner (Austin et al., 2006; Chell, 2007; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Sullivan Mort et al., 2003). This is accomplished through the development of innovative initiatives, the establishment of novel social structures, and the mobilization of untapped resources to tackle these challenges (Alvord et al., 2004).

d) Organizational construct

As discussed earlier, the organizational structure of social enterprises remains a subject of debate and exhibits significant diversity, ranging from purely non-profit entities to purely for-profit ventures with a social mission (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). Social entrepreneurship encompasses innovative activities with social objectives in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors, such as social business enterprises, social cooperatives, corporate social responsibility programs, or more commonly, hybrid models that blend for-profit and non-profit approaches (Austin et al., 2006; Chell, 2007; Dees & Anderson, 2003; Young & Lecy, 2014). However, economic sustainability is a fundamental aspect of social entrepreneurship: the approach focuses on creating long-term sustainable value rather than immediate profit (Austin et al., 2006; Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Mair & Marti, 2006), ensuring reinvestment in the organization itself (Alvord et al., 2004; Bacq & Janssen, 2011).

e) Resources

In social entrepreneurship, the notion of resources extends beyond tangible assets to encompass intangible human resources, local community knowledge, and skills/issues that require activation. Social entrepreneurs excel at mobilizing these "unconventional" resources, particularly in settings with limited resources (Baker & Nelson, 2005). They reinterpret social arrangements and implement innovative initiatives to harness these resources effectively (Alvord et al., 2004; Baker & Nelson, 2005).

2.4.- The Social Entrepreneurship Process

Social ideas form the foundation of innovative solutions aimed at tackling social challenges. These ideas represent novel concepts that address pressing social issues, driving the entrepreneurial process forward. At the core of this journey is the discovery of opportunities, where social entrepreneurs, whose characteristics and motivations have been already studied, identify gaps in existing approaches or unmet needs within communities. As these ventures progress through their life cycle (from ideation and creation to growth and scalability) effective management of these opportunities becomes essential for achieving sustainable results and promoting lasting social impact.

2.4.1.- Social ideas

In social entrepreneurship, ideas stem from various sources, mirroring the diverse origins found in any entrepreneurial endeavour. According to several authors (Fiet, 2002; Longenecker, 2015; Timmons et al., 2004), these sources can be broadly categorized as follows: (a) *Personal Experiences:* Many social entrepreneurs draw inspiration from personal challenges or needs they encounter, believing these issues are widespread and necessitate solutions; (b) *Systematic Search:* Some entrepreneurs intentionally seek out ideas, exploring avenues like reviewing unused patents or participating in specialized meetings known as "idea baths." These gatherings involve experts discussing industry trends and generating actionable ideas. (c) *Awareness Through Media and Networks:* Entrepreneurs may become aware of problems or issues through various channels, including media coverage, professional networks, or conferences. Mass communication has globalized the dissemination of problems, making issues from one corner of the world relevant to a broader audience; (d) *Hobbies and Interests:* The entrepreneur's personal interests and hobbies can also serve as fertile ground for idea generation; and (e) *Serendipity:* Occasionally, ideas arise unexpectedly during the search process or through chance encounters.

Longenecker (2015) offers another perspective, categorizing ideas into three types. Type A, identifying new markets for existing products or services; Type B, representing the

51

creation of entirely new products or services, often driven by technological advancements; and Type C, innovating processes to produce or deliver existing products or services more efficiently.

2.4.2.- The discovery of opportunities as the beginning of the entrepreneurial process

The identification of opportunities marks the outset of both business and social ventures, a point emphasized by numerous authors (Austin et al., 2006; Mair & Marti, 2006; Shaw & Carter, 2007; Zahra et al., 2008). However, research on this aspect is still nascent in social entrepreneurship, where opportunities extend beyond profit potential to encompass the creation of social value (Corner & Ho, 2010).

Before delving further, a definition of "opportunity" must be established from both general business and social perspectives. Timmons et al. (2004) delineate key characteristics of a business opportunity: the ability to add value for customers, solve problems or fulfil needs, capture a market, and generate profits, while aligning with the entrepreneurs' skills.

Two perspectives shed light on entrepreneurial opportunities: the Creation Theory and the Discovery Theory. The Creation Theory posits that opportunities arise from entrepreneurs' actions, reactions, and behaviours as they innovate to create new products or services (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Eckhardt & Shane, 2003). Linked to effectuation theory, it suggests that entrepreneurs iterate through a learning process that can lead to opportunity formation rather than actively seeking opportunities (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Gartner, 1985; Sarasvathy, 2001; Weick Karl, 1979).

In contrast, the Discovery Theory suggests that opportunities are not created but rather uncovered (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Linked to causation theory, it involves focusing on predefined goals and seeking means to achieve them (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001; George et al., 2016; Shane, 2000; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Entrepreneurial alertness, a spontaneous and unsystematic process, plays a pivotal role in

identifying opportunities, often arising from the entrepreneur's innate ability rather than deliberate search (Baron, 2006; Kirzner, 1979; Tang, 2009).

While these perspectives primarily address business opportunities, a similar analysis applies to social entrepreneurship. Despite less intense competition compared to commercial entrepreneurship, being the first to initiate a social venture in a community can confer an advantage (Timmons et al., 1994). Social opportunities, like business opportunities, have a finite "window of opportunity," during which social entrepreneurs can maximize benefit before circumstances change. These opportunities may arise from events, legislative changes, or demographic shifts.

Similar to commercial entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs must discern the needs and desires of their "customers" or beneficiaries. Social opportunities, like their business counterparts, must be economically sustainable to ensure long-term survival (Christensen et al., 2006).

Zahra et al. (2008) assert that one of the primary distinguishing factors of social entrepreneurship is the presence of social opportunities, a concept fraught with ambiguity. The authors propose five criteria for globally classifying social opportunities:

Preponderance: The degree to which people perceive a social problem as prevalent significantly influences which opportunities merit the attention of social entrepreneurs.

Relevance: The alignment between the importance of an opportunity and the entrepreneur's values, skills, and resources.

Urgency: Often manifested in the response of social entrepreneurs to unforeseen events such as natural disasters or crises.

Accessibility: The perceived level of difficulty in addressing a social need through traditional means. Greater difficulty may heighten the imperative for initiating a social entrepreneurship venture.

Radicality: The extent to which addressing a particular problem requires significant innovation.

These criteria serve to delineate and evaluate social opportunities, aiding social entrepreneurs in identifying and prioritizing areas where their efforts can yield the greatest impact.

2.4.3.- The role of the social entrepreneur in discovering and exploiting social opportunities

The discovery and exploitation of social opportunities depend on various characteristics possessed by the entrepreneur, as highlighted in the literature. These characteristics include knowledge and background, training and previous experiences, proximity to the social problem, and proximity to other entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneur's knowledge or background

An entrepreneur will discover opportunities related to their prior entrepreneurial knowledge (Venkataraman et al., 1997), which is defined as "the ability to take conceptual and abstract information about where and how to obtain explicit and tacit undervalued resources and how to exploit them" (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001). However, this ability is not evenly distributed among individuals (S. Shane, 2000), which explains why some entrepreneurs discover opportunities while others do not, as generally accepted in the literature (Shane & Cable, 2002; Shepherd & DeTienne, 2005; Zhang et al., 2011).

Shane (2000) identifies three types of prior knowledge relevant to the identification of entrepreneurial opportunities (as shown in Figure 2), even without actively seeking them:

knowledge of the markets, knowledge of ways to serve them, and knowledge of customer problems.

Figure 2: Conceptual model
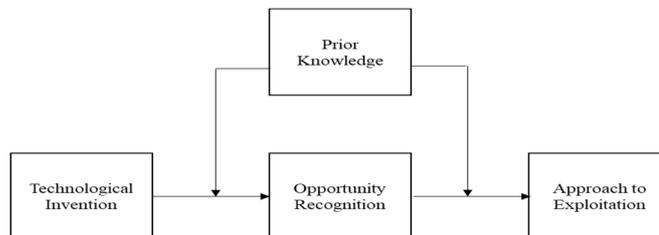
Source: Shane (2000)

This entrepreneurial knowledge does not necessarily imply specific knowledge of the skills required for producing the good or service that the company will offer. If deemed necessary, the entrepreneur can hire an expert in the field (Kirzner, 1979). This approach is applicable to both business and social entrepreneurship (Corner & Ho, 2010).

Entrepreneur's training and previous experiences

An entrepreneur's prior training enhances the recognition and evaluation of opportunities (Castrogiovanni, 1996). When this training is related to the activity that will later be implemented, it facilitates the detection of solutions to market failures and customer needs (Castrogiovanni, 1996). Thus, prior and relevant training acts as an enhancer of opportunity detection.

Furthermore, the specific training an individual possesses before establishing a business is crucial for its proper functioning. Entrepreneurs with a higher level of related training are more likely to succeed and sustain their business (Haber & Reichel, 2005). Additionally, previous entrepreneurial experience and experience related to the business being created also increase the likelihood of success (Cooper et al., 1994; Luk, 1996).

Several authors assert that prior experience also aids in the detection of opportunities by improving knowledge of market operations and customer needs (Cooper et al., 1994; Luk, 1996). Additionally, Ucbasaran et al. (2003) demonstrate that experienced entrepreneurs are more attuned to the entrepreneurial alert approach than novices.

Entrepreneur's proximity to the social problem

Considering that the role of the entrepreneur is to anticipate and meet the needs of the population (Kirzner, 1979), it is essential for the social entrepreneur to have both a close connection to and motivation towards addressing the social problem. This is referred to as prosocial motivation.

Prosocial motivation is defined as "the desire to benefit other people" without seeking financial compensation (Grant, 2008). Studies on its effects show that this type of motivation enhances persistence, performance, and productivity (Bing & Burroughs, 2001; Korsgaard et al., 1997), which are fundamental qualities in entrepreneurship.

Batson (1987) explains prosocial motivation by noting that efforts to help others are not ends in themselves but are instrumental in making us feel better through feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, and joy derived from these actions. Therefore, we help others when our well-being is positively affected.

One reason why the distress of one person can cause distress in another is empathy, defined as "feeling the same emotion that another person is feeling" (Batson et al., 1987). Through empathic processes, one person's mood is transmitted to others.

Thus, for a person to feel prosocial motivation, they must be close to the core of the social problem (Grant, 2008), since empathy is what fosters prosocial behaviours in individuals (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987), increasing the likelihood that they will try to help people in distress.

Another important aspect is that social entrepreneurs aim to reform society, not just address specific social problems temporarily. They strive to create sustainable changes that impact as many people as possible. To achieve this, they seek scalable and replicable solutions, moving away from the concept of competition. For social entrepreneurs, what is a competitor to a commercial entrepreneur can become an ally, part of their network (Waddock & Post, 1991). Networks provide valuable assets, offering access to key information, resources, and other networks (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Ozgen & Baron, 2007). This social capital enhances the venture's legitimacy, recognition, and the realization of ideas (Arenius & De Clercq, 2005; Bygrave & Minniti, 2000; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Elfring & Hulsink, 2003; Jenssen & Koenig, 2002; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

In addition to being dynamic, creative, and efficient (Dees, 1998), social entrepreneurs are characterized by strong social values, leadership skills, significant credibility, integrity, and the ability to garner support for their objectives or followers for their ventures (Mair & Marti, 2006). They demonstrate balanced judgment and a coherent unity of purpose and action in the face of social complexity (Sullivan Mort et al., 2003).

In conclusion, a social entrepreneur is a leader who initiates innovative business activities, viewing neglected social problems as business opportunities. Their primary goal is to achieve community, social, or environmental benefits, although this does not preclude obtaining economic benefits in their daily business practices.

2.4.4.- Introducing the Life Cycle of a Social Venture

Life cycle theory is a dynamic construct at the organizational level. As illustrated in Figure *3*, it indicates that firms progress through several stages: embryonic, growth, shake-out, maturity, and decline (Ashta, 2020).

Figure 3: Life Cycle approach
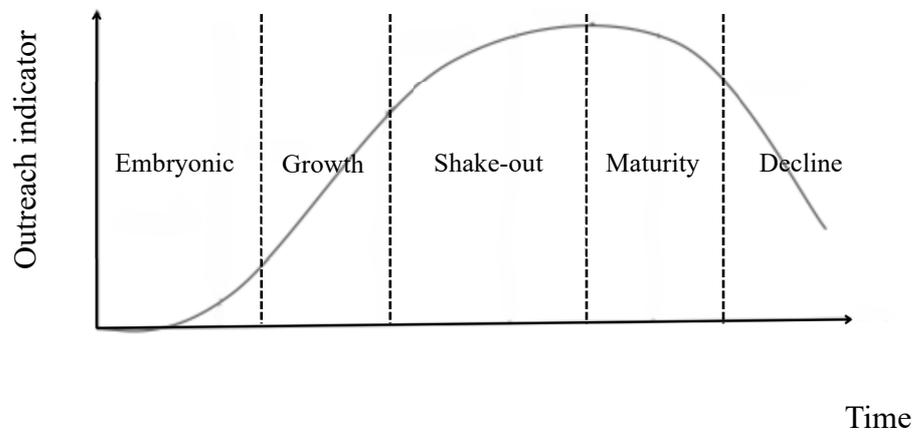
Source: own elaboration adapted from Ashta (2020)

In the following sections, each stage of the life cycle is explained in greater detail, with a specific focus on social enterprises.

2.4.4.1.- The Embryonic Stage

As Lowe (1995) points out, "having a clear vision or even a bold dream is the essential prerequisite for creativity. Such a dream has an all-consuming drive to create something that will have an existence of its own." Some social entrepreneurs are willing to sacrifice family life to create something that benefits those most in need (Venugopal & Abhi, 2013). To compensate for this sacrifice, society often joins in the effort of the social entrepreneur.

New ventures confront the "liability of newness" because the risk of failure for new ventures is much higher than for established organizations (Stinchcombe, 1965). Most start-ups lack a consistent past, such as a financial background, and are low-power actors (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009), often struggling to obtain support from the ecosystem. This can challenge their existence in the embryonic stage. Zimmerman & Zeitz (2002) suggest that there is a legitimacy threshold below which a new company will not attract the necessary resources.

One way to overcome the legitimacy threshold and ultimately access necessary resources is by conveying the inspiring vision of the social venture (Ashta, 2020). This narrative holds true for all kinds of activities that transform people's lives and use success stories to inspire others to join the social enterprise (Haugh & Talwar, 2016). This vision appeals to a sector of the population seeking a higher calling to engage in meaningful work, willing to work long hours for low pay, sacrificing personal health, family life, and social life (Dempsey & Sanders, 2010).

2.4.4.2.- Growth

For commercial companies, the embryonic stage typically leads to rapid growth. Taylor et al., (2002) have identified five primary reasons for scaling social ventures: (1) Moral imperative; (2) Demand-side pressures; (3) Organizational needs; (4) Funders' expectations; and (5) the personal ambition of the social entrepreneur.

According to Blundel & Lyon (2015), scaling a social enterprise offers several key benefits: (a) increased likelihood of survival; (b) enhanced efficiency; and (c) improved effectiveness. However, managing rapid growth in commercial firms involves careful attention to profit margins, asset turnover, retention or dividend policies, and financial leverage (Ashta, 2008; Higgins, 1977). In contrast, for social enterprises, dividends are replaced by the pursuit of economic resources from external ecosystems.

Recent research indicates that scaling social enterprises differ from those that do not in their ability to attract subsidies and earned income, driven by a management culture that boosts employee motivation (Bacq & Eddleston, 2018). However, the pursuit of subsidies can divert resources that might otherwise be used to expand social impact, prompting questions about the sustainability of relying on foreign financial aid.

As highlighted in the previous section, in the embryonic stage of a social enterprise, entrepreneurs inspire action through compelling storytelling to secure initial resources. However, sustaining subsidies requires demonstrating that the story translates into tangible social benefits for the target population. Social entrepreneurs achieve this

through continuous impact measurement, shifting focus from the entrepreneur and their initial model to company management and growth strategies as the enterprise moves into the growth stage (Bruno & Casanovas, 2013).

As the social enterprise advances in this growth stage and reaches the break-even point, the imperative for social justification diminishes, enabling the entrepreneur to focus on financial sustainability. Faced with these challenges, social entrepreneurs may consider whether increasing profitability through cost reduction, higher prices for beneficiaries, and compromising aspects of their original vision might be easier (Kerlin & Pollak, 2018).

2.4.4.3.- Shakeout

At this stage, like commercial enterprises, social enterprises are approaching market saturation. Existing theory indicates that some will merge with others, while others will be driven out by competition (Pinto, 2020).

On the other hand, there may be a conflict between social expectations of social performance and actual social performance. This suggests that social entrepreneurs who transform certain processes towards a commercial enterprise need to maintain a delicate balance in managing profits: to be profitable, but not too profitable so that public stakeholders who previously subsidised the sector do not feel that their money has gone into private pockets (Ashta, 2018).

The theoretical advantage for social enterprises transitioning towards profitability lies in potentially larger size and faster growth, which can lead to greater market share and profitability, improving survival prospects. However, for those still dependent on external financial aid and subsidies, the path forward becomes less clear. Social entrepreneurs must continue to justify their enterprise's social impact through significant services and outcomes (Ashta, 2020).

2.4.4.4.- Maturity

During the maturity stage, the growth rate of revenue slows down as new competitors enter the market with innovative products and services, a phenomenon known as "creative destruction," as studied by Schumpeter (1942). This stage is often underestimated because it may seem like the end of the entrepreneur's and company's story. However, there is limited research on the maturity phase of social enterprises (Massele & Fengju, 2016), despite its potential for reflection and interaction with other stakeholders that could lead to new initiatives.

Therefore, the maturity stage represents a moment for companies to reinvent themselves through conceptualizing, creating, and launching a new generation of products and services (Massele & Fengju, 2016).

2.4.4.5.- Decline

Just as in any business venture, when new innovations enter the market, older businesses may either adapt and transform or face the risk of becoming obsolete. This principle applies equally to social enterprises: if another organization can perform their work more efficiently or effectively, the rationale for their continued existence may diminish (Ashta, 2020).

There are also political-economic reflections concerning social enterprises. The leaders of these enterprises can become highly influential and popular, potentially creating competition with political leaders for public support and influence. This dynamic can shape political landscapes and power dynamics within communities and societies (Picherit, 2015).

2.5.- People in a social venture

2.5.1.- From an individual to a collective perspective

In the existing literature on social entrepreneurship, a predominant view is 'founder centric', emphasizing the role of the social entrepreneur as the primary agent of change who identifies problems and creates ventures to address them (Bacq et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2000; Shaw & Carter, 2007; Sullivan, 2007). However, there is growing recognition of broader conceptualizations that highlight collective approaches and the importance of networks and collaborative efforts (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; Tabuenca et al., 2008).

The literature identifies two main schools of thought in social entrepreneurship: the 'individual vision' school, prevalent in the United States and influential in Europe, which emphasizes the entrepreneur's individual efforts and qualities as pivotal to the enterprise's implementation and evolution (Austin & Stevenson, 2006; Bornstein, 2007; Dees, 1998); and the emerging 'collective vision' (Spear, 2011), which integrates the social entrepreneur's work within a group context. This perspective challenges the traditional view of the social entrepreneur as a solitary figure (Drayton, 2002; Hart and Christensen, 2002; Mair and Marti, 2006; Moreno *et al.*, 2010; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Prahalad and Hammond, 2002; Spear, 2011), advocating for a more collaborative approach.

The generation of ideas within a group setting supports opportunity detection (Chell 2007; Shepherd and Patzelt 2011; Braund and Schwittay 2006; Henriques and Richardson 2013; Sharir and Lerner 2006). This collaborative approach is increasingly recognized, with some studies even questioning the necessity of the individual entrepreneur (Shaw & Carter, 2007).

Despite broader conceptualizations emphasizing collective approaches and the importance of networks (Mair & Marti, 2006), there remains a significant research gap in this area. The Multistage and Multi-level model proposed by Saebi et al. (2019) illustrates the multi-level perspective (macro, meso, and micro) and underscores the pivotal role of entrepreneurial teams in both pre-formation and post-formation stages Figure 4.

Figure 4: *Social Entrepreneurship as a Multistage, Multilevel Phenomenon*
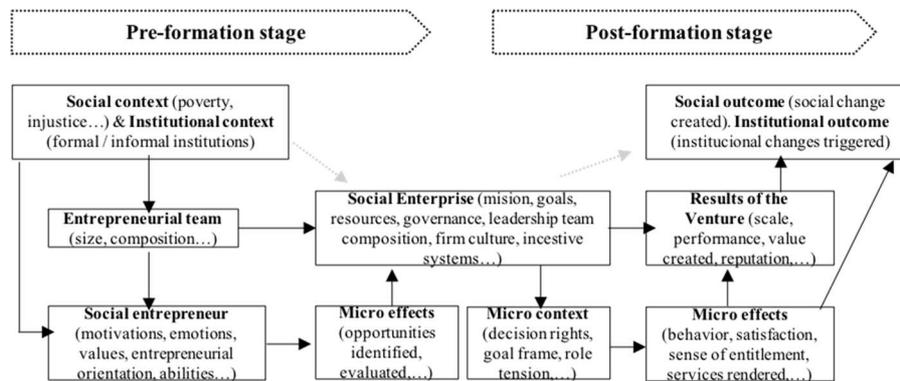
Source: *own elaboration adapted from Saebi et al., (2019)*

Bolzani et al. (2019) argue that collective outcomes surpass individual ones, as groups tend to be more creative, resilient, adventurous, wise, and robust. This enhanced performance stems from a shared leadership approach within the organization. In such dynamics, team members engage in ongoing interaction, exchanging and complementing ideas, perspectives, and values, which collectively shape an evolving vision for the enterprise.

Figure 5: *Social Engagement Network*
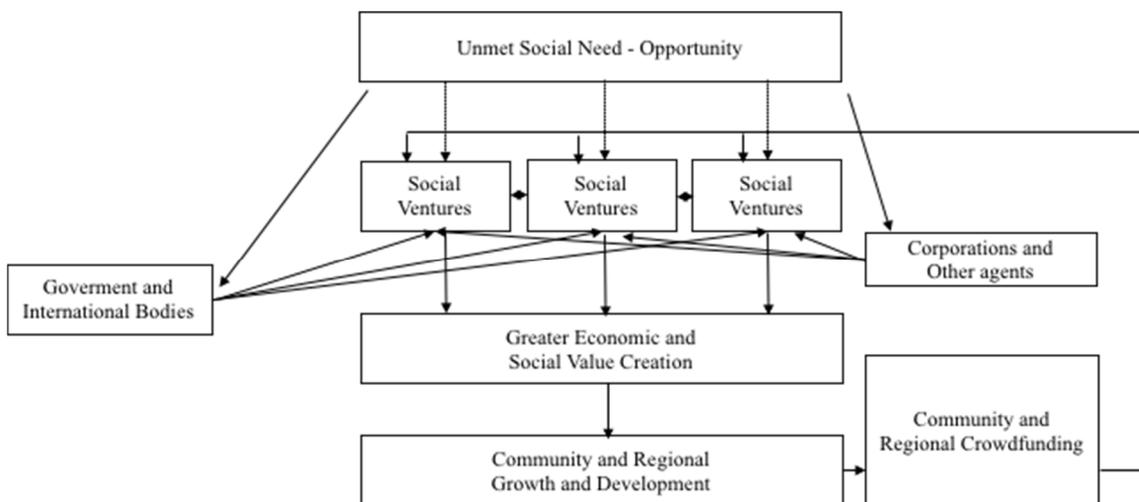
Source: *own elaboration adapted from the Social Engagement Network model (Meyskens et al., 2010).*

Cooperation spans across various stakeholders including entrepreneurs, managers, employees, clients, suppliers, and institutions. These relationships foster trust, teamwork, and organizational commitment (Koschatzky, 2002; Meyskens et al., 2010), highlighting the significance of networks and collaborative efforts, as illustrated in Figure **5**.

Among the various types of social networks, friendship networks are particularly influential in motivating individuals to innovate within organizations. These networks provide a sense of belonging and identity, exert significant influence over individual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, and are built on proximity and trust among individuals (Morrison, 2002).

For social entrepreneurs, social networks serve as invaluable tools for accessing resources critical to entrepreneurship that may not be obtainable individually (García & Marco, 1999). These resources include technology, information, material resources, and more. The support of like-minded groups is crucial, especially those who share values with the venture (Aldrich et al., 2002). For instance, Craig & Lindsay, (2001) demonstrated that social networks can serve as sources of opportunities and learning for entrepreneurship.

Public administrations also play a pivotal role in supporting social entrepreneurs through various forms of assistance for business creation and development (Summers, 2004), including financial and technical support. Financial constraints are typically a major hurdle for the establishment and sustainability of social enterprises, mirroring challenges faced in other forms of entrepreneurship (Tabuenca et al., 2008). Therefore, having a thorough understanding of public policies aimed at fostering entrepreneurship, particularly in the social sector, is crucial.

2.5.2.- Members of a social venture

Several key agents contribute to the functioning of a social enterprise. Figure 6 illustrates the essential components of a new social venture team, which typically include: the founder or founders, the board of directors (primarily for hybrid or for-profit social ventures), the board of advisors, the joiners and volunteers.

Figure 6: Members of a social venture

```
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │  Board of    │
                    │  Directors   │
                    └──────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│  Volunteers  │───▶│  Founder(s)  │◀───│  Board of    │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    │  Advisers    │
                           ▲             └──────────────┘
                           │
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │   Joiners    │
                    └──────────────┘
```
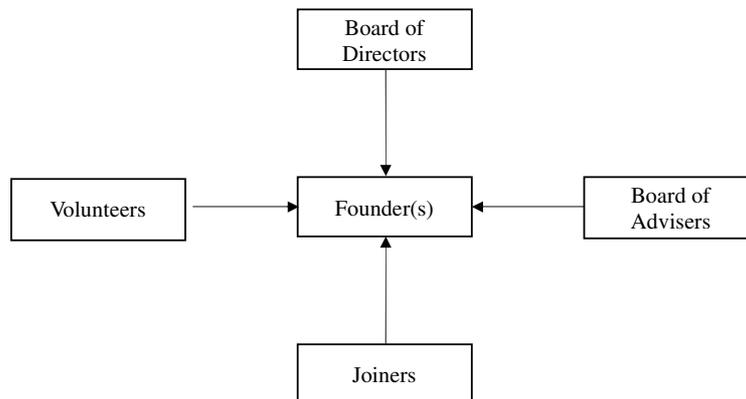
Source: own elaboration

Within a social venture, the founding team occupies a central role, responsible for strategic decisions and shaping the organizational culture (Barringer & Ireland, 2010). Social entrepreneurship ventures can originate from an individual or a group effort; research suggests that 50 to 70 percent of for-profit ventures are initiated by individuals (Miller et al., 2011). However, successful management often requires a team effort, leveraging complementary skills and experiences (Ensley et al., 2002; Iacobucci & Rosa, 2010; Wood & McKinley, 2010).

