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SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN ARGENTINA:

A CRITICAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND THE

HYBRID LANDSCAPE

Being work submitted for the degree of PhD by Published Work

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1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of my research submitted for the award of the "PhD by Published Work" (presented in the second part of this submission) and constitutes the required "supporting document (of up to 10,000 words) contextualising the submission and explaining in an introduction and conclusion the importance of the contribution to scholarship of the published works."[1]

The document starts with my *research objective* and *research questions*, then a clarification of my *organisational focus and context*, followed by the *body-of work-submitted* section. Next come my *theoretical approaches* and *methodology*. A following section on how my submitted papers *addressed the research questions*. Finally, the *conclusion*, and *gaps and directions for future research*.

It should be noted that my published work and reflections are also influenced by my experience as an instructor in undergraduate and postgraduate programs (both in Argentina and abroad), a consultant (for social enterprises, firms, international organisations, and public agencies), and member of INAES' Advisory Council.[2]

2. Research Objective and Research Questions

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[1] As required by University Programme Regulations: PhD by published work, v. 1 05-Sept 2019, paragraph 3(d)(iv), p.5.
[2] *INAES* is Argentina's National Institute of Social Associative Economy, a state agency promoting and regulating social enterprises. It reports to the National Ministry of Productive Development. As for its Advisory Council and my involvement, see: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/inaes/consejeros (accessed on: 07/06/2021).

Explore how critical organisational theory can help to gain a better understanding of the multidimensional dynamics of social enterprises in Argentina (and, to a lesser extent, in Iberoamerica), especially since the 2001-2002 local crisis.

2.B Research Questions

To advance my overall research objective, the following research questions were made. They are all largely rooted in the basic tenets of (critical) organisational theory and social enterprise/hybrid organisations management.

1. What elements explain how Argentine social enterprises developed their organisational models, especially after the 2001-2002 local crisis?

2. How the Iberoamerican and especially Argentine context impacted on social enterprises' emergence, strategies, and dynamics?

3. What was the impact of productive/ organisational pattern changes on Argentine social enterprises?

3. Organisational Focus and Context

The organisational focus of my work zeroes in on local social enterprises—and, to a lesser extent, their Iberoamerican counterparts—especially since Argentina's 2001-2002 social, political, and economic crisis.

Between 2001 and 2002, Argentina suffered an unprecedented crisis, with five presidents within a week, a default on its sovereign debt, and dozens of deaths due

to violent demonstrations[3]. These protests arose after a decade when the Welfare State withdrew from the economic and social arena. In turn, the crisis bore an impact on Argentine social enterprises: "After a severe national crisis during the 2001–2002 period… newer… ventures emerged addressing socioeconomic problems" (Berger & Blugerman 2021: 20). I will elaborate later about this topic.

The concept of social enterprises is contested and context-dependent;[4] thus, it requires further clarification. Reficco, Gutierrez & Trujillo (2006) view social enterprises as an organisational *species* in the quest for recognition and lacking precision on its boundaries and conceptual definition. Hence, one of my earlier works (Berger & Blugerman 2010b: 86) suggests a *working definition* of social enterprises: "mission-driven private organizations that rely primarily on market-based strategies to raise the necessary funds to create social value for their members, specific groups, or communities." Furthermore, in Berger & Blugerman (ibid), I emphasised a feature later developed by current literature: the hybridity of the organisational scheme under analysis— "conceptual differences… do not always translate so neatly into practice, as shown by several cases studied in this research, which have adopted a hybrid format. Thus, the legal format adopted by these organizations does not necessarily match their operations. Indeed, some organizations displayed ambiguous

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[3] "In the months surrounding the sovereign default and devaluation in Argentina at the end of 2001, output fell by 15%, down 20% from its previous peak, while unemployment exceeded 20% and almost half of the population fell below the poverty line" (Sandleris & Wright 2014: 3).

[4] With differences among European, British, and American assessments of the topic, it is worth to mention (chronologically) some key references on social enterprises, for example Dart (2004); Austin et al (2006); Defourny & Nyssens (2006); Kerlin (2009). Since the 2010s, the literature has explored the hybrid nature of social enterprises and hybrid organisations as an organisational type—e.g., Battilana & Dorado (2010); Teasdale (2012); Pache & Santos (2013); Doherty, et al (2014); Ebrahim et al (2014). More recent inputs on social enterprises as hybrids include Cornelissen et al (2020), Bauwens et al (2020), Gidron & Domaradzka, Eds. (2021). For a different perspective on the topic, see Eldar (2017).

formats...This hybridization may be attributed to constraints imposed by the legal frameworks in some countries." Briefly then, I stressed the hybrid nature of social enterprises as early as in 2010, underscoring the contextual constraints shaping the sector.

This hybrid nature of social enterprises was further highlighted years later, somewhat differently. Indeed, Grassl (2012: 37) mentions that "social enterprises are structurally hybrids in several dimensions. Hybridity is their essential characteristic." Two years later Doherty et al (2014: 417) stressed the same feature: "From a review of the SE [social enterprise] literature, the authors identify hybridity, the pursuit of the dual mission of financial sustainability and social purpose, as the defining characteristic of SEs." Accordingly, Ebrahim et al (2014: 82) states, "Social enterprises are accountable for both a social mission and for making profits (or surplus). By virtue of their hybrid nature, they are therefore required to achieve both social and financial performance."

Thus, despite contextual differences, hybridity remains the main feature of social enterprises, but it still requires an organisational clarification, and "[w]hile there is consensus that a social enterprise must balance social goals and market success in some way, this leaves open the possibility, indeed likelihood, that different organizational logics, legal forms, and overall objectives will drive that balance" (Young & Lecy 2014: 1320). What types of organisations do that? According to Young & Lecy (2014), these organisations include commercial non-profits, social

cooperatives, social-purpose businesses, etc.[5] They act within what Young & Lecy (2014: 1322) refer metaphorically to as the *social enterprise zoo*, an *intersection* of social purpose and commercial activities, regardless of the organisational entity or the organisational *species*, according to Reficco, Gutierrez & Trujillo (2006).

My submitted production focuses *on* social enterprises—a context-dependent organisational type with a contested nature, with *hybridity* being its key feature, and *not* on a specific type of social enterprise setting known as *hybrid organisation[6]*. Since my research has explored several types of local—and, to a lesser extent, Iberoamerican —organisational entities that combined social mission and commercial operations, both its larger context and its micro foundations—the national/ Iberoamerican social enterprise zoo—constitute my organisational focus.

Doherty et al (2014) warned of the geographical partiality in the study of social enterprises[7]. As of today, the main areas of focus in social enterprises research are still geographically focused on the study of the phenomenon in developed ecosystems (e.g., Avila & Amorim 2021, Borzaga et al 2020, Cornelissen et al 2021). More importantly, as Faraudello et al (2021: 421) asserts in a bibliometric analysis on social enterprises, "The literature puts social enterprises at the center of social

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[5] In addition, it should be noted that Young & Lecy (2014: 1323) include in this *zoo* an organisational figure called *hybrids*, that "constitute new forms that internalize the features of other forms of social enterprise by explicitly combining organizational components with commercial versus social goals… Although all social enterprises are hybrids of sorts since they mix market-oriented activities with social goals, the hybrids are distinct entities in that they mix corporate forms either through subsidiary arrangements or through hybrid legal structures that build the double-bottom-line into the DNA of an organization." Proving this context-dependency, this organizational figure does not exist in the Argentinian setting.

[6] See Young & Lecy (2014) and previous footnote for further clarification on the topic.

[7] With exceptions such as Bolivian microfinance organisations in Battilana & Dorado 2010 most of the referred research is in developed settings.

innovation by focusing on performance and management issues", their scaling strategies (Bauwens et al 2020) or pinpointing on how social enterprises can contribute to Sustainable-Developing Goals (Littlewood & Holt 2018).

