

## EXPANDED ABSTRACT

### Characteristics of the Social Journalistic Enterprises

#### Contextualization

The sector of communication companies is undergoing important changes, some of which are motivated by the eruption of digital technologies and the loss of credibility of traditional media. This situation is favoring the emergence of new forms of journalism and new sustainable business models (Galan, 2017); many of these models are cataloged as Social Enterprises. However, the Social Enterprise concept is not sufficiently developed in the field of communication.

Only in Spain, during the economic crisis (2008-2016), journalists have created more than 500 media that try to face the employment precariousness and the lack of credibility of the sector (Palacios, 2015). The new business models appear as one of the solutions to guarantee the survival of the journalistic company (Larrañaga-Rubio, 2010). These emerging forms are oriented, on the one hand, to create quality of employment, and on the other hand, to meet the need for information from society through innovations in services or information products. These journalistic projects adopt legal forms very different from each other; some forms can be cataloged as Social Enterprises. A simple look at their websites shows how they fit the definition provided by the European Commission: they are organizations "whose main objective is to have a social impact beyond the generation of a benefit for their owners or shareholders. They work providing goods and services to the market through entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as using its benefits primarily to achieve social objectives. They are managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involve workers, consumers and interest groups affected by their commercial activity" (COM-2011, 682:2, Brussels, 25.10.2011). Notwithstanding, there is no definition of the term Social Journalistic Enterprise (SJE), nor of the characteristics that can help to identify this sort of organization. In general, Social Enterprise is a concept that is not yet delimited theoretically and about which there is some confusion due to the existence of different approaches (Cabra de Luna, 2017). In addition, providing this definition is even more complicated if it is limited to the specific field of journalism.

#### Objective

The main objective of this work is to identify the characteristics of the SJE in order to determine the variables associated with "non-profit" organization and to examine the fit to the approach of Social Enterprise proposed by EMES (European Research Network) (Defourny and Nyssens, 2012).

## Methodology

To achieve the objective, the digital media collected in the SembraMedia Directory are analyzed. In this database, the information has been obtained from 509 companies: 365 self-described as "non-profit" and 144 as "for profit". This provides information of several variables: the founding members, the mission, the type of journalistic genre, the owners, the sources of income and the informative sources, among others. In each group, the common elements from the different variables have been researched. Subsequently, the results of each group have been compared. The data are analyzed statistically through SPSS software. On the other hand, the theoretical focus of reference for the development of this research is the conceptualization offered by EMES, who identifies 11 criteria grouped into three dimensions: 1 economic and entrepreneurial; 2) social; and 3) participative management. Among the 11 criteria, there is agreement in the scientific community on the non-distribution of benefits as the most determinant criterion. "The criterion of non-profit constitutes a guarantee for consumers (...) The absence of profit is a protection against two negative phenomena: adverse selection and moral risk" (Laville, 2015: 94). For this reason, this criterion will serve to select the companies of the journalistic sector beforehand. In view of the variables included in the directory, the EMES criteria for the Social Enterprise and the nature of the information activity, seven hypotheses have been established.

## Results

The outcomes are presented from seven differentiating variables between for-profit organizations (CAL) and non-profit organizations (SAL). From this, the main findings are that 71.71% are for-profit organizations (CAL) and 28.29% non-profit (SAL). Most of the companies are based in Latin America. Significant differences are found between the CAL and SAL companies, mostly related to the business model as digital media. An example of this is how SAL organizations show a significantly greater result in "foundations and subsidies", "education" and "entertainment and workshops". The territorial coverage in the group of companies analyzed is fundamentally national (78.55% CAL and 73.38% SAL). Only in the international contents were significant differences found between both media, being the CAL media those that presented the highest percentage. In general, the main subjects of the digital media studied are three: culture and entertainment (55.07% CAL and 54.17% SAL), politics (48.88% CAL and 43.26% SAL), and society and human rights (42.13% CAL and 51.77% SAL). Regardless of these results, the SAL media showed a significantly higher result in the environmental issue. In relation to the journalistic genre used by digital media, the most used was the "informative" (62.35% CAL and 44.86% SAL). On the other hand, significant differences have been found with higher percentages in the SAL organizations in four genres. The most recurrent technique used to compile the information is "news or breaking news". At the same time, it was the CAL organizations that opted more for this modality, while the SAL entities showed a significantly greater result in "coverage and data journalism". All the digital media work with professional journalists to elaborate the content of their news, although it is the CAL organizations that work with them in a significantly higher percentage. On the other hand,

15.83% of SAL organizations use content prepared by the founders, while the CALs only use 5.36%. All these results let us identify the characteristics associated with non-profit organizations and interpret them, based on the definition of Social Enterprise suggested by EMES.

### **Practical conclusions and original value. Implications and limitations to research**

There are important differences between digital media with and without profit motive in terms of: financing, thematic content and its origin, scope of news, support platform used, journalistic technique and gender used. These differences allowed us to develop the seven hypotheses. The main contributions of this work are two: we address a sector that is not usually studied in the field of the Social Enterprise, thus contributing to this field and to the conceptualization of the Social Journalistic Company within the framework of the EMES approach. In any case, the authors of this research agree with Nogales (2017:122) that "the most important aspects of the Social Enterprise are not the precise contours of its definition, but a common shared notion that captures its added value is necessary, mostly at the time of initiating public policies and actions both citizens and in the business sector that promote their development". The importance of this research lies in generating new empirical evidence on two topics, Communication Sector and Social Enterprise, in a relation in which the literature has significant deficiencies. Regarding the limitations of this research, we can identify two: the sample, since a greater number of companies may be useful to qualify and observe more variables; and the empirical limitation, derived from the limitation in time and the data capture method of capturing data.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Enterprises, Journalistic Enterprise, Non-profit organization, Journalism, Social Economy.