The size of the founding team is crucial; it is recommended to keep it relatively small, ideally no more than four members, to maintain agility and decision-making efficiency (Vissa, 2011), A larger team may hinder the venture's development and performance.

In contrast to commercial enterprises where the board of directors is elected by shareholders, in social enterprises, the board composition differs. It is typically selected by key stakeholders such as donors or government entities to oversee management. However, for social enterprises operating as for-profit entities, board structure and appointment processes may resemble those of commercial companies (Lester et al., 2008). Board members contribute not only governance but also legitimacy to the enterprise, crucial for attracting support (Barringer & Ireland, 2010).

In addition to a board of directors, social enterprises may establish a board of advisors. Unlike directors, advisors provide unpaid guidance and expertise without legal responsibilities. Their role is advisory but contributes significantly to project legitimacy and donor appeal (Lester et al., 2008).

Volunteers are essential contributors to social enterprises, offering their time and skills without financial compensation. Their motivation stems from a desire to contribute to a cause, enhancing organizational capacity and impact (Anheier & Salamon, 1999)

Joiners are paid employees crucial to the enterprise's development. They are vital components of the ecosystem of a social enterprise, performing fundamental roles that go beyond daily operational tasks (Roach & Sauermann, 2015). They bring a range of essential skills and competencies that help the organisation fulfil its mission and strategic objectives. Joiners occupy a variety of positions within the social enterprise, from operational levels to managerial roles, and their responsibilities may include project management, programme development, marketing and communication, fundraising, and daily operations (Bates & Nucci, 1989; Eesley & Wang, 2017). Committed to the organisation's mission, they are crucial for the execution of strategies and the achievement of organisational goals (Fayolle & Matlay, 2010; Friedkin, 1980).

The professional backgrounds and competencies of joiners are pivotal factors influencing venture outcomes (Baena-Luna et al., 2020). Functional expertise in areas such as marketing, sales, and operations, as well as broader entrepreneurial competencies, contribute to organizational effectiveness (Hambrick and Mason, 1984).

The motivation of joiners in a social enterprise often extends beyond salary. Their commitment stems from a strong alignment with the organisation's mission and values, which can translate into greater productivity, creativity and innovation, and lower staff turnover (Thompson et al., 2000). Joiners motivated by a social mission tend to be more productive and dedicated to their tasks, are more inclined to propose innovative ideas that can improve processes and increase social impact, and are more likely to stay long-term, reducing turnover and the costs associated with hiring and training new employees (Fişek et al., 1991; Mayhew et al., 1995).

2.6.- Chapter Summary

As we have seen throughout this chapter, social entrepreneurship has garnered significant attention due to its innovative approach to addressing social issues through entrepreneurial ventures. In recent years, among economic crises and the inadequacies of traditional economic models, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a viable alternative. It focuses on creating social value while ensuring economic sustainability, challenging the dichotomy between profit-driven enterprises and non-profit organizations. Social enterprises come in various forms, including purely non-profit, purely for-profit, and hybrid organizations, each with its distinct advantages and challenges. Despite the diversity in organizational structures, the core objective remains consistent: leveraging entrepreneurial principles to achieve positive social impact alongside financial viability.

Literature has particularly focused on the figure of the social entrepreneur. Unlike traditional entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs prioritize social impact over financial gain, aiming to improve societal well-being through innovative approaches and systemic changes. Their work is characterized by a strong sense of social mission. Despite varying definitions and motivations, social entrepreneurs share a commitment to creating lasting social change through entrepreneurial solutions.

We have also explored the journey from ideation to the life cycle of social enterprises. It begins by highlighting diverse sources of social ideas, including personal experiences, systematic searches, media awareness, hobbies, and serendipity; all of which drive the subsequent identification of social opportunities. Social entrepreneurs leverage their knowledge, training, proximity to social issues, and networks to identify and exploit opportunities effectively. As ventures progress through stages such as embryonic, growth, consolidation, maturity, and decline, they face unique challenges and opportunities in the social sector, including scaling impact, managing subsidies, and adapting to market dynamics.

Finally, in the section on individuals involved in a social enterprise, we have analysed the evolution from an individual-centric to a collective perspective within social entrepreneurship. Initially, the literature emphasized the pivotal role of the individual social entrepreneur in identifying and leading ventures to address social issues. However, there is growing recognition of the effectiveness of collective approaches and the role of individuals surrounding the entrepreneur in fostering innovation and sustainability. Research highlights two main streams: the 'individual vision' school, which underscores the efforts and individual qualities of the entrepreneur, and the emerging 'collective vision', which integrates social entrepreneurship within a collaborative framework. This shift challenges the traditional model of the solitary entrepreneur, advocating for shared leadership, diverse perspectives, and network-based collaboration to enhance organizational resilience and impact. Key contributors within social enterprises include founders, boards of directors and advisors, volunteers, and joiners (paid employees), each playing crucial roles in guiding the organization towards achieving its social mission.

CHAPTER 3.- SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GASTRONOMY

3.1.- Chapter introduction

This chapter offers a comprehensive exploration of the dynamic landscape of social entrepreneurship within the gastronomic sector. We begin by establishing the general context of social entrepreneurship in the field of gastronomy, examining what is also referred to as "Social Gastronomy" and its various manifestations across different regions and cultures. Subsequently, we will define the boundaries of this movement, analysing what constitutes and does not constitute social entrepreneurship in gastronomy.

We will delve into the Spanish case, one of the countries with the highest recognition of its gastronomy globally, which will serve as a thread to analyse specific examples and initiatives that exemplify social entrepreneurship in the gastronomy of this country.

3.2.- General context of Social Entrepreneurship in Gastronomy

As previously mentioned, Social Entrepreneurship activities aim to enhance communities by creating "social value." Social entrepreneurship drives significant change by addressing social issues while striving for sustainable improvements. Operating at the local level, these initiatives can have global impacts. Historically, social entrepreneurship has focused on sectors such as education, health, environment, energy, financial inclusion, housing, technology, culture, and art (Ombrane & Fayolle, 2010).

The COVID-19 crisis and ongoing territorial conflicts have profoundly affected human life and the economies of affected nations, leading to widespread emotional distress

characterized by uncertainty, fear, stress, and frustration (Kraus et al., 2020). Global manufacturing disruptions have extended economic repercussions beyond national borders (Yu & Aviso, 2020).

These crises have highlighted the vulnerabilities of our systems and underscored the need to strengthen our social institutions (Buheji & Ahmed, 2020). Moreover, they have demonstrated our capacity to devise innovative solutions to new challenges despite limited resources (Meyer et al., 2020). It is within this context of solidarity, uncertainty, and resource constraints that social enterprises, including those in the gastronomy sector, often thrive (Laskovaia et al., 2019; Marino et al., 2008; Varum & Rocha, 2013).

Gastronomy has emerged as a vibrant sector for entrepreneurial endeavours. Defined in this thesis as the informed understanding of what and how we eat, gastronomy encompasses interdisciplinary knowledge that examines and influences physical-chemical, cultural, and socioeconomic processes related to food cultivation, processing, distribution, and consumption, affecting physical, mental, and social well-being (Gobierno Vasco, 2020).

Traditionally associated with tourism, gastronomy not only complements tourist experiences but often defines them, with certain destinations becoming renowned for their culinary offerings (Gómez-Rico et al., 2021; Madeira et al., 2023). Gastronomy imbues a place with distinctive tastes, smells, and cultural identities (Malisiova et al., 2023; Serçek & Serçek, 2015). The consumption of these dishes evokes customs, traditions, and preparation methods, allowing travellers to mentally revisit and emotionally connect with places they have visited (Andrés & Wolffe, 2018; Gupta et al., 2023; Kalyna et al., 2024).

Beyond culinary preparation, gastronomy is intricately linked to biodiversity, health, and social development (Damasceno et al., 2023). Social gastronomy has emerged as a pivotal movement, combating food waste and contributing significantly to vulnerable populations (Eris et al., 2022).

In the realm of social entrepreneurship, gastronomy encompasses the entire value chain—from farming and processing to distribution and consumption (see Figure 7). This chain involves producers, processors, distributors, consumers, and regulatory bodies such as governments and NGOs. Collaboration among these stakeholders is now more critical than ever.

Figure 7: *Gastronomy Value Chain*
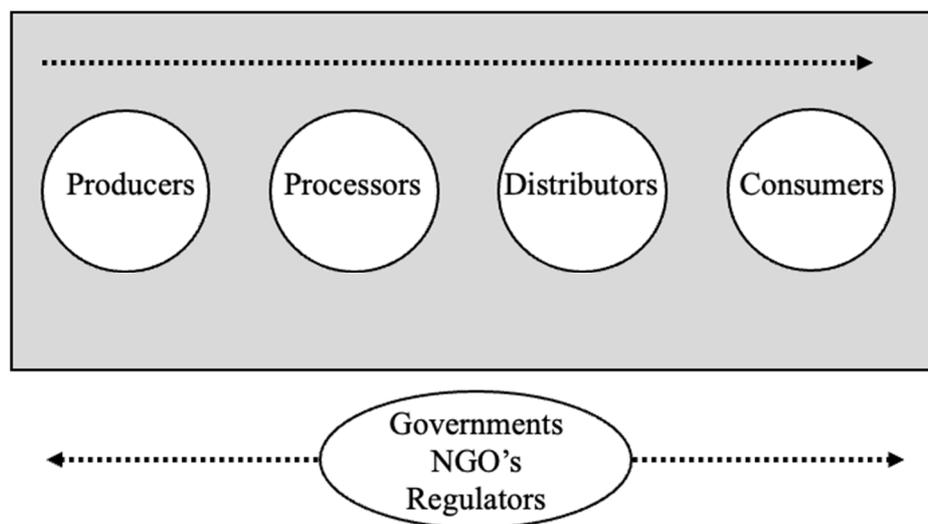
Source: *Own elaboration*

In summary, gastronomy today is a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond the culinary realm. Economic, social, cultural, and even political realities intersect with our eating habits in profound ways. Contemporary chefs are expanding beyond their kitchens to engage more deeply with their surroundings (Batat, 2020), transforming gastronomy into a fertile ground for social entrepreneurship (Morales & Coppin, 2015).

Given these attributes, critical questions emerge: Can gastronomy serve as a catalyst for social change? Could it contribute to enhancing the environment, economy, and the well-being of communities? The lack of academic literature on this subject paves the way for future exploration of gastronomy as a significant sector for driving social change.

3.3.- 'Social Gastronomy' in the world

Far from being merely incidental or a media sensation, social entrepreneurship in gastronomy has sparked a global movement. Extensive literature and secondary sources document numerous projects addressing diverse social issues. Examples include: integrating marginalized populations through vocational training (Pansarella, 2018); promoting responsible food consumption to combat waste (Mansuy, 2016; Petrini et al., 2020); fostering healthy eating habits, such as educational programs in schools to reduce fat intake (Black, 2010; Tormo-Santamaría & Bernabeu-Mestre, 2020); revitalizing local products to boost community development communities (Atala, 2013; Barber, 2015; Noguer-Juncà et al., 2021); and many others (Navarro-Dols & González-Pernía, 2020). Table 8 illustrates various examples aligned with these objectives.

Table 8: Examples of Social Entrepreneurship in Gastronomy in the world

Objective	Entrepreneur	Venture location	Venture's name	Description
Social Insertion	Alberto Crisci	United Kingdom	The Clink Restaurants (www.theclinkcharity.org)	Rehabilitation of prisoners through restaurants in the prisons themselves.
Social Insertion	David Hertz	Brazil	Gastromotiva (https://gastromotiva.org)	Culinary training for vulnerable people from favelas.
Social Insertion	Gabriel Garza	Mexico	Destellos de Sabor	Teaching the blind to cook for themselves; giving them independence, self-esteem, and the potential to find future employment
Social Insertion	Kamilla Seidler and Michelangelo Cestari	Bolivia	Gustu (www.gustu.bo)	Training and empowering locals both by opening up employment possibilities, and a wider knowledge and pride about their ethnic gastronomy.
Social Insertion	Jessamyn Rodriguez	United States	Hot Bread Kitchen www.hotbreadkitchen.org	Training program for low-income, minority and immigrant women.
Social Insertion	Heidi Bjerkan	Norway	Vippa (www.vippa.no)	Training and work opportunities for refugees and immigrants.
Social Insertion	Dieuveil Malonga	France	Chefs in Africa (www.chefsinafrica.fr)	Digital platform to punt in contact chefs from African countries to academies, hotels and restaurants.
Social Insertion	Caleb Zigas	United States	La Cocina (www.lacocinasf.org)	Transforming people with low-incomes (mostly immigrant and African-American women) into owners of their own business
Social Insertion	Selassie Atadika	Ghana	Midunu (www.midunu.com)	Inspiring women to move beyond their traditional roles as home cooks and bearers of culinary tradition

Social Insertion	Giovanni Cuocci	Italy	La lanterna di Diogene (www.lalanternadidiogene.org)	Cooperative with people with intellectual disabilities, who grow, prepare and serve the very best of Emilia Romagna's artisanal cuisine
Social Insertion	Mario Castrellón	Panama	Maíto (www.maitopanama.com)	Creating opportunities for social development in coffee-farming communities.
Social Insertion	Simon Boyle	United Kingdom	Beyond Food (www.beyondfood.org.uk)	Providing essential culinary skills to homeless and unemployed people.
Education in healthy habits	Ann Cooper	United States	Chef Ann Foundation (CAF) (www.chefannfoundation.org)	Donating salad bars to schools and helping parents advocate for better food in their own children's schools.
Education in healthy habits	Teresa Corçao	Brazil	Tapioca Project	Students were taught how to prepare tapioca and its role in history, music, folklore and cuisine
Education in healthy habits	Dan Giusti	United States	Brigaid	Helping schools rethink the design and functionality of their kitchens.
Education in healthy habits	Karissa Becerra	Peru	La Revolución www.larevolucion.org	Training and education program, aiming to generate an emotional connection between people and food.
Education in healthy habits	Siew-Chinn Chin	United States	The Charlie Cart Project (www.charliecart.org)	Training educators and children connecting cooking, health, and the environment.
Feeding vulnerable people	Margot Janse	South Africa	Feeding Hungry Minds (www.feedinghungryminds.co.uk)	Program that produces thousands of meals a day for local schools, in partnership with other local initiatives
Feeding vulnerable people	Joshna Maharaj	Canada	n/a	Working with several hospitals and institutions to help them serve better food to patients.
Feeding vulnerable people	Niko Romito	Italy	Inteligencia Nutricional	Devising a system that enables hospitals to serve healthier and tastier food
Feeding vulnerable people	Melinda McRostie	Greece	Starfish Foundation	Offering food, water, clothing, medical care, information, and emotional support to refugees in Lesbos.
Feeding vulnerable people	Mariana Aleixo	Brazil	Maré de Sabores (www.redesdamare.org.br)	Providing cooking workshops and gastronomic events for the community.
Feeding vulnerable people	Elijah Amoo Addo	Ghana	Food for All Africa (www.foodforallafrica.com)	Feeding vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa and recovering surplus food from supermarkets and restaurants.
Feeding vulnerable people	Tracy Chang	United States	Off Their Plate (www.offtheirplate.org)	Helping vulnerable communities (i.e., immigrant families) that are struggling to get access to food.
Research	Massimiliano Alajmo	Italy	Il Gusto per la ricerca (www.ilgustoperlaricerca.it)	Funding research into children's neoplastic diseases
Local Community support	Rodolfo Guzmán	Chile	Conectaz	Discovering native ingredients and sharing this knowledge in the search for new food sources

Local Community support	Manoella Buffara	Brazil	Curitiba	Working closely with some twenty local food producers, she has created an agro-ecological network
Local Community support	Alicia Gironella	Mexico	Semillaton	Preserving native ingredients and placing seeds in community banks to distribute among farmers.
Local Community support	Ricardo Muñoz Zurita	Mexico	Encyclopedic Dictionary of Mexican Gastronomy	Promoting the country's culinary heritage.
Local Community support	Virgilio Martínez	Peru	Mater Iniciativa www.materiniciativa.com	Knowledge and research are combined into a creative offering
Local Community support	Lars Williams	Danemark	Empirical Spirits (www.empirical.co)	Promoting innovative ideas designed to empower local communities to explore the potential of their untapped culinary resources ranging from wild fruits to termites.
Local Community support	Ed Lee	United States	Reboot Relief Reboot Program (www.leeinitiative.org)	Supporting the relationships between small farmers and local, independent restaurants; purchasing fresh products from small farms and providing those resources to local restaurants.
Waste reduction	Douglas McMaster	United Kingdom	Silo (www.silolondon.com)	"Upcycling" process transforming used materials to produce an object of equal or superior quality, over recycling.
Others	Cristina Martínez	United States	#Right2Work Initiative	Public dialogue about the conditions for undocumented workers in the restaurant industry

Source: own elaboration

The transformative power of gastronomy is widely recognized, and its importance has become even more significant since 2016. That year, the Basque Culinary Center (BCC), in partnership with the Basque Government and as part of the Euskadi-Basque Country Strategy, launched the Basque Culinary World Prize (BCWP), often referred to as the "Nobel of Gastronomy." This prestigious award aims to encourage chefs from around the globe to expand their influence beyond traditional culinary boundaries. Winners receive a prize of 100,000 euros and support causes such as boosting local economies, promoting cultures, empowering women in entrepreneurship, and reducing environmental impacts in restaurants, as outlined in Table **9**.

In social gastronomy entrepreneurship activities, comparable opportunities or needs can be identified, but the economic context influences how entrepreneurs approach their ventures.

Table 9: *Winners of the Basque Culinary World Prize since its creation in 2016*

Year	Name	Country	Venture	Description
2016	María Fernanda di Giacobbe	Venezuela	Cacao de Origen (www.cacaodeorigenvenezuela.com)	Supporting local producers with the resources they need to improve their product.
2017	Leonor Espjnosa	Colombia	Funleo Foundation (www.funleo.org)	Reviving the ancestral know-how of indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples.
2018	Jock Zonfrillo	Scotland / Australia	Orana Foundation (www.theoranafoundation.org)	Supporting indigenous communities in the production and faire marketing of their products.
2019	Anthony Myint	United States	ZeroFoodprint (www.zerofoodprint.org)	Providing tools for chefs to reduce or eliminate their businesses' carbon footprint.
2020	José Andrés	Spain / United States	World Central Kitchen (www.wck.org)	Intervening in many countries and mobilizing thousands of volunteers to cook around the world.
2021	Xanty Elías	Spain	Los Niños se Comen El Futuro (www.losninossecomenelfuturo.org)	Educating the next generations about healthy eating.
2022	Fatmata Binta	Sierra Leone	Dine on a mat (www.dineonamat.com)	Nomadic restaurant demonstrating how the Fulani people eat and interact with food.
2023	Ebru Baybara Demir	Türkiye	From Soil to Plate (www.ebrubaybarademir.com)	Promote the production and consumption of local and ancestral grains
2024	Andrés Torres	Spain	Casa Nova (www.casanovarest.com)	Incorporate sustainable cooking practices and recipes based on knowledge acquired from other communities

Source: *own elaboration from Basque Culinary World Prize (2024)*

3.4.- What is and what is not Social Entrepreneurship in Gastronomy

The objective of this section is to provide an overview of how social change through gastronomy has evolved in recent years. More specifically, it aims to shed light on how social entrepreneurship relates to gastronomy from an academic point of view.

To achieve this goal, based on the frameworks from Martin and Osberg (2007) and Saebi *et al.* (2019), different types of social initiatives are distinguished to understand what constitutes social entrepreneurship in gastronomy, with practical examples.

As in other areas of social entrepreneurship, a wide range of movements and activities can be found in gastronomy. Given the continual blending of concepts, there is an increasing need to classify within this theoretical framework.

As mentioned in the previous section, social entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly important in society, since the creation and development of companies is no longer exclusive to people who seek to maximize profits. Even if everything is "social," not everything should be considered as social entrepreneurship. In fact, as Martin and Osberg suggest, the term has become so widely used that there is a tendency to associate any kind of socially beneficial activity with social entrepreneurship (2007). That is why they propose to classify the different forms of social engagement based on the nature of the action and its outcome, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Pure Forms of Social Engagement

Source: Martin & Osberg (2007)

Firstly, "Social Service Provision" involves an individual or entity identifying a social opportunity and initiating a venture. While these efforts may have limited impact without broader replication, they are crucial for supporting local populations.

Secondly, "Social Activism" shares a similar motivation—addressing societal imbalances. However, the distinction lies in the approach: activists seek change through indirect means, influencing governments, NGOs, consumers, and workers. For instance,

World Central Kitchen, led by José Andrés, exemplifies this by using food to revive communities and economies. Following Hurricane Maria in 2015, they served over 3.6 million meals in Puerto Rico, prompting urgent government response. Andrés & Wolffe (2018) emphasize that food is more than sustenance; it embodies identity, pride, family, and community foundations, making cooking an empowering act.

Similarly, the concept of social entrepreneurship itself can be categorized based on two dimensions highlighted by Saebi et al. (2019). As shown in Figure 9, the first dimension distinguishes whether social value is created for beneficiaries (sole recipients of goods/services) or with beneficiaries (incorporating them into the value creation process). The second dimension assesses the integration level between social and commercial activities. Each quadrant will be illustrated with real gastronomy cases to elaborate further.

Figure 9: A Typology of Social Entrepreneurship

		Social mission	
		For beneficiaries	**With beneficiaries**
		(beneficiaries are solely recipient)	(beneficiaries are par of value creation process)
Economic mission	**Differentiated** (commercial revenue cross-subsidizes social missioin)	(Quadrant A) Two-sided value model	(Quadrant B) Market-oriented work model
	Integrated (beneficiaries are paying customers)	(Quadrant C) One-sided value model	(Quadrant D) Social-oriented work model

Source: Saebi, Foss, & Linder (2019)

In Quadrant A, Anthony Myint, an American chef, champions the "two-sided value model" (commonly known as the "buy one, give one" model), where beneficiaries receive assistance funded by sales from a broad customer base. Myint has spent over five years directing his culinary colleagues towards achieving a zero-carbon footprint. Among his various gastronomic ventures, focused on social causes, he emphasizes initiatives like Zero Foodprint in San Francisco. His work with restaurants is twofold: social, aimed at raising awareness to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and economic, prioritizing financial aspects within the restaurant industry.

Zero Foodprint conducts audits of restaurant operations and collaboratively designs annual plans to reduce environmental impact. This includes practices such as water conservation, waste reduction, and organic matter conversion into compost. This research, benefiting society at large, is funded through one percent of the turnover generated by consumers at participating restaurants. Approximately thirty globally renowned restaurants, including Noma (René Redzepi), Atelier Crenn (Dominique Crenn), and Osteria Francescana (Massimo Bottura), have committed to achieving carbon neutrality through this initiative.

In Quadrant B, the "market-oriented work model" thrives, where beneficiaries actively participate in the value chain by creating products or services offered. A notable example is Vippa, a street food market in Oslo, originally a fish store transformed into a multicultural gastronomic hub (Vippa, 2024). Many chefs cooking at Vippa arrived in Norway seeking refuge. The market aims to integrate these newcomers and foster cultural dialogue amidst tightened immigration measures by the Norwegian government.

Heidi Bjerkan, the Norwegian chef behind Vippa, selects refugee proposals, offering successful candidates a stand for a year. During this period, they receive training in entrepreneurship, food safety standards, Norwegian language, and culture. Vippa supports promising projects by facilitating access to bank loans for independent ventures. Additionally, waste produced at Vippa is recycled into fertilizer for an onsite roof garden, supplying organic produce to its stands.

In Quadrant C, the "one-sided value model" emphasizes advantageous conditions for customers who claim products or services. Peru's Pachacutec Cooking Institute (ICP) exemplifies gastronomy's role as a social agent (Sichra, 2017). Established in 2007 under the Pachacutec Foundation and Gastón Acurio's leadership, the institute offers a comprehensive culinary education (Luque, 2010). Aimed at youth from low-income families, students pay modest admission and tuition fees subsidized by around 70%. Outstanding graduates receive scholarships for internships in top global restaurants, thanks to strategic partnerships.

Quadrant D extends from Quadrant C, where beneficiaries not only enjoy customer benefits but also gain employment within the social enterprise itself. Gastromotiva, initiated in Brazil in 2006 by chef and social entrepreneur David Hertz, exemplifies this model. Over a decade, Gastromotiva has transformed over 1,800 lives across Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, and El Salvador through free professional training. Projects like the Refettorio dining room, launched during the Olympic Games, have served thousands of free meals from surplus food, promoting dignity restoration for marginalized communities (Refettorio Gastromotiva, 2020).

In conclusion, "social" entrepreneurship does not simply denote philanthropy, charity, or humanitarian aid but rather the prioritization of social goals within business ventures. These models often blend aspects of entrepreneurship with social service and activism, reflecting a broader spectrum of impactful initiatives.

3.5.- The Role of the Spanish Gastronomy

Spanish gastronomy is recognized as a cultural asset with a growing influence in areas such as the economy, culture, education, and tourism, in addition to its impact on health and quality of life. The imagination of chefs, their respect for ingredients, and their meticulous culinary techniques ensure that Spanish restaurants consistently rank among the world's best each year. One such example is Spanish chef Ferrán Adriá, who has appeared on the prestigious list compiled by the British magazine Restaurant for four consecutive years, showcasing how Spanish cuisine combines tradition with innovation at an exceptional level.

According to a KPMG study (2021), Spanish gastronomy contributes €388 billion to the economy (33% of Gross Domestic Product), encompassing agricultural and livestock production, distribution, tourism, and hospitality sectors. This comprehensive perspective highlights the breadth and significance of the gastronomic industry.