Then, it appears that the mainstream literature looked at performance and management issues on social enterprises mainly located in developed settings. As I will explain later, these elements seemed to fall mainly within what Astley & Van de Ven (1983) call micro focus and a voluntary orientation on organisational theory. My contribution to knowledge is to bring to the fore other dimensions, such as the impact of organisational and pattern changes on social enterprises, division of labour, power relations and contextual elements, within a critical perspective of organisational theory. These latter dimensions can be labelled within what Astley & Van de Ven (1983) call macro focus with a deterministic orientation.

I will be focusing these developments on Argentina and other Iberoamerican countries to explore such multidimensional dynamics since the new Millenium, and to understand such issues better, but the learnings might have relevance more widely too.

4. The Body of Work Submitted

My submission comprises eleven peer-reviewed pieces published over a fifteen-year period that I co-authored with several colleagues from four countries across three continents. The papers are written in English and Spanish. With a *transdisciplinary* (Bernstein, 2015) approach, these pieces share a cohesive sense of direction while

using analytical traits from several fields—mainly organisational theory, social enterprise management, as well as sustainability, third-sector analysis, complemented by other social sciences—to gain a better understanding of the dynamics at play in local social enterprises, especially after the 2001-2002 Argentine crisis, as I will try to demonstrate here.

In this section, first I will list the submitted production by chronological order. After that, I provide an explanation of the focus and orientation on which my whole production can be grouped, for expositive reasons.

Next, the papers will be categorised in three chronological sets. In turn, each one of the sets refers to each one of the three research questions already mentioned as they emerged. Is worth to clarify that each research question appeared sequentially in my journey while trying to address my overall research objective. There is a linear sense in terms of how each research question appeared, and this in turns impacted on the publication data. However, two things should be clarified beforehand. First, the "cycle of production" of knowledge and publication depends on several factors. For example, an article may appear only some years after the corresponding research project, that was conducted to address the initial research question (which also means that a paper addressing a new research question can be published before due to the revision process). More importantly, advancing another research question to address a new significant dimension of the phenomena under study does not obliterate the "return" to a new facet within the umbrella of a previous research question. In a word, the road was far from direct in terms of production and final publication of works, but it was indeed chronological in the rise of each one of the

research questions. Finally, in each set of papers below the production is referred as they were published.

4. A Submitted Production

The following is the chronological of my papers:

1. G. Berger & L. Blugerman (2006), "Recover Them from Oblivion. Recover the Community's Ability to Produce. Cristina Lescano and El Ceibo," *ReVista, Harvard Review of Latin America,* Fall, Cambridge, MA: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University, pp. 26-28.

2. G. Berger & L. Blugerman (2010a), *¿Inclusivo y sostenible? Desafíos del Programa Sume Materiales* [Inclusive and Sustainable? Challenges in Sume Materiales Program], Buenos Aires: Universidad de San Andrés-Social Enterprise Knowledge Network-La Caixa, Teaching Case [pp. 1-30] and Teaching Note [pp. 1-23].

3. G. Berger & L. Blugerman (2010b), "Social Enterprises and Socially Inclusive Business," in: *Socially Inclusive Business. Engaging the Poor through Market Initiatives in Iberoamerica,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 83-110.

4. L. Blugerman, D. Szlechter & G. Tavella (2015), "División del trabajo y mecanismos de coordinación: dinámica del desarrollo de los estudios del trabajo en la Argentina. Una aproximación" [Labour Division and Coordination Mechanisms: Dynamics of the Development of Labour Studies

in Argentina. An Approximation], *Revista Trabajo y Sociedad* Nº 24, pp. 161-181.

5. G. Berger; L. Blugerman, C. Guo; R. Petrov & D. H. Smith (2016), "Relationships and Collaboration among Associations," in: *Palgrave Handbook of Volunteering, Civic Participation and Nonprofit Associations,* London: Palgrave, pp. 1162-1185.

6. L. Blugerman, A. Darmohraj & M. Lomé (2017), "FAB MOVE: Social Enterprises in Argentina," in: *La Democracia y la Sociedad Civil en América Latina y el Caribe.* 1-27, Quito: 11th International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) Regional Conference, pp. 1-31.

7. C. Meilán, L. Blugerman & & S. Agoff (2018), "La organización como un fenómeno complejo" [Organisation as a Complex Phenomenon], in: Szlechter, D., *Teorías de las organizaciones. Un enfoque crítico, histórico y situado*, Los Polvorines: Editorial Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, pp. 13-34.

8. D. Szlechter, N. Bauni, L. Blugerman, F. Isuani, S. Agoff (2018), "La perspectiva del posfordismo en otras configuraciones organizacionales. Estado, sociedad civil y economía social" [The post-Fordism Perspective in Other Organisational Configurations: State, Civil Society, and Social Economy], in: Szlechter, D., *Teorías de las organizaciones. Un enfoque crítico, histórico y situado*, Los Polvorines: Editorial Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, pp. 245-284.

9. G. Berger & L. Blugerman (2018), *Challenges and Tensions in Developing Inclusive and Sustainable Businesses in Nonprofit Organizations: A Case Study*

from the South, Amsterdam: ISTR Conference Working Papers Series, Paper Presented at the XIII ISTR International Conference, pp. 1-27.

10. Blugerman, L., Corropolese, C. F., Calamari, M., Díaz, C. C., & Fidmay, P. (2020), "Asociación Civil Andar: los desafíos de ampliar el foco organizacional" [Asociación Civil Andar: The Challenges of Broadening the Organisational Focus], in: *La economía popular ante la crisis: por la defensa de los derechos y hacia una economía social y ambientalmente sustentable*, Berazategui: Cuadernos de la Economía Social y Solidaria, pp. 421-432, paper presented at: "La economía popular ante la crisis. Por la defensa de derechos y hacia una economía social y ambientalmente sostenible. II Congreso Nacional de Economía Social y Solidaria" [Second National Congress of Social and Solidarity Economy].

11. Berger, G. & L. Blugerman (2021), "The Evolution of the New Social and Impact Economy in Argentina," in: Gidron, B. & Domaradzka, A., Eds. *The Social and Impact Economy*. Springer Nature Switzerland AG, pp. 19-48.

4.B Focus and Orientations of the Submitted Production

As it was mentioned earlier, my research objective is to explore how critical organisational theory can help to gain a better understanding of the multidimensional dynamics of social enterprises. The notion of multidimensionality, core to my research objective and the research questions that followed suit can lead us to a view of interacting different layers and forces within the conceptual space of

a given phenomenon. A good narrative device to grasp *multidimensionality* in the organisational theory might be provided by Astley & Van de Ven (1983: 246-7), when they mention that to "classify the major schools of thought" of organisation theory, the different perspectives can be grouped within a *focus* on *macro* (populations and communities of organisations) or *micro* level (individual organisations), and an *orientation* that can be *deterministic* (with an emphasis on contextual structural constraints[8]) or *voluntaristic* (stressing autonomy[9]). Is worth to clarify that these two elements are just used here to represent the submitted production synthetically, and that the main driver of the journey is the emergence of each research question to address the research object.

To put it simply then, the image of Astley & Van de Ven (1983) is a useful device for a higher-level contextualisation of the multidimensional sense of my research objective, but the chronological approach is then useful for a more focused/granular narrative explanation of the different research questions that were emerging.

Thus, using this narrative device, as it will be shown here, my works combined a micro and a macro focus throughout the years, with orientations that started predominantly voluntaristic (e.g., emphasising the role of social leaders in successful local social enterprises) at first and progressively shifting towards a more

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[8] "The deterministic orientation focuses not on individuals, but on the structural properties of the context within which action unfolds, and individual behavior is seen as determined by and reacting to structural constraints that provide organizational life with an overall stability and control" (Astley & Van de Ven (1983:247).
[9] "Seen from the voluntaristic orientation, individuals and their created institutions are autonomous, proactive, self-directing agents" (ibid).

deterministic view in my research journey (e.g., looking at the impact of productive pattern changes on this organisational setting).

In sum, for expositive reasons, my multidimensional research journey can be pictured as a voyage, but across the two mentioned axes (on Astley & Van de Ven 1983)—one regarding *focus* (macro and micro) and the other concerning *orientation* (voluntaristic and deterministic). I will show that especially in the first productions of my first two research questions my journey started with a rather voluntaristic approach (both at micro and macro level), and then, as I did not find answers to understand the underlying dynamics of local social enterprises, I started to incorporate a rather deterministic (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983) approach, which is particularly clear in the third research questions and my later productions. It will be argued later that this later view is closer to a critical perspective (Ibarra 1991) on organisational theory.

Accordingly, this was a multidimensional journey from voluntarism to determinism/criticism, with different levels of analysis across the route. In this journey, my production can be grouped in three set that emphasise this multidimensional approach: social enterprises at a micro level, social enterprises at a macro level, and then the critical foundations of social enterprises. Having an *interactive research approach* (Maxwell 2013) in mind, the three sets that encompass my works are described next.

4.B.i Set 1. Sustainable Social Enterprises: A Story of Pragmatism and Social Leadership

Firstly, I have explored these phenomena from a micro level, with case studies of several social enterprises. My early papers in this set featured a voluntaristic approach (e.g., the role of social leaders) to analyse the effects of the 2001-2002 Argentine crisis on a low-income social enterprise. But then I realised that there were other forces beyond and beneath individual social enterprises that might help to understand their dynamics and that is what it was added in the coming sets. Therefore, I slowly moved away from a voluntaristic stance towards a more deterministic, something that is especially clear on the last paper cited here (e.g., analysing the quest for impact of a Work Integration Social Enterprise in public policies), depicting an evolution in my journey. The papers included in this set, with a theoretical background coming from third-sector analysis, social enterprises, sustainability management, and organisational theory categories, are: Berger & Blugerman (2006), Berger & Blugerman (2010a), Berger & Blugerman (2018), and Blugerman et al (2020).

4.B.ii Set 2. Getting to Know the Hybrid Territory: The Complex Map of Social Enterprises

Leaving aside the single case perspective, this second set of papers views the phenomena at a macro level. It started with a voluntaristic position, and afterwards incorporated a rather deterministic stance. In this set, I analysed the evolution and dynamics of local and Iberoamerican social enterprises over more than 10 years,

considering the impact of Argentina's 2001-2002 crisis and analysing the political, economic, historical, sociocultural, and managerial aspects characterising this organisational setting. The theoretical background draws from organisational theory, third-sector analysis, social enterprises, and sustainability management—all of them in conjunction with a historical analysis of the local and Iberoamerican context using social sciences categories (stemming from economy, sociology, and political science). The papers included in this grouping are: Berger & Blugerman (2010b), Blugerman, et al (2017), and Berger & Blugerman (2021).

4.B.iii Set 3. Critical Foundations of Social Enterprises

This body of work rely on mainstream and especially critical approaches on organizational theory (and analytical categories from economy and sociology), at macro and micro level. The set uses a more deterministic and critical approach, with the division of labour in and among organisations, organisational complexity, productive/organisational patterns, and critical theory as the main topics. My works in this set include: Blugerman et al (2015), Berger, Blugerman et al (2016), Meilán, Blugerman & Agoff (2018), and Szlechter, Bauni, Blugerman, et al (2018).

5. **Theoretical Approaches and Methodology**

5.A Theoretical Approaches: From Voluntaristic Micro Mainstream to Critical Determinism

My first published works draw mainly from the basic tenets of mainstream organisational theory—that is, the systematic "study of how organizations function and how they affect and are affected by the environment in which they operate" (Jones 2013: 8)[10] on social enterprises and hybrid organisations management -Dart (2004); Austin et al (2006); Defourny & Nyssens (2006); Kerlin (2009); Battilana & Dorado (2010); Teasdale (2012); Pache & Santos (2013); Doherty, et al (2014); Ebrahim et al (2014), Gidron & Domaradzka, Eds. (2021). Mainstream organisational theory tends to focus on voluntaristic issues in the quest for improving organisational efficacy (Ibarra 1991). Based on this systematic *corpus*, my research agenda tried to cover the organisational phenomena from micro and macro analytical levels, dialoguing with other fields to do so. This was the main driver in the two first sets of papers, addressing research questions 1 and 2.

But the mainstream of organisational theory/ social enterprises-hybrid organisations corpus rather described the managerial challenges of social enterprises and its greater role after a big economic and political crisis, without a further preoccupation on trying to understand the reasons why this momentum occurred. Accordingly, my first publications showed the same rather descriptive nature, but the questions on the reasons why this phenomenon was occurring after the 2001-2002 crisis arose progressively. And these doubts in turn led me to consider an additional set of papers

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[10] The *classical* administrative view evolved from the first works in the early 20th century—e.g., Fayol (2013) and Taylor (2004)—on the *best ways* to organise the administrative and productive tasks. Later, this *corpus* evolved into a rather systematic reflection on organisations with more comprehensive views considering the relationship between human and cultural factors within organisations, organisational environments, power relationships within-among organisations, gender, etc., into several perspectives within mainstream and critical Organisational Theory. To briefly trace the evolution of this discipline, see, for instance, Hatch (2011), or Morgan (1998).

usually far from mainstream literature: a critical perspective on organisational theory (Hatch 2011, Ibarra 1991), other social sciences such as sociology (Powell 1990), and a critical economy corpus rooted in French regulation school (Coriat 1991, Boyer & Saillard 2005).

The addition of this unorthodox literature for the social enterprises mainstream standards impacted later my work, especially in the third set of papers, while addressing research question 3. It can be said that as a result my research journey evolved (or at least changed somehow), and therefore most of my publications increasingly tended to consider one or more of the following three interrelated dimensions: power (e.g., Blugerman, et al 2015, or Berger, Blugerman et al 2016), geographical context (e.g., Blugerman et al 2017 or Berger & Blugerman 2010b), and historical dynamics (e.g., Szlechter, Bauni, Blugerman, et al 2018, or Berger & Blugerman 2021). Ibarra,1991 considered these three interrelated dimensions as the main features of a critical approach in organisational theory. Thus, it may be safe to say that my stance was closer to the *critical* approaches in organisational theory. And since the critical perspective explain the dynamics in an organisation due to forces or phenomena occurring beyond its will and its boundaries, is the reason why I relate this critical perspective with the deterministic stance in terms of (Astley & Van de Ven 1983: 247) that "focuses… on the structural properties of the context within which action unfolds".

In a nutshell, the main advantage of adding a critical approach in an organisational type (thoroughly studied by mainstream organisational theory and social enterprise and hybrid organisations management) was to help me to better understand the

underlying multidimensional dynamics behind the flourishing of this hybrid sector, due to historic, geographic, power-related dynamics, and the deep-rooted reasons of tensions within these organisational types.

5.B Rationales: Why Studying Social Enterprises, Why With a Critical View?

As it was mentioned earlier, the organisational focus are social enterprises/ hybrid organisations, and the phenomena is analysed with a critical view. The first two research questions covered the *species* (social enterprises, from a *micro* and a *macro* perspective), and the third research question emphasise a *critical* view. The following section try to explain, firstly, the contextual reasons explaining why I deemed important to focus the research on this organisational type, and secondly, how the hybrid and tensive nature of social enterprises led me to focus on these actors with a critical lens instead of using mainstream literature.