Table 10: Countries with the greatest presence in the list of the 50 best restaurants in the world

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF RESTAURANTS AMONG THE 50 BEST IN THE WORLD
Spain	5
Italy	4
France	4
Thailand	4
Japan	3
Mexico	3
Peru	3
China	2
United States	2
Germany	2
Singapore	2
Brazil	2
United Kingdom	2
Austria	1
Argentina	1
Sweden	1
Belgium	1
South Africa	1
Denmark	1
Chile	1
Portugal	1
Colombia	1
Slovenia	1
United Arab Emirates	1
Singapore	1

Source: *Own elaboration from The World's 50 Best Restaurants | The Best Restaurants in the World*, 2024

As previously mentioned, the gastronomic sector is studied from a broad perspective, encompassing a value chain with various branches of activity including agricultural production, distribution, hospitality, home-cooked meals, and consequently, tourism and hospitality industries.

The KPMG study also reveals that agriculture, fisheries, and livestock farming play a crucial role in this chain, generating an annual revenue of €50 billion. Furthermore, Spanish gastronomy employs 3.73 million workers, accounting for 18% of the national workforce. Equally notable are the figures related to food exports, which constitute 17% of the total, and the expenditure by international tourists on gastronomy, amounting to 15.5%.

Spanish gastronomy has always been highly esteemed abroad, and this reputation has been further solidified as numerous Spanish establishments have attained top rankings in influential gastronomic guides worldwide. For instance, the annual list of 'The World's 50 Best Restaurants,' published by the British media group William Reed Business Media since 2002, features Spain prominently. In recent editions, Spain has secured positions for six establishments, as detailed in Table 10. The renowned Michelin Guide operates similarly, awarding stars to restaurants that excel in quality, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: *Ranking of the 10 countries awarded with the most Michelin stars according to categories*

MICHELIN STAR RESTAURANTS (2024)				
COUNTRY	*******	******	*****	**TOTAL**
France	30	75	534	639
Japan	20	63	304	387
Italy	13	40	330	383
Germany	10	48	278	336
Spain	15	32	225	272
United States	13	32	189	224
China	5	15	104	124
United Kingdom	9	22	156	187
Switzerland	4	23	105	132
Belgium	2	22	117	141

Source: *Own elaboration from Michelin Guide 2024.*

3.6.- Social Entrepreneurship in the Spanish Gastronomy

Now more than ever, gastronomy is focusing on new models such as social gastronomy, which promotes the need to ensure a sustainable food chain from production to the final consumer, ensuring the supply of top-quality local products with sanitary guarantees.

Similarly, as in the global context of social entrepreneurship in gastronomy, Spain showcases numerous cases involving both small and large entrepreneurs. Social gastronomy is not limited to established chefs alone. In Spain, as illustrated in

Table **12**, small organizations are increasingly thriving and revolutionizing the landscape. Their initiatives range from supporting people at risk of exclusion to revitalizing depopulated areas of Spain, including promoting sustainable agriculture.

Table 12: Examples of Social Entrepreneurship in the Spanish Gastronomy

Objective	Entrepreneur	Venture's name	Description
Waste reduction	Angel León	Aponiente www.aponiente.com	Provocative culinary innovation at his restaurant, working with universities to explore the potential of the oceans as a source of food
Waste reduction and social insertion	Mireia Barba Jordi Bruna Marina Pons	Espigoladors (www.espigoladors.cat/)	Recovers fruit and vegetables that were going to be discarded by employing people at risk of social exclusion.
Feeding vulnerable and sick people	Marc Puig-Pey	Cooking Area of the Fundació Alicia (www.alicia.cat/es/)	Researching and developing food solutions to ensure that children and adults with dietary restrictions can enjoy food that is both healthy and delicious.
Social insertion	Cristóbal Colón	La Fageda (www.fageda.com/es/)	Group of food companies that professionally and socially integrate people with intellectual disabilities and/or severe mental disorders.
Social insertion	Josep Serra	El Rosal (www.elrosal.cat/es/)	Century-old cookie brand.
Social insertion	Eulàlia Lora Pizarro	Teterum (www.teterum.com)	Tea company that hires people with disabilities.
Social insertion	Miguel Herrera	El Golimbreo (www.elgolimbreo.es)	Inclusive Cooking School whose main mission is to help people at risk of exclusion through training.
Social insertion	n/a	El Quiosco de Down Experience (www.downexperience.com)	Bar-restaurant with almost 70% of its staff at risk of exclusion.

Social insertion	Ángel Palacios	Cocinar a ciegas	Culinary training for blind people
Social insertion	Tomás Aller	Hotel Escuela San Cristóbal (www.hotelescuelasancristobal.com	Hotel that provides training for children and young people at risk of exclusion.
Social insertion	Federica Marzioni	Catering Comidissimo (www.comidissimo.es/)	Catering services training and employing people with social problems in the kitchen and dining room
Social insertion	Martín Habiague	Restaurante Mescladis (www.mescladis.org)	School restaurant that promotes opportunities for people who have difficulty accessing a job.
Social insertion	Christian Mecca	Novaterra Catering (www.novaterracatering.com)	With more than 600 events a year, they work with communities and school cafeterias. There are more than 1000 students and 50 workers.
Social insertion	Àlex Pujol	Cuina Justa (www.cuinajusta.com/es/)	Catering services training and hiring people with difficulties.
Social insertion	Francesc Grimalt and Sergio Caballero	Gallinas y Focas (www.gallinasyfocas.com)	Winery where the members actively participate in the entire wine creation process, being the main protagonists of this venture.
Developing local communities	Nani Moré	Menjadors Ecologics (www.menjadorsecologics.cat)	Promoting better nutrition for children through documentaries and short films
Social insertion and developing local communities	Carlos Zamora	Depersonas (www.depersonas.com) and el Super de los Pastores (www.elsuperdelospastores.com)	Catering and minimarkets with local products, training and hiring young people with intellectual disabilities and people over 50 years of age with job placement problems
Social insertion and developing local communities	J.M. Segura	L'Olivera (www.olivera.org/es/)	A social agriculture venture that also generates opportunities for social inclusion for young people with special needs and reclaiming agricultural activity linked to large cities.

Source: own elaboration

Clearly, the models and examples presented are not purely one-dimensional; they often blend elements of entrepreneurship with social service or activism. In illustrating this hybrid model, several cases have been highlighted involving both small and large organizations, and individuals ranging from chefs to non-chefs, known as 'gastro entrepreneurs'. This diversity reflects the richness of social entrepreneurship and the wide array of ventures through which gastronomy can make a meaningful impact.

3.7.- Chapter Summary

The chapter explores the expansive landscape of social entrepreneurship within the gastronomy sector, highlighting its potential as a catalyst for social change. The COVID-19 pandemic and global conflicts have exposed vulnerabilities in existing systems, underscoring the need for innovative responses and stronger social institutions. Gastronomy, integrated throughout the food value chain from cultivation to consumption, fosters collaboration among stakeholders and generates positive economic, social, and cultural impacts globally.

The global phenomenon of 'Social Gastronomy' is examined, emphasizing its impact beyond media attention. Examples include integrating marginalized populations through vocational training, promoting responsible food consumption, and revitalizing local products for community development. The economic context influences how entrepreneurs in social gastronomy manage their ventures, highlighting the sector's adaptability in addressing global challenges.

An academic framework is provided, distinguishing various types of social initiatives in gastronomy according to Martin & Osberg (2007) and Saebi et al. (2019). Cases such as Anthony Myint in San Francisco and Heidi Bjerkan in Oslo exemplify different models based on whether beneficiaries receive or participate in value creation, emphasizing gastronomy's role in social change and economic empowerment.

Spanish gastronomy is experiencing a transformative surge, emphasizing sustainable practices and promoting local, high-quality products. This movement involves actors from renowned chefs to grassroots organizations dedicated to social causes. The concept of "social gastronomy" is explored globally, distinguishing what constitutes social entrepreneurship and examining the significant role of Spanish gastronomy. Two objectives of the thesis have been already addressed: examining Social Entrepreneurship through gastronomy examples and understanding existing theories in Social Entrepreneurship.

Qualitative methodology is presented as the most suitable to address the remaining objectives. It allows for a deep, contextualized understanding of the phenomenon, capturing complexities within specific contexts (Hlady-Rispal et al., 2021). The adaptability of qualitative methodology ensures that findings are pertinent and meaningful for practice and policy in gastronomic social entrepreneurship (Hlady-Rispal et al., 2021).

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

4.1.- Chapter introduction

Chapter 4 explores qualitative research methodology, focusing on the Case Study approach chosen for this research. It begins with an introduction to the principles guiding qualitative inquiry in this context. The chapter emphasizes the suitability of the Case Study method for in-depth exploration of complex phenomena. It evaluates the methodological rigor of scientific research using Case Studies, discussing aspects such as validity and reliability.

Throughout the different phases of research design, this chapter provides a theoretical section and its practical application to the research of this thesis. Firstly, a detailed research design is presented, starting with the preparatory phase that includes case selection, such as the pilot case "Uninicio," among others. The Evidence Collection Phase covers the design of instruments, qualitative data collection methods, and procedures tailored for this study.

The chapter concludes with the Phase of Evidence Analysis and Presentation of Results, employing ATLAS.ti software for analysis, transcript management, coding, and result synthesis. This process culminates in documenting the study findings and conclusions, which will be presented in subsequent chapters.

4.2.- Qualitative research

Qualitative methodology in research is characterized by obtaining descriptive data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1987) and focusing on answering "how" questions rather than "how

much," aiming to understand the world from the perspectives of those being studied (Pratt, 2009). It generates a substantial amount of information (Phelps & Horman, 2010), providing depth and detail for investigating the issues at hand (Bowen, 2005). In seeking to understand the perspectives of participants thoroughly, qualitative researchers value all opinions (Taylor & Bogdan, 1987).

The analysis of qualitative data seeks to derive meaning and significance from the research questions, aiming to explain complex phenomena characterized by multiple facets of human experiences (Smit, 2002). The efficacy of qualitative data analysis is crucial across various disciplines. Although quantitative methods predominate in most social science research (Silverman, 2021), the use of qualitative and mixed-method approaches has increased in recent years to enhance understanding of studied phenomena (González & de Castro, 2005).

Human relationships involve numerous interrelated variables that manifest in diverse ways. Therefore, when collecting data, efforts are made to ensure they reflect the relationships and experiences of individuals related to the studied issue (Bowen, 2005). Qualitative data, which is descriptive in nature, is essential for interpreting how participants perceive and understand reality (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Smit, 2002; Suddaby, 2006). To report findings objectively, clearly, and precisely, data must exhibit fidelity, accuracy, reliability, and objectivity, while analysis should be rigorous, systematic, disciplined, and well-documented methodologically (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Rodriguez et al., 2004; Smit, 2002).

Qualitative research requires a flexible design (Taylor & Bogdan, 1987) that allows for simultaneous development or revisiting of stages as needed (Serbia, 2007). It should be open to unexpected findings, as data collected may reveal unforeseen insights (Serbia, 2007). Therefore, in qualitative research, data collection, analysis, and interpretation are interconnected processes rather than isolated stages (Silverman, 2021).

Qualitative data analysis involves a series of steps aimed at generating meaning from the investigated phenomena without relying on frequencies or counts, conducted in a rigorous and systematic manner (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). Description forms the basis of

analysis, and analysis informs further description in a continuous iterative process (Smit, 2002).

The research process for qualitative studies involves a series of interconnected phases, each crucial for ensuring a thorough and methodical investigation. According to Pratt, (2009), there are various approaches to qualitative research, each involving distinct methods for data collection, timing, analysis, and research outcomes (Glaser & Holton, 2004). The process is generally divided into four overlapping phases: preparatory, fieldwork, analytical, and reporting. Each phase builds upon the previous one to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The preparatory phase includes selecting the appropriate cases for study, assessing potential sample sizes, and determining access to necessary information. This phase sets the foundation for the research by defining the unit of analysis and outlining the process for obtaining and managing data. Following this, *the evidence collection phase* involves designing the research instruments and protocols, employing qualitative data collection methods such as interviews or observations, and adhering to established procedures for gathering evidence. For our research, specific attention was given to designing effective instruments and protocols tailored to our case studies.

In *the analysis and presentation phase* of this research, ATLAS.ti software is utilized to assist in the analysis of qualitative data. This phase involves transcribing collected data, coding the transcripts, and systematically interpreting the findings to derive meaningful results. The final step is *writing the report*, where results and conclusions are presented, integrating insights from the analysis to provide a coherent summary of the research outcomes. Each phase is integral to ensuring that the research is comprehensive, reliable, and provides valuable insights into the studied phenomenon. In the following section, each of these phases will be analysed in detail.

4.3.- The Case Study as the chosen method for this research

4.3.1.- Introduction

The research strategy chosen for the empirical study in this thesis is the case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1981, 1992, 2011). Various aspects related to the disciplinary framework, theme, object of study, unit of analysis, and research objectives suggest that studying cases is the appropriate approach for investigating the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship.

Case study is a powerful method that captures the uniqueness and complexity of phenomena of social entrepreneurship by providing a detailed and contextual analysis of specific situations, which is crucial for understanding particular dynamics that cannot be generalised through quantitative methods (Van Burg et al., 2022). Moreover, it facilitates the analysis of processes and temporality in social entrepreneurship, following social entrepreneurs and their joiners to gain a deep understanding of their evolution and response to challenges (Van Burg et al., 2022).

Case studies help develop theory based on the specific context of social entrepreneurship, including the interaction of entrepreneurs with their environments and how these influence their actions and decisions (Hlady-Rispal et al., 2021). They also allow for a detailed understanding of the social interactions between entrepreneurs and joiners, exploring how these contribute to the creation of opportunities and legitimacy in social entrepreneurship (Van Burg et al., 2022).

The use of case studies is increasingly common, recognized by several authors as particularly suitable for studying organizational phenomena (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014). However, the concept of a case study itself is also subject to methodological debate, with numerous definitions available. Some of these definitions are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: *Selection of definitions on Case Studies*

Author	Definition
Yin, 1981	a strategy to be chosen when the circumstances and research problems are appropriate, rather than as an ideological obligation to be followed in all circumstances
Eisenhardt, 1989	a research strategy aimed at understanding the dynamics present in singular contexts, which could be the study of a single case or several cases, combining different methods for collecting data. qualitative and/or quantitative evidence for the purpose of describing, verifying, or generating theory.
Hamel et al., 1993	part of an inductive research perspective, in which the empirical details that constitute the object under study are interpreted in the context in which they occur. This gives depth and dimension to the explanations generated by this method. The objects under investigation are more than mere facts. It seeks to understand the symbols and meanings contained in the interactions between the social actors that participate in the phenomenon studied. They highlight its descriptive nature, considering it as "the in-depth study of a particular case"
Stake, 2006	a learning process about the case and the result of this learning; claiming the unique or particular character of the case and what can be specifically learned from it, beyond its possibilities of generalization.

Source*: Own elaboration*

The case study is just one of many empirical approaches that seek to understand the real world, though it generates a high level of realism in the study's conclusions (McCutcheon & Meredith, 1993). Therefore, a case study investigates an event in depth within its original context.

This methodology is characterized by following a research strategy involving one or more cases and collecting qualitative data for later analysis (de Weerd-Nederhof, 2001). Qualitative research is based on the researcher's close and detailed observation of the reality under study, aiming to avoid reliance on existing theoretical models (Van Maanen & Kolb, 1982).

It is important to consider the specific information requirements for studying the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs, and their teams. Depending on the method used to gather evidence, the quality of the information obtained and analysed can be directly affected. The selection of the case study methodology as a scientific research strategy among different methodological alternatives is justified for several reasons, which will be discussed below.

a. Potential simple size

The emergence of Social Entrepreneurship in Spain as an incipient and rapidly developing phenomenon makes it a highly interesting topic. However, the relatively small size of the population under study poses challenges. Given that the empirical focus is on Gastronomy, limitations arose regarding the feasibility of using large sample sizes suitable for quantitative analysis. The depth and complexity of the research questions required a different type of information - primarily qualitative - and insights that quantitative approaches could not provide due to their nature.

b. Possibility of access to information

Generally, there exists a level of "information opacity" when companies share relevant information. The information available to the public through various channels tends to be quantitative and primarily focuses on the outcomes of their operations (such as company reports, statistics, and publicly accessible databases).

However, there is another type of information - tacit and informal - that companies refrain from disclosing, as it could be easily imitated by current or potential competitors. This caution in managing knowledge and information leads companies to be conservative in sharing valuable information with researchers, fearing potential risks.

c. The process of obtaining information

Even if organizations are willing to participate in the study via questionnaires and decide to respond, it must be acknowledged that the information they provide through this method is necessarily explicit. However, elements contributing to superior results for a particular company are often of a tacit nature, making them difficult for organizational members to define and articulate. For this reason, qualitative methodology, and more specifically case studies, are valuable tools for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being analysed. Case studies allow for a detailed and contextual exploration of tacit and complex aspects that may not be captured through quantitative surveys. By employing

in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, case studies facilitate the identification and understanding of implicit elements that influence organisational performance. This methodology offers a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective, enabling researchers to grasp the subtleties and dynamics underlying organisational outcomes and providing a richer and more precise interpretation of the studied phenomenon.

Moreover, in some specific quantitative methodologies (though not all), it is implicitly assumed that the parameters they assess remain stable across organizations and over time, thereby disregarding exceptional, unlikely, or infrequent behaviours that form the basis of competitive advantage (Fong Reynoso et al., 2017).

Another reason why the Case Study methodology is preferred for our research is articulated by Mintzberg (1979), who argued that constructing theories or models necessitates rich and detailed descriptions. Therefore, only through anecdotal data can the requisite depth and richness be achieved.

d. Analysis unit

Similarly, there are challenges in clearly identifying how social enterprises in Gastronomy evolve and, for instance, understanding the dynamics between entrepreneurs and their teams throughout their life cycle. This situation arises from causal ambiguity (Lippman & Rumelt, 1982), which refers to the difficulty in measuring the frequency and likelihood of relationships when it is unclear which variables are independent and how they relate (Barney, 2001). Therefore, due to this uncertainty, specific examples are isolated and analysed using this methodology.

4.3.2.- Contemporary case study models for scientific research

The three most influential authors on contemporary case studies, Yin (1981, 1992, 2011, 2014), Eisenhardt (1989, 1991) and (Gioia, 2013), have published a series of

methodological articles establishing practical steps for using case studies as a tool in scientific research.

Yin's model Yin (1981, 1992, 2011, 2014), outlines various phases in the design and implementation of case studies for scientific research. These phases are detailed in the following research process framework, depicted in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Case Study Method
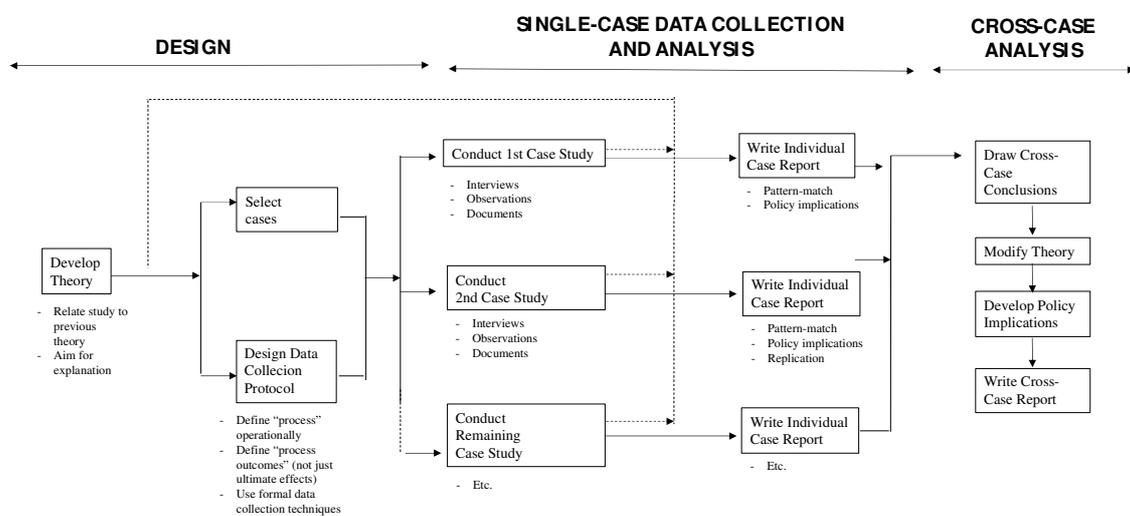
Source: own elaboration from Yin (1994)

Eisenhardt (1989) outlines in her influential methodological article the steps involved in theoretical generation through case study research. She details the activities to be undertaken at each stage and the rationale behind them, as shown in Table 14.

One of Gioia's significant contributions is the development of a systematic approach to qualitative research that emphasises rigorous data analysis and theory construction. This methodology includes the creation of analytical codes and categories, which are then structured into first-order themes (informant-centred) and second-order themes (theory-centred). This structured approach allows for a comprehensive and systematic presentation of research findings, facilitating the development of new theoretical insights from qualitative data.

Table 14: *Eisenhardt's case study model. The research process*

STAGE	ACTIVITIES	REASONS
Beginning of the investigation	Define the research questions	Leading the efforts
	Possible a priori constructions or concepts	It provides a better support for your subsequent measurement
	Neither theory nor starting hypothesis	It retains some theoretical flexibility
Case selection	Having specified the population	It limits extraneous variations and reinforces external validity
	Theoretical and non-random sampling	It orients the effort to those cases that replicate or extend theory (theoretically useful)
Instrument design and protocols	Multiple methods for data collection	The theoretical foundation is reinforced with the triangulation of the evidence
	Combination of qualitative and quantitative data	Search for synergies in the evidence
	Gather several investigators	Encourages divergence of perspectives
Field phase	Overlap the collection with a first analysis of the data	Speed up the analysis and fine-tune the collection of information
	Use of flexible and timely methods in data collection	Allows investigators to take advantage of emerging and/or particular aspects of the case
Data analysis	Analyse the data of each case (individually considered)	Facilitates becoming familiar with the data and generating a preliminary theory
	Search for patterns between cases through divergent techniques	It forces investigators to go beyond their previous impressions, and to look at the evidence from multiple angles.
Hypothesis formulation	Iterative tabulation of the available evidence for each concept	Reinforces its definition, validity and measurability
	Apply a replicating logic between the different cases	Confirms, extends and/or refines the theory
	Search for evidence to identify causes behind the relationships detected	Grants internal validity
Literature review	Comparison with conflicting literature	Gives internal validity, increases the theoretical level and adjusts the definition of concepts
	Comparison with similar or favourable literature	Reinforces generalization, improves conceptual definitions and increases the theoretical level
Completion of the study	Theoretical saturation when possible	Process is finished when incremental improvement is minimal

Source: *Own elaboration from Eisenhardt (1989)*

For this study, Yin's methodology was chosen due to its clear and systematic structure, as well as the abundance of manuals and resources available that facilitate its application. This choice is based on the fact that the researcher is a novice and has valued having a detailed guide that provides defined steps for conducting the research. Yin's methodology offers a rigorous approach to the design and execution of case studies, including specific techniques to improve validity and reliability, ensuring that the findings are considered credible and valid by the academic community. Additionally, the extensive literature and support resources associated with Yin's methodology provide a comprehensible and accessible framework for beginner researchers, enabling them to develop solid research skills and produce high-quality studies. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the clear structure and abundant resources of Yin's methodology are especially valuable, as they facilitate the adaptation and conduct of rigorous research in a challenging and constantly changing environment. Furthermore, numerous secondary sources have been used to enrich and validate the collected data, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

4.3.3- Evaluation of the rigor and methodological quality of scientific research through Case Studies

The objective of this section is to demonstrate how the case study is a research methodology that adheres to scientifically required criteria and thus achieves acceptable levels of rigor and methodological quality. The case study is no exception, having developed mechanisms to ensure compliance with reliability and validity criteria in the generated explanations (Yin, 1981).

Reliability in research is generally defined as the extent to which a measurement procedure yields consistent results over repeated trials and under varying conditions. It reflects the degree to which findings are independent of incidental factors in the investigation. On the other hand, validity refers to the degree to which a test measures what it claims to measure (Kirk et al., 1986).

Thus, the scientific credibility of an investigation hinges on fully achieving both reliability and validity. It is important to note that these criteria are not inherently

balanced; an investigation may be highly reliable yet lack validity, whereas achieving validity typically ensures the reliability of the study.

To uphold the case study as a systematic, rigorous, objective, and high-quality research methodology, various procedures have been implemented. These range from rigorous control over collected evidence to the systematic collection, recording, and treatment of data (Yin, 1981).

Regardless of the specific format of a case study, contemporary models emphasize four key aspects essential for maximizing rigor and quality: 1) construction validity; 2) internal validity; 3) external validity; and 4) reliability.

In conclusion, the overall quality and rigor of a case study methodology significantly depend on the foundational principles and criteria used to ensure the quality of research outcomes.

4.4.- Designing the research

A well-designed study ensures efficient use of resources and time. It also clarifies decisions regarding sampling and the rationale behind chosen methods over others (Flick, 2018). As illustrated in

Figure **11**, the study is divided into three distinct phases: (1) Preparatory phase, involving initial analysis of secondary sources, determination of the Data Collection Protocol, and selection of study cases; (2) Information gathering phase; (3) Analysis and presentation of results phase.