5.B.i. Rationale for Taking an Organisational Focus: Social Enterprises at a Micro and a Macro Level

The main organisational focus of the research agenda I have developed throughout the years has concentrated on organisations with a logic located *between* the third sector and the private realm: that is, social enterprises. Some of the first works presented here (Berger & Blugerman 2006; Berger & Blugerman 2010b) were carried out within a Harvard Business School-led Iberoamerican research network called

Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN),[11] a consortium founded and inspired by one of the leading scholars on social enterprises, James E. Austin.[12] At the start of my publication career, this approach greatly influenced my research, and subsequently the goal of gaining a better understanding of social enterprises—organisational actors developing market initiatives to pursue their social mission—in the Argentine context marked my academic interest, as shown by my first (at a macro level) and second (at a micro level) set of papers already mentioned. However, in the second decade of the new Millennium, the *hybrid* character of those organisations gained momentum as the most comprehensive concept to describe the landscape of entities pursuing social, environmental, and economic value. As a reminder, in Berger & Blugerman (2010b), I had already underscored the hybrid nature of social enterprises on the Iberoamerican and local settings.

The rationale here is both theoretical and contextual. Indeed, the high poverty rates plaguing Latin America in general, and Argentina in particular, led my research agenda onto a focus on low-income sector ventures. This effort was not solely based on a contextual concern but also reflected a trend in academia, as proven by the Bottom-of-the-Pyramid literature (Prahalad, 2012). With different emphasis on several inequalities, other bodies on the literature also explored issues such as socially inclusive businesses (Marquez et al 2010) and shared value (Porter & Kramer 2019), while several trends in general around the world, like the B-Corp movement (Stubbs 2017) and the regenerative/circular economy (Morseletto 2020), also

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[11] http://www.sekn.org/en/ (accessed on 14/05/2021).
[12] https://scholar.google.com.ar/citations?user=Gz5xg8sAAAAJ&hl=es&oi=sra (accessed on 14/05/2021).

addressed similar challenges. This recent development was mentioned and analysed in Argentina, in Berger & Blugerman (2021), or more generally in the volume where that chapter was published (Gidron & Domarazka, Eds. 2021).

5.B.ii. Rationale for *Adopting a Critical View: Looking Beyond and Beneath Social Enterprises*

As my research agenda evolved, further dimensions were added in the understanding of social enterprises, stressing the critical features both at macro (e.g., the impact of changes on the productive pattern in a developing country as a factor that might help to understand the rise of local social enterprises, as in Szlechter, Bauni, Blugerman et al 2018), and micro levels (e.g., the impact of power asymmetry on collaborative ventures in Berger, Blugerman et al 2016), as reflected in my third set of papers.

The notion of *core competencies* (Prahalad & Hamel 1997) can contribute to a better grasp of the rationale underlying this set of papers. The history of this term is understood under the perspective of the population ecology approach in organisational theory (e.g., Hannan & Freeman 1984), referring to the organisational mission, type of authority and basic technology, among other factors. In established firms, state agencies, and non-profits, the agreements on their *core* dimensions (mission, governance, etc.) often cover the conflicts between their parts. Yet, as early as in Berger & Blugerman (2010b), I warned about the common lack of agreement around *core* features (stressed to generate both social/environmental but also economic value, with disputes over the adoption of governance mechanisms, or their

formal/ legal setting, or even in the understanding of their organisational identity)[13] seen in local- Iberoamerican social enterprises. Then, throughout several of my early publications, this type of organisations seemed to be a relevant area of research to study some *core* tensions often invisible in *purest*[14] organisational forms that already had (archetypically) resolved these issues. But I considered that the state of the art on social enterprises did not provide a useful framework to understand or look deeper into these *core* tensions. Then, this emphasis on organisational tensions led me to problematize and try to analyse the phenomena with a different framework, incorporating *critical* thinking on organisational theory (e.g., power) to dialogue with social enterprises´ literature.

Furthermore, these tensions also show a difficulty to solve differences on how to divide labour within organisational boundaries, and on how to establish relationships with the environment (and thus, if/how to establish collaborative strategies). Therefore, and starting from the basic tenets of organisational theory, since an established division of labour within an organisation is the result (and the producer) of power asymmetries to solve problems to coordinate its collective action, my assumption was that the critical stance on organisational theory should prove fruitful to examine the dynamics of these organisational realities. In short, conflict is an intrinsic part of any organisation, but for the reasons mentioned earlier, these pressures appear more clearly in social enterprises. Thus, critical organisational

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[13] An issue later covered for example by Cornelissen et al (2020).
[14] *Purest* organisational forms understood in an *ideal-type* (Weber 2009 [1947]) sense. In addition, the term *pure* might be understood as an antonymous of *hybrid*.

theory and other rather deterministic approaches seemed to prove useful to build an alternative conceptual understanding of their intrinsic dynamics.

While mainstream theory (Doherty et al 2014, Battilana & Dorado 2010) tend to describe the growing presence of social enterprises, the critical perspective serves to better depict a plausible understanding of why those hybrid actors flourished recently. In this venue, this research process more focused on deterministic dimensions led me to investigate whether the bigger economic and societal role of these organisational forms was the result of changes in the productive/organisational pattern occurred in the last quarter of the 20th century, seen in a lesser role played by the State (e.g., as in Szlechter, Bauni, Blugerman et al 2018). To bring light on the structural forces behind the growth of the hybrid sector it was deemed necessary to add a critical economic and organisational perspective rooted in the regulation theory (e.g., Coriat 1991, or Boyer & Saillard 2005).[15]

The intertwined and rather *hesitant* nature of this organisational form with a *mixed* socio-environmental and economic logic, and how its emergence seemed to be a result of more profound changes in economic, political, and social arenas, both at national and international levels, led in turn my research program to analyse more thoroughly the engagement of (newer and older) social enterprises with public,

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[15] This approach suggests that a change in the productive pattern (e.g., from Fordism to Post-Fordism) bore an impact on—by eventually changing—how the State regulates the economy (e.g., the Welfare State changed as a result of a crisis in the Fordist productive pattern around the 1970s, and this crisis led to Post-Fordist pattern with a Neo Conservative State, with lesser social and economic functions that private firms and/or Third Sector/ Social Enterprises took over).

social/non-profit, and private actors of different levels. My last publication, Berger &

Blugerman (2021), and my future research plans are also heading this way.

5.C. Methodological Approach

Is worth to remind here that my overall research objective is *to explore how critical organisational theory can help to gain a better understanding of the multidimensional dynamics of social enterprises in Argentina (and, to a lesser extent, in Iberoamerica), especially since the 2001-2002 local crisis*. In addition, the research questions are: 1) *What elements explain how Argentine social enterprises developed their organisational models, especially after the 2001-2002 local crisis?*; 2) *How the Iberoamerican and especially Argentine context impacted on social enterprises' emergence, strategies, and dynamics?*; and 3) *What was the impact of productive/ organisational pattern changes on Argentine social enterprises?* Each one of these questions will be addressed in the coming Section 6, when addressing the research questions, respectively on 6.A., 6.B, and 6.C.

The theoretical approaches discussed above were applied over the years with an *interactive* (Maxwell 2013) qualitative research (Cassell & Symon 2006, Gummesson 2000) method. The *interactive approach* in qualitative research design (Maxwell 2013) posing an interplay between research questions, goals, conceptual framework, methods, and validity, helps to understand the rationale behind the research questions posed.

In addition, Creswell & Poth (2016) note that there are *five interpretative frameworks* on qualitative studies and research designs. My research stood within the *social constructivism* domain (ibid: 24), claiming an emphasis on the understanding of the phenomena, the multiple-participant meanings, the social and historical construction, and theory generation.

Finally, my research agenda and the pursuit of my overall research objective were also strongly complemented by using in-depth case studies as a methodological approach (Yin 2017, Stake 1995), mainly depicted in the first set of my research program. The selection of these cases was intentionally aligned with my research objective, and the rationale behind this strategy was to build theory, aiming to contribute to the understanding of social enterprises at an Iberoamerican but especially at a national level in Argentina, particularly after 2001-2002. This intention is best described by Eisenhardt (1989), who states that building theory from case studies is a research strategy that involves using one or more cases to create theoretical constructs, propositions, and/or midrange theory from case-based, empirical evidence.