Figure 11: Design of the research
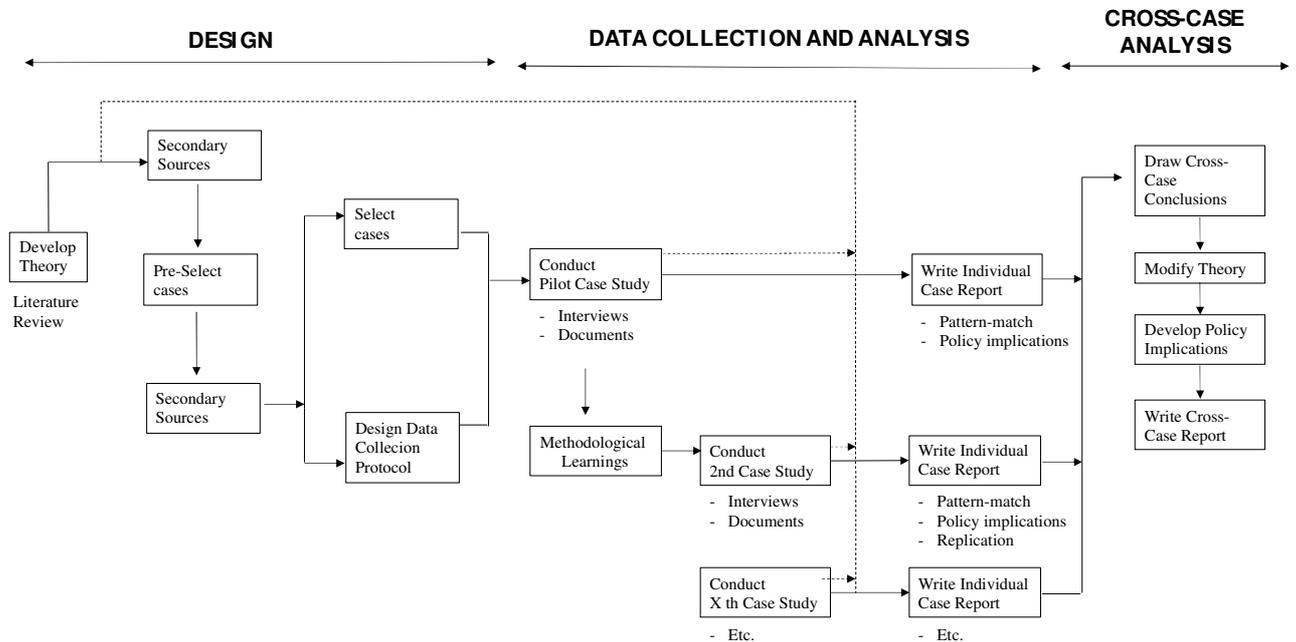
Source: own elaboration

4.4.1.- Preparatory phase

4.4.1.1.- Selection of cases

Once the central questions of the investigation and the initial theoretical propositions have been formulated, the design of the study commences. This should unfold as a logical sequence that connects empirical data with the initial questions and ultimately with the conclusions. Essentially, the goal is to construct an action plan that ensures the evidence collected remains focused on the issues at hand.

During this critical phase of the case study investigation, several methodological decisions must be made.

Firstly, it is important to appropriately define the unit of analysis, which forms the very essence of the "case" (Yin, 2011). This definition should help delineate the boundaries of

the study, although at times, it can be challenging to separate a phenomenon from its context (Rialp, 1998). The unit of analysis is closely tied to the fundamental issue of determining the type of case being studied. Generally, the definition of the unit of analysis, and consequently the type of case, aligns with how the initial research question is framed. It is worth noting that previous studies often provide criteria for case selection to facilitate comparison of results (Yin, 2011).

After defining the unit of analysis, the selection of the case to be studied involves theoretical sampling rather than statistical sampling, aiming to choose cases that provide the greatest learning opportunities (Stake, 1994). This process involves identifying the core focus for studying the questions at hand, such as a single company, a group of companies, relationships between various organizations, and so forth (Johnston et al., 1999).

4.4.1.1.1.- Types of Case Studies

Regarding the typology of case studies, various categorizations can be established. For example, Kirk et al., (1986) classify case studies into three categories:

- **Intrinsic:** This type of study is conducted to deeply understand a specific case due to its scientific interest.
- **Instrumental:** In an instrumental case study, a single case is examined to enhance understanding of another aspect of greater interest or to refine theory.
- **Collective:** A collective case study replicates an instrumental study but involves multiple cases, offering deeper understanding and potentially better theorization.

Selection of the case or cases to be analysed is particularly crucial in instrumental and collective studies, whereas in intrinsic case analysis, the case is inherently specified beforehand.

The most widely accepted classification in current literature is proposed by Yin (1981, 1992, 2011, 2014), who introduces a dual classification of case studies. As depicted in Figure 12, Yin's typology categorizes case studies into four basic formats based on two key characteristics:

- Whether the study involves a single case or multiple cases.

- Whether the analysis maintains a holistic approach (single unit of analysis) or examines various partial units of analysis.

Thus, both single case studies and multiple case studies can be either "holistic" or "embedded," resulting in the four types proposed by Yin, as illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Types of Case Studies
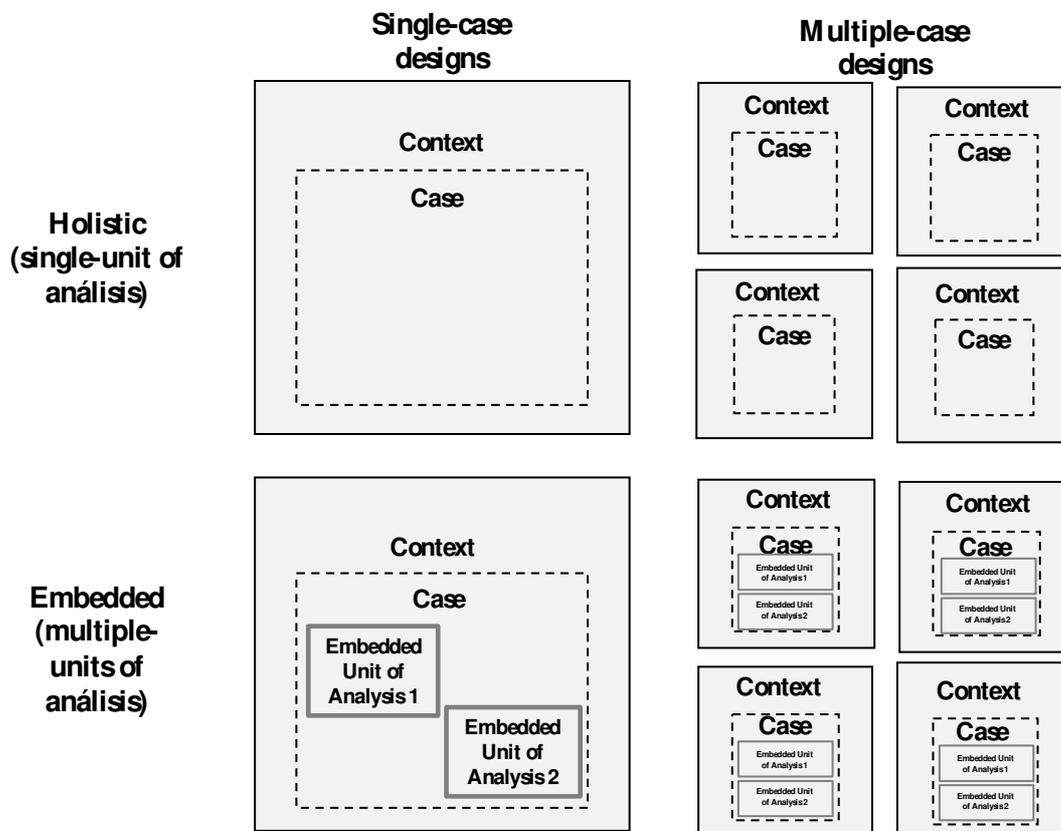
Source: own elaboration from Yin (1994)

On the other hand, depending on the specific objectives of research, Yin (1981, 1998, 2014) proposes three distinct types of case studies:

- **Descriptive:** Aims to describe what occurs in a particular case within its authentic context.

- **Exploratory:** Generates results that can serve as a foundation for formulating research questions. These studies help researchers become familiar with a situation lacking a well-defined theoretical framework.
- **Explanatory:** Aims to facilitate interpretation and is the most profound and complex type of study, focusing on developing new theories.

However, not all scholars agree with this categorization. For instance, Gummesson (2000) argues that these categories are not mutually exclusive. Exploratory studies, like descriptive ones, can contribute to theory generation, and even descriptive studies themselves can be explanatory.

While alternative methods exist - such as surveys, experiments, archival analysis, and historical analysis - case studies are particularly suitable when the research question explores "how?" or "why?", when the researcher has limited control over events, and when the emphasis is on contemporary events within their natural context (Yin, 1981, 1998, 2014).

4.4.1.1.2. Single Case vs Multiple Cases

As discussed earlier, depending on the number of cases and their generalization logic, as well as their potential subdivision into multiple analysis subunits, a study can be categorized as single versus multiple and holistic versus embedded. Thus, both single case studies and multiple case studies can be either "holistic" or "embedded," resulting in the four types proposed.

Therefore, the initial decision revolves around choosing between studying a single case or multiple cases. There are few clear recommendations on the number of cases that should be selected for a case study (Coffey & Atkinson, 2003), as there are no precise and reliable rules for sampling in qualitative research (Patton, 1990).

Yin (1994) suggests that in "single case" studies, a single case is examined either because of its critical importance and validity in drawing conclusions, its unique circumstances,

or limitations in accessing more companies due to insufficient economic or temporal resources.

A "holistic" case study is suitable when partial units of analysis cannot be defined or when the theory itself is holistic. The primary reason for choosing a multiple case study, beyond enhancing internal validity, lies in achieving theoretical replication - a concept crucial for external validity, as discussed previously. This involves reproducing the experiences across cases to verify and clarify causal relationships of the phenomenon, thereby validating or refining theories (Yin, 1992).

In the design of a multiple case study, as illustrated in Figure 13, each case is meticulously chosen to predict similar outcomes (literal replication) or to uncover divergent results due to anticipated factors (theoretical replication). Cases may be selected to replicate previous findings, extend emerging theories, fill significant gaps in knowledge, and/or exemplify extreme situations where the phenomenon of interest is clearly observable.

Figure 13: Design of a multiple case study

THEORY

Case 1 Case 2

Cases selected to investigate theory in similar contexts

Case 3 Case 4 Case 5

Cases selected to investigate expected contrasting results based on theorized differences

Case 6 Case 7

Cases selected to specifically investigate rival hypotheses
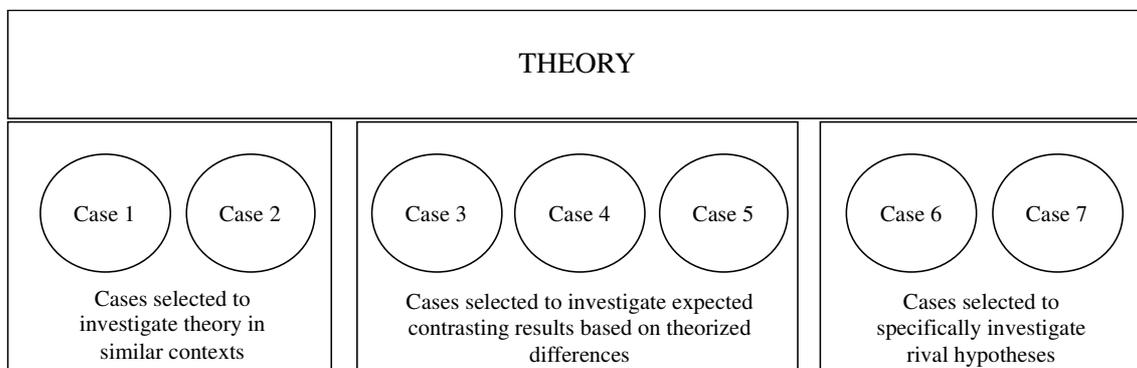
Source: own elaboration from Johnston et al. (1999)

It should be noted that case studies contribute to generalization, but their conclusions are not definitive. Extrapolation occurs, similar to experiments, after multiple repetitions involving representative and analogous cases, and when clearly consistent patterns emerge. However, case studies are highly contextual (Mills et al., 2009). The question

remains: How many cases are necessary to analyse for a theory to achieve generalizability?

4.4.1.1.3. Number of cases

The next question to address concerns the number of cases necessary to assert that a theory is true and generalizable (Cambra-Fierro, 2004), with the understanding that the quality of generalizing conclusions improves with an increased number of cases studied (Arias, 2003).

The academic debate on this topic persists. For instance, Popper (2002) theoretically argued that one of the issues with inductivism is the lack of certainty in our conclusions. However, Hillebrand et al., (2001), building on the concept of theoretical generalization, posited that a single case is sufficient to generalize the study's findings and establish their validity. Subsequently, other cases serve as replications (across different cases and contexts) or extensions of the initial case. In this way, the analysed case serves as a foundational basis for analysing, studying, and understanding other situations.

It could be affirmed that there is no consensus in the literature on the number of cases necessary to undertake an investigation of this type (Cambra-Fierro, 2004). Several authors leave the choice of the number of cases to study to the investigator's judgment. Pérez & Lorente (1996) refer to the availability of existing cases and the researcher's resources, considering time and money factors.

Bonache (1999) states that certainty can be achieved after a small number of cases, although they are not quantified. The higher the number of cases, the greater the degree of certainty. Bonache (1999) indicates that if it is believed that sufficient and necessary conditions have been isolated to explain and predict a phenomenon, the investigation may be considered concluded.

Eisenhardt (1989) proposes stopping at a point called "theoretical saturation," when the increase in knowledge and security is minimal compared to the effort required to achieve

it. In any case, a certain multiplicity of cases will allow the results obtained to be replicated, and it is advisable to manage a number of cases neither fewer than four nor more than ten (Eisenhardt, 1989). Other authors such as McCutcheon & Meredith (1993) do not comment on the matter.

Faced with this problem, other authors (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Rialp, 1998) propose possible ways and criteria for choosing certain samples in qualitative research, reflected in Table 15.

Table 15: *Criteria for selecting a certain sample*

Case choice	Description
Extreme or abnormal case	A choice of case studies that show extremely unusual or extreme manifestations of the phenomenon under investigation.
Due to the informational intensity of the case	The intensity is defined by the wealth of information of the case with respect to the dimensions that are the object of analysis, but without reaching the existence of extreme intensity.
By maximum variation	In multiple cases, it is a matter of selecting that presents the widest possible range of variations between cases, in order to try to establish the common patterns existing among all of them.
Homogeneity	The selection of multiple similar cases focuses the investigation, allowing complexity to be reduced and facilitating group interviews.
Typical case	It illustrates the typical, normal or average situation.
Group stratification	It selects cases for analysis of the specific characteristics of subgroups, thus facilitating comparisons between groups.
Critical case	It allows the logical generalization and the maximum use of information in the application to other study realities, because if the case is contrasted, it will probably be true in most situations.
"Snowball" or chain	It identifies the cases of interest of people "who know people who in turn know people who know cases rich in information", resulting in excellent case studies.
Based on criteria	Selection of the case or set of cases that meet a series of criteria.
Based on theory or operational constructs	Search for cases that manifest the theoretical constructs that wish to be contrasted.
Confirmation or disconfirmation	Elaboration and deepening of the initial analysis, looking for exceptions and variation tests.
Opportunistic	Taking advantage of an unexpected situation.
Aleatory sample	It gives the study more credibility, being useful for large samples, a rare situation in the analysis of cases.
Convenience	It saves time, money and effort. The poorest rationally and with the lowest level of credibility.
Combination or multipurpose	Based on triangulation, seeking flexibility and compliance with the needs and interests of the investigation.

Source: *own elaboration*

This research is based on seven case studies. Many authors have supported the notion that small samples are adequate to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research (Brandão et al., 2021; Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; De Ruyter & Scholl, 1998; Dreher, 1994; Eisenhardt, 1989; Foroudi et al., 2017; Priporas et al., 2012).

The criterion for selecting the seven cases (entrepreneurs and their ventures) was based on the identification of the ideal criteria for being considered a social enterprise, identified in Table 4 of Chapter 2: (1) the social entrepreneur and their organization had to satisfy the definition of a "social venture," having an explicit aim to benefit the community; (2) they have continuous activity producing goods and/or providing services, not depending on grants or subsidies; (3) high degree of autonomy; (4) according to the Strategic Plan of Gastronomy of the Basque Country (Gobierno Vasco, 2020) , all these social ventures cover a significant part of the gastronomic value chain (from production to service, including training); (5) they originate from different regions of Spain.

Table 16: Case studies selected

Social entrepreneur	Initials	Case Study	City	Description
Edu Roselló	ER	UnInicio (pilot case)	Madrid	Cooking training for people at risk of social exclusion + catering
Luis Font	JF	Robin Good	Barcelona	Food production with people at risk of social exclusion
Armand Folch	AF	Conca Organics	Barcelona	Organic food production
Aitor Guerra	AG	De Buen Café	Madrid	Coffee distribution
Antonio Espinosa	AE	Auara	Madrid	Bottled water distribution
José Luis Baños	JLB	Winable	Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz)	Wine tourism activities with people with Down syndrome
Juan Llorca	JLL	Juan Llorca	Valencia	Training in healthy eating habits

Source: *own elaboration*

An important consideration in the selection process was that all participants had substantial experience relevant to the research questions. Additionally, depth was prioritized over breadth, leading to a focused sample size (Serbia, 2007).

The selected social entrepreneurs and their ventures are listed in Table 16. The cases are presented in the order of the date of the interview. To expedite data collection, subsequent analysis, and the reporting of results, each social entrepreneur was renamed using their initials.

In conclusion, the research will be based on a collective case study, which replicates an instrumental study but involves multiple cases, offering a deeper understanding and potentially better theorisation. Additionally, it will be exploratory, as it will generate results that can serve as a foundation for formulating research questions and help familiarise oneself with a well-defined theoretical framework.

4.4.1.2.- Selected cases for our research

4.4.1.2.1.- Pilot case: UnInicio

On this occasion, emphasizing the presentation of evidence (Gehman et al., 2018), UnInicio and its founder, Edu Roselló, have been selected as the pilot case study due to the uniqueness of the case and its relevance to the research (Gioia, 2013).

UnInicio is a social venture based in Vallecas (Madrid) that aims to train and support young people at risk of social exclusion through gastronomy. The venture, which began its gestation in 2010, commenced operational activities in 2016. The mission of UnInicio is encapsulated in its vision statement:

"Uninicio is a social venture launched to train, educate, and employ young people in vulnerable situations through gastronomy and the production of ready-made food products (fourth and fifth range) for restaurants and catering services."

Currently, UnInicio is a thriving social venture that has been fully operational for over four years, successfully navigating the initial stages of entrepreneurship (Reynolds et al., 2005). It has also persevered through the recent challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, which significantly impacted the global economy, particularly in Spain.

Several factors guided the selection of UnInicio as the pilot case for this research. Firstly, comprehensive information about the case was available from secondary sources such as websites and articles. Secondly, the case was identified through exploratory studies and interviews with experts in Social Entrepreneurship and Gastronomy in Spain as a potent initiative with substantial social impact. Thirdly, this case presented a valuable learning opportunity due to the researchers' easy access to the venture and its team, facilitating the acquisition of rich and abundant anecdotal data (Stake, 1994). Insights gained from studying this pilot case informed and refined subsequent case studies in the research.

This case exemplifies the dual organizational identities crucial to successful social ventures (Moss et al., 2011). On one hand, it embodies a normative or social identity within its kitchen operations, fostering equal opportunities to empower young people at risk of exclusion towards becoming future entrepreneurs. On the other hand, it embraces a utilitarian or entrepreneurial identity through its business model, which revolves around both food sales to external parties and catering services.

At UnInicio, the kitchen serves as a training ground where young participants receive hands-on training as part of the production team. The training program comprises free courses lasting approximately three months (with groups of 40 to 45 participants) and includes internships at a network of collaborating restaurants. The scheduling is flexible, tailored to meet individual training needs. Before commencing internships, the training team, led by a psychologist, liaises closely with each restaurant to outline each student's profile and specific support requirements.

Kitchen operations represent only one facet of the comprehensive training provided to enhance students' professional profiles. The educational team offers a broad curriculum encompassing literacy, numeracy, theatre and other subjects. The overarching goal is to equip young individuals at risk of exclusion with fundamental culinary skills (such as

punctuality, hygiene, and professionalism) in an environment conducive to learning and personal growth.

4.4.1.2.2.- Brief presentation of the rest of the case studies

a) RobinGood

RobinGood, founded by Luis Font in 1998, is a social venture that specializes in selling food products crafted in workshops staffed by individuals at risk of social exclusion. These workshops include people with physical and intellectual disabilities, as well as immigrants. The brand's product catalogue spans five categories of ecological, sustainable, and artisanal foods, such as cookies and savoury snacks.

Beyond providing employment opportunities to vulnerable groups, RobinGood is committed to enhancing the professionalisation of the social enterprises it collaborates with. They describe their products as "food with soul," emphasizing their role in transforming lives. The venture focuses on rural villages and small towns, promoting local productions and preserving traditional practices.

Additionally, RobinGood prioritizes reducing its environmental footprint through initiatives like minimizing food waste, cutting CO_2 emissions, using eco-friendly packaging, and expanding its range of ecological products.

RobinGood is recognized as a Certified B Corporation, a testament to its adherence to rigorous standards of verified social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability in business practices.

b) Conca Organics

Armand Folch initiated Conca Organics as part of his final MBA project. In July 2018, the company, previously known as Herbes de la Conca, launched its offerings which include spring salts, microplastic-free infusions, and vegetable pates.

Conca Organics actively partners with organizations dedicated to integrating individuals at risk of social exclusion into the workforce. Their Special Work Centre near Barcelona employs a workforce where 90% are individuals with disabilities or mental disorders.

The company promotes plant-based diets through educational initiatives and outreach on social networks, advocating for healthier and more sustainable alternatives to animal protein consumption. They prioritize ingredients sourced exclusively from certified organic farming, supporting responsible and sustainable agricultural practices among their network of farmers and suppliers.

In line with their environmental commitment, Conca Organics uses materials with high post-consumer recycled content, ensuring all packaging is either recyclable or compostable. This approach minimizes the extraction and processing of virgin raw materials. Additionally, the company contributes to ecosystem resilience against climate change by participating in reforestation ventures aimed at creating stronger ecosystems.

c) De Buen Café

De Buen Café specializes in marketing coffee in compostable capsules, emphasizing both environmental sustainability and social inclusion. As the only Spanish organic coffee company certified as a B Corp, they prioritize ethical business practices and environmental stewardship.

Their partnerships include collaboration with the Café Mundi foundation, where part of the proceeds from their coffee sales supports sustainability and social responsibility ventures within coffee-producing communities. De Buen Café also contributes to social inclusion by employing young people facing challenges in accessing the job market through the Prodis Foundation.

Their coffee originates from organic farming in countries such as Brazil, Peru, Colombia, India, Tanzania, or Ethiopia. They package their coffee in biodegradable single-dose

capsules made from corn starch, aligning with their commitment to reduce environmental impact.

In the research investigation, Aitor Guerra, one of the founders of De Buen Café, will be interviewed, providing insights into their business model, sustainability initiatives, and social impact efforts.

d) AUARA

AUARA is the first Spanish social enterprise certified with the Social Enterprise Mark, founded in 2015 by Antonio Espinosa, Pablo Urbano, and Luis de Sande. These three friends, with backgrounds in NGOs and extensive professional experience across various fields, were inspired by their travels to countries experiencing extreme poverty. They recognized water as foundational for societal development.

The AUARA team pioneered the creation of Europe's first water bottles made entirely from 100% recycled plastic R-PET. The bottle design prioritizes cubic capacity efficiency to optimize transport, allowing up to 20% more bottles per pallet compared to traditional formats. AUARA bottles also feature a Braille reading system to cater to consumers with reduced visibility.

In collaboration with 10 local organizations, AUARA implements projects that foster community roots and ensure long-term sustainability. This approach guarantees ongoing venture monitoring and community engagement in project maintenance.

AUARA has transcended its role as a mere water-selling company to become a catalyst for social change, advocating for a different way of doing business.

e) Winable

Winable is a Jerez-based company born from the fusion of two passions: wine and social conscience. Its primary goal is to introduce the wines of Jerez and the province of Cádiz to private and corporate clients through unforgettable wine tourism experiences.

The company pioneers innovative approaches to wine tourism by integrating wine tasting with other experiences, all facilitated by individuals with Down syndrome and/or intellectual disabilities. José Luis Baños, its founder and CEO, firmly believes that "wine tourism has the power to transform lives, both for visitors and ourselves, making the world a better place."

Recognized for its commitment to inclusion, Winable received an award from the Association of Spanish Wine Cities (Acevin).

Winable operates across several fronts: (1) conducting home tastings nationwide; (2) organizing winery tours in Jerez; (3) providing consultancy services in wine tourism; and (4) selling merchandise tailored for wine enthusiasts. These activities highlight the evolution of its wine tourism offerings, which expanded with the acquisition of its vineyard in October 2019 and the introduction of its Viña El Perro Ximénez wine. Throughout its growth, Winable maintains a steadfast commitment to social inclusion, integrating it into every aspect from production to the enjoyment of wine tourism experiences.

f) Juan Llorca

Chef Llorca is dedicated to transforming school canteens into healthy, communal spaces. He currently works at the Valencia Montessori School, the first in Spain to receive the "Slow Food" seal. Leaving behind his restaurant career, Llorca focuses on revolutionizing children's diets by advocating for the inclusion of fruits, vegetables, fish, legumes, and whole grains, while eliminating fried foods, processed items, and refined sugars.

Recognizing the importance of nutrition in meeting daily energy needs for different age groups, Llorca emphasizes that school canteens play a crucial role in students' socialization and overall health. He highlights concerns over the prevalence of catering services over in-house kitchens within schools, aiming to improve food quality and reduce childhood obesity rates. Beyond his work at Montessori in Valencia, Llorca collaborates with the Spanish Association against Cancer and consults with national and international schools on promoting healthy eating practices.

4.4.2.- Evidence Collection Phase

4.4.2.1.- Instrument design and protocols

After the initial phase (research question and theoretical review) and the case selection phase (single case or multiple cases, criteria for choosing the organization under study, and determining the nature of the analysis unit as holistic or embedded), the phase prior to data collection begins. This phase involves developing the instruments and protocols used to collect information.

The tools used in this task must be sufficiently varied and numerous, as this aspect is one of the determining factors of the methodological quality of the case study.

The research question determines the appropriate design for the investigation. Every case study has an explicit or implicit design. In the most elementary sense, the research design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to be collected with the initial question to be investigated, and ultimately, with the conclusions. In short, it is an action plan.

In this action plan, the standardized definition of the evidence collection processes is necessary to confer greater reliability on the investigation. For this, it is necessary to create a data collection protocol. The case study protocol, in addition to containing the data collection instruments, includes the procedures and general rules that must be followed when using the case study Yin (1994). The implementation of the protocol

confers reliability on the results obtained by using this tool in the data collection phase of the research (Arias, 2003). The case protocol is imperative in studies of multiple cases and recommended in single cases (Yin, 1994).

Within the case study protocol, it is considered necessary to clarify some ethical aspects, making a list or letter in which the people involved are informed about the approximate effort and time they will devote to the study, specifying the activities in which their collaboration will be required, and detailing the treatment of the information obtained, among other aspects (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The case study protocol should consist of the following sections (Yin, 1994):

- **Generic purpose of the case study**: General information about the venture in relation to its context and perspective.
- **Field procedure**: Formal procedures that must be followed to collect information, providing reliability and guaranteeing the homogeneity of the results.
- **Study questions**: Specific aspects that the researcher must consider when collecting data, including potential sources of information to answer each question.
- **Guide to the case report**: Preparation guides that will facilitate the subsequent preparation of the report.

(Note: See Appendix 1.- Case study protocol for more details on the case study protocol used in this research).

The final preparation for the collection of evidence in Yin's (1994) model is to carry out a pilot case. This helps the researcher refine the action plan in terms of its content and the procedures to be followed. By combining the empirical results of the pilot test with the most recent literature on the subject, the study design can be refined to achieve relevant theoretical and practical results (Fong Reynoso, 2003).

4.4.2.2.- Qualitative data collection methods

The objective of this phase is to collect all the information and evidence that helps corroborate the propositions included in the model. As previously mentioned, the tools used in this task must be sufficiently varied and numerous, which is one of the determining factors of the methodological quality of the case study.

When using the case study as a methodology, it is necessary to demonstrate the ability to handle diverse evidence resulting from the application of different data collection techniques, as well as to tentatively define the research questions (Eisenhardt, 1989).

One of the most characteristic features that the case study must exhibit for the sake of the study's validity is the use of multiple sources of evidence (Arias, 2003). This methodological objective is based on the concept of triangulation, which is considered robustly established when evidence from three or more different sources is consistent (Yin, 1998).

Evidence collection methods for case studies could be:

a.- Direct observation

In the process of direct observation by the researcher, valuable information is accessed that adds depth to the study (Fong Reynoso, 2003). When this tool is deemed important, it is necessary to implement a protocol for collecting observations (Arias, 2003). This protocol serves as a crucial source of information and must establish criteria to measure the incidence of certain behaviours over a given period of time (Fong Reynoso, 2003).

Bearing in mind that the reality under study is not solely historical, observing environmental conditions and behaviours can provide additional empirical evidence. The main advantage of this method is its close approximation to the contextual reality of the phenomenon being analysed (Yin, 1994). When resources allow, incorporating multiple

observers can enrich perspectives and enhance the reliability of the information gathered (Salmador Sánchez, 2001; Yin, 1994).

In addition to direct observation, there is the possibility of making participatory observations, where the researcher takes an active role in the situation under study (Salmador Sánchez, 2001). However, this method carries the risk of bias due to the researcher's influence on the object of study. There are no firm rules about the appropriate level of personal involvement or disclosure by the researcher (Yin, 1994).

b.- Documentary evidence

The documentary evidence (documentation and files) obtained can take many different forms, such as letters, memorandums, internal communications, agendas, reports, administrative documents, internal studies, media information, or archival information (Arias, 2003).

c.- The interviews

The interview is the most widely used method in qualitative research, due to its flexibility, applicability in most situations, and its ability to yield detailed and in-depth information on the phenomenon analysed from the interviewee's perspective (Arias, 2003). However, despite its advantages, it must be triangulated with other methods to ensure the consistency of the results (King, 1994).

In the field phase, the reformulation of questions is common. Therefore, the interview should have low levels of structure, prioritize open questions, and focus on the interviewee's vision (Kvale, 2012).

Initial questions should encourage the interviewee to narrate their experience related to the generic objective of the research (Perry, 1998). This approach ensures that the interviewee's responses are not biased by the researcher's preconceptions to test a theory (Dick, 1990). If the key topics are not covered during the interview, the interviewer

should steer the conversation by asking open questions related to the topic. These questions typically begin with "How...?" and "Why...?" and should avoid prompting monosyllabic answers. Care should be taken with the wording of questions, avoiding terms that might limit the scope of the responses (Perry, 1998).

If, after conducting open and focused interviews, the information needs of the theory or model being studied are still unmet, a more structured questionnaire with specific questions could be used (Yin, 1994). The researcher should maintain flexibility in the interview process, allowing for the inclusion of relevant topics not covered in the interview guide (Arias, 2003).

To ensure trustworthiness, it is advisable to record the interviews and have multiple researchers involved in the process (McCutcheon & Meredith, 1993). Eisenhardt (1989) recommends having at least two researchers present during the interviews: one interacting with the informant and the other observing and taking notes on the conversation.

Participant selection should be made after defining the topics to be discussed, aiming for the highest possible suitability of the interviewees (King, 1994).

Additionally, conducting group interviews can be valuable, especially in the early phases of the investigation. However, they can present challenges, such as bias introduced by the presence of superiors in the group (Arias, 2003).

d.- The observation of physical, technological and cultural artifacts

In typical case studies, photographs and videos do not usually provide relevant information (Yin, 1994). However, in specific instances, they may offer important contextual insights. Consequently, they can be incorporated as a source of evidence by including these visuals in the case database (Gillham, 2000).

Relying on a single source of information poses the risk of drawing partial conclusions. Therefore, combining different methodologies in data collection allows for the validation

of results, enhancing the methodological quality and reliability of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the collection process, no single source should dominate over others. The strengths and weaknesses of each tool must be considered (Yin, 1994).

4.4.2.3.- Procedures for data collection

There are three basic procedures for data collection (Yin, 1998):

a. Use of multiple sources of evidence (triangulation): This procedure helps overcome the problems associated with classic case studies, enhancing constructive validity, reliability, and safety by corroborating findings in multiple ways. Having various measurements of the phenomenon helps more firmly establish the developed theory (Fong Reynoso, 2003).

b. Creation of a case study database: A clear distinction should be made between the data in the evidence base and the research report itself. This separation is important since the former involves a large mass of information properly organized for subsequent revisions, while the report is the result of analysing this data.

c. Maintenance of the chain of evidence: This allows other researchers to reconstruct the case more reliably by following the established sequence between evidence, study questions, and resulting conclusions. Additionally, it helps reconstruct the context in which the evidence was obtained and clarifies the criteria and techniques used to select this evidence over others.

Another important point is determining when to end data collection in the field, considering both practical and theoretical implications. Time and budget constraints, or even the patience of the observed participants, are practical considerations to keep in mind. For example, Lincoln & Guba (1986) identified four criteria to determine when it is appropriate to end data collection: exhaustion of sources, saturation of categories, emergence of regularities, and overextension.

4.4.2.4.- Evidence Collection Phase for our research

The adoption of a strategy based on using a single source of information presents the danger of obtaining partial conclusions. Therefore, it is crucial that the tools used are diverse and comprehensive. This aspect significantly influences the methodological quality of the case study.

As shown in Table 17, both primary and secondary sources of information have been used.

Table 17: *Phases and sources of information*

PHASE	SOURCES	TYPE	NUMBER
1.- Selection of the cases	Secondary	Websites	14
		Media articles	52
		Radio or video interviews	8
2.- Data collection	Secondary	Websites	7
		Media articles	47
		Annual reports	9
		Radio or video interviews	15
	Primary	Semi-structed interviews	7
3.- Data analysis	Primary	Additional questions via e-mail.	10

Source: *own elaboration*

As is typical in inductive studies, early data collection prompted further refinements.

To streamline the documentation of the entire data collection process, a "Field Notebook" was initiated from the outset, recording incidents, contacts, ideas, and observations.

4.4.2.4.1.- Documentary evidence

The openness of all the social entrepreneurs investigated has been pivotal in this study, as they provided a wide range of documentation, reports, and even private foundational documents. This openness has allowed for a deeper understanding of the initial philosophy behind each venture.

4.4.2.4.2.- Direct observation

Among the various observations made during the study, the author was invited to attend a session between the organisation's psychologist and a group of six adolescents at risk of exclusion. While the primary focus of the research was not on the personal situations and ambitions of these young individuals, attending this session provided a rich personal and professional experience.

The challenge during direct observation was to thoroughly document findings and filter out data that was important and relevant, even if it did not align with the researcher's initial assumptions. Informal conversations and noteworthy statements deemed valuable for the study were carefully documented.

Due to the geographic dispersion of each case study across Spain and the COVID-19 restrictions, direct observation was not feasible for all cases. This limitation was addressed by gathering additional information provided by the social entrepreneurs themselves.

4.4.2.4.3.- Observation of technological and cultural artifacts

Although technological and cultural artifacts typically do not provide relevant information in traditional case studies (Yin, 2014), they can often offer important contextual insights. They serve as a source of supporting evidence through the inclusion of photographs or videos in the case database (Gillham, 2000).

During the pilot case, strict confidentiality was maintained for both the organization and the individuals involved in the study. However, for the subsequent study cases, due to the limitations of direct observation mentioned earlier, this type of information source was substituted with documentation provided by each social entrepreneur and the interviews conducted.

4.4.2.4.4.- Interviews

Interviews have been one of the primary research tools. As decided in the preparatory phase, among the existing qualitative research techniques for data collection, the semi-structured interview has been predominantly chosen as a primary source. To elicit responses that offer new insights and nuances about the research objective (Caven, 2012; Ozols & Fortune, 2012), efforts were made to afford the interviewees maximum freedom (Flick, 2018). To achieve this, a script was utilized that allowed for a flexible and dynamic interview, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all investigated topics (Bowen, 2005; Taylor et al., 2002).

The researcher's academic background and familiarity with the general topic under study facilitated understanding the language, terms, and vocabulary used by the interview participants (Caven, 2012; Silverman, 2021; Taylor & Bogdan, 1987).

Interviews for the pilot case

As mentioned earlier, interviews began with a pilot test involving UnInicio and its founder, Edu Roselló. This test proved highly beneficial as it allowed for refining the interview structure and adjusting such as rephrasing, adding, or even removing questions.

Despite the option of conducting interviews via telephone or other remote methods, it was preferred to conduct them in person at the workplace itself. Any additional information or refinement of responses was subsequently handled via email. Table **18** provides an overview of all participants and the specific circumstances of their interviews.

The six participants were selected based on their key roles within the venture team and their daily interactions with each other. Their diverse profiles provide a comprehensive perspective on the venture. The age range of the interviewees was between 23 and 54 years old, with two men and four women.

Table 18: *List of interviewees*

Participant	Professional Title	Data and time	Duration of interview
Edu Roselló (ER)	UnInicio Founder	03.02.2020 – 17:00	62 minutes
Joiner 1 (J1)	Co-founder	04.02.2020 – 18:00	47 minutes
Joiner 2 (J2)	Psychologist	03.02.2020 – 15:00	42 minutes
Joiner 3 (J3)	Marketing	04.02.2020 – 15:30	36 minutes
Joiner 4 (J4)	Training assistant	04.02.2020 – 16:30	49 minutes
Joiner 5 (J5)	Quality	03.02.2020 – 16:00	47 minutes

Source: *own elaboration*

Highlighting the openness of the interviewees, it was noteworthy that the lead author was invited to conduct additional interviews with the main team members to deepen the case study. Recognizing this as a valuable opportunity, the author travelled to UnInicio facilities to interview these six members of the social venture team.

The interviews began with an introductory explanation of the research objectives, assuring participants of the confidentiality of their data and informing them that the entire interview would be recorded digitally (Kulkarni et al., 2015; Kvale, 2008), with subsequent transcription by the researcher. Participants were encouraged to ask questions for clarity and were assured that note-taking would not occur during the interview to prevent distractions or interruptions to the conversation flow (Kvale, 2008).

Prior to data collection, an interview script was prepared to cover all topics related to the research question (as seen in Table 19). However, the direction of the interview was guided by initial responses, prompting further exploration along relevant paths. The researcher returned to the script as needed, ensuring all subjects were addressed while allowing flexibility for the conversation to naturally progress.

The conversational style of the interviews aimed to put participants at ease. Familiarity with the interview script and clear research objectives facilitated seamless transitions between topics as the interviews unfolded.

Interviews for the rest of case studies

In the pilot case, interviews were conducted on-site at the workplace, involving both the entrepreneur and key team members. However, with the onset of COVID-19, it became materially impossible to replicate this approach for subsequent cases. Therefore, it was decided to conduct subsequent interviews via Zoom, with each session recorded (with prior authorization from the interviewee) and later transcribed for analysis. Each interview lasted between 55 and 70 minutes.

To secure the collaboration of each social entrepreneur interviewed, an introductory email was sent outlining the study objectives, followed by a confirmation call to arrange their participation, date, and interview time.

To maintain consistency in gathering information, it was decided to conduct a repeat Zoom interview with Edu Roselló (from UnInicio, the pilot case). This was beneficial as it allowed (1) confirmation of the interview structure, (2) validation of the established coding methods, and (3) refinement of questions by adding, deleting, or rephrasing them as needed. Following these adjustments, the interview script (Table 19) remained largely intact.

Table 19: *Initial script established for interviews with social entrepreneurs*

Phase	Category	Objectives		Question
0	General issues	General information - "warming up"	1	Name / Age / Place of birth / Position
		Entrepreneurial profile ("warming up")	2	How do you present yourself? Any particular trait to highlight?
	Overview of social entrepreneurship	What does the interviewee understand by social entrepreneurship? Their knowledge of the sector	3	Understanding that this project has a highly significant social component, how would you define social entrepreneurship?
			4	How do you think social entrepreneurship has evolved in Spain?
			5	How important is social entrepreneurship considered at the moment?
	Overview of the social entrepreneur	Understanding the importance the entrepreneur places on their role	6	Is a social entrepreneur born or made?
			7	Do you think everyone can be a social entrepreneur?
			8	What do you think characterizes a social entrepreneur?
			9	What do you think can motivate someone to undertake social entrepreneurship?
			10	Why do you think it isn't done more often?
			11	Do you consider prior experiences important for launching a social project?
			12	What type of training do you think they should have in particular?
	Interviewee's social project	Seeing the project from the interviewee's perspective	13	We already know from the media what the project is about in considerable detail, but what makes this business different?
1	Opportunity detection	Social alert	14	How did the idea for this project come about?
			15	What difficulties or setbacks did the project have to overcome to stay afloat?
		Closeness to the social problem	16	Have you experienced situations that have marked you and motivated you to create the company?
		Proximity to other entrepreneurs	17	Are your family or friends involved in social projects?
			18	Who supported you in this venture?
			19	Before starting the company's activities, did you have contact with other social entrepreneurs?
			20	If there is one lesson above all that social entrepreneurs have taught you over the years, what would it be?
		Prior experience	21	How do you start a social project from scratch?
			22	Were you aiming to create a social business?
			23	Do you have experience related to the company's activity?
			24	Do you think your previous work experience has influenced you in any way in creating the company?
			25	What did you do for work before?
			26	What is your background in social entrepreneurship?
		Entrepreneur profile (common traits in academic literature and seeking new ones)	27	Is there something from your personal past that has particularly marked your life?
			28	What characteristic would you highlight about yourself that has enabled you to get the project off the ground?
			29	How did the entrepreneurial spirit arise in you?
			30	Do you collaborate on other social projects, such as social entrepreneurship or NGOs?
		Entrepreneurial motivation and its evolution	31	How did you feel when you presented your project for the first time (to a client, for funding...)?
			32	Did you think a few years ago that you would be doing this?
			33	What is it like to make a living from your passion?
			34	Is there a word or phrase that inspires you to continue on this adventure?
			35	Considering your previous experiences and knowing that you don't "get rich" with these types of projects, what kind of benefit do you gain that explains your involvement?
			36	What was your main motivation at the start of the project?
			37	And after these years, have your motivation and objectives evolved? Do you think anything is different now?
		Importance of prior education	38	Do you have any training related to the company's activities?
			39	How important has your training been in creating the company?
2	Entrepreneurial team	Team profiles	40	How did you and your partners meet?
			41	What was that first meeting with your partners like?
			42	What are the profiles of the rest of the team?
			43	How would you describe your partners? What main characteristic would you highlight about each of them?
			44	What are the selection criteria when hiring someone for your team?
			45	Do employees participate in the company's strategic decisions?
3	Future vision	Assess their ambition, and if their vision for the project has evolved...	46	Where do you see your project in 3-5 years?
			47	If you hadn't pursued this, what would you have liked to do?
			48	Has your life changed a lot in recent years?
			49	What would you recommend to someone who intends to start a social enterprise but is hesitant?
			50	Do you have any other social entrepreneur in mind who inspires you? Why?

Source: *Own elaboration*

The new method of information collection did not diminish the quantity or variety of nuanced information. What initially could have posed a research obstacle later became an efficient way to expedite data gathering, eliminating the need for the researcher to travel across different parts of Spain.

To facilitate tracking and drawing conclusions from each case study, interviewees were requested to state their names and venture affiliations in the study, a request to which all agreed, signing the respective consent forms (see Appendix 1.- Case study protocol).

As the number of interviews progressed, new facets and factors emerged in respondents' answers, prompting adjustments to the initial interview script, including adding or removing questions (Caven, 2012).

The field notebook functioned similarly to the research journal described by Gibbs (2013), consisting of a simple hardcover spiral-bound notebook with squared pages. It enabled recording incidents during data collection, documenting emails, interview dates, ideas, problems, impressions, and other occurrences (Caven, 2012). Following the interviews, the researcher dedicated a brief period to reflecting on these notes (Kvale, 2008), writing annotations in an open format without strict organization (Gibbs, 2013). An example of these notes and internal organisation can be found in Appendix 4.- Example of notes and reflections in Notebook. During the analysis phase, these annotations in the field notebook provided additional data for studying the transcripts, aligning with Glaser & Holton's (2004) idea that "all is data."

Comprehensive notes were taken, and any additional information or refinement of email responses was subsequently addressed. Transcribed interviews were shared with each interviewee for review, feedback, and verification, enhancing the reliability and validity of data interpretation (Yin, 2014).

Since interviews were the primary method of data collection in this study, notes from secondary sources served mainly to provide context and support understanding derived

from interviews. With all data collected, theoretical saturation was achieved in understanding the phenomenon under study.

Some interview questions, particularly those probing the significance of the interviewees' roles within their organizations, were challenging to answer. These queries often led to prolonged moments of silence. What remained unsaid often held more value than subsequent "politically correct" responses, underscoring the importance of researcher observations and notes. These moments frequently yielded additional information not directly solicited during open conversations, enriching both the information gathered and subsequent analysis.

4.4.3.- Phase of evidence analysis and presentation of results

The phase of data analysis in case study research presents significant challenges and has received less theoretical development compared to other methodological phases (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). According to Eisenhardt (1989), while published studies often detail data collection methods and study contexts, they frequently offer limited guidance on the analytical processes employed. This lack of standardized procedures can lead to interpretative discretion among researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Yin (1998) outlines that data analysis in case studies involves examining, categorizing, tabulating, and using various methods to combine evidence to test initial hypotheses. Researchers are advised to begin with a clear analytical strategy, prioritizing what and why aspects of the analysis.

Eisenhardt (1989) proposes a generic analytical strategy for case study analysis:

1. Identify similarities within a group of cases and differences between different groups.
2. Make comparisons across cases.
3. Divide and compare data based on their quantitative or qualitative nature.

However, the methodological approach lacks standardized quantitative or qualitative methods for pattern matching, making this phase one of the least structured in the process (Eisenhardt, 1989; Hartley, 1994; Miles, 1979). To mitigate interpretative discretion, researchers are encouraged to discuss their findings with peers in the field (Salmador Sánchez, 2001). Additionally, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) like Ethnograph, ATLAS.ti, WinMAX, NUD*IST, and NVivo are noted for their utility in qualitative analysis, though they do not entirely replace the researcher's analytical effort (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Maxwell, 1998).

The process involves evaluating data through multiple interpretations to uncover relationships relevant to the research questions. Constructs identified in qualitative data can yield significant insights in case studies, leveraging diverse data collection and analysis techniques to triangulate findings. In multiple-case designs, researchers assess the generalizability of constructs and themes across cases, examining if observed themes are consistent or variable across different contexts (Gall et al., 1996).

Two prevalent types of analysis in case study research include structural analysis and reflective analysis:

- Structural analysis examines patterns inherent in discourse, text, events, or phenomena.
- Reflective analysis draws on qualitative traditions like critical science and phenomenology, relying on the researcher's intuition and judgment rather than explicit category systems (Gall et al., 1996).

Researchers are advised to explore data from various angles to uncover unforeseen outcomes, potentially necessitating additional interviews or involving different investigators to enrich perspectives and enhance the robustness of conclusions.

4.4.3.1.- ATLAS.ti software as an analysis tool

It was determined that the method should function as a tool to address the research questions (Rodriguez et al., 2004; Silverman, 2021). It was evident that the data analysis

process would be conducted using specific computer tools (MacMillan & Koenig, 2004). Therefore, a student license for ATLAS.ti version 9.1.3 software was purchased.

New information processing technologies are fully integrated into the field of qualitative research. Beginning in the 1980s, the first qualitative analysis computer programs were developed, collectively known as CAQDAS, Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (Hwang, 2008). These programs encompass a wide range of software designed to facilitate the analysis of qualitative data, as detailed in Table 20.

Table 20: Main qualitative analysis software

SOFTWARE	WEB SITE
ATLAS.ti	www.atlasti.com
Ethnograph	www.qualisresearch.com
HyperResearch	www.researchware.com
MaxQDA	www.maxqda.com
NVivo	www.qsrinternational.com
Transana	www.transana.org

Source: own elaboration

ATLAS.ti, Ethnograph, and NVivo are some of the most used CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software). The choice of one program or another will depend on the objectives of the study, theoretical perspective, type of analysis required, and researcher preferences (Tesch, 2013).

ATLAS.ti is an optimal tool for the qualitative analysis of large amounts of information, and one of the most widely used CAQDAS by researchers. Its main advancement compared to other programs is its support for not only textual material but also graphics, videos, and websites, making it possible to organize, regroup, and manage all material in a systematic and creative way (Friese, 2019).

The prototype of this program was created by Thomas Murh at the Technical University of Berlin as part of the research project "ATLAs (1989-1992)," and it began to be commercialized in 1993 (Muhr, 1991). Since its inception, this tool has been influenced by the research of Glaser and Strauss, with Strauss himself collaborating in its design (Glaser & Strauss, 2017).

CAQDAS emerged in the eighties, stemming from new computer programs for qualitative or mixed research methods (Fielding & Cisneros-Puebla, 2009). Qualitative data analysis software can be divided into three basic categories (Jones, 2007): text retriever, code-and-retrieve packages, and programs to develop or build theory ("theory-building-software"). The third group of programs arises within the framework of "Grounded Theory" and allows research to be carried out more efficiently and with more resources (González & de Castro, 2005). ATLAS.ti belongs to this type of software (Fielding & Cisneros-Puebla, 2009; Smit, 2002).

ATLAS.ti frees the researcher from many tasks that machines can do more effectively (Friese, 2019), increasing the overall level of quality of the analysis organization (Lu & Shulman, 2008). The program helps by providing better data management, saving time, and offering great flexibility (Jones, 2007). Among other actions, it allows you to modify the name of codes and the size of selected citations, retrieve data based on various criteria, search for words, add notes, and find them later, count the number of coded incidents, and many more tools (Friese, 2019). Faced with a large amount of information, it allows the researcher to improve their ability to classify, examine, search, and identify patterns and their characteristics (Lu & Shulman, 2008).

ATLAS.ti allows working with data in text format, videos, sound files, and other digital files such as photographs (Hwang, 2008). Texts are analysed and interpreted using various coding procedures and generating annotations (Smit, 2002). Annotations or "memos" are notes that help the researcher include ideas, explanations, definitions, make decisions, or interpret meanings that arise during the coding and analysis process (González & de Castro, 2005; Smit, 2002). All the data and information generated during the analysis are stored in the same file called the Hermeneutical Unit (Friese, 2019).

The program can greatly assist in managing large, complex datasets (Gibbs, 2013), allowing the analysis of a phenomenon from many perspectives, something that would be nearly impossible with traditional human reflection processes (Martínez, 2006). However, there is a general consensus that the intellectual work, data interpretation, analysis process, and/or theory generation must be carried out by the researcher themselves (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Caven, 2012; Gibbs, 2013; Hwang, 2008; Jones,

2007; Suddaby, 2006). Thus, the computer and ATLAS.ti are tools that aid in the qualitative data analysis process.

The main benefits identified after using ATLAS.ti in this research include:

- Facilitating the integration, management, search, and retrieval of large amounts of information obtained during fieldwork. It has also allowed consolidating all the analysis in a single file.
- Enabling the connection of interview excerpts with codes and categories within the interview's context, thus preventing decontextualization of the analysis.
- Promoting the constant comparison process, where codes, memos, and previously noted citations are readily available for ongoing analysis.
- Visualizing the coding process through diagrams and generating theoretical networks schematically.

However, regardless of their advancements, computer tools do not replace the researcher and cannot fully comprehend the meaning of texts. Their primary advantage lies in facilitating specific parts of the analysis process (Tesch, 2013), such as coding extensive text volumes, segmenting text into citations, or writing analysis memos. However, these tasks could still be performed in a more traditional manner using photocopies, highlighters, coloured pencils, index cards, or post-it notes.

4.4.3.2.- The transcript

The analysis process commenced with the transcription of each interview, creating a document that facilitated the study and comparison of information (Carrasco & Porta, 2013). This transcription process was time-consuming, prompting some researchers to advocate for direct analysis from recordings (Gibbs, 2013), a capability offered by ATLAS.ti for direct audio file analysis (González & de Castro, 2005). Despite this potential advantage, transcription was preferred to ensure careful interpretation of all recorded content and to produce a document that could be easily reviewed multiple times (Gibbs, 2013). It was decided to transcribe everything without omitting repetitive or non-informative parts to maintain conversation context (Gibbs, 2013).

Despite efforts to accurately reflect conversation content, transcriptions inherently reflect an interpretation of the original reality (Solanilla, 2007). According to Kvale (2008), transcriptions are translations from oral to written language, involving a shift from narrative oral discourse to narrative written discourse, each governed by different structures and rules.

The primary advantage of transcribing interviews was the opportunity during the writing process to initiate data analysis, familiarize oneself with the content, and generate new ideas and questions (Gibbs, 2013).

4.4.3.3.- Coding

The qualitative coding process described by Bingham (2023) is structured into five phases to ensure a systematic and transparent analysis. First, data is organised through attribute coding, categorising it by type, source, location, and time. Next, it is classified into relevant thematic categories using deductive analysis and a priori codes aligned with the study's purpose. In the third phase, open coding is used to identify patterns and themes through a constant comparative method. The fourth phase involves condensing these codes into themes and synthesising them into findings. Finally, theoretical and literature-based codes are applied to connect the findings with existing research and theoretical frameworks. Throughout all phases, writing memos is crucial for recording thoughts and decisions, supporting the transparency and reliability of the study. This process ensures a systematic and credible analysis of qualitative data.