6. Building Blocks of the Journey, or: Addressing the Research Questions

In this section it will be illustrated the contribution to scholarship made by my papers while addressing the research questions posed above, especially in the (critical) organisational theory and social enterprise management fields. Seeking to

understand the dynamics of Argentine social enterprises, my research started with a more voluntaristic approach at a micro level in the first research question, then to a macro level in the second. Finally, in the third research question, I looked at both the micro and macro-organisational dimensions of the phenomena but with a more deterministic-critical perspective. In this section I will describe how research questions served as *building blocks* (Collier & Munck 2017): in this sense, in trying to address each research question I was finding some answers, but - at the same time - leading me to add a different angle to my initial overarching objective, and then leading me to add new insights to it from different levels and dimensions.

6. A. Addressing*: "What elements explain how Argentine social enterprises developed their organisational models, especially after the 2001-2002 local crisis?"*

The first submitted papers I developed on the matter (Berger & Blugerman 2006, Berger & Blugerman 2010a), under the SEKN and Austin´s theoretical umbrella, had an inherently *voluntaristic* approach—e.g., focusing on organisational autonomy rather than on contextual structural constraints. In those publications, I tried to explore organisational models for social enterprises and the main features of their relationships. Thus, I was dialoguing with the state-of-the-art, mainstream organisational literature of social enterprises management on market-driven initiatives aimed at the bottom of the pyramid (and with low-income sectors in their value chain involved as producers, distributors, partners, or especially consumers in the Iberoamerican context).

Hence, in Berger & Blugerman (2006), I uncovered the drivers to explain the successful creation of social and economic value by a local urban recyclers' social enterprise that developed an inclusive business. These drivers encompassed: a) leadership; b) an effort to fit the business model into the social mission according to environmental changes, and c) pragmatism in the collaborative strategy. The findings in this case study in turn were the main avenue to discover what helps Iberoamerican social enterprises to best accomplish their goals -as later elaborated in Berger & Blugerman 2010b; therefore, it was possible to contribute to building a theory from case studies (Eisenhardt 1989). In addition, it was the first indication in my work of the value of collaboration as a key factor to gain a deeper understanding of the sector´s dynamics. This initial—*voluntaristic*— approach, more focused on social leaders' role, was later put into a more complex, more macro and abstract focus 10 years later (especially in Berger, Blugerman et al 2016).

Then, in Berger & Blugerman case study (2010a), I analysed a social venture with a sound collaborative strategy. Key findings from this work include a) its sustainability was better understood because the case underscored the organisation's division of labour, b) the professionalization of its structure, and c) a sense of *managerialization* of its organisational culture to reflect contextual changes. These insights paved the way to focusing on more micro dimensions to better understand the dynamics of local social enterprises in other works (e.g., in Berger, Blugerman et al 2016, where the division of labour proved instrumental to understanding collaborative strategies -see 6.c).

As mentioned earlier, starting in the 2010s, the term *hybridity* gained momentum in the field as the paradigmatic concept to depict the field of actors pursuing social, environmental, and economic goals primarily with market mechanisms. To try to understand how these actors developed their organisational models and had relationships with other actors, especially after 2001-2002, the following two case studies added new insights on the phenomena.

Firstly, in Berger & Blugerman (2018), I studied a local social enterprise working with low-income sectors. This case analysed the tensions in the process of creating and consolidating a sustainable social business across several dimensions such as organisational identity, ethical dilemmas, business model change, and operations. Since this organisation was also analysed in Berger & Blugerman (2010a), I could then trace the impact of contextual factors on the same organisation and observe how the organisational model changed. Looking at the same organisation with newer literature on the topic and an evolved research agenda enabled me to investigate new aspects treated by the literature such as organisational identity. The insights in this sense show that to witness sustainable changes in organisational identity (e.g., from a social service towards a commercial model) there needs to be a reflective organisational reinterpretation of mission and client's profile (Berger & Blugerman 2018: 18), but without consensus those changes (e.g., towards a deeper standardisation) may not occur (ibid, p.19).

In a similar vein, in Blugerman et al (2020), a case study on a Work Integration Social Enterprise provided an opportunity to reflect on how this type of organisations responds to organisational crises caused by environmental changes (in this case, the

termination of their main source of revenues due to an explosion) that bear an impact on their organizational identity and on the relationship with several social, public, and private actors. In this strategy of working with several actors, their quest for an impact on public policies on disability at a national and local level seems to prevail. This links to the insights coming from Berger & Blugerman 2010b, and the ties between organisations and their context, while the desire to influence public policies leads back to a *deterministic*/critical approach, since the driving conceptual force behind this organisational goal is influence and power[16].

It is worth adding that the emphasis on these last two publications on collaborative strategies is the result of my work on collaborative issues (Berger, Blugerman et al 2016 -see below), while other topics (e.g., organisational identity) remain key research concerns that I continue to explore in my present and future research agenda.

 Thus, this first research question *(What elements explain how Argentine social enterprises developed their organisational models, especially after the 2001-2002 local crisis*) can be answered this way: a sound leadership, occurring in organisations able to both develop their business model into the social mission, but doing so pragmatically - that is, being sensitive to both environmental changes and with active collaborative strategies. This sensitivity might signify that the social enterprise could face a business or operations model change. These specific organisational models have a rather professional structure and culture, with a clear division of labour, and

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[16] See section 6.C.

perhaps looking for impact on public policies. This is not cost free, and these organisations had to successfully deal with tensions over their identity, facing ethical dilemmas.

But across these publications, it started to become apparent that bigger changes occurring outside, *beyond* (and, to a certain extent, *beneath*) individual social enterprises' organisational boundaries also have an effect within them. Hence, a more holistic approach began to emerge as a useful perspective to gain a better understanding of how social enterprises emerged - and the dynamics at play in these organisations. Therefore, my research agenda evolved to encompass social enterprises at a national/ Iberoamerican level, and then to analyse what structural changes impacted on local social enterprises and how, as detailed in the coming two research questions/ sections. This remains an ongoing research concern on my agenda.

6.B. Addressing*: How the Iberoamerican and especially Argentine context impacted on social enterprises' emergence, strategies, and dynamics?*

The scope of these papers—namely, Berger & Blugerman (2010b), Blugerman, Darmohraj & Lomé (2017), and Berger & Blugerman (2021)—covers the phenomena from a macro perspective.

With a more voluntaristic approach but a broader focus, 13 Iberoamerican social enterprises were compared in Berger & Blugerman (2010b), revealing the impact of

the Iberoamerican context on the emergence of social enterprises. "The time frame for the origin of several social enterprises studied… is no minor detail, as economic turnaround, market deregulation, state withdrawal and shrinkage, and increasing globalization processes seem to have created an environment conducive to the use of market mechanisms" (Berger & Blugerman 2010b: 88-89). Thus, among state withdrawal from social spheres and shrinkage, is no surprise that the "most frequent motive for the creation of these initiatives was to secure higher income for underprivileged individuals" (ibid:89).

In addition, operating with dire constraints amidst critical socioeconomic environments with low-income sectors engaged as producers or workers of these social enterprises led to the presence of a "funding scheme… that included subsidies or external economic contributions… limited ventures' independence to some extent, primarily in economic terms" (ibid: 101). Thus, in this context, Iberoamerican social enterprises seemed to be pragmatic in their organisational strategies [e.g., funding scheme] to secure better social and economic value to low-income individuals and communities even if it meant an impact on its independence in economic terms.

As it was mentioned, Iberoamerican social enterprises had low-income sectors engaged in the ventures, usually marginalised, and/or under-professionalised. And this has an impact: supporting "themselves solely by market proceeds seemed more difficult for these organizations because they incurred greater costs to promote [low-income sectors] productive or collaborative capabilities, to coordinate supply, to expand their scale in order to do away with intermediaries or to access international networks from excluded areas" (ibid: 102).