In this research, the analysis process commenced with data coding and retrieval (Coffey & Atkinson, 2003; Tesch, 2013) to separate, condense, classify, and synthesize all data for easier management (Jones, 2007). Working with text files, significant phenomena were identified through code assignment (Coffey & Atkinson, 2003), emerging organically during the analysis process (González & de Castro, 2005). The words, phrases, and paragraphs associated with these codes facilitated the identification of commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures (Coffey & Atkinson, 2003).

According to DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2011), two primary levels of coding were utilized: open coding for naming and categorizing concepts and descriptions through meticulous data examination (Blismas & Dainty, 2003; Flick, 2018). Data fragments were dissected and compared during coding, with similar incidents grouped under corresponding codes (Smit, 2002). Throughout, textual segments aimed to convey meaningful, relevant, and informative content (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007), contributing conceptual or descriptive value (Blismas & Dainty, 2003) to the study's focus (Jones, 2007).

Using ATLAS.ti, "open coding" involved creating new codes (Friese, 2019). While numerous new codes were generated (Flick, 2018), existing codes were applied as similarities and repetitions were identified among data related to discovered phenomena (Friese, 2019). The coding phase began with constant comparison, evaluating similarities within and between coded elements (Gibbs, 2013).

Despite generating a substantial number of codes, the challenge of over-coding emerged (Jones, 2007). Following Bowen (2005), codes were compared to identify similarities, and using ATLAS.ti's "Merge Codes" option, codes with different names but identical concepts or phenomena were consolidated (Friese, 2019). This flexibility in coding exemplifies the capabilities associated with CAQDAS (Lu & Shulman, 2008).

In this study, various concepts such as "helping others," "not monetarily compensated," and "feeling useful" were grouped under the theme of "prosocial motivation." Similarly, concepts like "value proposition," "department," and "professional" were categorized under "professionalisation of the team." Additional themes included "shared leadership," encompassing concepts such as "feeling of belonging," "teamwork," and "making decisions as a team," while "search for financing" grouped concepts like "contributions or donations," "private support," and "crowdfunding."

As suggested by Bryant & Charmaz (2007), code names were chosen to accurately reflect the content of each data segment, addressing challenges in maintaining consistency and rigor reflective of the underlying information.

During coding, brief definitions were assigned to each code, akin to those found in a "codebook" (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011), In the case of this research, the codebooks generated will be shown in various tables in the Results chapter.

Throughout the coding phase, analytical memos were created to capture new ideas, concepts, or relationships emerging from data analysis (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Lu & Shulman, 2008; Trinidad et al., 2005). These memos supported ongoing analysis by fostering new approaches and aiding interpretation of data insights that might otherwise have been overlooked (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). An example of a memo is included in Appendix 2.- Example of a memo.

4.4.3.4.- Getting results

At the outset of this phase, ATLAS.ti was utilized to generate text files containing all citations and memos linked to each code. Following Smit (2002), the program was restricted to textual functions. The subsequent analysis phase, involving the interrelation of codes to generate categories, concepts, and models, was conducted using a word processor, combining manual and electronic techniques (Smit, 2002; Valles, 2005). According to Coffey & Atkinson (2003), the functionalities and capabilities of word processors sufficed for the analytical tasks undertaken in data analysis.

Engaging with the citations associated with codes, characterized by Tesch (2013) as data segmentation to decontextualize them from the original text, involved reorganizing and classifying segmented data in a process of recontextualization. Constant comparison of data within text segments was pivotal in this phase (Bowen, 2005), refining concepts, identifying their attributes, and exploring their interrelationships (Taylor & Bogdan, 1987; Tesch, 2013).

Emergent patterns provided descriptive insights into the principal characteristics of the phenomenon studied from each subject's perspective on the topics explored (Coffey & Atkinson, 2003; Suddaby, 2006; Tesch, 2013). These patterns culminated in distinct categories and relationships, facilitating the grouping of text segments into specific analytical constructs (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Tesch, 2013).

Overall, it was an iterative and non-linear process (Smit, 2002) necessitating repeated reviews of quotes, interviews, codes, etc., to consolidate emerging ideas, concepts, and relationships. This inductive content analysis of the interviews aimed to avoid preconceived theories (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Hunter & Kelly, 2008).

Following Bryant & Charmaz (2007), after data analysis, a review of secondary sources related to the topics investigated was conducted, treating them as additional data sources integrated into the analysis through constant comparison (Glaser & Holton, 2004). This approach provided contextual background to situate the topic and develop new perspectives on the findings.

To ensure the credibility of results and enhance confidence in them (Bowen, 2005), the interviews were read multiple times to verify interpretations (Martínez, 2006), and results and conclusions obtained were triangulated through different sources, such as interviews, observations and document analysis (Hammond & Wellington, 2012).

4.4.3.5. Writing the report: results and conclusions of the study

The interpretation and conclusion phase of a case study requires substantial effort from the researcher, as it involves synthesizing findings and drawing meaningful conclusions (Arias, 2003). Unlike earlier phases, there are no explicit rules governing how the study report should be structured. It is recommended not to postpone this phase until the end but to begin documenting relevant conclusions early in the process (Rialp, 1998).

Successful execution of these tasks demands that researchers remain open-minded and ready to confront findings contrary to their expectations, thereby setting aside preconceived notions and biases.

Various structural approaches exist for organizing case study reports (Yin, 1998). These may include traditional structures (e.g., questions-methods-results-interpretation), chronological narratives, comparative analyses from different perspectives, or frameworks that emphasize theoretical development. When multiple cases are involved,

individual cases can be presented in full detail or summarized using conceptual tables and charts or may be included as appendices.

Regardless of the chosen structure, involving informants or participants in reviewing the study's content enhances its credibility and quality by corroborating presented evidence (Rialp, 1998).

The final report of a case study should adhere to a clear structure appropriate for its objectives and intended audience, ideally presented in a straightforward manner accessible to both academic and general readers (Yin, 1994). This approach maximizes the study's impact and broadens its dissemination beyond academic circles (Cambra-Fierro, 2004). Case studies, with their focus on real-life situations and accessibility through written reports, provide valuable insights that resonate with everyday experiences, thus aiding in understanding complex phenomena (Yin, 1994).

4.7.- Chapter Summary

This chapter has elucidated the rationale behind selecting the case study methodology as the most suitable approach for this research.

Seven social entrepreneurs and their ventures were selected based on specific criteria: they operate as social enterprises addressing social issues using business methods; they cover significant segments of the gastronomic value chain; they originate from diverse regions of Spain; they are prominent, facilitating access to ample secondary information; and they allow for direct contact, essential for the study.

The Evidence Collection Phase begins with Instrument Design and Protocols, crucial steps following the establishment of the research question and case selection criteria. This phase entails creating diverse and numerous tools that ensure methodological quality in the case study. Central to this is the Case Study Protocol, which not only includes

instruments for data collection but also outlines procedures and ethical considerations necessary for reliability and ethical practice in research. A pilot case precedes full-scale data collection, allowing refinement of the study's action plan and methodologies based on empirical results and current literature. For this occasion, Uninicio was our pilot case study.

Qualitative Data Collection Methods then come into focus, aiming to gather evidence that validates the study's propositions. The methodology stresses the importance of triangulation, using multiple sources such as direct observation, documentary evidence, interviews, and artifact observation to enhance the study's validity.

Specific Methods Employed in Data Collection highlight practical implementations of these procedures. Documentary evidence, including reports and foundational documents from social entrepreneurs, provides foundational insights into their ventures. Direct observation, though constrained by geographic dispersion and COVID-19 restrictions, offers first-hand insights into organizational operations and interactions. Interviews, both in-person and via Zoom, serve as primary tools for gathering detailed perspectives from key stakeholders, adapted to ensure flexibility and depth in data collection across diverse contexts.

Lastly, the Evidence Analysis and Presentation of Results phase employed tools like ATLAS.ti for this purpose.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND PROPOSITIONS

5.1.- Chapter introduction

The following chapter is fundamentally divided into two phases. In the first phase, a detailed account of the results from our pilot test is provided, which served as a crucial step in refining our approach. This chapter also includes initial conclusions highlighting key findings and concludes with reflections and insights on the feasibility and effectiveness of the methodology applied.

Subsequently, the second phase begins, expanding the study to include more cases. The conclusions and reflections from this phase are substantial enough to warrant their own dedicated chapter.

5.2.- First phase: Results of the Pilot Test

As outlined in the Methodology section, this research commenced with a Pilot Case featuring Edu Roselló from UnInicio and their joiners, aimed at thoroughly testing the interview questions proposed. Additionally, this pilot case served as a foundation to later identify similarities and differences with the subsequent cases.

Both the preliminary analysis of secondary sources, primarily a compilation of media appearances in the press and other outlets, and the subsequent interviews contributed to shaping an initial understanding of the significance and role of participants within this newly established social enterprise. A summary of this initial exploration is detailed in Table 21.

Table 21: Excerpt from the Codebook of Key Elements for Developing a New Social Enterprise (UnInicio's case)

Theme	Coding	Description	Examples
Social motivation of the whole team	Shared vision of the social problem	A unified understanding of the social problem and its importance.	"We found that there are hundreds of boys that at the best moment of their lives nobody notices them".
	Social background: Previous experiences vs previous training	Contrast and description of professional and personal experiences.	"I remember with special affection one of my latest collaborations, an accompaniment to an elderly man until he died at the age of 100".
Founder's profile	Perfectionism	Setting high standards, striving for flawlessness, and fearing mistakes.	"You always have to pursue the level of excellence".
	Charisma	The ability to attract and inspire others through confidence and a magnetic presence.	'He is a guy impossible to forget. I remember the day I met him. A deep, uncomfortable, and invasive look'.
	Closeness to the team	Personal connection, trust, and rapport with team members	"Your boss is your friend; I am in a family environment."
Balance of objectives	Collective objectives	Shared group goals and collaborative efforts to achieve them	"I love teamwork with such different profiles and learning from them. I like Mondays for arriving after the weekend and seeing them".
	Individual objectives	Personal goals and efforts impacting success.	"Although I now love its social component, when I decided to start working at UnInicio, the social part was not the main reason. I wanted to continue growing professionally".

Source: own elaboration

To aid in the readability of the results, the list of participants in this pilot case is provided in Table 22.

Table 22: List of interviewees

Participant	Professional Title
Edu Roselló (ER)	UnInicio Founder
Joiner 1 (J1)	Co-founder
Joiner 2 (J2)	Psychologist
Joiner 3 (J3)	Marketing
Joiner 4 (J4)	Training assistant
Joiner 5 (J5)	Quality

Source: own elaboration

5.3.- Social motivation of the whole team

UnInicio's case introduces additional factors, as outlined in Table 23, such as identification with the social venture itself and personal experiences addressing social issues. These factors can compensate for the absence of other forms of prior knowledge or professional experiences.

5.3.1.- Shared vision of the social problem

As shown in Table 23, the social entrepreneur (ER) started his journey as a teacher, where he observed numerous teenagers with significant potential who were marginalized from society. This realization was solidified when one of his students ended up in a reformatory school. To maintain connection with the student, ER and other teachers started playing football together on Sundays. This experience underscored the need for proactive intervention to support youth at risk.

One of the joiners (J2) describes UnInicio as a venture filled with promise and hope, aiming for its beneficiaries, including the staff themselves, to discover their own paths. Similarly, another joiner (J4) emphasizes that as a social worker, everyone is viewed as more than just a 'case'; they are individuals in need of compassion and acceptance (see Table 23).

As detailed in subsequent sections, internal communication within UnInicio is highly effective. Each team member, regardless of their tenure with the venture, has embraced these core values to varying degrees.

Proposition 1: In social ventures within the gastronomy sector in Spain, the collective social motivation and shared vision are highly valued by both social entrepreneurs and joiners

Table 23: *Excerpt from the specific codebook for the theme "Social motivation of the whole team"*

Theme	Coding	Examples
Social motivation of the whole team	Shared vision of the social problem	ER: 'We found that there are hundreds of boys that nobody notices at the best moment of their lives'. 'We began to see that the kitchen had an incredible educational aspect. We thought about combining these charity caterings with the boys with whom we played football. And we found that the kitchen provided immediate learning, something unthinkable. And at the same time, we saw that the kitchen gave us a field of action in which we could really consider a social project of great impact'. J1: 'We should not start with the idea that we work with adolescents who lack something but have a value that has not yet seen the light'.
	Social background: Previous experiences vs previous training	Previous experiences with social problems J2: 'Thanks to volunteering, during my pre-adolescence and adolescence, I was able to mature and not lose my way. It was a troubled time'. 'I remember with special affection one of my latest collaborations, an accompaniment to an elderly man until he died at the age of 100'. 'My aunt is a philosopher and psychoanalyst and with a social discourse that undoubtedly influenced me'. Previous training of the team members ER: 'Because whether it is for the kitchen or to do the accounting, there is already someone who can do them for you'. 'We all learn together'. J1: 'Academic training opens the mind, gives tools, helps to express… but practice is the best. It is important to have the ability to see the world from a different perspective, identify needs, and respond with action'. J4: 'Studying Teaching Career has not helped me at all. I decided to do this university course because I thought that this way, I could help my foster brother. Helping people is my vocation.'. J5: 'Each one learns on the go, as needed. It is always good for people to know (for example, having a psychologist like J1 is important to us), but then many things are best learned by doing and based on what is needed'.

Source: own elaboration

5.3.2.- Social background: previous experiences vs previous training

Considering that opportunity discovery requires to be alert in the market (Kirzner, 1979), social entrepreneurs discover opportunities by addressing social needs for which they are alert due to their personal background. Accordingly, it is crucial for them and their team members to have a personal connection to these social challenges. Despite being a young team, members of UnInicio typically bring prior experiences and familial connections with social causes. Table 24 outlines each member's previous experiences, with specific details withheld to maintain confidentiality.

Table 24: *Proximity of the interviewees to some social problems*

Participant	Proximity to the social problem
Edu Roselló (ER)	Founder of previous social ventures in Barcelona
Joiner 1 (J1)	Parents with social ventures in Africa
Joiner 2 (J2)	Influence of his aunt
Joiner 3 (J3)	Parents involved in social ventures in South America
Joiner 4 (J4)	Parents involved in foster care ventures
Joiner 5 (J5)	Daughter of Joiner1 (co-founder)

Source: *own elaboration*

In the case of UnInicio social entrepreneur (ER), his upbringing was marked by a challenging adolescence. Before launching UnInicio, he was involved in other food delivery ventures aimed at supporting the homeless and drug addicts.

Alongside her role at UnInicio, J1 actively participates in other NGOs. Since a young age, she has accompanied her parents, who are doctors, in cooperation projects in an African country. Her father served as the President of one NGO.

J2 has been engaged in volunteer projects since the age of thirteen. Although he was involved in other volunteer initiatives, such as an association for psychotics, his current workload prevents him from continuing with them. Additionally, J2's family has a long-standing relationship with various social organizations, providing financial support.

J3's family has a history of involvement in social issues in a South American country. J4 has grown up surrounded by foster siblings, as their parents are affiliated with a foster Foundation. J5, the daughter of J1, initially joined the social venture as a part-time volunteer while pursuing her university degree.

Therefore, it is evident that ER selects a team with a strong inclination towards addressing social problems, emphasizing empathy as a catalyst for developing prosocial behaviours in individuals (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987b), thereby enhancing their likelihood to take action.

Upon entering UnInicio's premises, one immediately perceives the high value and significance the social entrepreneur and the joiners place on people and social motivation: corridors adorned with photographs, artworks, and images featuring their employees, students (beneficiaries of their social initiatives), and external collaborators, as depicted in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Photographs taken from the UnInicio's facilities

Source: own elaboration

140

A collaborative philosophy permeates every aspect of the building and extends to all public engagements (certain details cannot be specified due to confidentiality reasons). At UnInicio's facilities, it is common for the psychologist (J2), the marketing manager (J3), and the rest of the joiners to convene regularly, aiding each other in launching ongoing ventures.

The UnInicio team, including its founder and joiners, did not possess professional expertise in the firm's field of activity, cooking and gastronomy (as indicated in Table 25). ER chose to assemble a team based on personal qualities, prioritizing these attributes over specific professional skills, and sought to complement any deficiencies by recruiting collaborators with complementary expertise.

Table 25: Previous training of the interviewees

Participant	Previous training
Edu Roselló (ER)	Philosophy & Teaching
Joiner 1 (J1)	Teaching & Biology
Joiner 2 (J2)	Psychology
Joiner 3 (J3)	Advertising - Public Relations - Marketing
Joiner 4 (J4)	Teaching
Joiner 5 (J5)	Process engineering

Source: own elaboration

When asked about the importance of the team's prior training, all interviewees unanimously emphasized the significance of previous personal experiences and their involvement in the social field. During their selection processes, their primary criteria revolve around identifying "responsible adults."

Proposition 2: In social ventures within the gastronomy sector in Spain, prior personal experiences among social entrepreneurs and joiners complement their limited formal training.

5.4.- Founder's profile

In an era where leadership is a focal point of analysis in both business and political sectors, it is rare to encounter someone who lacks formal knowledge of leadership or business strategy yet naturally embodies charisma and overwhelms with their leadership abilities.

This is precisely the impression one gets upon initial contact with ER. From the prompt response to the first email to the subsequent phone call, it became evident that visiting UnInicio's facilities was essential to truly grasp ER's personality and his venture's essence.

Initially, UnInicio might appear as a deeply personal venture driven entirely by ER's vision. However, after conversing with the joiners involved in the social venture, it becomes clear that ER is indeed a capable leader, honest, transparent, and adept at fostering a sense of security among his team members while consistently embodying the organization's values from the top-down. This has cultivated a work culture where joiners feel comfortable teaching, learning, and enjoying their work without fear of failure. Subsequently, they are empowered to engage in bottom-up communication, ensuring the organization is not solely reliant on one individual's inspiration (Harter & Mann, 2017).

A common and notable trait among all interviewees is their loyalty and admiration for ER. They use descriptors such as astute, visionary, and brilliant. Consistently, they identify ER's leadership with key attributes such as perfectionism, charisma, and a close connection to the team, as detailed in Table 26.

Table 26: *Excerpt from the specific codebook for the theme "Founder's profile"*

Theme	Coding	Examples
Founder's profile	Perfectionism	J1: 'To work with ER it takes a lot of humility since he manages to get you out of your boxes all the time. He is highly challenging, and for that, you need to be more flexible. That is precisely why we argue many times.' J3: 'I like the pressure to do your job perfectly; it doesn't matter if there is a lot or a little work to do. And that level of demand is transmitted to the entire team'. J5: 'Thanks to ER we are very professional in everything we do and not because it is something social, we have to relax when offering a quality product or service'.
	Charisma	J1: 'My life has not been easy since she started on the project. I have always had my doubts. If I have continued, it is because of my relationship with ER. It is something that brings me a lot'. J2: 'I was working as a bartender in a bar when ER and Joiner5 entered the bar, and while they were enjoying their dinner, we began to know each other. They told me about the project and the idea. ER told me that he would call me in two years when the project was somewhat more established. I thought this guy was crazy. And indeed, two years passed, and he called me. And here I am, in love with this patient [the project], with UnInicio'. 'ER's way of transmitting makes the difficulties disappear. We all have absolute confidence in what we do and how we do it'.
	Closeness to the team	ER: 'After a few years of unconsciousness, I notice all the shortcomings I had. In a social project, it is very difficult to manage human emotions. It is like being a Big Brother, to your colleagues, bosses, clients ... are in your professional and personal life. However, and after several disappointments, I now try to keep my distance from the new recruits. I don't do the interviews anymore.' J4: 'Your boss is your friend. I am in a family environment.' 'ER called me, and I said yes without thinking twice'.

Source: *own elaboration*

5.4.1.- Perfectionism

ER's perfectionism is a central characteristic that profoundly influences his leadership and the dynamics with the joiners at UnInicio. This trait, marked by his immense tenacity and obsession with clarity, has elevated the standards of work and professionalism within the organisation. His perfectionism manifests in a constant effort to avoid any ambiguity, which leads him to be extremely meticulous in all aspects of his work.

This trait, however, has a double-edged nature. On one hand, the joiners at UnInicio appreciate the pressure ER exerts to ensure each task is completed to the highest possible standard. One of the joiners, J3, expresses that he enjoys the pressure to perform his job perfectly, regardless of the workload, and that this level of demand is transmitted to the entire team. This perfectionist attitude has led the team to excel and develop a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to the quality of their work.

On the other hand, this same perfectionism can be seen as a source of stress and conflict. ER is not only demanding with his team but also with himself. For example, J1 mentions that working with Edu requires a lot of humility and flexibility, as he constantly challenges his team to step out of their comfort zone. This dynamic can lead to arguments and misunderstandings but is also viewed as an opportunity for personal growth and development.

Moreover, ER has successfully instilled a high level of professionalism in his team. J5 points out that, thanks to ER, the team never allows itself to relax, even when the work might be considered less critical due to its social nature. This rigorous approach ensures that a high-quality product or service is always delivered, which in the long run strengthens the reputation and efficiency of the team and the organisation as a whole. Additionally, J2 also highlights that ER's detailed and perfectionist approach has been fundamental in structuring and developing training programmes that truly impact the beneficiaries of their projects.

5.4.2.- Charisma

Another characteristic of ER highlighted by the joiners of UnInicio is his charisma, which has a profound impact on the dynamics of UnInicio. This charisma is expressed in various ways, each contributing to his ability to inspire, motivate, and connect with those who work with him.

During the hour-long interview, ER demonstrated unwavering confidence, a strong character, and a very direct attitude. This magnetic presence is something that many of the joiners at UnInicio recognise and value. Some of them consider ER a "social magnet," capable of attracting both small and significant collaborators who have been crucial for the project's success.

ER is known for his ability to communicate effectively and motivate his team. J2 highlights that the way ER conveys ideas and tackles difficulties makes obstacles seem insignificant, generating absolute confidence in the team about what they do and how they do it. J1 and J3 agree that this ability to motivate and keep the team focused is a clear manifestation of his charisma.

ER has a remarkable talent for attracting and retaining talent. J2 recounts the anecdote of the day he met ER and J5. He was working as a waiter in a restaurant, and during dinner, ER shared his vision for the project. He promised to contact J2 again in two years, when the project was more established, to invite him to join the team. This promise, which at the time seemed crazy to J2, was fulfilled, demonstrating ER's ability to inspire trust and attract individuals committed to his vision.

J4 and J5 emphasise ER's ability to see potential in others before they see it themselves. This talent for identifying and developing hidden skills in his team has helped many discover and enhance abilities they were unaware of.

In short, ER's charisma not only makes him an effective leader but also an inspiring figure who motivates his team to achieve levels of excellence and commitment that would otherwise be unattainable.

5.4.3.- Closeness to the team

During the initial 'warm-up' conversations about his role in UnInicio, ER's first response clearly reflects a social intention: "Take care of everyone." ER acknowledges that the company has undergone rapid evolution in recent years. Adopting a constant trial-and-error approach has also transformed his perspective on managing the company and its team members. Despite attempts to maintain some distance, ER recognises that it is his closest team of joiners who have successfully implemented his vision. In selecting these team members, he prioritises their trustworthiness, personality, and sensitivity over their specific knowledge or skills.

From the joiners' perspective, ER's closeness fosters "agility in decision-making" (J3), "the non-bureaucratisation of a young firm" (J5), and "the assumption of responsibilities" (J4). J4 highly values ER's closeness to the rest of the team, as it makes her feel at home. However, being close to ER can be a double-edged sword since, as J2 indicates, personal and professional issues are continually mixed.

This leads us to the organisation's selection processes. Joiners surrounding ER agree that they have been recruited informally (J2 and J3) or were very close to the family (J4 and J5). ER himself reflects on his experiences: "After a few years of unconsciousness, I notice all the shortcomings I had. In a social project, it is very difficult to manage human emotions. It is like being a Big Brother; your colleagues, bosses, clients... are in your professional and personal life. However, after several disappointments, I now try to keep my distance from the new recruits. I don't do the interviews anymore."

A faithful reflection of this closeness is what J4 states: "Your boss is your friend. I am in a family environment." This sentiment is shared by many in the team, highlighting how ER's approach creates an atmosphere of support and care. J4 continues: "ER called me, and I said yes without thinking twice," underscoring the strong personal bonds that ER forms with his team members.

ER's closeness to his team fosters a collaborative environment where team members feel valued and understood. This personal commitment allows ER to better assess the

strengths and weaknesses of his team, facilitating tailored support and development. This hands-on approach ensures that each joiner feels integral to the success of UnInicio, fostering a sense of belonging and dedication to the project's goals.

ER's proximity also means that he is highly aware of the challenges his team faces, both professionally and personally. This awareness enables him to provide timely and relevant support, whether it's a word of encouragement during tough times or strategic advice on overcoming work-related obstacles. The joiners at UnInicio know that they can rely on him not just as a leader but also as a mentor and confidant, which strengthens their loyalty and commitment to the organisation.

> *Proposition 3*: In social ventures within the gastronomy sector in Spain, joiners highly value the social entrepreneur's perfectionism, charisma, and closeness to them.

5.5.- Balance of collective and individual objectives

As observed in the previous section, the founder's profile has a special relevance in the final performance of the social enterprise, balancing the joiners' objectives. From the interviews conducted, two types of objectives emerge: collective and individual, as seen in Table 27.

The sense of "social" in its broadest definition is the central axis for everyone in the firm. This is perceived in their collaboration for the development of other people and their relationships with the rest of the team.

Firstly, the feeling of being part of a team and a venture with a common goal is mentioned throughout the interviews. Particularly noteworthy are responses that show their admiration for the rest of the team. Secondly, they all participate in making the team more balanced.

Table 27: *Excerpt from the specific codebook for the theme "Balance of objectives"*

Theme	Coding	Examples
Balance of objectives	Collective objectives	J2: 'I love teamwork with such different profiles and learning from them. I like Mondays for arriving after the weekend and seeing them'. J3: 'Every time I had to go to work, it was very hard, I couldn't take it anymore. I am now excited; I see that my work is worth something, I have more concerning and caring work'. J4: 'This is not a normal job; it is a life project.' 'Look at J5, she is an industrial design engineer and, in the end, she ends up doing everything: orders, clients, health issues ... We all do everything.' 'J3 could have a comfortable job, in a 'normal' firm, and look ... she is involved in all projects all day'.
	Individual objectives	J2: 'I have never been short of work. I am choosing what to discard. Today I am a bit on edge. At UnInicio, I am 3 days a week. Thursday and Friday, I am outside. In the afternoon, I attend patients in my private clinic. This also helps me take a certain perspective on UnInicio and not end up exhausted with the project'. J3: 'Although I now love its social component, when I decided to start working at UnInicio, the social part was not the main reason. I wanted to continue growing professionally.'