Therefore, one of the organisational features to see how the Iberoamerican context in general, and the Argentinian in particular, impacted on social enterprises´ strategies was how important is the collaborative dimension for these actors (materialised in this context in the vital importance for Iberoamerican social enterprises of subsidies, external economic contributions, networking with international cooperation actors, etc.).

The role or founders or social leaders was also crucial in these cases. The leadership in turn could be internal or external. For *internal leadership* I meant on the role of traditional social leaders within the social enterprises analysed (e.g., Teté or Cristina Lescano, in Berger & Blugerman 2006 and 2010b, or Raúl Lucero in Blugerman et al 2020), while for *external leadership* I meant the role of leaders, persons or institutions, that associated with social enterprises (e.g. such as Fundación Social was to Porvenir in Colombia, or Taller de Acción Cultural to Bio Bio Pickers in Chile -Berger & Blugerman 2010b).

Furthermore, with the external leadership and the alliancing dimensions as key factors, the analytical avenue was opened to later use specific tools to explore the relationship of social enterprises with other organisations. The vital role of collaborative strategies for Iberoamerican social enterprises seems to be a result of how the local context impacted on the organisational strategies. This was a major finding in 2010 and pushed me in turn to focus on the matter a few years later, as I will develop below on 6.C.

This prior analysis led me to highlight the common elements of sustainable Iberoamerican social enterprises operating in this context: formulating a business model fitting the social mission, developing the right scale (further continued e.g., in Berger & Blugerman 2018), building creative and pragmatic alliances (an issue I deepened later in Blugerman et al 2020), and having a sound internal and/or external leadership to generate social and economic value.

Later, in Blugerman et al (2017), I served as the coordinator of the national chapter in an EU-funded initiative to map local social enterprises around the world. This initiative found that the development of social enterprises in Argentina followed a unique interaction pattern related to the articulation among the state, civil society, and the market. The role of the 2001-2002 local crisis as a driving force shaping the sector and other long-term variables (such as the extension and later collapse of Argentina's Welfare State between 1945 and 1990) served as input to reply to this research question focused at a macro level, but it also raised a new plausible angle— e.g., on analysing the impact of the productive pattern change on local social enterprises, such as I did in the coming research question, in a publication appeared one year later, in Szlechter, Bauni, Blugerman et al (2018).

Thus, in Berger & Blugerman (2021), the crux of the work was to analyse the New Social and Impact Economy (NS&IE) in Argentina. The NS&IE in this country has manifested in new *hybrid* forms of engagement that seek to create social value through business models in a financially sustainable form. The study was done with a focus on Argentina, but looking at bigger trends around the world, as larger changes in the social and economic arena were occurring also elsewhere. This is the result of

the dynamics created by international actors, the growth of an entrepreneurial culture, and public policies and programs supporting and financing start-ups.

To understand the emergence of NS&IE in Argentina, Berger & Blugerman (2021) pays special attention to the impact of the 2001–2002 economic, social, and political crisis. The findings led me to identify some of the core local NS&IE specificities in Argentina: weak coordinating structures, opposite views about the nature of the sector, low-scale initiatives centralized in higher income areas, and legal inconsistencies (this latter feature in turn led me back to an issue already identified prematurely on Berger & Blugerman 2010b: 85-6, when I identified that in the social enterprises analysed for that paper "the legal format adopted by these... does not necessarily match their operations. Indeed, some organizations displayed ambiguous format despite their legal status").

Conclusively, four insights appeared addressing the research question ("*How Iberoamerican and especially Argentine context impacted on social enterprises emergence, strategies, and dynamics*?"). Firstly, that local social enterprises emerged as the result of an interaction pattern related to the articulation among the state, civil society, and the market. On the other hand, that the 2001-2002 local crisis was a milestone to the sector, and this crisis in turn seemed to be the result of the collapse of Argentina's Welfare State amidst a productive pattern change. In addition, that as the second decade of the Millennium moved forward, the growing influence of international actors, the entrepreneurial culture, and some public policies and programs supporting and financing start-ups shaped a slightly different organisational scenario, entering what I called NS&IE, more attuned to global

dynamics on the sector. Finally, that to gain sustainability in this context social enterprises developed business models with the right scale that fit the social mission of the organisation, and (as in the previous research question) I found that they must build creative and pragmatic alliances and a sound internal and/or external leadership to generate social and economic value.

But as it happened with the previous research question, while answering this question new research avenues were open: local social enterprises gained momentum after the 2001-2002 crisis, but this crisis in turn seemed to be the expression of a change in more structural dimensions that regulation theory (Coriat 1991) refers to as productive patterns. Thus, to put it more simply: to understand the phenomena it was necessary not only to understand what happened at a micro (research question 1) and a macro (research question 2) organisational level, but also to go beyond and beneath local social enterprises.

6.C. Addressing: *What was the Impact of a Productive/ Organisational Pattern Change on Argentine Social Enterprises?*

The insights gained from the previous research questions – i.e. the micro and the macro context of local social enterprises- led to newer questions linked to the overall objective. These newer issues relate not to the micro nor macro levels, but to the complex foundations in the dynamics of social enterprises.

Therefore, this new angle might be summarised as follows: to understand the dynamics of local social enterprises after the 2001-2002 crisis also requires a focus

beyond, *beneath* and *among* these organisations. This means studying the impact of changes of productive/ organisational patterns on local social enterprises (analysing how changes *beyond* social enterprises bore an impact on these organisations), as well as how these productive/organisational changes impacted on both collaboration (*among* social enterprises and with other actors), and on the division of labour and coordination mechanisms (thus, *beneath* social enterprises). I consider that the incorporation of this more deterministic/ critical approach in the understanding of local social enterprises after the 2001-2002 crisis is one of the main contributions to knowledge of my research journey, as it will be developed further in the conclusive section.

The so-called *global associational revolution* (Salamon 1994) that encompassed the rise of social enterprises in the organisational arena was construed under the influx of productive changes (ibid.). Therefore, using a *critical* (Ibarra 1991) approach to stress contextual structural constraints on developing societies as noted earlier, I started to research the impact of the productive changes on local social enterprises. The emergence of newer questions after advancing the study of micro and macro foundations led me to this rather *terra incognita* for the scholarly literature on organisational theory and social enterprise management literature studying (local) social enterprises.

It may prove useful to recap that, while responding research questions 1 and 2 (on social enterprises at a case and at an Iberoamerican-national level), my research work found that collaboration was a key factor for social enterprises' ability to

accomplish their multiple goals – respectively, e.g., in Berger and Blugerman, 2006 and 2010b.

Since the focus of those research questions and publications was not on collaboration, the specific study of collaboration (this is, *among*) was not addressed until few years later, when I started to analyse why collaboration was a central feature on social enterprises, and what does the change in productive and organisational patterns has to do with that. This happened when I started to study the global change of productive and organisational paradigm and its local impact on these organisations.

The collaborative strategies of social enterprises - already identified as early as in 2006 and 2010 as a central feature of social enterprises at a micro and a macro level - showed a deeper meaning under this new angle opened in my third research question. As I discuss below (e.g., in Berger, Blugerman et al 2016), these collaborative strategies seemed to be an adaptive response to (and a manifestation of) structural pattern changes from Fordism to Post-Fordism and the parallel retreat of the Welfare State towards a smaller State. In short, according to my research, the impact of those changes drove organisations (local social enterprises, but also public, private, non-profit) to increasingly stop playing *solo*, paving the way to outsourcing, externalising and alliancing.

Accordingly, with a project conducted between 2015 and 2016, I started to research the very foundation of the collaborative effort—the division of labour (firstly, *internal*, secondly, *among* organisations)— to find a more robust pattern to understand the

forces at play in social enterprises, looking at division of labour and coordination mechanisms.

Firstly, as for the *internal* dimension, according to Fayol (2013) one of the basic principles of management for every organisation is its division of labour, with coordination mechanisms among their parts. This is then stabilised within a structure (Mintzberg 2005), that in turn is the result of — and both reflects and reproduces — the differences of power among their parts (Ibarra 1991). Therefore, to have a greater understanding of the dynamics of Argentine social enterprises, it was necessary to dig *beneath*, so to speak. This began in Blugerman et al (2015), where I traced the development of labour studies in Argentina to account for the different social *coordination mechanisms* and prevailing forms of work practices since the beginning of the 20th Century in Argentina. According to Powell (1990), those social coordination mechanisms are three: hierarchy, market, and collaborative networks. With this scheme in mind, I found that in Argentina it is possible to trace an evolution from informal networks in the beginning of the period, towards market and hierarchy amidst the spread of Taylorism and Fordism, and then, once the productive and organisational pattern changes towards the post-Fordism, to national and international formal networks in the end of the period.

Aiming to consolidate this research line, I am currently working on division of labour and coordination mechanisms, and organisational identity in local social enterprises, as explained. Some preliminary findings included in Blugerman et al (2020: 29-30) are: local social enterprises tended to rely on hierarchy (e.g., the strong influence of the social leader/ founder) as the main driver for coordination mechanism defining

the division of labour within the organisation. If the organisation grows in scale and faces a more complex environment due to changes in the productive and organisational pattern (witnessed in retreat of the State, etc.) these organisations tend to rely more on a network-coordination mechanism. Additionally, this change in the prevailing driver of the division of labour and coordination mechanism within the organisation deeply impact on the organisational identity witnessed - e.g., in this case- in the tension between the missional-therapeutic and the productive facet (ibid: 28).

Secondly, I decided to examine the division of labour *among* organisations. Thus, in the Palgrave MacMillan's Handbook entry on collaboration (Berger, Blugerman et al 2016: 1162-3), I analysed that the term collaboration is usually viewed in the literature as a *processual exchange relationship among* organised actors of one or several social fields; this can be formal or not, with equal or unequal benefits to all the parties, and involves *division of labour*, *shared activities,* or *delegation*.

In this publication, I addressed and reviewed not just the definitions of collaboration and its dynamics, but also the historical background leading to the present collaborative landscape in Voluntary Associations in general and social enterprises in particular. In doing so, I tracked the first texts on interorganisational relations (e.g., March & Simon 1958), which focused on conflict (Berger, Blugerman et al 2016: 1165). This took me back to the critical reflection of the present research question and these set of papers. Three key issues were identified: the perspective of treating collaboration as a dynamic process (something that most of the literature has uncritically taken for granted, considering it as something fixed and desirable while

neglecting the conflict or possible failure among other variables), then examining the managerial challenges involved on setting the collaborative framework (including issues regarding membership, leadership styles, managing conflict, structural design, strategy formulation and implementation, governance mechanisms, control and performance measurement, institutionalization of the relationship), and finally discussing several organizational arrangements of the various kinds of actors involved in these processes (the names, rationales and dynamics of the collaborative settings differ whether the actors that divide their work belong to the same social sector or if they belong to different ones—e.g., a public actor and a social enterprise).

Furthermore, in Berger, Blugerman et al (2016) I found that the macro landscape changed (a change of organisational patterns, as I later developed on Szlechter, Bauni, Blugerman et al 2018), and, as a result, the *blurring boundaries* between market, state and civil society are both the *causes and consequences* of *collaborative efforts* (Berger, Blugerman et al 2016: 1167). As for division of labour and collaboration, I found that collaboration is a *division of labour* among organisations in different sectors, which usually have several stages of increased interconnection, and that this trend is likely to rise with the present productive/organisational pattern. Then, I observed that social enterprises use several settings, depending on factors such as the actors engaged with social enterprises and other organisations, and they labelled those collaborative structures as Federations, Networks, or Partnerships (I used this conceptual development on a case study in Blugerman et al 2020).

In sum, collaboration is a dynamic process increasingly occurring in the current hybrid environment of a post-Fordist productive and organisational setting. Is conditioned

by power asymmetries among actors that divide their work, and observed not only in the social enterprises' field, but especially between the social sector and the public and private realms.

Later, to deepen the response to the impact of these pattern changes on social enterprises, in Meilán, Blugerman & Agoff (2018), and particularly in Szlechter, Bauni, Blugerman et al (2018), I tried to understand the specific impact of those contextual structural changes on local social enterprises. To do so, I used complexity approaches and critical organisational theory (i.e., emphasising power, history, and contextual analytical dimensions). These works shared a reflection on the dynamics of social enterprises, showing that they cannot be analysed without an insight into their basic assumptions (e.g., the effects of the division of labour on an organisation with intrinsic tensions - thus *beneath* social enterprises), and especially a critical understanding of the complexity paradigm in a post-Fordist emerging economy.

In these papers I looked at the consequences of post-Fordism in different types of organizations in developing contexts. Here it was found that Argentinian social enterprises flourished after the retreat (between 1990 and 2001) and later collapse (2001-2002) of the local Welfare State. And this retreat and crisis in turn - following the critical French regulation school - was an epiphenomenon of a change in the productive and organisational pattern from Fordism to Post Fordism. The dynamism of this hybrid local sector cannot be understood without a reference to this structural change. The local vitality of this sector after the change of the productive and organisational pattern is a phenomenon also witnessed in other countries and regions (see, e.g., Gidron & Domaradzka, Eds. 2021).

Additionally, in those 2018 papers I showed that Argentine social enterprises exhibit a range of different options in terms of their organisational models and their internal management schemes, and they even display a more nuanced stance to capitalistic and/or monetaristic practices (e.g., workers' coops, barter clubs, worker-recovered enterprises)[17].

In conclusion, addressing the first research question brought relevant insights at a micro level, and the second research question did the same at a more aggregate perspective. At both levels collaborative strategies were an important feature in depicting the dynamics of local social enterprises after the 2001-2002 crisis; however, in those two research questions the roots of this organisational feature were mostly unattended. But addressing the third research question with a critical organisational theory perspective - rooted in the French regulation school as well - provided a fresher and original look to go deeper in the quest for understanding the dynamics of this hybrid sector, and why collaborative strategies are a central feature in this field. And, in turn, the vigour of social enterprises, and their collaborative strategies seemed to be observed as a response to changes in productive and organisational patterns, especially in Argentina after 2001-2002. This landscape, in turn, led local social enterprises to *core* organisational tensions: in their division of labour within and among organisations from different social realms, and on their organisational *blurred* identity, among other factors.

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[17] The disparaging motto coined at the local protests during this 2001-2002 crisis and in some social enterprises created around those troubled times was "*Que se vayan todos!*" (Fire them all!), pushing for radical changes in the system, much in the same vein as the *Occupy Wall Street* movement, among others, did several years later.

Finally, it was learned that collaboration and division of labour are organisational features that need to be problematised and put into a broader focus that far exceeds the hybrid dynamics of local social enterprises after 2001-2002, and seems to be an actual structural feature in the social enterprises and impact economy field across the globe.

7. Conclusion and Gaps and Directions for Future Research

7.A. Conclusion

In this document I first presented my organisational domain (social enterprises, an organisational *zoo* with different organisational *species* looking for economic, social, and environmental impact, mainly—but not solely—via market mechanisms). I used micro and macro-organisational perspectives, from voluntaristic (at the beginning of my research journey) and increasingly heading towards deterministic orientations. Then, I presented my publications, with theoretical approaches on macro and micro dimensions on social enterprises, and beyond, beneath and among these organisations. With a qualitative, interactive approach, my overall research objective was to explore how critical organisational theory can help to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of social enterprises, especially in a particular *locus*: Argentina after its 2001-2002 crisis, which marked a turning point for the local expression of the productive/organisational pattern.