Source: own elaboration

The collaboration in the development of other people and their relationships with the rest of the joiners become emotional rewards that compensate for any other deficiencies in their jobs. For example, their satisfaction is reflected in several joiners' statements. J4 indicates that she is better personally and professionally and that her mother is very happy seeing her like this. Additionally, J3 says that UnInicio brings her personal and professional experiences that a Big4 company cannot offer.

Regardless of each joiner's responsibility and professional profile, all of them see themselves within the venture in the next five years. However, specific comments or ways of expressing themselves reveal interests that diverge from the collective. These more "individual" interests are also valuable for complementarity. Both the analysis of their responses and direct observation have been key in determining these reflections.

For example, both J2 and J3 quickly answered questions about their position in the social venture and their functions (Psychologist and Marketing Manager, respectively). However, J4 and J5 expressed doubts in their answers. When asked about her position, J5 hesitated and mentioned that she did a bit of everything, like quality control, picking, and receiving and shipping orders.

This hesitation prompted further analysis of other responses, the waiting times to respond, and to reach a preliminary conclusion that the team could be classified into two groups: Career Oriented Joiners and People Oriented Joiners, as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Collective and individual objectives of the team

CAREER ORIENTED JOINERS

1.- Project as a business (social, but business)

2.- Project as part as their profesional careers

ER (founder)
#J1
#J2
#J4
#J3
#J5

PEOPLE ORIENTED JOINERS

1.- Previous personal relationship with founders or other colleagues

2.- Everyone as a family
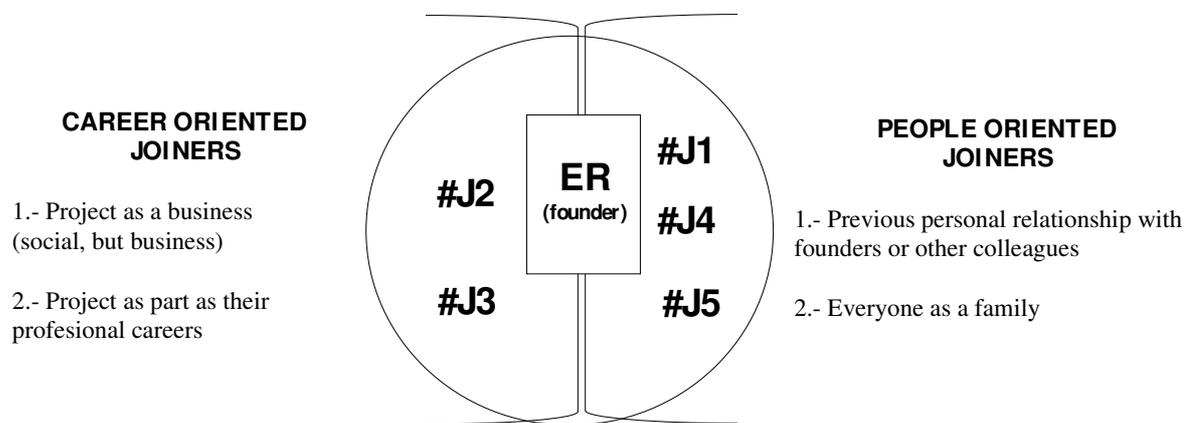
Source: own elaboration

J2 and J3 consider UnInicio as part of their professional careers. For example, J2's frantic work activity is noteworthy: he holds several jobs as a private psychotherapist, a professor in a private master of psychoanalysis program, a worker in a gambling association, in addition to his role at UnInicio. Similarly, J3, responsible for the Marketing area, was very clear about her professional responses.

In contrast, another group of joiners, which has been described as People Oriented Joiners, was detected. For example, their ties to the venture are stronger (J5 is the daughter of J1; J4 is a friend of J5 from school, and they both knew ER even before the venture started). They took longer to describe their positions and spoke more about their colleagues than about themselves.

> **Proposition 4:** In social ventures within the gastronomy sector in Spain, there is a balance between the collective and individual goals of both social entrepreneurs and joiners.

5.6.- First reflections and next steps in the research

With these initial propositions, several reflections can be drawn. The first is related to the joiners' motivations. Sharing the same social concerns and values is critical. Additionally, the leader's role in the new venture's success becomes significant when the organizational culture is based on values that are shared and transparently communicated among team members.

Secondly, the importance of team cohesion should be noted. Among the many functions within the organization, the social entrepreneur's role includes creating the team and balancing collective and individual interests.

UnInicio uses gastronomy to carry out its social work. However, the founder and his core team had little prior training in gastronomy. This suggests that, at least in the initial stages of the social enterprise's creation, team-level factors were more important than previous training in a specific subject. Therefore, this evidence challenges the idea that joiners' functional background is key to the beginnings and subsequent evolution of the social enterprise (Gauthier et al., 2019). In this case, such an idea is reconsidered by adding personal experiences, especially those related to the 'social' sphere.

When expanding the research to other case studies, it was proposed to coordinate with each of the founders to replicate the work carried out in UnInicio, visiting the facilities of the other social enterprises that are the subject of this study. However, the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to implement the planned design. Consequently, it was decided to start again with UnInicio, interviewing its founder online, and to replicate the interviews with the rest of the founders.

5.7.- Second phase: General results

5.7.1.- Introduction

In the first online interview with Edu Roselló (UnInicio), it became apparent that certain conclusions reached during the initial months of the creation process of his social venture may not have remained fully valid sometime later. UnInicio had already made progress in the market, and its value proposition was evolving. Therefore, for the purpose of the analysis of all case studies, the Embryonic Stage of the venture's life cycle was divided into two sub-stages, as seen in Figure 16.

Firstly, the Problem Validation sub-stage (indicated as A in the Figure) refers to the period when the social entrepreneur interacts with their network of close contacts to share and tests their idea and takes the first steps to establish the venture. Secondly, the Solution Validation sub-stage (indicated as B) refers to the period when, after testing the idea within their immediate network, the social entrepreneur has made progress to establish the foundations of their venture's vision and values.

Figure 16: Life Cycle approach
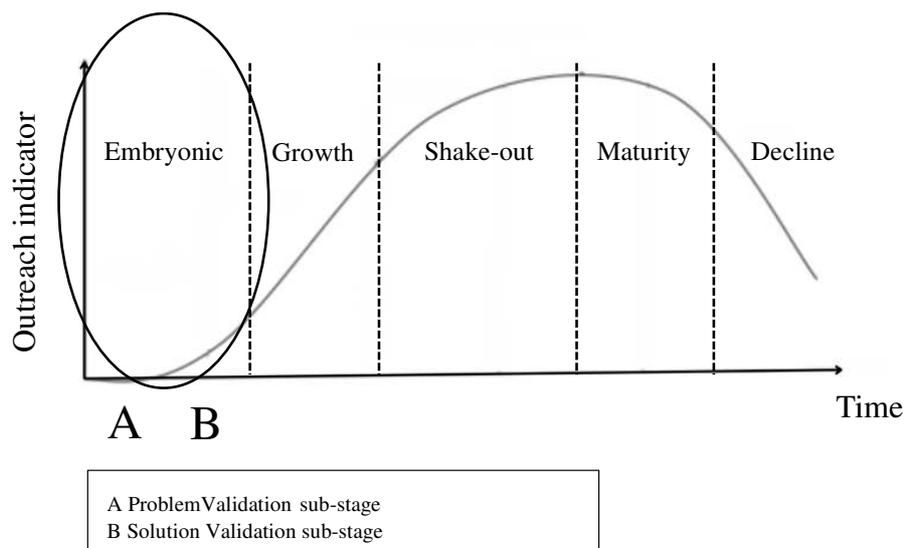
Source: own elaboration adapted from Ashta (2020)

As mentioned previously, the creation of these two sub-stages was intended to organise and categorise the information from the case studies under analysis, which was gathered from various sources. Additionally, the pilot case served as a basis for identifying similarities and/or differences with the rest of the proposed cases.

To ensure consistency in data collection, we opted to conduct all interviews via videoconference using Zoom. Prior to each interview, we obtained the interviewee's authorization to record the session, facilitating later transcription for analysis purposes.

Comprehensive notes were diligently taken during each interview session, and any additional details or clarifications from email correspondences were carefully documented. Following transcription, the interviews were shared with each participant for review, feedback, and authentication. This collaborative exchange and verification process with the interviewees was instrumental in enhancing the reliability and validity of the data interpretation, in accordance with the principles outlined by Yin (2014).

Given that interviews served as the primary method of data collection in this study, the notes from secondary sources were primarily used as supplementary materials for contextualization and enhancing understanding of the insights gleaned from the interviews. After collecting and analysing all available data, it was determined that theoretical saturation had been achieved, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

5.7.2.- Data Analysis

A content analysis was performed through a series of steps to distil the meaning as much as possible without losing the central findings. The transcripts were broken down into units of meaning in sentences or paragraphs with related content, allowing for further condensation of the content.

Since the process of analysis in qualitative research is not linear but rather recursive, it must be continuously evaluated. The interviews and their subsequent analysis led to the

emergence of a set of themes, grouping categories with clear connections from the researcher's perspective (Gall et al., 1996).

According to Bryant & Charmaz (2007), after analysing the data, a review of secondary sources was conducted in relation to the topics investigated, treating it as another source of data to be integrated into the analysis process with constant comparison (Glaser & Holton, 2004). This helped provide sufficient background to locate the topic and develop new perspectives on the results obtained.

To check the credibility of the results and increase confidence in them (Bowen, 2005), the interviews were read several times to ensure they had not been misinterpreted (Martínez, 2006), and the results were triangulated through other sources used during the research.

5.7.3.- Results

This second phase of the research helped confirm the founder's pivotal role in the initial months of the social enterprise's existence and further developed insights from the first stage. The codes identified are summarized below in Table 28.

Table 28: *Main themes identified in the data Analysis stage.*

Embryonic Stage				Aggregate dimensions
Problem Validation sub-stage		Solution Validation sub-stage		
Codes	Group of codes	Codes	Group of codes	
Founder's personal background	Founder's profile	Qualified joiners	Participatory leadership	Leadership style
Founder's professional background		Collaboration		
Prosocial motivation		Complementarity and multitasking		
Family-friends-fools	Closest contacts of the founder	Crowdfunding and Others Round of financing	Procedural search for financial support	Funding support
Other contacts of the founder		Partners and investors		

Beneficiaries	Value proposition focused on the social vision of the venture	Management evolution	'Professional' ways of working	Approach to the market
Philosophy of the company		Business model evolution – Value proposition		
Sustainability		Marketing Strategy & Awards		

Source: *own elaboration*

It was considered how frequently these codes were identified across the consulted sources, including both primary and secondary sources. The results would be those reflected in Table 29.

Table 29: *List of codes and frequency*

Embryonic Stage			
Problem Validation sub-stage		Solution Validation sub-stage	
Codes	Frequency	Codes	Frequency
Founder's personal background	10	Qualified joiners	32
Founder's professional background	17	Collaboration	15
Prosocial motivation	32	Complementarity and multitasking	21
Family-friends-fools	14	Crowdfunding and Others Round of financing	11
Other contacts of the founder	20	Partners and investors	22
Beneficiaries	22	Management evolution	21
Philosophy of the company	14	Business model evolution – Value proposition	55
Sustainability	22	Marketing Strategy & Awards	16

Source: *own elaboration*

5.8.- Joiners and leadership style

Timmons, Spinelli, and Tan (1994); and Ensley, Carland, and Carland (2000) highlighted in their research that within a team, there typically exists a leading entrepreneur who articulates the vision and subsequently attracts others who resonate with that "dream". This pattern was evident in the cases analysed and observed during initial contact with each entrepreneur. The first emails, promptly responded to by the entrepreneurs in most cases, and their willingness to follow up with calls to provide context for the study, demonstrated the determination and passion with which they pursue their ventures.

As outlined in the research design section, the interview process was divided into two distinct stages during the Embryonic Stage of the social enterprise. Regarding the leadership style within the social venture, a series of quotes were extracted from the interviews and are presented in Table 31.

To aid in the readability of the results, the selected social entrepreneurs and their ventures are listed in Table 30. The cases are presented in the order of the date of the interview. To expedite data collection, subsequent analysis, and the reporting of results, each social entrepreneur was renamed using their initials.

Table 30: *List of selected social entrepreneurs*

Social entrepreneur	Initials	Case Study
Edu Roselló	ER	UnInicio
Luis Font	JF	Robin Good
Armand Folch	AF	Conca Organics
Aitor Guerra	AG	De Buen Café
Antonio Espinosa	AE	Auara
José Luis Baños	JLB	Winable
Juan Llorca	JLL	Juan Llorca

Source: *own elaboration*

Table 31: *Leadership style evolution*

Problem Validation sub-stage	Solution Validation sub-stage
Founder's profile	**Participatory leadership**
ER: "Every Sunday, with some co-workers, I went to a prison to play soccer. We realized that nobody spends any of their time on guys between the ages of 16 and 22, when this is a crucial moment for them. There is nothing worse at that age than not having someone to enhance your talent". "Look, now I am going to speak to you with my heart in my hand, there are moments in which I enjoy a clairvoyance that cannot be trained". LF: "From a very young age, on summer vacations, I went for a month or two as a volunteer to Africa or Latin America. My father instilled in us many social values". "I love generating opportunities. Where others do not see them or do not spend time, I like to 'waste time' on it". AF: "From a very young age my task was to take care of animals. Self-sufficiency, ecology and being able to fend for yourself with what you produce are terms with which I have lived my entire life". AG: "One day in the afternoon, I sat at home one day and designed what I wanted to do in my company". AE: "Before, because I didn't want to worry them, I didn't share much information". JLB: "I fell in love with this land and from the beginning I wanted to create a different concept of wine tourism, with its social values as its banner". JLL: Well, it's funny to read some headlines like I'm the chef who left his restaurant to take a school canteen to the top.	ER: "We have made internal decisions to speed up processes to improve at the business level and our social reach". "Letizia said, Edu we have to do something, tomorrow we'll get to it. And indeed, the next day Leti and Marta were already creating Homey". LF: "The team is essential, the trust that is generated when we all go together". "All decisions are agreed upon with great respect". "Sharing joys and sorrows is much better". "We are looking for people with complementary profiles, multitasking and so they don't need us continuously to make all kinds of decisions". AF: "The team helped us change some internal processes". "I am lucky to dedicate myself to learning from so many colleagues and collaborators who push me to improve professionally and personally every day". AG: "The versatility of everyone is fundamental". AE: "We have adopted a horizontal structure and I have learned to delegate a lot so that the team has its own autonomy". "We are very proud of everything we have achieved together". JLB: "I share with the whole team and collaborators everything we would like to do. It is important to have consensus to continue moving forward". JLL: "I can no longer manage this alone. I need everyone's collaboration."

Source: own elaboration

At the beginning of their projects, during the Problem Validation sub-stage, the social entrepreneurs see themselves as "social magnets" within their companies, often viewed as key and irreplaceable contributors. They also acknowledge that at this stage, their personal involvement in the venture transcends their professional roles.

As the interviews progressed, there was a noticeable shift in the conversation from an individual-centric perspective to a more collective one, emphasizing the growing relevance of joiners. Terms such as "we" and "team" became prevalent throughout the discussions, indicating a transition towards a collective identity and highlighting the collaborative nature of the entrepreneurial endeavour over time. This shared leadership is exemplified in statements such as ER's: "If you have a clear path, I will accompany you and only help ensure that everything aligns with your vision. We make decisions as a team. The company and its decisions are not hierarchical. Everything is consensual and approached with great respect."

In all cases, decision-making did not rest solely on the entrepreneur in the absence of information. The prosocial motivation of founders and joiners facilitated the emergence of shared decision-making processes, particularly in uncertain situations with short-term, medium-term, or long-term consequences, enabling agile responses from the companies without compromising their social vision.

AE's case vividly illustrates how the group responded to various critical situations. AE recalls the day the team unanimously decided not to prioritize profitability ("We had to give even what we didn't have") and launched several fundraising campaigns. AG echoes a similar approach: "When you have a committed team and share the same life outlook, quick decisions become straightforward."

According to ER, the company's greatest "virtue" is its ability not to dwell on long-term plans. "When you have nothing to lose, you have everything to gain. In such situations, there is little time for reflection and more for action." The team initiates projects in parallel, such as Homey, a food distribution program for the underprivileged supported by individuals and companies. They quickly developed a website and promotional

materials that, while "not aesthetically pleasing," effectively met the immediate needs arising daily.

This agility also manifests in other actions, like hiring skilled individuals who lost their jobs, launching an online store for short-term revenue generation, and conducting live online nutrition training sessions. As JLB points out, "Our ability to adapt quickly to changes helped us stay motivated and resilient."

Initially, the social entrepreneurs demonstrated effective leadership qualities such as honesty and transparency, fostering a sense of security among joiners aligned with the company's top-down communicated values. This environment encouraged experimentation, learning, and enjoyment in work without fear of failure during the Embryonic Stage of the venture. However, over time, bottom-up communication facilitated the sharing of culture and values among team members (Harter & Mann, 2017), reducing the venture's dependence on the inspiration of a single individual—the social entrepreneur.

Proposition 5: In social venture within the gastronomy sector in Spain, joiners progressively engage in collaborative leadership with the founders during the embryonic stage, supporting the decision-making process.

5.9.- Joiners and funding support

As in all entrepreneurial ventures, whether for profit or social, difficulties in securing financial resources are considered one of the most significant barriers to venture development. Establishing credibility, particularly based on the founder's reputation and capabilities, is crucial when seeking resources (Nwuneli, 2016). Initially, the entrepreneur's "family, friends, and fools" often serve as the primary sources of resources. However, as illustrated in Table 32, as the company progresses in the market, its sources of financing also evolve toward more professionalized and structured avenues.

Table 32: *Funding support evolution*

Problem Validation sub-stage	Solution Validation sub-stage
Closest contacts of the founder	**Procedural search for financial support**
ER: "When the project started, I had the support of Dabiz Muñoz, Xesc Reina, Javier Goya, Nacho Manzano... all good friends". "I don't have a person who is in charge of preparing all the papers to apply for financial support". "How do you get into investing in a social impact company? It is only possible by trust".	ER: "Social investment funds are beginning to support us. We currently have Q-impact investment funds".
LF: "We had many ideas and sometimes, indeed, we did not focus on something specific. One tried to cover as much as possible, being in contact with a lot of people". "Day to day overwhelms you and it is difficult to maintain contact with other companies with the same characteristics and with whom you can collaborate".	LF: Through some friends in London who know of success stories, we have started to be supported by Forward Fooding, a food and technology platform". "We set up a crowdfunding campaign to raise 250,000 euros to advertise and expand our range of products." "In parallel we have just closed a round of financing, supported by Crowdcube". "Robingood is gaining traction on the shelves and we have closed an investment round to multiply our business by three".
AF: "I guess we started as everyone starts. With some of my savings and my family".	AF: After having our model validated and with certain clients, we looked for a partner that would support us with "Smart Money".
AG: "At first, we were not focused on seeking financing through funds and those types of organizations. We had the principle of obtaining money through our activity: selling coffee".	AG: We met Open Value, always very willing to help and we received a lot of support to get B Corp certification.
AE: "…the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters and the NGO OAN International…"	AE: "We have carried out different rounds of financing, synchronized with the needs we had at all times, looking for the most suitable investors in each case and advancing in the level of professionalism and financial sophistication. We are already in contact with new partners and investors for a new round of financing".
JLB: "We have always been in contact with a lot of social support (mainly individuals)".	JLB: "…, but it is true that, thanks to various awards received, we have been receiving interest from various institutions and corporate clients".
JLL: "As the first projects were small in scale, I did not need a lot of funds".	JLL: "The leap occurred with the first call from Zara Home. From there, and with social networks, the ecosystem has opened up with many companies that believe in me and in all of us who make this project grow."

Source: *own elaboration*

According to the interviews, the different cases experienced an evolution in the mix of collaborators, increasing contributions from companies, other economic agents, and individuals through crowdfunding campaigns. In this process, the impetus given by the joiners to the social entrepreneurs was key.

Indeed, thanks to the collaboration of joiners within the social ventures, other external agents were added to the ecosystem providing funds to the ventures; business angels, social venture capital, accelerators, and incubators started to have more relevance. For example, Basque Culinary Center, Barcelona Activa, or Lanzadera were key for some ventures (e.g., LF and AF). Feeling supported professionally for a few months is no longer merely useful, but also personally fulfilling. For JLL, receiving recognition from the Basque Culinary World Prize as a significant figure in social gastronomy helped him to consider the impact of his work, leading to the pursuit of larger ventures.

Likewise, with the participation of joiners, the evolution of the social purpose expanded to a wider audience. While family and friends continue to provide specific contributions, crowdfunding emerged as a valuable tool for sourcing funds and sharing the social purpose of the ventures. For example, thanks to financial contributions from thousands of people, Robin Good opened a bread factory in Barcelona; Auara was able to continue donating water bottles to hospitals with 100,000 euros.

Finally, it is worth noting that the cases did not indicate any shared support and synergies with other social enterprises in the search for funding. Despite explicitly asking about it during the interviews, there was hardly any mention of collaborations with other social enterprises in this regard. Each case operates within its own sphere, addressing its specific problems of interest, without seeking synergies with other social ventures tackling similar issues to increase efficiency in their efforts. It appears that the focus on daily activities leaves little time for broader collaboration and association with other social ventures.

Proposition 6: In social ventures within the gastronomy sector in Spain, joiners progressively engage with the founders during the embryonic stage, participating in activities to secure funding beyond the entrepreneur's informal sources.

5.10.- Joiners and approach to the market

A successful social venture must exhibit dual identities in both social and economic terms (Moss et al., 2011), creating value with social impact by leveraging opportunities through economically viable business models (Beugré, 2011; Yunus, 2011). However, building a viable business model is challenging in the Embryonic Stage for any venture, characterized by slow growth, high risk, and typically low profits (Audretsch & Woolf, 1986; Smith & Miner, 1983). For social ventures specifically, the Embryonic Stage requires entrepreneurs to navigate chaos, work long hours for low pay, and often sacrifice health, family life, and social life while pursuing market entry with a social purpose (Dempsey & Sanders, 2010a).

The case studies generally indicated that the Embryonic Stage, particularly the Problem Validation sub-stage, was relatively chaotic, marked by informal management practices (i.e., lacking predefined structures) and a lack of professional working methods. The prosocial motivation of social entrepreneurs was a driving force behind their ventures' progress. Additionally, the motivation of joiners within social ventures acted as a cohesive force during this stage, binding the team together and propelling development towards subsequent stages through increased professionalisation of working methods in approaching the market.

All interviewees concurred that advancing and sustaining social ventures in the market required more than just a prosocial motivation; it necessitated enhancing competitiveness and offering truly distinctive value propositions. In pursuit of this market-oriented approach, social ventures undergo transformations from having purely social purposes to integrating a social purpose with a market-driven value proposition. This evolution entails

professionalizing various management areas, including general management, marketing strategy, commercial strategy, operations, and human resources policies. The insights gathered from interviewees regarding the evolution of their ventures' value propositions and the main changes in management professionalisation are summarized in Table 33.

Table 33: Evolving the company's value proposition through professionalisation

Social entrepreneur	Social Venture	City	Company's main change	Examples
ER	UnInicio	Madrid	General Management Human Resources Policies Marketing Strategy	Implementation of a new structure and protocols Expansion to new cities Greater delegation of functions in the teams Hiring a communication agency for their new projects.
JF	Robin Good	Barcelona	Brand building	The business model evolved from being a "social brand" distributor to creating their own brand.
AF	Conca Organics	Barcelona	General Management Human Resources Policies	Time flexibility and telework. New people joining the team (including external collaborators).
AG	De Buen Café	Madrid	Commercial Strategy	New Route to Market, from a BtoB model to a BtoC strategy through online.
AE	Auara	Madrid	Operations	Improvements in efficiencies throughout the value chain.
JLB	Winable	Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz)	Marketing Strategy Human Resources Policies	Highlighting the exclusivity and level of innovation of their service. New people joining the team
JLL	Juan Llorca	Valencia	Marketing Strategy Human Resources policies	Substantial changes in brand management. New people joining the team

Source: *own elaboration*

This enhancement of processes and the new perspective on company management have garnered recognition from the general public. Forbes magazine recognized Auara and De Buen Café as part of "The Other 100 Greatest Fortunes of Spain" (FORBES, 2021); Winable received multiple awards for its social commitment (vinetur.com, 2020); JLL received the Basque Culinary World Prize; and UnInicio was awarded by Fuera de Serie Magazine, (2020). Additionally, some obtained the B-Corp certification (De Buen Café, Robin Good), acknowledging their strong social practices across all company facets (*B Corp Spain*, 2020).

However, their ambitions extend beyond this, aiming to transcend the label of a social enterprise and engage a broader ecosystem in Spain. For instance, AE garnered support from 130 leaders across various economic and social sectors through social networks for their 'Equipo País' project, which presents diverse proposals and solutions in a document delivered to public institutions. Furthermore, AUARA was acquired by Hijos de Rivera, a beverages producer and distributor, acquiring 51% in May 2022 (Ropero, 2022).

All this reinforces what ER highlighted during the interview: "There shouldn't be a division between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. There is no possibility of entrepreneurship if you are not social."

This transformational journey was facilitated by joiners initially attracted to the social ventures due to their non-profit mission, and subsequently remained engaged due to the opportunity to contribute to transformation through new methodologies while advancing their professional careers simultaneously.

> **Proposition 7:** In social ventures within the gastronomy sector in Spain, joiners progressively engage with the founders during the embryonic stage, contributing to the professionalisation of management areas to ensure a social purpose supported by a market value proposition.

5.11.- Proposed model of the contribution of joiners to social ventures

In order to propose a conceptual model on the contribution of joiners in a social enterprise during its embryonic stage, and the transition from an individual vision model to a collective one, Figure 17 is presented, which includes the propositions mentioned throughout Chapter 5.