As noted, some micro and macro dimensions are brought into play to understand this organisational hybrid landscape. As revealed by my research, the increased

importance of social enterprises around the world seems a by-product of the substantification of productive and organisational changes (from Fordism to a post-Fordist setting). In Argentina, the process of changing this pattern unfolded in a violent social and economic retreat of the Welfare State in the 1990s, which led to the emergence of social enterprises to cover some of this vacuum amidst the 2001-2002 crisis. In short: the new Millennium brought to Argentina a new organisational landscape rooted in global changes.

With my work, I provided a better understanding of how the bigger role of those organisations - acting with disparate legal formats to deliver economic, social, and environmental solutions – was mainly performed via collaborative actions with organisations from different realms (public, social, economic, both national and international). Then I investigated how these actors worked to accomplish their multiple goals in this setting and what their unique traits were. This, in turn, led me to reflect on how they divided their labour and the unresolved nature of their multiple and often *conflicting* goals (e.g., social, and economic) and *demands* (Doherty et al 2014: 428). As a result, I came to reflect upon the intrinsic conflict lying at the *core* of these organisations that strive and manage to successfully inhabit a tensive space, not only in general, but especially in emerging contexts such as Argentina.

Hence, to better understand the dynamics of the local sector, I deemed it necessary to increasingly take into consideration both long-term and macro-contextual structural trends (e.g., productive, and organisational pattern changes, Iberoamerican and Argentinian levels of poverty), and micro dimensions (e.g.,

leadership styles or strategies pursued by social enterprises in a crisis). This analysis should also factor in social enterprises' distinctive traits (e.g., identity struggles, balancing mission accomplishment and financial survival), and the features they share with other contemporary organisations (e.g., division of labour, or the need to collaborate in a post-Fordist environment—and what their collaborative strategies look like).

The tensive nature of these organisations also bears an impact on their organisational identity. A thorough analysis of social enterprises' hybrid *DNA* led me to revisit the concluding thoughts captured in Berger & Blugerman (2010b: 106). More than a decade ago, I mentioned that Iberoamerican and local social enterprises looked like Ulysses while at sea after leaving Circe, asking to be tied to his ship's mast to avoid being driven to a certain death by the mermaids' tempting song:

> "...should avoid listening only to mission "songs," luring them away from business strategy formulation... to accomplish their social goals... this same self-discipline should be exercised when exposed to market "mermaids"—succumbing to their charm would imply (regardless of economic results) forgetting the inclusive purpose of these initiatives and foregoing the accomplishment of their social objectives".

Nowadays I conclude that perhaps the tension for social enterprises does remain in how tied to mission songs or how prone to listen deadly mermaids' market chants they are. After this journey what I can understand better now is where the market chants come from and how social enterprises can gain sustainability. Firstly, those

market chants emerge because of productive and organisational pattern changes; secondly, to gain sustainability mission songs that astray the organisation from its context can be somehow muted if social enterprises unfold sound collaborative strategies.

I also have a better grasp of the fact that one thing is a vessel imagined in a developed setting - were most of the mainstream literature is rooted -, and a hybrid ship in a critical and/or a developing context such as Argentina is quite a different matter[18]. I also know that, to have a clearer picture of it all, I need to further understand how the boat was made, piece by piece (e.g., through a thorough analysis of its organisational and interorganisational division of labour), how its hybrid nature (social, environmental, economic) influences its identity, and how this in turn impacts on its leadership and its overall organisational sustainability. The growing socioeconomic presence of these organisations in my country since 2001-2002 makes it extremely attractive for me to continue to advance my research on this direction.

But Ulysses´ journey provides another analogy. In a nutshell, at this point of my research voyage I can affirm that my main contribution lies at understanding how changes in productive/ organisational patterns impacted on the presence and dynamism of local social enterprises (analysing how changes *beyond* social enterprises bore an impact on these organisations), and on how these productive/ organisational changes impacted *among* and *beneath* social enterprises. But no

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[18] For instance, the elements of the Argentinian local environment (Berger & Blugerman 2021: 44-45) can lead us to think that perhaps is a little bit less enabling than other more developed countries (Gidron & Domaradzka, eds 2021) were most of the mainstream literature on the topic comes from.

journey is possible without a compass: my critical/deterministic contribution on the understanding of local social enterprises after 2001-2001 crisis was only possible after addressing the micro and macro dimensions of the phenomena that started from a more voluntaristic perspective.

My overall research objective was to explore how critical organisational theory can help to gain a better understanding of the multidimensional dynamics of social enterprises in a particular geographical space and time (Argentina after 2001-2002). But in doing so, along the way I collected more general insights as an original contribution to the organisational theory field that can be proposed here to be used as a framework to test, dialogue, or confront with, when analysing social enterprises in coming research endeavours in other contexts too.

In this sense, conclusively, social enterprises are hybrid organisations with different legal forms using market mechanisms to accomplish its mission, that to be sustainable have a pragmatic leadership sensitive to environmental changes and with an active collaborative strategy. Social enterprise might face a business or operations model change with a rather professional culture and structure -and some of them might be looking for impact on public policies. In addition, using market mechanisms to accomplish social mission might lead to tensions over their organisational identity.

Social enterprises' field emerges as the result of the articulation among three societal international, national, and subnational actors and forces: state, civil society, and the market. These actors and forces, along with cultural elements, also impact on norms, customs, regulations, and policies on the sector. The dynamism in social enterprises,

and how vital their collaborative strategies are for their sustainability, both occur as a response to recent global changes in productive and organisational patterns from Fordism to post-Fordism. The tensive nature of the *species* (being a socially oriented organisation and an enterprise) is an arena to visualise the conflictive nature lying beneath several basic principles of organisational theory, such as division of labour and coordination mechanisms, among others. The unveil of this conflicting nature in my work appeared because of the use of critical organisational theory to understand the dynamics of the sector.

7.B. Gaps and Directions for Future Research

The more general directions for research that the literature has not worked yet are enticing and might include, for example, looking at what are the features of social enterprises´ Human Resources policies that have voluntary and paid work. Another avenue might be opened looking at the impact of critical events (e.g., foreign invasions, epidemies, etc.) in the strategic process and the identity of social enterprises. Finally, the role of social enterprises as actors influencing the policy making - e.g., in the public utility arena - has not yet been modelled. More generally, there have not yet been found other critical approaches in organisational theory to understand the dynamics of local social enterprises.

Having this in mind, there are some emergent research gaps identified in my line of work that provide attractive opportunities for my present and coming research

projects. Therefore, in an institutional research project[19] aiming to deepen this understanding, I am currently working on two paths: first, on how blurred division of labour within social enterprises shapes their organisational identity (some inputs of this can be found in Berger & Blugerman 2018, or Blugerman et al 2020), and second, on the current local dynamics of the new social and impact economy—some findings on the local impact of Covid-19 epidemy in the New Social and Impact Economy realm have been included in Berger & Blugerman (2021). Finally, the role of local social enterprises as actors influencing the policy making in a public utility company is an ongoing research project - see some provisional results on Agoff, Blugerman & Meschengieser (2021).[20] These academic publications all continue to embrace the overarching objective of using critical organisational theory to gain a better understanding in the multidimensional dynamics of local social enterprises in Argentina after 2001-2002.

The ideas expressed here, along with the submitted papers, are expected to meet the criteria of the University of Hull for the award of PhD by Published Work.

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[19] See the research project I currently lead (*Blurring of organisational boundaries*… -Code 30/4100), on https://www.ungs.edu.ar/idei/investigacion-idei/proyectos-en-curso-administracion (accessed on: 07/07/2021). The project was extended until 2022, but the web page is not yet updated.
[20] :Agoff, S. L.; Blugerman, L.; Meschengieser, G. G. (2021) "La gestión pública de empresas: el desafío de un abordaje multinivel". DAAPGE, 21 (36) 124-145. Santa Fe: UNL. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14409/daapge.2021.36.e0014. Available at: https://bibliotecavirtual.unl.edu.ar/publicaciones/index.php/DocumentosyAportes/article/view/10725/14239 (accessed on: 02/03/2022).

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