Figure 17: Proposed model of the contribution of joiners to social ventures
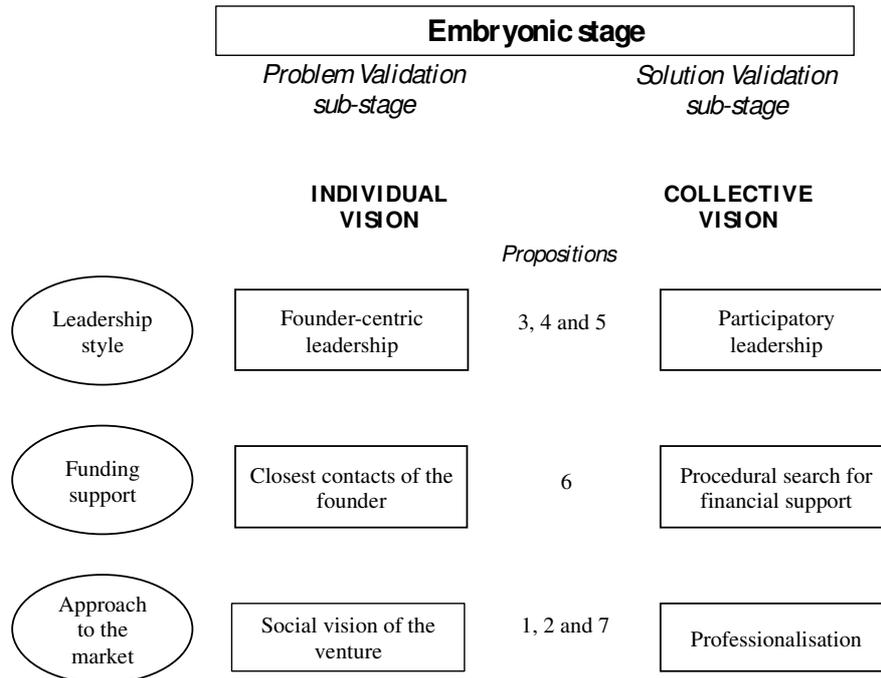
Propositions 3, 4, and 5 are grouped under the theme of "leadership style" as they address different aspects of how leadership is perceived, exercised, and evolves in these enterprises. Proposition 3 highlights the personal qualities of the social entrepreneur, such as perfectionism, charisma, and closeness, which are highly valued by the joiners. Proposition 4 explores the balance between collective and individual goals, both of the social entrepreneur and the joiners, indicating a leadership style that values both teamwork and personal initiative, ensuring that everyone's objectives are mutually supported. Proposition 5 describes the collaborative nature of leadership during the early stages of the enterprise, showing an inclusive and participatory leadership style, with joiners actively engaging in the decision-making processes alongside the founders.

On the other hand, and as mentioned in the Results chapter, Proposition 6 has been included under the theme "funding support" because it addresses how joiners, during the early stages of social ventures in the gastronomy sector in Spain, actively engage with the founders in securing funding. Specifically, Proposition 6 highlights that joiners not only

participate in the initial activities of the venture but also collaborate in obtaining funds beyond the entrepreneur's informal sources. This underscores the importance of a collective and organised effort to secure financial resources.

And finally, Propositions 1, 2, and 7 are grouped under the theme "approach to the market". Proposition 1 highlights the importance of collective social motivation and a shared vision in aligning team efforts and developing a value proposition that combines social impact with commercial value. Proposition 2 notes that prior personal experiences complement formal training, influencing how entrepreneurs and joiners approach the market and adapt their strategies. Finally, Proposition 7 demonstrates how the involvement and professionalisation of joiners, even from the early stages of the social enterprise, contribute to the development of a robust value proposition.

5.12.- Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a thorough analysis of the empirical research findings, starting with the results from the pilot test that established the foundational observations for the study. The initial phase highlighted key areas for further investigation, laying the groundwork for a more in-depth analysis.

The second phase of the research delves into the overall results by examining the remaining cases. This phase involved a meticulous analysis of qualitative data, revealing critical insights into the role of joiners in social enterprises. It highlights how joiners influence leadership styles, contribute to fundraising efforts, and shape market strategies. The findings suggest that joiners play a crucial role in both supporting daily operations and contributing to strategic decision-making and market positioning. Their involvement enhances the overall trajectory and sustainability of social enterprises.

Additionally, the chapter proposes a model that illustrates the contributions of joiners to social enterprises. This model integrates the insights gained from the data analysis and

provides a framework for understanding the value that joiners bring to social enterprises. It underscores the significant impact of joiners on leadership, funding, and market approaches, offering a structured approach to effectively evaluate their role and contributions.

In the following chapter, the main conclusions derived from the study conducted and from this proposed model will be presented.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1.- Main conclusions

Social entrepreneurship, with its distinctive characteristics and values, holds considerable potential to address significant problems within the communities and regions where social entrepreneurs operate. However, despite this potential, social entrepreneurship faces significant challenges that must be overcome to achieve its objectives and promote effective and lasting change. Some of these challenges have been explored throughout this thesis.

Firstly, to address the primary objective of this research – to investigate the collective aspect of social entrepreneurship and analyse the theoretical foundations and practical implications of social entrepreneurship from both individual and collective perspectives – the focus has not been on developing flawless tools, but on challenging and transforming the prevailing individualistic view of social entrepreneurship. This involves highlighting the importance of the social entrepreneur's relationship with the broader pool of people engaged in the social venture, especially the joiners who are often overlooked but are crucial at every stage of the social venture's life cycle. This study addresses their role in the initial stages of the venture. Therefore, there is a deliberate attempt to rethink existing paradigms and introduce management concepts that specifically cater to the unique needs of social organizations, aligning with global development and sustainability goals.

Secondly, the phenomenon of Social Entrepreneurship through examples in the field of Gastronomy has been examined. This research has been a revealing experience, uncovering the complex interactions between food, community, and business that drive significant social impact. This comprehensive exploration has highlighted the multifaceted and intricate nature of social entrepreneurship, which includes a wide variety

of approaches, philosophies, and practices. The case studies reveal that the field of social gastronomy can encompass a broad spectrum of initiatives. These endeavours also promote environmental sustainability by using local and organic ingredients, reducing food waste, and advocating for sustainable culinary practices. The research shows that these initiatives not only generate economic benefits but also strengthen community cohesion and improve the quality of life for those involved.

Thirdly, both individual and collective theories have been studied, which are crucial for a complete understanding of social entrepreneurship. Individualist theories, such as the social entrepreneur as a change agent, highlight the entrepreneur as a visionary and charismatic leader who drives social change through passion, innovation, and resilience. However, focusing solely on the entrepreneur can lead to underestimating the importance of the team and the community. Collective theories emphasize that social enterprises do not operate in isolation but depend on an external and internal network that provides resources, knowledge, and moral support. Research shows that the most effective social entrepreneurship strategies combine the entrepreneur's vision and leadership with a collaborative approach that includes the active participation of the collective and the community. This integrated approach provides a more robust and sustainable foundation, allowing greater resilience and adaptability to challenges.

Moreover, the collaborative dynamics applied to the world of gastronomy are conducive to the principles of social entrepreneurship, often involving collaborations between chefs, producers, community organizations, and other actors. Through joint efforts to establish sustainable food systems, strengthen local economies, and advance social inclusion, these initiatives can generate significant changes at local and global levels.

As outlined in the results analysis section, three primary and distinct themes emerged involving both the founders and collaborators of the social initiatives: *leadership style,* initially centred around the founder of the social enterprise and later transitioning to shared leadership with diverse contributions from joiners; the set of resources initially provided by the founder themselves, which evolve with joiners, and a systematic search for *financial support* playing pivotal roles; and finally, the company's value proposition,

initially rooted in purely social aspects, evolving with more refined operational frameworks and joiners assuming increasingly *professionalized roles.*

In the field of social entrepreneurship, effective leadership goes beyond the founder's vision and self-confidence. It includes *collaborative leadership* that highlights collective intelligence and the value of diversity within teams. Leaders who adopt this approach prioritize open communication, shared decision-making, and mutual respect. By cultivating a collaborative environment, these leaders harness the collective experience and creativity to address complex social challenges. Collaborative leaders foster a shared vision that resonates with the organization's values and objectives. By involving joiners in the visualization process and empowering them to share their ideas, a sense of ownership and dedication is promoted among team members. This collective sense of purpose inspires individuals to pursue common goals and cultivates a strong sense of unity and camaraderie.

The contribution of joiners within the organization is fundamental. These individuals bring valuable skills, knowledge, and perspectives that enrich the team's diversity and effectiveness. Collaborative leaders understand the importance of integrating joiners and promoting an inclusive environment where every member feels valued and empowered to make significant contributions. By adopting this approach, leaders can foster innovation, teamwork, and ultimately achieve a more significant social impact.

This collaborative leadership also reflects in the search for *financial support*, where joiners' participation legitimizes the venture and attracts human and financial resources. By forging alliances with other organizations, government agencies, and community groups, collaborative leaders and joiners can leverage collective resources and expertise to maximize their impact. These strategic partnerships enable social enterprises to tackle complex challenges and scale their efforts to achieve broader systemic change.

The financing landscape must evolve because traditional sources, such as public institutions, do not fully meet all needs. Joiners advocate for seeking additional resources, and *crowdfunding* has emerged as a critical financing source. This method involves a broad audience of potential collaborators, including donors, lenders, and investors, and

facilitates connections with like-minded individuals who share a passion for a cause. The democratization of the fundraising process provides equitable opportunities to attract capital regardless of the venture's origin. As crowdfunding matures, its potential to transform the landscape of emerging and expanding social enterprises becomes increasingly evident, with opportunities for joiners to play a significant role.

Collaboration between social entrepreneurs and joiners is fundamental to strengthening the company's value proposition, especially in its initial stages. Joiners bring knowledge and skills that complement the founder's competencies, allowing for greater innovation and a better response to market and community needs. Research shows that effective collaboration with joiners can help refine and improve the company's value proposition, making it more attractive and competitive. Additionally, joiners can provide valuable insights and feedback that help align the value proposition with stakeholders' expectations and demands. The *professionalisation* of the company through the incorporation of specialized profiles allows the social enterprise to adopt more sophisticated operational frameworks and assume a more strategic, market-oriented approach.

Joiners play a crucial role throughout the company's life cycle, but their impact is particularly significant in the initial stages. During the company's launch, joiners help overcome the "liability of newness," providing the experience and knowledge necessary to establish efficient operations and create a solid foundation for future growth. As the company grows, joiners continue to be important in providing stability, fostering organizational culture, and helping the company adapt and evolve. Their active participation and continuous commitment are fundamental to facing challenges and seizing opportunities throughout the company's life cycle, ensuring its global success.

In conclusion, from a collective perspective that encompasses the contributions of joiners alongside the individual vision of the social entrepreneur, this thesis on social entrepreneurship in gastronomy presents compelling findings that resonate across academic and practical realms in the Basque Country. The analysis of these case studies has yielded a deep understanding of how collaboration between social entrepreneurs and their collaborators is reshaping the gastronomic landscape. These insights not only

provide a comprehensive view of social entrepreneurship dynamics but also propose effective strategies to encourage collective participation in developing innovative solutions for current and future social challenges. By emphasizing the pivotal role of joiners and their contributions to the success of social enterprises in gastronomy, this research has the potential to inspire increased collaboration and cooperation within the Basque Country's entrepreneurial ecosystem, thereby fostering a more significant societal impact.

6.2.- Limitations

As with any research, this thesis has some limitations that must be acknowledged to define the scope and depth of the findings.

Firstly, exploring the role of "joiners" in social enterprises poses challenges that need to be addressed for a more comprehensive understanding. While the seven case studies have provided valuable insights into various aspects of the gastronomic value chain in Spain, there is a need to expand the research to other fields of social activity and geographical areas. As an emerging field, social entrepreneurship presents abundant opportunities for collaborative investigation. By including a variety of social enterprises from different sectors, there would be collective learning, accelerating and solidifying the progress of the field. This would enable a deeper understanding of the role of "joiners" and their impact across various areas of society.

Additionally, it is important to note that the seven case studies analysed are exclusively led by men. This lack of gender diversity in the research teams could have biased the results and limited the representativeness of the conclusions. Including more diverse research teams, with equitable gender representation, would have provided a more comprehensive and enriching perspective on the issues addressed in the thesis.

Lastly, this study aimed to conduct significant research on the role of joiners in social enterprises by designing a conceptual framework through literature review analysis and various case studies. However, despite presenting precise and specific conclusions, further in-depth research is required, including quantitative methodologies, to generalize the findings.

Increasing research with quantitative methodologies would not only facilitate knowledge and strengthen the field of social entrepreneurship, but also make the conclusions more generalizable, promoting and growing the number of companies dedicated to social activities.

6.3.- Suggestions for future research

The exploration of social entrepreneurship in gastronomy has provided valuable insights into the potential of food-based initiatives to create positive social change. By adopting a holistic approach that acknowledges the diverse array of perspectives and practices within the field, it was emphasized that there is potential to develop more effective strategies for addressing the complex social challenges of our time and for building a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

Throughout this thesis, the collective vision and, specifically, the role of joiners within the social enterprise are increasingly relevant as the enterprise progresses through its embryonic stage. Therefore, our recommendations for future research will continue to focus on joiners from various perspectives.

Firstly, it is commonly assumed that joiners in the social sector possess high intrinsic motivation that compensates for low salaries. Initially, social entrepreneurs are often supported by their friends and family. However, relying heavily on intrinsic motivation and familial support is not a viable strategy for scaling a venture. It is crucial to assess whether the team that helped a social enterprise reach its current level is suitable for

expansion, as previous staff members may not be prepared or motivated to manage tasks associated with scaling. Additionally, dissatisfaction with scaling may arise due to changes in the work environment, with increased emphasis on efficiency rather than previously prioritized outcomes, potentially alienating team members and diminishing organizational spirit.

Attracting talented and skilled employees is challenging due to their often-limited motivation to work in the social sector, given low salaries and prestige. Furthermore, finding individuals whose mindset aligns with the value proposition of social enterprises—focusing on social value while ensuring financial sustainability—is difficult. Therefore, it is essential for social enterprises to leverage their positive societal reputation to attract new talent, enhancing the contributions made by predecessors while adhering to general market rules.

Secondly, although challenging, forming mixed teams can be one of the most sustainable ways to create and grow a social business. The diversity of skills within such teams enriches the ecosystem surrounding the social enterprise, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In these processes, joiners continuously interact, sharing and complementing ideas, perspectives, and values, thereby evolving the firm's vision. Future work should focus on identifying their profiles and assessing their complementarity in a social context.

Lastly, all cases analysed in this thesis were in their embryonic stage. It was observed how the role of joiners becomes increasingly significant as this stage progresses. Studying the evolving relationship between founders and joiners, including responsibilities and leadership distribution throughout the remaining stages of the social enterprise's life cycle, would be a compelling area of study.

Considering the potential evolution and scaling of company value propositions, studying the founder's role in relation to joiners in subsequent stages of the company's life cycle is of particular interest.

Therefore, three promising avenues for future research revolve around exploring the evolving role of joiners within social ventures: (1) understanding how social enterprises can attract talented joiners, examining factors influencing their engagement; (2) studying how to effectively harness joiners' full potential through complementary profiles; and (3) investigating the evolution of founder-joiner relationships throughout the social enterprise's life cycle, with an eye toward scalability.

By delving deeper into these dimensions, researchers can offer valuable insights that inform the development of more inclusive and impactful social entrepreneurship models. The contribution and implications of this thesis lie in the collective vision of social entrepreneurship. In summary, social responsibility is not merely a trend but a fundamental asset, bolstered by new technologies that contribute to economic development, job creation, and environmental sustainability. Achieving this requires collaborative efforts among individuals, companies, institutions, and governments worldwide. The days when it was optional to have a social focus are gone; now, it is imperative. In this context, the sense of "social" assumes a prominent role and must be integrated into the core strategies of companies, rather than being viewed as merely complementary or relegated to social enterprises.

Balancing present needs with future considerations has never been straightforward. However, society and companies are at a critical juncture, with a tangible urgency for adopting business and life models that satisfy current demands without jeopardizing future generations. While many profit-driven companies increasingly address social issues, social enterprises remain pivotal in navigating these transformations.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1.- Case study protocol

SECTION			
Generic Purpose of the Case Study	**Objective**		To analyse the social ventures from a collective perspective and the role of joiners beyond the individual entrepreneur's role.
			To explore the motivations and experiences that characterise joiners beyond the individual entrepreneur.
			To delve into how social entrepreneurs can rely on their joiners to enhance the venture's value proposition in its early stage.
			To study how joiners contribute in different ways to the life cycle of the company, especially in its early stages.
	Context	**Socio-Economic Environment:** Assess economic conditions, social factors, and cultural influences affecting the venture.	
		Industry Landscape: Examine industry trends, competition, and market dynamics.	
		Organisational Context: Explore the venture's organisational structure, leadership, and internal culture.	
Field Procedure	**Data Collection Methods**	**Interviews:** Conduct interviews and use recording devices and transcription services for accuracy.	
		Observations: Perform direct observations of operational activities, meetings, and interactions. Use structured observation checklists to ensure consistency.	
		Document Analysis: Gather and review documents such as annual reports, strategic plans, marketing materials, and internal communications.	
	Consistency Protocols	**Standardisation:** Use standardised instruments for data collection, including interview guides and survey tools.	
		Data Management: Implement procedures for organising, storing, and protecting data. Regularly back up digital data and secure physical documents.	
	Ethical Considerations	**Informed Consent:** Provide detailed information to participants about the study's purpose and obtain written consent.	
		Confidentiality: Ensure that all personal and sensitive information is kept confidential and anonymised.	
Study Questions	**Specific Aspects**	**Operational Details**	
		Contextual Factors	
		Challenges and Successes	
	Information Sources	**Interviews:**	
		Identify primary and secondary stakeholders to interview.	
		Prepare detailed interview protocols and ensure questions align with research objectives.	
		Schedule and conduct interviews in a structured manner.	
		Documents:	
		Collect and categorise relevant documents for analysis.	
		Analyse documents for insights into organisational strategies, performance, and external relations.	
		Observations:	
		Create an observation plan detailing what will be observed and how.	
		Record observations systematically and note any patterns or anomalies (if possible)	
		Previous Research:	
		Review existing literature and case studies related to the venture's sector or similar ventures.	
		Use insights from previous research to contextualise findings and develop theoretical insights.	
Guide to the Case Report	**Structure**	**Introduction:** Define the research problem, objectives, and significance of the case study.	
		Methodology: Describe the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques.	
		Findings: Present and interpret the data, using tables, charts, and quotes where appropriate.	
		Discussion: Relate findings to the research questions and theoretical frameworks. Discuss implications, limitations, and practical applications.	
		Conclusions: Summarise key insights, provide recommendations, and suggest areas for further research.	
	Content Guidelines	**Clarity:** Ensure clear and concise presentation of information and analysis.	
		Integration: Integrate data and theory effectively to support conclusions.	
		Consistency: Maintain consistent terminology, formatting, and referencing throughout the report.	
	Formatting Standards	**Style:** Follow academic or organisational style guides for formatting, citation, and referencing.	
		Visuals: Use diagrams, graphs, and tables to enhance understanding and presentation of data.	
		Proofreading: Conduct thorough proofreading to eliminate errors and ensure coherence.	
	Review and Revision	**Peer Review:** Solicit feedback from colleagues or experts to refine the report.	
		Revisions: Incorporate feedback and make necessary revisions to improve the quality and accuracy of the report.	
		Finalisation: Prepare the final version of the report, ensuring it meets all quality and submission standards.	

Source: Own elaboration

Appendix 2.- Example of a memo

Date: 3 February 2020

Personal Information
Name: Eduardo (Edu)
Age: 34 years old
Place of Birth: Girona

Role and Self-Perception
Position: General Director of UnInicio

Self-Perception:
Considers himself more as someone who serves others than as a director.
Struggles with insecurity, viewing it both as a virtue and a problem.

Social Entrepreneurship
Personal Definition:
Does not see himself as a typical social entrepreneur nor as someone highly dedicated to social causes.
Recognises the high social component of the Un Inicio project.

Motivation:
Created Un Inicio due to dissatisfaction with his previous jobs.
Wanted to reflect his values and create something from scratch.
Evolution of Social Entrepreneurship in Spain

Perspective:
Believes that social entrepreneurship in Spain has not evolved much.
Distinguishes between ventures funded by wealthy individuals and projects with a genuine social character.

Current Importance:
Thinks that little importance is given to social entrepreneurship today.
Many current social enterprises are not worth much.

Notable Examples

Fundació Travaill:
Considers this foundation as an excellent example of social impact.
Helps a thousand people find employment each year.

Characteristics of a Social Entrepreneur
Tenacity: Perseverance is key to maintaining any project.
Social Impact: All companies have a social impact, and this should not be underestimated.
Challenges of Social Entrepreneurship in Spain

Difficulties:
It is hard to engage in social entrepreneurship due to many obstacles and tax burdens.
Admits that at times, he might have preferred not to start the project due to these difficulties.

Education:
Does not believe there is a specific education required to be a social entrepreneur.

His background in philosophy has helped him communicate and lead his project.

UnInicio Project

Origin:
Stemmed from his experience working with at-risk youth and witnessing their lack of opportunities.
Inspired by charitable catering activities at his school.

Methodology:
Combines theory and practice.
Focuses on the autonomy and freedom of the youth.

Differentiator:
The awareness behind every action and the value given to the people involved.

Personal Reflections

Personal Impact:
Creating Un Inicio is a fundamental part of his identity and way of being.

Dissatisfaction and Arrogance:
Attributes his motivation to a mix of personal dissatisfaction and strong self-criticism.
Future and Expansion

Long-Term Vision:
Would like to expand the project to Barcelona and other cities.
Maintain focus on social impact and training.

Other Aspects

Previous Experiences:
Started due to dissatisfaction, not by choice.
His previous work experiences always lacked something, prompting him to create Un Inicio.

Education and Skills:
Studied Philosophy, which provided him with essential communication skills.
Values the ability to clearly express his ideas to lead his team.

Support:
Received significant support from Gloria, Ferran, and Manolo in the initial stages.
Appreciates the emotional and practical support from his team and friends.

Financial Challenges:
Has faced significant financial challenges, including managing taxes and ensuring the economic sustainability of the project.

My Personal Notes
Follow-Up: Call him in a few days to thank him for his willingness and that of his team.
Future Interviews: Confirm his availability for future interviews.
Research: Investigate more about his previous projects.
Interesting Profile: Include him as an example for sessions at the Basque Culinary Center.

<u>Appendix 3.- Consent form template for interviewees</u>

Consent form

Title of Case study:	A collective vision of social entrepreneurship
Author:	Jorge Navarro Dols

Consent to publish – Release form

I hereby confirm that I have reviewed the above-entitled case study in full and on behalf of the organisation in question, I provide my full permission for the case study to be published in its entirety for the life of the work in all languages and all formats.

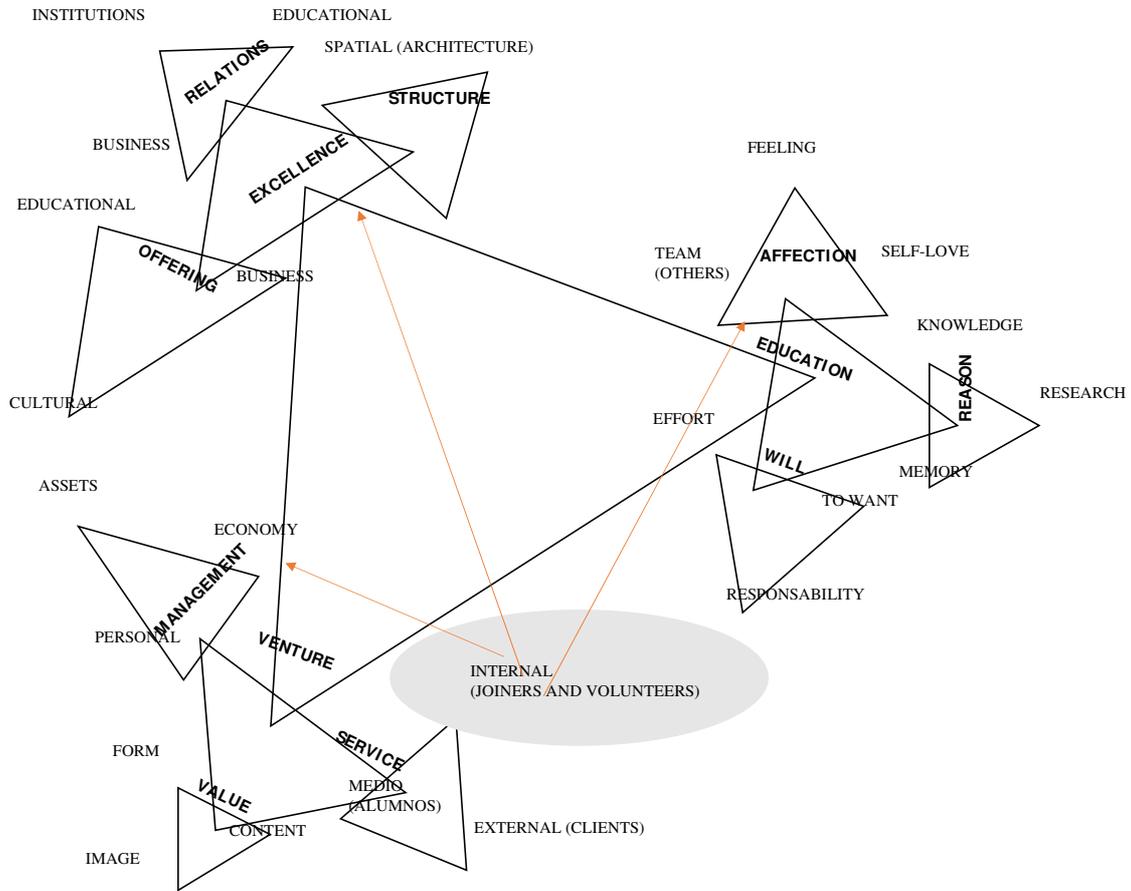By signing this form, I warrant that I am authorised to grant full permission.

Name:
Position:
Address:
Organisation:
E-mail:

Signed: (either handwritten or insert a scanned image of your signature)

Date reviewed & signed:

Source: Own elaboration

Appendix 4.- Example of notes and reflections in Notebook

Source: *Own elaboration*